

Afghanistan



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John Griffiths delves into the history, culture, social fabric, internal politics and economy of this intriguing and backward country. He reveals a nation living in the shadow of perpetual conflict: from the early incursions: Persian, Greek, Hun Mongol, through the Russian invasion and subsequent withdrawal, to the rise of the Taliban and the resulting international crisis which led to the War on Terror and the ongoing Allied occupation of the country. Set against Afghanistan's deep-rooted religious, ethnic and social divisions and the more recent bitter civil war that left as many as 2 million Afghans dead and over 6 million homeless, Griffiths examines the political situation, in particular the role of the Taliban - who controlled approximately 90 per cent of the country before the war - under their fanatical and reclusive leader. He analyses their stance on minority groups, the importance of Islam, the place of women in Taliban society, their views on education and their support for the Islamic fundamentalist Osama bin Laden. He also discusses the difficulties that the West have and will continue to face when attempting to impose law and order on a country which

has as its core a collection of diverse, independent and proud people, and stresses the importance of ultimately creating stability in what is becoming a vitally important strategic and political flashpoint. Fully updated, "Afghanistan: Land of Conflict and Beauty" provides an insightful and informative account of a country trapped between the middle ages and the twentieth-first century.

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