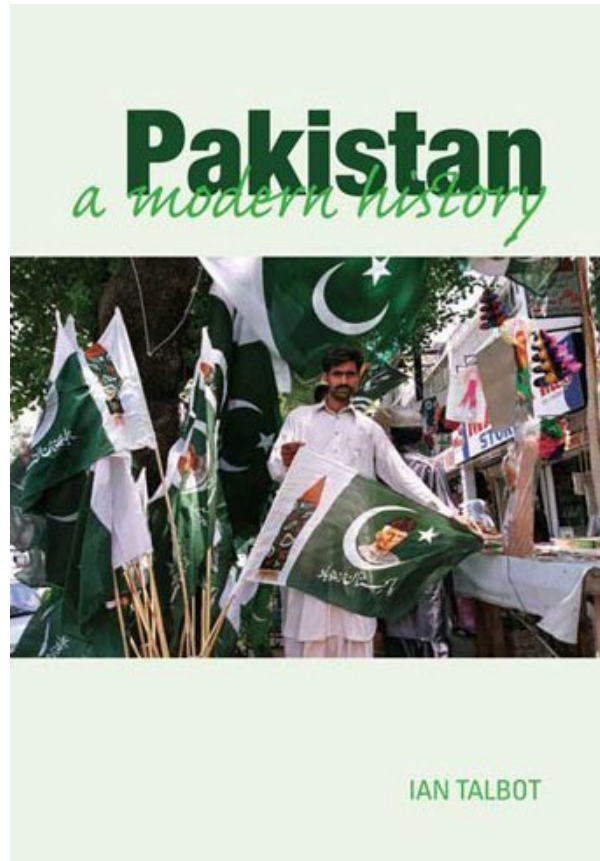


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## Review

"Bound to become a standard reference among the watchers of South Asia."--Publishers Weekly

"...Essential reading for scholars and students seeking an informed narrative of Pakistani political history."--  
Journal of Asian Studies

## About the Author

Ian Talbot is Senior Lecturer in History at Coventry University.

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# PAKISTAN: A MODERN HISTORY BY I. TALBOT PDF

This book fills the need for a broad, historically sophisticated understanding of Pakistan, a country at fifty which is understood by many in the West only in terms of stereotypes - the fanatical, authoritarian and reactionary "other" which is unfavorably compared to a tolerant, democratic and progressive India. There is a need at the time of Pakistan's golden jubilee for it to be taken seriously in its own right as a country of 130 million people. It is in reality a complex plural society which although greatly shaped by the colonial inheritance and circumstances of its birth is also experiencing rapid change. The author's approach breaks down stereotypes and assists in answering the vexed question of why democracy has succeeded in India, while Pakistan has been subject to long periods of authoritarianism during its five decades of existence.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Book

By A Customer

South Asian historiography is beset by three main problems: firstly, it is highly partisan especially books that purport to cover formation of Pakistan and partition of British India. Secondly, these histories tend to concentrate on works of the good and great, or they are based on rather mechanistic structural accounts. Thirdly, far too often they are indebted to out-moded epistemologies. It is to his great credit that Ian Talbot overcomes these three problems and produces what is currently the best history of Pakistan available. He points out that the creation of Pakistan has to take account the scale of popular support that the idea of Pakistan enjoyed among Muslims- something most critics of the creation of Pakistan neglect in their effort to maintain that Pakistan only came to being because of the vanity of handful of individuals. Talbot's account is thorough and rigorous. Anyone, interested in the history of Pakistan could do no better than read this book.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

## The Modern View about Pakistan

By Fabrizio Turchetti

It's a modern view about Pakistan and about its history, it's important to understand the history and the current situation of this country that it has to decide what position and role wants play in the world scenery.

Moreover it was been the important tool to know the Pakistan's History, because in my country (Italy) it's imposible find something like this.

18 of 36 people found the following review helpful.

Some additional information for a good book.

By A Reader

I have read this book, always optimistic in the hope that I will come across even better accounts on this much misunderstood subject, but sadly that is a wish that remains unfulfilled after many long years. Ian Talbot has meticulously documented and provided scholastic information that will otherwise be useful and handy for students and interested readers alike, but I--for one--would like to add through this review, a synopsis of what I feel he has left out. This concerns the crux of what needs to be sorely known about Pakistan's basic realities.

Pakistan is definitely in many ways a historical "stepchild" of India, whose creation is owed to some complex situations evolved in India due to extensive invasions from its Northwestern side, and the arrival of Islam here through those invasions. Unlike other "standard" nation states of the modern era, however, Pakistan is enveloped in an aura of artificiality. This is not simply because of the fact that it was carved "artificially" out of India on the demand of one man for apparently fudgy reasons; but this artificiality is more apparent in the fact that when its 54 year history is studied, Pakistan is seen as a state which seems to exist primarily in order to fulfill the predatory aims of its ruling elite classes, unlike most other countries in the world. (This elite has been rated as among the most rapacious by the world's premier anti-corruption think-tanks and watchdog bodies). The prime reason of this elite's existence and rule of the Pakistani state all along has been corruption and misappropriation of wealth for their own enjoyment. It was for this reason that they lost East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh in 1971 after a landmark struggle. Then, they have literally been using Afghanistan as an unofficial "backyard" of theirs since 1992, after it had endured 14 years of ravages due to the Soviet intervention there and prolonged civil war. And they have been fuelling the fires of war and terrorism in neighbouring Kashmir since 1989 especially--and have "adopted" it as their "cause"--not out of any conviction about Kashmiri independence, but to focus attention there and to have something "to live for" in order to keep their topsy-turvy and unnatural system alive and going. In other words, they thrive not on a fair social base or development, but on mischief and destruction. This speaks volumes for their true nature, to the incisive analyst.

In all of this, and in fact for their lifeblood and their existence, this elite of bandit rulers has been parasitically dependent wholly and solely on the largesse and aid of America and Western Europe--which was fuelled by the formers' own greedy and myopic motives. In the '80s and '90s of the past century, this elite acted shamelessly as the willing sycophants and henchmen for America's dirty games against the USSR and progressive governments in the region. Now when that Islamic terrorism and atmosphere of corruption sponsored here by the US and its allies have finally begun to backfire on them, the "poor" Pakistani ruling classes are out in the dark cold night, between the devil and the deep blue sea. They deserve it, for the nature of their character and what they have done. I would like to remind Mr. Talbot that no authoritative history of Pakistan would otherwise be complete without an unfazed judgement on its ruling elites. They are a blot on the face of the earth.

Another valuable differentiation which I feel that Talbot has not pointed out with the analysis needed, is that from among the four main nationalities which constitute Pakistan, the Pathans (Pukhtuns) are the most offensive. In fact, their cultural mores proudly "sanctify" criminal practices and lawless attitudes, by backing them with the sanction of custom and tradition. The Punjabi nationality are in the majority, but the copying

of Pathan behaviour is regarded by them as a matter of prestige.

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