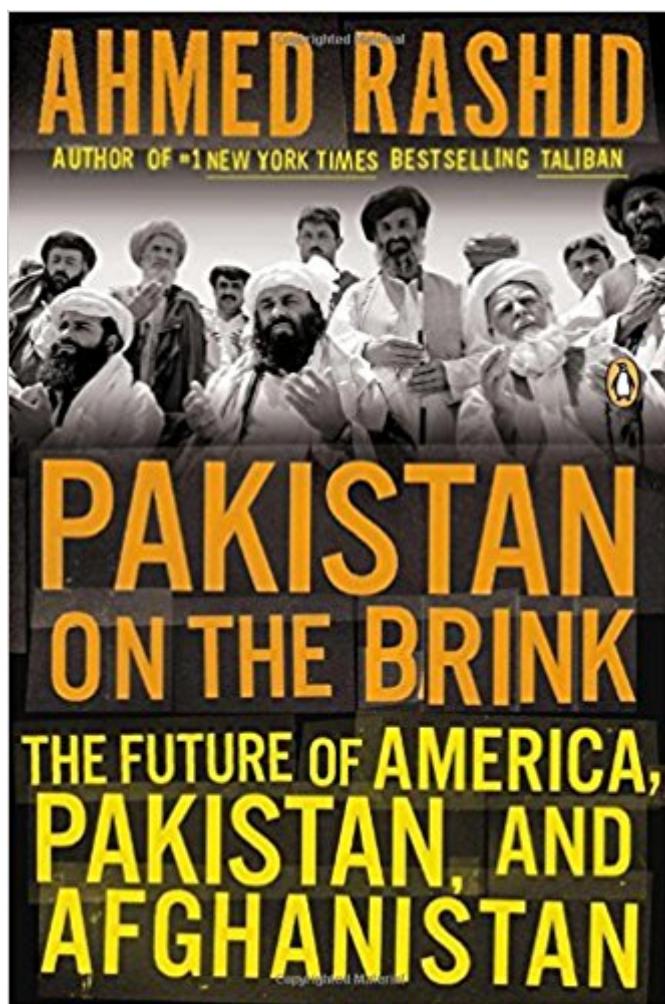


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Pakistan On The Brink: The Future Of America, Pakistan, And Afghanistan



Synopsis

An urgent, on-the-ground report from Pakistan—^{from the bestselling author of Descent Into Chaos and Taliban}Ahmed Rashid, one of the world's leading experts on the social and political situations in Pakistan and Afghanistan, offers a highly anticipated update on the possibilities—and hazards—facing the United States after the death of Osama bin Laden and as Operation Enduring Freedom winds down. With the characteristic professionalism that has made him the preeminent independent journalist in Pakistan for three decades, Rashid asks the important questions and delivers informed insights about the future of U.S. relations with the troubled region. His most urgent book to date, *Pakistan on the Brink* is the third volume in a comprehensive series that is a call to action to our nation's leaders and an exposition of this conflict's impact on the security of the world.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (February 26, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780143122838

ISBN-13: 978-0143122838

ASIN: 0143122835

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 56 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #619,081 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #64 in Books > History > Asia > Pakistan #660 in Books > History > Asia > India #1194 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Middle Eastern

Customer Reviews

"[Rashid] literally wrote the book on the Taliban and now has added a superb work on the future of Pakistan." —The Washington Post "Insightful . . . Readers will welcome this insider's lucid, expert account of a disaster in the making." —Kirkus Reviews "Pakistan on the Brink is a page turner. Through Ahmed Rashid's eloquent, incisive, objective, and fact-based descriptions of events and blunders repeatedly committed by the Afghan, Pakistani, and American establishments, the reader gets a great understanding of the genesis of the quagmire for which President Obama has coined the phrase AfPak." —Louisville

Courier-Journal Praise for Descent into Chaos "Powerful." • Wolf Blitzer "A clear-headed, sobering look at a country whose ties with the U.S. are becoming ever more frayed." • Publishers Weekly "Rashid, a Pakistani journalist, is that most valuable of political analysts: both insider and outsider to the problems he studies. His book should be read by anyone pondering how America might stop widening Osama bin Laden's pool of bomb-clad volunteers." • Chicago Tribune "Rashid's book should be required reading for both presidential candidates, and anyone who wants to understand the jihadi problem." • The Philadelphia Inquirer "Ahmed Rashid's latest work provides essential insights for anyone who hopes to understand what's going on in Central Asia and the alternative futures that stretch out before it." • Pittsburgh Post-Gazette "A clear-headed, sobering look at a country whose ties with the U.S. are becoming ever more frayed." • Publishers Weekly (starred review) "Excellent | Nobody tells the story of Musharaff's duplicity better than Rashid." • Time "Ahmed Rashid has over the decades turned out to be something of a prophet in the region. [and] his fourth book [is] a caustic compendium of the mistakes by the Bush administration and, by extension, its regional allies, in tackling Islamic militancy." • International Herald Tribune

Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani journalist based in Lahore, is the author of *Descent Into Chaos* and the #1 New York Times bestseller *Taliban*. He is a regular contributor to the *Financial Times* and the *New York Times*, and appears regularly on *NPR*, *CNN*, and the *BBC World Service*.

