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BOOK REVIEWS

Pervez Musharraf, *IN THE LINE OF FIRE: A MEMOIR*

(London: Simon and Schuster, 2006), pages 352.

Written in a direct, crisp military style, President Pervez Musharraf's recent autobiography, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*, is a candid account of his early life, education, his family, and, especially his ascent to power in a politically turbulent country - Pakistan. He writes in a rhetorical, though overly self-righteous style. Yet it is captivating in many ways. In his opinion, the main motivating force of writing this book is to set the record straight and to project Pakistan's image in its proper perspective. At the same time, however, his account is quite inevitably controversial from various perspectives. Some cynics say that the book was timed and targeted for the Western audience, particularly the US, before the November 2006 mid-term congressional elections. Others think that Musharraf has violated the Official Secrets Act by delving into sensitive areas. This makes the book quite inevitably controversial.

Musharraf's birth in Delhi and his family's migration to Karachi in the newly independent Pakistan make an interesting story. He talks about his family background as a troubled life and a feisty adulthood that he spent at Karachi. He confesses that in the early army life he was 'considered a casual, happy-go-lucky, confrontational officer rather than a serious professional' with an 'overflowing record of indiscipline'. However, he ascribes hard work and sound family values, together with good luck, as secrets of his success. With no martial background, Musharraf was able to reach at the top in the army that attests to a generally fair selection and promotion system in the armed forces of Pakistan though political considerations do occasionally creep in.

Musharraf terms the October 1997 military take-over as a 'counter coup' against the 'real coup' of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, when the latter tried to dismiss the former with 'indecent haste' while returning from abroad. In fact, his differences with Sharif had unearthed much earlier and could be traced to the unceremonious dismissal of General Jehangir Keramat, chief of Pakistan army. Nevertheless, Musharraf's 'counter coup' thesis is contestable. The Kargil incident proved to be the last straw for the fall of the Sharif Government. This narrative is gripping, albeit with some gaps. Whether Sharif was taken into confidence and how he understood the implications for Kargil operation, is murky. Moreover, while Pakistani casualties in the conflict were omitted in Musharraf's autobiography, one can see those of India's. In hindsight, Musharraf's portrays the Kargil operation as a brilliant tactical manoeuvre, yet it is realised that the operation backfired politically. One is even not sure how did the Kargil operation put the Kashmir issue on the

limelight. India, on the contrary, used the Kargil operation in order to castigate Pakistan for cross border terrorism.

Last chapter reveals Musharraf's philosophical outlook. Like other military rulers, he holds the profession of arms in high esteem. Musharraf, however, appears somewhat contemptuous about the role of politicians in the country and terms the decade of 1990s as 'the dreadful decade of sham democracy'. Strangely enough, while former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's negative features were brought into focus, his brilliant leadership was wholly ignored. Moreover, the dissolute ways of General Yahya Khan were glossed over. Musharraf has turned highly critical of General Muhammad Zia ul Haq and termed him 'hypocritical.' One wishes that if Musharraf should had dealt with the harvest of religious bigotry and extremism that the Zia regime bequeathed to the country. Musharraf also dwelt on the role of Dr. A.Q. Khan, Pakistan's nuclear scientist and the controversy related to his nuclear activities.

Musharraf, unlike other military rulers, demonstrates his own style of working. He shows daring style, straight talk, and has had close brushes with dangers and death. His views often border on high certitude. May be, he has inveterate belief in his luck and destiny to lead the nation. Many believe that in the aftermath of 9/11, Pakistan's so-called 'U-turn' has proved to be a prudent policy. While a large number of militants of Al-Qaeda have been arrested and handed over to the United States, the Taliban issue remains unresolved. More importantly, Pakistani society is still convulsed with militancy and violence. Creditably, major developmental plans have been launched in underdeveloped Balochistan for the first time. In the meanwhile, the government faces challenges in establishing its writ in the tribal areas and Balochistan where militancy has not yet subsided.

