

**Vol-IV, No.4**

ISSN 2310-4260



# **CISS Insight**

**Quarterly Journal**

December, 2016



**Center for International Strategic Studies  
Islamabad**

©Copyright Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS)

All rights are reserved.

No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced, adapted, transmitted, or stored in any form by any process without the written permission of the Center for International Strategic Studies.

*Editor-in-Chief*

Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi

*Editor*

Iftikhar Uddin Hasan

 [www.ciss.org.pk](http://www.ciss.org.pk)

 @CISSOrg1

 Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS)

December 2016

Volume IV, Number 4

CISS Insight

Journal of Center for International  
Strategic Studies

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>1.</b> 'Cold Start' – The Cat is Out of the Bag Dr Naeem Salik	1
<b>2.</b> Global Strategic Forecast 2017 Dr. Afsah Qazi and Saima Aman Sial	19
<b>3.</b> Emerging Security Dynamics in Syria: Role of Foreign Powers Sajid Aziz	33
<b>4. Book Reviews:</b>	
Christopher Philips, The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East	51
Farhana Qazi, Secrets of the Kashmir Valley	56
Stephen Philip Cohen, South Asia Papers, A Critical Anthology of Writings	60
<b>5.</b> CISS Insight Guidelines for Contributors	64

**'Cold Start' - The Cat is Out of the Bag**  
**Dr Naeem Salik**

**Page 1 to 16**

**Global Strategic Forecast 2017**

**Dr. Afsah Qazi and Saima Aman Sial**

**Page 17 to 29**

**Emerging Security Dynamics in Syria: Role of Foreign Powers:**

**Sajid Aziz**

**Page 30 to 45**

**Book Review**  
**By**  
**SAJID AZIZ**

**Christopher Philips,**  
***The Battle for Syria:***  
***International Rivalry in***  
***the New Middle East,***  
**(London: Yale University**  
**Press, 2016) 238**

Two months from now will mark the sixth anniversary of Syrian war. What started in March 2011 as a peaceful revolt against the government of Bashir al-Assad soon morphed into a macabre civil war. The light of dawn the peaceful protestors heralded turned into a night of chaos and blood. The devastating war has had a severe toll on Syrian people. Approximately half a million people are dead (though, one should be skeptical when quoting these figures given the level of propaganda, lack of physical access to journalists and difficulty to sift truth from unverified reports filed to satiate the need of incessant demand information from a war zone); close to five million have sought refuge outside the country and more than 6 million are internally displaced. The economy is devastated and thousands of civilians have lived for years under sieges of both government and rebel forces. The harrowing images coming from rebel-controlled eastern Aleppo are a testament of the brutality of war wrought on people. The moral outrage it has rightly evoked should not bar us from critically analyzing the war and discussing the role of internal and external factors that have contributed in the lengthening and lethality of the war.

Christopher Philips's *The Battle for Syria* is an insightful work in this regard, specifically vis-à-vis the role of external powers in Syrian war. The narrative of this book is driven by the proposition that the regional and international actors have



played a very central role in Syrian war and shaped the war in crucially important ways. His main hypothesis is that on the eve of Syrian war, political and security landscape in Middle East had considerably changed. The perceived American hegemony in the region was weakening due to the failures of Operation Iraqi Freedom, election of Barack Obama who criticized the military adventurism of his predecessor and the lack of military commitment in the aftermath of 2008 financial crisis. These significant developments inevitably increased the role of what Christopher calls 'the role of regional agency' to fill the vacuum. Moreover, American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq indirectly benefitted Iran to expand its influence in the region. The Iran-friendly Shia majority government of Iraq extended the 'Arc of Shia Influence'. Hezbollah, thanks partly to Iranian financial support and arms with Syria being the conduit, had already emerged the dominant power in Lebanon, carving a greater political niche for Lebanese Shias and battling Israel to protect Lebanon's territorial integrity. Gulf countries generally and Saudi Arabia particularly perceived both 'a military and ideational threat from Iran. The 'threat' of Iran emerging as a regional hegemon has always been a source of concern for the Gulf countries. These states saw in the Syrian uprising an opportunity to undermine growing Iranian political clout in the region by helping the rebel forces to topple the government of Assad and supplant it with Sunni majority government, cutting the most important link between Iran and Hezbollah.

