

## Short Reviews of Recent Books

**South Asia A Historical Narrative.** By Mohammed Yunus and Aradhana Parmar (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 267 p., Rs. 250.00, ISBN 0-19-579711-6 (Pbk).

The authors of this book are first-generation Canadians of South Asian extraction, who now teach at the University of Calgary in Canada. Neither of them is a trained historian. The book written by the duo as an "essential core textbook" according to a prescribed syllabus seeks to bring together "Hindu" and "Muslim" perspectives of the "Indian" past to grasp the reality of the past in "South Asia" as a whole. We are informed that it has taken the "extensive scholarship" of recent years to arrive at the conclusion that there is a "connection between the problematic narratives of the (sic) Indian history and the creation of separate boundaries of citizenship in South Asia." The correlation between the creation of identities along predominantly communal lines and resulting socio-political conflict would be self-evident to most residents of South Asia. To use an Americanism – it's hardly rocket science!

Having said that, the authors have produced a useful, easy to read and follow chronological narrative of South Asian history from the earliest times till independence and partition of India in 1947. The book is well illustrated with a number of well laid out maps, which help the reader put the narrative in context. However, there is a tendency towards oversimplification of complex historical issues. There are a number of errors in editing, and even at times on points of fact. For example, under the sub-heading "The Sikh Challenge" in the chapter dealing with the Mughal Empire, we are told that the Sikhs had only nine Gurus, instead of the actual figure of 10.

Overall, in spite of the claim that it provides a unique and modern account of the South Asian subcontinent, the book provides the reader with no new insights, and says very little that has not been said before. If at all, its value lies in the fact that it is an interesting attempt to bring together two varied and divergent, if not mutually antagonistic constructs of South Asian history.

Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina (Retd)

**Globalization or Colonization?** By Kalyan Roy (New Delhi : Deep & Deep Publications, 2004), 301 p, Rs 480, ISBN 81-7629-560-4.

Globalisation, a vital ingredient of Manmohanics has come to stay at least for the present century in our country. It is nothing new for us.



Shri Kalyan Roy has deftly traced its roots to 18<sup>th</sup> Century India, when political domination followed the East India Company. Thereafter we faced neo-imperialism of Great Britain to be later thrown open to the USA, Japan and other developed countries as consumers of their surplus goods from domestic markets. This will ultimately lead to political globalisation resulting in loss of national sovereignty. The author opens up a new chapter on globalisation which could be of interest to academics and policy makers. Shri Kalyan Roy, during his service, has keenly observed short-term and long-term impact of various government schemes. He has interest in problems of economic development and had earlier authored a book *A Search for Demand : The Missing Link in Economic Development*.

Recommended for general reading.

Major General Yatindra Pratap (Retd)

**National Security: A Primer.** By Colonel PK Gautam (New Delhi : Knowledge World, 2004), 167p, Rs. 495.00, ISBN 81-87966-26-2.

The book is a collection of essays written by the author on military subjects. Divided into four parts, Gautam needs to be complimented for having covered a wide canvass of topical issues, like need to understand the impact of strategy and training on national security, importance of understanding nuclear aspects and doctrine, how does economic issues impinge on logistic and war fighting machine, and a few aspects of the Kargil conflict of 1999. He has also devoted a chapter to societal security and aspects like environment, economy and has commented upon relevance of 'clash' of civilisations in India's context. All chapters are very well researched and fully authenticated by references, which indicate the extent of in-depth study carried out by the author and effort put in by him.

Even a non-military reader can easily grasp the points made by the author. Highlighting the need for inculcating strategic and tactical thinking in our officers, including about Revolution in Military Affairs, he has also given examples from military history of World War II. Aspects of conventional, nuclear and counter insurgency warfare have also been covered, as they relate to our environment.

Written in simple and readable style, the author has adopted a direct approach in making his points forcefully. The book contains wealth of knowledge on matters of strategy and contemporary military matters. It will be of great help to all officers of the Armed Forces.

A must for libraries of units, educational institutions and clubs.

Lieutenant General Y M Bammi (Retd)



**India's National Security : The Asymmetrical Challenges.** By Brigadier *Rahul K Bhonsle* (New Delhi : Knowledge World, 2004), 392 p, Rs 650.00, ISBN-81-87966-21-1.

