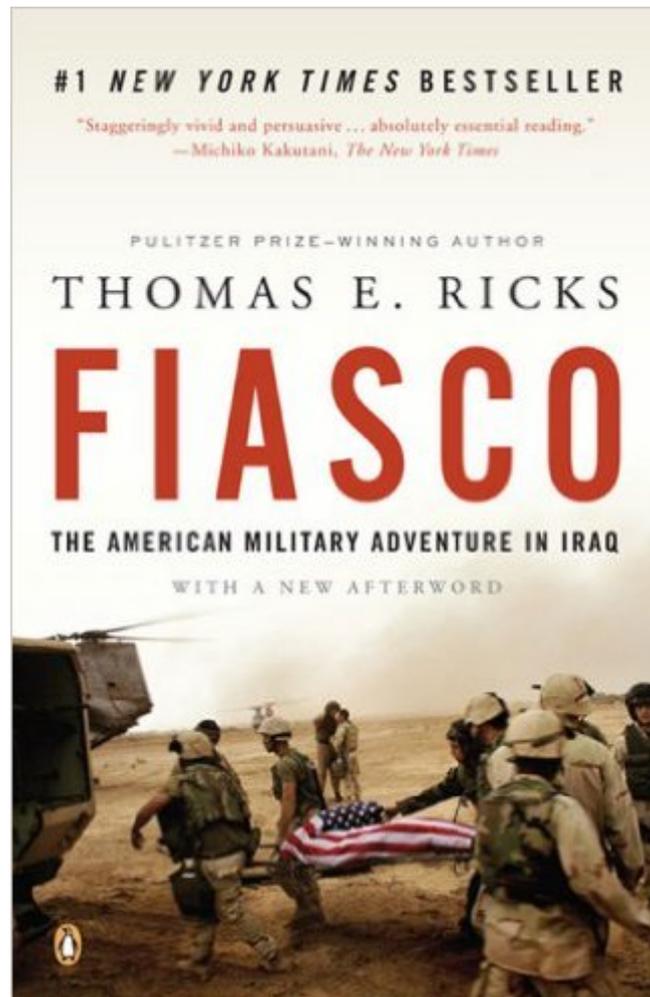


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Fiasco: The American Military Adventure In Iraq, 2003 To 2005



Synopsis

Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize
One of the Washington Post Book World's 10 Best Books of the Year
One of Time's 10 Best Books of the Year
USA Today's Nonfiction Book of the Year
A New York Times Notable Book
The definitive account of the American military's tragic experience in Iraq
Fiasco is a masterful reckoning with the planning and execution of the American military invasion and occupation of Iraq through mid-2006, now with a postscript on recent developments. Ricks draws on the exclusive cooperation of an extraordinary number of American personnel, including more than one hundred senior officers, and access to more than 30,000 pages of official documents, many of them never before made public. Tragically, it is an undeniable account "explosive, shocking, and authoritative" of unsurpassed tactical success combined with unsurpassed strategic failure that indicts some of America's most powerful and honored civilian and military leaders.

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Customer Reviews

I've spent the better part of the past 36 hours inhaling Thomas Ricks' "Fiasco" and I have to say it is easily the best book so far produced on the Iraq War. I say this as someone who supported the original rationale for going into Iraq and who still supports the war effort. But support should never be blind and I think there's much that opponents and supporters of the war can gain from reading Mr. Ricks' "near-term history" of the conflict. He has produced a remarkable book that synthesizes a broad range of information and yet does so in an immensely readable fashion. The author is to be genuinely congratulated. For me, the book was particularly insightful in offering a cogent narrative of

how the insurgency came to be. It presented a detailed inventory of the political and military mistakes of the period stretching from immediately after Baghdad's fall in the late spring of 2003, through the rise of the insurgency later that year and into the middle of 2004. Is the book perfect? No and doubtless as more time passes and as more information becomes available some of the conclusions and narratives presented here may change. But for the time being, the book is the best contemporary record of the events of the past three years in Iraq and I can't imagine it being surpassed anytime soon. I found it far more useful than the somewhat tepid "Cobra II" and the better-but-not-as-good "Assassin's Gate." What most impressed me was the way Ricks dealt honestly with the shortcoming of the US military and particularly the US Army.

I have just finished the first part of the book and believe that the content needs to be addressed. The book has the right title because it is a fiasco in Iraq. I will not go so far as to say it will never workout because only time will tell; however, I do respect Thomas Ricks's viewpoint that ill preparation doomed the Iraq war so far. The soldiers on the ground are doing the best that they can, but the type of battle will have to be shifted to defeat the insurgency. Ricks discusses a lot about the containment theory with Saddam Hussein and how it could have worked; one is to never know now that he has been overthrown. I did like how Ricks did the opposite of what all media has done today and simply blame Bush for all the trouble. Ricks starts off with Paul Wolfowitz and explains his views were the beginning of Iraq for a war target. Ricks does not characterize Wolfowitz or anyone else for that matter. Ricks simply looks at the people that brought us to war and compares their strengths and weaknesses. I love how he did this. Ricks lets the reader form their own opinion on the subject. Ricks points to Tommy Franks, Dick Cheney, and George Tenet at fault for the run-up to war. Tommy Franks is blamed for rejecting ideas from subordinates, "meddling in tactical issues and did not address key strategic questions". Cheney started the run-up to war when he gave a speech on August 26th 2002 to the VFW. Cheney stated at the time that there was no doubt Iraq had WMDs. Bush did not have much choice but to go along with his VP on the issue. Ricks says this really started the ball rolling to war on Iraq. Then Ricks points toward George Tenet for the intelligence failures. Ricks states that after Desert Fox, Iraqi intel went downhill because the sources were afraid to speak out.

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