

War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan, Kashmir and Tibet

Eric Margolis

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War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan, Kashmir and Tibet Eric Margolis Beginning with the premise that South Asia is one of the most combustible regions on the planet (a 1993 CIA study rated Kashmir as the most likely place for a nuclear war to begin), veteran foreign correspondent Margolis goes poking around the region, wondering where the spark will originate, discussing Afghanistan (especially the heavy American and Pakistani involvement in the area), the border conflicts in Kashmir and Siachen between India and Pakistan, and China's occupation of Tibet, which he sees as a model for how China might come into bloody conflict with India. The book is good on military issues and useful as a primer for the uninitiated, especially on the way that British, American and Russian policies have fueled the arms and territory battles in Afghanistan and on what India's and Pakistan's battling has cost them in lost social and economic development. But the author's fondness for generalities and potted psychologizing can be wearying: Muslim Kashmiris are "a haughty lot," Sikhs are known for their "love of revenge," the leaders of the Afghan Army suffer from a "deficit in human talent that afflicts so many backward societies." Margolis even devotes a page to the proposition that Hindu anti-Muslim sentiment is partly due to Hindus feeling sexually inferior to Muslims since Islam "encourages a robust sex life" and some Indians believe that Muslims are better lovers because they are circumcised.



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