One of the important results of the post-Iraq invasion was the establishment of Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq, prompting Turkey to exploit the prospect of cheap oil from the autonomous Kurdish region as well as to perceive a security threat that the KRG model in Iraq might

inspire Turkish Kurds to demand greater autonomy. Moreover, Turkey had been trying to chart an independent course of action that did not necessarily align with American's. In addition, Qatar too had been asserting its profile as a moderator in regional conflicts, helped by its huge oil sources and media house, al-Jazeera. Christopher Philips argues the political environment and regional alignment in Middle East coupled with the internal political dynamics of Syria (a minority Alawite government that has been ruling a Sunni majority nation for decades) made the civil war inevitable. This is not to suggest that the author is externalizing the indigenous peaceful uprising of Syrian people and reducing the latter at the level of stooges of outside powers devoid of any independent agency.

The first few chapters draw a succinct regional sketch and shed light on the early period of the Syrian uprising, whose genesis is traced to the southern city of Deraa where students registered their protest through witty graffiti. Rather than conceding the genuine political demands of the protestors Assad regime relied on brute force to quash the movement. The subsequent militarization of Syrian conflict thanks to internal Syrian dynamics and external support is detailed in chapters 5 and 6.

According to Philips, regional protagonists thought the sponsorship of rebel and Islamist/Jihadist/Salafist forces coupled with internal chaos within Syria would ultimately force Assad to relinquish power. This was a misperception that did not take into account the strength of Syrian armed forces despite defections and pro-government militias, so was their hope that like in Libya, USA would intervene in Syria on the side of rebels. The American ambivalence emanated from multiple factors: reluctance of Obama administration to commit

American forces in the quagmire of another war, a position buttressed by American experiences in both Iraq and Libya; then there was the fragmented opposition, divided into plethora of factions supported by different regional actors to have greater influence over the course of movement that dissuaded America to militarily intervene. But more importantly, this was also a reflection of declining American power in the region. Philips questions the assertion that American intervention would have tilted the balance of war in favor of rebel forces and given a coup de grace to Assad regime. According to him, there is no guarantee that American intervention would not have lengthened the civil war in Syria.

According to Philips, Iranian financial and arms support has been vital in sustaining Assad regime. The economic sanctions, control of substantial oil resources by rebel and Islamist forces, and lack of productivity brought Syrian economy under severe strain. Moreover, the regime required greater financial resources to continue a brutal war on multiple fronts. Iran not only financially sustained Syrian government, but also helped it in cyberspace and media. Besides this, Iran provided Assad regime with weapons and advisers from Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) had been present in Syria in the initial stage of the war. Qassim Sulemani of IRGC established the National Defense Force (NDF) that fought alongside Syrian government forces, Iraqi Shia militias and Hezbollah. At the latter stage of the war, when the Iraqi Shia militias were forced to go back to Iraq when the so-called Islamic State (IS) declared its caliphate after routing the Iraqi government forces in Mosul.

According to Philips, Russian military intervention was preceded by a substantial amount of arms transfer that included

Yakhont anti-ship cruise missiles, SA-17 surface-to-air missiles, MiG helicopters, and small arms. Russia also sent military advisers. The Russian military in September 2015 was prompted by both domestic and geo-strategic factors. Putin was genuinely concerned about the internal threat the Russian Islamists fighting in Syria could possibly pose to the security of Russia. Moreover, Russian invasion of Ukraine was followed by sanctions and global isolation. To revitalize its role as a global power, Syria provided Putin with an opportunity to flex its military muscles.

