



BOOK REVIEWS

The Pakistani Paradox

Shoshana Bryen

HUSAIN HAQQANI, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 395 pp., \$17.95.

If Husain Haqqani's excellent *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* contented itself with recounting and clarifying the convoluted relations among Pakistan's military, intelligence and religious strongmen in a highly readable fashion, it could already be considered an important work. Were it simply focused on the extraordinary and uninterrupted string of corruption that has warped Pakistan's political and economic development and paved the way for an unholy alliance between the military and radical Islamic leaders, it would still be worthwhile reading. Were it

just a chronicle of Pakistan's tenuous early existence, it would nonetheless be a timely reminder of the forces shaping contemporary Pakistani policy. And if it only outlined the troubling reality that American military and economic aid has often strengthened Islamist and/or military power at the expense of civilian control, the opposite of its intended effect, it would constitute a useful policy tool.

But *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* does much more. Haqqani, a former policy advisor to three Pakistani prime ministers who now serves as a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, provides a cautionary tale for democratic nationalists, asking and *almost* answering the question, "What is the rationale for a nation and on what



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basis do people identify with it?"

America is based on its founding documents. An immigrant can, in time and with legal sanction, "become American." Place of birth, ethnic background, color and religion then become either the stuff of ethnic festivals or, more ominously, fodder for diversity training. On the other hand, to be German is a racial identity. And, as second and third generation Turkish-German (and North African-French) citizens have discovered, racial assimilation is not an option and cultural assimilation doesn't work too well either.


So how much harder is it if there is neither a single bloodline nor a workable founding philosophy? What if you are Pakistan—ethnically, linguistically, culturally and tribally diverse, with no *raison d'être* other than to be "not India"? How do you unify society? How do you create a founding myth that serves the people? Unfortunately for the Pakistanis, according to Haqqani, "the country was created in a hurry and without giving detailed thought to various aspects of nation and state building." Instead, nationalist leaders chose the lowest common denominators: pan-Islamic ideology and the threat of India, giving enormous power to religious and military elites who over time became intertwined and linked by their desire for power.

While the chapters in *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* are not entirely chronological, they are arranged sensibly for understanding Pakistan as an ideology with a country, rather than as a country with an ideology. The chapter on the "Afghan Jihad" is worth the price of the book alone, outlining as it does the British and Russian roles in the region during the 19th Century, and detailing how Pakistan and Afghanistan have

worked to undermine one another from the time of Pakistan's birth to the present. Two other chapters, "From Islamic Republic to Islamic State" and "Military Rule by Other Means," describe the early entry into politics of religious power brokers and the creeping Islamicization of Pakistan's once adamantly secular military establishment.

In his conclusion, appropriately termed "From Ideological State to Functional State," Haqqani offers a prescription for Pakistan's ills, but the medicine is difficult to swallow. He calls for Islamabad to "redefine" its objectives and "focus on economic prosperity and popular participation in governance." In other words, to find a new rationale for the country, one not focused on either India or Islam.

But how does one set about doing so? The United States, Haqqani writes, should "demand reform of those aspects of Pakistan's governance that involve the military and security services," and "no longer condone the Pakistani 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 government." And Washington should use money "as a lever to influence Pakistan's domestic policies." But "[b]oth Pakistan's elite and their U.S. benefactors would have to participate" in such a process, Haqqani counsels.

To the extent that the U.S. can leverage a country to do the right thing for its people, it should. But after 300 pages spent examining the depth of corruption and incestuous relations between the military and religious elites, it is hard to understand which Pakistanis will emerge as partners for any change in America's approach. In this, and in this alone, Haqqani  falls short.