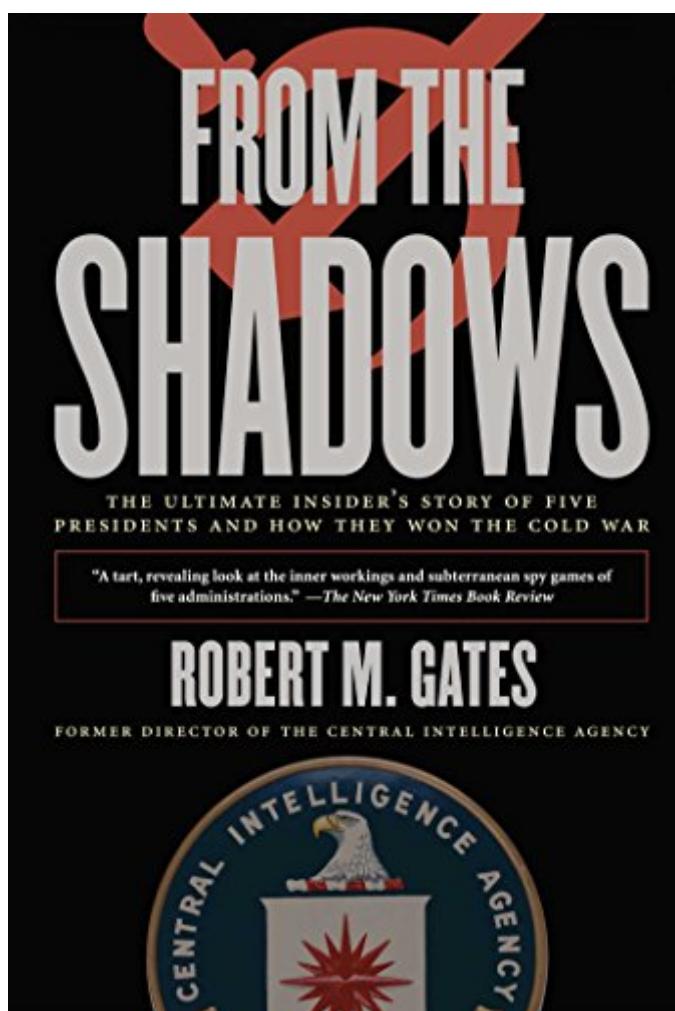


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From The Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story Of Five Presidents An



Synopsis

Written by a former director of the CIA, this is the story of America's and the agency's role in the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As the only person to rise from entry-level analyst to Director of the CIA and to serve on the White House staffs of four Presidents, Robert Gates is uniquely qualified to tell the unprecedented inside story of the Cold War. Drawing on his access to classified information and top-level involvement in policy decisions, Gates lays bare the hidden wars and operations the United States waged against communism worldwide. Ever certain that the fifty-year struggle with the Soviet Union was indeed a war, Gates makes candid appraisals of Presidents, key officials, and policies of the period. Among his disclosures are: how Carter laid the foundations for Reagan's covert wars against the Soviets; CIA predictions of a conservative coup against Gorbachev and the collapse of the Soviet Union; CIA and KGB "black operations" against each other; the secret relationship between Pope John Paul II and the Soviets; and three secret CIA-KGB summits. > is a classic memoir on the career of a CIA officer at the center of power during a time when the threat of global annihilation informed America's every move.

Book Information

File Size: 3151 KB

Print Length: 608 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster (December 20, 2011)

Publication Date: December 20, 2011

Sold by:Ã ª Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B006L9B616

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #107,030 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #79 inÃ ª Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Intelligence & Espionage #86 inÃ ª Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics >

Customer Reviews

Highly recommend this book for the inside stories as to events that were watershed years for the United States. I thought the book was very even handed as to the treatment of politicians. Most significantly, when Mr. Gates made an error or was wrong, he so stated without hesitation...what a rarity in Washington. As to the Pentagon Brass, the saying that generals are always one war behind in their strategies is painfully evident, with tragic results for our service personnel. In reading what Mr. Gates had to do to move the Pentagon to purchase and deploy the protective equipment needed by our troops made me irate at times, and I am not even ex military. Mr. Gates is quite clear in demonstrating the sorry excuse for what is called "Congress" as well..what a disgrace. This book is numbing at times...

