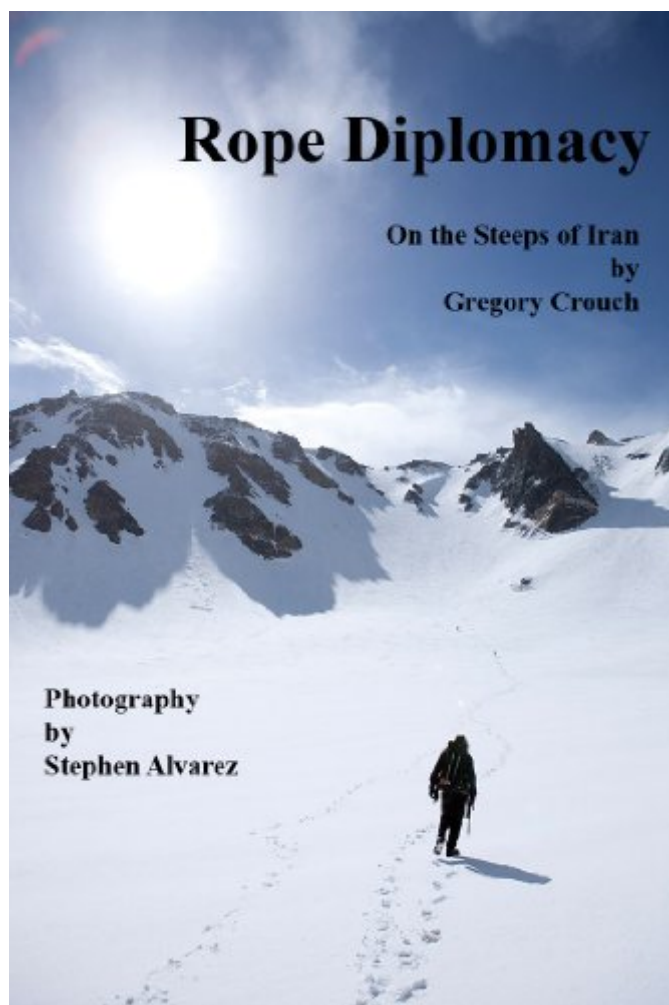


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Rope Diplomacy: On The Steeps In Iran



Synopsis

In the summer of 2011, National Geographic writer Gregory Crouch and photographer Stephen Alvarez spent a jaw-dropping month climbing the highest mountains in the Islamic Republic of Iran as members of a goodwill exchange between the American Alpine Club and the Alpine Club of Iran, both world-class organizations intent on doing something to improve the strained relations between the two peoples. Besides having wild adventures in gorgeous mountains, Alvarez, Crouch, and their teammates built excellent relationships with their Persian hosts, gained a better appreciation of the ancient culture of Iran, and experienced some of the tensions inherent in life in modern Iran, all at a time when the two captured American hikers were still languishing in a Tehran prison. The Atlantic published a short version of the story in their April, 2012 issue; *Rope Diplomacy: On the Steeps in Iran* gives you the opportunity to read Gregory Crouch's full, detailed, and nuanced article, accompanied by more than thirty of Stephen's brilliant photos.

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Customer Reviews

An eye-opening piece of writing, *Rope Diplomacy* gives new insights into life in the Islamic Republic

of Iran. For starters, it was a revelation to me that a climbing community even existed there. As the Americans and Iranians (a woman among them, another surprise to me) team together to tackle the imposing peaks of Iran, language and cultural barriers are bridged and friendships formed. Crouch writes with understated humor that "life is not fun in Iran" and gives the reader an appreciation of what drives these climbers beyond a passion for climbing. Spectacular photographs accompany the article, capturing the beauty of this land and its people. A good follow-up read to this excellent piece is Crouch's *China's Wings*--another look into another faraway place with an intriguing history.

I just spent an hour in Iran from the comforts of my over-sized plush sofa. Gregory Crouch's vivid descriptions along with Stephen Alvarez's spectacular photos transported me to a country I will most likely never visit, and certainly to heights I will never ascend! It was enlightening and inspiring to read of the cross-cultural relationships that developed through the shared passion of climbing. If people more often shared their passions world wide, there would be a better understanding between cultures that could surpass their governments' differences.

First, this story would be worth buying for the pictures alone. In terms of the story, the US and Iranian governments could learn something from this expedition. It clearly demonstrates that people are people the world over. A well written and interesting read.

A unique opportunity to see inside a country that we only hear bad things about. This author calmly shows us what wonderful people he has met in a place where most of us dare not go. I hope he writes more about this trip and others that he has done. Wonderfully well written and engaging!

Great potential but too much left out. I think a lot of opportunity squandered in brevity. In that so much left unexplored that was expected by the title.

At a time when all one hears with regard to the US and Iran is hostility and more hostility, it's heartening to learn that there are actually Americans and Iranians who are not engaged in exchanges of threats, but are actually working through their sport to build bridges of friendship. As a climber I'm a sucker for just about any read that talks to my sport. But this is a tale which moves beyond the narrow perspective of the climber and speaks to anyone who might believe that good ole every day folks can leave the messaging of antagonistic governments behind and engage in meaningful person to person diplomacy. I can think of no other sport where one's trust in one's

companions is truly a matter of life and death. Climbing is the ultimate test of friendship and trust and this story makes it clear that the trust implicit in the brotherhood of the rope is indeed a powerful diplomatic tool. (Great climbing reading as well!) Definitely deserving of five stars.

One word: Fab. This book proves that through the power of brotherhood (and sisterhood), coupled with the love of mountaineering, the East and West can indeed meet. An erudite rendition on a topic that most climbers don't usually write about, leave alone do justice to it. It will be especially of interest to non-Moslem Zoroastrians (Parsis) and open-minded Iranian climbers, esp. the younger generation. Really enjoyed it...great work by Gregory Crouch. Will share my copy. Ah, actually no I won't! (-:

Full disclosure, Gregory Crouch is a West Point classmate of mine. As a non-climber, I was able to feel the love that the Iranians portrayed feel about climbing came shine through in this account. I came to appreciate that, even with the government restrictions, they can find place to enjoy the sport they love. This short story just reiterated to me that we are all the same just facing different circumstances.

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