

Book Reviews

Title: **Aid, Politics and the War of Narratives in the US-Pakistan Relations - A Case Study of Kerry Lugar Berman Act**

Author: **Hussain Nadim**

Publisher: **Routledge, 2023, 125**

The author employs the decolonial perspectives to examine the politics and narratives surrounding the US Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009, also called the Kerry Lugar Berman (KLB) Act.¹ The act authorised the payment of \$1.5 billion per year in non-military assistance to the government of Pakistan for the next five years, from 2010 to 2014, with a provision to extend funding for an additional five years on meeting specific benchmarks. The act was severely criticised and generated a debate in Pakistan. One of the significant differences from past practices was the inclusion of conditions aimed at increasing the Pakistani military's accountability and limiting funding use.

KLB restricted US funding to develop military capabilities against India and approved the use of funds for counterterrorism operations only. It required the secretary of state to certify that Pakistan's military and intelligence services are working in harmony with US interests and no longer assisting "extremist and terrorist" organisations and that cooperation on non-proliferation has persisted. The most contentious article was the US vow to fund democratically elected governments exclusively. This condition thwarted efforts to stage a military coup and signalled a distinct break from past practices. The Government members considered the KLB the best possible given the circumstances and success of a democratic government. The opponents regarded it as an attack on Pakistan's sovereignty that conceded Pakistan's decision-making authority and control over the expenditure of funds. Analysts saw the measure as dividing the national polity along the lines of People, Army, and Parliament on one side and the president on the other.

The author examines aid, politics, and the contest of narratives in US-Pakistan relations from a decolonial perspective. A novel mode of thinking, these perspectives criticise the Western-dominated political, social, and economic system and focus on the colonial/racial experience as a result of the issue in embodiment theories, knowledge production, and economic exploitation. Dr. Nadim employs the security-development nexus, a corollary of modernity/coloniality - a fundamental notion in decolonial thought to further his argument. The dyad argues that human

¹ The act was named after the two US Senators — John Kerry, a Democrat, and Dick Lugar, a Republican who authored the legislation unanimously approved by the US Congress on September 24 and signed by incumbent President Obama on October 15, 2009.

progress and prosperity brought about by the expansion of Western civilisation is accompanied by coloniality - a complex matrix of power historically constructed and controlled by Western men and institutions - a darker side of modernity. It emphasises the Western countries' use of redemption rhetoric cloaked in various languages to serve their objectives. Initially, the discourse of salvation centred on rescuing people by Christian conversion. The second was modernity's rhetoric to civilise people through colonialism, followed by the rhetoric of freedom and democracy and, after that, by the rhetoric of progress and development. The security-development dyad considers security and development as mutually inclusive. It contends that there can be no security without development and vice versa, beginning with the unwavering assumption that a safer world is only achievable if impoverished nations are given a genuine opportunity to grow. The author argues that Western donors and politicians use the security-development nexus to legitimise their regulatory or interventionist actions in the developing world on the pretext of protecting their national security interests against the threats emanating from underdeveloped regions. The concept has its roots in the colonial era and the cold war period.²

The book has eight chapters divided into three sections. The first section discusses the security-development nexus and decolonial perspectives to explain the politics of assistance. It argues that Western donor nations use the nexus to further their interests in the developing and underdeveloped states. In the second section, the author asserts that the US administration employed the act to transfer ownership and the burden of blame for the war on terrorism onto Pakistan. It describes how the US operationalises the dyad to accomplish its objectives through discursive and practical means: first, by creating a strategic construct within the region by combining Afghanistan and Pakistan into the AfPak discourse; and second, by influencing Pakistan's security policy through specific provision within the KLB act, including direct funding of covert operations in Pakistan. The author goes on to explain how Pakistan employed a narrative of being a weak state to maintain long-term relations with the US and created complex interdependency; and how Pakistan managed to develop its military forces and maintained a power balance with India by fighting the US war on terrorism. This section concludes that Pakistan, rather than being a passive player, played a crucial part in co-

² Under the Marshall Plan, the US provided \$12 billion (equivalent to \$120 billion today) in aid to reconstruct and develop Europe. The core purpose, however, was to use development as a way to secure Western interests against the spread of communism. Two agencies were established in the US the CIA in 1947 and the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) (the predecessor of USAID) in 1948 to secure American interests in Western Europe against the Soviet Union.

producing the nexus created by the act. Furthermore, despite the uproar over how the KLB Act affected Pakistan's policies, the military used it to preserve a military force balance with India. The final section focuses on the US use of the act to cause a domestic power shift in favour of the civilian government in Pakistan, characterising it as a precise instance of Pakistan's sovereignty being violated. According to the author, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government supported the KLB act to achieve its political goals of achieving civilian dominance and balancing civil-military ties to its advantage. It emphasises that the act was a collaborative effort between Pakistan's government and the US administration; both deemed Pakistan Army an adversary that needed to be restrained. The KLB Act was repealed early in its third year because its goals of gaining easy access to the ground for intelligence collection, covert activities under the pretext of development, and re-engineering the nation's power structure were allegedly accomplished.

