

unblinking assertion that the president was elected by all the people, not just the states, and therefore had priority over Congress—a clear reversal of the Founders' ideas. He is also thinking of Jackson's direct appeals to the people through newspapers (the "media" of 1828), his extensive and private circle of advisers known as the "Kitchen Cabinet," his melodramatic and compelling personality.

A surprising number of Jacksonian issues are with us today—the recklessness and arrogance of bankers, the rise of the evangelical Right—but none more central and important than the expansion of presidential power year after year, and the parallel dwindling away of Congress to a series of transoms through which lobbyists submit their bids. Jackson's expansion of executive power was much admired by later presidents, particularly the two Roosevelts and Truman, and Meacham is surely right that most of it is irreversible. But though he tries to view this development calmly, even philosophically, the distance between iron will and tyranny is not easy to measure. "The Bank . . . is trying to kill me," Jackson once cried out in rage, "*but I will kill it.*"

Apart from some material on the Donelson family, little here is new, but everything is so carefully and brilliantly set out for the general reader that Meacham's book should now become the biography of choice. He concludes with Jackson's retirement to Nashville and his late conversion to church membership just before his death in 1845. An epilogue on the famous equestrian statue of Jackson across from the White House offers a warm and reassuring image of the old hero as a strong-willed but loving father to his people.

Some readers will see the image differently, however. It is also possible to imagine from the evidence that Jackson's character was less benign, founded on a dangerous core of anger that never went out and fueled by an inexhaustible ambition to dominate and control. If he was often compared by his contemporaries to Napoleon, it was not solely because of military ability. If he was like Ahab in his astonishing, mesmerizing energy and force of will, it is well to recall that in the end Ahab's ship and all its men, save Ishmael, perished.

MAX BYRD is the author of the historical novels *Jackson* (1997), *Jefferson* (1993), *Grant* (2000), and *Shooting the Sun* (2004).

## CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

### Marching Orders

Reviewed by Ayesha Siddiq

IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON terror, no country looms larger than Pakistan, and in Pakistan, no institution looms larger than the army. The dominant force in Pakistan's political life, it also has a profound regional influence through its never-ending confrontation with India and its tangled relationships with the Islamist militants it is pledged to oppose both at home and in Afghanistan and India.

Books on Pakistan's politics and military gener-

#### CROSSED SWORDS:

Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within.

By Shuja Nawaz.  
Oxford Univ. Press.  
655 pp. \$34.95

ally do one of three things: (a) justify the military's presence at the helm of the country's affairs, (b) hold the military responsible for manipulating the state, or (c) link military intervention with structural flaws in the nation's political system. Shuja Nawaz, a journalist and political consultant who has followed the country's military for the past three decades, has written a book in the first category. In *Crossed Swords*, he uses historical evidence and rich details, some not available before—including information about the ethnic backgrounds of the officer cadre and kickbacks military officials have siphoned to various politicians—to explain the armed forces' consistent intervention in affairs of state.

Writing primarily for a Western audience, Nawaz presents Pakistan's army as a secular and

professional institution that has been in power, either directly or indirectly, for half of the country's 61 years of existence. Even when the military does not hold the reins, it plays a major role in power politics. The threat from India—Pakistan's paramount concern since the violent division of the subcontinent into these two states in 1947—and the weakness of Pakistan's civil and political institutions allowed the army to dominate national resources and create a role for itself as a guardian of the state and its ideology.

Nawaz applauds Pakistan's first military dictator, Ayub Khan (1958–69), for developing the country politically and economically. And he praises the regime of his own brother, Asif Nawaz (1991–93)—who died in office under what the general's family charges were mysterious circumstances—along with that of Pervez Musharraf, who handed over power to a civilian last year after seven years in office. Nawaz appears critical of only two military regimes: Yahya Khan's (1969–71), which imposed authoritarian policies that led to civil war in 1971, and Ziaul Haq's (1977–88), which he criticizes for encouraging religiously conservative or extremist values in the military and the country at large.

While the incompetence of Pakistan's civilian politicians is incontrovertible, Nawaz's characterization of the army as a professional and secular organization is questionable. Can we describe a military engaged in a variety of political and economic roles as professional according to Western liberal democratic standards? Even its competence as a fighting force is debatable. Because of shoddy generalship, the military hasn't won a single war, and it has been guilty of adventurism, most recently in 1999, when General Musharraf sent militants and light infantry to occupy territory in the disputed Kargil region of Kashmir. The operation took place around the time of Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Pakistan, and reaction from Delhi was strong. Its military response, along with international pressure, forced Pakistan's army to withdraw. Musharraf still lauds the operation as a tactical success.

As early as the 1947–48 war with India over



**Pakistani prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani awards officers and aviation cadets at a graduation ceremony in November.**

Kashmir, when the military joined forces with tribal warriors, Pakistan's generals have used nonstate actors to achieve their goals. They conscripted jihadists to fight against Soviet troops in the U.S.-backed war in Afghanistan that began in 1979, and in the late 1980s they pursued their own ambitions in Afghanistan, which resulted in the creation of the Taliban. The Pakistani army maintains alliances with some of these militant elements to fight what it considers Indian-sponsored militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan's northwestern tribal areas. The Islamabad government is still upset by what it sees as a strong Indian influence in Kabul.

Like previous writers about the Pakistani army's links to militants (with the exception of Ambassador Husain Haqqani, in *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*), Nawaz fails to recognize that the centrality of jihadists to the Pakistani army's pragmatic strategy obliterates the distinctions between the thinking of secular generals and of those who are religiously motivated. Nawaz's book will prove helpful for scholars of Pakistan and its military, but it must be read with caution, for he does not grapple with the problems the military has created for itself and for the country.

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