



Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb

Feroz Khan

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The history of Pakistan's nuclear program is the history of Pakistan. Fascinated with the new nuclear science, the young nation's leaders launched a nuclear energy program in 1956 and consciously interwove nuclear developments into the broader narrative of Pakistani nationalism. Then, impelled first by the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan Wars, and more urgently by India's first nuclear weapon test in 1974, Pakistani senior officials tapped into the country's pool of young nuclear scientists and engineers and molded them into a motivated cadre committed to building the 'ultimate weapon.' The tenacity of this group and the central place of its mission in Pakistan's national identity allowed the program to outlast the perennial political crises of the next 20 years, culminating in the test of a nuclear device in 1998.

Written by a 30-year professional in the Pakistani Army who played a senior role formulating and advocating Pakistan's security policy on nuclear and conventional arms control, this book tells the compelling story of how and why Pakistan's government, scientists, and military, persevered in the face of a wide array of obstacles to acquire nuclear weapons. It lays out the conditions that sparked the shift from a peaceful quest to acquire nuclear energy into a full-fledged weapons program, details how the nuclear program was organized, reveals the role played by outside powers in nuclear decisions, and explains how Pakistani scientists overcome the many technical hurdles they encountered. Thanks to General Khan's unique insider perspective, it unveils and unravels the fascinating and turbulent interplay of personalities and organizations that took place and reveals how international opposition to the program only made it an even more significant issue of national resolve.

Listen to a podcast of a related presentation by Feroz Khan at the Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation.

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