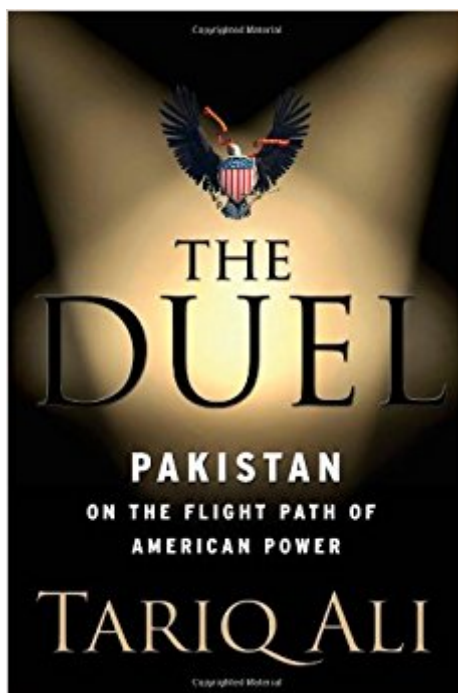


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The Duel: Pakistan On The Flight Path Of American Power



Synopsis

An accessible and revelatory account of the deepening political crisis engulfing the West's closest ally in the war on terror, by a writer unrivalled in his knowledge of the key players and issues involved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

A veteran journalist on Pakistan, Ali reviews the country's six-decade political history critically, indicting the leadership class and its ties to the U.S. Viewing the country as in neocolonial thrall to U.S. strategic interests, Ali comments freely in a narrative that acquaints readers with the country's main political events, from Pakistan's creation in 1947 to its situation in the wake of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007. The military being the dominant feature of Pakistani politics, Ali applies his caustic pen to descriptions of its leaders, particularly those in command during Pakistan's 1971 debacle of losing what is now Bangladesh. As for civilian leaders such as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his late daughter, Benazir, Ali regards them as corrupt and no more interested in, and certainly no more effective at, alleviating the appalling poverty and illiteracy in which most Pakistanis live. Imparting personal detail about his visits to Pakistan and interviews with political figures, Ali offers strongly argued opinions on the past, and his preferred future, of Pakistani politics. --Gilbert Taylor

"A well-informed, compelling narrative...Ali uses his own encounters with historical figures - Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto...they add an urgent, intimate layer to the narrative."-- The

Guardian"Pakistan is the most dangerous country in the world...Yet most Americans don't realize how much of the Pakistani peril is our own fault. The Duel ... should be read for an understanding of, first, what role America has played in creating this dangerous mix and, second, why many Pakistanis see us as responsible for their problems."--The Washington Post --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The style of the duel resembles a very cavalier political memoir more than a responsibly written, thoughtful, history. It is exactly this style that makes Ali's insights on the history of Pakistan so accessible and interesting. His passion about the modern history of Pakistan and his very often eye witness accounts add texture and depth to what would otherwise be much harder to follow. But the book's best quality is also its worst. As Ali explores recent US involvement in the region his subjectivity makes the last part of the book almost unreadable. It is all grievance and no policy -- his earlier insightfulness becomes ad nauseum criticism. If you want to read one book about Pakistan, do not chose this one. However if you want an excellent background, I think this book is essential.

I have not been able to read this book on cruise control. Full attention to every sentence has been required. A little knowledge of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh around 1947 would help prior to picking this volume up. A few more maps would help as well. Above all a consciousness raising book.

october 9 2008, after last night's presidential debate, i recommend getting ahead of the reductionist version we will get through the mainstream media. Tariq Ali's The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power takes us from The Partition in 1947, thru the War in Bengal (aka West Pakistan, aka Bangladesh) with a death toll approx 2 million, of course you remember, right?), to the present, and the continuous American support for the succession of military dictators strictly in the interest of a stable government, which finally cost, at least, the birth of that nuclear power. Who are the people? btw, i learn that the Rolling Stones wrote "street fightin' man" about Tariq. enjoy, and get ready to tremble...

