

Pakistan's Enduring Challenges

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Edited By: *C.C Fair and Sarah J. Watson*

Review By: *Seemab Zafar**

It is a harsh reality to accept that Pakistan is facing different external and internal challenges since its inception. These challenges have tangled the state in its own contradiction, ranges from political instability to economic uncertainty. It inculcates exacerbated sense of insecurity and sense of deprivation among people. Non-state actors have cashed these circumstances efficiently as well as effectively and tried to portray Pakistan as a safe haven for terrorism. This factor has changed the overall outlook of the state and made it to indulge in this proxy war, whereas, positive social developments remain aside. It has also given birth to several challenges, both at the domestic and international level.

This edited volume is an effort to project these challenges faced by Pakistan in terms of security and prosperity, especially after the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan as well as its relations with foreign states, such as, the US, China and Saudi Arabia. Every challenge has been compartmentalized in three sections, whereas, root-cause of each issue can be traced back to a common-threat, posed by non-state actors. It invites the state to nurture its policy options to cut-out domestic instability and security threats along with the opportunities to develop more trustworthy relations with other nations. While, exploring all avenues, one of the chapters chases economic tail in order to fast-track the correction process regarding mismanagement and profligacy.

The moot-point of this book revolves around the creeping expansion of Jihadist influences and different shapes that militant juggernaut may take after US withdrawal from Afghanistan, both in terms of sectarian and identity basis. It proposes to adopt a forward-leaning posture not only for Pakistan, but for the stability of whole region. Secondly, it sheds light on different ideologies and how these ideologies are being interpreted in different ways by using the Quranic verses to achieve target-goals by militants. This argument raised the question that if there are such religious ideologies, exercised by non-sate actors, then why there is no

* Seemab Zafar is a Research Intern at Research and Publication Branch, Institute of Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis, National Defence University, Islamabad.

religious party has been able to form the government up till now. Therefore, this percept of radicalization needs to be reviewed.

While suggesting the countermeasures for elimination of such elements, this book, in one way or the other, justifies US drone program in Pakistan. It entails the argument that this program is being supported by implicit consent of concerned authorities despite the fact that the Pakistan's government has been raising its voice against such attacks. It further elaborates the legal aspects of drone attacks, which is, in fact, contrary to true international law perspective. Besides highlighting drone causalities, this part of book also touches upon the sensitive topic related to Pakistan's nuclear security arrangements by arguing that the strategic choices may come to surface due to the problems emanating from neighbouring states and violent extremism. This logical reasoning requires the state to put forwards the counter argument.

Referring to the second part of this volume, it has augmented that how civil-military relations have been evolved over the period of time. The changing political scenario in the country involves judicial activism, media and provincial autonomy and how foreign policy is being formulated within the security ambit. It covers the technological aspects along with its positive and negative effects depending upon its use. As proposed, social media can be served as a medium to bring forth public awareness and voices to formulate policies that display best narrative, however, it is being used to amplify the radicalization factor. Identification of the flaws in administration due to ineffective policies and corruption, which has most probably led the country to be more dependent on foreign sector to boost its economy, is important to tackle with.

The last part of the book argues that Pakistan's relation with the US, especially after the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. This withdrawal would create problems for Pakistan in handling terrorism, however, Pakistan would avail this opportunity to dominate the region. It projects that the withdrawal of US forces will do much better to reduce anti-American sentiments and help to improve Pak-US relations. This part unravels the relations of Saudi Arabia and China with Pakistan through shedding light on interests and how these relations have reached to a degree of mutual understanding in a time of need. It provides the historical analysis to look into Pak-Afghanistan relations and how non-state actors have affected these relations over the time.

It can be deduced that most of the contributors emphasized on US withdrawal from Afghanistan that will give birth to security and economic challenges for Pakistan, which ultimately lead to regional instability. This has been illustrated descriptively, while keeping the readers engaged. However, some arguments of this

volume are debatable as they are contrary to Pakistan's own perspective, because Pakistan is not a part of any race to be a regional hegemon rather it is a peace-loving state. Pakistan has never shown soft corner for any such element that are destructive and violent in nature. The National Action Plan can be served as an example to support Pakistan's stance on it. The argument that Pakistan is supporting militancy for waging proxy war against its rivals is, in fact, a myopic statement. Pakistan always speaks for the stability of Afghanistan both at the national and international level. There is no such evidence exists to support this self-created perception that Pakistan is likely to continue meddling in Afghanistan and targeting India.

Referring to the safety of Pakistani nuclear arsenals, these strategic assets are under strict command and control regime, which cannot be compromised in dealing against internal and external threats, even if left in isolation. It is not an easy task to deal with each and every challenge that is being faced by any state. However, this volume tried to give an overview of different challenges comprehensively under one umbrella. Despite the fact that there is a need to make Pakistan's position clearer so that to keep the reader's option open for themselves, when analysing multiple perspectives rather than the resilience on one side only.

This volume serves as a guideline for the government representatives to deal with security issues. It is an area of concern for the policy makers to ponder upon such detail. However, this study can also be a route forward for academic research in the concerned field.

Reference

Fair, C. Christine, and Sarah J. Watson, eds. *Pakistan's Enduring Challenges*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.