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**Book Review**  
**By**  
**MARYAM ZUBAIR**

**Myra MacDonald, *Defeat is an Orphan - How Pakistan Lost the Great South Asian War* (India: Penguin Random House, 2017), 313**

The underlying premise of *Defeat is an Orphan: How Pakistan Lost the Great South Asian War* is how Pakistan, though a nuclear armed state since 1998, lost every time it tried to compete with India and push through its interests. A journalist who covered South Asian affairs for about three decades, the author shines light on the rivalry between India and Pakistan. She explains in detail the events starting from the 1998 nuclear tests; the Kargil war, military standoffs in 2001-2002 and 2008, the dynamics of the countries' involvement in Afghanistan, the problem of Kashmir, militant attacks on Indian soil, failed prospects of peace and the internal dynamics that governed the relationship between the two neighbours.

Although this is a book of history, the author has been unsuccessful in remaining neutral and providing an impartial account of the events she has undertaken to describe. The author's speculation is obvious in many instances. An important such case is the presenting of the Kashmir issue as illogical and irrelevant to relations between the two neighbours. Ms. Macdonald makes the same mistake that many foreign watchers of South Asia make, that Kashmir is an irrational and unreasonable objective, and not a prime interest of the Pakistani state. This is evident throughout the book. She portrays President Musharraf as a military leader who championed the Kashmir cause for personal glory, rather than motivation to

resolve the long standing problem, which could consequently pave the way for lasting peace in South Asia.

Right from the outset of the book, there are some flawed assumptions. The author holds that India's quest for nuclear power was driven more by its consideration of threat from China than Pakistan, and that "India refused to see itself in direct competition with Pakistan, preferring to pair itself with a neighbor of comparable size, namely China." It may be pointed out that China and India are not comparable in size or other elements of national power. However, she subsequently claims that a desire for regional hegemony on India's part coupled with troubled relations with Pakistan influenced the former's policies "far more...than it cared to admit."

Ms. MacDonald repeatedly asserts that the nuclear power status of Pakistan made it careless and overconfident about its policies vis-à-vis India. For example the Kargil operation, she deems, was "far ambitious than the Indian occupation of the passes above Siachen had been" and that Pakistan "simply did not think it through", and put too much stock in its nuclear capability, thinking it would succeed. Such a thinking, however, was present on both sides of the border. In 2000, the Indian defense minister said that New Delhi had realized that the possibility of fighting limited conventional war under the nuclear umbrella remained real. He said at a national conference that "We were able to keep Kargil War limited primarily due to nuclear as well as conventional deterrence." According to the author's analysis, in Kargil as well as in other crises that broke out between the two countries in the future (besides in its overall relationship with India), India's diplomacy served it better in the long run.

The second important theme of the book is the fundamental issue of Pakistan's identity, which the author chooses to term

“insufficiently imagined”<sup>1</sup>, and claiming that Pakistan became “a prisoner of its identity.” However, the author contradicts herself towards the end of the book, claiming that Allama Iqbal’s prediction that the Muslim country would flourish if social democratic principles were to be adopted was proven wrong “not because of any inherent problem with Islam....but because of the nature of the Pakistani state.” As an extension of this, another thesis in the book has been how Pakistan’s policies pertaining to intervention (esp. in Kashmir and Afghanistan as well as support for militancy) were ideologically driven. Additionally, the author also makes conjectures about the Islamic identity of the Pakistani state in the light of its pursuit of national policy. For example, in the context of Kashmir, she writes that Pakistan’s desire for acquiring Kashmir was driven by a “millennial ambition to prove Muslim rule superior to Indian Hindu rule.” This and similar other assertions are not based on authentic sources. The author also underplays India’s role in the 1971 war, wherein it militarily intervened and played a major role in dismemberment of Pakistan. She does not bring into discussion the trauma caused by 1971 war to the Pakistani nation which had pushed it to pursue nationalistic policies, and that in the event of the fall of Dhaka, identity became a significant tool of nation-building in Pakistan, which was then still a young country.

