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The Most Dangerous Place: Pakistan's Lawless Frontier

"Gul offers an unparalleled inside view of the region where Al Qaeda lives and still thrives." —AHMED RASHID, author of *Taliban*

IMTIAZ GUL

THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE

PAKISTAN'S LAWLESS FRONTIER



Synopsis

The story of the dark side of the Afghan war - and how Pakistan degenerated into a nuclear-armed powder keg. Eight years ago we chased the Taliban from Kabul and forced Al Qaeda to find a new home. One by one the militants crossed the border into Pakistan and settled in its tribal areas, building alliances with locals and terrorizing or bribing their way to power. This place - Pakistan's lawless frontier - is now the epicenter of global terrorism. It is where young American and British jihadists go to be trained, where the kidnapped are stowed away, and where plots are hatched for deadly attacks all over the world. It has become, in President Obama's words, "the most dangerous place" - a hornet's nest of violent extremists, many of whom now target their own state in vicious suicide-bombing campaigns. Imtiaz Gul, who knows the ins and outs of these groups and their leaders, tackles the toughest questions about the current situation: What can be done to bring the Pakistani Taliban under control? Who funds these militants and what are their links to Al Qaeda? Are they still supported by the ISI, Pakistan's all-powerful intelligence agency? Based on dozens of exclusive interviews with high-ranking Pakistani intelligence, government and military officers and extensive first-hand reporting, *The Most Dangerous Place* is a gripping and definitive exposÃ© of a region that Americans need urgently to understand.

Book Information

File Size: 1355 KB

Print Length: 321 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (May 31, 2010)

Publication Date: June 10, 2010

Language: English

ASIN: B003NX7NCY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #841,903 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #192 in Books > History > Asia > Pakistan #430 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Asia > India #696 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > National & International Security

Customer Reviews

Don't mistake this book for a popular history -- Imtiaz Gul's short but fact-packed book about the recent history and current state of the Afghan/Pakistan frontier is more of a reference than a read. As a list of the players and an overview of the state of play in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, it can't be beat - though the fluidity of the current situation will likely date the book quickly. But I found plowing through the author's dry presentation a challenge. Gul's underlying theme, if theme there be (as I said, this is more of a reference than a story), is that American distrust in Pakistan's commitment to battling Taliban and Al Qaeda enemies sheltering in Pakistan, while once founded, is no longer justified. He points to increasing Pakistani military response to local militants, and to Taliban attacks on Pakistani authorities, as evidence that whatever relationships may once have been between Islamic fundamentalists and the Pakistan government, they have now soured to the point that Americans can count on Pakistani help fighting militants within its borders. He makes a persuasive case in some respects -- Pakistan can hardly be expected to put up with attacks on its soldiers and policemen -- but cannot dispel all doubt, since he records a number of truces made between Pakistan and Taliban elements based on their promise not to attack the institutions of Pakistan. This leaves such elements with the option of crossing the porous border to Afghanistan and attacking Western elements there, using Pakistan as a base. But mostly, this is a list of FATA areas, the fundamentalists most active in them, their leaders, their relations with each other, and their likely sources of funding and support.

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