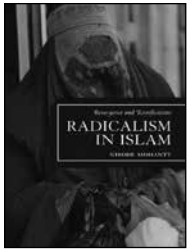
Book Reviews



Radicalism in Islam: Resurgence and Ramifications
Nirode Mohanty
University Press of America Inc., 2011
$ 57.99

The book charts the growth of Islamic radicalisation and discusses the causes. It pins its origin to the success of the Iranian Revolution spearheaded by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 that humiliated America, a vaunted superpower. It was this movement that spawned a large number of terrorist organisations in the Arab world as also Pakistan. It further received impetus in the 1990s after the defeat of the Soviet Union, another superpower, by the Mujahideen, in cooperation with Saudi Arabia, the US and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan.

The author warns that the threat posed by radical terrorists is getting increasingly dangerous because of the global network, access to wealth and technology, and the possibility of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons, which Obama has described as the "single biggest threat to US security". In fact, the book has one complete chapter devoted to *jehadi* terrorism by means of weapons of mass destruction, technology and cyber-terrorism.

The author seeks to distinguish between other forms and cases of terrorism by individuals or groups and Islamic terrorists by stressing that the latter invariably draw sustenance from one or more terrorist organisation having a global religious agenda. The book delves into nuances of terms that are in currency, i.e. Terrorism, Islam, Islamophobia,

Islamofascism, Political Islam, Radical Islam, Militants, *Jehad*, *Jehadists*, *Quran*, *Sunnah*, *Hadith*, and their varying degree of overlap. For instance, the book categorises the Muslim Brotherhood as a political party and part of political Islam to gain governance by constitutional means, which also used violence and murder to spread radical Islam. Iran and Sudan exemplify Islamic radicalisation in the guise of political Islam.

The phenomenon of suicide attacks by the *jehadists* has also been discussed in great detail. As against insurgents, the author describes Islamic radicals or *jehadi* terrorists as those who have theological–religious goals and target combatants as well as non-combatants. Two important American allies, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, have been described as the twin pillars of radical Islam. The Saudis, the author maintains, have been winning the intellectual battlefield against secularisation of Islam. Universities in the UK and America, which include Oxford and Harvard, have received generous funds from the Saudi Royal family to propagate its version of Wahabi Islam. As far as reforms in Islam are concerned, the book cites several Muslim intellectuals across the world who are sanguine about the gathering wind for *tajdid* (or renewal in Islam). These voices, however, are presently suppressed and feeble. For now, even in Turkey there is an attempt to revisit and revive the *Sharia*, despite its move to get into the European Union.

In Chapter 3 which dilates on "Radical Islam's Ideologies", the author gives a historical perspective of Islam and discusses various Islamic doctrines, ideologies and ideological groups, namely: Al-wala' Wal-bara, Wahabi, Dhimmi, Deobandi, honour killing, suicide bombing, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Al-Shabaab, the five pillars of Islam, Sharia, Sharia schools of jurisprudence like Hanabali (Saudi Arabia and Taliban), Hanafi (Central Asia, Egypt, India, Pakistan), Malliki (North Africa), Shafi'i (Southeast Asia and Yemen), and Ja 'fari (Iran).

Apart from the fundamental and compelling motivation to revive the Golden Age of Islam and attain parity with the West, the author attributes various other causes for the rise and spread of radical Islam, i.e. the West's

quest for unremitting oil supply; its strategic interests in the Middle East, Asia and Europe; its primal goal of containing the Communists using Islamic terrorism; its flawed domestic and international policies; and the instability of Muslim states in the former Soviet Union.

The author argues that it was the unlimited flow of petro-dollars that altered the religious behaviour of the countries in the Middle East, and essentially engendered radical Islam. Fifty years ago, Saudi Arabia or Iran or Libya did not fund radical Islam or aid terrorists. They were fighting despots and colonists, in which America was their ally. Later, it was only the oil money that funded thousands of Wahabi mosques and *madrassas* in Pakistan, the main factory of Islamic terrorists, and elsewhere.

