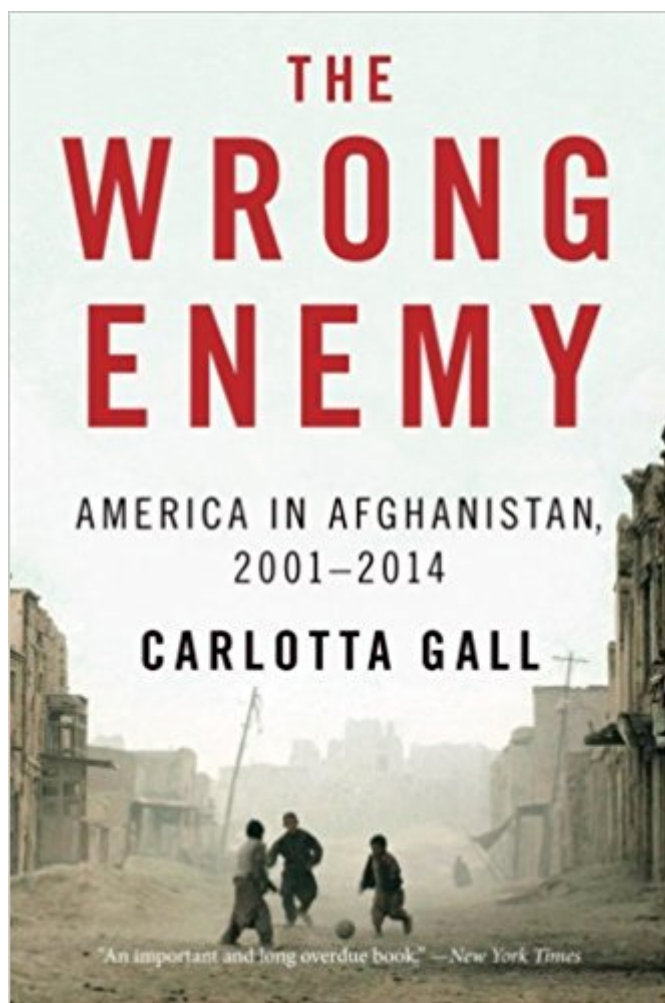




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The Wrong Enemy: America In Afghanistan, 2001â€™2014



Synopsis

“An enthralling and largely firsthand account of the war in Afghanistan.” *Financial Times* “Few reporters know as much about Afghanistan as Carlotta Gall. She was there in the 1990s after the Russians were driven out. She witnessed the early flourishing of radical Islam, imported from abroad, which caused so much local suffering. She was there right after 9/11, when the US special forces helped the Northern Alliance drive the Taliban out of the north and then the south, fighting pitched battles and causing their enemies to flee underground and into Pakistan. She knows just how much this war has cost the Afghan people. And she knows just how much damage can be traced to Pakistan and its duplicitous government and intelligence forces. Combining searing personal accounts of battles and betrayals with moving portraits of the ordinary Afghans who were caught up in the conflict of more than a decade, *The Wrong Enemy* is a sweeping account of a war brought by American leaders against an enemy they barely understood and could not truly engage. “A strong, well-crafted account by an informed observer.” *The Economist* “Gall is perhaps uniquely positioned to tackle the troubling questions she raises about Pakistan’s alleged support of terrorism . . . a must-read.” *Christian Science Monitor*

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A valuable contribution to a hefty body of work on the American war in Afghanistan that has become stale and somewhat hackneyed. It provides a raw, unvarnished and important look at one of the darkest and least understood parts of the Afghan war . . . Ms. Gall, a reporter for the New York Times in Afghanistan and Pakistan for more than a decade, beginning shortly after September 11, is in an extraordinary position to write this important and long overdue book.” *New York*

Times's *The Wrong Enemy* is a timely survey of a military and diplomatic undertaking that has exacted a stiff tribute from Afghans and NATO forces in lives, treasure, and national prestige. Gall is right to confront the uneasy truths involving Pakistan's double-dealing while also identifying coalition shortfalls . . . When it comes to informative, credible reporting from Central Asia over the past decade, Gall ranks with journalists like Dexter Filkins and David Rohde who have written about Afghanistan with authority and context. But Gall is perhaps uniquely positioned to tackle the troubling questions she raises about Pakistan's alleged support of terrorism . . . As the US and NATO prepare to possibly withdraw all forces from Afghanistan at the close of this year, Gall's book qualifies as a must-read.

• "Christian Science Monitor" "Gall's long years of reporting for the New York Times from the front lines of the war are clear in this book, particularly in her vivid reconstruction of how things went rapidly downhill after the easy U.S.-led victories over the Taliban at the end of 2001 . . . To her credit, Ms. Gall gets the most important thing right. She underscores the danger of the U.S. turning its back on Afghanistan, which, while still fragile, shows more signs of modernity than ever before. The repercussions of the U.S. drawdown are already inspiring Islamists, who are comparing it to the withdrawal of the Soviet Union after its defeat at the hands of the mujahedeen. Unlike the Obama administration, Ms. Gall recognizes that radical Islam can't be ignored or wished away."

• "Wall Street Journal" "A strong, well-crafted account by an informed observer."

• "Economist" "The author offers a compelling account of the attack on bin Laden's compound, the repercussions of which are still being felt. Gall admirably never loses sight of the human element in this tragedy."

