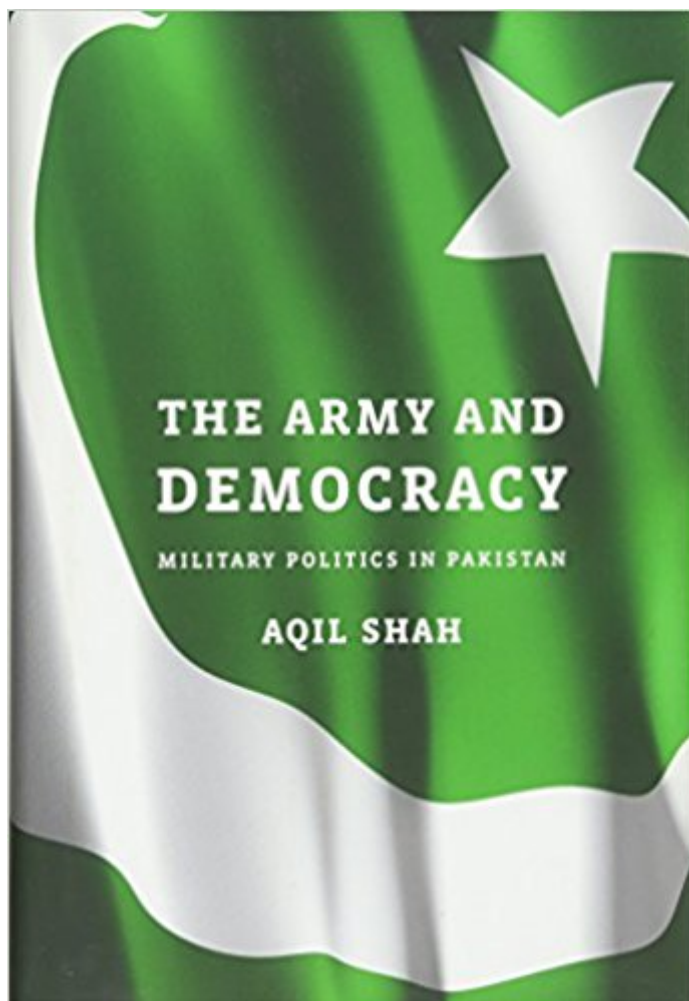


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# The Army And Democracy: Military Politics In Pakistan



