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Yunas Samad. *The Pakistan-US Conundrum: Jihadists, the Military and the People–The Struggle for Control.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. xv + 336 pp. $30.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-70282-9; ISBN 978-0-231-80065-5.

Reviewed by Robert Nichols (Richard Stockton College)
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Resolving the Conundrum

Of the many new nation-states that struggled in the postcolonial world, Pakistan experienced the full range of national and transnational stresses felt in new countries from Africa to Southeast Asia. All had to negotiate the internal distribution of political power between diverse legacy state institutions and newly empowered regional and ethnic communities. All had to respond to external Cold War pressures and incentives. From the late 1970s many postcolonial states have faced emerging religious identities and claims. All have had to adjust to and, often, attempt to mitigate the effects of global flows of capital, labor, cultural material, and media.

Experienced voices have discussed Pakistan's many problems, recently Anatol Lieven in *Pakistan A Hard Country* (2012), and described with complex nuance the challenges faced by state-building officials. More abstract policy discussions, sometimes literally titled "What's Wrong with Pakistan?," as in Robert Kaplan's *Foreign Policy* article of July/August 2012, often reduce the dynamics and outcomes of decades of history to apparent, often facile, narratives about the shaping and limiting influences of geography, culture, and religion.

For a Western audience trying to understand Pakistan within the set of moral and policy concerns and dilemmas that ebbed and flowed after September 11, 2001, Yunas Samad offers an interdisciplinary study arguing that the endless details of national and regional political, ethnic, and religious conflict are best analyzed from conceptual and theoretical perspectives that transcend foreign policy interests and partisan discourses. Samad further situates events within dynamic social, historical, and global spheres. Established structures of power are being challenged by organizations and alliances that assert new forms of agency operating at personal, community, and transnational levels. Unfortunately, many have chosen coercion as a means to maintain or gain access to power. Many prefer conflict to compromise. Samad discusses the many issues facing Pakistan in fine detail, in a country and world of increased economic globalization, uneven development, horizontal inequalities, and violence.

Many books commenting about the crisis in Pakistan, especially ones written in immediate response after September 11, 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, have suffered from thin knowledge of the region and relevant scholarship. Others have presented too general a survey of the many political parties, religious groups, military interests, economic problems, and foreign policy issues. Some well-informed books have focused on one or two favored issues such as jihadi politics, the Pakistan military, or relations with India or the United States. But the focused volumes often shortchange discussion of crucial variables and relational or transnational links. If Yunas Samad began his project in reaction to events and U.S. policy choices made after September 11, 2001 and Iraq, he recognized the need to avoid the self-limiting choices of analysts and scholars. Instead, equipped with a full knowledge of Pakistan's society, dominant institutions, political economy, and diplomatic history, Samad presents a strong argument that the many issues involved, including Pakistan-U.S. relations, jihadists, the military, Pakistani society, Afghanistan, and India, need to be analyzed as always operating within ever active fields of regional and global power.

Within Pakistan, society has been victimized as the postcolonial state has remained dominated by non-democratic institutions and political parties. This, even as the American "global war on terrorism" and the forces of globalizing economic relationships have weakened the ability of Pakistan's state structures to function much beyond simple institutional competition and self-interest. The volume's main title, *The Pakistan-US Conundrum*, points to Samad's sense that state actors in both countries need to make good-faith efforts to seriously reflect upon, and revise, world views, historical claims, and commit-

ments to accountable, democratic political processes. The ten chapters of the book, in three parts, situate the key issues of the post-September 11, 2001 decade in theoretical and historical perspective, including discussing Al Qaeda and Islamic activism within the framework of social movements, especially in response to state authorities viewed as unresponsive and illegitimate.

