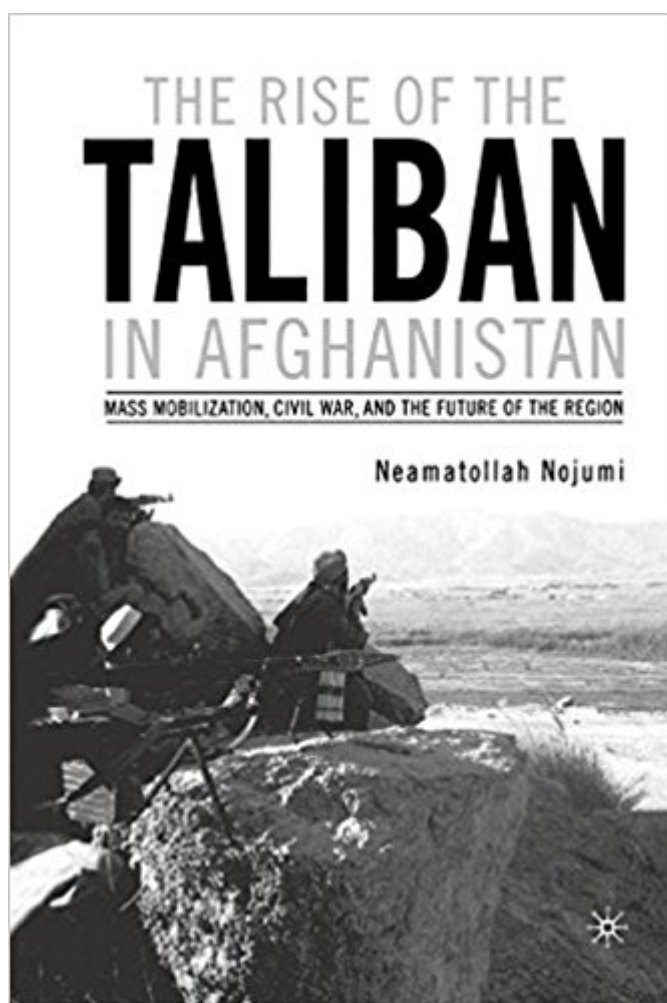


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The Rise Of The Taliban In Afghanistan: Mass Mobilization, Civil War, And The Future Of The Region



Synopsis

This book describes the turbulent political history of Afghanistan from the communist upheaval of the 1970s through to the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001. It reviews the importance of the region to external powers and explains why warfare and instability have been endemic. The author analyses in detail the birth of the Taliban and the bloody rise to power of fanatic Islamists, including Osama bin Laden, in the power vacuum following the withdrawal of US aid. Looking forward, Nojumi explores the ongoing quest for a third political movement in Afghanistan - an alternative to radical communists or fanatical Islamists and suggests the support that will be necessary from the international community in order for such a movement to survive.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nojumi, a former member of the Mujahadeen who fought the Soviet invasion and a contributor to humanitarian efforts to help displaced Afghans, offers a committed but often barely intelligible attempt to explain the historical, political and cultural circumstances behind the Taliban's ascent to power. The author, who was raised in Afghanistan, describes how decades of war and foreign interference eroded the traditional relationship between an Afghani central government and the local tribal councils, or jirgas, destroyed an economy based on agricultural production and "watered the seeds of Islamic radicalism." Afghan citizens initially greeted the Taliban with hope, he writes, but "many quickly lost their hope in the dusty field of [its] militaristic, ethnic, and religious ultra-supremacy approach"; the Taliban has paid no more attention to the country's "national

ideology" than did the Marxist/Leninist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, whose 1978 coup led to the 1979 Soviet invasion. Nojumi's discussions of the phenomenon of mass mobilization which he defines as a political organization's efforts to induce broad social change weigh down his account with unnecessary and garbled attempts at theory. Such a complicated history cries out for a structure based on chronology and on narrative. Instead this text is so disorganized, so riddled with confusing or even meaningless sentences ("Each event evolved and occurred because of previous events," for example) that most readers will find themselves too frustrated to keep going. Illus. not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

During the ten years (1979-88) of Soviet rule in Afghanistan, Nojumi was active in the mujahedin resistance, fighting for the return of independence to his native country. Now he is an independent scholar living near Boston. Here he has written a detailed account of the Soviet period plus the following years until the Taliban took effective control of the country in 1996. Drawing primarily on personal notes and diaries, he describes the events as a contest among the three forces of nationalism, Islam, and modernization and as a process of mass mobilization, which he believes is necessary to bring about political change. However, his theoretical framework is poorly explained, and his story frequently bogs down in the minutiae of thrust and parry of the long struggle for power. At this time, when the Taliban figure so prominently in the news, all libraries need something current on the topic; better choices would be Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (LJ 4/1/00) or *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (New York Univ., 1998). Marcia L. Sprules, Council on Foreign Relations Lib., New York Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I bought this book back in the fall of 2001 when it was one of only two books on Afghanistan or the Taliban in stock at one of the big book stores. Nine years later, I have yet to read any of the other many works that have since been published. So when I say it is a very disorganized book, but full of information, I don't know how that compares to what else is out there. Having said that, I would ultimately recommend it for a diligent reader intent on a good introduction to the history of Afghanistan in the second half of the 20th century. I had to take notes to keep dates and names straight and so develop my own chronological narrative which the author did not. But I felt as though I got a mostly objective history, largely untainted by any particular slant on the part of the author. I

enjoyed the glimpses of the dominant warlords, and got a good primer on tribal geography and tribal politics. It is, however, ultimately an introduction. Overall, it read like someone's dissertation notes, hastily thrown together and published in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001. As such introductory-type works go, it read very poorly due to the disorganization, but, again, as the only book on the topic in 2001, the information was worth the hassle. I am surprised to see that there has not been a revised edition since then.

