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Fighting to the end: the Pakistan army's way of war

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from complete, and at best ‘there is a long process of experimenting, building and adapting ahead’ (p. 460) for those who yearn for a more radical project of social transformation.

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Fighting to the end: the Pakistan army’s way of war, by C. Christine Fair, New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, xv + 347 pp., \$34.95 (hardback), ISBN 9780199892709

After the elections in May 2013, when the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz obtained an electoral victory and Nawaz Sharif began his third tenure as Pakistan’s Prime Minister, many commentators, in Pakistan and abroad, described these elections as a watershed moment for Pakistan’s democracy. For the first time in the country’s history there was a smooth transition from one freely elected government to another. Pakistan has a chequered history of democracy and democratic institutions as long periods of military rule (1958–1971, 1977–1988, and 1999–2008) weakened democratic practices. Against this backdrop, the army played a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan’s institutions by retaining key policy prerogatives and by constantly hanging as a sword of Damocles over Pakistan’s civilian leadership. This timely volume delves into the strategic culture of the Pakistan army articulating a sound and consistent analysis which aims at explaining why Pakistan has been pursuing a revisionist agenda in its foreign policy. The main argument of the book goes against conventional wisdom that portrays Pakistan as a security seeking state. Fair argues instead that Pakistan is an ideological state and she does so by highlighting the consistency of Pakistan’s army narrative throughout the country’s history.

The structure of the book is clear, focused and draws on an unprecedented wealth of sources to support its case. After the introduction, Chapter 2 outlines the analysis to be conducted in the ensuing chapters with the concepts of revisionist states and strategic culture discussed against a solid theoretical background, with Pakistan being delineated as a ‘greedy’ state. Chapter 3 insightfully addresses the historical roots of the strategic culture of the Pakistan army shedding light on how its historical heritage is inextricably linked to the development of its ideology. The latter is discussed at length in Chapter 4, elaborating on why the ‘Pakistan Army sees itself as responsible for protecting not

only Pakistan's territorial frontiers but also its ideological frontiers' (p. 5). In Chapter 5 Fair clearly explains the concept of strategic depth in Afghanistan and the instruments that Pakistan uses to pursue this policy, primarily Islamist proxies. Chapter 6 scrutinises Pakistan's rivalry with India through the lenses provided by Pakistan's defence literature, concluding that Pakistan is a revisionist power because of its entrenched strategic culture which shapes the country's proclivity to conflict with India. The section including Chapters 7, 8 and 9 addresses relations with the USA, with an eye to China, as well as focusing on Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, doctrine and the use of proxies with regards to Afghanistan and India. Finally, in chapters 10 and 11 the author briefly looks at recent developments in Pakistani politics and at the possible sources of change both in Pakistani society and from within the army.

Despite an articulate and coherent argument, the analysis only marginally addresses the role of civilian institutions in the context of the domestic civil-military interplay. Although Fair acknowledges the incremental changes in Pakistani politics and society, she draws pessimistic conclusions over the foreseeable future by arguing that 'the world should prepare for a Pakistan that is ever more dangerous and ever more committed to its suite of dangerous policies' (p. 277). It is undeniable that the army played a preeminent role in shaping Pakistan's domestic politics as well as its international outlook, but democratic processes and institutions require time to be absorbed and to become effective, particularly in countries like Pakistan in which the army's political role is so deeply entrenched and pivotal in the country's politics. Foreign policy is no exception to this trend.

Notwithstanding these considerations, the book represents a valuable contribution to the literature. It has been deeply and thoroughly researched, with an extensive analysis of the official documents of the Pakistan army previously overlooked by scholarship on the subject. These sources include Army Green Books, memoirs as well as Pakistani official defence publications over a period of time of six decades. *Fighting to the end* is an exhaustive, illuminating and empirically rich work. It is a valuable book because the author carefully interprets the role Pakistan plays in its region, which has broader international ramifications. For these reasons, this volume is likely to become an indispensable read not only for students and academics interested in deepening their understanding of Pakistan, but also for policymakers in Europe and the US alike.

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