In fact, some of Musharraf's difficulties are the bitter legacy of the Zia period and the mishandling of State affairs by democratically elected governments. However, the general impression persists that Musharraf could have done much better in the first two years after coming into power when he had unchallenged authority. Needless to say, the book seems to have been hastily written, coinciding with his visit to the United States in September 2006. There are some typographical errors. Some factual mistakes have been, however, removed in the Urdu version, *Sub Se Peble Pakistan*.

Ascribing the authorship by some critics to a ghost-writer, appears false. In fact, the book reflects Musharraf's style, direct tone, often blunt and gung-ho. Notwithstanding his good intentions and patriotic fervour, he will have to grapple with the issue of holding of two offices after the 2007 general elections. The country needs moderate forces in the political mainstream. Hopefully, the government is realising this fact. In sum, *In the Line of Fire* provides a window on an eventful period of Pakistan's history from 1999 till to date. While the debate goes on about the authenticity of events and

Musharraf's interpretation, the final verdict will rest only with immutable forces of history. ■

Dr Maqsudul Hasan Nuri, Senior Research Fellow, IPRI

WAHEGURU PAL SINGH SIDHU, BUSHRA ASIF, & CYRUS SAMII (EDS), *KASHMIR: NEW VOICES, NEW APPROACHES*

(New York: International Peace Academy, 2006), pages 291.

Since the 1989 mass uprising that has developed into a sustained insurgency, Kashmir has come under increasing regional and global focus. The prolonged period of violence affecting weaker and marginalised sections of Kashmiri society, like women, children and religious minorities has made the complicated issue of Jammu and Kashmir more complex. The decision of Pakistan and India to become overt nuclear weapon States in 1998, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and emergence of non-state actors have added new dimensions to the conflict in Kashmir. Although Pakistan and India still retain their primacy as principal parties for the resolution of Kashmir dispute, the nuclearisation of the region, and the lessons learnt from the Kargil episode (1999) and military stand off (2001-2) are affecting the order of their priorities in their bilateral relations and on Kashmir dispute. Taken together all these developments have given rise to new factors, new concerns and new voices with regard to the Kashmir dispute, necessitating new approaches towards finding a satisfactory and durable settlement. This is the main theme of the book, *Kashmir: New Voices, New Approaches*, which is product of New York based International Peace Academy, and contains contributions on various dimensions of Kashmir dispute by prominent scholars from the United States, Britain, Pakistan, India, and Southeast Asia.

The book is organised into three parts: Part I comprising eight chapters deals with sub-national and national dimensions of the Kashmir dispute. The first two chapters in this part by Inpreet Kaur and Bushra Asif are on the Indian and Pakistani administered Kashmir respectively. Kaur's account of brutalities, excesses and violence against civilians, sexual abuses of women and violation of human rights is an indictment of both security forces and militants. The author stresses the need for a peace process in the strife-torn State and suggests some confidence building measures, including accountability among the police and bureaucracy to mobilise public support and leadership interest in peace. Bushra Asif discusses the nature of relations between Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistan, which, in the formal shape look ones between two separate and autonomous identities, but in actual practice are based on full control of the former by the latter through Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Northern Areas (KANA) and Azad Jammu and

Kashmir Council. While Bushra's is a good account of mechanism through which Islamabad manipulates political events in Azad Jammu & Kashmir, two important facts are missing from her otherwise well researched article: One, Azad Jammu & Kashmir has had much higher literacy rate as compared to other parts of Pakistan; two, level of development (before the devastating earthquake of October 2005) due to investment of money earned through remittances was much higher than that of insurgency hit Indian-held Kashmir. D. Suba Chandran and Rizwan Zeb investigate the phenomenon of non-state actors (*Jihadi* groups) in the Kashmir conflict from the Indian and Pakistani perspectives respectively. Their findings lead to the conclusion that these groups are the product and not the cause of insurgency in Indian-held Kashmir. The insurgency in Kashmir has brought untold miseries to the women in the valley. Their sufferings at the hands of security personnel but also militants (foreign) in the valley are well documented by Kavita Suri in her chapter. Women have not remained unaffected even in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. This fact is highlighted by Shaheen Akhtar in her chapter. Both authors, however, go further than merely providing descriptive accounts of suffering of women as soft targets. They advocate a role for women in conflict resolution and peace process in Kashmir. In their chapters on 'Sources of New Delhi's Kashmir Policy', and, 'Islamabad's New Approaches to Kashmir', P R Chari and Hasan-Akari Rizvi respectively discuss the factors that have shaped the Indian and Pakistani policies on Kashmir during the last six decades and explore the possible options in the light of past experiences and new developments at regional and global levels.

