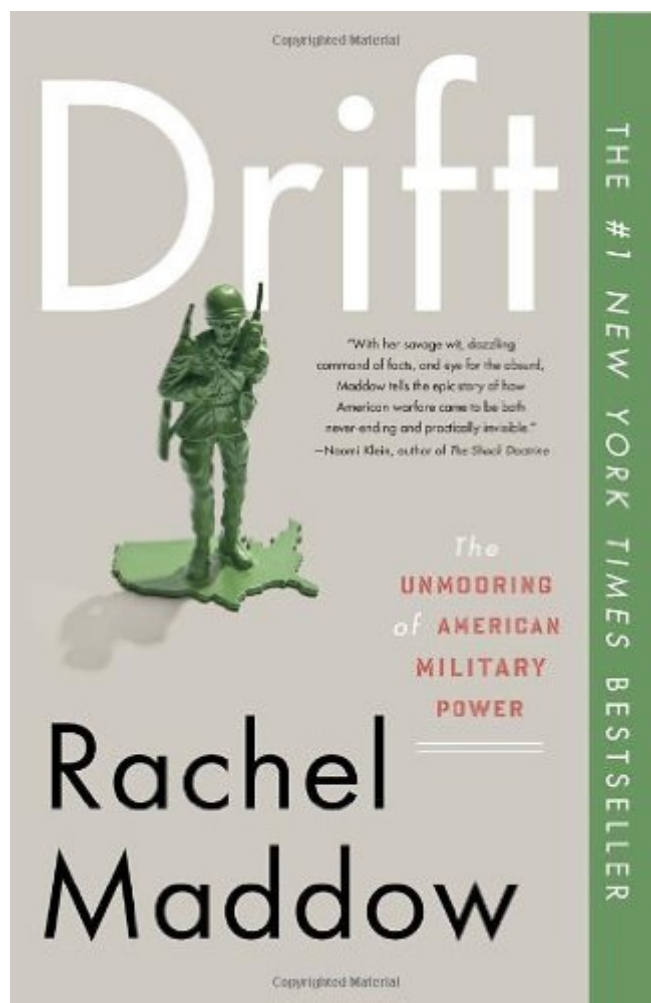


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Drift: The Unmooring Of American Military Power



Synopsis

The #1 New York Times bestseller that charts America's dangerous drift into a state of perpetual war. Written with bracing wit and intelligence, Rachel Maddow's *Drift* argues that we've drifted away from America's original ideals and become a nation weirdly at peace with perpetual war. To understand how we've arrived at such a dangerous place, Maddow takes us from the Vietnam War to today's war in Afghanistan, along the way exploring Reagan's radical presidency, the disturbing rise of executive authority, the gradual outsourcing of our war-making capabilities to private companies, the plummeting percentage of American families whose children fight our constant wars for us, and even the changing fortunes of G.I. Joe. Ultimately, she shows us just how much we stand to lose by allowing the scope of American military power to overpower our political discourse. Sensible yet provocative, dead serious yet seriously funny, *Drift* will reinvigorate a "loud and jangly" political debate about our vast and confounding national security state.

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Customer Reviews

Regardless of whether or not you like Rachel Maddow or agree with her politics, and I'm not generally much of a fan, you owe it to yourself to read this book. It should be required reading for anyone who cares about the U.S., our heritage, military policy, and future. You don't have to agree with her but you should at least consider what she has to say on the topic. This is a terrific book. I believe that Ms. Maddow has done a remarkable job of defending her argument. I saw her on Meet

The Press and she said she saved this topic for a book because it required "a long argument". Reading her long argument felt like being on an island of common sense in a vast ocean of madness. This book is not partisan although many will see it that way. She reserves as much criticism for Obama's secret wars as she does those of other presidents. The bulk of the early part of the book is about Reagan's secret wars and the Iran-Contra scandal and then she traverses the next couple of decades, including the last decade of seemingly endless wars in the Middle East, and ends with Obama's secret CIA drone wars. Her wit is very sarcastic and scathing at times, but this can be overlooked as one considers the actual content of her arguments. I'm sure that to people who don't agree with her will find this part of her writing to be off-putting, but we can all be bigger than that. There is substance in this book and the substance is what should be considered. The tone is just part of being a passionate human and actually gives the writing some character and humor. She calls the military superstructure we have built a leviathan.

"Of course the people don't want war. But after all, it's the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it's always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it's a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and exposing the country to greater danger." - Hermann Goering in Nuremberg where he was found guilty and sentenced to death for crimes against humanity. Maddow has written a concise guide about the war economy and mentality our country has fallen into - a mentality that seems to infect every president the moment he enters the White House. At least since Wilson, we have been in virtually continuous war, originally with the excuse of democratizing the world. Some of these squirmishes have protected American corporations in various countries. At times we took sides with democratic regimes and other times we sided with more totalitarian groups (See "America's Mission" by Tony Smith. It chronicles the wars each president has engaged in since Wilson). More recently, as Maddow describes, the privatization craze has extended to the war business. We have been involved in little undeclared wars that we have rarely even heard about. We spend more money on our military than the next umpteen countries combined. Our brave all volunteer recruits constitute an ever diminishing segment of our population and the recent wars have exacted a tremendous toll on them and their families. We support a huge war industry that demands to be fed and buys off our elected representatives.

Ms. Maddow, a Rhodes Scholar and liberal MSNBC Talk Show host, has provocatively tapped into a rich vein of public debate pointing to what in recent years has come to be known as "normalized governmental corruption," involving the "mother" of all corrupt organizations, the military industrial (and now National Security) complex. This is an issue that none other than the illustrious solid Five Star Republican General, Dwight D. Eisenhower warned us about in his Farwell Address more than a half century ago. The reader may recall that in one of Ike's most solemn speeches as he was leaving office, he said in part that: " ... In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together." The author of this book takes a politically balanced point of view, since it is clearly the case that all sides of the political spectrum have been caught "slopping" at the same government trough.

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