

Conference Summary

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The conference, "Understanding the India-Pakistan Enduring Rivalry", organized by Professor T.V. Paul of McGill University, was the culmination of almost two years of work. The conference was generously sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's John Holmes Fund, the McGill University Peace Studies Program (through a grant from the Arsenault Foundation), the McGill University Conference Grant Fund, and the McGill University/Université de Montréal Research Group in International Security. It was held at the Holiday Inn Midtown, Montreal, December 6, 2001.

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 "protected 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:

- Lower 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 11, 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?