



Ally to Adversary: An Eyewitness Account of Iraq's Fall from Grace

Rick Francona

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Much has been written about the Iran-Iraq War, Desert Storm, and Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, but until now no one has chronicled the perilous, spiraling course of U.S.-Iraqi relations from inside the highest military and diplomatic levels. In this revealing firsthand account, career intelligence officer and Arabic linguist Rick Francona takes the reader on an unforgettable odyssey from the battlefields of the Iran-Iraq War, to the top secret tactical decision-making meetings of the Desert Storm coalition forces, to the actual surrender at Safwan by Iraqi officials, many of whom he had worked with previously as allies.

As the point man for the highly sensitive support the United States gave Iraq in 1987-1988, during its war with Iran, Francona walked the streets of Baghdad, toured military facilities, and established close relations with high-ranking Iraqis. Through these activities he gained a unique and valuable perspective of Iraq's military capabilities and doctrine, including its use of ballistic missiles and chemical weapons. Later, as General Norman Schwarzkopf's personal interpreter, he shared in the successes, failures, and frustrations of political and military planning and prosecution during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. From the author's sparkling, informative prose, the reader discovers how the delicate coalition of international forces was developed and maintained despite contentious parochialism that threatened to divide the force and even U.S. services. Francona sheds considerable new light on the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. and coalition intelligence efforts and explodes myths surrounding their methods and results.

Objective, revealing, and often humorous, this unprecedented peek inside the closed doors of U.S. and international military decision-making documents an important epoch of U.S. and Middle East history and offers many lessons and warnings for current and future relations.

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