The author has developed his approach to India's national security by looking into the various facets of security to include resources, environmental and demographic issues besides the commonly understood external threats and internal strifes emanating from unemployment, capital scarcity, social unrest and political instability. Quoting John Hamre, a former US Deputy Secretary of Defence, "Population and environment ...seem the obvious sources of the next wave of wars, perhaps major wars", which is further highlighted by the dissolution and loss of control on spread of nuclear technologies, chemical and biological weapons and the likelihood of their falling in the hands of terrorists, the challenge of cyber security and information technology warfare; an imposing array of asymmetrical threats when viewed in totality.

The author has done a commendable study of these threats in a detailed and systematic manner and brought them together in one volume. He has quoted extensively from the studies and writings of scholars in each field in defining threats, their genesis and what timely steps ought to be taken to meet them effectively. While dealing with the emerging modes of conflict, he has highlighted the 'greed-grievance' dichotomy of the conflicts that have sustained the operations of underground extremist groups like the People's War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) in Chhattisgarh as also the so called Kashmiri insurgency groups, some of whom have considerable political support and a false image of victimisation and martyrdom. He has made an observation that there seems to be a powerful economic motive for leaders on both sides of the spectrum, the government and the rebels, to sustain conflicts in India. The author has also devoted two chapters to 'Terrorism', giving the genesis and factors that sustain, support and fuel terrorism. The psychological analysis of a potential terrorist is lucid and can help in formulating governmental policies and initiation of timely actions that would reduce the lure of taking to arms as an alternate means of employment and financial security. The author has aptly categorised India as a soft state where hard policy decisions are being made by the Supreme Court of India.

The book is an excellent treatise on the various asymmetrical threats that need to be tackled, simultaneously, to ensure that nation does not come to grief. A good addition to all libraries.

*Commodore R P Khanna, AVSM (Retd)*



**Changing Perspective on National Security.** Edited by PC Dogra (New Delhi : Lancer's Books, 2004), 306 p, Rs. 580.00, ISBN : 81-7095-103-8.

This is a remarkable compilation of the presentations made by the internationally renowned experts on national security during a seminar on "Integrated Management of National Security" held on 27 and 28 September, 2003 by the "Forum on Integrated National Security", Chandigarh. Shri George Fernandes, the former Defence Minister, inaugurated the seminar.

The contents of the book discuss the external threat perceptions and problems relating to internal security. The deliberations also include the subjects like long-term strategic vision of the country, higher management of defence, national security challenges posed by Pakistan, changing perspectives of national security, India-China relations, impact of illegal migration of Bangladeshis on the sovereignty of our country, LTTE and left wing extremism. The papers contributed by the eminent authors have the professional content, thorough analysis of the issues and a comprehensive reach. It brings forth a refreshing reappraisal of the defence format of the country and its sustainability in the changing security environment around and inside India.

On the whole, the book can be called an authoritative document and critique of both external and internal threat perceptions as also an informative and a useful document for the decision makers and the public at large. An interesting and a thought provoking book.

Shri I R Kumar

**Human Rights & Security Forces.** Dr Mohinder Singh Malik (Delhi : Bright Law House, 2004), 506 p, Rs. 750.00, ISBN 81-8552-498-X

Here is a detailed analysis of the conceptual development of the subject. The author has done his best to deal with all possible situations that can be termed as human rights violations.

Monitoring human rights is the primary responsibility of the human rights activists. However, the right of its protection remains with all citizens. In view of the complicated internal security matrix of our country, our security forces are increasingly getting embroiled with the complex situations, which otherwise are not their responsibility. At the same time, even unintended excessive use of force can be termed as human rights violation under the applicable laws. It is therefore important for the security forces to remain alive to this sensitive subject and increase their awareness by constant training. Dr Mohinder Singh has devoted one full chapter on



'International Humanitarian Law and the Security Forces', which gives an insight to the subject (as relates to India) and will be of great help in training of our officers and men.

This book should be read by all officers of the security forces.

*Colonel AK Bardalai*

**India-ASEAN Economic Cooperation : The Road Ahead.** (New Delhi : The Confederation of Indian Industry, 2004), 107 p, Price not indicated.