Three chapters in Part II discuss the global dimensions of the Kashmir conflict. Amitav Acharya and Arbinda Acharya examine the application of international relations theory of regional conflicts and cooperation to the Kashmir dispute. The chapter views Kashmir dispute in a broader perspective, arguing that being a multi-dimensional dispute, its solution requires a comprehensive and wholesome approach. Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu assess the role of the international community, particularly the United Nations (UN), in promoting the settlement of Kashmir dispute during the first two decades of the dispute. In author's view these efforts have been of no avail, leading to search for solution either through bilateral negotiations or through third parties operating outside the UN. Identifying various factors that motivate international community to focus its attention on Kashmir in the post-Cold War era, the author views current involvement as US-led. One wonders why the author has overlooked the role played by China, Russia, and members of the international community to facilitate the resumption of Indo-Pakistan peace process, which has raised the hopes of a settlement on Kashmir. John Thomson in his chapter examines interaction between Kashmir, the Indo-Pak nuclear rivalry, and global nuclear proliferation. Citing the examples of the Kargil and 2001-2 crises, the author maintains that nuclear

arsenals of Pakistan and India are relevant to Kashmir conflict. At the same time, a connection between Kashmir and nuclear proliferation has been established after the two countries conducted nuclear tests in 1998.

Two chapters by Iffat Idris and Cyrus Samii discuss approaches to the settlement of Kashmir dispute. Stating that Kashmir comprises two conflicts: international (between Pakistan and India) and internal, Idris gives reasons for urgently resolving internal conflict even if international conflict remains unresolved. The author discusses various issues of internal conflict both in Indian-held and Azad Kashmir, and says that failure to resolve it carries the constant danger of developing the conflict into a full-scale war between Pakistan and India. Samii's concluding chapter largely drawn upon the views expressed in the previous chapters of the volume. The author suggests addressing the causes of conflict's *persistence* rather than addressing the causes of the *onset* of the conflict as the most appropriate approach for the Kashmir case. Based on this approach, the author examines the opportunities that have arisen since the January 2004 Summit between India and Pakistan for resolving the conflict and restraints that arrest the progress towards the resolution. What distinguishes this volume from other contemporary literature on Kashmir is that it examines the dispute as it has evolved since 1989-90 mass uprising. It has certainly raised the level of international discourse on Kashmir, bringing it into the limelight with its new dimensions and providing a fresh insight into the dynamics of the conflict.■

Dr Rashid Ahmad Khan, Senior Research Fellow, IPRI

NICOLAS VAN DE WALLE, *OVERCOMING STAGNATION IN AID-DEPENDENT COUNTRIES*

(Washington D.C: Centre for Global Development, 2005), pages 120.

Low economic growth in poor countries could put an end to the process of development. Resultantly, aid-dependent countries cannot grow economically. In *Overcoming Stagnation in Aid-Dependent Countries*, written by Nicolas van de Walle, a distinguished scholar on aid policies, mentioned that a certain number of countries have witnessed low level of growth throughout the 1990s. North Korea, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tajikistan, *inter alia*, ranked on the top of low growth. The writer mentions that these countries have also experienced tragic civil wars, whereas North Korea's heavy military spending and foreign economic sanctions, have crippled its economy in recent times. These are also highly aid-dependent countries and 'they failed to grow' (p.vii), because of incompetent and corrupt political leadership along with wrong policy goals (p.2). Therefore, these economies are in a vicious poverty trap for over a longer period of time. Walle maintains that aid reforms have been

incomplete. He further argues that 'foreign aid has been the central policy instrument with which the international community has promoted economic development' over the past 50 years. The case of post-war Japan, South Korea, and several other South East Asian countries can be cited as they badly needed foreign aid to get kick-start their development plans in the 1950s and 1960s. Contrary to this belief, as several of poorest countries could not develop and wasted precious foreign aid resources, a critique against foreign aid also took place by fully ignoring the economic success achieved through foreign aid in other countries. Walle, however, opines that 'foreign aid has to play a crucial role in any successful development strategy' along with a 'radical reform' in aid-dependent countries (p.5).

