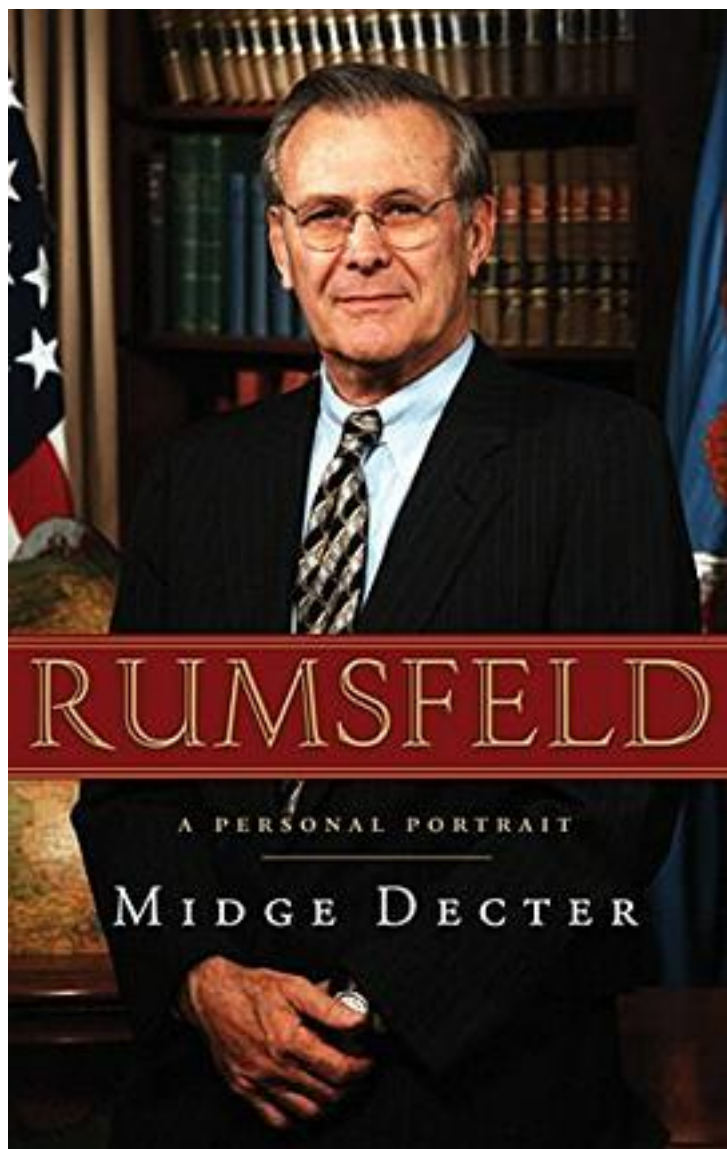


Rumsfeld



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著者:Midge Decter

出版者:Harper Paperbacks

出版时间:2004-10-12

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780060561109

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Publisher Comments :

When Donald Rumsfeld was appointed secretary of defense, no one foresaw that he would become the most prominent and influential member of President George W. Bush's cabinet. But as the main architect of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Rumsfeld moved into a central position as a policymaker. And through his televised briefings he won the admiration of millions of Americans with the agility and confident poise he showed in handling the press.

Drawing on her long acquaintance with Rumsfeld, a wealth of documents, and interviews with him and his family, friends, and colleagues, Midge Decter provides riveting accounts of the many milestones marking the journey Rumsfeld made from the suburbs of Chicago to the Pentagon. There is the insurgent young congressman, the ambassador to NATO, the White House chief of staff, the youngest-ever secretary of defense, the successful corporate executive, and, finally, the stirring second tour of duty as secretary of defense under Bush.

As this remarkable story unfolds, Decter brings her knowledge of American culture to bear on the question of why so many Americans have responded so fervently to Rumsfeld. In answering, she points to the Midwestern values in which he was born and bred.

