

**Deception: Pakistan, The United States And The Global Nuclear Weapons Conspiracy**  
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Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clarke are well-reputed investigative journalists working as Senior Correspondents for *The Guardian*. Both have an experience of reporting from South Asia for more than a decade, which has enhanced their comprehension of Pakistan's politics and its foreign policy – essentially, along with other South Asian States. They have written two books before their recently published, much debated and highly controversial work on Nuclear Weapons Proliferation.

“Deception” is mainly an investigative account of a proliferation network. First half of it presents an exhaustive description of the history of Pakistan's Nuclear Program, rationale that set off the zealous endeavors, and its tremendous achievements in the field, with a sharp focus on the establishment of a network for the procurement of sensitive and some rarely available items required for weapon purposes – much of which is already known to many familiar with the subject of Nonproliferation. However, the manner by which minutest details have been traced, reflect exceptional investigative reporting that helps generate a lot of interest in reading this book. Nevertheless primary focus of the book lies in two propositions that it vehemently projects through out the book in general and in the second part in specific.

First, it asserts that the development of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and later its involvement in a larger proliferation network has been deliberately ignored by the United States. The authors propose two major reasons behind the US negligence of Pakistan's involvement in proliferating sensitive information and items to other States including Iraq, Iran, Libya, North Korea and Saudi Arabia. They claim that it was partially a result of self-interest and partly of inter-departmental rivalries rampant in the United States. The authors ardently question the rationale behind US punitive actions against Iraq and penalizing policies against Iran, while staying silent

on Pakistan. They strongly push forward a case suggesting Pakistan should be punished first.

Second stream of argument implies that Pakistan's proliferation activities did not come up accidentally, it was a rather a well-thought out route that Pakistan opted for various reasons that include: -

- Recovery of huge sums of money invested in Pakistan's own nuclear weapons program,
- Strengthening Muslim Ummah by helping them equip themselves with the weapons of deterrence
- To use uranium-enrichment as a mean to conduct barter trade to meet technological needs in areas where Pakistan faced deficiencies (e.g. long range missile program).

It argues that the role of military and establishment cannot be secluded from Pakistan's proliferation episode. It emphasizes that proliferation via Pakistan was not a work of a handful of scientists or a small group within KRL establishment. A.Q.Khan and other KRL members have rather been manipulated as a cover up by President Pervez Musharraf, to secure himself in specific and the military's high-ups as well as ISI in general.

The authors have also tried to fabricate a whole lot of accusations against Pakistan. They have blamed Pakistan for extending its proliferation activities to non-state actors like Al-Qaeda and Taliban before 9/11. They profess that Pakistan is still maintaining ties with Taliban and Al-Qaeda. They have also claimed that despite Khan and his associates being off the show, Pakistan has not halted its proliferation activities. However much of these allegations reflect a lot of speculation, lack of substantive evidence and a deliberate attempt to tarnish Pakistan's image.

Based on these accusations, the authors press hard on the need for some action against Pakistan which also seems as the primary agenda point behind this book. In order to promote this objective and build the case really hard, the authors, at some instances appear over occupied with bias and fabricating links substantiated with weak references.

Laborious efforts undertaken by the authors to conduct dozens of interviews with the concerned people and extensively quoting the primary data should win due credit. However, some instances reflect a more selective approach in terms of data citation. Also there are few claims that are either not referenced or the evidences are too weak to be bought. It makes the reader feel as if there is a purported effort to demonize Pakistan.

One may safely assert that it is a chunk of "selective truth". It may not be wrong to express it with the one liner description of Nick Naylor's character in the movie "*Thank you for smoking*" which says "he does not hide the truth, he filters it". Authors of this book have partially done the same.

Keeping these controversial aspects and derogatory remarks apart, the strengths of this book may not be discredited. For instance, it touches a far broader range of issues and subjects than what the title suggests. It provides a good deal of information on Pakistan's political culture and history. It also presents a deep insight into the institutional mechanism and inter-departmental rivalries in the United States and their impact on policy-making. It provides a good deal of explanation of how the rift amongst White House, Pentagon and CIA undermines effective decision making in the United States. The story of Richard Barlow covered at a good length helps understand institutional frailties as well as challenges faced by young professionals in the World's leading Power. It uncovers many facets of double-standards manifested in US policies and entails a reasonable explanation of the US outlook, its involvement in Iraq and other foreign policy priorities.

To sum it up, "Deception" undoubtedly projects some highly disputed notions. Nevertheless it is worth reading.

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