

**Pakistan and a World in Disorder — A Grand Strategy for  
the Twenty-first Century by Javid Husain  
Palgrave Macmillan (2016)**

Mahwish Hafeez \*

The book titled *Pakistan and a World in Disorder — A Grand Strategy for the Twenty-First Century* discusses Pakistan's policies in the 21st century at length. Taking advantage of his vast experience, the author of the book Ambassador Javid Husain, a career diplomat who has served on important positions around the world, ponders Pakistan's foreign policy and its achievements and shortcomings. He argues that Pakistan's foreign policy is "out of sync" (p.1) with the realities both at regional and global level and, therefore, a review is imperative. To some extent, the clash between different ministries and organisations in Pakistan is responsible for this situation. The author, therefore, makes a strong case for the adoption of a coherent and well thought-out grand strategy.

The writer argues that the end of the Cold War gave way to unrealistic hopes of a world order based on justice and fair play. However, unfortunately the major powers have been showing blatant disregard to the principles of international law and the UN charter while dealing with issues of peace and war, the case of invasion of Iraq being in point. To be peaceful and progressive, the world order needs a right balance of power and principles. He predicts that the US supremacy, in military terms, will remain unchallenged for at least first half of the 21st century. Nonetheless, other countries, like China, Brazil etc. will continue to grow economically and play an increasingly important role in world affairs.

On the regional front, while tracing the history of China-Pakistan friendship, Mr. Husain points out that this relationship grew stronger due to the convergence of interests which is likely to persist throughout the 21st century. At the same time, China's rapid growth, in economic and military terms would be the most momentous development in the 21st century. The author feels that China should gradually also work towards making political reforms, failing which social tensions are likely to

---

\* *The book reviewer is Research Fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.*

increase. At present, China's military budget is far below the military budget of the US. However, this situation is likely to change because of the difficulties the US has been facing economically since last many years. Ambassador Husain very rightly points out that the US would use all powers at its disposal to resist China's growing influence and power. Highlighting the importance of CPEC, the author also makes a concrete suggestion that Pakistan should pay more attention to the rapidly growing ASEAN region.

While turning his attention to India, the author insists that Pakistan, while formulating its policies, should take into account India's growth as a major regional power and its regional and global strategic goals. On the Asian continent, Indian economy is the second largest after China. As a result, India is also spending huge amount on acquisition of modern weapons and defence budget. In strategic terms, India is a member of important world forums like G-20 and is an aspirant of permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. Further, the US has given an important role to India in its efforts to contain China. Hence, it should not come as a surprise that India seeks its hegemony in this particular region. The author suggests that Pakistan should refrain from any adventurism but, at the same time, should also not adopt an appeasement policy which, the current government seems to be doing. The writer, feels that internal political harmony, cultural identity and economic prosperity are the only ways through which Pakistan can challenge Indian hegemony in the region. Further, Pakistan should take a firm stand while dealing with India on the issues that bedevil the bilateral relationship. Finally, Pakistan should further improve its relations with China, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Russia to balance India's power advantage. On the issue of regional cooperation, the writer feels that Pakistan should focus more on Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) instead of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Here again, the argument presented by the author is valid as unlike SAARC, ECO member-states have common cultural heritage, geographical proximity, absence of serious disputes, their economies are complementary and there are no hegemonic designs among the member states.

Chapter six extensively deals with Afghanistan. After narrating the events that led to the civil war in Afghanistan, the author laments the fact

that this civil war had an extremely damaging effect on Pakistan's relations with Iran. This situation was fully exploited by India. The policy of supporting Taliban was counterproductive for Pakistan. Not only Pakistan was isolated internationally, this policy also encouraged extremism in the Pakistani society. This assertion by the author cannot be contradicted as it is a fact that Pakistan has suffered enormously at the hands of the extremists. It has lost thousands of its civilians and security personnel in a most brutal way while fighting against these forces. The writer suggests that Pakistan should follow the policy of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs; encourage intra-Afghan dialogue that is aimed at national reconciliation; deny sanctuary to Afghans that are still fighting; extend support to Afghans in rebuilding and reaching out to all groups and factions so that the bitter past may be left behind.

In the proceeding chapter, the writer discusses in detail the era of glory of Muslim civilisation and its ultimate decline. In recent times, the emergence of groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda has further damaged this religion of enlightenment.

He concludes his book by making some recommendations for Pakistan's grand strategy. These include the acceleration of economic growth; the adoption of non-adventurist foreign policy and an innovative military strategy. He further argues that Pakistan also needs to stabilise itself politically and deal effectively with the menace of terrorism.

This book provides a deep insight into the changing scenarios around the world and makes a critical analysis of the shortcomings in Pakistan's policies in an anarchic world. Unlike other books that are available in the market, this particular book is unique in the sense that it not only presents the mistakes that were made by the policy makers in the past but also provides realistic recommendations that do not lack depth and detail. The writer, being a career diplomat with a vast experience, provides policy makers a great opportunity to formulate policies that are best suited in the prevailing regional and global environment. This book is equally useful for students of international relations, members of academia, scholars or a general reader for that matter.