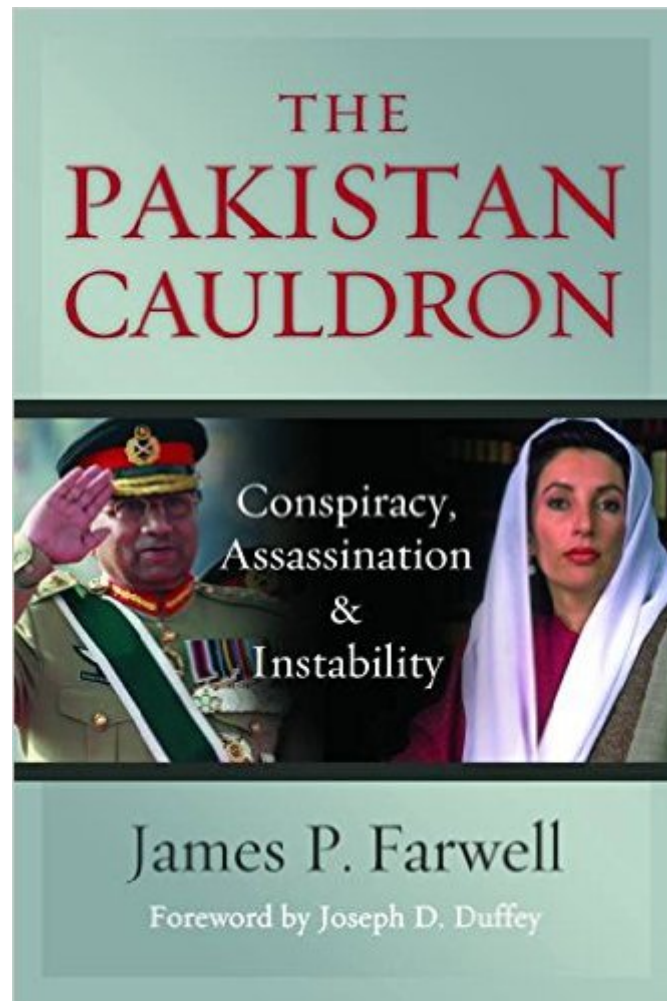


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The Pakistan Cauldron: Conspiracy, Assassination & Instability



Synopsis

The killing of Osama bin Laden spotlighted Pakistan's unpredictable political dynamics, which are often driven by conspiracy theory, paranoia, and a sense of betrayal. In Pakistan, the late prime minister Benazir Bhutto famously declared, there is "always the story behind the story." In *The Pakistan Cauldron*, James P. Farwell explains what makes Pakistani politics tick. Farwell has advised the Department of Defense on terrorism, sovereignty, and the political issues in the Middle East, Africa, and Pakistan. Here he reveals how key Pakistani political players have inconsistently employed the principles of strategic communication to advance their agendas and undercut their enemies. Pakistan is an enigma to many. Only by understanding the complex forces that shape Pakistani leaders can we uncover their shifting political agendas and how they affect America and the West. Farwell explains how and why former president Pervez Musharraf clamped down on nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan and isolated him. He assesses Benazir Bhutto's unique legacy and analyzes how Musharraf handled the aftermath of her assassination. He explains Pakistan's current instability and demonstrates how the country's emotional reaction to bin Laden's death is best understood as the outcome of long-standing political dynamics. *The Pakistan Cauldron* is for anyone who needs to know why Pakistan continues to pose increasingly difficult challenges for the United States and the West.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you want a quick, analytical look at Pakistan's recent machination-filled political history, this is your book. A fairly easy read (264 pages of text) even though JPF covers the subject matter from

the perspective of a wonkish international political strategist. The events covered include the case of A. Q. Khan, the celebrated father of Pakistan's atom bomb but also infamous dealer in nuclear technology and material who so embarrassed political leaders like Musharraf that he was placed under house arrest; the short, doomed presidency of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (father of Benazir Bhutto) executed at the hands of militant islamist General Zia who himself died (fortunately for Pakistan) soon after in a helicopter crash; the rise and fall of General Musharraf; the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, likely at the hands of the Taliban or Al Qaeda; and finally the current regime led (surprisingly well) by Benazir's husband Zardari. Underlying all these events was the ever constant internal turmoil of a nation divided by competing religious sects (Sunni and Shiites), secularists and islamist militants (Taliban and Al Qaeda), scheming civilian and military leaders, and a perpetual paranoiac feud with India. JPF paints a picture of a dysfunctional culture that is too easily swayed by conspiracy theories and disinformation, but that, in the end, offers hope because a solid majority favors secular democracy and rejects extremist islamism. Much of JPF's analysis applies his area of expertise which is examining how the various actors used or failed to use "strategic communications" (an euphemism in my view for "spin") to influence public political perceptions in dealing with situations and crises that they faced.

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