

## **Book Reviews**

### ***Power and Civil Society in Pakistan***

Anita M. Weiss and S. Zulfiqar Gilani (eds.)

Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2001

Pages 312.

Ably edited by Anita M. Weiss and S. Zulfiqar Gilani, the book brings out that Pakistani society is presently gripped by a number of fundamental crises. These crises, in turn, have created extreme distortions in the state and society. The perception that power in Pakistan may be attained by any means is fast gaining currency. This unhealthy trend has also gone a long way in creating a sense of insecurity among all its stakeholders. As a result, a sense of uncertainty and social chaos has gripped the nation. The social aspects underpinning these problems have been largely ignored.

The task of this book is two-fold. First, it makes an effort to understand the historic relations of power and authority in a range of social relationship in Pakistan as a means of creating a base-line understanding of the traditional conception of power. While they vary somewhat by region, class and gender, ample common features exist to form a foundation of what can be termed as “Pakistani society.” The second task of this project is to grapple with the causes behind the disintegration of a moral consensus within Pakistani civil society, with the ultimate objective of re-conceptualizing development priorities. The main purpose of carrying out this exercise is to contribute to the re-building of a diverse, confident and culturally rich society.

Mustapha Kamal Pasha, in his paper “Savage Capitalism and Civil Society in Pakistan,” remarks that a civil society – a sphere relatively autonomous from the state, yet depending on it –is indeed emerging in the country. In other words, a modern civil society has started emerging and pre-conditions for expansion of the sphere of both self-interest and rights are gradually coming into being. However, the presence of massive inequality severely constricts the development of civil society.

With increasing pressures to “globalise,” the tensions in this nascent civil society are most likely to exacerbate. This makes the task of building a better society in Pakistan, as well as in the rest of the post colonial world, more complicated.

Next, Anita M. Weiss, in her paper “Gendered Power Relations: Perpetuation and Re-negotiation,” – explores the foundation of power relations within the home and the extended families. She also examines how this is mitigated by the socialisation process occurring in Pakistani schools. She holds that there is a clear connection between the re-negotiation of gendered power within the family, greater number of women becoming literate, the resultant expansion of women’s labour-force participation prospects, and women wielding greater power within civil society. Women and men are actively engaged in re-negotiating power relations and access to power in unprecedented arcs. It is through this process that the greatest potentials for positive, participatory outcomes can be realised.

Dilating on “Politics of Power and its Economic Imperatives,” Shahid Javed Burki, in his well-researched thesis states that politics, economics and social change proceed in step. Any lapse in this process produces dis-equilibrium, which can hardly be sustained. For most of its history, Pakistan has had to deal with this dis-equilibrium. For most of the times, the leadership groups sought to block the development of the political system, while the country’s social structure was being transformed. For some time, Pakistan’s economy also moved fast, creating wealth in the hands of the people who sought accommodation in the political system. As they were denied this accommodation, they welcomed change as an unpopular regime was dispensed with by constitutional means or by the periodic intervention of the army into the country’s political life.

Further, Omar Noman discusses the role of shadow privatisation, conflict and ideology with reference to an uncivil society. He brings out that the emerging civil society institutions are connected to these dynamics of power. Some institutions have emerged which raise fundamental issues of human rights abuses, environmental degradation and gender discrimination. These should be active agents in the aforesaid changes. At the same time, a number of civil society institutions are engaged in the opposite – sectarian bigotry and indoctrination of extreme religious views. Allowing this fertility of views, even unpleasant ones, are part of the process of building a civil society.

Next, Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi, carries out an in-depth analysis and convincingly brings out that the military has become an all-pervasive force with expanding professional and corporate interests encompassing the government, the economy and the society. Its strength no longer depends on controlling the levers of power but

it is derived from the political clout it exercises due to its organisational strength and its significant presence in the economy and the society. Its ethnic homogeneity contributes to internal cohesion, but it becomes a source of irritation for the under-represented regions and ethnicities, because the military profession opens the way to a host of rewards, opportunities and prospects. Further, Dr. Rizvi opines that the expanded role of the military in the polity and the society makes it a key decision-maker for determining politico-social and economic priorities and allocating resources for societal developments.

