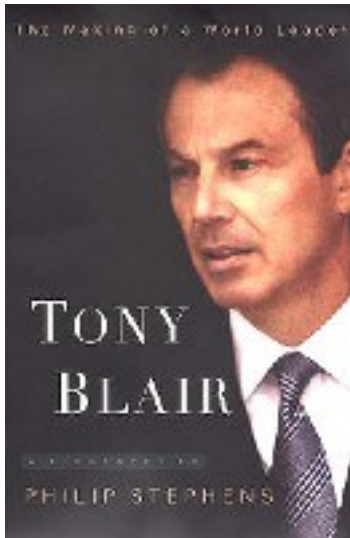


Tony Blair



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著者:Philip Stephens

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On March 27, 2003, President George W. Bush said, “America has learned a lot about Tony Blair over the last weeks . . . and we’re proud to have him as a friend.” Despite the President’s assertion, the average American knows little about Tony Blair except that he remained one of America’s strongest allies in the war on terror and, ultimately, in the war against Iraq. But why? What is Blair’s agenda? Is he just trying to further England’s cause or his own? And how has this man, the youngest British prime minister in centuries, kept strong ties with such fundamentally different presidents as Clinton and Bush?

Philip Stephens—editor of the UK edition of the Financial Times and a man who has known Blair since the beginning of his career—answers for the first time these questions for the American public. Stephens follows the emerging world leader from his boyhood to his leadership of the Labor party and, along the way, exposes his beliefs, his personality, his shortcomings and contradictions, and his role in shaping a

new international order.

A senior editor at the Financial Times presents a biography of Britain's Prime Minister that's engaging and slickly presented but ultimately lacking in depth. Writing for an American audience unfamiliar with politics across the pond, Stephens paints Blair as a British version of Bill Clinton—a poll-driven, mediagenic, self-consciously religious political animal who yanked the Labour party from its socialist and trade union roots and remade it into a business-friendly party of the moderate middle class. Stephens's account of Blair's administration focuses on foreign policy, particularly on his controversial collaboration with the United States in the invasion of Iraq, a stance that, the author contends, shows the moral principle and spine underneath the Prime Minister's geo-political maneuvering. Although Stephens acknowledges elements of ruthlessness, calculation and cynical image-management in Blair's career, he remains almost uncritically supportive of the man. His sometimes sketchy overview of Blair's domestic program skirts in-depth examinations of such controversial policies as the introduction of the private sector into the provisioning of public health and education services. And while he allows that Blair's "Third Way" between anti-government conservatism and tax-and-spend socialism can seem like a hodgepodge of cautiously centrist measures, he rather unreflectively accepts its claims to philosophical coherence, noting that the post-modern service economy has created "new aspirational classes" in the place of that old Labor standby, the working class. The result is a fluent but superficial take on a pivotal figure in British history, one that substitutes personality for substance.

Bush's poodle? His ever-devoted pet who will follow him anywhere? Pick up this solid but controversial biography by a British journalist to read all about the British PM and where his policies have taken him.

Brad Hooper

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