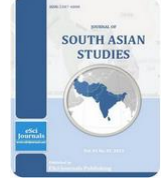




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Book Review

PAKISTAN BEYOND THE CRISIS STATE

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By Maleeha Lodhi ed., Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2011. pp. 391. ISBN: 978 0199064380. USD 5.01.

Dedicated to the resilient people of Pakistan, who deserve a better future is the underlying theme of the book. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi's *Pakistan Beyond the 'Crisis State'* into the heart of Pakistanis does not necessarily flourish any ground-breaking literary prowess, but definitely is an original and path-breaking contribution to the centrist country's discourse on the multiple issues faced by it across its length and breadth. She challenges the generalizations and status quo albeit makes a genuine attempt to give an incessant recourse to the people of Pakistan: HOPE.

Dr. Lodhi has twice served as Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States and the United Kingdom. Thereby she carries a strong influence and knowledge over the country's polity and people both. Certainly the credit goes to her for assemblage the articles from experts of the respective fields and edits it into a book form. Some of them are thoroughly well researched while others are opinionated articles. All these experts are country's renowned academia, policy-makers, historians, journalists, analysts and bureaucrats like Ayesha Jalal, Mohsin Hamid, Shujha Nawaz, Ishrat Hussain, Moeed Yusuf, Munir Akram, Saeed Shafaat, Akbar Ahmed, Meekal Ahmed, Feroz Hassan Khan, Ahmed Rashid, and Rifaat Hussain.

It carries a sense of urgency, for its critical nature of the topicality whence the entire world is busy in theorizing South Asian Region as deeply troubled, failed and withered; then this book carries a very unique message and pays tribute to the common man's resilience and persistence to survive even against all odds. The voices

from several maestros are weaved into cohesive choir in a journalistic fashion to re-affirm their faith that Pakistan's challenges are surmountable and the impetus for change and renewal can only come from within through bold reforms.

The book comprises of seventeen chapters/articles. It can suavely be divided into five major parts; first contains historical articles, second pertaining to foreign policy, third to the army, forth is to enhance country's competitiveness whereas last part is consecrated to several problems faced by Pakistan at large e.g. education, militancy, bad governance, energy crisis and economic challenges.

The book starts with the depository article of renowned historian Ayesha Jalal titled "The Past as Present" in which she highlights the importance of past for the quintessence of the accompanied ethos of the generations of mankind in a retrospective tone. Its relevance assumes greater worth and value especially for a nation which has suffered geographical split in recent past i.e. 1971. Thus every Pakistani must understand the genesis of Pakistan to determine their future course accordingly. Second chapter by Dr. Akbar Ahmad titled "Why Jinnah Matters" refers towards the importance of the immaculate ideals of the founding father for the consolidation of nascent state which not only were the guiding principles for the tattered nation yesterday but also offers a practical solutions for today's problems faced by the nation i.e. sectionalism, sectarianism, and provincialism. Zaid Haider in his article "Ideological Adrift" revisits the historical dimensions of Pakistan history with relation to religion i.e. Islam. The second part can be classified unto the foreign policy of the country in which eastern side is

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dealt by Rifaat Hussain in his article "The Indian Factor" whereas the western side of Pakistan's geography is covered by Ahmad Rashid in his essay "the Afghan Conundrum". Hussain has also given a very detailed table of CBM history (p.332-37) in a chart form between India and Pakistan from 1947 to present. Former Pakistan' UN Representative and a maven in foreign policy Munir Akram's article "Reversing Strategic Shrinkage" talks about the external challenges ranging from TTP to Afghanistan crisis, Kashmir to nuclear deterrence and from strategic marginalization to strategic paradigm at geo-political front. Thus the country's foreign policies and practices are reviewed in a holistic fashion by these three authors.

Fifth chapter 'Army and Politics', sixth chapter 'Praetorians and the People', and fourteenth chapter "Pakistan as a Nuclear State" have been written by Shuja Nawaz, Saeed Shafaat, and Feroz Hassan Khan respectively about country's one of the powerful institutions i.e. Army. These articles cover subjects like civil-military imbalances and mad race of nuclear arsenals and weapons which make this region volatile and ambivalent from security point of view. Army acts as an important stakeholder in making policies because geographically the country is engulfed with strategic and security challenges. It also reminds us of social scientist Hamza Alvi's superstructure nature of Pakistani society which argues to maneuver military to jeopardize democratic institutions for their own vested interests. Shafaat argues that democracy can only flourish if there are free, fair and impartial elections held only as well as true participation from the people can ensure the democracy. Army as an institution requires cultural pluralism and work ethics to flourish in the country.

"Why Pakistan will survive" by Mohsin Hamid gives a glimpse of hope and presents a spectacular diverse demographic analysis of Pakistani nation and a reason to co-exist as a modern democratic nation. It silently takes its reader an oath to accommodate each other because we are a unique nation across the world. It also provides a viable solution to the many problems faced by Pakistan; provided the nation is committed to pay more taxes in return. In this title, "Beyond Crisis State" by Dr. Lodhi explores the intricate dynamics of the much celebrated location of the country which has been more of a challenge than an asset since country's inception. Mudassir Mazhar Malik furnishes and explores the entire layout of Pakistan's geographic, demographic, economic,

and topographic potentials and possibilities in his article "Boosting Competitiveness". He goes on suggesting certain pertinent measures to delve into all these potential and to put the country on the trajectory of growth and development.

The last part deals with the miscellaneous challenges faced by the country in the following articles. "Retooling Institutions" by Israt Hussain addresses the kernel issue of institutional bad governance which is mainly because of corrupt bureaucracy, prevailing indecency in society, and lack of accountability and non-efficiency of state machinery. If we carve to modify our system then we need to ensure an efficient mechanism of transparency and accountability as well as bold steps at governmental front and social front are required." An Economic Crisis State?" by Mekaal Ahmad reminisces glorious past when Pakistan was seen as a role-model in economic and developmental programs during sixties. "Turning Energy Around" by Ziad Alahdad investigates what it will take to turn energy sector around and how to make it energy scarce to energy sufficient country. "Education as a Strategic Imperative" by Shanza Khan and Moeed Yusuf enumerate that how education can turnaround the entire critical mass to an informed and learned people as a viable nation in the world. "Battling Militancy" by Zahid Hussain analyses the efforts incubating militant threat and suggests measures to deal with it. In her concluding remarks, Dr. Lodhi reiterates and reinforces her fundamental ideal of introducing the bold reforms in the country for which she looks forward to charismatic, sincere and visionary leadership that is the need of the hour.

There is very little literature produced in recent era that has touched upon the potential of Pakistan in terms of its physical, geographical and human resources, when the nation is in true hot waters facing internal and external discords and challenges. Sartaj Aziz's book "Between Dreams and Realities" and Yusuf Nazar's book "Balankanization and Political Economy" also attempt to restore the confidence and potential of the nation and the idea of formation of Pakistan but the first one is an historical cum biographical account whereas later one touches upon the issue pertaining to economy of the country. But Dr. Lodhi's book is tour de force due to its multi-dimensionality and holistic approach of synthesizing all the issues along with its solutions and surveillance strategies to tackle these daunting tasks as Lodhi solemnly concludes 'but Pakistan's people deserve no less'.