He has also points out the case of Pakistan. An impression that depicts from his study is that amongst the aid-dependent and stagnant economies, Pakistan's performance appears somewhat relatively encouraging. He is of view that 'Pakistan has enjoyed periods of sustained economic growth over the last half-century' (p.28). He also mentioned that there had been frequent changes in Pakistani politics and the number of rulers who ruled the country during 1960-2003, is much larger than in all other aid-dependent countries (p.12). Pakistani pluralistic political system could be an asset for future economic development. Further, donors view decentralisation more effective than centralisation. Pakistan's decentralisation process started in 1999, which introduced local governments at district level to improve service delivery (p.61). Average growth rate of Pakistan seems to be another positive indicator. As far international economic links (that include foreign investment, exports, and per capita) of stagnant low-income countries are concerned, case of Pakistan seems relatively better. These points put Pakistan in a much advantageous position compared to aid-dependent countries in recent past. Walle's study does not include recent data about Pakistan's economic performance, which seems much better now than in the 1980s and 1990s. The most convincing point that should be put forward in support of Pakistan's economic performance is that Pakistan, no longer, is an aid-dependent country and also no more a stagnant economy. Pakistan's economy has grown at an average rate of 7 percent during 2002-06. Following a credible strategy of debt reduction during 1999-2006, Pakistan has succeeded not only slowing the pace of debt accumulation but also succeeded in reducing debt burden at a substantial level. International donors such as the United States, Japan, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, are no longer in a position to put pressure on Pakistan to adjust its policies in accordance with their prescriptions. If Walle publishes a new edition of his work, the case of Pakistan, as aid-dependent country, may not hopefully become a focus of his analysis.

He also identifies intractably unsuccessful economies during the last two decades and reviews the nature of governance and policy-making to show

that political dynamics are essential for economic growth. He offers a wide variety of multiple solutions to overcome stagnation in aid-dependent countries. These are: moving away from State-led development strategies, focusing on the private sector, decentralisation, and increasing institutional capacity. As far foreign aid is concerned, he suggests that donors should realise their responsibilities, bureaucrats should avoid cleansing politics, and there should be an external accountability and pressure on donors too.

Current aid policies and difficulties, associated with aid reforms, have also been well discussed by Walle. To make foreign aid more effective, he suggests that conditionality and selectivity are both necessary for aid recipient countries. Donors should fully coordinate with aid reforms. Institutional improvement and State capacity should also be built. Governmental economic planning should be restored and strengthened together with bureaucratic reforms. There should be greater check and transparency over the recipients of aid and the donors alike. Low volume of aid should be accepted together with a proposal made by the recipient government, using local models and prescriptions. Private sector should be promoted. Regional institutions, such as banks, economic commissions, and think tanks should be promoted. Democracy and human rights and participatory governments should forge a new relationship with aid donors. Walle also suggests that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Development Assistance Committee (DAC), should be reinforced and made independent of donor agencies.

The work is a useful addition in the field of development studies within the paradigms of conservative approach of foreign aid. Walle, however, has thoroughly rejected the critique surrounding aid offered by the West and their institutions. Many countries could not develop as a viable or promising economic entity simply because of the conditions and goals associated with their aid programmes. It is also believed that aid was offered for political and geo-strategic reasons to many countries after 1945. Cutting of aid for an on-going or new project because of external or internal reasons also jeopardised the process of growth and development in aid recipient countries. Numerous cases can be cited in support of this argument. Therefore, central argument in Walle's work does not make a shift in aid philosophy, policy, and programme. Rather, the analysis provides with solutions for donors if they ever wish to assist aid-dependent countries with high level of stagnation prevailing in such countries to overcome their economic woes. In short, the work is convincingly argued, well researched, and well documented. ■

Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik, Research Fellow, IPRI

MADLINE KORBEL ALBRIGHT, *THE MIGHTY & THE ALMIGHTY: REFLECTIONS ON AMERICA, GOD, AND WORLD AFFAIRS*

(New York: Harper Collins Publishers 2006), pages 352.

