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Ashutosh Misra, & Michael E. Clarke (Eds.). Pakistan's stability paradox: Domestic, regional and international dimensions. Milton Park, UK: Routledge. 2012.

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Ashutosh Misra, & Michael E. Clarke (Eds.). *Pakistan's stability paradox: Domestic, regional and international dimensions*. Milton Park, UK: Routledge. 2012.

Picking up Ashutosh Misra and Michael E. Clarke's edited volume, one is first struck by the cover image of a demonstration featuring gun-toting Pakistani youth and bearded men, with banners held aloft against an overcast sky. The image is one that has been popularized by mainstream media due to the central place that Pakistan has come to occupy in what is known as the "War on Terror." Coupled with the title of the book, the image draws the readers' attention to the instability of Pakistan and the lurking threat of its collapse. Yet, if one looks carefully at the image on the cover, the faces of those youth, with guns held high, are striking for their wide-grinned smiles, as if they are posing for the camera, trying to appear angry and tough but unable to hold back their light-hearted laughter.

The discrepancy between what the image on the cover intends to portray and how the youths in the photograph may perceive themselves is reflective of a broader paradox in which the security threat Pakistan poses is a presumed truth, regardless of not only the ways in which the U.S. has "created" this truth but also the ways in which the people of Pakistan may perceive their own involvement in the "War on Terror." However, seeing that this edited volume is a result of a three-day conference organized by the Griffith Asia Institute and held in Brisbane, Australia in November of 2009, where "security experts" from Pakistan, India, Australia, and the United States addressed "some of the most pressing challenges facing the country," it is not surprising that such paradoxes are not addressed in the text (p. xvi). While the "mediatization" of Pakistan's role in the "War on Terror" is not addressed, Misra and Clarke have set out to pull together a series of papers that do address the domestic, regional, and international challenges facing Pakistan. In the preface, they begin by pointing to the 2.5 per cent GDP growth rate, double-digit inflation rate, and US\$56 billion in foreign debt. They write that there is unanimous recognition that the failure of the state would have devastating consequences for international security "and must be prevented at all costs." At the same time, the picture that emerges from the essays is that while Pakistan does face significant challenges, the state is unlikely to collapse.

The first five of the book's twelve chapters focus on Pakistan's domestic sphere. Ashutosh Misra begins with a look at the interplay in Pakistan between the three forms of government (FOG): military dictatorship, democracy, and Islamism. Using a stability-instability model in which these three forces compete with each other and engage in co-optation, he argues that the interplay between these three forms of government lies at the core of Pakistan's political instability. The author suggests that for the sake of Pakistan's stability, this jostling among political parties must cease; still, he acknowledges that "this may only be possible when one of these FOGs becomes self-reliant and does not have to align with the other two in order to stay in power" (p. 3). Misra concludes his essay by pointing to developments within Pakistan's judiciary system and by asserting that such developments reflect positively on the future of democracy in Pakistan.

The conclusion of the first chapter provides a fitting transition to the excellent second chapter by Tasneem Kausar. Kausar focuses on the Pakistani judiciary system during the 2007 lawyers' movement and provides a helpful historical overview of the Pakistani Supreme Court and its historic role in the development of democracy in the country. Underscoring the historical significance of the strides made by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry in helping the court establish "its own identity, [secure] its legitimacy and [win] its independence" (pp. 28, 32),

the author goes on to show how Pakistan's case demonstrates the inability of existing scholarship on judicial empowerment to account for these historical shifts. She ends by suggesting that the democratic government should learn from the success achieved by Chaudhry's Court and should likewise respond to the interests of the common Pakistani.

In the third chapter, Aneela Babar, provides a helpful firsthand account of seminaries (or "madrassas") in Pakistan. Her essay serves as a corrective to other scholarly accounts that have relied on official data about the number of seminaries in Pakistan without taking into account the fact that many of the newer seminaries are identifying themselves as private schools rather than madrassas. Calling them "hybrid seminaries" (and thus including them in her analysis), Babar builds on fieldwork she previously conducted at 15 seminaries in Rawalpindi, Quetta, Malir, Khairabad, Karachi, and Peshawar. She claims that madrassas (including "hybrid seminaries") deprive their "students of the will to change or challenge all that is flawed in the Pakistani society" because of their singular focus on the cultivation of a religious sensibility that has little concern with issues of governance. (p. 58). In short, she argues there are two populations of Muslims in Pakistan: (1) those who challenge the Pakistani state in the name of Islam using violence and (2) those that feel they have no mandate to address "Pakistan's problems with governance and class differences" and that "their religious duty lies in subcontracting the *just war* to the militant fringe" (p. 59). The author suggests that the government should address society's extreme inequalities, which would make it more difficult for these militant fringes to position themselves as the only alternative to an ineffective system of governance.

