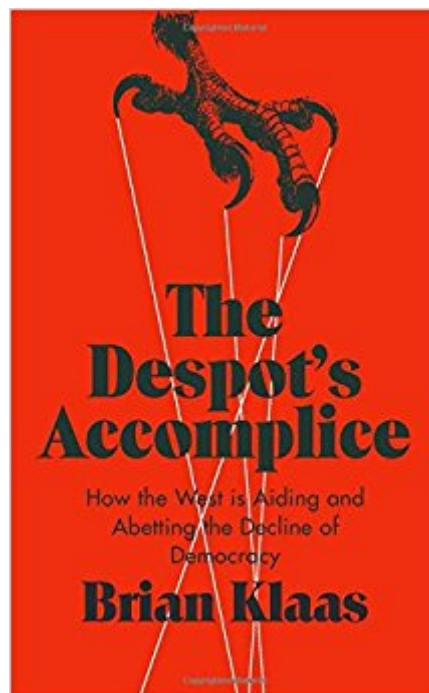




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The Despot's Accomplice: How The West Is Aiding And Abetting The Decline Of Democracy



Synopsis

For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the world is steadily becoming less democratic. The true culprits are dictators and counterfeit democrats. But, argues Klaas, the West is also an accomplice, inadvertently assaulting pro-democracy forces abroad as governments in Washington, London and Brussels chase pyrrhic short-term economic and security victories. Friendly fire from Western democracies against democracy abroad is too high a price to pay for a myopic foreign policy that is ultimately making the world less prosperous, stable and democratic. The Despot's Accomplice draws on years of extensive interviews on the frontlines of the global struggle for democracy, from a poetry-reading, politician-kidnapping general in Madagascar to Islamist torture victims in Tunisia, Belarusian opposition activists tailed by the KGB, West African rebels, and tea-sipping members of the Thai junta. Cumulatively, their stories weave together a tale of a broken system at the root of democracy's global retreat.

Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (April 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0190668016

ISBN-13: 978-0190668013

Product Dimensions: 8.7 x 0.9 x 5.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #72,017 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #102 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > Political Ideologies #139 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Democracy #141 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > International Relations

Customer Reviews

This is an important book for all who want to understand and do something about the crisis of democracy in our turbulent world. Klaas tells a disturbing story, but he offers hope - and a dose of humor -- while showing how the West can turn the tide, if it acts wisely and quickly. Essential reading.' -- Walter Mondale, Former Vice President of the United States, Ambassador to Japan, and United States Senator'For the last few decades, liberal democracy was on the march. Today, however, the world is going through a democratic recession. In this thought-provoking book, Brian

Klaas points the finger at a surprising villain: the West itself. He argues that Western governments have too often been accomplices to authoritarianism; through sins of commission and admission. An enjoyable and challenging addition to the literature on democracy promotion.' -- Mark Leonard, founder and director of the European Council on Foreign Relations 'This lucid, wide-ranging, up-to-date analysis of US democracy promotion offers penetrating critical insights as well as practical recommendations for doing better. Klaas is an engaging, lively guide through the complex thickets of democracy policy challenges and dilemmas.' -- Thomas Carothers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace "This efficient and thought-provoking plea for the U.S. and other Western countries to prioritize democracy promotion is a must-read... [Klaas] is no armchair academic, and his analyses of policymaking challenges are informed by extensive, and sometimes dangerous, field work... [He] is able to make his points simply and clearly, as in his observation that democracy, like free speech, must be protected regardless of whether it yields a preferred result."--Publishers Weekly starred review"Written with precision and learning, with lively prose and dark humor. Klaas'proposals combine the conviction of an idealist with the experience of a technocrat. At a time when democracy is in retreat and the world seems headed for turbulence, this book can be the shot that revives this ailing patient." --The National

Brian Klaas is a Fellow in Comparative Politics at the London School of Economics, where he focuses on democratization and political violence. He has advised several national governments and major international NGOs, including International Crisis Group, the Carter Center, and One Earth Future. Klaas received his doctorate from the University of Oxford. The author has written op-eds for The New York Times, Financial Times, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, and Minneapolis Star Tribune. Starting September 2016, he now has a column in the Washington Post.

My husband and i both read this book and thought it was very well written. Mr. Klaas' insights are well thought out and explained. We also saw him interviewed and were impressed with his eloquent answers to questions about these complicated times. it is a must read.

Clearly written examination of an important and timely topic.

Compelling and thought-provoking book.

A terrific resource for anyone who wants to have a clear grasp of the status of democracy in the world today. The writing is thorough and the author is thoughtful, sometimes humorous, and always getting back to the bigger picture, as he tells us stories of historic pragmatic government decisions that have supported despotic regimes, rather than influenced the improvement of democratic principles.

It's a good book and makes some good points, yet the author mentioning Ukraine in the last chapter as an example of failed transition was absolutely unsupported by anything AT ALL in the rest of the book. Focusing on Belarus for an entire chapter while ignoring everything that has happened next door in Ukraine since 2014 (except as an example how the West changed its view of Lukashenko because of Russia) was, frankly, unforgivable, in such an ambitious book. And to sum it all up as a "failed transition" -- when Ukraine actually proves all of the author's points, including its highly criticized failure in the early 1990s to eliminate the ancien Soviet regime, and is the most democratic of the former Soviet republics outside the Baltics -- makes me suspect the authors' motives. Dude, next time, don't spend one sentence on the biggest country in Europe, which has been a huge recipient of US democracy development aid and is currently, literally, protecting democracy from good, old-fashioned Russian imperialism. It's lazy, and insulting and detracts from the rest of the story. And an editor could have helped. I didn't do a spell check but "democracy" appears about 24,000 times in the book, sometimes multiple times in one sentence.

While covering a very crucial topic: the decline of global democracy, this book is an easy, enjoyable read that details current issues and offers practical solutions. For example, the author explains two ways the West is helping authoritarian states: the "Saudi Arabia Effect" and the "Madagascar Effect". The consequences of backing an despot for geostrategic expediency or creating counterproductive incentives for counterfeit democracies appear dire. The reader's fears are somewhat assuaged when Klass outlines his seven principles that, if followed, could bring about global stability, strong economic growth, justice, and, at the very least, encourage, democratization. While not at all an expert, I am persuaded that the League of Democracies idea is worth investigating further. Brian Klaas travelled over 100,000 miles and conducted approximately 250 interviews to write this book. By personalizing the struggles nations are facing across the globe, the call for action becomes all the more imperative. The Despot's Accomplice: How the West is Aiding and Abetting the Decline of Democracy is well researched with extensive notes and a helpful index,

Poignant, witty, and articulate. A well researched commentary on the retreat of democracy/the West's contributions to authoritarianism and future democracy promotion. Klaas' insights are particularly relevant in today's political climate. A very thought-provoking and enjoyable read - highly recommend.

I read the five star reviews and I thought this should be an interesting book. The reviews must have been from his parents. A friend of mine had bought the book and I thought I would check it out. What a waste of time. Clearly it is a book written by a person writing from a perspective of someone on the outside. If you want to waste a couple hours of your life, then this book is for you

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