The work is a political autobiography of the former US Secretary of State, Madeline Korbel Albright, with a foreword written by former US President Bill Clinton. Albright briefly traces the history of the United States since the end of World War II and discusses the role of religion in politics, the US foreign policy, terrorism, and Muslims in the West and in Africa. She substantiates her point of view by quoting facts from her personal experience and by describing suitable anecdotes whenever necessary. Her faith in her religion is obvious when she says that if God has a plan it will be carried out and that 'there is indeed a promised land and Israelites were the recipients of the promise'. She points out that some Americans believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth when Solomon's temple was rebuilt and 'climactic war between good and evil, described in the Book of Revelation' was fought. Thus the right wings Christians support Israel, she argues. As against prevalent Western thought, and like several Jews, Christians, and Muslims, she advocates for incorporating religion in international relations. She argues that the religion has played a decisive role throughout history and that the globe has been plagued by religious warfare and religion has been responsible for the current political upheaval. Critics may, however, refute her assertion, as she has bypassed the economic and political dimension of conflicts among nations.

She rightly points out that some Muslims, like some Christians and Jews, tend to equate the term 'secular' with 'godless'. They think that in order to be a secularist, it is essential to denounce religious path and attendant morality, traditions, and rules that operate within Muslim societies. They do not accept that one can be religious and, at the same time, sees things with no reference to religion. She also points out the dilemma with the whole Muslim world is that whether all power comes from God or all legitimate authority on earth comes from the people. She might be right in her argument, but the fact is that the Constitution of Pakistan has already discovered an answer to this dilemma by codifying that sovereignty belongs to God but is to be exercised by the people. She correctly points out that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are Abrahamic religions. These are monolithic religions and have more in common rather than differences and share common teachings about compassion and peace. Albright explains the salient features of Islam and emphasises the need for understanding Islam so that non-Muslims should know about Islamic virtues and principles. She advocates interfaith harmony and is optimistic when she says that these religions have a potential to unite the world. She, however, correctly observes that the enemy of the United States is not Islam or any variation of Islam. The enemy is *Al Qaeda* and its

variations. She does not subscribe to Samuel Huntington's theory of clash of civilizations, and rightly considers it dangerous in its implications. In her suggestion how to deal with Islamist terrorists, she feels that Osama Bin Laden's *Fatma* of February 1998 'to kill Americans everywhere' is meant to divide Muslims on one side, and the West on the other. She advises the West to reject this notion and suggests that American strategy should be to prevent attacks and to erode enemy's support, which is based on past injustices done to Muslims. She rightly advises the United States administration to realise the danger in continuing the current policy and to minimize actions, which terrorists can exploit to gain converts.

Albright points out that owing to the simultaneous expansion of Islam and Christianity in Africa, both Muslims and Christians have been guilty of fighting each other. She is unnecessarily apprehensive of communal struggle between the two communities in future. She suggests that in order to fight terrorism, the United States should send representatives to Africa and concentrate on health care, provision of clean water, schooling, and environmental improvement. Regarding the present US policy, she is critical of US President George W. Bush policies toward the Islamic countries. With regard to US military postures in Iraq and war on terrorism, she feels that the US attack on Iraq and its aftermath 'may eventually rank among the worst foreign policy disasters in U.S. history.' It has divided Americans, as was the case never before even during the Vietnam War, she argues. While referring to earlier US policy failure in Vietnam and Iran, Albright highlights the dichotomy in the world's perception of the US foreign policy and United States belief in its own goodness and moral authority.