The book discusses US-Pakistan relations through a decolonial perspective to evaluate the nuanced interplay of power between the two countries. The book's central claim is that the donor and recipient nations co-produced the security-development nexus, as embodied in the KLB act, as part of a dialectical power contest. It is an interesting read for the policy maker, national security students and IR scholars to understand the discursive US-Pakistan relations. The book endeavours to de-politicise the US-Pakistan relations debate in the media and argues that Pakistan is a 'victim' of American imperialism that beguiles American gullibility. It argues that the security-development nexus established an intricate interdependency in the US-Pakistan relationship, wherein each side ensured enduring efforts to achieve their goals through cooperation. The author has made a significant contribution by illuminating the prevailing Western centrism in IR and highlighting that relevant weaker states possess the ability to exert their agency in the realities generated by the dominant discourse.

Reviewed by Syed Wajeeh Ul Hassan, PhD IR Scholar, University of Management and Technology, Lahore

Title: Great Potential, Many Pitfalls Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative
Author: Bijan Omrani
Publisher: Routledge, 2021, 118

Bijan Omrani, Editor of the Journal Asian Affairs critically evaluates the potential as well the pitfalls of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) trade and infrastructure project by exploring some related themes.

This edited book is divided into seven chapters, each contributed by a different author. These chapters were presented at a joint conference of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs and the Woodrow Wilson Centre. The editor has brought together these chapters for the sake of an advanced clarity on the subject. The primary data sources comprise of national and international statistics, such as the World Bank Databank, as well as governmental documents made public, including the Pentagon report.

The works of Shirley Yu, Raffaello Pantucci, Nadege Rolland, and Arif Rafiq explore the definition of the Belt and Road initiative, deconstruct the mega project and talk of a transforming global order. The author refers to the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) as a means to the ultimate end, and not an end itself, of China's alleged 'grand strategy' of establishing a new global order, such as the Pax-Sinica. However, much of this is merely based on assumptions, rather than facts and statistics. While the author rankles the reader's curiosity, it also brings about a general disbelief. The apparent lack of fact-based arguments also brings about an air of scepticism about the writings.

In "The Belt and Road Initiative: Modernity, Geopolitics and the Developing Global Order," Shirley Yu effectively breaks down the BRI project into 3 premises, which provide a reader an over lay of the motives and history behind China's grand strategy of trade dominance. This chapter also sets a theme for the remainder of the book. In my opinion, the chapters that follow are merely a repetition of the themes discussed in Shirley Yu's work, which the focus is on the concepts laid down in the preceding chapters.

Yu talks about how the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is not about economics, rather it is economics in black and white on its own. It is built on the Chinese President Xi Jinping's 'two-pronged' vision of Modernity and the other of Common Destiny. The authors of this book staunchly believe that BRI is merely an extension of these two visions of the Chinese government, if not anything more. On one hand, the Modernization vision is all about bringing economic prosperity through open trade corridors and infrastructure developing in BRI-oriented countries of the region, which would in turn lead China to establishing its economic dominance in the heartlands of Eurasia. On the other hand, the Common Destiny vision stems from archaic religious beliefs, similar to the Manifest Destiny of the

U.S. post World War II. The book argues that the Common Destiny vision is an interpretation of the Chinese believe of their natural right of supremacy and dominance over other communities and countries in the world. However, unlike the U.S policy, China is said to believe that successful implementation of this vision can only be achieved through a win-win economic situation for all countries involved in the BRI with China at the top level of the hierarchy.

Raffaello Pantucci, in his chapter "China in Central Asia: The First Strand of the Silk Road Economic Belt," talks about a major incentive in the way of the Belt Road Initiative: connectivity. The primary objective behind China's BRI project is to connect its Xinjiang region to the rest of the Central Asia in order to quell civil unrest in the province, bring about economic development and prosperity, as well as open up global trade routes for the rest of the country. To incentivize regional countries to take part in this trade and infrastructure development project, the Chinese foreign policy has a "natural overspill" into the regional politics of each of these countries. In addition to the traditional infrastructure development in the forms of rail, road, and sea ports, Chinese companies have also undertaken telecommunication infrastructure projects, such as those of fibre optics telecommunication lines, in Central and South Asia. Moreover, bilateral military exercises, exchange of military equipment, educational scholarship programs etc.