In 14 highly absorbing chapters, the book strategises future initiatives between India and its Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) partners individually and collectively for mutual economic benefits. The first chapter lists potential items for enhancing trade. The second chapter highlights India-ASEAN trade, analysis of the growth trends, lucrative complimentary areas of economic cooperation to both for trade and investment. The fourth chapter exclusively and crisply describes growth of Indian economy in infrastructure, trade, financial, economic, industrial and commercial activities conducive to investment by the ASEAN countries. It also highlights phenomenal growth in the IT sector, opportunities India is offering in engineering manufacturing, financial services, biotechnology, drugs and pharmaceuticals, entertainment industry (primarily Indian films), food processing, healthcare, textiles and telecommunications. Chapters 5 to 14 deal with ASEAN countries individually analysing the primary sectors of India-ASEAN trade having potential of mutual benefits.

Overall an informative and crisp book.

*Colonel NN Bhatia (Retd)*

**Arming the Defence Forces: Procurement and Production Policies.** By Lieutenant General Chandra Shekhar (New Delhi : Manas Publications, 2004), 138 p, Rs 495.00, ISBN 81-7049-177-0.

The author is a former Vice Chief of the Army Staff who was actively involved in the modernisation of the Indian Army and has closely observed the working and the shortcomings in the existing defence procurement procedures. During Operation Vijay he directed the procurement of certain critical defence equipment on a fast track basis.

The existing procedure for defence procurement is beset with lengthy and laborious procedures and involves a large number of agencies resulting in avoidable delays. The procurement procedure takes years before the equipment reaches the combat units. Unfortunately, procedures have not kept pace with the changes taking place in technology and the geo-



political environment. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has not been able to deliver despite their assurances and promises to the Services, which to an extent has resulted in loss of its credibility.

The procurement process should be dynamic and flexible. The author has delved into the shortcomings beset with 'red tapism' and apprehension of 'scams' in various defence related deals. Though the scams may be at the political and bureaucratic levels, since the procurement procedure is controlled by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), it is the Services which are adversely affected by delays. The Services by way of tradition make do with the existing resources and equipment under adverse conditions. We, however, need a crisis to wake up from our slumber and then speed up the procurement process on a fast track to make up deficiencies and shortfalls. The lessons of Operations Vijay and Parakram tend to be forgotten.

The author has given some pertinent and useful suggestions and recommendations to ensure streamlining of the procedure. However, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) without the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in place, may not be in a position to implement these aspects. The CDS once in place would be responsible to coordinate and oversee the process in conjunction with the MoD. Notwithstanding this, the Services, however, need to set aside their differences on this account and make concerted efforts to synergise their efforts. It is, however, felt that we may still be far from adopting a defence procurement procedure which meets the aspirations of the Armed Forces.

Colonel Rajiv Bhalla

**The Politics of Irrigation Reform: Contested Policy Formulation and Implementation in Asia, Africa and Latin America.** *Edited by Peter P Mollinga and Alex Bolding (Aldershot : Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 331 p, £ 55.00, ISBN 0 7546 3515.*

The Global Environmental Governance Series has brought out a number of publications to address current environmental problems and challenges. This timely book on the politics of irrigation reform by 15 contributors has eight case studies pertaining to Asia, Southern Africa and Latin America. The objective is to make a socio-political perspective on irrigation reform a legitimate subject for discussion. Water is one of the most important environmental issues more so when 70 to 90 per cent of fresh water is used for agriculture in the developing countries. The 20th Century saw an increase in irrigation by a factor of six world-wide. In India further expansion is inevitable. Dams, canals and irrigation network have



been constructed and have like any institution various types of water bureaucracies, vested interests of stakeholders, normative donor perceptions and prescriptions have come up. Irrigation management has three dimensions: technical, organisational and socio-economic. Just constructing dams and canals is not enough. The entire water cycle, till the user end, needs attention lest drainage related problems like water logging and salinity take toll besides heavy transmission losses due to poor operation and maintenance. Chapters on the Indus basin in Pakistan and the irrigation network in Andhra Pradesh in India are well analysed and presented. The tremendous clout of the feudal gentry in Pakistan and strong influence of local and political elites in Andhra Pradesh exhibit how entrenched vested interests reappear and obstruct reforms. This book is a useful addition to a knowledge base for improving irrigation in an integrated manner.

