BOOK REVIEWS

Pakistan: The US, Geopolitics and Grand Strategies

Author: Julian Schofield and Usama Butt
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Pakistan: The US, Geopolitics and Grand Strategies edited by Julian Schofield and Usama Butt is a welcome and most certainly a refreshing addition to the current literature on Pakistan. Unlike existing books on Pakistan, which tend to take a predominately the US or India focussed prism in considering the complexity and dynamics of Pakistan domestic and foreign policies, Schofield and Butt, in their introduction to the book, promise to provide more diversity and nuance. Importantly, their aim is to maintain that ‘Pakistan’s strategic affairs and its regional and foreign policies are not exclusively influenced by direct the US pressure’ (pg.6), consequently the eleven chapters contained within the book are designed to flesh out this rather ambitious proposal. Whether this promise is fulfilled is another matter.

The book begins with Part 1, consisting of six chapters which, given the stated purpose of the book i.e. moving away from the US centrism, is rather puzzlingly entitled ‘Part I: Pakistan-US relations’. The first of these chapters, written by Butt himself provides an excellent analysis of how Pakistan’s elite needed an Islamic discourse to legitimise their power and dominance; while conversely, for Pakistan’s masses, Islam is relevant as an ideology and not necessarily a ‘need’ as such. The fundamental argument of Butt’s chapter is that while the consistent use of the ‘Islamic card’ ensured that Islam remained dominant in politics, the situation has now changed to the extent that, in the post 9/11 era, Islam has now become the narrative of the anti-elit e and non-state actors. In short, an Islamic orientation and purpose is no longer the exclusive domain of the state, and therefore the state cannot seek to manipulate and use the Islamic card for political and military purposes. While Butt makes a convincing argument, arguably he overstates the case, i.e. that Islam is now in the hands of anti-elit e and non-state forces. Nevertheless, Butt’s chapter is perhaps one of the best in the book.

The second chapter by Michael Rubin deliberates on the differing the US and Pakistan perceptions of national interest. For Rubin, this difference is most strikingly represented in Pakistan’s fear of ethnic nationalism while conversely the US is equally concerned with Islamist movements. These differing threat perceptions have been consequential in the US -Pakistan relationship because
they have hindered a genuine convergence of interests. For Pakistan, while Islamist movements are a concern, the bigger threat, given Pakistan's historical experience, is ethnic movements. Similarly, the US is more concerned with Islamist movements and therefore has limited concern for, and understand of, Pakistan's ethnic threats. Rubin presents a rather pessimistic future for the US-Pakistan relations.

The third chapter entitled 'The influence of domestic politics on the making of the US-Pakistan foreign policy' is disappointed, not least because, instead of focussing on Pakistan's domestic inputs vis-à-vis its policies towards the US, the chapter instead largely examines the domestic politics and perception in the US, and how these shape the US foreign policy towards Pakistan. A much more interesting and original account would have been an extended discussion of Pakistani inputs into its foreign policy.

The chapter by Nasir Islam is interesting in so far as it provides a useful monograph of the 'ups and downs' of the relationship between the US, Pakistan, and Afghanistan in the post 9/11 time-frame. Meanwhile, Shamshad Ahmad provides an eloquent and frank Pakistani perspective on the country's own quest for survival in a hostile regional environment and the perceived indifference of the US to Pakistan's security concerns. In particular, Ahmad notes that the US steps to enter into long-term strategic partnership with India belies insensitivity for Pakistan's concerns.

Ishtiaq Ahmad's chapter focuses on the Af-Pak strategy and explores the potential for a convergence of US-Pakistan interests on counter-terrorism. Ahmad's account is useful in the sense that it explores Pakistan's reluctance to comply with the US insistence of geographically expanding counterterrorism operations. In keeping with some of the major themes espoused in the rest of the book, Ahmad questions the feasibility of the US expectations in this regard.

