

Armed Conflicts in South Asia : 2009
Continuing violence, failing peace processes

Published by: Taylor and Francis Books India
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13th January 2010: “Interestingly, the government of Pakistan has been the principle catalysts in instigating the current situation. The strategies in both FATA and NWFP have been different and it explains a lot about what they do and not do in reality”, said Lt. General Patankar (Retd), in an IPCS panel discussion that marked the launch of an annual series ‘Armed Conflict in South Asia: 2009’, at the India International Centre last Thursday.

This book comprises of a collection important papers that discuss India’s geo-strategic significance, its common borders with its neighbors; the psychological and economic costs of violence, the problem of refugee migrants; treaties, memorandums and ceasefire agreements signed over the past several years across countries; the role of the United Nations and other peacekeeping forces; and the future of failed and failing states.

The panel discussion held on 7th January, was for the purpose of providing critical feedback on and a review of the aforementioned book which delved not only into armed conflicts involving nearly every country constituting South Asia, but also included internal insurgencies such as the Naxal violence inside India. Comprising of scholars and practitioners, the panel included Maj. General Ashok Mehta (Retd), Lt. General Patankar (Retd), Prof Ashwini Ray (Retd) and former Union Home Secretary 2004-05, Mr. Dharendra Singh. Nearly all panelists agreed that although information may be limited, a greater emphasis should have also been awarded to the peace processes in place in the regions and countries discussed. The book was commended for maintaining a uniform structure throughout its chapters and for continuity in the issues studied.

Designed as an annual series, the book provides a brief historical sketch of the emergence of armed conflict, outlining its various phases. These include the contemporary trends and factors that have sustained the conflict, followed by an examination of conflict management, specific measures taken by the government, non-state actors, civil society and the international community in addressing the conflict. The articles then chart the direction that armed conflict is likely to take and provides a set of alternative measures that could be pursued by the various actors.

This book will be useful to students of politics, international relations, and peace and conflict studies. It will also be relevant to the governments of South Asian countries, to intelligence agencies, and to international bodies.

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11. Failed and Failing States and Armed Conflict in South Asia

For a detailed seminar report please visit: www.ipcs.org

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