



The Age of Fallibility: Consequences of the War on Terror

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After reflecting on his support of a losing Democrat for president, George Soros steps back to revisit his views on why George Bush's policies around the world fall short in the arenas most important to Soros: democracy, human rights and open society. As a survivor of the Holocaust and a life-long proponent of free expression, Soros understands the meaning of freedom. And yet his differences with George Bush, another proponent of freedom, are profound. In this powerful essay Soros spells out his views and how they differ from the president's. He reflects on why the Democrats may have lost the high ground on these values issues and how they might reclaim it. As he has in his recent books, *On Globalization* and *The Bubble of American Supremacy*, Soros uses facts, anecdotes, personal experience and philosophy to illuminate a major topic in a way that both enlightens and inspires.

The Age of Fallibility: Consequences of the War on Terror Details

Date : Published June 12th 2006 by PublicAffairs (first published May 30th 2006)

ISBN : 9781586483593

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Format : Hardcover 288 pages

Genre : Politics, Economics, Nonfiction, History, Finance



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From Reader Review The Age of Fallibility: Consequences of the War on Terror for online ebook

Mike S says

This book is so impressive that I have to start my review by stating that I do not currently have the skills I would need to do this book justice.

If you like the political writings of Chomsky and Vidal you'll almost assuredly like this book.

If you liked Orwell's 1984 you will almost assuredly like this book. I would even say that anyone who liked 1984 would find this a modern sequel that is entirely adequate to the task.

In this book we get a very clear and honest look at the current state of the US through the eyes of a man I have a huge amount of respect for. Soros started out as a philosopher, moved on to make his fortune, and since then has used that money to become an inspired and truly impressive philanthropist.

I haven't read about many wealthy people that didn't leave me with some degree of disappointment, whether I thought they were so full of themselves as to become caricatures, arrogant, cold, so self-indulgent that they became functionally less intelligent - usually something less than human. But reading Soros I actually have more hope for humanity. That someone could be so wealthy and still have the integrity and humanity he shows again and again, there really is hope for the future.

In the book Soros discusses his philosophy on thinking and reality, what an open society is and why the US is having trouble being one, the current Bush policies, the war on drugs, the war on terror, how Bush could possibly have gotten re-elected, how key professions have become businesses, how academia has lost its identity and is becoming and end in itself, affirmative action... and at the end of the book Soros shows inspired thinking about how he would approach some of the largest problems facing our planet. What a change after hearing Bush "speak" and watching his disastrous policies make everything they touch worse. (Is there an opposite to the Midas Touch?)

The book is overflowing with such clarity and intelligence that I can't imagine anyone honestly interested in what's going wrong with America would not be fascinated with it.

If you like the political writings of Chomsky or Vidal, Berman's "Twilight of the American Culture", Stiglitz's "Globalization and its Discontents", or are in any way troubled by the disconnect between what Bush says and what he accomplishes... **READ THIS BOOK!**

Carrie says

I did not actually finish this book. I do not believe in finishing a book merely because it's been started and this book did not deserve to be finished.

Rajiv Chopra says

I do like this book, but I don't think that it is a fantastic book.

The abstract concepts at the start of the book are interesting and, I think, are valid. Also, I do like the manner in which George Soros links his thought to his personal work. I do get the impression that he does walk the talk. He is willing to admit his own fallibility, and this is something I like.

Yet, I don't quite understand how the book is all about the consequences of the war on terror. His ideas around the 'feel good' and 'open' societies are good, and can be books in themselves. India, for instance, is not really an open society anymore.

However, some more thoughts around the war on terror would have been welcome.

Sue Nami says

Sadly being highly successful financially does not mean such a person can write a good book! But it is a good way to gain some understanding of what makes such a man tick!

What really caught me by surprise appears on page 137. With so much money on hand, why not meddle with the world and get involved in regulatory overreach. Here is what he says....