A notable contrast has been presented by the author, wherein he brings out that with the establishment of Israel, the Jews were expelled from Arab countries and their properties confiscated. Most Christians sought refuge in Australia, Canada, Europe and US. However, today, in the Arab world, it is only Jordan, which grants citizenship to Palestinians. Saudi Arabia donated only $ 20 million to Palestine in 2001, while America sanctioned more than $ 400 million in 2008 alone. The author further argues that the Palestine issue unites the Arabs just as the Kashmir issue unites Pakistan. It is for this reason that Pakistan, at forums like the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) attempts to link the Palestinian problem with Kashmir.

Importantly, the author argues that terrorism and violence have generally "triumphed over non-violence, truth, peace and power of the pen" and most great powers have either patronised or yielded to terrorism to promote their own national interests. Yasser Arafat, the mastermind of several terrorist attacks was awarded the Nobel Prize, whereas Gandhi was not. The author quotes Herman Arthur: "It was violence, not non-violence that forced the British to change course, then to seek Gandhi's approval and then, finally, leave". Sri Lanka has been mentioned as one of the few exceptions that did not yield to terrorism.

On the very concept of 'secularism', the author has opined that the

term which means and implies separation of 'Church and State', has been in existence amongst Jews and Christians for some centuries, and is intrinsic to the civilisation of the Buddhists and Hindus, but the *Sharia* enjoins pervasive religious influence in the affairs of the state. With regard to acceptance of religious diversity, a survey quoted in the book provides a peep into the prevailing collective mindsets i.e. Christianity – 52 percent; Judaism – 30 percent; and Islam – 23 percent.

The author has belaboured on the impetus and the degree of Islamic radicalisation in Asia, Europe and Africa, with particular reference to Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. Islamic radicalisation and *jehadi* terrorist groups in the West have also been discussed. The alarming rate of the growing level of terrorism in Pakistan, which claimed 6,715 causalties in 2008, as compared to 189 in 2003, has been highlighted by means of a table.

Finally, the book discusses the various counter-terrorism models in place in the US, Asia and Europe. Of particular interest and concern to Indians is the commentary on the drawbacks of the American counter-insurgency model in Afghanistan and its failure to punish Pakistan for its duplicity in the 'global war against terrorism'. It highlights Pakistan's support to the Haqqani group and the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT). The book quotes a French judge, Jean-Louis Bruguiere, who investigated Sajid Mir (of the LeT, a retired Major of the Pakistan Army): "Lashkar is just not a tool of the ISI, but an ally of Al-Qaeda that participates in its global *jehad*". The author maintains that the "war against terrorism" has suffered in the region because of lack of clarity about "friends and foes".

Radicalism in Islam is a painstakingly researched book and offers a comprehensive background, deep insight and clinical analysis of the dynamics of the unabated wave of violence and intolerance that is vitiating Islam.

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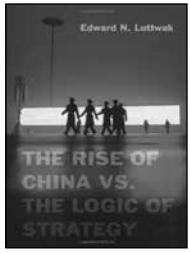
The Rise of China Vs. The Logic of Strategy
Edward N Luttwak
London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012
$17.79



The book written by Edward Luttwak hinges on analysing the rise of contemporary China by virtue of being a modern-day strategist and not exactly as a Sinologist. The author begins by advocating that the universal logic of strategy applies in perfect equality to every culture in every age. That the author began his travels to the remotest parts of China long before its opening up to the world adds value to his views and reflections of today's China. Luttwak has compared the conditions and ensuing transformation of China in the past decades, beginning with the atrocious miseries that persisted while Mao Zedong lived, and the astonishing transformations that started very soon after his death, and continue till date.