However, the pitfalls of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) are numerous, the most influential of these being the international opposition and the domestic grievances associated with this high-speed rail of economic development. Domestic anxieties have largely been centred around economic risks, with many Chinese academics and policy officials voicing concerns that the adverse movements and fluctuations in interest rates are creating a volatile bubble of false economic security. They have warned the Chinese government time and again that unless these risks are managed and mitigated, the consequences in the near future would be dire indeed for China as well as other Belt and Road countries.

Consequently, the initial pushback has been varying in degree and manner. In the early years of its planning and development, many Western countries, especially the United States perceived the Belt Road Initiative as ill-conceived and ill-defined, giving them all the more reasons not to formulate defensive strategies against BRI in their foreign policy for over a decade. However, with alarmingly fast-paced execution of this trillion-dollar project has given the Western global circle sufficient reasons to be wary of the true intentions of China in the backdrop. The United States and the United Kingdom are staunch opponents of the BRI, criticise China for its predatory economics in the Central and South Asia due to its excessive use of debt traps for pulling developing countries of the region into its bandwagon.

In my opinion, while there is an element of truth to the allegations and criticism laid down in this book, a significant proportion of these is merely based on assumptions and hearsay. The authors fail to incorporate relevant figures and reliable information to support their arguments. While there is no denying the fact that the BRI is indeed an attempt to rival the Marshall Plan of the United States in asserting the Chinese economic dominance, the theory of the Common Destiny vision that reeks of prejudice and nepotism is not a reliable account of the steps taken to build the Belt Road Initiative from scratch. Moreover, it should be noted that a major criticism of this book is also based on the fact that the authors here frequently project BRI as an economic tool for China's world dominance and spiritual superiority. Critics of this school of thought staunchly argue that BRI should only be evaluated in economic and political contexts, and should not be seen as anything other than a mega trade project.

Reviewed by Air Commodore Sajjad Hussain, PhD Scholar at the Department of IR, National Defence University, Islamabad.

Title: Global Pakistan: Pakistan's Role in the International System
Author: Jochen Hippler and Vaqar Ahmed
Publisher: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Pakistan Office, 2022, 292.

Globalization is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon. The advancement in the means of communication and technology has played the role of a catalyst in intensifying international economic, social and political integration thus accelerating the process of globalization. Pakistan, a member of the global community, competes economically and on cultural, geo-political and diplomatic fronts. Jochen Hippler and Vaqar Ahmed's book, *Global Pakistan: Pakistan's Role in the International System*, explores Pakistan's role in the international system and the challenges posed to it due to globalization. The book comprises eleven chapters including an introduction by Jochen Hippler, former Country Director Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Pakistan. The book in a broader context addresses three themes: (i) political, cultural, religious and geo-strategic impact of globalization on Pakistan; (ii) changing global geo-political landscape; and (iii) integration of state economy with the global economy.

The book assesses the religious, political and cultural impact of globalization on Pakistan including challenges of globalization faced by the country. This theme contains three chapters: (i) *Nation States in the Era of Globalization: What Pakistan can learn from others?* by Hassan Jalil Shah and Aamir Khattak; (ii) *Globalization, Islam and Culture; Lessons from Pakistan's Occluded Histories* by Feriyal Amal Aslam and Ayesha Rasheed Dar; and (iii) *Risks, Challenges and Opportunities in Globalization: Carving a Role for Pakistan* by Mustafa Hyder Sayed. They assess that in a globalized environment, several countries in the world including South Korea, Vietnam and Bangladesh have a close resemblance to the challenges faced by Pakistan. Islamabad should learn from those who have successfully traversed the difficult path and surmounted the ostensibly insurmountable challenges identical to those being faced by Pakistan (pg. 34).

Feriyal Amal Aslam and Ayesha Rasheed Dar applied Jan Naderveen Pieterse's model of hybridity and its premises that the "Muslims world is a fertile area of hybridization" for interrogating the impact of globalization on Pakistani society and culture. The authors argue that Pakistan on one hand aspires to remain a modern Islamic democracy with the commitment to modern democratic freedom and on the other hand, a theocratic tendency, inherent in the freedom movement and later co-opted in its constitutional and legal provisions by successive governments, requires a manifest adherence to Islamic laws and morality. Mustafa Hyder Sayed points out that the Foreign Office of Pakistan should have "Targeted Diplomacy" by engaging civil society, think tanks, pressure

groups and media of the host countries in shaping public opinion in the interest of Pakistan (pg. 225). In curbing the economic crisis of Pakistan, there is a need for the “Islamabad Consensus” to make a 15-20-year economic policy that is adhered to regardless of which party is in power (pg. 229).