Decter's fascinating account of the life and career of Donald Rumsfeld, lavishly illustrated with photographs from the private collection of the Rumsfeld family, is essential reading for anyone who wishes to become better acquainted with a figure whose rise to the highest levels of influence sheds new light on the current condition of the American people.

Synopsis:

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has become the leading spokesman for the Bush administration on all matters related to the military and its prosecution of the war on terror. Midge Decter, an accomplished political journalist who has enjoyed over two decades of friendship with Rumsfeld, will answer the question of why and how he has come to play such a critical role.

Partly biographical and partly analytical, the book focuses on Rumsfeld's past and current activities as well as what he represents: an ethos of sturdiness, frankness, and resilience that has clearly resonated with the American public. Decter gained Rumsfeld's full cooperation, and she trailed him through the Pentagon and beyond as he prosecuted the war on terror and the military campaign against Saddam Hussein. The daily stresses of advising the president, handling the media, crafting military policy, and dealing with issues of life and death are examined from the inside – as they happened.

This book offers a dynamic, intimate, behind-the-scenes look at the biggest political star (apart from the President himself) of the Bush administration.

From Publishers Weekly

With his dry wit and deliberate demeanor, Bush defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld became a television personality through his daily press briefings following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, Rumsfeld gets an adoring biopic from an adoring writer. In breathless, reverential prose, conservative essayist Decter (Liberal Parents, Radical Children; etc.) offers a personal, thoroughly uncritical profile of the defense secretary, whom she has known and admired for years. From modest Chicago roots, Rumsfeld went on to Princeton University, achieved success in business, served three terms in Congress and, at age 43, became the youngest secretary of defense in the nation's history and a close adviser to President Gerald Ford. More than two decades later, Rumsfeld is reprising his role as defense secretary under President George W. Bush, and while, true-to-form, ruffling feathers at the Pentagon, has been suddenly thrust to prominence under extraordinary circumstances. Clearly, Rumsfeld, one of the first and foremost proponents of using technology to remake the U.S. military, owns a career worth examining. Decter's dotting paeon, however, so exceedingly praises its subject that it is nearly impossible to take seriously. The book's tone is set in an almost surreal prelude where an elegant, anonymous New York socialite confesses to Decter that she has Rumsfeld's picture hanging in her dressing room. From there, Decter attacks Rumsfeld's critics with sycophantic zeal and attempts to build events in the secretary's life and career into the stuff of legend. Even fans of Rumsfeld's will find that this overwrought hagiography trivializes the secretary's impressive, if at times controversial, career.

From Booklist

Despite his high-profile posts in government and business, Republican Donald Rumsfeld did not attract much public notice--until September 11. Since then, celebrity culture has enveloped the current boss of the Pentagon--photo spreads in *People*; a profile in *Vanity Fair*; daily sound bites of his jousts with journalists. Decter sets out to explain Rumsfeld's sudden fame and to present the man's basic biography (although, as the subtitle states, this work is not a formal biography). Rumsfeld granted her access, imparting anecdotes about his youth, marriage, family, and hobbies. About his career in politics, however, he is more reticent. Decter, though sympathetic toward her subject (as expected from such a well-known neoconservative), doesn't provide much information beyond Rumsfeld's known ascent from 1950s congressional aide to secretary of defense in 1975-77. Decter improves when she plays to her strength by analyzing the factors behind Rumsfeld's popularity, which she attributes to a yearning for decisive leadership after the empathic Clinton years. Readers who disagree with the architect of the war-on-terror will scorn this book; Rumsfeld supporters will admire it.

Gilbert Taylor

About Author

Midge Decter is an author and editor whose essays and reviews have appeared in *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *National Review*, *The New Republic*, and *The Weekly Standard*. A regular contributor to *Commentary*, she is also the author of several books, the most recent being *An Old Wife's Tale*. She is a member of the board of the Heritage Foundation, the Center for Security Policy, *First Things* magazine of the Institute on Religion and Public Life, and the Clare Boothe Luce Fund, and she lectures widely on a variety of subjects, from the family to foreign policy. She lives in New York City with her husband, author Norman Podhoretz.

Book Dimension

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