

QUELLE, ALEXANDER: Geopolitische Orientierungen nach dem 11. September. Pakistans Rolle im Kampf gegen den Terrorismus. 179 S. und 5 Abb. Beiträge zu interdisziplinären Studien in Ländern des Südens 4. Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Berlin, Berlin 2009, € 24,80

Pakistan, never really out of the bad news, is again regularly contributing to unsettling headlines, this time mostly connected to armed confrontations between security forces and Islamic militants in the country's north-west.

Unfortunately, there is only little hope that the tense situation in the NWFP and the Tribal Areas might calm down anytime soon. In fact, it is much more likely that these tensions will spill over into the neighbouring provinces. An important reason for this deep internal crisis is that religious extremists operating in Swat and elsewhere have managed to link their own interests to the social and economical concerns of the local population. One of their ways to influence people's minds in their favour is to portray the Pakistani government as "hypocrite" and "anti-Islamic". But how comes that a good number of the population is receptive to arguments which place the leadership of their country in straight opposition to the nation's main ideology?

In searching for an answer to this intriguing question one might like to have a closer look at the Pakistani government's role in US dominated geopolitics. To do this it is now possible to refer to the book under review. ALEXANDER QUELLE's study is based on an analysis of written sources and has the wider aim of examining Pakistan's place within the G. W. Bush administration's New World Order. Its focus is on an analysis of the political rapport between the US and Pakistan during the years 2001 to early 2008, seen through the prism of the Rogue State Doctrine. But before arriving at these more tangible matters, the author guides us through a number of theoretical issues, fundamental to understanding his method and way of reasoning: Chapter 2 deals with the relationship between political geography and geopolitic, and chapter 3 explains aim and approach of critical geopolitics. Chapter 4 follows with an investigation into the scope and structure of global geopolitical concepts current in the 1990s, in which special attention is given to C. L. POWELL's "Rough Doctrine" (1990), Z. K. BRZEZINSKI's "American Primacy" (1997) and S. P. HUNTINGTON's "Clash of Civilisations" (1993), as parts of these theories were later serving as building blocks used for the construction the Bush administration's very own dichotomous world view.

Having set the study's theoretical background, the author moves on to dealing with concrete events. Chapter 5 outlines the evolution of the Rogue State Doctrine, tracing its origins back to the 1970s. In order to investigate the doctrine's present status, the author turns to the "War on Terror" discourse. First, he demonstrates in detail how the Bush administration combined a simplified interpretation of the multi-layered terrorism phenomenon with bits and pieces from existing geopolitical concepts, so as to arrive at a vision of a world divided into clear-cut, geographically definable spheres of "good" and "evil". Then he identifies the Rogue State Doctrine, adjusted to the political needs of the day and boosted by the military option of pre-emptive strike, as the US government's main political tool to delineate these spheres.

Chapter 6 reveals the mechanism of such a delineation process in the case of Pakistan. To set the background for this, ALEXANDER QUELLE provides the reader with a short country profile and a synopsis of the relationship between Pakistan and the US over the second half of the last century. Then he turns to his main objective, the application of the Rogue States Doctrine criteria to Pakistan's political reality in the years following 2001. The author reminds us that this reality included Islamabad's highly controversial position on issues like transnational terrorism (Kashmir conflict, war in Afghanistan) and nuclear proliferation. Hence, had the US administration used the Rogue State criteria in a consistent way, there would have been every possibility of placing Pakistan within the sphere of "evil" and through this on the same enemy list as countries like Iraq, Sudan, Syria and North Korea. However, out of considerations of geopolitical expediency Washington chose to modify its yardstick and to allow its preferred "front line partner in the War on Terror" to perform a (still on-going) balancing act between the two spheres.

According to the author, and with this we are turning to the study's conclusions, the option of such a choice indicates two fundamental flaws in the New World Order thinking model. First, the adaptability of the Rogue State Doctrine to the needs of its creators deprives this concept of its alleged universality and exposes it as a politically biased tool, solely determined by US foreign and security interests. And second, the fact that Pakistan was given the possibility to occupy a position outside the fixed spheres of "good" and "evil" presupposes the existence of a third, "grey" zone and thus reveals the artificiality and mendacity of the Bush administration's dichotomous ideology.

But while playing with its own principles in the name of *realpolitik* may have given certain short-term benefits to the US and its military forces in Afghanistan, its partner Pakistan is now facing the darker side of the deal. As demonstrated in the second part of chapter 6, in order to (at least outwardly) conform to the Rogue State Doctrine Islamabad was encouraged to take a number of internally highly controversial political decisions. Some of them (e.g. to stop support to the armed Afghan opposition, to restrict the educational freedom of the *madrasas*, to remove the “father of the Islamic Bomb” from his position as head of the national nuclear programme, to discontinue helping the Kashmiri militants) were interpreted by many people within the country as undermining Pakistan’s Islamic foundations. Subsequently, this popular understanding of things was taken up by religious extremists like TNSM’s Sufi Mohammad, who now use it as a potent ideological weapon in their mass mobilisation against Pakistan’s leadership and state order.

To conclude: ALEXANDER QUELLE has presented us with a thorough, methodologically sound study on a highly relevant subject. His sources are up-to-date and comprehensive, combining scientific publications with print media articles and material from the internet. His argumentation is coherent and convincing, aptly illustrated with straight-to-the-point, well placed quotations. By dedicating the first half of his study to more general issues the author not only offers help to the reader unfamiliar with geopolitical theory but also gives extra credence to his articulate conclusions. The part dedicated to Pakistan’s internal/external post-September 11 affairs shows the author’s first-rate acquaintance with the country’s complex political landscape, a rare quality of high value, especially when, as in this case, combined with a balanced, unbiased approach. All these elements make ALEXANDER QUELLE’s book essential reading for everyone eager to understand more about Pakistan’s role and destiny in the present geopolitical set-up.

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