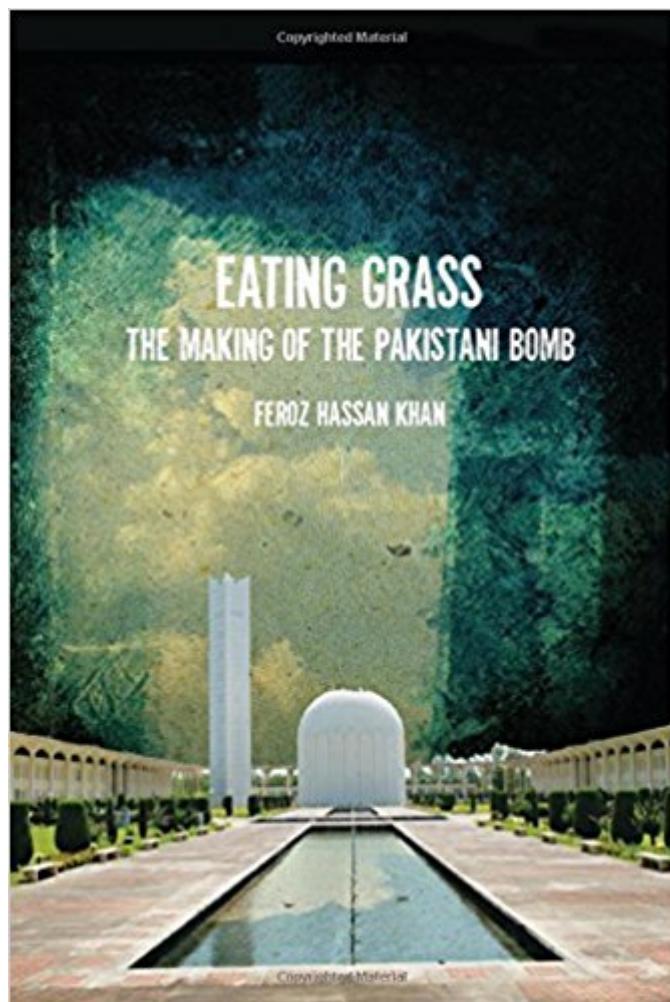


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# Eating Grass: The Making Of The Pakistani Bomb



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Feroz Khan, a retired Pakistan Army general who served as Director of the Strategic Plan Division, Pakistan's nuclear security apparatus, has written the first comprehensive insider account of the Pakistani nuclear weapons program . . . Framed as a story of indigenous triumph, *Eating Grass* nonetheless also serves as a history of the failure of non-proliferation regimes—*or as a how-to guide for how to evade them.*" (Timothy Nunan *The Sunday Guardian*)

"Feroz Hassan Khan's book *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb* is a comprehensive description of Pakistan's campaign to develop its nuclear weapons . . . *Eating Grass* is in a class by itself because it is written by an author who served as director of arms control and disarmament affairs in the Strategic Plans Division of the Joint Services Headquarters of Pakistan . . . Khan brings to his book considerable experience not only as a scholar of the subject of nuclear nonproliferation but also as a practitioner of nuclear diplomacy." (Ehsan M. Ahrari *Mediterranean Quarterly*)

"Feroz Hassan Khan has written the seminal study of the creation, development, and expansion of the world's fastest growing nuclear weapons complex. His use of source material heretofore unexplored or otherwise unavailable—including dozens of exclusive interviews with the scientists, generals, diplomats, and politicians who guided Pakistan's nuclear bomb program—makes *Eating Grass* a must-read for national security scholars and practitioners alike." (Peter R. Lavoy national security practitioner)

"*Eating Grass* fills a big gap in the scholarly literature. Feroz Khan's book about Pakistan's nuclear program takes its place beside the authoritative volumes on U.S., Soviet, Chinese, Indian, and Israeli nuclear histories. Going beyond the headlines, Khan provides unique insights into the political, technical and strategic issues behind the untold story of Pakistan's bomb. Essential reading for anyone interested in nuclear history, proliferation, or South Asian security."

