



Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War

Muhammad Zubair

To cite this article: Muhammad Zubair (2014) Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37:6-7, 1071-1074, DOI: [10.1080/01402390.2014.984919](https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2014.984919)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2014.984919>



Published online: 06 Dec 2014.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 282



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

Given these flaws, how is this monograph to be assessed? In all likelihood, those who were persuaded by earlier revisionist studies that fear of Germany was an irrelevance to British foreign policy will find this contribution to their taste. Equally, however, there is little new here to convince those who were unmoved by Ferguson, Wilson, Neilson or Charmley. Such readers will continue to regard British policy as one of containment rather than appeasement. Nothing here persuades me that they would be wrong to do so.

MATTHEW S. SELIGMANN © 2014
Brunel University, UK

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2014.984918>

Bibliography

- Bell, Christopher M., 'Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution Reconsidered: Winston Churchill at the Admiralty, 1911–1914', *War in History* 18 (2011), 333–56.
- Bell, Christopher M., 'On Standards and Scholarship: A Response to Nicholas Lambert', *War in History* 20 (2013), 381–409.
- Buckey Christopher, M., 'Forging the Shaft of the Spear of Victory: The Creation and Evolution of the Home Fleet in the Prewar Era, 1900–1914', PhD, Univ. of Salford, 2013.
- Charmley, John, *Splendid Isolation? Britain and the Balance of Power, 1874–1914* (London: Sceptre 2000).
- Ferguson, Niall, *The Pity of War* (London: Basic Books 1999).
- Grimes, Shawn T., *Strategy and War Planning in the British Navy, 1887–1918* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell 2012).
- Lambert, Nicholas A., 'On Standards: A Reply to Christopher Bell', *War in History* 19 (2012), 217–40.
- Morgan-Owen, David "'History is a Record of Exploded Ideas": Sir John Fisher and Home Defence, 1904–1910', *International History Review* 36 (2014), 550–72.
- Neilson, Keith, *Britain and the Last Tsar: British Policy and Russia 1894–1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995).
- Otte, T.G., 'The Foreign Office and Defence of Empire, 1856–1914', in Greg Kennedy (ed.), *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order 1856–1956* (London: Routledge 2008).
- Simms, Brendan, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, 1453 to the Present* (London: Allen Lane 2013).
- Wilson, Keith M., *The Policy of the Entente: Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy, 1904–1914* (Cambridge: CUP 1985).

C. Christine Fair, **Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp.368. £22.99, HB. ISBN 978-0-19-989270-9.

Pakistan and India came into being as independent states in 1947 after the British withdrew from India in the aftermath of World War II. The division of assets between the two countries also included men and

material inherited from the institution of the British-Indian Army. While the Indian political leadership was able to establish the supremacy of civilian political institutions over the military from the very start, civil-military relations in Pakistan took a completely different path. Soon after independence, the Pakistan Army came to dominate the political system by assuming the role of guardian of the territorial and ideological frontiers of Pakistan, while also undertaking the task of nation building. The Army turned Pakistan into a security state, ruling through puppet civilian governments and, on four occasions, ruling directly through military coups.

There is a bulk of scholarly literature examining how the Army came to dominate Pakistan's political life. However, most of these accounts are expository and historical in nature. C. Christine Fair's *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War*, is a valuable addition to the existing body of scholarship. Fair is a well-known security analyst and a professor at Georgetown University. Her book distinguishes itself by framing the discussion in a theoretical and analytical framework that not only gives a deeper insight into understanding the institution and its role but also challenges the conventional wisdom about the Army.

Fair argues that the strategic culture of the Army is based on basic assumptions about Pakistan's strategic environment and its historical experiences. The Army assumes that Pakistan is an insecure state born out of an unfair partition process, that it inherited the threat frontiers of the British Raj but only a fraction of its resources, that India is opposed to the existence of Pakistan and seeks its subjugation and possibly its destruction, and that territorial and political strategic depth inside Afghanistan is vital to Pakistan's security in order to prevent the Indian encirclement of Pakistan on its eastern and western borders. These assumptions have given birth to the many approaches the Army has adopted. One strategy is the instrumental use of Islam for shaping national identity and anchoring it in the two-nation theory that was itself the basis of the creation of Pakistan. The two-nation theory was grounded in the idea that Hindus and Muslims in British India were two different nations and Muslims needed to have their separate homeland in order to avoid becoming a permanent minority in the Hindu-dominated united India. However, even after the creation of Pakistan, the theory has not lost its utility and remains an important element of the Army's strategic culture.

Fair's theory is mainly based on the rigorous analysis of the Army's own professional publications of the last six decades and memoirs of senior military leadership, and she also relies on her 15 years of ethnographic field research in Pakistan. This approach is unique because it brings to light the Pakistan Army's own insights into how it evaluates the world. All other works look at the institution from the outside.

The Army believes that India seeks not only to undo the territorial integrity of Pakistan but also sows the seeds of discord amongst its various ethnic and sectarian groups, thus undermining the founding logic of the state. Pakistan's perceptions of its internal and external threats are inherently intertwined, and the Army manages these threats by arrogating to itself the role of defending Pakistan's ideology. To counter India's alleged designs, the Pakistan Army uses Islam as a unifying ideology in order to dampen the divisive potential of Pakistan's ethnic and sectarian diversity, while also rallying the citizens in times of war, preparing them for adversity, and acclimatizing them to the Army's own continued domination of national affairs.

Most scholars see the Kashmir dispute as central to explaining the Army's behavior. They claim that Pakistan will cease its adventurism in India and Afghanistan through its militant proxies once the Kashmir dispute is resolved. However, Fair challenges the conventional wisdom and asserts that Pakistan's Army is locked in an ideational and civilizational battle with India and therefore will persist indefinitely. According to Fair, it will do anything at any price to undermine India's rise in the region by bleeding it with a thousand cuts. She also argues that the Army will suffer any number of military defeats in its efforts to do so, because the Army does not consider military defeats at the hands of India as defeats in the conventional sense of the word. Rather, defeat means acquiescing to India or at least failing to put up a challenge.

Fair also challenges the consensus amongst many scholars who date the Army's use of Islamist Jihadi proxies as strategic instruments of foreign policy to the anti-Soviet jihad. She reminds us that Pakistan started using such non-state actors at the very birth of the country when it mobilized militias from Pakistan's tribal areas to invade and seize Kashmir and later in the 1950s when it started employing the Islamist militants in Afghanistan. Pakistan's army also used Islamist militants to fight Bangladeshi insurgents in East Pakistan in 1971.

What one misses from Fair's account is the role of the military's private business concerns in sustaining the strategic culture. Whether it was the cause or effect of the Army's strategic behavior, the fact remains that the Army and other services have accumulated an enormous economic empire as a result of the direct involvement of the armed forces' various business enterprises and foundations. Fair has elsewhere partially endorsed Ayesha Siddiqa's proposition that as long as the Army has a role in policy formulation, it will most likely pursue policies that continue to define Pakistan as a national security state to further its corporate business and political interests. The military would hardly have any incentive to pursue peace building with India if that would lead to reductions in the Army's size and influence or threaten its business interests. Thus, as an independent factor, the business interests

of the armed forces are most likely to sustain the strategic culture in Pakistan. Yet this factor is conspicuous by its absence in Fair's book.

Fair is not terribly optimistic about change in the Army's strategic culture in the near future and warns the world to be prepared for a Pakistan that is ever more dangerous and more committed to a suite of dangerous policies.

MUHAMMAD ZUBAIR © 2014

Indiana University, USA

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2014.984919>