2007

Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military

Amer Latif

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol60/iss1/13

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.
strategic thought, in both academe and the policy world. The second chapter addresses both the strengths and weaknesses of “new security” thinking in academe in the 1990s. This chapter could be of particular value to political scientists and international relations specialists.

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this section should be required reading for the modern war fighter and other practitioners. These sections focus on the importance of seapower and maritime strategy, on the enormous complexities involved in making strategy, and on the paradoxes inherent in the principles of war and in efforts to adapt them to the changing international environment. Gray notes that the principles of war are actually principles of warfare—intimately connected with the tactical and operational levels of war but remote from the fundamental issue of waging war to achieve political ends.

The second and third sections do not quite achieve the high standards of the first. The second section’s focus on nuclear strategy, on the RMA debate, and on arms control may seem antiquated to today’s reader. Nevertheless, the notions that the RMA debate failed to consider adversary responses to American technological superiority and that arms control “is as likely to fuel political antagonism as prevent or alleviate it” still have relevance to policy today. The third section’s first chapter notes the salient impact of geography on strategy—an obvious point, perhaps, but one exemplified most recently by the problems of carrying out a counter-insurgency campaign in an Iraq with insecure land borders on all sides. The third chapter is a laudable effort to explain morality and ethics in international relations from the viewpoint of a neo-classical realist. The middle chapter, on strategic culture, is the most daring, and in some respects the most disappointing. Gray attempts to make a very complex argument regarding the definition of strategic culture, but much of the chapter is focused on a debate with Iain Johnston, which readers unfamiliar with this literature may find particularly daunting. This unusual chapter, however, does not detract from the overall value of the volume, which is excellent not only as an introduction to those unfamiliar with the study of strategy but also as a useful addition to the libraries of practitioners, academics, and military officers.

TIMOTHY D. HOYT
Naval War College


Five years into the U.S.-led global war on terror, Pakistan remains a cornerstone of U.S. strategy in defeating the Taliban and rooting out al-Qa’ida. Despite the importance of Pakistan, it is a country that poses challenges for the United States. A key challenge is the dominant role of the military, which seeks to balance its commitments as a valuable U.S. partner with its role as a guardian of the country’s Islamic identity through its close relationship with Pakistan’s religious establishment. How Pakistan manages these commitments has serious implications for U.S. policy. Fortunately, Husain Haqqani
has come to our aid to help us understand this complex political dynamic.

Haqqani has an insider’s view of Pakistani politics, having served as an adviser to three prime ministers, a diplomat, a political commentator, and a scholar of South Asian politics at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. This experience well qualifies him to guide the reader through the complex and, at times, confusing relationship between the Pakistan military, the civil bureaucracy, and the religious establishment.

Haqqani chronicles the early struggles for Pakistan’s formation and makes a convincing case that the lack of a clear vision for Pakistan’s identity in the early period of independence opened the door for the military, the civil bureaucracy, and Islamic ideologues to play dominant roles in Pakistan’s political culture. The largely secular ruling establishment acknowledged Islam as the symbol of unity but did not define how Islam would manifest itself within society. What were the limits (if any) on religion in politics? How would relations between Muslims and other religious groups be managed if Islam was the defining idea of Pakistan? Whose interpretation of Islam would dominate the new country? Questions such as these were never confronted; the new leadership was too preoccupied with others, such as establishing a government, developing an economy, raising an army, and developing a civil bureaucracy.

Haqqani explains how the inability of Pakistan’s founders to delineate Islam’s place in society turned the faith into a political tool for successive military and civilian leaders. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan’s secular civilian prime minister in the 1970s, began the cynical employment of Islam in politics by attempting to cross it with socialism. It was Bhutto’s courting of the Muslim clergy with “Islamic socialism” that opened the door into politics for Pakistan’s religious establishment.

Bhutto was overthrown in 1977 by General Zia ul-Haq, a man of strong religious convictions. During his eleven-year rule he transformed Pakistan’s identity through a campaign of Islamization of law and society. This process extended throughout the military and spread to the Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate, which came to be dominated by officers who believed in Zia’s aims. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided Zia an opportunity to support selected mujaheddin groups fighting the Soviets, as long as they aligned with Zia’s religious views and vision for Afghanistan. By the time Zia died in an unexplained plane crash in 1988, Pakistan had, according to Haqqani, changed to an “ideological state guided by a praetorian military.” The centers of power were by now heavily Islamized, through the influence of the religious establishment within the civil bureaucracy and the military.

Haqqani argues that civilian leaders like Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif could not reverse the Islamization of Pakistani politics. Instead, both of these leaders tried to coexist with a military heavily influenced by the religious establishment. Both leaders failed, because they eventually ran afoul of the influential military establishment that believed they threatened its position of power.

As he skilfully explains these dynamics, Haqqani also weaves in their effect on the United States–Pakistan relationship.
During the first decade after its chaotic birth, Pakistan sought to form a strategic alliance with the United States. The bilateral relationship during the Cold War was based on U.S. interest in a strong anti-Soviet ally in Asia and Pakistan’s desire for backing against India. This incongruence set up the two countries for misperceptions and unfulfilled expectations that have lasted to the present day.

The relationship was further complicated in the period after the Cold War as U.S.-Pakistan ties frayed over Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program and the Soviet threat disappeared. As the United States began to scrutinize Pakistan more closely for democratic practices and nuclear proliferation, the pro-American tilt within the Pakistani military began to wane. A series of perceived slights (such as Washington’s refusal to deliver F-16 aircraft after Pakistan had paid for them) and the effective cessation of the bilateral military relationship contributed to this collective attitude. Although the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 resurrected the relationship, it remains to be seen whether the current bilateral cooperation can be sustained for the long term, given the various pressures that the current president, General Pervez Musharraf, is facing.

Haqqani ends the book with a chapter that summarizes his findings and offers suggestions for U.S. policy. Although his diagnosis of U.S. policy toward Pakistan is sound, we would benefit from a bit more detail about some of his policy proposals. That is a minor shortcoming; Haqqani has provided an excellent work on understanding the nexus between Pakistan’s religious establishment and military, and on the implications of this relationship for Pakistan’s future.

AMER LATIF
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Director, South Asian Affairs


This is a timely book. It is a collection of rarely read wartime reports and post–World War I articles that wrestle with the consequences of war and were written by the British officer T. E. Lawrence, otherwise known as Lawrence of Arabia, one of the greatest theoreticians and practitioners of modern guerrilla warfare.

Lawrence, of course, is best known for his book The Seven Pillars of Wisdom, which describes the British-inspired-and-supported Arab revolt against their Ottoman suzerain. Lawrence is back in vogue again, which is not surprising given the involvement of the United States in a seemingly intractable and protracted insurgency in Iraq. Many officers, officials, and academics are turning to The Seven Pillars of Wisdom for nuggets of information about insurgency warfare, or, indeed, about the Arabs themselves. In his foreword, Professor Michael Clarke of King’s College London says that the book “has become an oft-consulted work among military officers presently struggling with the attempt to create order in Iraq.” The Seven Pillars of Wisdom is wonderful prose, but as Malcolm Brown puts it, the work is “no pushover even for the most adept of skim-readers.” It is in