"The prevailing world order is based on the sovereignty of states and states are entitled to resist outside intervention." My foundations do not hesitate to get involved with the internal affairs of other countries -- after all, democracy is an internal affair -- but they do it as citizens of the country concerned. The network consists of local foundations whose board and staff are preponderantly local citizens and they take responsibility for the actions of the foundations."

WELL NOW..... those of us who know recent history are aware that the US government has been meddling with the sovereignty of other nations for several generations, e.g., Panama and the Panama canal! But this time it happens to be one powerful US citizen manipulating the levers of multiple US based environmental organizations with foreign branches and all based on a false premise.....

The most severe example is the myriad of US based environmental and associated social agencies who are ripping Canadian government sovereignty apart by the seams both at the federal and provincial levels and using Canadian aboriginal groups as a proxy for this dangerously misguided effort..... What a dangerous gain this man is playing.... but what does he have to lose?

Marc says

Soros has been pilloried by bombastic conservative and timid Americans alike. It challenges the hegemonic attitudes that have prevailed for most of the century. The argument is reasoned and reasonable.

Zach Freeman says

I had never heard of George Soros until I read an editorial he sent in to the Wall Street Journal. The editorial piqued my interest and so I looked him up and discovered this book.

The Age of Fallibility is very well written and presents very complicated theories in an easy to grasp from. Soros writes with the mentality of someone that really wants to get his point across: He tells you what he is going to talk about, talks about it, and then tells you what he just talked about. This has the affect of seeming a bit repetitive, but at the same time, you realize that the ideas are actually sinking in.

The first half of the book is dedicated to Soros' theory of reflexivity. Basically, reality isn't a fixed thing that we work around, it is constantly changing because of our actions and our thoughts. The idea of an open society is one that accepts that we will never reach a "perfect" solution to anything and so we must always work together to improve what we are doing, understanding that each improvement we make will require additional improvements.

The second half of the book is geared towards asking what is currently wrong with America, what is wrong with the world, and what we can do to fix it. Soros gives an in depth look into all three topics and makes some very good points.

To say that George Soros is anti-American is just silly. He merely points out the ways in which Americans can improve in our domestic and foreign policies. This is part of the open society model. There is always room for improvement. Pointing out that something can be improved is not the same as being against it.

The book got over my head a bit towards the end. I don't know enough about Russia to follow a lot of the points made there. Overall, this is a great book for someone who is interested in what is currently happening in this country and the world and would like to know more.

David says

one has to go into the hearts of darkness to realize the darkness..a book which diverge everyone's attention on the American moral ground is constructed and should be led by our government officials which are total bullshit..he is the crook of the century collaborating and affiliating with Rothschild legacy and empire..he who controls the bank controls the countries..to be fooled by the "abnormly" or "normalcy" of what one sees.

Louis Lapidés says

It was shocking to read how George Soros has no compunction about using his billions to create political global change. He's a leftist version of Donald Trump in many ways on how he views the power his money has given him. I respect him for having passion for his causes and putting his money where his mouth is. However, I have serious issues with how much power one human being can have by using his money. In 2004 Soros spent millions to make sure George Bush was not re-elected. There should be laws against this kind of financial megalomania.

The book was helpful in giving me insight into the thinking of George Soros. His thought processes are

unnecessarily cumbersome to understand. Not impressed.

Phred says

very interesting philosophically. his analysis of the problems facing the us and the european union, and the rest of the world are insightful and well considered. i agree about his conclusion of americans- we have become a "feel-good society" and are out of touch with reality. nice to see someone disappointed with the status quo who actually has ideas for promoting some change for the better.

Maxi Bona says

George Soros devided his book into two parts. In first part which has 2 chapters he tried to explain his conceptual framework. Mr. Soros expalin more deeply about many issues which already familiar in philosophy about mind, reality and as his concern, open society. Mr. Soros concept on these subject influence stronly by his professor Karl Popper. According to Mr. Soros, reality is something that independent from our mind. It means that reality is exist around us and waiting for us to understand it. Understanding reality means we create a model or picture in our mind which is correspond with it. On Open society, he said, an open society is an unperfect society which keep itself open to improvement.

