



The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World

By Larry Diamond

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"Meticulous . . . [Diamond] gleaned that . . . the fate of democracy was not driven by events but by the passion of individual people."? *The New York Times Book Review*

In 1974, nearly three-quarters of all countries were dictatorships; today, more than half are democracies. Yet recent efforts to promote democracy have stumbled, and many democratic governments are faltering.

In this sweeping vision for advancing freedom around the world, renowned social scientist Larry Diamond examines how and why democracy progresses. He demonstrates that the desire for democracy runs deep, even in very poor countries, and that seemingly entrenched regimes like Iran and China could become democracies within a generation. He also dissects the causes of the "democratic recession" in critical states, including the crime-infested oligarchy in Russia and the strong-armed populism of Venezuela.

To spur a renewed democratic boom Diamond urges the United States to vigorously support good governance and free civic organizations. Only then will the spirit of democracy be secured.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Political scientist Diamond (*Squandered Victory*), a leader in the field of democracy studies, provides a broad, authoritative survey of international trends and evolving academic thinking concerning the development and maintenance of democracies worldwide. Looking broadly at internal and external factors driving democratic movements, as well as the forces that sustain them once in place, Diamond argues democracy is not a Western anomaly, but a universal value. Diamond, who served as senior advisor to the Iraqi Coalition Provisional Authority, has witnessed democracy-building efforts at close range. The promotion of democracy in authoritarian regimes through either peaceful pressure or international interventions, Diamond believes, is rarely effective unless supported by outside assistance designed to strengthen internal civil societies. Democracy by force, he intones, has the poorest track record of all, and urges the U.S. and other established democracies to clean up their own houses, reasoning that "It does little good to promote freedom abroad while it gradually slips away at home." Being generally sanguine about the nature and influence of democracies, however, Diamond tends to downplay how they might also serve to maintain exploitative social and economic relations, amongst other political complications, but there's much to glean in this optimistic and carefully supported account.

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Review

"Meticulous... hopeful... *The Spirit of Democracy* takes on the world [and] offers well-grounded support to anyone who has questioned the long-held theory... that the richer the country, the greater the chances of sustaining democracy." ?*The New York Times Book Review*

"Diamond is... eloquent in arguing that despite the recent blunders of American democracy promoters, there is still a role for the international community in helping societies that are struggling to be free." ?*Foreign Affairs*

"Diamond ... strenuously argues against the cynical idea that certain religions, cultures, or societies are incompatible with democracy, pointing to the progress of the past three decades as evidence that democracy is indeed a universal aspiration." ?*The Chronicle Review*

"*The Spirit of Democracy* is a worthwhile corrective to America's post-Iraq pessimism about the future of democratic ideals throughout the world." ?*Francis Fukuyama, author of America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy*

"Diamond offers a path forward, full of his customary wisdom, tough-mindedness, and passion. With friends like him, the spirit of democracy will rise again." ?*Peter Beinart, senior fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, and author of The Good Fight*

"No one has thought harder or more broadly about the past and future of democracy than Larry Diamond. A passionate treatment, infused with optimism and eminently readable, *The Spirit of Democracy* is a must for anyone who cares about the toughest challenge of balancing national values and national interests." ?*Jessica Tuchman Mathews, president, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

"Ambitious [and] authoritative... Truly interesting." ?*McClatchy-Tribune Regional News*

“A thoroughly researched and informative account... intelligently composed [and] sure to provoke discussion... Highly recommended.” ?*The Midwest Book Review*

“Passionate... a refreshingly evenhanded overview of democracy's global prospects... [Diamond's] view... is wide-ranging and carefully considered, making this an especially effective work.” ?*Kirkus Reviews*

About the Author

Larry Diamond is the author of *Squandered Victory* and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He has served as the co-editor of the widely respected *Journal of Democracy* since its founding in 1990. He lives in Stanford, California.

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