Each chapter has a short introductory essay and then theoretical discussion that shapes understanding of comprehensive, often densely detailed events. Of special interest to each chapter are prescriptive policy suggestions, advocating and outlining steps towards the democratic reallocation of political power, more equitable control of economic resources, and institutional accountability grounded in the rule of law. Chapter 1 presents a critique of U.S. discourses of "terrorism" and the unilateral deployment of military power. Samad notes alternatives to post-September 11, 2001 foreign policy choices and that self-interested definitions of "terrorism" may excuse a "state terrorism" of violence deployed in nominal self-defense. Such violence may not appear as a legitimate use of power by many in the affected region.

Chapter 2 critiques the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. Decisions were made that guaranteed instability in a post-Taliban Afghan political system and the subsequent spread of "Talibanisation" in the border areas of Pakistan. Characteristically, the chapter offers a full survey of events of benefit even to regional experts. Samad concludes tentatively that "combining a military surge with negotiations and bringing onboard the Pakistani army in the future of Afghanistan is perhaps a step in the right direction and may allow the US and its allies to extricate themselves from the region" (p. 47).

Chapter 3 traces arguments about Al Qaeda, including its character as a "network," "a loosely connected social movement of people who have shared experiences going back to Afghanistan and ideologically operate within a broadly similar value system" (p. 49). Samad notes analysis of the "inter-reaction of the global and local (globalisation) that allows global processes to develop significance at the local level only when they intersect with local processes." He recognizes as persuasive an argument "that most *jihadi* groups are not in favour of global *jihad* and their agenda is primarily local, which has considerable implications for the US War on Terror" (pp. 49-50). Global flows of Western thought and "Third Worldist and Marxist traditions of revolution akin to Pan-Arabism and Pan-Africanism" had influence among Muslim activists, who reimagined Islam in hybrid ways. Samad suggests that "Osama bin Laden's strategy–a mixture of anti-Imperialism and Islamic radicalism–is closer to Guevarism where violence is seen as a trigger for social change" (p. 52).

The remainder of the book connects the history of the 1980s with enduring problems of the early twenty-first century. Chapters in part 2, "Revenge of History," survey the "Afghan factor," including the history and legacies of the "jihad" against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Islamization, the "*mullah*-military alliance," and the rise of Islamic social movements are discussed. The international intervention in this period generated a host of related stresses that negatively impacted Pakistan's state and society. Authoritarian tendencies were reinforced even as ethnic and religious tensions led to division and conflict.

In part 3, "Cry for Freedom and Pakistan," chapters document the domestic legacies of the U.S. intervention in the region in the 1980s and after September 11, 2001. Samad successfully reviews multiple struggles for authority and control, between those possessing levers of centralized, authoritarian power and challengers. Ethnic and sub-nationalist groups have been empowered locally by transnational processes. Voices of civil society remain ineffective, but persist. Samad suggests "alternative strategies" to enduring hegemonic political control. He highlights "that the issue of accommodating cultural diversity is associated with the decentralization of power and this can be done within a federal framework" (p. 229).

A kind of postcolonial colonialism, derived from the Government of India Act of 1935, influenced Pakistan's constitutional allocation of power and created "internal imperialism" (p. 229), something associated with the predominant role of the Punjab Province, that now has perhaps 80 million people. Samad offers remedies, from the redrawing of political boundaries to the decentralization of political power, all to be achieved through democratic consensus and the genuine accommodation of cultural diversity. Without denying the complexities of the moment, including that of defusing the India-Pakistan tension discussed in chapter 10, Samad mentions the possibility of accommodating ethnic difference, reorganizing provinces, "federalism combined with devolution," positive discrimination for minorities, and a multicultural imagining of Pakistan along the lines of Singapore (p. 234). In a deeply realistic book about confrontation and power, that touches on all the familiar issues, from nuclear assets to Kashmir, Samad continues to envision a transformed future. Peace in Afghanistan and with India,

downsizing an "overdeveloped military establishment" (p. 257), being responsive to the people, good governance, and democracy might be ideals, but they could all be nurtured and promoted by the United States, if only particular state interests, on all sides, were reevaluated and given priority to resolve the region's enduring conundrum.

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