*Colonel PK Gautam (Retd)*

**Pakistan's Provinces.** By *International Centre for Peace Initiatives.* (Mumbai : Strategic Foresight Group, 2004), 103 p, Rs. 295.00, ISBN 81-88262-05-6.

The Strategic Foresight Group (SFG) launched by the International Centre for Peace Initiatives (ICPI) in Mumbai had brought out a report in 2002 called "The Future of Pakistan". The present volume is a continuation to map Pakistan's future trajectories. The report examines the internal dynamics of each of the four provinces of Pakistan and assesses their collective impact. The Study provides a macro overview of Pakistan's economy and subsequent chapters deal with each province separately.

The religious, ethnic and provincial separatist forces in Pakistan are becoming increasingly powerful and internecine warfare is getting more violent. However, the presumption by SFG in the first chapter itself that Musharraf will hand over the reins of the Army to some other General is naive. The relations between the federal government and provincial governments require democratic bridges to be built and nurtured as the provinces abut other nations – Afghanistan, Iran and India. The Study brings out that serving and retired military officers head over 20 key economic institutions in Pakistan and the leadership of Pakistan's 18 political parties is in the hands of landlords, industrialists and religious teachers. Pakistan's military conducts business with zeal thanks to organisations like Fauji Foundation (FF), Army Welfare Trust (AWT), Shaheen Foundation (SF) and Baharia Foundation (BF). This group of four operates a number of corporate ventures including sugar, cereals, aviation, and real estate, apparently quite successfully, as FF alone was worth Rs 9.8 billion in 2003.



The detailed study and analysis of Balochistan, Sindh, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Punjab has been done in excellent details and provides useful information including those of the jihadis operating in the region. It is interesting that of the percentage share of total GDP, Punjab gets 54 per cent, while Balochistan and NWFP get four per cent and 13 per cent respectively. Sindh is given 29 per cent. The study paints four future scenarios for Pakistan's provinces that appear quite like an astrologer's predictions. Incidentally, the Study takes no cognisance of the impact on Pakistan's provinces or the federal government of an area called Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). A thought provoking book on Pakistan.

*Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)*

**Pakistan's Drift into Extremism : Allah, the Army and America's War on Terror".** Edited by Hassan Abbas (Armont : ME Sharpe, 2005), 275 p, \$69.00, ISBN 076-561-4960.

Hassan Abbas has carried out an excellent analysis and critical survey of development of governance in Pakistan since its inception. He explains the historical, political and religious movements from Mr Jinnah's time to the events through the alternating civil and military regimes in Pakistan. He perceives that there are three main characters or players who have shaped the major developments, for the 56 years of Pakistan's history – the Pakistan Army, the religious outfits and the USA. Abbas further highlights the twin devils that continue to plague Pakistan – corruption and fundamentalist extremism. He examines the events post 11 September 2001 and Pakistan's contribution to combat the war on terror, finally analysing the 'road ahead' in the concluding chapter, in a most dispassionate manner.

Hassan Abbas has presented a brilliant account of the momentous events in Pakistan, with a deep insight and understanding based on his personal experiences as a senior Police official and government functionary. He rightly states that Pakistan was created as a separate geographical entity, but was not a separate 'nation' and hence the appeal to 'Islam' became the compulsion for creating a separate 'identity'.

After the untimely demise of Jinnah and lack of a strong political leadership and absence of strong civilian institutions, the Pakistan Army moved in to fill the vacuum. In fact the Pakistan Army came to be accepted as the natural guardian of Pakistan and even expected to intervene to correct the incompetence of the politicians. The Army also courted the 'Mullah' for extending their autocratic rule, with their assured support. Hassan Abbas has not spared the Army and exposed the failures of Ayub, the incompetence of Yahya Khan, the Islamisation of Zia, and half



measures being adopted by Pervez Musharraf. He credits Bhutto for giving a democratic constitution to Pakistan (1973), for building friendship with China and initiating the nuclear capability. He dismisses Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif governments as non entities with heavy dependence on the Army and the religious parties for governance. He has also highlighted the role of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and its linkages with the radical religious elements in the national politics and for 'Talibanisation' of Afghanistan.

