



Pakistan: A New History

By Ian Talbot

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If Pakistan is to preserve all that is good about its country--the generosity and hospitality of its people, the dynamism of its youth--it must face the deterioration of its social and political institutions. Sidestepping easy headlines to identify Pakistan's true dangers, this volume revisits the major turning points and trends of Pakistani history over the past six decades, focusing on the increasing entrenchment of Pakistan's army in its political and economic arenas; the complex role of Islam in public life; the tensions between central and local identities and democratic impulses; and the effect of geopolitical influences on domestic policy and development.

While Ian Talbot's study centres on Pakistan's many failures--the collapse of stable governance, the drop in positive political and economic development, and, most of all, the unrealised goal of securing a separate Muslim state--his book unequivocally affirms the country's potential for a positive reawakening. These failures were not preordained, Talbot argues, and such a fatalistic reading does not respect the complexity of historical events, individual actors, and the state's own rich resources. While he acknowledges grave crises still lie ahead for Pakistan, Talbot's sensitive historical approach makes it clear that favourable opportunities still remain for Pakistan, in which the state has a chance to reclaim its priorities and institutions and reestablish political and economic sustainability.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In this work of interpretation Talbot builds on his earlier historical analyses of Pakistan. He reflects on the entrenchment of the army in politics; the issues surrounding the role of Islam in public life; the tensions between centralising tendencies and local identities; and the impact of geopolitics on internal development. In doing so he lays bare failures of governance, economic and political development. He concludes that the security crisis may not be the worst that Pakistan will have to face; more serious threats lie in population and environmental pressures. Talbot's judgements are balanced and his words authoritative."--Francis Robinson, Professor of the History of South Asia, Royal Holloway, University of London

"An invaluable guide for navigating and understanding Pakistan's complex, byzantine politics. Talbot brings extraordinary understanding and empathy in analysing the trials and tribulations of Pakistan's political experience. No other contemporary history of Pakistan comes anywhere near Talbot's understanding and detail of its challenges and missed opportunities."--Maleeha Lodhi, former Pakistani Ambassador to the US and editor of *Pakistan: Beyond the 'Crisis' State*

"This is an excellent overview of Pakistan's troubled past and uncertain future. Professor Ian Talbot provides a judicious, informed and incisive account of a polity that has defied standard explanations. A work of exceptional quality that is a must read for everyone seriously interested in Pakistan's history and politics."--Gurharpal Singh, Dean , Faculty of Arts and Humanities, SOAS

"This book by Ian Talbot is a timely addition to understand the predicaments in which Pakistan is presently embroiled. Talbot has written extensively on South Asia in particular the history of Pakistan and this book shows his expertise on the subject. [It is] a welcome addition to understand the state of Pakistan and its society from a historical perspective." -- Muhammad S. Pervez, Lahore School of Economics

"The book is a lucid and comprehensive exploration of Pakistan's past and present which highlights solutions for future prospects. It is an excellent contribution and a must-read for all those interested in the history, culture, society and security of Pakistan." -- Tauseef Ahmad Parry, *The Muslim World Book Review*

"A refreshing take, and a welcome addition to the literature on Pakistan." -- *Contemporary South Asia*

"This important book provides a refreshing look at Pakistan. It lays the burden of failures and disappointments mainly on governance issues ... Undoubtedly, for those interested in a clear, concise and

chronological history of Pakistan, Talbot's new volume is an essential read." -- *South Asia Research*

About the Author

Ian Talbot is Professor of History at Southampton University, one of Europe's leading historians of South Asia, and the author of many books on the sub-continent.

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