This is Ahmed Rashid's follow up to *Taliban* and *Decent into Chaos* covering the events from 2009-2013-14. *Pakistan on the Brink* really ties the problems of Afghanistan and Pakistan together in this soup of dysfunction, in that Afghanistan's failures coupled with Pakistan's questionable foreign policy decisions of support for the Taliban mixed with eliminating those Taliban who haven't promised not to attack Afghanistan has created quite a mess for both the Stans and the United States. I think Rashid really hit the nail on the head in this book in that the United States as a country cannot solve Afghanistan without solving Pakistan. Given the current relationship between the two countries, such a solution does not seem likely in coming. This problem strikes me as a human problem and how do you change the thoughts and perceptions of an entity like the Pakistan Army, Taliban, or even American politicians? These are so entrenched that the situation becomes hopeless. An informative book on a depressing situation.

This is the book that the intelligent American needs today-this year, this very minute- to understand the sad political, diplomatic, military and social realities that we are finding ourselves engulfed in in Afghanistan. Ahmed Rashid's "Pakistan on the Brink" weaves together the occasionally confusing conditions of South and much of Central Asia into a subtly textured fabric, from whose stark colors we dare not distract our eyes or attention. Each of the book's chapters might be read independently of the others, but all of them tell the same tale: the betrayal of our initiatives in Afghanistan by Presidential ideology and high-handedness. Betrayal by the feudal shortsightedness and cynicism of President Karzai in Kabul. Betrayal by interfering neighbor countries. And, most of all, and central to Rashid's argument, betrayal of the Pakistanis, the Afghans, and the US/NATO troops still "in country" by the imploding death star of Pakistan, its government cowardly and clueless and crawling before its military and intelligence sectors who enjoy complete power at home and who exercise unrelenting terrorism against all of their foes at home and abroad, its economy crumbling, its infrastructure unfunded, its citizens mired in poverty and corruption, and all of Islamabad's energies committed to endless, pointless war against India and preserving or ensuring a Pakistani regime in Afghanistan, care of the Taliban. If you read only one book about Afghanistan today, Rashid's "Pakistan on the Brink" is that one. If you would like to read another book giving a background to events in Afghanistan, I would heartedly recommend Rashid's equally fine book, "Taliban". Mark Seifter

If, like me, you have been totally confused by the on-going fiasco of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan for the last 13 years - and longer with Pakistan - this book clearly lays out the seemingly unending list of policy failures by both the Bush and Obama administrations, and how hundreds of billions of dollars were poured down various rat holes. Rashid has had unusual access to all the major players on this chess board and has been very prescient in his earlier books about where events were headed. This is not a blame-game book (although there is plenty to go around), rather how well-intentioned, if totally naïf, policies failed but nevertheless continued to march on because of sheer momentum and unquestioned funding from Washington. About the only person Rashid credits with understanding the situation in the region and possibly had a strategy for a favorable outcome was Richard Holbrooke. Unfortunately, Holbrooke unexpectedly died - not that anyone in D.C. gave his ideas any serious thought as various cabals in the foreign policy apparatus were each pursuing their own agendas. Unfortunately, the hubris of the Project for the New American Century, even after lessons hopefully learned from Iraq to Afghanistan-Pakistan, remains

at the center of our foreign policy - see Ukraine and probably more to come.

For anyone who has studied or worked alongside Pakistanis in the West, it is always a bit a puzzle to see how such a resourceful and savvy population can come out of a country that always seems on the brink of some catastrophe. Ahmed Rashid is a Lahore-based journalist and offers a clear report of all the problems plaguing the nation. Some of these problems are imposed from outside, such as excessive American reliance on the Pakistani Army - but he reserves most of his ire for Pakistani leadership's short-sightedness. While other once testy neighbors, such as Greece & Turkey or France & Germany have settled their differences - Pakistan continuously sees India as waiting to attack, and thereby justifies the military consuming most of the nation's limited resources. For anyone who thinks that once the U.S. leaves Afghanistan that we can sleep easily will not be re-assured by Rashid's book.

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