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Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the previously well-established organisation of world politics has been thrown into disarray. While during the Cold War, the bipolarity of the world gave other powers a defined structure within which to vie for power, influence and material wealth, the current global political landscape has been transformed by a diffusion of power. As a result, the world has seen the rise of sub-national or quasi-/non-state actors, such as Hezbollah, al-Qaeda and the movement that calls itself Islamic State, or ISIS. These dramatic geopolitical shifts have heavily impacted state-society relationships, power and authority in the international system. *Weak States, Strong Societies* analyses the effect of these developments on the new world order, arguing that the framework of 'weak state, strong society' appears even more applicable to the contemporary global landscape than it did during the Cold War. Focusing on a range of regional contexts, the book explores what constitutes a weak or strong state. It will be essential reading for specialists in politics and international relations, whether students or academic researchers.

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About the Author

Amin Saikal is Director of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies and Professor of Political Science at the Australian National University. He has been a visiting fellow at the University of Cambridge and Princeton University, as well as at Sussex University's Institute of Development Studies. He has also been a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow in International Relations. He was awarded the Order of Australia (AM) in 2006. He is the author of a number of works on the Middle East, Central Asia and Russia, including *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?* (2003); *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: Iran from Autocracy to Religious Rule* (2009), *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (I.B.Tauris, revised 2012), *Zone of Crisis: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq* (I.B.Tauris, 2010) and editor of *Democracy and Reform in the Middle East and Asia: Social Protest and Authoritarian Rule after the Arab Spring* (I.B.Tauris, 2013).

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