The following two chapters discuss changing global geo-political landscape and its impact on Pakistan’s foreign policy-making process: (i) *Global Geo-Political Changes, International Political System and Pakistan* by Zahid Shahab Ahmed; and (ii) *A Rearticulation of Pakistan’s Foreign Policy in the Wake of the Twenty-First Century Challenges* by Huma Naz Siddiqui Baqai. Both authors suggest that Pakistan should try to maintain a balanced relationship with the US and China. The authors recommend that Pakistan should remain committed to “connectivity” and try to exploit CPEC and New Quad – signed in May 2021 by the US, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan for regional support to Afghan peace process – as golden opportunities.

The succeeding two chapters are dedicated to the impact of the global economy on Pakistan including (i) *High-quality Education to Survive in the Global Economy – Pakistan’s Perspective* by Fareeha Adil, Rabia Tabassum, and Nudrat Fatima; (ii) *Supporting Export Competitiveness in Pakistan’s Industrial Sector Amid Covid-19* by Syed Shujaat Ahmed and Vaqar Ahmed. According to international practices, several international study programme and internships can help in transforming market orientation and required skills for the students, that includes the Japanese professional development method of Lesson Study, real-world learning, use of technology, role play and video-based reflections. Syed Shujaat Ahmed and Vaqar Ahmed analyze that the pandemic has led to changes in the production, cost of trade, and quality standards demanded by international buyers. Therefore, it is important to develop rapid evidence-use systems including trade portals and commodity-wise dashboards which inform both buyers and sellers in case of disruption (pg. 269).

Apart from this, some chapters comprise miscellaneous themes including climate change, emigration from Pakistan and Pakistan’s role in the UN. The chapter on *The Effects of the Global Changes in Climate on Pakistan* by Fahad Saeed and Kashif Majid Salik, traces Pakistan’s various initiatives to mitigate the climate change impact including, the “ten billion Trees Afforestation Project”. Shafqat Munir Ahmed’s chapter, *Emigration from Pakistan – How influential is the Diaspora?* notes that Pakistani emigrants are five cents of its population, 95.70% of whom reside in Gulf countries and the remaining 4.30% are in the West, enjoying a very limited role in the decision-making process of host countries. The author suggests that the Information Ministry, Foreign Affairs and Ministries of Overseas Pakistani should come up with a comprehensive plan to use emigrants for the promotion of the best interest of the country.

Nausheen Wasi in her chapter *The Place and Role of Pakistan in International United Nations Organizations* assesses Pakistan's relations with the UN in political and developmental domains. The author underscores Pakistan's concerns about India's bid to get a permanent seat in Security Council are genuine. India's continued propaganda for placing Pakistan on FATF grey list and recently as the president of UNSC its denial to invite Pakistan to the meeting of Afghanistan, testify to Pakistan's concerns (pg. 134). Pakistan is also establishing the balance of power in South Asia by proposing a large number of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament-related initiatives through the forum of UN. (pg. 134). The author recommends that the government needs to have digital and physical infrastructure capacity and fool-proof systems for fund utilization, coordination between the center, the provincial government and UN agencies to implement agreed proposals and promotion of research culture through the US-Pakistan partnership.

The book is an interesting read with a comprehensive and balanced compilation by editors. The contributions are well-researched. Keeping in view the significance of Pakistan's geographical location, contributors recommend that the country need shift from a geo-strategic to a geo-economic one. Furthermore, they argue that Pakistan is an inward-looking country that generally focuses on the country itself or on its relationships with its immediate neighbors, needs to adopt the global approach. The authors have also pointed out the foreign policy challenges the country is facing in maintaining balance between the US and China and suggested that Islamabad should focus on geo-economic model to maximize its foreign policy objectives.

Reviewed by Safia Malik, Research Officer, Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Sindh.

Title: **The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back Our Planet**
Author: **Michael E. Mann**
Publisher: **Public Affairs, New York, 2021, 368.**

The New Climate War" by Michael E. Mann is a comprehensive and well-written examination of the ongoing battle to combat climate change. Mann, a leading climate scientist, provides a detailed look at the tactics used by those who deny the reality of climate change and the ways in which these tactics have hindered progress in addressing the issue. He also offers solutions for how we can overcome these obstacles and effectively combat climate change.

