

THE THISTLE AND THE DRONE

THE THISTLE AND THE DRONE

How America's War
on Terror Became
a Global War
on Tribal Islam

AKBAR AHMED

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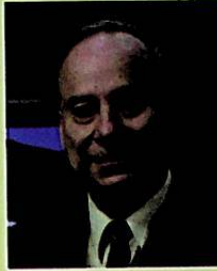
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provides the social and historical context necessary to understand how both central governments and tribal societies have become embroiled in America's war. Beginning with Waziristan and expanding to societies in Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and elsewhere, Ahmed offers a fresh approach to the conflicts studied and presents an unprecedented paradigm for understanding and winning the war on terror.



AKBAR AHMED

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Praise for
**THE THISTLE
AND THE DRONE**

"This is a book of genuinely global importance; by offering a fresh and entirely persuasive analysis of what the West habitually and superficially treats as 'religiously motivated' violence or terror, it demands an urgent rethinking of the disastrous strategies that have been used in the last decade to combat the threat of terrorist activity. Professor Ahmed combines a clear professional anthropological expertise with an equally clear, critical and humane moral perspective. This is an unusual and groundbreaking book, which should be compulsory reading for Western governments."

—**DR. ROWAN WILLIAMS**, former Archbishop of Canterbury

"In the end, I was close to tears. *Lagrimas caudales* or "flowing tears," to use the apposite phrase of Blas de Otero, seems to be what the book's conclusions lead to. . . . Thus *lagrimas* for the tribes, for the soldiers, and for the United States. . . . Akbar Ahmed gives us the only way out of this dangerous dilemma, a way to coexist with the thistle without the drone."

—**COLONEL LAWRENCE WILKERSON**, former chief of staff
to Secretary of State Colin Powell, professor of government and public policy
at the College of William and Mary

"I am moved, horrified, and encouraged all at once. Above all, Professor Ahmed makes me proud to be an anthropologist!"

—**PROFESSOR MARILYN STRATHERN D.B.E.**, former William Wyse Professor
of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge

"Ahmed's years of field experience and study, as a government official in tribal Pakistan, as an anthropologist, and as a leading authority on traditional Islam, make him uniquely qualified to offer this timely, balanced, and well-argued analysis of the interaction between modern drone warfare and the tribal peoples it targets. This book should be required reading for any policymaker, student, or military officer seeking to understand the risks and dilemmas of today's conflict."

—**COLONEL DAVID KILCULLEN**, author of *The Accidental Guerilla*

"From Akbar Ahmed, one of the wisest Muslim heads I know, a brilliant deconstruction of America's drone attacks on targets in Pakistan and other Muslim societies across the world. His cogent account of how each attack detonates tribal threads, alienating and radicalizing whole communities still further, is a must-read."

—**JON SNOW**, presenter Channel 4/ITN News