All in all, *The Battle for Syria* is a significant study on the role of external powers in Syrian war. Though largely descriptive, it is interspersed with insightful analyses of policy rationales of different actors. In the deluge of propagandistic literature regarding the Syrian war, Philips' work presents an uncontroversial narrative of the role of foreign protagonists in Syrian war. The fragile country-wide truce in Syria effected on 30 December, 2016, by Russia, Turkey and Iran endorsed both by US and UN, gives some credence to Philips' assertion that international actors have played an instrumental role in lengthening the Syrian civil war and their role would be vital in any resolution of the conflict.

*Sajid Aziz is a  
Research Assistant at CISS*

**Book Review**

**By**

**MARYAM ZUBAIR**

**Farhana Qazi, *Secrets of the Kashmir Valley* (New Delhi: Pharos Media & Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2016), 312**

Much has been written about Jammu and Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, but little literature exists exclusively on the role of women in Kashmiris' fight for freedom. Farhana Qazi documents this aspect of the freedom movement in Kashmir in *Secrets of the Kashmir Valley*. The word "Secrets" in the title aptly describes a reality that seldom gets the attention it deserves, i.e; the struggle of women in the Jammu and Kashmir conflict

The author has narrated her personal experiences of meetings with numerous women involved in the Kashmiri struggle. The inspiration for her venture into the subject comes from her mother and maternal grandmother. The first two chapters, 'Mama's War' and 'Remembrance' are a narrative of the Kashmiri struggle as seen through the eyes of her mother and grandmother, the latter being a Kashmiri herself and the former identifying strongly with the Kashmir cause and was involved in politics in her youth.

In the chapter titled 'Nights in New Delhi', Qazi writes about the dynamics of the dispute as seen by intellectuals as well as common people affected by the situation in Kashmir. The next three chapters, 'Bomb Girl', 'Martyrs' and 'Prisoners' are all stories about women who had directly taken part in the freedom movement or were heading organizations that fought for their rights as women. They organized rallies and led protests. Many of them were arrested or had lost their men due to the high handed tactics employed by Indian authorities. Some women in these stories were also widows or half-

widows, or had sons who were arrested or killed, on sometimes false allegations of involvement in militancy. Despite all their hardships, each one of them had bravely continued to voice their concerns openly.

In chapter 7, the author highlights the fact that though Kashmir is like a perpetual prison, people, especially women, work hard to support their families in the absence of men and occasions such as weddings are celebrated as in any other part of the world. Kashmiris, as a community, are strong-willed and determined to live in the face of difficulties they face on a daily basis. Their poetry and songs, however, reflect their deep-felt pains and agony. The chapter titled 'Wives of Militants' are accounts of women who married men whose first love was militancy. They lived in fear but felt the pride of their husbands' fight against occupation of their land.

In chapter 9, Qazi relays the conditions of affectees of the 2005 earthquake living in Pakistan administered Kashmir. Female refugees had suffered the most because female doctors were not available in the affected areas. She quotes some secondary sources, for example Todd Shea, an American who raised funds and came to Kashmir to help improve the healthcare facilities and stayed for ten years, as having said "Others are better equipped, but I'm the one who's here." In chapter 10, 'Siege', the author writes about the massive human rights violations, including rape, killings, forced disappearances and denial of basic facilities such as electricity and how people have learnt to live without them. The author concludes with a discussion about the importance of raising awareness of the Kashmir conflict. She is of the view that people involved in the struggle are striving to do just that. The brief epilogue ends on a bittersweet note as a survivor of the 2014 floods in Kashmir expresses a hope regarding the future of Kashmir, saying "We live in God's shadow."