Its institutional and corporate interests make it imperative for the top brass to see to it that territorial security consideration gets adequate attention in policy making and allocation of resources. This means that the policies of the government will be heavily skewed in favour of these considerations rather than towards societal development or societal security.

In their essay on "Power Configuration in Public and Private Arenas and the Women's Movement Response," Farzana Bari and Saba Gul Khattak bring out that in Pakistan, the women's movement has generally worked within social parameters in order to continue to have social legitimacy of sorts. However, a potentially strong role for the women's movement is constrained due to the patriarchal structures within which it must function. Working within the framework of a masculinist culture necessarily impedes its options. Additionally, the extent to which it is able to negotiate for women's voice at the individual, family, community and state level, is dependent upon its relationship with other stakeholders within civil society. Furthermore, the position of the women's movement within civil society is marginal vis-à-vis other contenders for power. It negotiates from the position of relative powerlessness. Therefore, the chances of achieving a voice for women consistently across contexts are not very high at present.

To conclude, power in Pakistan is being negotiated between different groups in new, unique and innovative ways. This bartering for power has resulted in unprecedented and unanticipated contradictions, which, in turn, have unleashed a descending spiral of confrontation, uncertainty and social turmoil throughout the country. It is in the course of negotiating the ground rules of changing power dynamics that we can envision a new balance that can lead to developing new visible paths to rebuild discourse and consensus within the country. ■

*Colonel (Retired) Ghulam Sarwar*

***The Armed Forces of Pakistan***

Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema

Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, Australia, 2002.

Pages 220, Price Australian \$49.95

There are more than one reasons why a book on Pakistan's armed forces should attract the attention of students, scholars, researchers and even general readers interested in the evolution of the country's internal politics and its external relations. For more than half of its history since independence in 1947, Pakistan has been under direct or indirect military rule. Externally, whether it was the post-World War II global strategic environment, the neo-Cold War era marked by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the decision to conduct nuclear tests in 1998 or the post-9/11 scenario with a focus on war against terrorism, the armed forces of Pakistan have been overtly or covertly behind the prominent role played by Pakistan in all these situations. Since the military's input in the decision making process at all these crucial junctures has been significant, it would be interesting and useful to know how this powerful, highly disciplined and best organized institution in Pakistan has developed and evolved since independence. Professor Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema's book, *The Armed Forces of Pakistan* fulfils this requirement to a considerable extent.

The author discusses the development and evolution of Pakistan's armed forces (army, navy and air force) in the context of the changing patterns of Pakistan's geo-strategic environment and security (internal as well as external) imperatives. The elements of the context within which, Professor Cheema has tried to trace the history and development of Pakistan's armed forces include the travails of Partition and the Indian efforts to deny Pakistan's due share in the arms, ammunition and equipment of the armed forces of undivided India, the costs and benefits of the Cold War alliance with the United States (US); three wars with India, the challenge of the Afghan crisis caused by the Soviet occupation of the country in 1979; the Indian nuclear explosion in 1974; and, the Gulf War of 1991. Pakistan's response to these developments has been an important factor in determining the growth of its armed forces.

Since the armed forces of Pakistan are an integral component of its political system, their evolution and development cannot be understood without reference to the genesis of the country. This is why Professor Cheema, in his book, has discussed and analysed all those circumstances that necessitated the establishment of a separate and independent homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. The author

has given a brief account of the conflicting ways of life of Hindus and Muslims and the unbridgeable differences between the All India Muslim League and the Congress on the future shape of the constitution of India that ultimately culminated into the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. The author also discusses the evolving strategic environment after the World War II, including the establishment of the United Nations (UN) collective security system, the beginning of the Cold War and consequent East-West rivalry, the rolling back of European colonialism, the emergence of the Third World and the formulation of Pakistan's threat perception due to unresolved disputes with India.

