**SYNOPSIS**

“ ‘Regime change’ did not begin with the administration of George W. Bush but has been an integral part of US foreign policy for more than one hundred years. In *Overthrow*, Stephen Kinzer tells the stores of the audacious American politicians, spies, military commanders, and businessmen who took it upon themselves to depose foreign regimes, starting with the toppling of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893. He detail the three eras of America’s regime-change century: the imperial era, when Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Honduras were brought into the US orbit; the Cold War era, when the CIA deposed governments in Iran, Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Chile; and the invasion era, when American troops overthrew governments in Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Kinzer explains why the US government carried out these operations and why so many of them have had disastrous long-term consequences. *Overthrow* is a cautionary tale that serves as an urgent warning as the United States seeks to define its role in the modern world.”

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**AUTHOR**

“**Stephen Kinzer** is an award-winning foreign correspondent who has covered more than fifty counties on five continents. He was the Latin American correspondent for The Boston Globe and later served as The New York Times’s bureau chief in Managua, Berlin, and Istanbul. His previous books include All the Shah’s Men, Crescent and Star, Blood of Brothers, and Bitter Fruit. He lives in Chicago.”

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**AUTHOR’S ARGUMENTS & NOTES**

* The motivation behind US intervention (e.g., “regime change”) in weaker nations is to
	+ increase its power,
	+ impose its ideologies, and/or
	+ maintain or gain control of valuable resources.
* “No nation in modern history has done this so often, in so many places so far from its own shores,” (Kinzer, 2006, p. 2).
* The author presents these regime changes within their historical contexts as they relate to one another. In this way, Kinzer is able to highlight their commonalities and establish patterns of evidence for his central argument.
* In each case, Kinzer seeks to answer the following two questions:
	+ (1) Why did the US carry out these operations?
	+ (2) What have been their long-term consequences?
* “Too often, ‘regime change’ operations have been simply a substitute for thoughtful foreign policy. I most cases, diplomatic and political approaches would have worked far more effectively. They are subtler, more difficult to design, and take longer to bear fruit, but they do not plunge nations into violence and do not drive millions of people to resent the United States,” (Kinzer, 2006, p. 320).

**PART I: The Imperial Era**

* Began with the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, which started a debate on what the US’s role should be as a world power
* Regime changes in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Honduras marked an era where “…the United States assumed the right to intervene anywhere in the world, not simply by influencing or coercing foreign governments but also by overthrowing them,” (Kinzer, 2006, p. 3).

**PART II: Covert Action**

* Throughout 20th and early 21st centuries, “…the US repeatedly used military power, and that of its clandestine services [the CIA], to overthrow governments [of Iran, Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Chile] that refused to protect American interests. Each time, it cloaked its intervention in the rhetoric of national security and liberation. In most cases, however, it acted mainly for economic reasons – specifically, to establish, promote, and defend the right of Americans to do business around the world without interference,” (Kinzer, 2006, p. 3).

**PART III: Invasions**

* Invasions in Grenada and Panama were motivated by the US’s need to reestablish itself as a global power --- after its image was weakened by its failures in Vietnam
* Americans believed that invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq were just since they “saw it as an appropriate reaction to the presence of terrorist…” (Kinzer, 2006, p. 5).