*Defeat is an Orphan* is about a particular narrative, and though not lacking in information, it by no means shows a complete picture of Pakistani foreign policy aspirations, motives and even choices in the post-1998 period. For instance, despite the fact that the chapter on Kargil gives a compelling account of the conflict, in which the author draws on former President

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<sup>1</sup> Coined by Salman Rushdie

Musharraf's own account of the war as well, she failed to highlight how Pakistan's actions in the Kargil reflected its utter desperation regarding non-resolution of the Kashmir issue.

The book is extensively referenced, but a glance at the list of notes at the end of the book shows that the sources used in some chapters are selective and not many Pakistani sources are cited. Moreover, the book's literature is drawn a great deal from the author's independent primary research, e.g. email correspondences and personal interviews with some important players dealing with defence and foreign policies of India and Pakistan. This serves as both an advantage and a drawback. The advantage is credibility. The disadvantage is that the author's interpretation of data is coloured by her personal biases. Moreover, such sources at best can be relied upon to project a country's policy positions and personal opinions, but may not necessarily present an accurate picture of events.

The reading of some chapters shows that the author has tried to fit a partial viewpoint into her broader narrative. In many instances, the author misses a crucial point of view of one side in her telling of the greater, more comprehensive reality. As an illustration, in the chapter on Kashmir titled "in the Name of the People – A Short History of the Kashmir Dispute from 1846 to State Elections in 2002", the author is critical of Pakistan's narrative, writing that "the history of the Valley would be communalized by the Pakistan to paint a picture of Muslim inhabitants oppressed by Hindu rule," whereas the history of the Valley goes back many decades, and was overwhelmed by foreign rule that was not limited to Hindus, but also to Sikhs, British and Muslims themselves. The history of Pakistan, however, starts from the mid-twentieth century and it is therefore only natural that Pakistan built upon the Muslim element of that history. Moreover, the fact remains that the

Partition criteria guidelines, when the British decided to leave the subcontinent, had laid down that princely states which had a majority of Muslims in population will join Pakistan if their territories were contiguous to the newly created state of Pakistan. Similarly, states with Hindu majority would join India.

The theme of the book, as discussed earlier, is the 'blunders' Pakistan committed over the course of its history, made one faulty decision after another, and faced a defeat in what she calls the "Great South Asian War". It may of course be argued that the "war" is not over yet and that history is still incomplete. *Defeat is an Orphan* however provides an insight into the western outlook of the rivalry between the two South Asian neighbours and would also likely be instructive for Pakistani policy makers.

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**Book Review**  
**By**  
**ATTIQ UR REHMAN**

**Hein G. Kiessling, *Faith, Unity, Discipline: The ISI of Pakistan* (Uttar Pradesh: Haper Collins, 2016), 320.**

With a doctorate from Munich, Kiessling is a political scientist and a historian. He spent thirteen years of his life in Pakistan (1989 to 2002) and lived in Quetta for four years and nine years in Islamabad. More than a decade-long stay of Kiessling in Pakistan provided him enough time to observe the civil-military relations in the country and perceived role of intelligence agencies in Islamabad's politics. The book contains a record of Kiessling's observations and analyses which are heavily based on his views of Pakistan's domestic politics and foreign policy. As the head of a German political foundation, the author was able to travel across the country and observe various political developments from close quarters, and cultivated good relations with politicians and retired military officers. Additionally, he was able to interact with several former officers of ISI and Pakistan's military.

The book is divided into twenty short chapters with five appendices. First chapter of the book gives the genesis of ISI when Major General Walter Joseph Cawthorne, a British officer who opted to serve in Pakistan after Partition, established and headed the agency for a few months in 1948. This chapter also gives the main objective of creation of Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate and the task given to it by the state, which was intelligence gathering outside Pakistan in India, particularly in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. From the second chapter to chapter twelve, the book covers the history of events in the country's political arena and the role

allegedly played by ISI in Pakistan's domestic politics under various heads of state and government, from Iskander Mirza to Nawaz Sharif (1958 – 1990). The author then goes on to discuss his views on country's political development in the subsequent periods. Kiessling then discusses in some detail the alleged role of ISI in insurgencies in Indian Punjab and in the North-Eastern states which makes interesting reading.