She also talks of Muslims living in the West. According to her, there are about one/two percent Muslims in the United States. In Europe, they are more in number and are likely to become ten percent by 2020, thus altering European demographic culture. She tells Europeans that Islam is not alien to their culture but an integral part of it. Although there is disdain towards Muslims among Christians in the Balkans and elsewhere, she advocates Turkey's admission into EU. She rightly says that Europe's own values would be betrayed to exclude a country on religious grounds. In short, even though one may not agree with some of her findings, her work is undoubtedly well written, informative, and thought provoking by explaining the Western and American foreign policy behaviour and cultural attitude with a particular reference to contemporary Islam. It is especially useful for those interested in US foreign policy and the influence of religion on politics in today's international affairs. ■

Dr Noor ul Haq, Research Fellow, IPRI

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE, *THE LAST MUGHAL: THE FALL OF A DYNASTY, DELHI, 1857*

(New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2006), pages 578.

Walking through the boulevards of Delhi fills you with an ironic sense of *deja vu*. Remembrance of the bygone times and the whispers of those who vanished in the rubble of time can still be felt through the air that blows with a heavy heart. In London's inner streets and *Koochas* of old Lahore, you can smell the same irony of existence that historically constitutes our sense of time and space. A book on the last Mughal Hurrah in Delhi of 1857 cannot be other than a long breath of sorrow.

William Dalrymple's *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857* takes us on a journey to unforgettable historical times when Delhi was the centre of artistic and poetic beauty but faced unprecedented political turmoil. Historically, Delhi had not been treated very well but what happened to it 1857 onwards truly made it the 'City of the Dead'. Being the descendents of Indian Muslims, *The Last Mughal* reminds us of times when one political system was on the verge of collapse and another had not emerged yet. By sheer force of history, people in Delhi were forced to survive in a broken, shaken, and shadowy world. By its narration of those forgotten times, this book opens up our wounds afresh although spring is not around the corner.

Dalrymple named his book *The Last Mughal* as if his entire emphasis was on the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, but the reader can feel the author's obsession with the grandeur of construction and destruction of Delhi. With every page you turn, you find the grand architecture of the Delhi palace, Red Fort, with which no European palace could compare. Yet, the British destroyed it ruthlessly after 1857. The landscape of Delhi, which was full of very important landmarks like Jamia Masjid, royal gardens and elaborate Muslim architecture, was destroyed to the ground. The author reveals that there was once a British plan to destroy Delhi forever as a city, but fortunately saner voices within the British prevailed.

He portrays Delhi as a city of shady, shaky shadow like figures who live in two world simultaneously – their old world is being shaken and destroyed before their eyes and the other world has not emerged yet. Dalrymple begs us to read Ghalib's famous letters once again which were written among the lasting chaos of Delhi. How hard it would have been for a grand poet like Ghalib to lose his poetry, which was only saved in three Delhi libraries, which were destroyed?. Throughout the author's portrayal of the vast destruction of Delhi, a sensitive reader constantly asks: 'Where is Momin? Where is Zauq? How is disillusioned and friendless Ghalib coping with watching the burnt-out gardens of Delhi? The city, which had once experienced sunshine, was now enveloped in gloomy darkness. Who could dare to rise from the 'City of the Dead'?

Dalrymple's book is strongly about destiny. Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last of the line of Mughal kings who ruled India for 350 year, would have vanished even if he had not sympathised with those who carried out the war of independence of 1857. Despite any fault or action of King Zafar, he was bound to fall and taken as a prisoner. The king could not escape his times and the time was ripe for the destruction of one force of history and the victory of another. The victors and the vanquished were bound to co-exist in New Delhi by the sheer force of history. It was a classical Greek tragedy, which was being played out in New Delhi centuries after the great Greek playwright Sophocles had passed away. The insight that the grand historical theatre, which was set in Delhi in 1857, could easily be shifted to another place at another time, is what makes *The Last Mughal* truly great.

Within this context, Dalrymple's book is a deep psychological study of classical colonialism, which is readily applicable to contemporary neo-imperialism. The new imperialism is evident in our newspapers, in our daily feelings of despair, and its signs stretch from South Asia to the Middle East. We, who live in the 21st Century under neo-imperialist forces, understand well the call of destiny. It is destiny, which like a furious ocean, carries men, women and children unrecorded to the bottom of the seas. It is destiny that allows the victors to burn the vanquished and the cities alike. Destiny does not differentiate between kings and ordinary folk. Destiny crushes everything that crosses its path. In this way, destiny, like justice in history, is blind. Such was the plight of Delhi after 1857. Both the Mughal dynasty and Delhi were destined to fall at that particular point in time.

