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Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, *The Nuclear Jihadist: The True Story of the Man Who Sold the World's Most Dangerous Secrets—and How We Could Have Stopped Him*. New York: Twelve, 2007. Pp. xv, 413. ISBN 978-0-446-19957-5.

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In *The Nuclear Jihadist*, reporters Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins set out to tell a story only marginally known to most Americans—how Pakistani atomic scientist A.Q. Khan sold nuclear secrets and technology to a wide range of governments unable to buy or create nuclear materials on their own. Frantz and Collins dub this a “second atomic revolution” in which the have-nots of the world crash the nuclear club, using equipment and expertise purchased from the West to make up for a lack of scientific/technological infrastructure.

At the center of this web, Frantz and Collins place Khan, who began his career working in the Netherlands for a nuclear supplier. Based on his espionage and contacts developed there, Khan set out to run Pakistan’s nuclear materials program, producing the uranium for the nation’s first atomic weapons (weapons design and manufacture were handled by the military, not Khan’s operation).

Khan turned next to creating a black market for nuclear technology that stretched the length of, then beyond, the Silk Road. He used contacts in North Korea for nuclear as well as missile technology, providing that regime with much-needed cash. Khan also dealt heavily with European suppliers of nuclear technology, who were simply unable to pass up massive sales of equipment.

As the story progresses, Khan’s network, and the scope of the book, continue to widen. Khan becomes involved in Iraq and especially Iran, where he helps create an infrastructure for atomic material production. Khan also reaches out to suppliers and experts in South Africa, who are able to profit from their nations’ renunciation of nuclear weapons. Finally, Khan becomes a nuclear supplier for the regime of Muammar al-Gaddafi in Libya, and creates manufacturing facilities in Malaysia. The story even reaches Afghanistan, where several Khan scientists offer the Taliban and Al Qaeda their services.

Frantz and Collins, first-rate investigative reporters, never let the trail go cold. They alternate their story between Washington, Vienna and the Middle East, with a focus on two questions: how did all of these bombs get made? and what was the U.S. doing to stop it? The authors are particularly good at digging out the back story of American critics of Pakistan and the nuclear program, and how U.S. alliance with Pakistan was used to justify turning a blind eye to its hardly-secret nuclear production facilities.

The authors argue that Khan’s methods of nuclear proliferation were very simple—most of the information could be gleaned or bought from the West, and much of the complex equipment could be finagled through weak export controls. Pakistan is the model of this approach—a nation with little scientific or technical infrastructure was able to create an atomic arsenal only eighteen years after India’s first detonation in 1970. Khan then turned his skills to help other nations, such as North Korea, profit from selling nuclear technolo-

gy to states like Iran and Libya, who believed that nuclear weapons would prevent attack by regional rivals or superpowers.

The book also presents evidence that the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency, had information about this racket early enough to shut it down, but the alliance between the U.S. and Pakistan, as well as bureaucratic inertia and bumbling, prevented action despite solid intelligence.

Nuclear Jihadist offers profiles of policy-makers within the U.S. government wrestling with the conflicting goals of non-proliferation and maintaining an alliance with Pakistan. When the Soviets occupied Afghanistan, the U.S. depended on Pakistan to bring aid to rebels. This relationship led the CIA to squelch any intelligence on Pakistan's poor non-proliferation record, which Frantz and Collins thoroughly expose.

This work is at its strongest when it immerses the reader in the world of nuclear weapons trade:

While under surveillance, Khan arrived at the VIP terminal at the west end of Islamabad's chaotic airport.... Khan emerged in his familiar tailored safari suit and nodded regally as a wave of recognition swept over the onlookers. Somewhat incongruously for a man whose staff normally carried his briefcase, the scientist this time clutched two rumpled beige shopping bags from Good Looks Fabric and Tailors, a dry cleaner and tailor that catered to Islamabad's wealthy. Khan was whisked through security and passport control to the first-class lounge to await his flight. As diplomats, businessmen and generals stopped to pay their respects, the two bags never left Khan's side (257-8).

Incredibly, though Khan lived in a military dictatorship and served at the whim of the government, he could exit his nation with two shopping bags bulging with classified documents under the very nose of that government. It is frustrating to learn of the ease with which Khan obtained and traded in nuclear technology.

The book wobbles somewhat when it tries to address the overall geopolitical significance of nuclear weapons and terrorism. The following captures the flavor of the authors' thinking:

By the Spring of 2000, the CIA had obtained proof that two of the most repressive and dangerous regimes in the world—the militant clerics in Iran and the terrorist sponsor in Tripoli—were trying to develop nuclear weapons.... Based on the shipments going through Dubai, they were able to estimate the progress Iran and Libya were making towards building a functional nuclear weapon. While the early judgments required a certain amount of guesswork, both countries were believed to be within five or six years of going nuclear (249).

While everything in this paragraph is properly referenced, the interpretation has a false ring to it. By 2000, who would put Libya on a list of major danger spots for the U.S.? The Gaddafi regime is known more as a terrorist foe of the Reagan years than a threat in 2000. The book also ties together odd allies—states across the Middle East are indiscriminately characterized as Islamist, when many are in fact more secular than theocratic.

Is the title *Nuclear Jihadist* accurate? Frantz and Collier claim that Khan was motivated largely by his belief in Islam and the Islamic world's right to possess a bomb, but he also acted out of patriotism and a fear that neighboring, nuclear-armed India would crush Pakistan. Perhaps a "jihadist" at the beginning of his career, Khan, by middle age, had become a corrupt middleman in a vast nuclear technology black market. His dealings with many of the figures in the book—religious, secular, communist, socialist, Islamist, dictatorial—are strictly cash-and-carry, with few long-term bonds or religious affiliations.

The original definition of "Jihad" is, of course, to struggle greatly, in order to improve oneself or one's community. Khan's career ironically belies such a definition. His early work in the Netherlands involved manipulating others, never developing anything scientific or technological on his own. His career in Pakistan was spent buying and stealing his way to power, and building his nation a nuclear arsenal using off-the-shelf technology. In his old age, Khan was a cynical salesman, making millions from his knowledge of the nuclear trade.

Most chilling about the work of Frantz and Collins is not how hard Khan had to work to build his nuclear empire, but how easy the nuclear powers made it for him to ply his trade in the shadows. Frantz and Collins' achievement is not to scare the reader with predictions of nuclear terrorism, but calmly to walk the reader, step by step, through the vast nuclear bazaar that threatens the peace from Korea to Africa and beyond.