• "Kirkus Reviews"

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Carlotta Gall is truly courageous in reporting the story of this horrific war in Afghanistan and its complexity. The most memorable quote was "America should have selected to crush al Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan, rather than go to war in Iraq" by Habib Jalib Baloch and, of course, Ambassador Holbrooke, "We may be fighting the wrong enemy in the wrong country." Vice President Cheney remarked, 13 March 2002 "The Taliban is out of business, permanently." Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, declared in 2003 "We clearly have moved from major combat activity to a period of stability and stabilization and reconstruction activities. The bulk of the country (Afghanistan) is permissive, it's secure." President Bush remarked, 6 March 2006 "Pakistan "will be a steadfast partner. A force for freedom and moderation in the Arab world." However, finally, the New

York Times reported on 22 September 2011 "The nation's top military official said Thursday that Pakistan's spy agency played a direct role in supporting the insurgents who carried out the deadly attack on the American Embassy in Kabul last week. It was the most serious charge that the United States has leveled against Pakistan in the decade that America has been at war in Afghanistan. The realization that Saudi Arabia, Pakistan (ISI) and the Taliban, al-Qaeda represented a deadly enemy, a triangle of Islamist jihadist terrorism of death, an endless war in Afghanistan and the spread of Islamic terrorism everywhere, be it Iraq, Syria, Libya, Russia, Turkey, and in Paris and Brussels with more promised. The over 3,400 Coalition/NATO/U.S. military personnel that have been killed, 2,400 of them American, have been killed by the proxy forces of al-Qaeda and the Taliban representing this Islamic Triangle of Death of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the Taliban/al-Qaeda. The United States is engaged in a death struggle in Afghanistan with Islamic extremism fostered and supported by Saudi Arabia & Pakistan with their proxy armies of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, fanatical jihadist funded worldwide by Saudi Arabia (Wahhabism) with deep involvement of Pakistan. While the cognizance of this triangle was well known, certainly described thoroughly by Ambassador Peter Tomsen "The Wars of Afghanistan" it was essentially ignored by the U.S. with failure to hold Saudi Arabia and Pakistan accountable, they have, are and will continue to kill and wound Americans as well as Afghans. As now recognized, Bush, Cheney and especially Rumsfeld and his assistants in DOD were arrogant, deceitful and ignorant of Afghanistan's culture and history, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff also became accomplices in failure to confront the Islamic Triangle of Death and thus allowing U.S./NATO forces to be exposed to these proxy forces of the Islamic Triangle of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, much as described by H.R. Master "Dereliction of Duty" in the Vietnam War of the JCS.

Carlotta Gall has impeccable credentials with regard to Afghanistan and Pakistan, having reported "on the ground" from the region for a very, very long time. In "The Wrong Enemy", she carefully, forcefully, meticulously and diligently points out exactly who the actual enemy in this case is: it's Pakistan. The US government has had a fraught relationship with Pakistan for decades. After Partition, an event that cost many thousands of lives and a harbinger of things to come, the US was more-or-less sympathetic to the new Muslim nation. Why? Because India wasn't especially cloaked in fealty to the West, choosing instead to assume the mantle of the then-fashionable, "third way"; the Non-Aligned Movement. Indifference to Pakistan later became distinctly chilly, when Pakistan detonated its first atomic weapon. Sanctions were imposed and distance grew. However, as India became more capitalistic and Pakistan more overtly militaristic and Islamist, sentiments and policy

shifted. Following the September 11 events, the War on Terror began and Pakistan became a close chum of the USA. Despite the new cozy relationship, the Pakistani military and the legendary Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency never ceased to support a stunning array of terrorist organizations: Kashmiri-Islamist militants, anti-India terrorists and, of course, the Taliban with its "affiliates". Did the US know this? Of course. It's been assiduously documented by a panoply of journalists (Wright, Lieven, Packer, Rashid, Coll and many others); it's public knowledge. Did the US do anything about it? According to Gall and all available evidence: no. Thus, as Gall points out, the US and its NATO allies are simultaneously supporting the logistical/operational/financial/ideological base for terrorism in Afghanistan (i.e., Pakistan) whilst fighting the symptom, to wit, the Taliban. Bizarre? Yes. Clearly documented by Gall? Yes. Realpolitik? Maybe. Myopic? Definitely. Worse, following what Gall (optimistically) characterizes as a successful counterinsurgency campaign and a belated troop surge, culminating in a sort of Iraq-like wave of anti-Taliban sentiment by some tribes, the US adroitly decides to pull out of the country, leaving the corrupt, ineffectual and angry Karzai regime in tatters while elections are pending. Shades of Vietnam? Maybe. So, how does it end? Gall isn't much prone to idle speculation, but she seemingly concludes that the "long war" is about to end as a debacle, this due to political expediency by the Obama administration and war fatigue at home and amongst the NATO allies. Who wins? Looks like Pakistan 1: USA 0 on this one. (Update: Extensive commentary on Gall's book by Ahmed Rashid appears in the current issue of The New York Review of Books. He takes issue with several of her claims, especially regarding a "Bin Laden desk" at ISI and her perceived failure to recognize "evolution" of Pakistan's attitudes toward the Taliban and other Islamist extremist groups).

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