The author identifies various sources of insecurity as the major factor influencing Pakistan's efforts to maximize its military power. These sources are both internal as well as external. Internally, Pakistan has faced threats to its national security from ethnic conflict, sectarianism and religious extremism, parochial nationalism and the forces of regionalism. Externally, an adversarial relationship with India and hostility from Afghanistan during the 1950s and 1960s and then under the Soviet occupation, have been major sources of insecurity for Pakistan. Combined together, both internal and external factors, forced Pakistan to enhance the level of its security by strengthening its armed forces, and also by joining the US-sponsored military alliance systems. Describing Pakistan's security dilemma, Professor Cheema identifies five major areas of concern that the country had to attend to during the early phase. These were: lack of strategic depth; the absence of a well trained, well equipped, well knit and numerically sufficient army; the lack of an arms industry; a large border with India (2,250 km); a geographical distance of 1,600 km passing through hostile India between the two parts of the country i.e. East Pakistan and West Pakistan; and unresolved issues and problems with India like Kashmir, Junagarh, distribution of river waters and division of financial and military assets on the eve of partition. Subsequently, the author has elaborately dealt with each of the areas of concern, focusing on Pakistan's response and impact on the development of its three services.

While discussing defence administration, the author highlights how a serious need was felt to institutionalise decision-making in the armed forces and set up a mechanism for coordinated planning among the three services. There is a detailed account of the defence hierarchy of Pakistan with the Prime Minister as the head and the organizational plan and structure of such bodies as the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC), Defence Council (DC) and Joint Chiefs of Staff

Committee (JCSC). The issue of increased allocations for the defence sector is also discussed, where the author has rightly observed that it is “ritually approved by the Parliament without tangible debate.” Although Professor Cheema has candidly underlined the imperative for a frank and open debate on the issue of high defence spending in view of its social and economic costs to other sectors of national life, it would have been better if the issue was discussed in a more detailed manner, especially in the context of repeated demands for cut in the defence expenditure emanating from both foreign and domestic quarters.

The evolution of Pakistan’s three defence services is discussed in the context of Pakistan’s threat perception, particularly from India with whom the country fought three wars, and serious financial constraints resulting from an impoverished economic and social infrastructure inherited at the time of independence. These factors, as the author correctly points out, drove Pakistan to seek foreign links to obtain economic and military assistance in order to build a credible defence structure to protect national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. While going through the account of various stages of the evolution of Pakistan’s three defence services, one cannot fail to note the neglect with which the navy had been treated in the past by our defence planners. One could say that in view of Pakistan’s long border with India, it was but inevitable that the army would get priority in the allocation of funds. However, there should have been an increase in the allocation of funds for our navy in view of the enhanced strategic significance of the western part of the Indian Ocean since 1970s, especially the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

While discussing the role of the military in the politics of Pakistan, Professor Cheema mentions four things that facilitated the process of military takeover in Pakistan; first, the superiority of military discipline and organizational skill, together with the willingness to play an active role in the developmental tasks of Pakistani society; second, the weakness of political institutions and almost continuous wrangling among various groups of politicians seeking to gain power; third, the inability of the civilian regimes to keep a firm control over both the civil and military bureaucracies; fourth, the overwhelming illiteracy of the general public, which precluded the constructive evolution of public opinion and allowed the public to fall easy prey to organized divisive manoeuvres.

While each of the four reasons given above for repeated military interventions in Pakistan may be true, it is difficult to overlook the fact that the Cold War environment and Pakistan’s entry

into the US sponsored military pacts qualifying it to become the recipient of large scale military and economic assistance, directly contributed to the ascendancy of military and civilian bureaucracy in the politics of Pakistan. This phenomenon undermined the civilian supremacy and impeded the growth of political institutions in the country that ultimately paved the way for recurrent military takeovers in Pakistan.