The author has generally examined the relations with India in an impartial and objective manner. However, his conclusion that partition of India is to be blamed on Nehru and by breach of Lucknow Pact of 1916, on 'separate electorates' cannot be entirely agreed to.

Hassan Abbas has articulated Pakistan's perceptions on Jammu and Kashmir well. However, he has assigned the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to Indian Union by forceful annexation by Indian Forces, even suggesting that Indian troops were sent to pressurise the Maharaja. In fact it was Pakistan which had engineered a tribal invasion in October 1947, backed by direct military invasion later. This was thwarted just in the nick of time on the outskirts of Srinagar, by Indian troops airlifted after the Maharaja acceded to India. This is even acknowledged by the British historian, Percival Spear in his book, *History of India 2*. Similarly it was India, which went to the UN in 1948 hoping that the UN would make Pakistan vacate the territory occupied by it and India agreed to a plebiscite subject to Pakistan withdrawing its troops. Missing out these basic facts is not acceptable from the Indian perspective.

Hassan Abbas concludes his book with a warning of a future where the fundamentalist forces in Pakistan, if not countered by a massive economic development and modernisation of Madrasa education, would pose a danger that would have nightmarish consequences. He also recommends that, both, India and Pakistan would have to be more accommodating in their stated positions on Jammu and Kashmir for solution of this complex problem and the USA would need to help them.

This book is an admirable analysis of political developments including reasons for rise of religious extremism in Pakistan, and its domestic prospects and in the evaluation of Indo-Pak relations. The influence of the American policies and support in moderating the Army and combating the extremist forces has been ably articulated. An interesting, authentic, comprehensive, and excellent account of momentous events in Pakistan, since its inception. A must for those involved in policy formulation in combating terrorism in the South Asian region.

*Lieutenant General Chandra Shekhar, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)*



**Long March of Islam, The Future Imperfect.** By RK Ohri (New Delhi : Manas Publications, 2004), 438 p, Rs 695.00, ISBN 81-7049-166-X.

Terrorism has emerged as a major threat to the world order, which is likely to change the very concept of security in the developed countries. The author has done a detailed research on fundamentalism of Islam and clearly brings out its radical uniqueness and links it to the behaviour pattern of the terrorists. He gives an historical perspective by going back a few centuries, wherein he explains the atrocities of the Mughal rulers in the Indian sub-continent and West Asia, which were, according to him, primarily undertaken due to the teachings of Prophet Mohammad.

The author in the initial chapters of the book explains the theological aspects of Islam. The religion expects total commitment to the teachings of Prophet Mohammed as was understood and interpreted by his companions and followers at that point of time. These teachings are biased towards asymmetrical warfare especially against a trained and disciplined force. Islamism establishes a unique bonding amongst the entire Muslim population, cutting across national boundaries, through the concept of 'Ummah'. In this concept, all Muslims have a common identity and belong to one nation ie., Islam. Hence, it is their moral duty to fight the 'enemy'. It is probably for this reason that mujahideens from all over the world get together, even if they were not directly involved, to fight the 'holy war' (jihad) against the society and nation for their perceived cause.

India is the most vulnerable due to the demographic changes taking place and its lackadaisical attitude towards evolving a pro-active strategy to counter the menace of terrorism and fundamentalism. A way ahead needs to be evolved by the moderate and educated Muslims, probably from within the system, which presently seems to be remote. To find a long-term solution, it is imperative that the activities going on in the madrasas, most of which are known to be the 'jihadi factories', are monitored and regulated to the extent that the teachings are restricted to school education vis-à-vis religious fanaticism.

An interesting book and a must read for those involved in research on terrorism.

Colonel Rajiv Bhalla

**Islam in Europe – Integration or Marginalization.** Robert J. Pauly Jr, (England : Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004), 191 p, £ 47.50, ISBN 0-75464-100-7.

As the name of the book suggests, the author explores the concept of integration and the reality of marginalisation of Islam in Europe where the Muslims have sizeable and growing presence due to migration and higher growth rate of Muslim population.