Part II focuses on Pakistan's foreign relations and consists of five chapters deliberating on Pakistan's relations with China, the Arab region, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and finally a chapter that examines Pakistan's nuclear security. In the first of these chapters, Julian Schofield provides a rather brief and concise account of China's interest in Pakistan and vice versa. Schofield suggests that the US measures to improve its strategic relations with India are likely to trigger an equivalent response by China vis-à-vis Pakistan. The chapter by Christian Koch is useful in the sense that it explores how the countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) can potentially liaise and expand their interaction with Pakistan in a way that promotes peace and stability in the latter. Stability in both Afghanistan and Pakistan is in the interests of the GCC. On this account, Koch suggests that the European Union (EU) is increasingly coming to the realisation that, in the face of failed unilateral the US policies in the region, the EU will ultimately be left to deal with the consequences. In this context, Koch suggests
a similarity of interests, and therefore the potential for wide-scale cooperation, between the EU and the GCC in terms of promoting peace and stability in Pakistan.

Gawdat Bahgat’s chapter on Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations considers the long-term ties of the two Sunni states and predicts their continued friendship, as well as military and economic cooperation. The following chapter by Harsh V. Pant provides a lucid account of Pakistan’s complex relations with Iran. Pant focuses largely on contemporary trends, in particular Pakistan’s interest in Iranian oil, and the vexed security relationship between the two. Moreover, in discussing the growing Iran-India ties, Pant locates the dilemmas for Pakistan in the expansion of such ties. The last chapter by Shaista Tabassum provides a rebuttal of Western concerns around the security of Pakistan’s nuclear technology. In particular, Shaista Tabassum is concerned with assessing the divergent postures the West adopts vis-à-vis Pakistan and India in the area of nuclear politics. Tabassum concludes a confidence in Pakistan’s command and control of nuclear facilities, and dispels threats of a terrorist takeover of nuclear installations.

All in all, the various chapters contained with the book offer a much broader and contextualised view of Pakistan in the post 9/11 time-frame. Indeed a particular plus point of the book is the way in which it moves away from a the US-centric and even an India-centric framework to locate Pakistan’s foreign relations. Such a focus is not only refreshing, but a trend that has hitherto received little academic attention. However, while the introduction to the book seeks to add more context and nuance to the study of Pakistan, there are instances where specific chapters fall short of this task; arguably some accounts within the book tend to revert back to an overwhelming focus on viewing Pakistan from a US prism. Nonetheless, the book provides an important contribution and is well worth a read.

Dr. Nazya Fiaz
Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations
Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad.
Towards a More Cooperative South Asia
Edited by Tomislav Delinic & Nishchal Pandey
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For its unique characteristics the region of South Asia has always attracted the critical analysis of intellectuals. Although consisting of democracies, the countries of the region are still plagued with poverty, underdevelopment, insurgencies and terrorism. Moreover, South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which has participation of all the South Asian States, is unable to positively address all those issues for which it was established.

“Towards a more cooperative South Asia” is yet another endeavour for identify the problems and opportunities faced by South Asian countries in their pursuit of regional cooperation. Edited by Tomislav Delinic & Nishchal Pandey, the book is a compilation of the speeches, statements and research papers presented at a regional conference on “Towards a More Cooperative South Asia”, organized by the Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS) & Konrad Adenaur Stiftung KAS) in November 2011 in Kathmandu Nepal. The contributors to the conference were learned scholars and practitioners from Germany and various South Asian countries.

The idea of this book can be traced back to the concept presented by German statesman Dr. Friedbert Pfluger in which regional integration of Europe under European Union (EU) has been proposed as a formula for success for SAARC. In this connection, the statement of the German ambassador to Nepal also serves as a motivating factor to South Asian States for learning lessons from EU Experience.

The chapters in the book deal with regional affairs of South Asia in collective as well as individual dimensions. Challenges and opportunities for cooperation in South Asia, India’s apprehensions of China in the region and prospects and hurdles for SAARC are the major issues addressed by the researchers. Along with this, domestic political developments in the majority of the countries of South Asia have been highlighted. The history of democracy building in Bangladesh, successes and challenges of peace process in Nepal, rehabilitation and reconstruction in post-conflict Sri Lanka and critical nature of Indo-Pak relations are the issues featured in the book.

Although EU is the most successful regional integration model, yet, its experience is not necessarily relevant to the South Asian political culture. Unlike European countries, the South Asian states do not have a common enemy against whom their interests could converge for regional integration. Further, no world power is favouring or helping build SAARC as a viable regional organization, like the USA did in the case of EU or Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). According to Dr. Pfluger, instead of dictating its
will on smaller countries, Germany disproportionately shares the financial burden within EU. Such a behaviour is unexpected from India in South Asia because not only India is disproportionately huge vis-à-vis much smaller South Asian States but also because of the fact that India has global as well as regional ambitions.

