

Deception: Pakistan, the United States, and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons

Adrian Levy , Cathy Scott-Clark

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The shocking, three-decade story of A. Q. Khan and Pakistan's nuclear program, and the complicity of the United States in the spread of nuclear weaponry.

On December 15, 1975, A. Q. Khan--a young Pakistani scientist working in Holland--stole top-secret blueprints for a revolutionary new process to arm a nuclear bomb. His original intention, and that of his government, was purely patriotic--to provide Pakistan a counter to India's recently unveiled nuclear device. However, as Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark chillingly relate in their masterful investigation of Khan's career over the past thirty years, over time that limited ambition mushroomed into the world's largest clandestine network engaged in selling nuclear secrets--a mercenary and illicit program managed by the Pakistani military and made possible, in large part, by aid money from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Libya, and by indiscriminate assistance from China.

Most unnerving, the authors reveal that the sales of nuclear weapons technology to Iran, North Korea, and Libya, so much in the news today, were made with the clear knowledge of the American government, for whom Pakistan has been a crucial buffer state and ally--first against the Soviet Union, now in the "war against terror." Every successive American presidency, from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush, has turned a blind eye to Pakistan's nuclear activity--rewriting and destroying evidence provided by its intelligence agencies, lying to Congress and the American people about Pakistan's intentions and capability, and facilitating, through shortsightedness and intent, the spread of the very weapons we vilify the "axis of evil" powers for having and fear terrorists will obtain. *Deception* puts our current standoffs with Iran and North Korea in a startling new perspective, and makes clear two things: that Pakistan, far from being an ally, is a rogue nation at the epicenter of world destabilization; and that the complicity of the United States has ushered in a new nuclear winter.

Based on hundreds of interviews in the United States, Pakistan, India, Israel, Europe, and Southeast Asia, *Deception* is a masterwork of reportage and dramatic storytelling by two of the world's most resourceful investigative journalists. Urgently important, it should stimulate debate and command a reexamination of our national priorities.

Deception: Pakistan, the United States, and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons Details

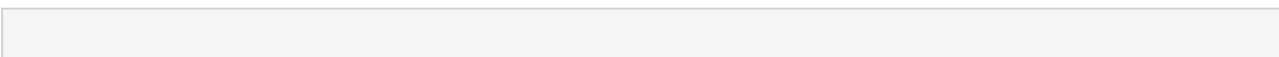
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Will says

Terrifying. This book was written in 2007. Subsequent "events" have not convinced me that anything but a miracle has prevented the use of these weapons. I take only a tiny bit of solace in the reminder that "W" was pretty damn bad too--and we made it (somehow). If John Bolton comes back, though, I'm starting to dig my bunker.

Roughly the first half of the book details the work of A Q Khan to build the bomb and the second half is how Pakistan exported technology and completed components to fund its program--working the US the whole time, supporting the Taliban, and collecting billions in "aid". As one Pakistani official said, "We do whatever we want, and the US does whatever we want."

One side note on the source, Peter Griffin ... yeah, it is hard to take seriously.... Some of the other reviews have questioned the entire book because of the reliance on him. But, I felt that there was only one chapter -- that seemed tacked on -- about him and intended to exculpate. In my opinion did not detract from the whole story.

Dermot Nolan says

If you want a book that exposes the vagaries of short term political foresight this is a great place to start. Excellent stuff. Brilliantly written and most of all a sad damning critique of so called great power politics .

Akshay Acharya says

A Mind boggling account of nuclear proliferation at a scale that has not yet matched by anyone else. It establishes the fact that Pakistan , A failed state in itself has let its soil be used for activities that have led to the spread of terrorism and arming unstable states with nuclear tech and an ever evolving threat of their leaders to use it.In all this entire mess the book also highlights what a colossal waste NPT is and also how USA president Reagan and his successors were complicit in allowing Pakistan state to go about proliferating despite incriminating evidence.

All in all one cannot simply brush aside this episode by calling it as abysmal, lapse of judgement etc on part of the political establishment. I for one agree to the fact that USA a superpower had all the wherewithal to nip this in bud but it chose not to , asserting to the fact that its actions are criminal and the entire world is right now facing after effects (ISIS , NK crisis, Refugee crisis, Terrorism in Kashmir valley etc..) of a succesfull proliferation by the Failed State Pakistan & a botched/ failed US middle east and far east policy.

The authors have done an excellent job in bringing this issue to the fore front , the narrative style is fast paced and races through the time line with such clarity that it makes you want to dwell deeper into this issue. Kudos for making this an exciting and gripping book to read ..