“This book” as Professor Des Ball has said in his foreword, “will have its critics because the subject is extremely controversial.” But it cannot be denied that Professor Cheema has given an informed account of the evolution of Pakistan’s armed forces in a succinct and, as far as possible, objective manner. ■

*Dr. Rashid Ahmad Khan*  
Senior Research Fellow, IPRI

### ***Theories of Democracy: A Critical Analysis***

Frank Cunningham,  
Routledge Press, 2002, Pages 217.

Democracy is considered to be the best form of government; nevertheless it has become an elusive goal. Modern researchers in political thought are trying to explain and discover what democracy is, how it originated as an idea, and whether it changed its forms in different circumstances. This book is an effort to explain the concept of democracy in modern times and analyse its basic theories. The book elucidates liberal democracy, classic pluralism, participatory democracy, catallaxy, democratic pragmatism, deliberative democracy and radical pluralism. The author presents a preview of the book and explains the relevance of the contemporary theories of democracy.

In the beginning the author involves the reader by building an illustration of concepts about democracy. After presenting the probable scenarios of democratic and undemocratic states, the author identifies the problems of democracy and engages the reader in visualising the concept of a true and workable democracy. The author also explains the visualisation of democracy and its prerequisites by political thinkers like Aristotle, Tocqueville and Schumpeter. The assessment of the various theories of democracy is done by their comparison and relevance to modern times. Various forms of governance, like royalty, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, polity and democracy, are explained, along with their variations in the Aristotle’s nuance classification.

Aristotle argued that the best form of government would probably be 'royalty' followed by a properly functioning 'aristocracy' but it would seldom be found. In the view of political thinkers, the idea of democracy has shown some weaknesses e.g. inefficiency, elusiveness, unreliability and the difficulties involved in making collective decisions. The concept of democracy has been usurped by some politicians who corrupted it and used it to suppress a minority. Tocqueville and Aristotle agree on the idea that the people's voice should be the basis for building a democracy. Schumpeter considers democracy a method for selecting public officials and defines it as that institutional arrangement for driving at a political decision in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. As such, free elections are a primary prerequisite for establishing democracy.

The 'state' is considered as another factor. In order to study the affairs of a state and its ideal behaviour in accordance with its institutions, the author has conceptualised the theme in a triangle of orientations. In this triangle of orientations, the meaning of democracy is at the apex and the value and the conduct of the institutions are at the base.

Democracy is confronted with certain weaknesses like the tyranny of the majority, which can result from a democracy leading to an aristocracy and the leadership of an elite. While explaining these concepts, the author has taken the reader to the times when the idea of a polis, or city-state was being evolved. The author traces the links between active participation and a good workable democratic system. While explaining the idea of liberating the people by giving them the right to govern, the author has also presented the frailty and vulnerability of people, which compels them to indulge in ruthless revolutions.

The rule of 'many' in its unbridled form can be considered similar to tyranny. It is imperative, not only to give the people the 'choice' but also the 'will' combined with a guarantee of all civic amenities to enable them to live like cultured human beings. This course points towards the need to have people's government irrespective of the fact whether or not it is an efficient one. It will be through the process of changing governments that the democratically mature government will be established. This argument is supported by J. S. Mill, who says that the major virtue and aim of democracy is to develop people's potentials.

The author has made a comparative analysis of the various types of democracies including analyses of the theories presented by



Mill, who calls for a community partnership, and that by Thomas Hobbes who calls for a monarchy to escape the violent chaos of amoral conflict and competition. All liberal theorists agree and endorse the formation of a representative democracy after elections. The author presents his views on the basic democratic ideas like the freedom of individuals and the institutions, and the probable misuse of freedom.