## Synopsis

Since Pakistan gained independence in 1947, only once has an elected government completed its tenure and peacefully transferred power to another elected government. In sharp contrast to neighboring India, the Muslim nation has been ruled by its military for over three decades. Even when they were not directly in control of the government, the armed forces maintained a firm grip on national politics. How the military became Pakistan's foremost power elite and what its unchecked authority means for the future of this nuclear-armed nation are among the crucial questions Aqil Shah takes up in *The Army and Democracy*. Pakistan's and India's armies inherited their organization, training, and doctrines from their British predecessor, along with an ethic that regarded politics as outside the military domain. But Pakistan's weak national solidarity, exacerbated by a mentality that saw war with India looming around every corner, empowered the military to take national security and ultimately government into its own hands. As the military's habit of disrupting the natural course of politics gained strength over time, it arrested the development of democratic institutions. Based on archival materials, internal military documents, and over 100 interviews with politicians, civil servants, and Pakistani officers, including four service chiefs and three heads of the clandestine Inter-Services Intelligence, *The Army and Democracy* provides insight into the military's contentious relationship with Pakistan's civilian government. Shah identifies steps for reforming Pakistan's armed forces and reducing its interference in politics, and sees lessons for fragile democracies striving to bring the military under civilian control.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Shah is commendably balanced and thorough. His narrative taps archive material, military documents, and more than 100 interviews with Pakistani officers, politicians and civil servants: political science indeed. The Army and Democracy successfully conveys the Borgia-like high drama of traditional Islamabad politics, which makes Beijing's seem almost tame. -The South China Morning Post, 6 May 2008. The first comprehensive, historical study of the behavior of Pakistan's military relative to India. - The Indian Express/PTI, 6 May 2014 The book makes for a fine analysis. - Livemint [This] rich and skilfully argued book leaves no doubt about the military's central responsibility in blighting the course of Pakistan's democratization - Times Higher Education, 8 May 2014. "One of the best books on Pakistan." Ahmad Faruqi, Author of Rethinking the National Security of Pakistan [An] important new book - The military has hitherto escaped accountability because, as Aqil Shah explains in The Army and Democracy: Military Politics in Pakistan, it has always resisted democratic control. Shah traces its praetorian instincts to the seminal conflict over Kashmir, which set the tenor of the relations between military and civilian institutions - Shah is rightly scathing of the military's role in politics. (Muhammad Idrees Ahmad The Nation 2014-12-29) [This] rich and skillfully argued book leaves no doubt about the military's central responsibility in blighting the course of Pakistan's democratization. While some may see [Shah's] approach as too forgiving of Pakistan's politicians, his is a fresh and original perspective that demands serious consideration. (Farzana Shaikh Times Higher Education 2014-05-08) [Shah's] chronicle charts the army's rise on the heels of its British forerunner, which treated politics as beyond its scope. In contrast, exploiting the young state's weak solidarity, the Pakistan Army steered public policy, buoyed by pride that persists - Shah is commendably balanced and thorough. His narrative taps archive material, military documents, and more than 100 interviews with Pakistani officers, politicians and civil servants: political science indeed. The Army and Democracy successfully conveys the Borgia-like high drama of traditional Islamabad politics. (David Wilson South China Morning Post 2014-05-04) This book is a focused and timely analysis of what has gone badly wrong in Pakistan, and what could be done to correct the situation. It will hopefully inspire Pakistanis who care for their country both inside and outside the armed forces to reform their political order; otherwise extremist Islam will destroy their polity and convulse the region in violence. (Talmiz Ahmad Business Standard 2014-07-17) There would not be a better time to read Professor Shah's wonderfully nuanced, well-referenced and yet fast-paced book than after the recent almost two-month-long civil-military coalition attempt to impose its will

on an elected PM and parliament. Shah has excelled in showing that, since the fateful invasion of Kashmir in October 1947, the military has become increasingly politicized and distant, unlike the Indian army, from the professional apolitical ethos both had inherited from the British army. Shah gives a series of very timely policy prescriptions to balance the civil-military equation in favor of the former, making his work urgent reading for Pakistan watchers and Pakistani politicians alike. (Mohammad Taqi Daily Times 2014-10-07) With a clarity and directness that is refreshing, The Army and Democracy attributes Pakistan's lack of democratization to the military's formal and informal political interventions, further suggesting that this has, on the balance, greatly impacted the state's ability to effectively resolve the perennial problems of ethnic conflict, governance, and growth that have blighted Pakistan's history. The Army and Democracy is arguably at its most interesting and informative when it details the socialization process that takes place within the military. Through his analysis of the military's publications and training materials, as well as his interviews with military personnel, Shah provides a rare insight into the internal workings of the military mind. The Army and Democracy is an extremely accessible read that will undoubtedly be of great value to experts in the field as well as a more general audience. (Hassan Javid Dawn 2014-12-12) Based on archival material and more than 100 interviews with politicians, civil servants and military officers, including four services chiefs and three heads of the Inter-Services Intelligence, and assessment of military writings, Shah's book provides deep insight into the military mind. The Army and Democracy is a treasure trove of information on civil-military relations in Pakistan. It is also a lesson on what the country needs the most at this critical juncture: a politics of inclusion by all stakeholders, rather than exclusion. (Shahabuddin Gilani Express Tribune 2014-09-14) The book makes for fine analysis but is a pessimistic read. The Pakistan army's attitudes towards elected leaders, India, and citizens of Pakistan has not changed since it indulged in the first coup there. These assumptions go back almost to the start of the country's independent life and have not changed since. Shah's book, which was researched in recent years, is one more example that little has changed at the general headquarters in Rawalpindi. (Gayatri Chandrasekaran Mint 2014-05-06) An excellent addition to the existing literature on the conflation of civil and military roles in the politics of Pakistan. The book uncovers many myths about the army and informs us about the strategic, political and social ramifications of the khaki adventures since the incursion in Kashmir in 1948 which sowed the seeds of military insubordination. The book is a result of rigorous research and a labor of love. Aqil Shah has authentically mapped Army's institutional development, its professional and

