

Book Review
By
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Bruce Riedel, *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America and the Future of Global Jihad* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institute, 2011).pp.144

This volume titled “*Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America and the Future of Global Jihad*” is written by Bruce Riedel. The author has previously served in important positions in the United States government such as service in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Advisor to four US Presidents, on Middle East and South Asia, and chairman of President Obama’s interagency review board of policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan during his first term in 2008. Bruce Riedel is currently a senior fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East policy of Brookings institute.

This book is an American perspective on the evolution and conduct of forces battling United States today in the Islamic World particularly in Afghanistan, and it also examines how US-Pakistan relations have unfolded over the years. The target audience of the book is academic researchers, practitioners of policy and strategy in the fields of security, foreign policy and importantly the observers of US-Pakistan relations. The book is divided into seven chapters, and the sequence is set in a coherent manner that fits the narrative built by the author on the subject.

US-Pakistan relations continue to be an important theme of discussion both as an academic pursuit and as foreign policy discourse within Pakistan and United States. This is particularly true for Pakistan because many in this country believe that US is part of the problem rather than the solution and an unreliable “friend”. Reidel aptly brings out this fact through describing multiple international surveys conducted by credible sources that in Pakistan, US outpolls India as the bad guy.

The book dwells on what is perceived by United States and the West as “global jihad” and “Islamic extremism” in the broader context of US – Pakistan relations. Author’s primary argument in the book is that United States and Pakistan, with support of some Middle Eastern countries, created forces which now need to be countered and confronted, and that Pakistan today is the epicenter of radical Islamic forces which constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

The narrative presented in this book, in many ways, is consistent with the official United States narrative on political and strategic developments in Afghanistan and

South Asia. The author instead of objectively analyzing various aspects of the problem relies heavily on official US narrative of blaming Pakistan for all the problems in the region. This assertion, however, remains far from the factual position as the author fails to highlight US failure in Afghanistan, its role in destabilizing the region and indifference to Pakistan's legitimate security concerns.

The tone of the author matches the narrative when he talks of targets, redlines, unilateralism and verifications. For example, in the concluding chapter titled 'Helping Pakistan' the author states:

"But Washington should also be abundantly clear that there are behaviors it cannot tolerate, the most important being collusion with terror....that the days of double dealing need to end..."

With three decades of experience in United States government in different capacities, more recently as chairman of President's Obama's first term Af-Pak review committee, Bruce Reidel has explained some interesting aspects with regards to US policy in the region. For example he talks about changing Pakistan Army's India centric threat perception, resolution of Kashmir dispute on existing territorial status quo, keeping intelligence pressures on Pakistan through developing capabilities inside the country and recognition of Afghan – Pakistan border.

It can be seen very clearly that the policies mentioned by Mr. Reidel are already being implemented by the US in this region as a result of which we have seen Pakistan's position in the region steadily erode in the overall strategic equation.

With regards to the text, the language is simple and easy to understand for the readers, something that is difficult to achieve considering the complex problems under discussion. The flow of narrative is coherent, consistent and easy to follow.