

Book Review
By
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Hein G. Kiessling, *Faith, Unity, Discipline: The ISI of Pakistan* (Uttar Pradesh: Haper Collins, 2016), 320.

With a doctorate from Munich, Kiessling is a political scientist and a historian. He spent thirteen years of his life in Pakistan (1989 to 2002) and lived in Quetta for four years and nine years in Islamabad. More than a decade-long stay of Kiessling in Pakistan provided him enough time to observe the civil-military relations in the country and perceived role of intelligence agencies in Islamabad's politics. The book contains a record of Kiessling's observations and analyses which are heavily based on his views of Pakistan's domestic politics and foreign policy. As the head of a German political foundation, the author was able to travel across the country and observe various political developments from close quarters, and cultivated good relations with politicians and retired military officers. Additionally, he was able to interact with several former officers of ISI and Pakistan's military.

The book is divided into twenty short chapters with five appendices. First chapter of the book gives the genesis of ISI when Major General Walter Joseph Cawthorne, a British officer who opted to serve in Pakistan after Partition, established and headed the agency for a few months in 1948. This chapter also gives the main objective of creation of Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate and the task given to it by the state, which was intelligence gathering outside Pakistan in India, particularly in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. From the second chapter to chapter twelve, the book covers the history of events in the country's political arena and the role

allegedly played by ISI in Pakistan's domestic politics under various heads of state and government, from Iskander Mirza to Nawaz Sharif (1958 – 1990). The author then goes on to discuss his views on country's political development in the subsequent periods. Kiessling then discusses in some detail the alleged role of ISI in insurgencies in Indian Punjab and in North-Eastern states which makes interesting reading.

The regional security environment of South Asia based on New Delhi's offensive neighbourhood policy was the major driving force, according to Kiessling, behind Islamabad's secret intelligence operations outside its borders in the initial years of its establishment. The wars of 1965 and 1971 with India coupled with American alliance during Soviet invasion of Kabul were instrumental in increasing the ISI's role domestically as well as beyond Pakistan's borders. Moreover, the three military regimes of Ayub, Zia, and Musharraf created space for increased role of Inter-Services Intelligence Agency in domestic politics. According to Kiessling, New Delhi's belligerent attitude against Islamabad and its role in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and its connections with Russia and Iran forced Pakistan to empower its intelligence agency. Interestingly, the author reiterates what may not be known to many, that internal security wing of ISI was created by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, probably for the same reason.

The author has narrated in some detail the overall state of civil-military relations in the country. In doing so, however, he fails to take into account the peculiar political climate of the country and the threat posed by Pakistan's neighbours to its security, which he had highlighted earlier. An analysis based on these factors would have provided a more insightful picture of Pakistan's civil-military relations and ISI's activities. He views the cross-border clandestine activities of the ISI in 1990s as

primarily designed to destabilize the neighbouring states but does not bring into discussion activities of foreign secret agencies working to destabilize Pakistan internally. Though the book is about ISI and its role in domestic politics, its weakness is that it does not adequately cover India's involvement in Pakistan's internal matters.

Faith, Unity and Discipline: the ISI of Pakistan is mostly descriptive and narrates the history of Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate. It is not an analytical work of ISI's role and operations, its success and its failures in a complex political and security environment of South and West Asia. The book includes author's pictures with Pakistan's senior retired military and intelligence officers, giving an impression that the contents of the book would have information which was earlier not available in public domain. The book's contents however does not live up to that expectation.

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