Arthur Edelstein says

This is a fantastically detailed report on the skulduggery in Washington and Islamabad surrounding Pakistan's nuclear program and proliferation programs. However I have doubts about the correctness of the interpretation.

Colin says

This book overviews the history of Pakistan's uranium weapons enrichment program, the illicit global procurement network created by A.Q. Khan to build that program, the failure of the United States to stop that program, and its links to other nuclear weapons programs in Libya, Iran, North Korea, and China. The authors are shocked by this history, and they expect you to be shocked as well. There are lots of villains here, sometimes described in frankly sneering terms, including A.Q. Khan himself, Aslam Beg and Hamid Gul, Pervez Musharraf (who appears to have been personally responsible for just about every militant organization formed in Pakistan since the 1980s), and a number of U.S. officials, some of whom are accused of deliberately covering up awareness of the state of the Pakistani enrichment program at various points in its development.

It appears undeniable that successive U.S. administrations put aside nuclear nonproliferation objectives in favor of other foreign policy priorities concerning Pakistan, to dangerous consequence. I think there's also a compelling case here that Khan's sales network was generally sanctioned by the Pakistani military leadership, with whom the U.S. continued to maintain relations even as Khan was sacrificed. But as other reviews of this book have suggested, it's not clear from this book how a more confrontational U.S. approach would have been enacted, and if this would in fact have deterred Pakistan from its enrichment goals, particularly as its neighbor India made progress towards the same objective.

I am not a nukes guy, and I don't know the history well here. But the alarmist tone throughout, reliance on some few key sources who may have some self-exculpatory interests of their own, and what seems to be some sloppiness with details on some of the parts I'm more familiar with, makes me question how much I should rely on this as a guide to the proliferation and sales network, which from my perspective is the most concerning aspect of the story. I think I need to triangulate this account with several other sources before drawing any conclusions on the details.

Eric says

This book is mind-blowing really. A large but fairly easy read that takes you through the history of Pakistan's nuclear program and how they attained nuclear weapons and became the largest proliferator in the world. It reveals that nuclear proliferation was an integral part of Pakistan's foreign and economic policy. They sold various parts of uranium refinement technology, warhead technology and nuclear material to North Korea, China, Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia and perhaps more countries that we don't know about. This book also reveals how Pakistan used American aid during Reagan's reign to fund their nuclear drive, how Reagan's administration knew about it and how they ignored it because Pakistan was a key partner in supplying the mujahideen in Afghanistan who were fighting the Soviets. Sound familiar? Bush also ignored Pakistan's nuclear activities for the same reason. The book argues that Pakistan is the number one threat to world peace due to their connections with terrorism and their nuclear proliferation. Hard to argue with it after reading this

book.

Mark Sequeira says

I like this one probably the best of the three or four I've read on Pakistan's nuclear program and it's father, A. Q. Khan.

Gsmalz says

Terrifying and chilling this book is a must read for those who are interested in world affairs. In particular the book documents years of the United States turning a blind eye to, as well as actively enabling, Pakistan's nuclear program. Even worse than allowing Pakistan to become a nuclear state, the U.S. also ignored, and actively suppressed information that proved Pakistan was engaged in proliferation of nuclear technology. Particularly egregious was the Bush II administration who allowed Pakistan to send nuclear technology, as well as bomb designs and highly enriched uranium, to countries such as North Korea and Iran, as well as many others. Indeed anyone who tried to speak up or stop this proliferation during the Reagan-Bush-Bush presidencies had their careers and lives destroyed by those administrations. This book certainly puts the lie to the claim that Bush "kept us safe" after 9/11. This book definitively shows that the actions undertaken by the administration were based on ideology and politics, nothing more, and that they have in fact increased the number of terrorists as well as anti-West sentiment among the Muslim world.

Abdul says

An excellent history of Pakistan's nuclear program and the country's duplicitous behavior with the United States.

Kevin says

WOW! Incredible book! This book was so full of information, I am almost at a loss for words. I learned so much about our country's knowledge and involvement with Pakistan and their quest to obtaining nuclear weapons. The book covers more than 3 decades of lying, deceit, theft of nuclear secrets and plans, illegal purchase and shipping of controlled goods, etc. The story is so good it could be made into a movie. It would be a pretty long movie however :-). It enlightened me on our government, what they knew, what they covered up, and ultimately how they coddled the country of Pakistan with billions of dollars of foreign aid and military equipment despite knowing full well that they were building a nuclear device. Some of the information really made my blood boil, and more of it just dumbfounded me. This book was long, but had loads of details and history. The author did a great job researching and gathering data to write the book.

