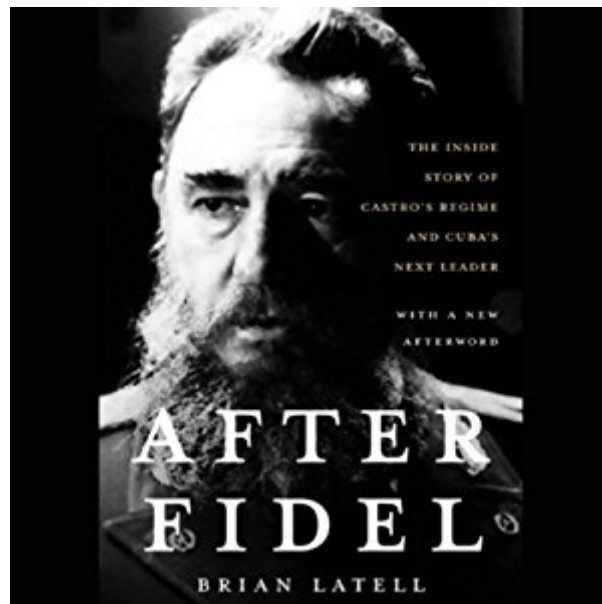


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After Fidel: The Inside Story Of Castro's Regime And Cuba's Next Leader



Synopsis

In this compelling, behind-the-scenes account, former top CIA officer and Cuba expert Brian Latell examines the extraordinary Castro brothers and the impending dynastic succession of Fidel's younger brother, Raul. Exploring the brothers' remarkable relationship, he reveals how Fidel and Raul have collaborated, divided responsibilities, and resolved disagreements for more than 46 years, a challenge to the notion that the little-known Raul has been an insignificant player. The result is an intimate portrait of two enigmatic men and a new understanding of the psychology and motivation behind their actions. Based on his insider knowledge of Raul, Latell projects what kind of leader he will be and how the shift in power might influence U.S.-Cuban relations.

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Customer Reviews

Before I write this review, I would like to state that I am a former student of Brian Latell. As an undergraduate at Georgetown University, I attended his class, "Cuba & The Great Powers", which was a once-a-week, three-hour long lecture. While I certainly open myself up to charges of bias by saying this, it was probably one of the best classes I have ever taken, and four years later, it has tremendously influenced my formation as an intellectual and historian of Latin America. While Professor Latell and I disagreed on a number of issues (I am very much a "liberal"), I found his lectures and expertise on Fidel's Cuba to be impressive and well-reasoned. The aim of Latell's book, simply put, is to shed light upon the lesser known Castro--Raul--who, for the last forty six years, has lived in the dominating shadow of his older brother. To do this, he contrasts Raul's personality and

abilities with that of Fidel, thus authoring a dual biography of sorts. "After Fidel" is a compelling title for this book because, rather than focus exclusively on questions of succession, he uses the history of the brothers' relationship and their policies to differentiate their styles of rule and to suggest that for many years, Raul has ensured the continuation of the Cuban Revolution and its most dramatic successes, such as the various internationalist projects. Without Raul, Latell asserts, Fidel Castro could not have achieved the dramatic military mission in Angola, when thousands of Cuban soldiers, projected Cuban power thousands of miles from their small Caribbean island. Raul is the manager, the adept organizer, "the Prussian", yet he lacks the charisma and connection with his people that Fidel clearly possesses.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER FIDEL? By Rafael Aguirre Sacasa
Few books are as timely as Brian Latell's "After Fidel: The Inside Story of Castro's Regime and Cuba's Next Leader." The book, which was recently released, but has been in the works for many years, is a masterful and insightful analysis into the personalities of and relationship between Fidel and his younger brother Raul, Fidel's designated successor. Few people are as qualified to write on this subject as Brian Latell. A 35+ year CIA veteran, he spent much of his career studying Castro and his actions; he attempted to "get into his shoes" and, after many years, became the foremost expert on Fidel in the United States Government. He culminated his career by becoming the National Intelligence Officer for Latin America, the crown jewel for an intelligence analyst. The book is engaging, well crafted and researched. From the outset, it draws the reader into the private life of the Castro Ruz family. It provides the reader with an intimate view into the lives of both Fidel and Raul. It's full of personal anecdotes, which provide a unique and unvarnished insight into their personalities, emotional underpinnings, motivations, and thought processes. This peek into their private lives weaves a rich tapestry that permits the reader to get a real feel for the Fidel behind his "public persona" and sheds light into the very secretive life of Raul. Whereas Fidel has always strived for attention and is jealous of anyone who tries to upstage him, Raul has shunned publicity, carefully working behind stage. Whereas Fidel has proven to be an unparalleled political strategist and propagandist, Raul's strengths lie in his organizational and managerial abilities.

With Fidel Castro, nearing eighty and in a precarious medical condition, the mind reels as to what will become of Cuba the day after his death. Former CIA analyst Brian Latell has done a fairly thorough job in his book of painting the possible scenarios. Giving an easily understandable perspective to the magnitude of the regime change is much needed at this juncture since Castro

has been in power for nearly half a century. That's an astounding four times longer than FDR's presidency to provide a comparison. Latell examines the profundity of Castro's sociopolitical influence in great detail and how significant events in his life built the fortitude of his leadership and contributed to its longevity. The author is particularly enlightening when it comes to the heretofore enigmatic figure of Raul, Fidel's brother and next in line to succeed. It is only recently that the international media has paid that much attention to him. Unlike Fidel, Raul Castro does not have an intractable relationship with the ideologies that initiated the revolution so many years ago and consequently, we are unlikely to hear him as a mouthpiece for Fidel's dogmatic, long-winded speeches. Latell paints a portrait of a pragmatist who will put greater focus on the widespread socio-economic hardships that could cause another revolution. So preoccupied with popular support is Raul that he apparently advocates strongly for economic reforms despite past indiscretions. But this does not mean there is a new utopia in a nascent stage. Latell describes a Raul Castro regime as one that continues to restrict political freedoms for ordinary Cubans with relentless control over the society and only as-needed concessions.

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