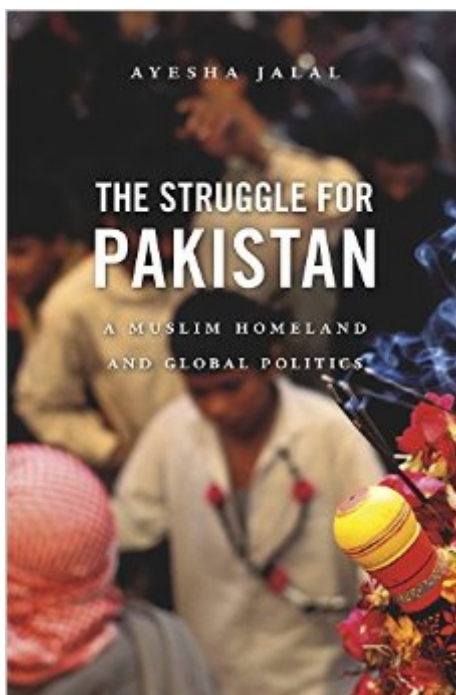


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The Struggle For Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland And Global Politics



Synopsis

Established as a homeland for India's Muslims in 1947, Pakistan has had a tumultuous history that has unfolded in the vortex of dire regional and international conflicts. Beset by assassinations, coups, ethnic strife, and the breakaway of Bangladesh in 1971, the country has found itself too often contending with religious extremism and military authoritarianism. Now, in a probing biography of her native land amid the throes of global change, Ayesha Jalal provides an insider's assessment of how this nuclear-armed Muslim nation evolved as it did and explains why its dilemmas weigh so heavily on prospects for peace in the region. Attentive to Pakistan's external relations as well as its internal dynamics, Jalal shows how the vexed relationship with the United States, border disputes with Afghanistan in the west, and the conflict with India over Kashmir in the east have played into the hands of the generals who purchased security at the cost of strong democratic institutions. Combined with domestic ethnic and regional rivalries, such pressures have created a siege mentality that encourages military domination and militant extremism. Since 9/11, the country has been widely portrayed as a breeding ground for Islamic terrorism. Assessing the threats posed by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban as American troops withdraw from Afghanistan, Jalal contends that the battle for Pakistan's soul is far from over. Her definitive biography reveals how pluralism and democracy continue to struggle for a place in this Muslim homeland, where they are so essential to its future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A great and timely book by the MacArthur genius awards winner, and one of the most

knowledgeable historians of South Asian and especially Pakistani history. This is the latest in her series of books on Pakistani history. She has been working hard to correct the distortions and outright lies taught in educational institutions, propagated through the media and supported by the Pakistani elites including the military. Her books, including this one, are scholarly but written with a style and powerful passion about her subject, that make them hard to put down. This book covers Pakistan's struggle to acquire an identity, and nationhood, from its inception as an idea, through partition, up to the present. I strongly recommend this book as required reading for anyone seriously interested in Pakistani and South Asian history.

Told from Pakistan point of view, perfect complement to *Magnificent Delusions*, same period covered from perspective of US diplomacy. Recognizes the many failings of all participants, it also credits courageous people who stood for principle and, almost, ends with optimism. Clarifies many modern issues, especially Iranian nuclear capacity. Will improve any reader's ability to understand and evaluate current issues.

The first few chapters on the subcontinent's partition and the first spell of Army rule in Pakistan were alright. But after that the book turned out to be terrible. It is rambling, incoherent, and poorly edited. The author just plugged in a series of facts, opinions and news headlines with no underlying theme tying them all together. There are better books out there about Pakistani history.

An incredible journey through the complex history of Pakistan. A must read for anyone trying to understand Pakistan's current challenges and identity.

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