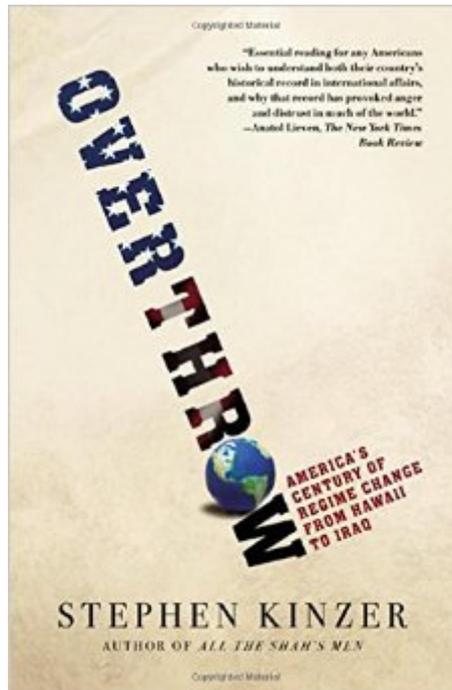


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Overthrow: America's Century Of Regime Change From Hawaii To Iraq



Synopsis

A fast-paced narrative history of the coups, revolutions, and invasions by which the United States has toppled fourteen foreign governments -- not always to its own benefit. "Regime change" did not begin with the administration of George W. Bush, but has been an integral part of U.S. foreign policy for more than one hundred years. Starting with the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893 and continuing through the Spanish-American War and the Cold War and into our own time, the United States has not hesitated to overthrow governments that stood in the way of its political and economic goals. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 is the latest, though perhaps not the last, example of the dangers inherent in these operations. In *Overthrow*, Stephen Kinzer tells the stories of the audacious politicians, spies, military commanders, and business executives who took it upon themselves to depose monarchs, presidents, and prime ministers. He also shows that the U.S. government has often pursued these operations without understanding the countries involved; as a result, many of them have had disastrous long-term consequences. In a compelling and provocative history that takes readers to fourteen countries, including Cuba, Iran, South Vietnam, Chile, and Iraq, Kinzer surveys modern American history from a new and often surprising perspective. "Detailed, passionate and convincing . . . [with] the pace and grip of a good thriller." -- Anatol Lieven, *The New York Times Book Review*

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Customer Reviews

Stephen Kinzer's latest book, "*Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*," is, I think, a necessary and valuable contribution to the study of American history. It's one of

those few books that I begin reading and find difficult to put aside. While not exactly a "thriller" in the ordinary sense of a James Bond novel, I found myself continuing to turn page after page, reluctant to take a break, hesitant to stop reading lest I miss something important by forgetting where I left off and, all in all, curious about what was coming next. This was strange; after all, I taught American history for over ten years and have continued to study it ever since I left teaching. But not much of the "stuff" Kinzer is relating. No, the whole idea of so-called "regime change" was never a topic discussed in a history class I taught. For that matter, it was not a topic in any American history course I took in college. Now, this does not mean that those of my generation were ignorant of the things of which Kinzer writes. I grew up and lived in the era when many of the "regime changes" discussed by the author were taking place. Neither I nor my contemporaries, however, used the term "regime change" or looked at those incidents through the conceptual lens that many of us do today. As close as I remember getting to this sort of political reality was when I spent ten days in Hawaii way back in the 1960s and was introduced to a few native Hawaiians who did not have very good things to say about the American missionaries and businessmen who stepped afoot on their island and simply took control, changing (or "destroying"?) a culture that had been around for hundreds of years and successfully so. A "regime change"? Well, I don't think any of us looked at it quite that way back then.

EDITED 27 June 2007 to add thoughts from second reading (accidental). While at the beach, ran out of books, bought this not remembering I had already read it, and found new value. Using the new link feature to insert links to the books originally listed. This is a timely review, although the facts are well known to those who follow international affairs. In this second (as if new) reading, the following quote stayed with me from page 317: "Most American sponsored 'regime change' operations have, in the end, weakened rather than strengthened, American security." I list the countries covered by this book: Hawaii, Cuba, Nicaragua, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Guatemala, Iran, Viet-Nam, Chile, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan, Iraq. I focus more on Hawaii, in 1893, the first of a new range of intrusive overthrows (beyond the land expansion actions the author chooses not to cover). I am struck--moved--by the duplicitous immoral actions of both the white landowners and the white US government representatives against the people of Hawaii. The author discusses how Hawaiians were at the time bound by obligations, ritual, and a reverence for nature. I am reminded of how we and the Spanish genocided the native Americans, north and south, individuals who had decades if not centuries of refined knowledge on how to shape and nurture the Earth in harmony with their needs. This time around, the author's emphasis on how

the legal right to buy land led to the loss of local indigenous control and rights. I now firmly believe that foreign and absentee landlords should be eliminated.

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