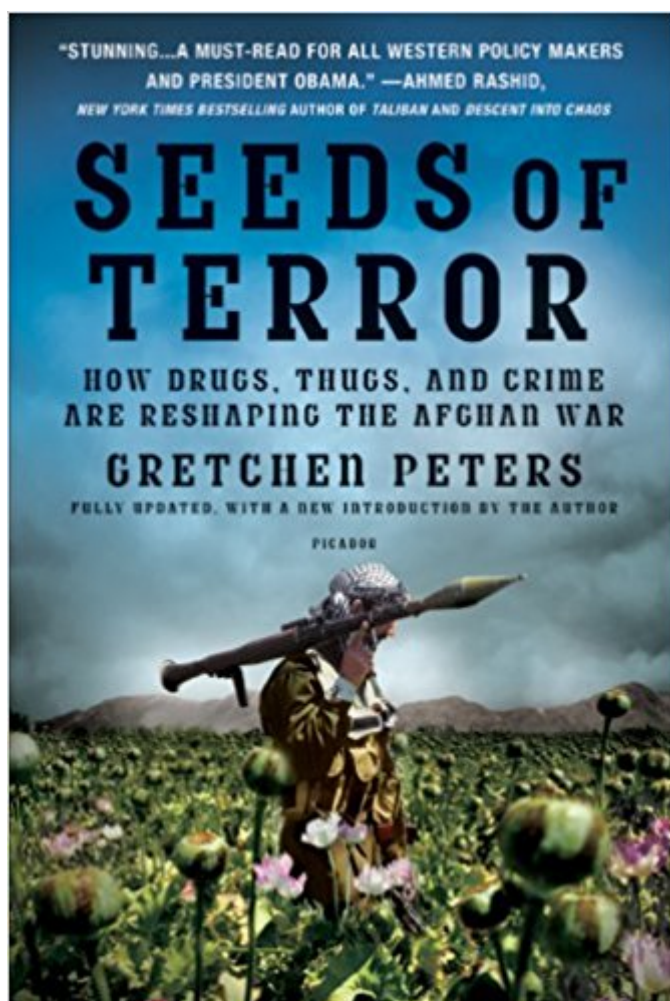


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Seeds Of Terror: How Drugs, Thugs, And Crime Are Reshaping The Afghan War



Synopsis

Seeds of Terror is a groundbreaking triumph of reporting, a book that changed U.S. policy toward the Afghan heroin trade and the fight against terror. In it, Gretchen Peters exposes the deepening relationship between the Taliban and drug traffickers, and traces decades of America's failure to disrupt the opium production that helps fund extremism. The Taliban earns as much as half a billion dollars annually from drugs and crime, and Peters argues that disrupting this flow of dirty money will be critical to stabilizing Afghanistan. Based on hundreds of interviews with fighters, smugglers, and government officials, *Seeds of Terror* is the essential story of the narco-terror nexus behind America's widening war in Afghanistan.

Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Picador; 2 edition (April 27, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312429630

ISBN-13: 978-0312429638

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 36 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #411,836 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #113 in Books > History > Asia > Central Asia #306 in Books > History > Military > Afghan War #386 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Middle East

Customer Reviews

Journalist Peters draws on 10 years of reporting from Afghanistan and Pakistan for this important examination of the nexus of [drug] smugglers and extremists in the global war against terrorists. Citing firsthand testimony, classified intelligence reports and specialized studies, Peters builds a solid case for her contention that the union of narco-traffickers, terrorist groups, and the international criminal underworld is the new axis of evil. Ground zero is Afghanistan, where the rejuvenated Taliban depend on opium for 70% of its funds and there is overwhelming circumstantial evidence of Osama bin Laden's involvement in the drug trade. Peters argues that the failure to halt this money flow to terrorist networks is the single greatest failure in the war on terror, and warns that stanching the flood of drug money into terrorist coffers is essential. The author offers a less-than-convincing strategy to sever the link, including military strikes against drug lords, alternative-livelihood

programs for small farmers, regional diplomatic initiatives and a public relations campaign.