Any adverse comments on Islam in non-Islamic countries generate a strong and often violent campaign in support of banning of books like Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* or withdrawal of legislation that promotes a secular European identity as being witnessed in France now. There is admittedly a 'sharpening of perceptions, strengthening of stereotypes and deep mutual acrimony'. Can these contradictions or faultlines be removed by a systematic effort to bridge the gulf between the secularists and the traditionalists? There is a fundamental societal divide that has to be recognised.

The fundamental difference lies in the belief structure. Islam is comprehensive and provides, as claimed by many Islamic scholars, a total solution to all ills of mankind. Here lies the dilemma which the author attempts to deal with various models. This effort is to be appreciated.

Nobody has said that the best policy is not to promote integration otherwise, as the author says, Europe would face 'social and political instability'. This is well taken. However, it can not be one way traffic. The author has prescriptions for social and political integration 'by way of interactive policy formulations, coordination and implementation at the local, national and supranational levels' No sensible person can disagree.

The author has not discussed how difficult it is to change the well established doctrines of Islam like Dar al-Islam, Dar al-Herb, Jihad, and Murtaad to cite a few. These concepts are basic to Islamic thought as explained by Mujjid Khadduri in *Islam and International Affairs*. There is lack of knowledge of these realities of Islamic thought and practices. These scholars, have not reinterpreted these divisive concepts in the light of the present day reality.

The book is highly readable, analytical and thought provoking. In a way, the book has given a choice to Muslims in Europe to go in for integration or face societal and political marginalisation.

Shri SK Datta, IPS (Retd)

**The Crimson Agenda; Maoist Protest and Terror.** By Ranjit Kumar Gupta (Delhi : Word Smiths, 2004), 239 p, Rs. 369.00, ISBN 81-87412-11-9.

Ranjit Kumar Gupta, an eminent Police officer with a very distinguished career, has authored this volume which traces the origin, history and spread of naxalite movement. Gupta is truly qualified to write on the subject having played a key role himself is dealing with Naxalite terror that shook West Bengal in the late 1960s. The chronicle does not end in 1972 with the defeat of the movement in Bengal. The fires that Charu Mazumdar lit engulfed large areas of the country in subsequent years. Most Indians are so preoccupied with cross-border terrorism in



Jammu and Kashmir and insurgency in the North East that they tend to forget or remain indifferent to the horrible truth that nearly one-fifth of the country, as Gupta reminds us, is under naxalite influence today.

The book has a highly readable foreword by Inder Malhotra and a post script at the end underscoring the grim realities of naxalite terror and its potential for spreading far and wide in future. The first few chapters are devoted to the ideological underpinnings of guerrilla struggle by the so called Marxist-Leninist-Maoists generally branded as "left wing extremists". After tracing the origin and growth of the movement from North Bengal to Calcutta, Gupta notes how it spread to Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Inevitably, the gathering storm in Nepal has received a fair amount of attention. The unfolding scenario in Nepal has grim possibilities for India because there are growing links between the Maoists in Nepal and the left wing extremists in India.

Gupta advocates a counter-strategy to address the underlying socio-economic causes which create conditions for left extremist movement to flourish in vulnerable pockets. Therefore, the institutions of governance have to be revitalised. Unless the state addresses the basic human needs, it would not be able to mobilise support of local population in dealing with this problem. At the same time, the effectiveness of the police force and the intelligence establishment must be enhanced and their techniques sharpened to meet the challenge. Gupta rightly points out that law does not permit any compromise with law-breakers and legitimate force must be used as and when necessary.

The book is the product of years of experience of a seasoned policeman who has also made a mark in the field of social research and applied anthropology. The author is truly entitled to advocate a comprehensive multi-pronged strategy for countering naxalite terror. This is a useful treatise not only for administrators, policemen and policy makers, but also for the academic community and social scientists who seek to understand social turmoils and their repercussions.

*Shri Kalyan K Mitra, IPS (Retd)*

**Dear Mr Jinnah : Selected Correspondence and Speeches of Liaquat Ali Khan 1937-1947.** Edited by Roger D Long (UK : Oxford University Press, 2004), 328 p, Rs 495.00, ISBN 0-19-597709-2.