In the fourth chapter, Tasneem Ahmar addresses the way women are portrayed in Pakistani media. She writes passionately that media portrayals of women as "content" remain "largely negative, stereotypical, and biased" (p. 62). She provides suggestions as to ways in which the media in Pakistan might work to change the way society perceives women (as opposed to simply reinforcing prejudices). In the following chapter, Muhammad Amir Rana provides an account of the different militant groups operating in Pakistan and the history behind their respective rises. He argues that militant organizations are a threat to the country's internal security and outlines the ways in which these threats manifest themselves.

Happymon Jacob begins the second section on regional dimensions with an essay summarizing the history of the India-Pakistan peace process that lasted from 2004 to 2008. In order to avoid the fate of previous attempts, in which the peace process starts afresh after each crisis, he suggests that an incremental approach would provide the most promising path forward. In this way, the peace process itself could help to facilitate trust between the two nations through a heightened level of sustained dialogue. Ashok K. Behuria provides an informative seventh chapter on jihadi organizations in Pakistan and their regional and international links. While recognizing the logic behind Pakistan's use of non-state actors like the jihadist group *Jaish-e Muhammad* (The Army of Mohammed) to weaken India, he argues, "This tactic has been pushed beyond its limits" (p. 119). He calls on the "Pakistani ruling class" to abandon their reliance on such groups for political change before it is too late; otherwise, he says, a "bloody civil war like those experienced in Algeria and Afghanistan" may erupt in Pakistan's future (p. 119).

In his essay, William Maley provides a historical summary of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. While he points to the drawing of the Durand Line in 1893 and the *Khudai Khidmatgar*[s'] ('Servant[s] of God') movement (incorrectly written by Maley as the *Khuda-i Khedmatgaran*, ('Servants' God')) as two important historical moments with far-reaching ramifications, he provides little context of the longer history of the politicization of religious identities in South Asia, which did not merely begin in 1978 when Zia-ul-Haq assumed the presidency. One of

Maley's better points is that the rise of the Taliban did not emerge from traditional Afghan society but from the "breakdown of Afghan social structures over decades of war, conflict and strife" (p. 127). In conclusion, he suggests the leadership in Pakistan should reflect on whether it is possible to confront the threat presented by the Pakistani Taliban without also attempting to eliminate the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network, and the *Hezb-e Islami* (p. 132).

Claude Rakisits ends this section with a look at the Pakistani Taliban. He argues that the growth of militancy in Pakistan is due, in part, to several internal factors including "the poor governance of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the socio-economic underdevelopment of FATA and its slack of political integration with the rest of the country, and the domestic and foreign policies of successive central governments, civilian and military" (p. 137). He encourages the civilian government to economically and politically integrate the people of the tribal areas with the rest of Pakistan as a first step in tackling the militant problem.

In the section on international dimensions, Moeed Yusuf turns the reader's attention to relations between Pakistan and the U.S. Utilizing the rational institutional design framework, he moves away from popular discourse, which blames Pakistan for its failure to tackle militancy and instead demonstrates that given "Pakistan's own threat perception and self-defined regional objectives," it is completely rational for Pakistan to help the U.S. achieve its objectives only half-heartedly (p. 155). He suggests different approaches the U.S. could take to address some of Pakistan's concerns. In the next essay, Srikanth Kondapalli provides a helpful historical overview of relations between China and Pakistan. While not furthering any innovative argument, the reader will walk away with a greater knowledge of the different ways in which the two nations have cooperated in the past and may cooperate in the future. Michael E. Clarke's essay concludes the volume with an assessment of the threat of nuclear terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Through a detailed analysis of each possible nuclear terrorist scenario, he concludes that the nuclear threat has been overstated but that due to a high level of mutual mistrust between Pakistan and the U.S., a more transparent approach from Pakistan regarding its nuclear facilities and their security is unlikely to transpire.

While the quality of scholarship in this volume varies from essay to essay (and a few essays could have used a heavier editorial hand), the collection as a whole provides a helpful introduction and, at times, a nuanced reading of Pakistan's political and historical complexity. The volume would have benefited greatly from an introductory essay to tie the readings together in a more thorough manner while providing a broader conceptual framework for the volume. Instead, the reader is provided with little more than a two and half page preface, which fails to bring the individual essays into conversation with each other. Of course, a collection like this cannot possibly address the full range of challenges facing Pakistan, but it at least provides a helpful analysis of the topics it does address and gives balanced policy recommendations that policymakers would be wise to heed.

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