



# Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq

*Thomas E. Ricks*

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## **Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq** Thomas E. Ricks

The definitive military chronicle of the Iraq war and a searing judgment on the strategic blindness with which America has conducted it, drawing on the accounts of senior military officers giving voice to their anger for the first time.

Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* senior Pentagon correspondent Thomas E. Ricks's *Fiasco* is masterful and explosive reckoning with the planning and execution of the American military invasion and occupation of Iraq, based on the unprecedented candor of key participants.

The American military is a tightly sealed community, and few outsiders have reason to know that a great many senior officers view the Iraq war with incredulity and dismay. But many officers have shared their anger with renowned military reporter Thomas E. Ricks, and in *Fiasco*, Ricks combines these astonishing on-the-record military accounts with his own extraordinary on-the-ground reportage to create a spellbinding account of an epic disaster.

As many in the military publicly acknowledge here for the first time, the guerrilla insurgency that exploded several months after Saddam's fall was not foreordained. In fact, to a shocking degree, it was created by the folly of the war's architects. But the officers who did raise their voices against the miscalculations, shortsightedness, and general failure of the war effort were generally crushed, their careers often ended. A willful blindness gripped political and military leaders, and dissent was not tolerated.

There are a number of heroes in *Fiasco*-inspiring leaders from the highest levels of the Army and Marine hierarchies to the men and women whose skill and bravery led to battlefield success in towns from Fallujah to Tall Afar-but again and again, strategic incoherence rendered tactical success meaningless. There was never any question that the U.S. military would topple Saddam Hussein, but as *Fiasco* shows there was also never any real thought about what would come next. This blindness has ensured the Iraq war a place in history as nothing less than a fiasco. Fair, vivid, and devastating, *Fiasco* is a book whose tragic verdict feels definitive.

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