

Book Reviews

Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, 2005), 380pp, preface, index, price \$ 17.95, \$ 35.95 (clothbound).

The military is the most powerful political player in Pakistan. Out of 58 years of Pakistan's independent existence, the military ruled the country directly or indirectly for about 30 years under four army chiefs and made major input to key areas of state policy from the sidelines in the remaining years. General Pervez Musharraf is the fourth army chief to rule the country and appears determined to hold on to power as long as possible. Like his predecessors, he projected himself as a reluctant ruler in the immediate aftermath of assumption of power, claiming that he was forced by circumstances to assume power. He promised to restore constitutional and democratic rule.

Six years later, General Pervez Musharraf is secure in power, having civilianized his military rule by constitutional and political engineering to strengthen his position, co-option of a section of the political elite and the holding of carefully managed general elections. He continues as the army chief and exercise far more power than assigned to President under the constitution.

The long years of military rule and the political clout of the top commanders has expanded the military's role in nonprofessional and civilian sectors. The retired and serving military officers occupy lucrative jobs in government and semi-government departments and organizations. The private sector hires senior officers to executive jobs to avail of their contacts with the government. The military is also actively engaged in various sectors of the economy, i.e., industry, business, banking, education and training, transport and communication, civil construction and the real estate development. The military is now spread out in most sectors of the state, the economy and the society, stifling the autonomous growth of civilian institutions and processes.

The Pakistan military's ascendancy is the focus of Husain Haqqani's book *Pakistan Between Mosque and Military*. It is an insightful and comprehensive study of the making of the overwhelming role of the military and how the military determined the character of the Pakistan state. The study identifies the instruments employed by the top brass of the military to shape the policy choices of the Pakistan state and protect the military's professional and corporate interests.

The book raises six major themes. First, the Pakistan military's ascendancy and how it shaped the institutions of the state and society. Second, what are the military's strategies to protect and promote its interests, especially its dominant position in the political system? Third, what are the changing patterns of relationships between the military and Islam? How has the military used Islam to advance its power interests? Fourth, how has the military contributed to determining the nature of Pakistani state marked by an over-emphasis on external territorial security, centralized and authoritarian governance? Fifth, how has the military used *jihad* as an instrument of its foreign and security policies? The author argues that 'the success of the jihadist experiment against the Soviets encouraged Pakistan's strategic planners to expand the jihad against India and into post-Soviet Central Asia.' (p.317). Sixth, what are the options available to the West, especially the United States, for dealing with the military dominated Pakistani state.

Husain Haqqani rightly argues that the roots of the Pakistan military's rise to power go back to the policy decisions made by Pakistan's rulers in the immediate aftermath of independence. They were faced with the problems of external security and internal stability due to troubled relations with India and Afghanistan and the need of setting up an effective administration for the new state. These concerns led the rulers to assign the highest priority to external security and internal stability. A by-product of the rulers' worldview was the formulation of the state ideology based on Islam, strong anti-India disposition, monolithic nationalism that did not accommodate linguistic and regional diversities, and friendship with the West, especially the United States.

The Islamic elements and the military developed a close relationship because both viewed Islam and an assertive Pakistani state with strong military as integral to the state survival. The relationship shaped up as the most enduring feature of the Pakistani state, although the precise nature of this relationship varied over time. It helped the Islamic leaders and groups to expand their role in domestic affairs. In return they supported the military's enhanced role in determining foreign policy priorities, liberal allocation of material resources to military and

security affairs, and the military's expanded role in the political and civilian domains.

The military played a decisive role in determining Pakistan's security, economic and political profile. The top brass of the Army were actively involved in Pakistan's decision to join U.S. led regional security pacts in 1954-55. They were convinced that Pakistan needed powerful friends in order to cope with the security pressures caused by the troubled relations with India. They joined hands with the senior bureaucracy to influence the nature and direction of domestic politics. Several important decisions relating to domestic politics reflected the military frame of mind emphasizing centralization, hierarchy and discipline. These decisions included, inter alia, the integration of different administrative units into one province of West Pakistan (1955), equal representation of East and West Pakistan in the parliament (1955), and a strong and assertive central government.