The regional security environment of South Asia based on New Delhi's offensive neighbourhood policy was the major driving force, according to Kiessling, behind Islamabad's secret intelligence operations outside its borders in the initial years of its establishment. The wars of 1965 and 1971 with India coupled with American alliance during Soviet invasion of Kabul were instrumental in increasing the ISI's role domestically as well as beyond Pakistan's borders. Moreover, the three military regimes of Ayub, Zia, and Musharraf created space for increased role of Inter-Services Intelligence Agency in domestic politics. According to Kiessling, New Delhi's belligerent attitude against Islamabad and its role in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and its connections with Russia and Iran forced Pakistan to empower its intelligence agency. Interestingly, the author reiterates what may not be known to many, that internal security wing of ISI was created by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, probably for the same reason.

The author has narrated in some detail the overall state of civil-military relations in the country. In doing so, however, he fails to take into account the peculiar political climate of the country and the threat posed by Pakistan's neighbours to its security, which he had highlighted earlier. An analysis based on these factors would have provided a more insightful picture of Pakistan's civil-military relations and ISI's activities. He views the cross-border clandestine activities of the ISI in 1990s as

primarily designed to destabilize the neighbouring states but does not bring into discussion activities of foreign secret agencies working to destabilize Pakistan internally. Though the book is about ISI and its role in domestic politics, its weakness is that it does not adequately cover India's involvement in Pakistan's internal matters.

*Faith, Unity and Discipline: the ISI of Pakistan* is mostly descriptive and narrates the history of Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate. It is not an analytical work of ISI's role and operations, its success and its failures in a complex political and security environment of South and West Asia. The book includes author's pictures with Pakistan's senior retired military and intelligence officers, giving an impression that the contents of the book would have information which was earlier not available in public domain. The book however does not live up to that expectation.

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**Book Review**  
**By**  
**MEHREEN BINTE**  
**TALHA**

**Peter Bergen, *The United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists and How Do We Stop Them?* (New York: Broadway Books, 2016), 397.**

Peter Bergen is a renowned journalist who has authored seven books to date, three of which were New York times bestsellers. He has written extensively on terrorism and is on the editorial board of the "Studies in Conflict & Terrorism", a leading scholarly journal on the subject of terrorism. The author has also held teaching positions at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

His latest book focuses on the broader issue of terrorism inside the United States; how individuals are radicalized, the methods used to identify terrorist plots and the instances when state institutions have failed to curb them. Bergen draws a parallel in the opening chapter, as Hamza Khan and his siblings planned to embark on a journey to the 'perfect Islamic state'. He observes that they were not unlike Americans in the 1930's who had thronged to Spain to show support to the antifascists fighting Franco.

These ideas of disillusionment with the American government and an increasing interest in 'Binladenist' ideology are a consistent motivating factor with many individuals who become radicalized. But the author notes that out of 360 terrorist plots that have been launched in the US since 9/11 four out of five individuals involved in the plotting were American citizens. He dispels the myth that exist about these 'homegrown' terrorists.

Using case studies; Bergen shows that they were not ill-educated, they had not recently immigrated, they had not always been religiously inclined and they showed no discernible mental health issues. They were like other ordinary Americans. The crucial questions arise then; why they chose to do what they did, how they were able to get in contact with jihadist recruiters and how such individuals can be identified in the future.