The book addresses the existence of a wide belief that the future of the world will be shaped by the rise of China, that is, by the continuation of its phenomenally rapid economic growth—even if less rapid eventually—and what comes naturally with such an immense growth in economic capacity, from ever-increasing influence in regional and world affairs, to further strengthening of China's armed forces. To further this argument, the author opines that recent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increases have exceeded 9 percent annually—twice the maximum sustainable growth rate of the economy of the US. Moreover, there does not seem to be any inherent reason as to why China's economic growth should decelerate greatly in the near future. What is more interesting is the organic growth

of China's modern economic sectors, several of which remain highly competitive and can, therefore, grow rapidly even as global markets grow more slowly.

As far as China's military expenditures are concerned, Luttwak has repeated some very prevalent and well known facts and figures yet again. In the past few years, Chinese defence expenditure has increased almost as rapidly as the economy as a whole, with estimates of the order of 9 percent per annum in real terms. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been receiving an expanding torrent of resources, and the most palpable consequence of receipt of these resources is the military strength and assertive posturing of the PLA within Asia and beyond.

Luttwak's arguments presented through the length of the book primarily rest upon certain assumed continuities. For instance, in the scenario that China's economy stops growing rapidly, then, would there be a global adversarial reaction to China in sheer geo-economic terms? Secondly, if the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) abandons the pursuit of military aggrandisement, or if its power wanes, there will be no geo-political reaction even if China's growth remains rapid. The author explains his first assumption that China's economy will continue to grow very rapidly, temporary disruptions aside—that is, at an annual rate of 8 percent or more. More generally, in the natural evolution of originally backward economies that take-off, acceleration toward very fast growth is eventually followed by a gradual deceleration, typically because the supply of previously unemployed and underemployed labour from the countryside diminishes. As far as China's growth continues to derive disproportionately from exports—because of very high savings rates that restrict domestic consumer demand, 9 percent annual rates cannot persist long if the major export markets are growing much more slowly, or not at all.

The author has stated that China's rapid growth can also be impeded by the environmental disfunctions generated by this very growth. When the

authorities do not intervene, popular protests can erupt, occasionally on a sufficient scale and with sufficient intensity to force the closing of especially polluting plants, given the diminishing propensity of the regime to suppress Han antagonists with unrestrained force (the protests of ethnic minorities, by contrast, are still repressed with much brutality). The frequent riots against local government authorities, provoked by land expropriations, above all, are a significant facet that needs to be borne in mind. In the case of China, ethnic unrest with a definitely national and, therefore, political character, now also manifests in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, Tibetan Autonomous Region and the Tibetan-inhabited parts of Qinghai and Sichuan, if not yet Yunnan. Besides, the possible unrest of the Muslim Hui, which for now appears seemingly tranquil, but has a violent past of harsh rebellions in parts of Qinghai, Gansu, Shaanxi, and Yunnan in 1862-77 and again in 1885-86.

It could be enumerated that increasing social tensions generated by ever-more extreme income and wealth inequalities in a nation that is inconveniently stuck with an egalitarian official ideology continue to be the most apparently evident and persistent threats to the Communist regime in China. In fact, the much broader threat is to the morale and cohesion of the CCP itself, that arises from the ideological bankruptcy of a nominally Communist regime very largely dedicated to the advancement of capitalism. Luttwak arrives at the hypothesis that the loss of a once powerfully motivating ideology was highlighted rather than diminished by now abandoned attempts to replace the ideological legitimacy lost by the regime with the décor and props of Maoism, by way of flag-waving processions and mass and choral singing of Party hymns.

The book assumes that the CCP's leadership will continue to increase overall military and related expenditures during the years ahead, in step with China's economic growth, which is itself assumed to remain very rapid. It is theoretically possible that the proportion of public funds allocated to military and related expenditures will be greatly reduced—for

example, to implement announced plans for publicly funded health care and minimum retirement pensions.

