

What AQ Khan's Diaries Tell About Pakistan's Drive for a Nuclear Bomb

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Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist who gave nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea, died of COVID-19 on Sunday at age 85. But his death does not mark the end of his story. I can now write about what I learned while reading more than 40 years of his diaries, which he wrote daily from when he began work on Pakistan's nuclear weapon project in 1976. The diaries, written in English, sometimes in a hasty scrawl, are an extraordinary treasure trove. Though they are revelatory to most of us, I doubt whether they reveal anything that the U.S. intelligence community and allied foreign agencies do not already know. I suspect the need for compromises, which are often the essence of formulating foreign policy, has held back revealing the full picture. Pakistan, of course, facilitated the defeat of Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s and was a crucial partner, post-9/11, in dealing with al Qaeda, and even today needs to be handled carefully now that the Taliban again control Kabul...

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