A.J. says

A well researched and thorough history of the scary and dangerous Pakistani nuclear weapons program. And the complicity of the U.S. government in allowing Pakistan to develop, deploy and then sell nuclear weapons worldwide. Levy and Scott-Clark's history concludes that nuclear armed, Islamist Pakistan is the world's number one threat. After reading this book, especially that last few chapters that provide a more detailed and under-reported biography of former Pakistani President Pervez Musharaff, one has to agree with the authors. Besides the normal cast of "evil-character" states (Iran, Libya, North Korea) - all nuclear weapons technology customers of Pakistan - the Saudi Kingdom gets the rare mention of its wholesale purchase of nuclear weapons from Pakistan as far back as the early 1990s. True? Quite possibly, but this possibility has never acknowledged by any government. After reading this book, one has to wonder exactly who the United States is allied with in southwest Asia. And why.

Bob says

Good read, what a deception.

I found it interesting how Peter Griffin says he met a Pakistani Brigadier-General Anis Nawab (pg 39). Similarly Adrian Levy reports that there was a Brigadier General working for A.Q. Khan in Pakistan (pg 35). These are interesting statements because "Brigadier-General" is not even a rank in the Pakistan Army (or for that matter in their own British Army). So, why is this fictitious rank being used? For example, knowing the correct rank would help answer the question, who was the senior officer on the Pakistani side (pg 39)? After all, there were no generals working for A.Q. Khan in 1976/ 1977. So, if there was a general present, it would suggest President Bhutto / Ghulam Ishaq may have appointed someone senior to A.Q. Khan to oversee the project.

Can we find out the true rank of "Anis Nawab" who Peter Griffin says was addressed as a General and was said to be running the project to industrialize Pakistan? Unfortunately, we cannot because it appears there were no Brigadiers or Generals in the Pakistan Army with that particular name. So, it seems, the deception on the Pakistani side, of using fictitious ranks and names, is complete and continues to this day. I find it remarkable that the one man whose identity the Pakistani team and government went to great lengths to protect was not that of A.Q. Khan but someone who still remains unknown.

Michael Griswold says

Deception reads like a cold war era thriller...every government from Carter until the second Bush White House is targeted for their failure to prevent Pakistan from acquiring nuclear weapons. The only reason I can't go five full stars here is that it seemed to attack Republican administrations more than Democratic ones, although Carter and Clinton really come off no better than any previous or subsequent administration. I thought the book did a really good job of focusing at events from the Pakistan point of view and how the actions of America emboldened Pakistan to continue building their bomb and eventually export technology to other "rouge nations that must be prevented at all costs from acquiring nuclear weapons." Yet Pakistan did it, while America declared the line of nuclear non-proliferation. This book made me question how anyone is ever going to be stopped from acquiring nuclear weapons given the disconnect between the words of the leaders featured in the book and their actions. Overall an engrossing read on Pakistan's nuclear program

wrapped around the failings, lies, and sporadic successes of five United States administrations.

Claire S says

Questions to answer about it though, from one reader on Amazon:

"The fact that the authors of Deception thank Peter Griffen in the acknowledgments of their book raises questions of credibility. In Deception, the authors quote him as saying he was duped and taken advantage of by the Khan network. Another recently released book on the subject, America and the Islamic Bomb, contradicts this portrayal and reveals that a secret British Customs paper says that Griffen was aware and involved in the network's shipments to Libya. How much did the authors of Deception rely on alleged nuclear proliferators for information?

Furthermore, the authors attribute allegations about Pakistani officials to journalist and academic Husain Haqqani, including the story that former ISI Chief Hamid Gul was in league with Osama bin Laden and Nawaz Sharif to overthrow Benazir Bhutto in 1990. Haqqani has since denied and contradicted many of these allegations in the media."

Abhijeet says

one of the best works of investigative journalism, it measures the stupidity of the american government on a grand scale and comes out with definite and great results. pakistan, a monster created by america, is a monster because of this one man army called A Q khan, but very few know that ISI was the brain behind all the high drama. it not only wanted to keep afghanistan as its strategic backyard against a economically (comparatively) rising India, but also as a promise of american dollars in case of any west asian war, like with iran, iraq etc.. And america acted like Charlie Wilson, in hope of pakistani goodwill, in hope that hard-core criminals are humans as well, not realizing the literary and scientific meaning of the term, or maybe because it's upper echelons wanted something else.

a classic case of idiocy going wild, and bazooka missiles coming back to destroy the firer.