Maj. Gen Dipanker Banergee has suggested cooperative society in South Asia on the model of EU, but, it is pertinent to understand that convergence of interests for cooperation is possible when threats come from outside. In case of South Asian strategic environment, security of smaller States is threatened by the presence of a hegemon from within South Asia itself. The scholar has also proposed effectiveness of Southern Asian Silk route, linking South East Asia to Central Asia and further to Europe. However, for its implementation, instability in Afghanistan, which would serve as a bridge for the suggested inter-regional connection, has not been addressed.

Prof. Swaran Singh has studied India's apprehensions against China's role in South Asia, which indicates India's regional balance of power approach. He has suggested China's role within SAARC under the leadership of India. Considering the political, economic and global prowess of China the proposed relationship should be other way round.

For energizing SAARC, Ahmed Saleem has very rightly advocated the inclusion of bilateral political and strategic level issues; especially the nuclear issue between India and Pakistan, for discussions at its platform. For this to be effective, in place of traditional approach to security, deepening approach will have to be undertaken, in which focus is on human security. The researcher has highlighted the bureaucratic hurdles in foreign ministries that limit the chances of success of SAARC. However, deep scrutiny of South Asian political culture, significantly of India and Pakistan, would expose the fact that extremist elements of both sides hamper the political leadership of making any peaceful commitments in SAARC summits.

Prof. Dr. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema has shown optimism in the prevalent level of interaction between India and Pakistan for furtherance of peace in the region. In this respect, it is relevant to consider the influential radical views on both sides of the border that thinks otherwise. Despite the fact that conditions for cooperation are present due to various common threats faced by both arch rivals, still, it is worth considering that governments of both countries blame each other for instigating these threats.

In the chapter focusing on democracy building in Bangladesh, Brig. Gen Shahedul Anam Khan has pinpointed the conflict between major political parties of Bangladesh as the root cause of military interventions, which in turn derails the democratic process in the country. The lack of tolerance found in the opposing political groups is the hallmark of almost all South Asian States. That can be addressed by spreading quality education at the societal level.

Rajan Bhattarai has found politicization of security agencies and militarization of political parties as the chief reason behind instability in Nepal. This is another area of significance where South Asian political culture is not
similar to the European political culture. And therefore, application of EU model in South Asia does not seem to work effectively.

Srilankan reconstruction model has been studied by Dr. Thusitha Tennakon. The rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDP’s) as presented by the scholar needs to be studied by the policy makers of the region, especially in Pakistan, for addressing this issue.

While the overall structure, organization and presentation of the book is impressive, it is notable that the issue of terrorism with specific reference to Afghanistan has not been addressed within the book. Being a Member State of SAARC and having profound effect on the politics of South Asian region, Afghanistan and its prevailing instability must be critically scrutinized for suggesting the ways for promoting peace in the region. Nevertheless, the conference on “Towards a more cooperative South Asia” and compilation of its findings in the book has explored important areas of study for further research. Terrorism in Afghanistan, influential extremist elements, rehabilitation of IDP’s, inclusion of nuclear affairs for discussion in SAARC and lack of tolerance in the political culture of the region are the broad issues on which further research is needed.

Muhammad Umar Abbasi
Lecturer, Dept. of I.R, FCS
National Defence University, Islamabad

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A G.Noorani, the author of Article 370 A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir, is a lawyer specializing in constitutional law and history. He is a columnist for Frontline and The Dawn, and has authored various books on the theme relevant to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. His various titles are related to the constitutional sensitivities of India, likewise this work consists of documents on Article 370 of the constitution which essentially envisaged temporary provisions with respect to Jammu and Kashmir. The publication is a collection of documents and provides an insight to the spirit of the Article amidst continuing controversy ever since its insertion in the constitution.

Article 370 was enacted in the Indian constitution on 17th Oct’ 1949, after five-month long negotiations, “the state of Jammu and Kashmir is the only State in the Union of India which negotiated the terms of its membership with the Union” the author opined. As for its importance, he quotes Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram when he acknowledged in Rajya Sabha on 6th August 2010 that the Kashmir issue is a ‘unique problem’ which requires a ‘unique solution’ thus, ‘it is important to win the hearts and minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir’ (pg: 2).