The first military ruler, Field Marshal Ayub Khan (October 1958-March 1969), viewed Islamic ideology and economic development as the cure for Pakistan's internal problems. Having little, if any, respect for representative governance, Ayub Khan viewed Islam as a national unifier that could overcome linguistic, ethnic and regional cleavages. His regime developed confrontation with one Islamic party, Jamaat-i-Islami, but the regime maintained a pro-Islam disposition and pursued it as a part of its nation-building project, periodically invoking the regime's services to Islam to justify Ayub Khan's rule.

His successor, General Yahya Khan (March 1969-December 1971) began to formally use the term Pakistan Ideology equating it with Islamic ideology. The emphasis on Pakistan Ideology and Islam aimed at countering Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's maximum autonomy demand for what was then East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh). His regime sought the support of the Islamic parties and groups to build an alternate political leadership in East Pakistan after the military launched its brutal military action there on 25 March 1971.

The long years of rule by the third military ruler, General Zia-ul-Haq (July 1977-August 1988) witnessed the development of a close partnership between orthodox and conservative Islamic political forces and his military regime. He invoked Islam to legitimize his rule and undercut the support of his political adversaries.

A new dimension was added to the military-Islamic group relationship when Pakistan and the United States joined together to build Islamic-Afghan resistance to Soviet troops in Afghanistan. The Pakistan military and intelligence agencies and American CIA strengthened Islam oriented Afghan resistance which subscribed to hard line and extremist

Islamic disposition. This created a deep rooted relationship between the Islamic hard line groups and the Pakistan military.

The success of the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviets encouraged Pakistan's military top brass to expand the *jihad* to Indian-administered Kashmir. They also allowed these militant Islamic groups to pursue their agendas elsewhere in the world. The *jihad* thus became a global phenomenon with Pakistan and post-Soviet Afghanistan as its base.

Even after the death of Zia-ul-Haq in an air crash in August 1988 and restoration of civilian rule in Pakistan, the military continued to manage Pakistan's policy towards India (including Kashmir), Afghanistan and the nuclear issue. There was no change in the military's *jihadi* strategy in Kashmir and Pakistan continued to serve as a haven for global jihadis.

General Pervez Musharraf, fourth military ruler, projected himself as the champion of the Kashmir *jihad* and a friend of the Taliban until 11 September 2001. He abandoned the Taliban regime and slowly reviewed the Kashmir policy.

Haqqani maintains that despite Musharraf regime's tall claims of Islamic moderation and enlightenment, it relies on Islamic elements to sustain itself in power. The conglomerate of six Islamic parties that sympathizes with Al-Qaeda and supports the Taliban, known as the MMA, has enjoyed favours from the Musharraf regime. It does not allow the mainstream and moderate political parties to function freely because they question the legitimacy of his rule. The MMA and the Musharraf regime have a shared goal of continuation of the present political arrangements.

Cooperation between the Pakistan military and Islamic theologians and activists has created a highly centralized and non-representative Pakistani state that lacks institutional arrangements to accommodate ethnic and regional grievances. Religious groups and leaders have benefited from this relationship and their clout has increased in the political system.

In the reviewer's view, two important aspects of this relationship have to be noted. First, there was a major shift in this relationship during General Zia-ul-Haq's rule. For the first time, the military dominated Pakistani state adopted Islamic extremism and militancy as an instrument of foreign policy. Pakistan employed militant Islamic groups to pursue its interests in Afghanistan and Indian-administered Kashmir. This strengthened the role of the intelligence agencies, especially the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), in Pakistan's foreign policy and domestic affairs. It gave new opportunities to Islamic groups to expand their

activities within Pakistan, resulting in increased religious and cultural intolerance and religious-sectarian violence.