The Last Mughal opens the doors of our perception as our own times are mirrored in the author's narration of events and people in Delhi from 1857 onwards. One might shudder to think of the comparisons, but we cannot escape them. We must remember that Dalrymple is primarily a historian and his vision of a given time is not pertinent to that era alone. It applies to all such cases in the present and future times. Power is the eternal principle of history and determines the destiny of the victors and the vanquished alike. Alas, we do not learn our lessons from history. ■

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Saadia Rashid (ed), *MUSLIM UMMAH IN THE MODERN WORLD: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES*

(Karachi: Hamdard Foundation, 2006), pages 317.

An international conference on the theme of the *Muslim World in the Modern World: Challenges and Opportunities* was held at Karachi on 3-5 September 2004,

which was an independent follow-up of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) held at Malaysia earlier. The Conference was intended to focus on challenges, currently being faced by the *Ummah* as well as to explore the opportunities and devise ways and means to tackle these challenges. The book is divided into three sections. Articles contained in the first section, generally reflect the overall perspective of the challenges and opportunities. The second section deals specifically with religious, social and political challenges and opportunities and the third brings out the economic development challenges and opportunities faced by the *Ummah*.

The keynote address, delivered by Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, presents a thought provoking overview of the fundamental challenges faced by the *Ummah*. He convincingly brings out that Islam is a complete code of life and as such, politics, social affairs and economic affairs, cannot be separated from religion, because the separation of State from religion is not possible in Islam. The State must obey the injunctions of the religion, but not necessarily be ruled only by clerics. Thus, while Islam enjoins that the Muslims must be capable of defending themselves, how that defence is to be carried out and how or what weapons are to be produced and used, cannot be determined by those who only learned about religion. Dr Mahathir says that religion does not specifically talks about weapons, strategies or the tactics. The injunction in the Quran is to acquire the capability to defend the *Ummah* and to inject the feeling of fears in the heart of the enemy. The effective word is defence, not war, horses or swords and spears. However, sad part of the story is that, as with other teachings of Islam, Muslims stress more on the form and less on the substance. Dr. Mahathir is of the view that primarily, there is only one challenge being faced by the *Ummah*. It is the challenge of admitting the truth that Muslims have strayed from the basic and true teachings of Islam. Instead, Muslims have succumbed to worldly ambitions, sects, and, race. Obviously, this is Muslims' fault and not the fault of their religion. It is for us to make amends and arrest the malady.

Hakim Mohammad Saeed suggests in his paper that Muslims should try to establish a dialogue with the people of other faiths. He says that the Muslims should abandon the policy of emotionally ridden confrontation and protests on every issue. They should also avoid condemning the West out of all proportions. He pleads that Muslims must evolve such an international system in the 21st Century that must ensure freedom to develop ones own version of relations with others. In case, this does not happen, narrow, parochial, ethnic, national, and religions frictions will throw humanity into the abyss of ignominy and disgrace. Common denominator of the papers is that Muslim *Ummah* is much more than a nation. It is transnational body of people that spread over the entire world. Muslims are singularly bound by one religion, with distinct concepts, values, traditions, and historical heritage. It is represented by 57 member countries of the OIC, having a total population,

approaching over 1.5 billion. However, with the prevailing heterogeneous political systems, and the lack of comprehensive similarity, unity and focus of community interests, it is sometimes questioned, whether the *Ummah* can justifiably be considered, beyond being an ideal and symbolic entity, and a real compact body, to be reckoned as a formidable force in the world.

It is extremely regrettable that today, Muslim *Ummah* has been fragmented into many hostile sects and divisions and this fragmentation has considerably dissipated the collective power that the *Ummah* could otherwise wield. As a result of this disunity, Muslim *Ummah* has lost opportunity to assert itself on the world stage. In the end, to quote Admiral Sirohey, Muslims must be proud of being Muslims and praise Allah for his bounties. They should also be proud for being the custodians of the Quran, ‘The Truth’, and for being the inheritors of the finest heritage and legacy, left by the Islamic leadership over thousand years. This pride should be spread throughout the Islamic world. The Quran gives the humanity a complete code of life and by following its dictates, Muslims must enter Islam completely. ■

Ghulam Sarwar, *Consulting Editor, IPRI Journal*

Mohammad Humayun Kabir (ed), *SMALL STATES AND REGIONAL STABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA*

(Dhaka: The University Press 2005), pages 246.

