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The Secretary: A Journey With Hillary Clinton From Beirut To The Heart Of American Power



Synopsis

In November 2008, Hillary Clinton agreed to work for her former rival. As President Barack Obama's secretary of state, she set out to repair America's image around the world - and her own. For the following four years, BBC foreign correspondent Kim Ghattas had unparalleled access to Clinton and her entourage, and she weaves a fast-paced, gripping account of life on the road with Clinton in *The Secretary*. With the perspective of one who is both an insider and an outsider, Ghattas draws on extensive interviews with Clinton, administration officials, and players in Washington as well as overseas, to paint an intimate and candid portrait of one of the most powerful global politicians. Filled with fresh insights, *The Secretary* provides a captivating analysis of Clinton's brand of diplomacy and the Obama administration's efforts to redefine American power in the twenty-first century. Populated with a cast of real-life characters, *The Secretary* tells the story of Clinton's transformation from popular but polarizing politician to America's envoy to the world in compelling detail and with all the tension of high stakes diplomacy. From her evolving relationship with President Obama to the drama of WikiLeaks and the turmoil of the Arab Spring, we see Clinton cheerfully boarding her plane at three in the morning after no sleep, reading the riot act to the Chinese, and going through her diplomatic checklist before signing on to war in Libya-all the while trying to restore American leadership in a rapidly changing world. Viewed through Ghattas's vantage point as a half-Dutch, half-Lebanese citizen who grew up in the crossfire of the Lebanese civil war, *The Secretary* is also the author's own journey as she seeks to answer the questions that haunted her childhood. How powerful is America really? And, if it is in decline, who or what will replace it and what will it mean for America and the world?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book poses a problem. How do you review a book that strays from its purported topic? The title of the book leads the reader to expect a portrait of Hillary Clinton, with a look at how she managed her duties as US Secretary of State. In reality, Hillary is almost a minor character in this book. Ghattas really delivers a look at US foreign policy, including some insights on the middle-east and South Asia, along with some observations on how Hillary Clinton performed as Secretary of State.=== The Good Stuff ===* Ghattas is at her best describing her own experiences in growing up in the middle east. She relates her youthful impressions of the United States. As an example, the citizens of Lebanon viewed the US as some omnipotent force on the planet, and were surprised and discouraged when the limits of US power became evident. A good lesson for modern America.* From her vantage point as a reporter, Ghattas relates several insights on how the US is viewed in the world. For example, I had never quite realized how easy the US Government was to manipulate into "taking a position". Ghattas relates a remarkable story of how foreign reporters would ask a question at a State Department briefing just to get something on the record of a US position. Then in the home country, the reporter could relate details of a "major US announcement".* As a reporter traveling with Ms. Clinton on an overseas visit, Ghattas is able to capture the hectic pace that such a trip involves. Transporting the US Secretary of State, and her staff, to six countries in ten days is an incredible logistical problem, especially when security concerns and the ongoing demands of the office are considered.

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