

Conference Abstract Summary

The long standing enduring rivalry between India and Pakistan poses important theoretical and policy problems to both academics and policy makers. The conference **Understanding the India-Pakistan Enduring Rivalry**, and the papers presented, tried to develop answers to questions surrounding the sources of the conflict, explanations of its enduring nature, and offer insight into possible solutions to the often violent rivalry, while at the same time trying to bridge the gap between different fields of political science, and between theorists and policy specialists. Leading scholars from both international relations and comparative politics were, for possibly the first time, sitting around the same table discussing and debating these questions. Important contributions were also made by policy specialists. The conference report concludes by offering possible policy options for Canada in developing its position vis-a-vis the enduring Indo-Pakistani rivalry.

The conference began with opening remarks by John Galaty, Associate Dean of Arts at McGill University, and chair of the McGill University Peace Studies Committee. His comments revealed some of the underlying themes that he thought the conference would deal with including issues of territoriality and the clash of competing world views, as embodied in different religions and domestic political systems and historical traditions in both India and Pakistan. Overall, there seems to be a need to win the "hearts and minds" of those who can affect the outcome of the conflict.

T.V. Paul opened the conference with a paper entitled "Power Asymmetry and the India-Pakistan Enduring Rivalry". Paul argued that there is little in the way of an international relations theoretical framework to explain the enduring rivalry between India and Pakistan. What has been done well is work by area specialists. It is hoped that this conference will help bridge the gap between international conflict studies and field specialists. Paul continued by pointing out that the terms associated with examining the India-Pakistan conflict, such as "enduring rivalry" and "protracted conflict," are contentious. He continued his presentation with a historical overview of the conflict, where the conflict has specific qualities of its own from an IR perspective:

- Power asymmetry between the parties involved
- Status quo vs. revisionist states
- Characteristics of balance of power theory
- The role of great power intervention
- The nuclear variable
- September 11th, 2001

He concluded his presentation by outlining the core questions that the participants were to answer in their paper presentations:

1. To what extent is the India-Pakistan conflict an enduring rivalry? How does it differ from other examples of enduring rivalries? Why have some enduring rivalries ended but not this one?