Prescriptions aside, Peters has exhaustively framed one of the thorniest problems facing policy makers in this long war. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

• • • Stunning . . . A must-read for all western policy makers and President Obama. • • Ahmed Rashid, New York Times Bestselling author of Taliban and Descent into Chaos • Seeds of Terror offers layer after layer of fascinating information about the deadly consequences of decades of disastrous policy decisions. This is a well-written, well-documented, and exemplary work of journalism. • • Lewis Perdue, Barron's • Meticulously researched. • • The Sunday Times (London) • Excellent • | Gretchen Peters's disturbing book plainly states that unless the opium-smuggling industry is put out of business, the nation-building exercise in Afghanistan is destined for failure. We should heed her warnings. • • Emran Qureshi, The Globe and Mail (Toronto) • Clear and persuasive. • • Booklist • An important examination of 'the nexus of [drug] smugglers and extremists' in the global war against terrorists. Peters builds a solid case [and] has exhaustively framed one of the thorniest problems facing policy makers in this long war. • • Publishers Weekly • A vitally important book. Until the United States admits what Peters knows, and changes course, the virulent narco-terrorism spreading across South Asia will cause us to lose not only Afghanistan but Pakistan as well. • • Robert Baer, New York Times bestselling author of Sleeping with the Devil and The Devil We Know • Required reading for anyone interested in public-policy issues concerning drugs, defense, and diplomacy . . . Buy it. • • National Post (Canada) • Peters has done a superlative job with Seeds of Terror. It is a primer for the new administration--a blueprint for what must be done in Afghanistan to rescue victory from the jaws of defeat. • • Jack Lawn, DEA chief under Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush • The linkage between fighting drugs and fighting terrorism is, with Seeds of Terror, now firmly established. Gretchen Peters, combining personal experience and in-depth research, paints a frightening picture and tells us how to surmount the problem. A critically important book. • • Raymond W. Baker, senior fellow at the Center for International Policy and author of Capitalism's Achilles Heel • Detailed and highly readable . . . masterfully traces the enormous success of the illegal heroin trade in Afghanistan. • • Frederick P. Hitz, former inspector general of the CIA and author of Why Spy?

By the time I finished this potentially very interesting work about an unquestionably important topic, I

was downright irritable at the circuitous, repetitive and sometimes impenetrable book about what is almost certainly one of the key national security issues we face: the link between narco-trafficking and the terrorism that its profits finance. Just from keeping up with the news, I knew this was an important topic and one I wanted to learn more of. Alas, this book didn't help much. Part of the problem is the structure -- Peters seems to make the same point over and over again, leaving me wondering why no editor had taken her material in hand and imposed some kind of order and coherence on it. Every so often, a segment would grab my attention, such as her quest into "HJK", the Afghan drug kingpin she compares to Khun Sa, the warlord of the Golden Triangle in Southeast Asia. But then she quickly relapses into making the same point in different ways, relying more on comments from anonymous Westerners and other security officials than other first-hand observations, and quoting reports by other journalists. Why??? if she has spent the last decade in the region, surely she can bring her own observations and reporting to bear, instead of quoting her peers on what seem like banalities, such as: "What is new is the scale of this toxic mix of jihad and dope," writes journalist David Kaplan." That's the same point she's making in 17 different ways in the book; why quote another observer to make it #18? Putting together this tendency to "tell" rather than "show" the reader what is happening, her reliance on other journalists' narratives to tell the story, and the circuitous nature of the book, left me with a disappointing book on my hands, and one that often felt as if it were written for a wire service or perhaps a news magazine and then streeeettchhhhed to fill an entire book. I'm sure there was new information in here, but frankly, you'd have to be following the drugs/terrorism connection with more than just average curiosity to detect it as it doesn't stand out. This struck me as an effort to drill down more deeply into one part of the vast interlinked criminal world that Misha Glenny chillingly outlined in *McMafia: A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld*, but it didn't come close to matching Glenny's book in reach or style. Recommended only to those with a compelling interest in the subject and enough tolerance for ponderous prose to wade their way through this in search of the nuggets it probably does contain. It's certainly a 5-star book, but I can't, in good conscience, award it more than three stars. Even *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier*, which is little more than a memoir by a young member of one of the anti-opium taskforces that have tried combating the cultivation of poppies in Afghanistan ended up providing me with more insight into the broad issue, including the perspective of the Afghans themselves.