The author profoundly describes the Indian aspirations with regards to this Article while quoting Union Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda’s address in the Lok Sabha on 4th December 1964 when he said: ‘the only way of taking the Constitution (of India) into Jammu and Kashmir is through the application of Article 370... it is a tunnel. It is through this tunnel that a good deal of traffic has already passed and more will’.

The controversy also relates to the legal effect which Article 370 carries in the follow up of later amendments. In this regard, while quoting Nanda further, Noorani emphasizes on the fact that in the light of Article 368, the Article 370 can be amended merely by a Presidential order. However, this led the spirit of the Article to die and its contents to drain over the past years. As, Nehru being ‘conscious of the indelicacy of the metaphor’ he writes, caused the Article to ‘erode’ by subsequent Presidential Orders. Going back into history, Noorani while analyzing the legal position of the ‘Instrument of Accession’ writes that, ‘the instrument of Accession which the ruler executed on 26th Oct 1947 was accompanied, uniquely, by a letter of the same date signed simultaneously with the instrument. In law, such a document is a collateral document and the two form an integral whole, the letter has the same legal
effect as does, indeed the Governor General's letter of acceptance dated 27th Oct' 1947.'

As the acceptance of the aforementioned letter was a legal prerequisite for the Governor General according to Article 6 (1) of Government of India Act 1935, thus Noorani further writes what the Governor General stipulated in his acceptance letter: as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader; the question of the State's accession should be settled by reference to the people. In addition, the Government of India acknowledged in 1948 that the accession would be considered provisional until the will of the people could be ascertained. The writer strongly asserts the accession to be purely only the will of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir who declares in clause 7 of the Instrument that the constitution of the state would be drafted by its own Constituent Assembly and the Indian constitution would not be adopted.

The Maharaja's proclamation openly suggested that acceding to the Indian Union would not mean that its constitution would also be applied; however the framers of Article 370 gave Jammu and Kashmir a special status which according to them would pave way for inserting the state in the Indian Union. The accession was subject to six special provisions; firstly, Jammu and Kashmir would have its own constitution. Secondly, the Indian Parliament's powers over the state were restricted to only three sectors: defence, foreign affairs and communications. Thirdly, prior 'concurrency' of the state government was required before any constitutional provision of the Indian union were extended. Fourthly, the concurrency was strictly provisional and had to be ratified by the state's Constituent Assembly. Fifthly, the state's government authority to give the 'concurrency' lasts only till the State's Constituent Assembly is 'convened'. And finally, according to Article 370 (3) the president of India has the special powers to abrogate the Article however; it is to be done after consulting the Constituent Assembly of the state.

Consequently, the Article 370 cannot be invoked if the State's Constituent Assembly has doubts regarding the aforementioned concerns or has taken decision regarding the constitution and range of jurisdiction over the state. However, when the state's first Assembly was convened on 31st Oct' 1951, it was not given authority to accord any 'concurrency' to the union. Thus, this leads to a conclusion that once the constitution of the state of Jammu and Kashmir was adopted on 17th Nov' 1956 and the Assembly was dispersed, the only authority to give more powers to the Union and accept the institutions of the Union other than those specified in the instrument of Accession simply vanished. Thus, all the additions to the Unions powers within the state of Jammu and Kashmir since then are unconstitutional.

Noorani takes the reader on an intensive journey of the constitutional history of the Article 370 with the help of original documents that corroborate the events of history. He himself declares that, 'given the political will, sincerity of purpose, and a spirit of compromise, it is not difficult to retrieve from the
wreckage of Article 370 a Constitutional settlement which satisfies the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.’

As long as the triangular nature of the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir is not addressed, the issue will remain an irritant for regional peace and security. The Article 370, if not used in good faith according to its true spirit, will never be accepted by the people of Jammu and Kashmir and even Pakistan. Thus the writer puts its rather strongly that, ‘obviously, as well as redrafting of Article 370, a review of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, drafted in abnormal circumstances, to say the least, will be necessary. The amendments must be based on agreement between all the major parties in Kashmir. they must meet Jammu’s concerns as well.’

Beenish Sultan
Research Associate, ISSRA,
NDU, Pakistan