Several themes are woven through the book's narrative. One is the stoic resilience of the Kashmiri women and their unbound ability to survive and protect their children. Another is a determination to continue the fight against the occupation of their land. Most importantly, all the people who have struggled and suffered, take pride in their actions as contributions to the cause of freedom. The people interviewed for the book included ex-militants, aspiring militants, those who had ties with or led sundry groups. They included members of the JKLF (Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front), HuM (Hizbul Mujahideen) MKM (Muslim Khawateen Markaz), JuM (Jamatul Mujahideen), JKMM (Jammu Kashmir Mass Movement), DeM (Dokhtran-e-Millat) and SLF (Student Liberation Front). The Kashmiri struggle has not slowed down in the last several decades despite the AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) in IOK, which gives immense powers to law enforcement authorities and enables them to use strong armed tactics, including random killings and arrests of innocent civilians on mere suspicion.

The author has taken great pains to collect material for the book. In this pursuit, she visited a low intensity conflict military zone to record heart-rending stories of the people affected by the conflict. However, it is not an academic read of the Kashmir issue, and certainly not for beginners intending to learn about the dispute. The book intertwines personal stories of women with facts, presenting a complex account of the happenings in IOK. It also includes small details, which sometimes seem not directly relevant but give more substance to the narrative.

The book's account is presented thematically rather than chronologically. It is mentioned in the introduction of the book that the interviews conducted for the book took place between 2007 and 2014, but references have been repeatedly made to the periods preceding 2007 as well. It is difficult to ascertain, in some cases, the

time frame of the people interviewed. There are also several proofreading mistakes in the text, which could be avoided with a little effort. In several places, punctuation is misplaced and words and names are misspelled. For example, on page 229, a new name “Ahmed” is introduced while two persons “Shoab” and “Pervez” are being talked about in the preceding lines of the same paragraph. However, despite these shortcomings, the book is a compelling read.

Farhana Qazi is a globally acclaimed writer, speaker and researcher. Her previous studies also include works on conflicts and terrorism for which she has received widespread commendation.

*Maryam Zubair is a  
Research Assistant at CISS*



**Book Review**  
**By**  
**HUMA REHMAN**

**Stephen Philip Cohen,  
South Asia Papers,  
A Critical Anthology of  
Writings: (HarperCollins  
Publishers India)**

The book entitled '*South Asia Papers: A Critical Anthology of Writings*,' by Stephen Phillip Cohen is a collection of sixteen essays by a leading analyst and scholar on South Asia's civil military relations, security and political issues. The book's chapters are drawn from more than 150 published pieces by the author and every essay presents a detailed and well researched insight into various periods of South Asian military history and military sociology.

While making preparations for *South Asian Papers*' publication the author revisited his previous writings on the subject and has indicated where his analysis was proved inaccurate by subsequent policy developments and events.

Though the book chapters are primarily focused on India but the author has also added a few essays on civil-military relations in Pakistan, security problems faced by it as well as difficult strategic choices the country had to make in its seventy years history. Chapter One of the book describes the author's personal research puzzle that influenced his research interests. Subsequent research done by the author, mostly on South Asia, was the choice he had made early in his career. His work includes research on how military power and its supporting

institutions had shaped relations in the region and within states that constitute the region.

Chapter Two deals with contemporary problems pertaining to India's defense and civil-military relations. With regard to civil-military relations the author observes that Indian society continues to be divided between military and non-military classes. He states that the origin of this division between military and non-military segments can be traced to the Hindu caste system. The caste system embedded in Hindu belief system did not allow members of certain castes, particularly those belonging to lower castes to become warriors. Chapter Three discusses unclear role and blurred parameters of jurisdiction of the viceroy and commander-in-chief in British Indian colony, in the light of a dispute between Lord Curzon (Viceroy) and Lord Kitchener the military commander in which Kitchener prevailed and Lord Curzon had to resign. Outcome of the dispute, in the opinion of certain analysts defined the prominence of military in state's decision making process. Chapter Four and Five discuss Indian National Army (INA) and how its establishment had contributed to the democratization of British Indian armed forces by recruiting soldiers from all castes and ethnicities.

Having developed the context of discussion on contemporary India in the first few chapters, Cohen focuses on India's potential for achieving great power status and the hurdles in its way. In this context, the author mentions disintegration of Soviet Union and problems of state building in Pakistan and threat to Pakistan's security. Pakistan's membership of SEATO and CENTO also find a place in the discussion on Pakistan's security.