A unique feature of the book is that it discusses different themes of international relations from the perspective of small States. These themes are: small States in global perspective, nuclearisation, globalisation and economic security, impact of war on terrorism, common risks and solutions for small States, democracy and conflict management in South Asia and its implications for small States. The objective of the study was to understand and explore the areas where small States could contribute towards regional stability. There is a need to understand the defining factors for stability in South Asia. Regional stability is a function of perceptions, policies and performance of State actors in the region and beyond. In today’s globalised, world no State actor can itself establish enduring stability in the region. Therefore, contribution of all States is essential for regional stability. A small State, despite of its size, can be more open towards regional cooperation and stability. The world today is characterised both by equality and inequality and small States have to live in peace and harmony with relatively more powerful States in the region. Authors are of the view that small States are not on the periphery but have a geopolitical importance in the contemporary interdependent world. With the end of Cold War, globalisation of economic and political interactions has increased the importance of small States.

Dr. Mirza Azizul Islam in his paper on 'Globalisation and Economic Security: The Perspectives of Small States in South Asia' writes that globalisation has impacted on economic security in a positive manner. The States of South Asia have actively participated in globalisation, which led to greater openness, investment, privatisation, faster economic growth and poverty reduction. However, it also led to sudden decline in growth. Some of the recommendations that could improve the situation include human resource development, trade cooperation under South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA), a regional development bank, a joint negotiating position in World Trade Organization (WTO), to reap benefits for the smaller South Asian countries. The author says that only globalisation cannot be relied upon to alleviate poverty. Micro credit as implemented in India and Bangladesh proved to be very beneficial to alleviate poverty.

Another chapter 'The impact of the War on Terrorism on Small States: The South Asian Context with Special Reference to Bangladesh', is written by Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed. The author says that war on terror has changed the modernist structure of the State. The USA is termed as an empowered State by the author whereas the terrorists are termed as disempowered non-state entity. However, he says that this non-State entity is becoming global and is attaining an empowering status. According to the author, as war on terror goes on, it has a risk of weakening smaller States. There is a need for policy analysis to remedy the situation. According to the author, the 'hypertension' of the USA should be replaced by 'hyper responsibility'. The author says that war on terror has severe impact on Bangladesh. Two factors played an important role in declaring Bangladesh from a moderate, Islamic, democratic polity to high-risk terrorist prone society by USA. One is the collection of Rohingya files in Afghanistan locating the Rohingya militants and the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation within Bangladesh, which might have connections with Afghanistan. This, instead of helping to resolve the 'polarised politics' of Bangladesh, has further strengthened the position of warring factions. Two, both the left and right wing parties in Bangladesh have opposed US invasion of Iraq. Thus, position of moderates has got blurred. More and more people have got disinterested in USA war against terrorism. According to the author, restrictive policies only empower the very network against when the war on terror is launched. The 'rhetoric of violence' as used in India and Pakistan relations in South Asia, is an offshoot of the war on terror. There is also more diversion of funds towards military sector in South Asia. The author says that new approaches must be adopted to curtail terrorism.

Dr. Ataur Rahman in his paper on 'Democracy and Conflict Management in South Asia', writes that South Asia suffers from historical and social cleavages. South Asian countries suffer from lack of good governance and democratisation. They are unable to solve their problems through power sharing and dialogue. This lack of democratic governance leads to conflict that

affects the civil rights of people. Hence, most of South Asian countries suffer from social inequality, corruption and poor leadership. According to the author, democratic governance can help leadership to solve conflicts and find solutions. In this regard, the role of national leadership is vital. According to the writer, despite Samuel P. Huntington calling democratisation as a 'global revolution' at the end of the

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