Stemming out of these plausibly fragile assumptions, the book leads to its findings. Owing to its inherent magnitude, quite independently of China's conduct on the regional and international scene, the very rapid growth in its economic capacity and military investment must evoke adversarial reactions, in accordance with the logic of strategy, according to the author. When a state of China's magnitude pursues rapid military growth, unless the resulting shift in the power-balance passes the culminating point of resistance, inducing the acceptance of some form of subjection, it causes a general realignment of forces against it, as former allies retreat into a watchful neutrality, former neutrals become adversaries, and adversaries, old and new, coalesce in formal or informal alliances against the excessively risen power.

The consequent result is that nations which seek to resist the long-term emergence of a global Chinese hegemony are visibly reacting to the rise of China with self-strengthening measures, including some increase in relevant military capabilities, but mostly by coalescing against China in various pairings and combinations. Individually, each component of the Chinese state that operates internationally is purposeful enough in pursuing its own institutional objectives, but the overall effect is frequently contradictory and damaging to China's overall interests, by evoking hostile reactions, as in the cases discussed specifically by the author, of Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Mongolia, South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The book is an interesting take on China's rise while putting it in perspective with the logic of strategy, and adds to the existing literature on the subject.

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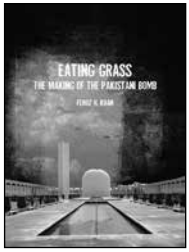
Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb
Feroz Hassan Khan
New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India Pvt Ltd., 2013
$ 26.77



'A story well told' -- these four words best describe the effort of Feroz Hassan Khan to provide a holistic account of the Pakistani nuclear programme as situated in the history of the nation-state, its insecurities, its alliances and its domestic developments. A former Pakistani Brigadier who retired as Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs Directorate of the Strategic Plans Division, the organisation tasked with the nuclear policy-making and strategy operationalisation, Khan is well placed to provide such an account given that Pakistan's nuclear programme is, even in his view, such a "maze of claims and counterclaims" and a story "awash with controversies and competing narratives".

As a country most affected by the Pakistani nuclear weapons capability, India has kept a close watch on the developments. It has constructed its own version of how the programme advanced over the years and it is satisfying to have most of this corroborated by Khan, besides the filling in of some gaps in knowledge. In a sense, the book is quasi-official, since Khan was granted permission by the Pakistan government to research, interview, and access archives in the country, even if on the basis of strictly laid down ground rules.

Yet despite his extensive archival research on the subject, in Pakistan and in the USA, and his own inside knowledge, Khan admits that the history of the nuclear programme still suffers from gaps and even imperfections. He attributes these not only to a "resistance to scrutiny" by the military and civilian key actors in the programme, but also, in some

instances, to a tendency to exaggerate the roles of key actors in the success of the programme. One such example that the book describes in detail is the institutional rivalry between the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) that promoted the enriched uranium route to the bomb and liquid fuelled missiles as against the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) that supported plutonium weapons and solid fuelled missiles. Both provide conflicting narratives on the role of their organisations in the building of the bomb. Even so, Khan has presented a balanced and as objective a view of the programme as can be expected from a person who was once so closely associated with the programme for as much as a decade.

The world has well known for a long time that for Pakistan, its nuclear programme is, as Khan says, "the most significant symbol of national determination and a central element of Pakistan's identity". However, the author's endeavour is to explain why this happened; why the country's nuclear programme shifted from a peaceful to a full-fledged weapons programme, and how it was organised and conducted in such a way as to overcome umpteen technical and financial hurdles. In fact, one does sense in the author's writing a deep sense of angst at the perceived victimisation of Pakistan as it pursued its nuclear programme in the face of unprecedented non-proliferation hurdles.

"Eating grass" in this effort became the metaphor for the unwavering resolve and dedication of the country to press ahead in the face of domestic difficulties and international pressures to acquire nuclear weapons. The scientists looked upon the development of the bomb as the highest national duty and the ultimate national cause. The political and military leadership, meanwhile, exploited political bilateral relations with the USA, China and the Muslim nations to achieve maximum gains. In this context, the Chinese assistance is duly acknowledged, though Khan maintains that Beijing too gained in the process from the technologies/equipment that Pakistan procured from the West and which were reverse engineered by the Chinese to benefit both programmes. In fact, Khan attributes only a

small role to the "technical boosts from the Chinese" and couples it with the ability of Pakistani scientists to evolve "new engineering techniques", reverse engineering and the ability to "innovate and improvise" (what he calls *joogaardh*) to find ways of beating the sanctions imposed by the West.

