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## The State of Islam: Culture & Cold War Politics in Pakistan

Toor, Saadia

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/2382>

Date: 2011

### Abstract:

The State of Islam tells the story of Pakistan through the lens of the Cold War, and more recently the War on Terror, to shed light on the domestic and international processes behind the global rise of militant Islam. Unlike existing scholarship on nationalism, Islam and the state in Pakistan, which tends to privilege events in a narrowly-defined 'political' realm, Saadia Toor highlights the significance of cultural politics in Pakistan from its origins to the contemporary period. This extra dimension allows Toor to explain how the struggle between Marxists and liberal nationalists was influenced and eventually engulfed by the agenda of the religious right. Timely and unique, this book is a must for anyone who wants to understand the roots of modern Pakistan and the likely outcome of current power struggles in the country.

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Saadia Toor's *State of Islam* is written in a sustained, low-intensity tone of anger as it systematically deconstructs the hegemonic narrative of Pakistani history and offers an alternate narrative from the point of view of its perennial dissidents. I begin this review with a comment about latent anger, not as criticism but as recognition. The tone belies the author's politics of scholarly responsibility, what Derrida has called the *mal d'archive* that relays a cognition of what is at stake in reconsidering and repudiating the givenness of the historical archive and the autobiography that the 's...