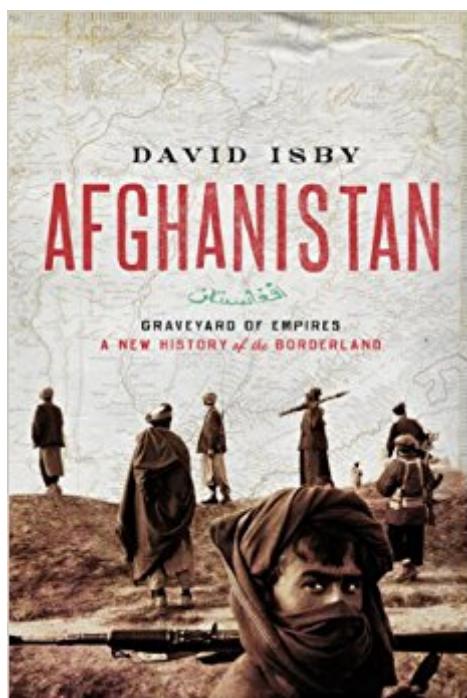


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# Afghanistan: Graveyard Of Empires: A New History Of The Borderland



## Synopsis

A startling history of modern Afghanistan: the story of a country caught in a vortex of terror. Veteran defense analyst and Afghanistan expert David Isby provides an insightful and meticulously researched look at the current situation in Afghanistan, her history, and what he believes must be done so that the US and NATO coalition can succeed in what has historically been known as "the graveyard of empires." • Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world with one of the lowest literacy rates. It is rife with divisions between ethnic groups that dwarf current schisms in Iraq, and all the groups are lead by warlords who fight over control of the drug trade as much as they do over religion. The region is still racked with these confrontations along with conflicts between rogue factions from Pakistan, with whom relations are increasingly strained. After seven years and billions of dollars in aid, efforts at nation-building in Afghanistan has produced only a puppet regime that is dependent on foreign aid for survival and has no control over a corrupt police force nor the increasingly militant criminal organizations and the deepening social and economic crisis. The task of implementing an effective US policy and cementing Afghani rule is hampered by what Isby sees as separate but overlapping conflicts between terrorism, narcotics, and regional rivalries, each requiring different strategies to resolve. Pulling these various threads together will be the challenge for the Obama administration, yet it is a challenge that can be met by continuing to foster local involvement and Afghani investment in the region. This paperback edition includes a new 2011 afterword by the author.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

David Isby is a lawyer and defense analyst who has testified before Congress and appeared on CNN, PBS, and FOX. A former adviser to President Reagan, Isby was contributor to *The Times History of War* and is the author of *Russia's War in Afghanistan; Afghanistan: Invasion and Resistance; Leave No Man Behind; and Fighting the Invasion: The German Army at D-Day* (2000). He is a frequent contributor to *Jane's Defense Intelligence Review* and lives in Washington DC.

With *Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires: A New History of the Borderland*, David Isby provides the reader an extremely thorough look into the central issue of current US foreign policy. His analysis is deep and penetrating, if very lengthy. Isby goes into detail into every aspect of the conflict in Afghanistan (and Pakistan), and examines the many challenges the US and its allies face there. His analysis of the relations between al Qaeda, the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, and their support networks in Pakistan's tribal areas is particularly noteworthy. The challenges that Isby identifies are daunting to say the least, yet he shows how all of them have viable solutions, if only the US and its allies will be willing to put in the time, effort, and resources to properly see them through. An outstanding read for anyone seeking an in depth look into the conflicts plaguing Afghanistan, Pakistan, and US policy in the region.

The historic background of the country was interesting and informative as I spent 2012 in the country (military). The book provides a good lessons-learned profile of the country and its people.

informative but not a very good read FYI

I purchased the kindle version of this book for a class on the Conflict in Afghanistan. The author is of course very knowledgeable, and the book is easy to read.

I had this book on my shelf for over a year and finally got around to reading it. There are very few books I have put down and stopped reading on the subject of Afghanistan. No Easy Task: Fighting in Afghanistan was one, and Isby's book was another. I read 75 pages of it and stopped. There were several grammar mistakes which makes any book difficult to continue reading. Secondly, the book is entitled, "A New History of the Border Land". The book did not give a history of anything that read in chronological order. It was all over the place. The book was extremely dry, contained very little quotations from sources/ conversations, and read like a textbook written by an analyst for

analysts.

I've been to Afghanistan. I have seen Afghan women cry as their babies died of tragically easily preventable sickness. I have seen Afghanistan's wars and what it has done to the Afghans. I have even met the author of this book, who has also spent a lot of time in Afghanistan and Pakistan over the years. I have seen what is at stake in Afghanistan. I know the lives of Afghan people who deserve better are being shaped by decisions made, not by themselves or their kin, but by men behind desks in Washington, Tampa, Rawalpindi Cantonment and other far and distant places. One of the things that continues to blight the lives on the Afghan people is that neither these men nor those that implement their policies understand Afghanistan. That applies to good guys as well as bad guys. I have seen well-intentioned aid workers make ill-informed decisions that led to more deaths than any trigger-happy soldier could inflict. If you want an idea of both **WHAT** is happening in Afghanistan and **WHY**, I recommend **AFGHANISTAN, GRAVEYARD OF EMPIRES**. For a sense of what is at stake in Afghanistan, it pulls together the conflicts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The author is an experienced military analyst, but this book is not about battalions and operations. Rather, it aims to put the wars in an Afghan (not US) political and cultural context, which is what the men behind desks, men trying to do good works or men leading troops in Afghanistan never seem to understand, to the Afghans' great sorrow and cost. I have seen the result of many of the policy, military and aid failures that this book describes. By no means all of them are the result of outsiders. The author knows enough to realize that Afghans are not just victims, but have been part of the reason why the conflicts in their remote conflict now touch lives throughout the world. If you need to understand Afghanistan, this book can make you better informed, even if it cannot provide the needed answers to Afghanistan's conflicts.

This book examines the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, when the Taliban and al Qaeda escaped to regroup in the borderlands of Pakistan. From there, the Taliban and al Qaeda sought (and still seek) to overthrow the governments in Kabul and Islamabad and to carry the war to the West. Isby provides a very thorough treatment of the actors and issues in these wars that is accessible to the general reader, with just enough reference to pre-2001 history to put things in context. He describes the lands and peoples involved, the dual faceted role of Pakistan as both sponsor and victim of terrorism, the evolution of al Qaeda from an Afghanistan-based to a Pakistan-based movement, the different factions of the Taliban, the role of narcotics trafficking, and the insurgency in Pakistan. He concludes that these wars must be won, and can be won if the US is

"willing to pay the considerable costs" of doing so. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to know why we're still in Afghanistan nearly ten years after 9/11 and who wants to understand the ongoing crisis in Pakistan.

This is a good book and the author has a solid understanding of Afghanistan and carefully goes into all the details about how and why Afghanistan evolved the way it did. I am giving it a four star because it becomes a very tedious read and unless you already have a knowledge of Afghanistan and Islam then much of it won't make sense to the reader. If you are looking for a book that gives a basic overview of Afghanistan and the conflict this is not a good book. If you want a book that goes into details about what happened and why it happened then this is the book for you.

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