Khan identifies three basic strategic beliefs emanating from the country's historical experiences of national humiliation and international isolation as driving its nuclear programme. These are: one, the need for nuclear weapons to guarantee Pakistan's survival in the face of a hostile India and unreliable external allies; two, international discrimination against Pakistan while India can 'get away' (not surprisingly, India feels that Pakistan has never been penalised for its acts of proliferation); and three, the danger of disarming attacks from India, the USA or Israel. This narrative is strongly entwined with Pakistani nationalism and the nuclear programme is, therefore, closely linked to the country's national identity.

The book devotes two chapters to the elaborate network run by A Q Khan to acquire nuclear material, technology and equipment from many sources. It even acknowledges the conversion of this import network into an export enterprise but refrains from making any mention of state involvement in this activity. In doing so, the author has ignored the many writings that have been published in the last decade or so documenting the role of the Pakistan state in nuclear proliferation. He laments that his country is looked upon as "grossly irresponsible" but attributes it to the national embarrassment caused by the A Q Khan network.

According to Khan, some of this downslide, however, was arrested with the establishment and growth of the Strategic Plans Division, which professionalised Pakistan's nuclear capability by providing "systematic control over strategic organisations" and establishing measures to enhance the security of national nuclear assets their unauthorised use. In fact, in his view, it was the increase in oversight of all aspects of the nuclear weapon programme, including its finances that had enabled the unravelling of A

Q Khan's proliferation network and led to his dismissal as KRL Director in April 2001. Nevertheless, he does admit that by then, the damage had been done by way of besmirching Pakistan's non-proliferation reputation and holds this responsible for the US offering a lucrative nuclear deal to India but isolating Pakistan.

It is ironical that the country that was declared by the Harvard Development Advisory Group in the 1960s as a "model developing country" on account of its average annual economic growth of 6 per cent has today degenerated into such a sad economic state. Much of this has to do with the country's obsession with its threat perception from India that leads to an overspending on defence, including on the nuclear programme, while ignoring the economic growth and development of the country. Owing to this, Pakistan has lost its sense of political direction and coherence. In fact, Khan may have touched on the central problem that plagues the country in a reference that he makes to what went wrong in the Indo-Pak War of 1965. In his analysis, Pakistani political leaders after Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan have not gone through the political mill and, hence, the country has had an underdeveloped political philosophy. This still remains the bane of the country as it still struggles to resolve its identity crisis. In the process though, it obviously causes concern to the region and beyond as, in Khan's words, "Pakistan presents the first encounter with a modern nuclear-armed nation-state whose destiny is uncertain".

Divided into five parts and spread over 20 chapters, the book makes for easy reading. The programme is chronicled through its historical evolution and is peppered with anecdotal episodes as well as serious analyses. However, the listing of notes only at the end of the book, instead of as footnotes proves to be a distraction. Another issue that is likely to confound the reader is the location of some tables. For instance, Table 5.1 which details Pakistan Nuclear Infrastructure does not fit into the narrative of the chapter in which it is found. In fact, the table itself

mentions no dates and leaves the reader clueless on whether the figures mentioned against the nuclear facilities pertain to their past or the current capacities.

However, these are minor issues in a 400-page book that overall does an admirable job. Presenting the history of the programme along with a section on operationalisation of strategy is no mean task and the author does provide an authoritative work on both counts. In fact, while staying with the main theme of the making of the nuclear bomb, the book is rich in detail on a number of related domestic and regional events. For an Indian strategic analyst, it is important to know this perspective so that predominant views, assumptions and beliefs from across the border can be adequately factored into future policy-making.

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