political expansion, and taking over of policy and consequently the society. The book weaves an engaging narrative that fascinatingly tells the unique story of Pakistan's military which has defied global trends of democratic waves. Whenever Pakistan Army decides to produce a new breed and generation of thinking officers, as against the current majority of believing officers, this book will be handy for a non-offensive unlearning. (Arshed Bhatti The News on Sunday 2014-08-17) It not only helps understand the current crisis but also helps us see into the future. Shah shows that the Pakistan Army has always had the final say in running the country, whether they are in power or are running the country from behind the scenes. This serves to demonstrate that Pakistan Army's hold on Pakistan is stronger than ever. This highly readable book is a must-read for everyone who wants to know what went wrong with Pakistan and why. The best book on the subject. (Arif Jamal thewashingtonbookreview.com 2014-12-07) Aside from providing a superb study of Pakistani civil-military relations, Shah makes an important and more general scholarly contribution: he explains why new polities fracture under challenging security environments and identifies the impulses that compel generals to both shift their gaze abroad and intervene in politics. (Zoltan Barany, author of The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas) Shah's book stands tall among the few serious books on Pakistan and its army. Given Pakistan's likely importance for the near future, it will be received warmly by both the policy community and anyone else interested in this critical region. (Stephen P. Cohen, author of Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum) A remarkable exploration of the role of the Pakistani army in politics since 1947. Shah brilliantly exposes the porousness of, and the connivance between, the nation's civilian and military spheres. He shows that the army was not the sole villain of the play: domestic politicians and American backers have played key roles in making military rule possible. (Christophe Jaffrelot, author of The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience) An important book. (Ahmed Rashid New York Review of Books 2015-04-02)

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Clearly written, thoroughly researched, methodologically sound - this book is a must read for any serious student of Pakistani politics. Critical to understanding the trajectory of an important but unstable nation.

Author has strong biases, but still a good read.

Good item - happy with purchase

In this book, Aqil Shah has done a wonderful job in studying the Pakistan Army. The book is well researched and based on new and primary sources, which include new NDU materials, such as officer training syllabi, strategy papers. This is the best account of the rise of the Pakistan Army to power in Pakistan from 1950s to now. As the Pakistan Army has been a central player in Pakistani politics, this book is a must for anybody who is interested in the Pakistan Army or Pakistani politics. Shah has brought to light some little or unknown facts of Pakistani politics and explains others which have not been analyzed. The book is full of new facts and perspectives. This is a very timely book as the civil-military relations in Pakistan are a top subject for the South Asia watcher. This book is a great source to help understand Pakistani politics and Pakistan Army's perspective on the Global War on Terrorism. After having read most books on Pakistan Army, I can say The Army and Democracy is definitely the best book on the subject. Arif Jamal, author of CALL FOR TRANSNATIONAL JIHAD: LASHKAR-E-TAIB 1985-2014.

The book is richly documented and well argued. It skillfully narrates Pakistan's evolution from the democracy envisaged by its British-educated founder, M. A. Jinnah, to a dictatorship that has oscillated ever since his demise between explicit military rule and implicit military rule. It boldly argues what many of us have felt and a few have penned editorials on it -- but it has never been said in book form before -- that ironically the tradition of authoritarianism harkens back to how the founder himself ruled the country. To understand that -- or to take issue with that -- you will just have to read the book. It is by far the most lucid (and heart-rendering) account of Pakistani history. The only thing I take issue with is that the book does not dissect the two-nation theory on whose basis the nation was founded. I continue to think that creating a country on the basis of religion was a bad idea. Now the Pandora's Box has been flung open and the results are in plain sight. But the denial continues...

This is a superb and thoughtful book, with a compelling narrative and very well argued opinions. Shah's history is very good, but the way in which he draws upon different historical events to construct his argument is even better.

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