



An Intimate War: An Oral History of the Helmand Conflict

Mike Martin

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An Intimate War tells the story of the last thirty-four years of conflict in Helmand Province, Afghanistan as seen through the eyes of the Helmandis. In the West, this period is often defined through different lenses - the Soviet intervention, the civil war, the Taliban, and the post-2001 nation-building era. Yet, as experienced by local inhabitants, the Helmand conflict is a perennial one, involving the same individuals, families and groups, and driven by the same arguments over land, water and power. This book - based on both military and research experience in Helmand and 150 interviews in Pashto - offers a very different view of Helmand from those in the media. It demonstrates how outsiders have most often misunderstood the ongoing struggle in Helmand and how, in doing so, they have exacerbated the conflict, perpetuated it and made it more violent - precisely the opposite of what was intended when their interventions were launched. Mike Martin's oral history of Helmand underscores the absolute imperative of understanding the highly local, personal, and non-ideological nature of internal conflict in much of the 'third' world.

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