

TARGET SSB INTERVIEW

Best Personal Counseling & Guidance about SSB

Contact - R S Rathore @ 9001262627 visit us - www.targetssbinterview.com

India & Its Neighbors -

Pakistan

Pakistan is and for foreseeable future will remain a permanent fixture on the agenda of India's policy makers. The State Relations between India and Pakistan have remained less than normal ever since the partition of India and creation of Pakistan in 1947. Sporadic efforts made by the civilian authorities on the two sides of the divide to provide semblance of normalcy to bilateral relations have often been thwarted by the ISI and Army in Pakistan. History almost repeated itself in the recent past. Pakistani President Nawaz Sharif made several conciliatory statements during and after his election in May 2013. He was reportedly advised by his Army Chief to go slow and exercise utmost caution while striving to improve relations with India; this was even before Nawaz Sharif was officially sworn in. As the prospects of a possible bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in New York on the side-lines of the UNGA 2013 Session were looking bright and back-channel contacts had begun, the ceasefire violations along the LOC accelerated, culminating in to the killing of five Indian soldiers (6th August 2013). India's response was firm and strong. In a Statement, the Defence Minister of India A.K. Antony said that "It is now clear that the specialist troops of Pakistan Army were involved in this attack when a group from the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) side crossed the LC and killed our brave jawans (soldiers). We all know that nothing happens from Pakistan side of the Line of Control without support, assistance, facilitation and often, direct involvement of the Pakistan Army." A chain of allegations and counter-allegations followed. In a resolution it adopted on 13th August, the National Assembly of Pakistan accused India of 'unprovoked aggression by Indian military forces across the LoC', promptly rejected and deplored by the Indian Parliament through identical resolutions in the two Houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) reflecting the unity of approach to this issue by the ruling coalition as well as Opposition. Besides refuting the allegation and asserting that "it was the Pakistan Army that was involved in the unprovoked attack on an Indian Army patrol", it also added "our restraint should not be taken for granted nor should the capacity of our armed forces to ensure the territorial integrity of our nation." To top it up the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his address to the nation on the 67th Independence Day singled out Pakistan by name and said "for relations with Pakistan to improve, it is essential that they prevent the use of their territory and territory under their control for any anti-India activity".

Against the backdrop of this vitiated atmosphere and divided civil society opinion, the Prime Minister of India decided in favour of meeting his Pakistani counterpart in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA. The focus of discussions during the meeting held on 29th September 2013 was on terrorism, reduction of tension on the borders and restoration of ceasefire. Addressing the media, NSA Sh Menon said "Both sides want to see a better India-Pakistan relationship than we have right now. Both want peace and tranquility along the Line of Control. The stage of broader dialogue has not come yet."

In my assessment the future of India-Pak dialogue would depend on i) whether or not Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is able to minimise Army's influence and control over foreign and security policies ; ii) tangible deliveries from Pakistan on issues of India's serious concerns particularly arising out of Pak-inspired/sponsored cross-border terrorism against India.

Afghanistan

As Afghanistan moves closer to multi transitions (NATO drawdown, Presidential elections, economic transition) and enters the phase of transformation decade, India's focus on Afghanistan is becoming sharper in view of the stakes India has in Afghanistan from the perspectives of Its own security and strategic interests. India can ill-afford the return of Taliban. The emergence of a regime in Afghanistan which is a proxy of Pakistan and dominated by Islamic fundamentalists would not be in the interests of India. A stable and peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is of no use to India if its territories are allowed to be used for the purposes which are inimical to the national interests of India.

Indian policy makers will have to pick up the right option as the security situation evolves; in the event there is no deterioration in the current security situation, India could continue with its policy of commitment to contribute substantially towards reconstruction of Afghanistan and capacity building including training of Afghan Security Forces. [India has invested over \$2bn in Afghanistan as development assistance; under its strategic partnership agreement, India is providing training to Afghan Security forces]. It could also adhere to its commitments as Lead Country in Istanbul CBMs. In case Afghanistan returns to chaotic and bloody civil war posing physical threat to Indian personnel's presence in Afghanistan, India may find it difficult to continue to operate in Afghanistan. At the same time, India's military intervention in Afghanistan is more or less ruled out.

Sri Lanka

India's policy approach towards Sri Lanka is reflected In its response to a Question tabled in the Parliament (Lok Sabha Q. N. 1542 dated 14th August, 2013); the Government stated "India has long advocated the creation of an environment in Sri Lanka in which all communities, particularly the Sri Lankan Tamils, are masters of their own destiny within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. Our objective continues to remain the achievement of a future for the Tamil community in Sri Lanka that is marked by equality, dignity, justice and self-respect. In this context, India has been engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka at the highest levels on its stated commitment to implement the 13th amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution and to go beyond, so as to achieve meaningful devolution of powers."

India has adopted a multi- pronged approach since the liquidation of the LTTE; this policy has several components: i) India misses no opportunity to impress upon the Sri Lankan Government to abide by its commitments towards Sri Lankan Tamils particularly meaningful devolution of powers and the implementation of the 13th Amendment and beyond in a time bound manner; ii) India reassure as often as possible the Sri Lankan Tamils that it will make every effort to ensure the 13th amendment is not diluted and the future for the community is marked by equality, justice and self-respect; (In June last year "Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was explicit in conveying to the visiting Tamil National Alliance (TNA) delegation from Sri Lanka that he was "dismayed by reports suggesting that the Government of Sri Lanka planned to dilute certain key provisions of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution ahead of elections to the Northern Provincial Council" [Ministry of External Affairs official statement, New Delhi, June 18, 2013] ; iii) India continues to invest into the reconstruction of Northern Sri Lanka; iv) As far the Tamil leadership in India, the Central Government in New Delhi listen to their demands, accommodates them to the extent feasible but ultimately exercises the prerogative of the Centre in the formulation of foreign policy taking broader national interests into account rather than being pushed by narrow regional priorities; v) India is monitoring carefully the Chinese overtures in Sri Lanka and check the latter's drift towards China.

China

In terms of geographic and demographic dimensions, skilled manpower, civilizational depth, China is the only country in the region which qualifies for comparison with India.

The two countries have a long history of civilisational links. Soon after its own independence and the Maoist revolution in China, India went an extra mile to reach out to the communist regime. India was quick in recognising China, and supported its entry into the United Nations; recognized Tibet as an autonomous region of China. The 1962 border conflict therefore came as a political shock to India. While Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's landmark visit in 1988 began a phase of improvement in bilateral relations, it is the cumulative outcomes of seven key High Level visits in last 10 years which have been transformational for India-China ties. [These were that of Prime Minister Vajpayee [2003], of Premier Wen Jiabao [2005 & 2010], of President Hu Jintao [2006], of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh [2008 and 2013] and of Premier Li Keqiang [2013]. It is noteworthy that more than 60% of the agreements between India and China have been signed during the last decade. As of today, both sides have established 36 dialogue mechanisms covering diverse sectors. Bilateral trade has registered enormous growth reaching \$70bn in 2011 (and may touch \$100bn by 2015). The year 2014 has been designated as the Year of Friendly Exchanges between India and China. The two sides have established a Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2005). The leaders of India and China have also been meeting on the sidelines of regional, plurilateral and multilateral gatherings and conferences.

This is not to suggest that there are no irritants in relations between the two countries; there is always the other side of the coin: the border dispute between India and China remains unresolved; China's plans to build dams on Brahmaputra or seek access to Indian ocean through Pakistan and Myanmar, "string of pearls" etc are matters of concern. In addition, the rapid economic rise of China and its military strength have given it the audacity to occasionally flex political and military muscles.