An important theme of the book is to understand the domestic terrorist threat to the US and identify the best strategies in tracking and countering them. Bergen explains how the process of 'jihadisation' is a gradual process where a potential recruit becomes influenced by 'Binladenist' Islamist ideology, becoming increasingly intolerant of any deviation from their beliefs even towards friends and family. From then on the jihadist begins to isolate himself, as in the case of Carlos Bledsoe who quit school and married a woman who shared his rigid beliefs, eventually attempting, by any means, to travel to a 'field of jihad'

A key theme in this book explores the importance of leader-less jihad, first explored by Sageman, an important theorist in foreign policy. In his 2004 book *'Understanding Terror Networks'* he proposes that social bonds could sometimes play a bigger part than ideology "motivated as much by in-group love as by out-group hate." A more significant contribution to this debate was that of Abu Musab al-Suri who critiqued Al-Qaeda's top down organization structure which he thinks is easy to fracture for western intelligence by capturing just one of its member. Suri instead proposed a model for jihad enacted by individuals or small cells working globally. Such a strategy would create an organization with so many heads that it will be impossible to decapitate: a true hydra.

The author also discusses the seriousness of the threat posed by leaderless jihad as seen in cases like Nidal Hasan, Umar Farouk Abdulmutalib and Carlos Bledsoe. A leaderless system according to the book was largely more successful because of the expansion of social media networks in recent years. Bergen makes an interesting point regarding counterterrorism, which is especially relevant in the current political climate. In his opinion there is no dearth of intelligence available to the CIA or FBI. What really brings results is the accumulation of *relevant* intelligence and effective coordination between different intelligence agencies.

A failure of either can have catastrophic effects as Bergen explains with the help of the case of 'underwear bomber' Umar Farouk Abdulmutalib whose father had tipped off US officials about his intentions well before he tried to board a flight with the intention of blowing it up. Miscalculations on the part of these agencies can be dangerous as well, as they may stray perilously close to violating civil rights. A startling fact to consider is that since 9/11 the FBI has engineered at least 30 fake terrorist plots in order to 'flush out' jihadist sympathizers or organizers. None of these operations was successful.

Bergen also discusses a counter to the Sageman theory of the homegrown threat by using the theory of Bruce Hoffman, who asserts that even the worst of the homegrown threats have not been able to inflict the kind of damage that a full-scale Al-Qaeda attack could. Bergen's own position on the matter is more objective and he points out that both methods of attack require strong coordination among terrorist leaders. Many 'lone wolf' threats were also provided funds by the jihadist organizations.

Perhaps the most salient focus of this book is the effect that the expansion of the internet, has had on the propagation of Salafist

ideas. The launch of the webzine, "Inspire" by Samir Khan featured jaunty articles like 'Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom' heralding a new shift in the war against terror where al-Qaeda content was presented in colorful graphics. Such a shift strengthened the case for leaderless jihad, where individuals like Khan and Chesser could do jihad from the safety of their computer chairs.

The author also notes that for a long time counterterrorism studies have focused on analysing what *motivates* homegrown terrorists, but he contends that trying to find logic in what is an essentially illogical act is a fruitless exercise. It is important to identify the indicators of a radicalized recruit but not so important to understand them. In order to fight them it is more relevant to know how the terrorists obtain information to carry out their attacks, the process for choosing their targets and their coordination channels with other terrorist groups.

It is baffling that despite their gory and highly publicized executions, horrific torture methods and draconian laws, ISIS has had thirty thousand foreign recruits pouring into the war torn regions of Syria and Iraq.

*'The United States of Jihad'* is a timely book; it is intensely relevant in the current political climate and offers an objective analysis and a concise history of domestic terrorist operations in the United States since 9/11. His analysis not only extends to jihadist terrorism but also, to how an ideological dimension has been charged up by both the media and government with regard to terrorism. The fact is, it is no longer accurate to say that a '*clash of civilizations*' is occurring. Bergen emphasizes a consistent need for decisions to be made based on *relevant* intelligence by agencies. Alternatively, it is important to engage with groups like Islamic State through the medium with which

they have garnered such popularity; social media. This book is a must read for academics focused on counterterrorism research, political analysts as well as anyone citizens who want to familiarize themselves with the current debates on domestic terrorism.

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