The true spirit of democracy requires the people to exercise their right of franchise, irrespective of the fact whether or not it brings about a great change. Voting does not cost the people any thing but if they do not vote it can cost them almost every thing.

The book is well written and methodically laid out. Its study has great literary value and it is of relevance to the current issues of governance. The author has made an effort to compensate those readers who missed out on the works of great political scientists and philosophers. ■

*Ahmed Ijaz Malik*

Assistant Research Officer, IPRI

### **INDIA *Emerging Power***

Stephen P. Cohen

Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, Pages 377

*India Emerging Power* relates to a new transition in the international political system after the end of the Cold War, as the disintegration of the Soviet Union shattered the Cold War balance of power and created a wide power vacuum. Other contenders for influential and big power status aside, India forcefully campaigned for such recognition and demonstrated its nuclear capability, defying non-proliferation norms, to support its claim and capacity of great power. The Indian policy and decision makers are fully convinced that even though sustained economic growth and human resource development is an essential component of power, the most convincing of all is the expanded and elaborate advanced high-tech tri-dimensional military power that endows upon a state a distinct status in the comity of nations. The composition of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the best illustration of this notion and the sustained Indian campaign for a UNSC seat attests that it gives overwhelming weight to military power. It is the Indians who had coined the term nuclear weapons as *Currency of Power*. In the same line of thinking a stream of literature and wave of thinkers appeared that foresaw a greater Indian role in world politics over an extended period.

One of the widely admired books written on India, as emerging great power, is *India Emerging Power* by Stephen P. Cohen, who has the credentials of one of the authoritative writers on South Asian politics. This study appears to be an improvement upon his former co-study with Richard L. Park in 1979, when both of them wrote *India: Emergent Power*. He asserts, “we concluded that if one took a twenty-five years perspective, then India would loom large as a crucial factor in America’s policies toward all of Asia, and beyond. Sufficient evidence is now available to demonstrate that we were essentially correct.” Similarly this book again is an attempt to examine the proposition of Indian emergence as great a power and the extent to which it can affect American policies in and around Asia. The academia is divided on this issue. One stream of analysts conjectures that Indian emergence as a great power is matter of time and focuses on its brilliance in its technological development, economic openness, and democratic institutions that would stabilize it. While the other stream of analysts contends otherwise and reach at certain pessimist predictions: that its democracy is fragile, federation is weak, poverty is rampant, its social fabric is divisive, and it is beset with all those ills that feature in most of the backward states.

Cohen says, “These two approaches, one optimistic about India’s prospects, and the other deeply pessimistic, have, when combined, created a bifurcated high-low American perception of India.” Scanning through vast literature on India, he opined that in one way or the other, all “studies offer a perspective on one of the puzzles of contemporary India: the large disparity between India’s own view of its “greatness” – past, present, and future – and the skepticism in this regard voiced by many others.” He further concluded that the contrast between the self-vision of the past and future power militates with a still poor reality that has confounded the American perception of India resulting into inconsistent policies towards it. Consistent with it, this book is another scholarly attempt that presents India more clearly for the benefits of American policy and decision-makers.

The book is a scholarly work on contemporary India by a non-Asian author who has given a very deep insight into Indian history, domestic and international politics, its disputes with neighboring states and the possibilities of nuclear war with Pakistan. It provides a guideline to those who are concerned with India. ■

*Mazhar Hussain Shah*

Assistant Research Officer, IPRI

### ***Technological Change and the Future of Warfare***

Michael O'Hanlon,

Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institute, 2000.

Pages 208

Michael O'Hanlon, Michael O'Hanlon is Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institute. The book under review examines the hypothesis of achievement of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) in the near future and the possibility of re-evaluation of military budgets, war fighting strategies and induction of modern arms in order to pursue United States (US) policy objectives for its military. New technologies and tactical/ operational innovations have the potential to make important contributions to warfare by 2020. The book is divided into eight chapters and each chapter contributes to the debate on RMA. The RMA debate is important because the validity of its hypothesis would lead to more productive and judicious utilization of US military resources and serve its security interests in an economical way.