The book highlights Liaquat Ali Khan's concerns for the Muslims during his career as also a unique relationship he had with Mr Jinnah, through selected correspondence and speeches by this great statesman of Pakistan.



The two remarkable men worked together incessantly for a sovereign state for the Muslims of South Asia and particularly for the creation of Pakistan. Although Jinnah never shared his innermost plans and ideas with anyone, Liaquat was, undoubtedly, the closest to him and called him his 'right hand' in 1943. Both subscribed to modernist views, having been educated in the UK. Both had married non-Muslims.

In Jinnah's many absences, Liaquat became the spokesman of Muslim League since 1936. He became the first Indian Finance Minister in 1946. He was appointed by Jinnah the first Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Liaquat's dedication to the cause of Muslims in India, to serving Jinnah and the League are lucidly put across in the correspondence between the two leaders and the speeches of Liaquat in the book. Those interested in the history of Pakistan's genesis will find the book quite readable.

*Lieutenant General M M Walia, PVSM, AVSM, SM (Retd)*

**A Diminished President – FDR in 1944.** By Matthew B. Willis (Raleigh USA : Ivy House Publishing Group, 2003), 156 p, \$ 22.95, ISBN 1-57197-347-8.

The impact on national and international events of failing health of a chief executive of a nation can be significant. This has been highlighted very effectively by the author, an American attorney turned historian, while surveying the debilitating condition of one of America's most loved President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, popularly referred to as FDR, in the closing years of the Second World War. Roosevelt's personal prestige and esteem in the eyes of the American public was high given his formidable reputation of leading the country through Depression in the 1930s and the Second World War. A deteriorating condition of the heart, however, denied Roosevelt the ability to negotiate an effective peace to the benefit of the western allies, the United States and Britain. What is more pejorative is that knowledge of his failing health was kept a closely guarded secret initially from the President himself, and later with his consent from the American public.

FDR's failing health is said to have affected first, his relationship with Winston Churchill leading to a cleavage at the critical stage of negotiations with a devious Stalin and a weak Chiang kai Shek. Thus, he is said to have ignored signs of Russian post war intentions of occupation of Poland and Eastern Europe, handing over the initiative to Stalin. He dismissed Stillwell who had proposed Americanisation of the weak Chinese National Army; the result was continuance of Chiang in power only to be overwhelmed by Mao's Peoples Army a few years later.



The author's investigations show that Roosevelt lacked the physical, mental and intellectual energy for confrontational politics at the international level against Stalin, one of the sharpest and powerful leaders ever witnessed in world history. Had Roosevelt abdicated the Presidency on grounds of health, would world history have been any different? A moot question but a constitutional amendment in the US has led the President's physician requiring to make public the status of his health. Perhaps we too need such a provision in our constitution. A revealing book recommended for the intellectuals.

*Brigadier Rahul K Bhonsle, SM*

**Alternative Therapies.** Edited by Raj Kumar Pruthi (Delhi : UBS Publishers Distributors Pvt. Ltd., 2004), 309 p, Rs 195.00, ISBN 8-17476-474-7.

The author is a multi-dimensional personality. He is a lawyer and not a doctor and among other disciplines has studied yoga research methods.

He has explained that allopathic systems alone cannot solve our mental and physical problems and hence the development of the alternative medicine and systems. Interestingly, most of these alternatives originated in the East and more specifically from India and China.

The book covers 56 of the about 100 systems of alternative therapies. It is a brief treatise to help the troubled mind and to counter prevailing stresses. This is not another book to be read but one that inspires, informs and educates and indeed it may even transform the reader's attitude to life. The author has diligently put together disparate systems of alleviation of distress. The intensity of research carried out comes out sharply while studying this book. Most readers would not have even heard of many of these. In writing the book, the author has offered a scientific and holistic approach to the art of healing.

Each chapter covers a system in an interesting and easy to comprehend manner. It covers uses of the system and medicine, procedure for treatment, other benefits, circumstances under which that particular therapy should be avoided and possible side effects.

The author has thoughtfully provided a glossary that explains the few technical terms used in the book. For the next edition the author could give a list of reference books at the end of the chapter of each therapy, to help an interested reader carry out further reading in his area of interest.

*Brigadier MS Chowdhury, VSM (Retd)*