(Zachary S. Davis, Center for Global Security Research Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory)

"Khan provides a comprehensive history of Pakistan's nuclear program. . . . Khan explains the reasons behind Pakistan's dogged pursuit of nuclear deterrence, including why it was willing to pay any price to achieve nuclear capability. . . . Recommended." (A. Mazumdar *CHOICE*)

"Comprehensive, detailed, and written with military precision and objectivity, *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb* is an elegantly crafted and engaging history of the Pakistani efforts to obtain the atomic bomb that will become a reference work in the study of Pakistan and its

nation-defining relationship with the nuclear program." (Vladimir Rauta *Review of Politics*) "In this important and impressive new work, Khan traces the development of Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program from partition to the present . . . Khan succeeds admirably in sifting through published accounts and weaving in details and anecdotes from his numerous interviews with key participants." (Frank Klotz *The National Interest*) "A tour de force—masterful, meticulously researched. Feroz Khan combines insights from Pakistani insiders and declassified U.S. sources to tell the most authoritative story of Pakistan's 50-year pursuit of the bomb and, with it, international respect." (Siegfried S Hecker, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, and Director Emeritus Los Alamos National Laboratory) "Drawing on primary and secondary sources, his own experiences, and numerous interviews with decision-makers and former scientists who were intimately involved in the program, Khan recapitulates Pakistan's nuclear journey. He analyzes key decisions by its leaders that shaped the trajectory of Pakistan's strategic capabilities and its foreign relations, bureaucratic disputes over the program, and competition between actors in the scientific community trying to put their individual stamp on the bomb." (Shehzad H. Qazi *World Affairs Journal*) "Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb, uses primary source material and personal interviews to explain and analyze the genesis of Pakistan's nuclear program. Understanding Pakistan's nuclear development is not only important for Pakistan scholars but also for nuclear analysts more broadly. Nuclear scholars are working with an incredibly small sample of nine nuclear states, so gaining a robust understanding of each nation's path to the bomb is essential. General Khan discussed a wide range of issues as an introduction to his book's more comprehensive analysis." (Sarah Wiener CSIS) "Eating Grass will become the authoritative volume on Pakistan's nuclear trajectory, from its uncertain beginnings to Pakistan's present development of tactical nuclear weapons . . . [T]his is the best volume we have." (Shashank Joshi *RUSI Journal*)

Brigadier General (retired) Feroz Khan is a lecturer in the Department of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey. He served with the Pakistani Army for 30 years, most recently as Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs, within the Strategic Plans Division, Joint Services Headquarters, and has represented Pakistan in several multilateral and bilateral arms control negotiations. General Khan has been a visiting scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and has held fellowships at Stanford University's Center for International Studies and Cooperation, the Brookings Institution, the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and the Cooperative Monitoring Center, Sandia National Laboratory. He has also taught as visiting faculty at the Department of the Defense and Strategic

Studies, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.

By an author with unequaled access to the major players, this account presents the exact sequence of events each placed in its full historical context in a very readable form.

Much has been written about Pakistan's program to develop a nuclear bomb; most of it centered around AQ Khan and designed to either show he was a hero and the best scientist Pakistan has ever produced or that he was a villain and incompetent to boot. Feroz Khan (no relation that I am aware of) has framed that question in its proper proportion to the rest of the history of Pakistan's bomb work in this fascinating and well researched book. There is much new and very important in this work and I highly recommend it.

Great!

Feroz Hassan Khan, a retired brigadier general in the Pakistani Army and currently on the faculty at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, has written an excellent and much needed account--under the imprimatur of the Stanford University Press--of the development of atomic power in Pakistan as a countermeasure to India's earlier pursuits in the atomic arena. His scholarship reflects a brilliant mind and balanced approach to appreciating and understanding this subject matter. It also serves to remind some of us of the futility of such one-upsmanship in the quest of atomic superiority. His findings are based on extensive interviews with many of the leading figures responsible for establishing and furthering this development, as is reflected by his many citations in the Notes. For those interested in international relations and its related fields, especially with respect to South Asia, this work should be regarded as required reading. It is uncommon to find someone with such an extensive background and first-hand knowledge of this subject matter as the author possesses.

If you're interested in understanding the history of the Pakistani nuclear program this book is a "must have". Who better than the general who headed up Pakistan's arms control and disarmament directorate to tell the story. The book shines in its description of Pakistan's secret nuclear R&D program. It provides new details about how Pakistan illegally acquired most of the key components of its weapons program as it developed dual tracks of producing highly enriched uranium and plutonium. The admission of Saudi funding of the weapons program (without a mention what they

received in return) and the Chinese assistance of giving Pakistan HEU as well as a complete bomb design, was by itself worth the price of the book. The flip side of the book is the authors lament of how unfair American policy makers, who wanted to roll back Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, were. Let's see, in 50 years of constant political instability Pakistan has had four military coups, military rule from 1958-1971, 1977-1988 and 1999-2008, perpetual distrust between the civilian and military rule, the rise Islamic terrorists, the Khan network of proliferators, etc. The truth is that Pakistan has been, and continues to be, the least stable country in the world holding the most dangerous weapons. It's depressing (actually frightening) to read about a country that lacks a culture of introspection and inability to admit failure or bad judgment. The reality is Pakistan has taken a valid issue of national security facing India and turned into a national culture of insecurity, corruption, nepotism, and a permanent "blame others" ethos. While the country got nuclear weapons the state has continued to fail its populace. They are no less secure, better fed, or economically well off with nuclear weapons. In fact, a case can be made that they're worse for it. It's a shame the authors' myopia continued into retirement. But he's delivered a great book that is a great read on many levels.