The author's personal reservations for the theory of RMA are quite visible. Some parts of the book may be difficult to understand for an average reader who is not conversant with the technical details and jargons regarding the issue.

The book advocates that high technology has not always been such a central ingredient in US defence strategy, which is contradictory to historical evidences. The end of World War-II was the result of nuclear technology, which revolutionized the battlefield. The vertical and horizontal arms race during the Cold War era is further evidence of the use of high technology in US defence strategy. The rapid mobilization of the US military in the Gulf War and its outcome was the result of RMA. The contemporary issue of National Missile Defence (NMD), and political support for this programme reflects the significance of high technology.

The author discusses various schools of thoughts in RMA. He used the references of "Joint Vision 2010," a report by Defence Secretary William Cohen. According to the report, the goals for US military forces are, superior battlefield knowledge, full-dimensional protection, dominant manoeuvre, and precision strike. The report includes that in the 21st century, the US military will be able to find targets in real time – any thing of consequence that moves upon or is located on earth by Global Positioning System (GPS).

There are four basic schools of thought in RMA. The first school of thought is the "System of System School," which focuses

on the advancement in computers, communications, and networking to make the functioning of existing weapons systems more effective. The second one is “Dominant Battle Space Knowledge,” which accepts the premises of the first school of thought as well as the sensors and transparency in battlefield. The third one is “Global Reach, Global Power,” school that supports the technological advancement to develop lethal, agile and deployable weapons. It accepts the above mentioned school of thoughts as well. The last one is “Vulnerability School,” which desires the whole world to be benefited by RMA. On the other hand the US needs to seek new military concepts to overcome the challenges to its military supremacy and national security. The chronology of RMA, as given in the book, is very interesting, and proves helpful in providing insights into the evolution of the subject. The author argues that if RMA is attainable, then it should be pursued pragmatically.

While discussing the technical details of the subject, author frequently uses the jargon of physics to illustrate the innate limitations of key military technologies. After analysing the prospects of technological progress in the coming decades, the author states that on the one hand, the role of computer is inevitable in the future battlefields and on the other hand, there are important limitations and vulnerabilities, which will remain in these technological spheres. He analyses the mechanical, chemical, and structural technologies regarding the subject. He also discusses the non-lethal and biological weapons and defence systems against ballistic and cruise missile attacks containing information about the trends in the types of technology and extrapolates their future capabilities and uses. It makes futuristic assumptions about warfare and battlefields. The most interesting part of the whole book is where the author discusses three case studies, namely, Operation Desert Storm, Kosovo 1999, and the Falklands War 1982, to support his arguments. He argues that technological advancement cannot alter the importance of traditional military tactics, but RMA can be helpful in achieving national objectives.

There are interesting debates about the future need for overseas US military bases, the future nature of multinational military operations and the possibility of eliminating nuclear weapons world wide, as well as reducing the vulnerability of US forces to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). RMA advocates belief that in case of RMA, the need for overseas military bases will be reduced. Some advocates of RMA believe that the purpose of RMA will be an American phenomenon, which would leave allies of the US in the

high-tech dust and make the conduct of combined military operations difficult on a multinational basis. Another small group of RMA supporters state that technological advancement would make it possible to eliminate nuclear weapons from the face of the earth within decades, as well as reduce the military's vulnerabilities to chemical and biological weapons.

The author has tried to formulate a strategy to modernize the defence of the US while keeping in view the defence strategies of other major powers. His major concern is the economic compatibility between the defence strategies and the economy of the US. He has stated that the US can devise a more affordable modern military strategy by emphasizing on the electronics and computer advancement, which offers new capabilities at modest cost.

The book provides opportunity for enhancing knowledge about the new ideas/theories and their application to modern warfare. ■

*Asma Shakir Khawaja*  
Assistant Research Officer, IPRI