Second, while pursuing a cooperative interaction with Islamic groups and parties, the top brass of the military do not allow these groups, including the militants, to dictate policies. The military uses them as a policy instrument and rewards them for their services but it keeps the political initiative with itself. The military is not expected to allow these groups to take over the Pakistani state because any such development threatens the military's commanding role and position in Pakistan's political system. The military jealously guards its privileged position. This generates periodic strains in military-Islamic group interaction. The Islamic groups endeavour to maximize their gains by applying pressure on the military but most of them avoid a head-on collision with the military.

Haqqani argues that the Pakistan military has often adjusted its policies to fit into U.S. foreign policy paradigm in order to obtain economic and military assistance which helps to sustain its dominant role. It has turned Pakistan into 'a rentier state, albeit one that lives off the rents for its strategic location.' He advises the U.S. government not to 'condone the Pakistan military's support for Islamic militants, its use of its intelligence apparatus for controlling domestic politics and its refusal to cede power to a constitutional democratic government.' Instead the U.S. should strengthen the democratic forces and institutions and processes of the civil society in Pakistan. These groups can counter Islamic hard liners and extremists that are still active in Pakistan and lay the foundation of enduring Pakistan-U.S. relations.

Hasan-Askari Rizvi

***Muslims in India Since 1947: Islamic Perspectives on Inter-faith Relations* by Yoginder Sikand, London: Routledge Curzon, 2004, pp.274.**

That the Muslims of India as a whole, and those of Kashmir in particular, count among the world's most oppressed minorities is something that even sage non-Muslims will not deny. The anti-Muslim riots in 'free' India have been occurring off and on ever since Independence in 1947 and these have, with the passage of time, shown no sign of reduction but instead have escalated into pogroms such as those in Bombay following the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the Gujarat massacre in 2002. Taking advantage of the current Western 'Islamophobia' the Indian government has cleverly turned a blind eye to attacks on Muslims masking them as 'elimination of terrorists.' The world at large, under the

current misleading impression that Muslims constitute a threat to their way of life, swallows such propaganda unquestioningly. With no hope of succour from the outside world, Muslims of India live in fear of their lives and of their eventual annihilation.

The book under review is a collection of essays dealing with the author's study, investigation and analysis of, various Muslim bodies, movements and leaders who have to combat an unenviable situation and seek to find ways and means of tackling it through a *via media* of acquiescence, compromise, resistance or confrontation. The book is valuable in that it gives a broad-spectrum survey of Muslims in India in their interaction with a hostile and indifferent majority. Clearly, a reading of the book gives the impression that the situation is far more serious than appears superficially. The all-embracing, syncretistic stranglehold of Hinduism – with its modern manifestation of cross fundamentalism [seen in parties like the Shiv Sena, the Bajrang Dal, the Visva Hindu Parishad which operate with the tacit support of the BJP, the Hindu Mahasabha and other political groups] – is the greatest threat to the maintenance of the undiluted purity of Islam. This purity has resisted dilution over the centuries in spite of attempts by the Bhagti movement, the Din-i-ilahi, the movements of Swami Dyanand Saraswati, the Shuddhi and Sangathan movements, the Theosophical Society, the Wardha Scheme, the Vidya Mandir scheme, etc. The situation prevailing in independent India has grown more and more dangerous for those Muslims who wish to follow their religion even in the bare minimum while outwardly accepting the *de facto* situation and professing allegiance to the Indian constitution. Secularism, declared as the basis of the new Indian Republic, is just an instrument to do away with those institutions that contributed to the keeping of a separate Muslim identity. Although there was no open declaration that India would be a Hindu state [Ram Rajya], the movement for a universal ban on cow-slaughter was a great fuelling force for the Congress – which later left it to the provinces to implement it. The sacred Muslim shrines and mosques were desecrated and converted into temples. Of late, this mosque-into-temple movement has gathered great force especially since the destruction of the Babri Masjid. Muslim Waqfs were done away with and their property – used to support mosques and shrines – seized. No such action was taken against temple holdings and ashrams which, in fact, continue to increase in number. The latest blow was directed towards the Muslim personal law in an effort to replace it with a 'secular' code so that Muslims may not live in accordance with their own laws governing inheritance, marriage, divorce, etc.