Intersting so far. Careful listing of people and abbreviations really helps. The author haas a vast list of contacts and sources for this book.

I was very impressed by Mr. Khan's analysis and narrative of how and why Pakistan acquired nuclear capability and would very much recommend this book to others. Well written, easily readable and thoroughly absorbing it is too, Mr Khan, one of the military figures significantly involved in the project, documents the process of bomb acquisition from the early years of the nation's history, right through until recent times. His coverage of the post-detonation era is in particular very concise and clear, documenting how Pakistan's nuclear strategy evolved and also how it adapted to the responsibilities of being a nuclear power. My very perception of how Pakistan functions as a nation has been altered by Mr. Khan's book. Firstly, the title refers to a statement made by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the undisputed 'father' of the Pakistani bomb project, when he commented that Pakistan and Pakistani's would need to 'eat grass' in order to obtain a nuclear capability in response to India obtaining one. And here, in a nutshell, is the principle motivation for the development of a Pakistani nuclear capability; the desire for 'strategic parity' with their arch-nemesis India. This desire for an atomic weapon was to be encouraged in later years by images of national stature and international isolation. We start during the 1950s. With President

Eisenhower's 'Atoms For Peace' project igniting the desire to take advantage of nuclear energy possibilities, the leadership in Karachi saw this as an excellent opportunity to strengthen the fledgling Pakistani nation. This investment continued even after the military coup installed General Ayub Khan at the end of the decade. Reactors were constructed and the infrastructure grew, enabling Pakistan to meet new challenges. However, it was the General's protégé, a young Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who saw the benefit and strategic need of pursuing a nuclear weapons capability. Initially skeptical, the Pakistani President saw little need to create a weapons project. After his overthrow in 1969 and the election of Bhutto as president, the bomb project was started and became a high national priority especially following the Indian 'Smiling Buddha' test in 1974. Over the subsequent years, Pakistan was to meet opposition from almost every international angle as it tried to create a weapons programme. This adversity was to merely encourage the Pakistani scientists and engineers in achieving their goal with Khan documenting how enthusiastic and resourceful they were in their work. By the late 1970s, a scientist by the name of Abdul Qadeer Khan (A.Q. Khan) was bringing his expertise and international connections to the project. He was to be pivotal in how Pakistan reached its nuclear goals. Khan's historical narrative is very interesting and exciting. This is a page turner, a book that documents a complex subject very nicely and in a very readable fashion and it doesn't stop here either. The author goes on to describe just how resourceful the Pakistanis were to be. They acquired their materials by legal and illegal purchasing and trade benefiting immensely from A.Q. Khan's international reputation and connections. Simple exchanges were considered and made with nations such as North Korea and China, certainly when it came to developing a strategic delivery system (both nations assisted Pakistan in obtaining solid and liquid fueled rockets capable of reaching and threatening India). Pakistan overcame sanctions, quarrels, active hostility and simple threats whilst building their bomb capability. Feroz Khan's analysis continues up to and beyond the first test detonation in 1998. Indeed it is the post-capability era where we see Pakistan adapting to their new role as a nuclear power. The events of 9/11 and the almost year long Kargil affair with India in 2001-2002 were crucial concerning the evolution of the country's nuclear strategy. Ultimately, the Pakistan authorities discovered how best to utilise their deterrent (a integration of conventional/nuclear forces) and also how to adequately secure it from theft and espionage. Today the Strategic Plans Division of the National Command Authority has sole authorisation of releasing nuclear weapons for use, however, it was to take nearly a decade to get to this stage of 'professionalism'. This professional approach also witnessed the discovery and removal of A.Q. Khan and his shameless proliferation network where he sold nuclear knowledge and technology to anyone who desired them. The Khan network was to be an

embarrassing off-shoot of the project with the scientist himself arrogantly assuming he could profit from his expertise whilst answered to no one. This is an excellent starting point to the subject and a must read. As mentioned, the author provides a very readable account of how bomb capability was achieved, clearly emphasising how the project was given virtually unlimited funding and resources regardless of the state of the Pakistani economy. His conclusion on where Pakistan is now heading is also somewhat chilling.

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