The book starts off as a real thriller by indulging into the drug trafficking that has been occurring out of Afghanistan since the 1970s. The book is very detailed and the investigating writing is heavily

documented. Half way through the book, the factoids and the story line gets repetitive; The governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran are corrupted, drugs are passing borders in large quantity, the Taliban are using the drugs as a main effort to finance their operations. The book was decent but I was bored by the 4th chapter. I do agree with what Ms. Peters says and I find her solution to the problem well thought out and the idea of multi-approach innovative. I just wish the U.S. had attempted her idea 10 years ago instead of the continuous war that we see today.

As a journalist with a deep interest in Afghanistan, Gretchen Peters offers an extensively researched account of the evolution of the heroin trade within Afghanistan and Pakistan. The recent escalation of hostilities in the region and the resurgence of the Taliban can be directly attributed to the proliferation of poppy fields. Furthermore, Afghanistan can now be described as a narco-state that parallels the development of the FARC within Colombia more closely than the insurgency in Iraq. From personally meeting many of the major players within the opium trade to relentlessly obtaining access to confidential intelligence cables and documents, Peters has gone to great lengths to provide a substantiated narrative of the Afghanistan heroin trade. Response: While Peters has extensively researched the connections between the Afghanistan insurgency, the numerous regional actors, and the poppy trade, the book suffers from a lack of broader context. Little discussion is given to the flows of opium once it exits the region beyond a brief mention of Europe being the primary recipient. Without a complete understanding of the opium markets that Afghanistan fuels, policy solutions will suffer as opium markets adapt to one-sided efforts. This book is very much a journalistic account of the topic and suffers from a lack of theory. Peters largely neglects theoretical discussion of counterinsurgencies or counternarcotics operations. Many of Peters' conclusions coincide with counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and could have greatly benefited from incorporating principles of COIN within her work, giving it a more substantial theoretical basis. The U.S. Army/Marine Counterinsurgency Field Manual is excellent supplemental reading for anyone engaged with these issues. Several important topics could have used far more discussion and depth. For example, Peters quickly dismisses the initial strategy for the Afghanistan invasion as inadequate "with predictably unfortunate results. (105)" Since the awareness of COIN doctrine has been a relatively recent phenomena (the U.S. Army/Marine Counterinsurgency Field Manual was published in 2006), initial operations within Afghanistan may have suffered from a lack of theoretical understanding of the nature of the conflict instead of blatant strategic errors. For Peters to claim that the current situation in Afghanistan was predictable from the start, far more depth is needed. Peters's discussion of Iran is also cursory. Even though Peters does document

several instances of Iranian involvement, Peters avoids exploring whether or not this involvement is the result of official Iranian policy or the result of a few Iranian actors searching for profit. In contrast, the connections between Afghanistan and Pakistan, particularly the ISI, are discussed extensively. Bottom Line: A pivotal book for understanding Afghanistan. Those interested in illicit networks, the intricacies of the Afghanistan insurgency, or the complexities of the Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship will also find this book fascinating. The book is also easily accessible for readers without a background on these topics. For more reviews and a summary of Peters' main points, find us at Hand of Reason.

I learned a fair amount actually finished the book.

I bought this book as a gift for my boyfriend...this is his review...Found the book a good and interesting read of investigative journalism. Her "boots on the ground" approach enabled her to interview and interact with various and divergent groups of Afghans, while in country. This assisted the reader to gain a better understanding of what actually is taking place in this region of the world. My only criticism, is her last chapter. She feels compelled to resolve the problems of this nation and its perpetual turmoil. My recommendation is that the author re-read her own writings and come to the logical conclusion that this reader has made. Intervention from the West into Afghanistan, no matter how well intentioned, (as expertly revealed throughout her book), will fail miserably! I believe history will also support this conclusion.

Great book

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