As a result of this overwhelming 'sense of siege', it is natural that some resistance may appear whether in the form of freedom struggle in Kashmir or a legal struggle through the law courts. But so far neither has produced any positive result. There is also the example of the Sikh struggle for freedom which has been ruthlessly suppressed with destruction of the Akal Takht in the Golden Temple, Amritsar.

In all this, the tendency that has proved most lethal to Islam is that of open compromise and mute acceptance by so-called leaders of Muslim opinion. There is now an abundance of persons who style themselves as 'Acharya Maulana' or 'Nur Maharaj', claiming to work for 'national integration'. Among these, the book examines the role of Asghar? Ali Engineer who began as a Bohra rebel but now is seen as a 'bridge builder' between Hindus and Muslims. This policy is to negate the political role of Islam as an independent polity and accept the state of a permanent minority for Muslims while trying to exact as many concessions as possible. The same predicament, the author writes, is faced by Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi and his followers who called for inter-faith dialogue even when the Babri Masjid was destroyed. While accepting Islam as the 'only true religion', Nadvi had no solution to the vexed question of Hindu-Muslim marriages. Similar is the case of Wahiduddin Khan, with his attempts to chalk out his own independent vision for Indian Muslims who, according to him, are themselves responsible for their plight for not interacting with Hindus. He has no answer to the inherent aggressiveness of the majority. The Jamaat-i-Islami Hind also advocates 'loyalty' to the nation but has no clout to prevent the majority for building up mass anti-Muslim hysteria. It thus advocates a quietist approach – far different from its Pak-counterpart. Another person, 'Shams Naved Usmani has come up with a novel theory that regards Hindu as being originally Muslims on the premise that Noah – Manu and that the Vedas rank as 'revealed' books. All his tendentious researches prove that he is more inclined to 'rehabilitate' the Hindus than work for the welfare of the Muslims. It is not surprising that he has gained no support from the Hindus to whom the 'truths' of his findings are directed. This trend – of making 'Muslims' out of Hindus – is taken further by Siddiq Hussain who devoted his life to a study of the Hindu religious texts and has come up with the startling revelation that he himself is the last expected avatar of the Hindus. His 'Deendar Anjuman' – far from being welcomed by expectant messianic Hindus – is now outlawed not because it modifies Islam but because it misinterprets Hinduism. The most objectionable element in this new interpretation is the equating of the Holy Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] with the suppressed Hindu avatars like Rama and Krishna.

The author also gives account of other movements such as the Muslim Dalit Movement formed by converts to Islam from low-castes among Hindus such as sweepers and tanners. This has also taken the shape of the AIBMM (All-India Backward Muslim Morcha) – which is more articulated in its demands for acceptance. Similarly, the role of Muslim students and Journals [*Dalit Voice*, *Islamic Voice*] has also been examined.

The book is a wide-ranging survey of the problems and predicaments of Muslims in India after independence. Clearly, this is an unfortunate lot which is aggravated by the fuelling of Hindu fundamentalism in recent years and the attempts to annihilate their history, culture and language reducing them to the status of a lower-caste in Hinduism. The various impractical – even fantastic – efforts of individuals to find a common meeting ground by referring to Holy Scriptures have proved a sterile task. The tendency becomes apparent that to be accommodated by Hindus, Muslims have to distance themselves from their faith and its application. It is a case of ‘placate or perish’ The only hope lies in the movement of the Kashmiris to break the Indian stranglehold which will certainly bring the other Muslim movements out of their theoretical fantasies and make them work practically for their rights.

Syed Munir Wasti