



Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland (Columbia/Hurst)

Sana Haroon

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Frontier of Faith examines the history of Islam-especially that of local *mullahs*, or Muslim clerics-in the North-West Frontier. A largely autonomous zone straddling the boundary of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Tribal Areas was established as a strategic buffer zone for British India, and the resulting autonomy allowed local *mullahs* to assume roles of tremendous power. After Partition in 1947, the Tribal Areas maintained its status as an autonomous region, and for the next fifty years the *mullahs* supported armed mobilizations in exchange for protection of their vested interests in regional freedom. Consequently the Frontier has become the hinterland of successive, contradictory *jihads* in support of Pashtun ethnicism, anti-colonial nationalism, Pakistani territorialism, religious revivalism, Afghan anti-Soviet resistance, and anti-Americanism. Considering this territory is said to be the current hiding place of Osama bin Laden, there couldn't be a better time for a sourcebook detailing the intricacies of the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderlands today and the function of the *mullahs* and their allies.

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