Gates has written a racing sketch of the final years of America's epic struggle with the Soviet Union. It is a formidably complex tale that well deserves and will get voluminous treatment by historians and political scientists. Here Gates presents a skeletal and easily read outline of the drama as it unfolded loaded with personal anecdotes. His insights to five presidents and the development of a consistent American policy as it sought to block, contain and contest Soviet expansion make for fascinating reading. It is a story of the extraordinary challenges faced by the CIA as it measured the economic exhaustion and ultimate collapse of the Evil Empire. Some will doubtless see Gates as a loyal apologist for the Agency. Loyal he undoubtedly was, but the verdict of time I think will find this to be an accurate and dispassionate account of the final years of the Cold War and the role CIA played.

A detailed, fact based history of CIA successes and failures, well written, thorough, and organized in a easy to follow time line. Unfortunately at times it is like eating a tough but tasty steak, hard to swallow, because of the recurrent self serving view that Mr Gates, regardless of which position he occupied, was always the one with the right answer! Amazing!

Loved this book. Very interesting and many parts were even compelling. The writing (or perhaps the editing) wasn't as good as I as expected from someone who seems to be very eloquent when speaking. The book follows threads of history from start to finish, rather than the Tom Clancy approach of interweaving multiple threads through a single time line. For the most part,I found this

to work just fine, but many specific discussions and events are discussed either in whole or in part multiple times. This got to be just a bit of distraction, but not enough for me to not recommend it. I tried to read this book with a critical eye; to ascertain if the author was trying to make himself look to be the "good actor" in every situation. After reading the whole book, I decided that this probably wasn't the case in general. Although I suspect that in some of events he recounts that we got the best possible view of it from his perspective. Not to bad for a non-politician working in jobs with tons of political pressure for his entire career. I would enjoy reading Gates' biography written by an unbiased biographer.

Bob Gates is a magnificent public servant and historian. One may not again see such an insider's commanding grasp of this vast subject as he unfolds in this book based on his long service in positions of rising responsibility in the CIA and the National Security Council and his close relationships with Presidents Carter, Ford and G.H.W. Bush until the advent of the Clinton Administration ended his public service. In 2006 President G.W. Bush recalled him to succeed Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense in 2006 and about which he recently wrote another excellent book. In particular, his portrayal of the role of Gorbachev's political reforms without corresponding reforms of the centralized command economy as accelerating the implosion of the Soviet Union has the sure touch of persuasion. Further, his account of the mastery of the first President Bush's non-provocative policy response to the Soviet collapse commands respect and approval. This book deserves wide reading and study. George Coburn

I have only read the first half of this book, but it is enlightening. Especially for those of us who lived thru this time period, but may not have known, or remembered all the events that took place. Of course many were still classified at that time. The author started with the CIA as a young recruit, and went all the way up to director. So he has a plethora of insight. I am finding the parallels with todays events quite interesting. This volume is about the former USSR and USA as competitors on the world scene. Hey, they still are. But one item that struck me was the statement about Cuban troops, trained and supported by the USSR and then being used to fight in places like Angola and Ethiopia! If you like this kind of insight, along with descriptions of 5 presidents take on world events, you might enjoy this book. Can't wait to read the rest.

Very informative and well-written

Very interesting to learn how it works inside the system. It is for me clear. One thing is to criticise from outside and the other to be inside. It is difficult, I would say very thought not to become a dictator to have things done. I have the conviction that the mayor goal is: "quill the bureaucrats" but not all. More insider stories not published in the media would have been according to the intellectual and human level of the author. A great luck for the USA to have this quality of real humans. Something has to be very GOOD in the USA

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