The Duel: Pakistan On The Flight Path Of American Power is a decent read. But is Pakistan's destabilization really all America's fault? I Don't Think So! The Pakistanis and their regimes have to hold themselves accountable. In my humble opinion, their destabilization has more to do with religion, culture and the mistreatment of women than American usurpations over their regimes,

which Tariq Ali discusses in the book, inadvertently contradicting him self, because he tries to place most of the blame on Western civilization/institutions when truth be told the Western powers are only exploiting what they deem a nation state of weak character. When a nation state that's only 64 years old spends two-thirds of its economy on defense and debt while 70 percent of women and 41 percent of men are illiterate then you have to contemplate that Pakistan has a real problem. Furthermore, nearly 70 percent of the population lives in squalor and abject poverty and these insalubrious conditions need to be dealt with, but to engage in dealing with the situation the Pakistanis must renounce their antiquated way of life. The strictness of Wahhabism and Islam is the main precipice that these people face and the fact that they have been under military rule since its inception after Britain lost control of the province makes you wonder if they'll ever become a stabilized nation. In Addition, according to Tariq Ali they still practice stoning women to death and forcing them to marry the Koran in an attempt to keep them from exercising their God given rights. The abuse that the Pakistani women face in many cases is unbearable. A civilization cannot thrive when it oppresses and demeans its women, which Bernard Lewis demonstrates in his book "What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East." And even though Pakistan isn't a Middle Eastern country it still embraces its philosophy, culture and logic, which is terrifying considering they are a nuclear superpower. Of course, Tariq Ali disagrees with Bernard Lewis' assessment by stating, "An argument often used by Bernard Lewis is that the U.S. has become a scapegoat for the Muslim world to explain its own decline and problems, to put forward this [anti Muslim] argument at a time when the Western military, or economics occupation of the Arab world," is being usurped in countries such as Iraq, it "is somewhat [a] disingenuous" position to take. Tariq also states that, "The founders of Al Qaeda were incubated in Saudi Arabia and Egypt before being dispatched to wage jihad in Afghanistan by Zbigniew Brzezinski (founder of the Trilateral Commission), now an adviser to Barack Obama." Moreover, as of 2008, Tariq Ali claims there may have been as little as 500 Al Qaeda operative worldwide, deeming them a very minimal threat, if a threat at all, even though President Obama has been assassinating their leaders including Osama bin Laden who was hiding in Pakistan shortly before his demise. These assassinations could be construed as a violation of international law such as the Geneva Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nuremberg Principals if they were able to apprehend these terror suspects without resistance. Of course, there is speculation, or should I say rumors abound that the U.S. and NATO forces had the intelligence information to apprehend Osama without killing him, but we will never know the truth behind that theory. The destabilization of Pakistan seems to necessitate the continued destabilization of Afghanistan with

Taliban agents crossing the border and reaping continued influence over both countries as Heroin production is at an all time high leaving both countries in dire-straits. President Hamid Karzai (former Unocal consultant) is all but powerless in Afghanistan while his brother Ahmad Wali Karzai is running much of the Heroin trade in that country, neutering any chance of Hamid being an effective leader, if that was ever his objective, which I don't believe it is considering he was placed in power under the Bush presidency. Overall, there has been four regime changes over the last 60 years from Mohammad Ayub Khan to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was executed by hanging, and Khaleda Zia who was allegedly assassinated in a plane crash, and military dictator/president Pervez Musharraf who was removed from office when he lost U.S. support. Furthermore, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, but no one is really sure what the motives were considering she was all but powerless during her tenure. The Bhutto clan and the Sharif family were at variance to one another bucking for power with frequent regime changes, but to no avail because of military control and U.S./Western influence. As of right now Benazir Bhutto's husband Zardari is in power and he is favored by the United States, but for how long is the question? As for India's role in all this, is there a chance that India and Pakistan will go to war and will it be a nuclear catastrophe? Well, as long as the U.S. and Europe continue to ally themselves with both countries the threat is minimal. But is Pakistan really an ally, or is it really a powder keg ready to go off at any moment? Tariq Ali gives you a lot to ponder upon in this book and hopefully he'll write an update soon as the events unfold. Overall, this was a good read, but I wish he had a cast of characters list and a timeline set up so his story would have been easier to ascertain and follow. 3 Stars for a good effort.

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