Well-known climate scientist explains how the fossil fuel industry has spent the last thirty years avoiding blame and postponing climate change action, and offers a strategy to preserve the planet. Recycle. Fly less frequently. Avoid eating meat. These climate change indicators have been taught to us. However, a marketing strategy has successfully placed the whole burden of combating climate change on individuals, resulting in an overemphasis on human behaviour. Fossil fuel companies have adopted the blame-shifting, "guns don't murder people, people do" and greenwashing tactics of other corporations e.g., "Crying Indian" advertisements by the beverage industry in the 1970s. They have fought against efforts to limit or charge for carbon emissions, run PR campaigns to make good alternatives look bad, and avoided taking responsibility for fixing the problem they caused. The outcome has been disaster around the world.

The New Climate War, according to Mann, is not over. He puts regular people against polluters like wealthy right-wing people, fossil fuel companies along with oil funded states. He pushes for a sensible and workable solution to the problem of carbon pricing, as well as a revision of the Green New Deal, which has good intentions but is faulty, and fair competition between fossil fuels and renewable energy; dispelling the misleading narratives and arguments that have split even proponents of climate action. Overcoming pessimism and climate-mongering hopelessness.

Due to the combination of extremely powerful entrenched interests in defence of the status quo over fossil fuels, the societal tipping point will not occur unless all citizens actively and collectively participate in a march against it. The book tries to equip and educate everyone to fight for the future of our world.

One of the world's foremost climate scientists attempts to comprehend the motivations and techniques of climate change deniers by entering their minds. Mann argues that denying the existence of human-caused climate change is no longer acceptable in this open and honest dissertation on the politics of the environment. The new climate war is a

more subtle form of denial that seeks to shift accountability for climate change from corporations producing greenhouse gases to individuals through a deceptive form of deflective accountability. If one considers that Rex Tillerson, the previous US Secretary of State, served as ExxonMobil's CEO before joining the Trump administration, one will agree with Mann's assessment. While Mann agrees that individuals have a responsibility to take care of the planet, he argues that enacting the kind of sweeping change that is needed, will require massive policy-level action on the order of the Clean Air Act and the Montreal Protocol, which were passed to combat ozone depletion, respectively.

Right-wing media scare tactics regarding solar and wind energy; the dangers of "clean" coal and geoengineering; "doomism," which "leads us down the wrong path"; and "climate denial," which "leads us down the wrong path," are all addressed in detail as he leads readers through the logical fallacies of these positions. There is a sense of urgency and initiative. As an example of the dangers of rejecting research for political reasons, Mann hopes the Covid-19 pandemic will serve as a warning. In terms of action, individuals can do things like "push politicians to adopt climate-friendly government laws," while groups can work to fix the underlying problems. Expertly debunking the fossil fuel industry's propaganda and calling for public opposition.

The book provides an indepth and detailed analysis of the culprits, in Mann's words these are the fossil-fuel sellers, strategies implemented and tactics espoused. It is enthralling to see the depths Mann has taken to in order to expose those strategies' and unearthed the non-solutions' solution to the problem like natural gas, nuclear energy, carbon capture and storage, direct air capture, and etc. Many climate advocates call such solutions "predatory-delay," and pseudo-solutions. However, at times there can be a dichotomy between his words as he goes on to push people to adapt, accepts value of direct air capture, talks in-between lines about pros of nuclear energy and carbon capture and storage. In addition, those he pitches as enemies in the climate wars under label of 'inactivism' are identified with the use of diversified terminology substituting the word 'deniers', which shows lack of clarity from the author. Additionally, as has been pointed out by several others, this places his cause within the scope of a destructive sort of support. Although his solution of systematic change advocates for promoting renewable energy and pricing carbon, there are other solutions that needs to be credited.

The book tends to be overly partisan in its approach. Mann is a vocal advocate for action on climate change, and some may argue about objectivity in his approach. Additionally, the book focuses primarily on the situation in the United States, and may not fully consider the global context of the issue.

The most recent contributions of Mann are well-researched climate change warnings. With his optimistic outlook, he draws a picture

of a new fight in uncharted climate territory. Whereas, in his bipolar universe, 'nay-sayers' to climate dangers have not been beaten, despite the fact that the world appears to have realised the reality of climate threat, they have instead adopted diversion, deception, and misdirection strategies in the continuation of climate conflicts. He eventually clamps down on their current strategies in the hopes of equipping and uniting people in their fight against climate inactivists.

Overall, "The New Climate War" is an important and thought-provoking read for anyone interested in understanding the challenges we face in addressing climate change and the ways in which we can overcome them. Mann has written a book that is not only informative but also inspiring and empowering. It is a must-read for anyone concerned about the future of our planet.

Reviewed by Mujeeb Jan Talpur, PhD Scholar at the Department of IR, National Defence University, Islamabad.