Background
1. Title and Subject. The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan is an illustrated book in which the writer explains how Afghanistan became the base for radical fundamentalism. It also provides a critical understanding of how internal divisions and the devastating effects of foreign interference undermines the resilience of Afghanistan communities, led to the rise of Taliban ultimately present a unique challenge to international efforts to nation building.
2. Author. Neamatollah Nojumi was raised in Afghanistan and also participated in the Mujahideen fight against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He also contributed to humanitarian efforts in providing medical and other related services to those Afghans who have suffered from the external and internal fighting. He is a frequent speaker on the politics of Afghanistan.
3. Thesis The author objective is to inform the instructive analysis to help the readers to fathom the diverse complexities as well as to provide the critical context to understand the obstacles and opportunities ahead in achieving peace in Afghanistan.
Contents
4. The book is basically divided into four main elements, Socio-political differences, Mass Mobilization, Civil War and the future of the region.
(a) Socio-Political Differences Neamatollah Nojumi describes about the events of massive political, social and cultural changes as a result of the April 1978 COUP D'ETAT by the People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) followed by Soviet invasion in December 1979, lasted for almost ten years. The PDPA attempted to move Afghanistan from a pre-industrial Society to a political establishment for paving the way towards socialism. Since the people in Afghanistan lived, traditionally, under Communal Codes of autonomy and individual freedom, therefore PDPA was unable to foresee the depth of these codes. IT ultimately caused massive violent confrontation between Afghan Communities and the PDPA-led government.
(b) Mass Mobilization The writer describes that the mass mobilization is the result of clash between masses and government which occurred as a result of political, social and economic interaction. The Afghan mass mobilization revolves around three groups. The leftist (pro-and anti-Moscow) the radical Islamic political parties (the Ikhwanis and Wahabis) and the nationalist/Islamic political parties. The role of Afghan Mujahideen in the process of Mass Mobilization is very important because of their internal divisions. The political leaders in the PDPA

and Mujahideen organization failed to provide a viable solution in the course of decades of war and violence.

(c) Civil War Neamatollah Nojumi comments that after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, the lack of trust between Mujahideen and government under Najeebullah led to civil war in Afghanistan. The severe confrontation between Iran-based leaders, the Pakistan-based leader and the external front leaders raised the issue of power-sharing. Another dichotomy arose over the issue of ethnic confrontation between Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbiks. The failure of the field Commanders to form an interim government in Afghanistan contributed to the eruption of civil war. The unanticipated rise of Taliban in 1994 from Southern Village of Qandhar, fall of Herat and entering Kabul in September, 1996 was an important military and political strategy for the Taliban. Although Taliban gained control of 80 percent of Afghanistan after fall of Mazar-e-Sharif, yet Ahmed Shah Masood was only northern leader to save the core of his fighters.

(d) Future of the Region As per writer, the essence of national, regional and international politics is of paramount importance to pave the way in the political settlement of a futuristic Afghanistan. One can realize the current regional and international interests with regard to situation in Afghanistan and more importantly, the impact of Afghanistan in the regional stability.

Evaluation

5. The evaluation of the book is as follows:

(a) The author is unable to cover the subject as his biased approach towards neighbouring countries was evident throughout the book.

(b) The book is a good effort at portraying the reasons for the rise of the Taliban.

(c) The shortcoming in thesis and conclusion, however, is its approach, narrative at the expense of analysis.

(d) The Rise of Taliban is interesting to read for the victories of Taliban through their military and political strategy.

(e) The book, has 260 pages and was first published in 2002 by 'PALGRAVE' formerly Macmillan Press Ltd, New York (USA)

This slim volume gives a theory, which ultimately let the likes of Osama/Usama Bin Laden, and the leadership of the Taliban, take over in Afghanistan, and their relationship to the 11 September, 2001 (9/11) attacks and the aftermath (in the Epilogue). Gives a theory of mass revolt + mass participation + mass organisation (organization) = mass mobilisation (mobilization) in which the author provides a framework for groups, like Al-Qaeda, operate. Further, the book gives a historical perspective on how the competition between "secular" and "religious" forces have shaped the rise of groups, like Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, in Afghanistan. The author proffers a theory to limit the effects of terrorism, and the increasing numbers of disaffected Afghans, for example, or as in Iraq, Iraqis; who join militant Islamic groups, due to a lack of stabilisation (stabilization) in the country, to provide for a stabilised [stabilized] country and to work to support a more stable government, in

particular, the United States in its foreign policy and not just to (as in Iraq) "bomb the people into submission" (n)or "to support a 'puppet' regime, either of which leads to the sort of militancy which the U.S. forces are now facing in Afghanistan and in Iraq [as part of a failed foreign policy, continuing through many administrations; especially the (newly)"reelected" one in the U.S.]. Worth a look.

This book explains some history about the Afghani culture as well as the rise of the Taliban. It describes the machinations at work allowing and creating the Taliban movement to perform what they had at the date of publishing.

The Publisher's Weekly review is spot on. The actual discussion of the Taliban doesn't show until the middle of the book! This book appears to be a poorly written and overly-detailed college essay that publishers decided to inflict on the unsuspecting public during a time when they knew it would sell. Don't bother.

read this book written by an afghani to get a broader understanding of the region.though this book was published in the mid 90's as you read it you'll not be sure if you're reading on afghan. during the 80's or iraq under US occupation today.

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