The author, with his long experience of researching in India and his knowledge of South Asian strategic and security issues, recommends a regional approach to enhance security of both India and Pakistan. In this context, he also supports a US-Pakistan nuclear deal on the pattern of US-India deal. But in the author's view, such an agreement should be crafted to strengthen non-proliferation regime instead of promoting nuclear proliferation.

Cohen perceptively sums up the dilemma of Pakistan and India and impediments in their bilateral relations. Pakistan's army, according to Cohen is a bulwark in the way of political extremism in the country. But while playing its role it cannot, not at the same time, guarantee promotion of moderation in the state institutions. India's dilemma is that it would like a Pakistan which is strong enough not to fall apart but not so strong as to be able to stand up to India and challenge its supremacy in the region.

The author's writings show his keen interest in dynamics of South Asian politics and security. The bilateral interaction between India and Pakistan, and how their armed forces influenced the political and military decision making. Chapter Thirteen is dedicated to Kashmir. In the author's view both sides lack the political will and commitment to resolve this dispute. He acknowledges the fact that both countries cannot ignore the fact that the Kashmir dispute had strengthened their identities and suggests that they should find a way to work around this reality. The last two chapters dilates on India-US relationship, specifically during the Reagan administration, and how a botched US alliance fed Pakistan's crisis. Cohen explains the highs and lows of US-Pakistan relations such as poor conceptual

foundation of this relationship and consequences of, off and on again alliance, mistakes, lessons learnt and forgotten.

Though the book contains essays by the author penned over a period spread over two decades but many concepts discussed by him are still relevant to the contemporary India and Pakistan. This marks the real value of the book which is written in a lucid style and makes the discussion on complex issues easy to understand even for those who may be uninitiated in the disciplines of international relations and strategic studies.

*Huma Rehman is a  
Program Coordinator & Research Officer at CISS*

## **CISS Insight Guideline for Contributors**

CISS Insight is a quarterly research journal of Center for International Strategic Studies, Islamabad.

It publishes articles on **nuclear** and **strategic issues** and **international security**.

The journal is published each year in March, June, September and December. Researchers and scholars wishing to contribute their articles for publication in CISS Insight may send their original, unpublished research articles at the address given below. After the initial editorial review their articles will be sent for peer review and contributors will be informed accordingly. Contributors may note that once their articles have been accepted for publication in CISS Insight they **cannot withdraw** their article or have them **published in any other journal**.

**Abstract Length** Articles should have a brief abstract comprising 100-150 words.

### **Article length**

Article length should be between 4000 and 5000 words. Up to 200 words may be added for citing references.

### **Deadline for Submission of Articles**

Two months prior to the quarter in which the authors prefer their articles to be included.

### **Submission Mode**

Contributor are expected to submit a soft copy in MS Word and a hard copy of their articles.

### **Referencing**

CISS Insight follows Chicago Manual for referencing.

### **Address**

Editor CISS Insight

Center for International Strategic Studies

Suite No 506, 5<sup>TH</sup> Floor Evacuee Trust Complex (ETC)

Sir Agha Khan Road F-5/1, Islamabad

Contact: 051-2722343-051-8315410-423

Email: [ciss.org1@gmail.com](mailto:ciss.org1@gmail.com)

CISS was established in October 2010 and has embarked on a challenging task, that of promoting a better understanding of international strategic issues pertaining to our region, both in Pakistan and abroad. We feel that there is a need now, more than ever before, for objective and impartial analyses and assessment of international issues from a Pakistan perspective.



## **Center for International Strategic Studies**

Suite No. 506, 5th Floor, Evacuee Trust complex

Sir Agha Khan Road, Sector F-5/1

Islamabad. Ph: +92-51-83145410-423

**[www.ciiss.org.pk](http://www.ciiss.org.pk)**