In the second part of his book, Mr Sorros tried to elaborate his concept and he stresses much thing that not rational on our era especially on the way USA mistreat other country. We an say how USA arogant to others. And the bad thing is most countries follow and support US. It is the worst threat for our world and cultures. Soros laso tell us about how he uses his money.

Joseph Busa says

I read this book long ago and didn't remember much about it. Other than maybe I thought Mr. Soros was a very successful person in the field of finance with serious aspirations of creating a legacy for himself as a modern-day philosopher.

I re-read this book because Mr. Soros, quite frankly, worries me. The book only served to confirm my worst fears about the rapid pace of change in the world. It now reads, to me, a bit like Hitler's Mein Kampf - a book I have read to about the half-way point.

In his book, Mr. Soros is quite frank about wanting to change the leaning of the American media and describing how his numerous NGOs operate in the world. He comes across as a faceless dictator intent on changing the world in his own image. It is all well and good Mr. Soros viewing an Open Society as a utopian aim/dream, for a distant future that he would never live to see, it becomes a dangerous concept when somebody like him tries to achieve it in only a few decades. My point is that Hitler had his Lebensraum and was willing to destroy the world order to achieve it.

Most troubling to me, was that Soros himself (writing back in 2006) didn't seem convinced that ordinary people would flourish in his Open Society. He says, and I paraphrase, "that loneliness and feelings of inferiority could ensue ... resulting in move to dogmatic mode of thinking" - I understand this to mean, a

totalitarian society.

Mr. Soros seems to want a world where freewill and dissent are to be encouraged, whilst being content to deny it to those that would argue against him. It makes me wonder if, at the age of 87, he isn't losing control of his Open Society Foundation, to others with less well-intentioned objectives.

Hannes Andreas says

Excellent read. I based part of my dissertation on this thing.

Bob says

Very interesting overview of the current world situation as seen by someone with a lot of world-stage experience. The problems we face are truly daunting, and the combination of political instability, environmental crisis, and energy needs may lead to a perfect storm of global chaos. Soros gives a scathing indictment of the Bush administration's "go it alone" foreign policy, which resulted in stunted or negative progress on all these issues. We can only solve these problems with global cooperation.

Oasix21 says

Offers a different view of the world, one that's held by a small minority of the citizens of Earth. He talks about philosophy, war, and global warming. A second reading might be necessary to grasp a deeper understanding.

In the end it all sums up the Crisis of Global Energy. Soros connects the dot's to this one grand problem, and the offers a grand solution that humanity must undertake before it's to late.

A very good read.

Nicholas Whyte says

<http://nhw.livejournal.com/683159.html> [return][return]Soros is here attempting to provide the American liberal tradition with a stronger intellectual base. He is disarmingly frank about why he does it:[return][return]"To sum it up, I believe I combine three qualifications. First, I have developed a conceptual framework that has given me a certain understanding of history, and, in particular, what I call far-from-equilibrium situations; second, I have a set of firm ethical and political beliefs; and third, I have made a lot of money." [return][return]When you're in that position, you can write whatever you like, and it is therefore with some bemusement that the casual reader expecting a book on contemporary US politics will find that the first seventy pages actually address the nature of reality and its relationship to human thought, in order to better contextualise Soros' ideal of an open society. I'm not especially well placed to rate this in terms of academic content of originality; I never studied philosophy or politics, though I have been a practitioner of the latter, and I did scrape a little below the surface of the philosophy of science back in my historian days. However it

seems sound enough, particularly his linkage with and development of the notions of Karl Popper. It is certainly an awful lot more convincing, as an analysis of human history, than Hari Seldon.[return][return]In the introduction he gleefully quotes Branko Crvenkovski as describing him as a "stateless statesman", but in fact he reveals a very strong sense of U.S. citizenship and even patriotism. His exploration of the question of "What's Wrong with America?" is that of a grieving insider. He worries that America is so busy trying to feel good that it has lost any thirst for knowing the truth. He thinks that America has difficulties dealing with death (and his own shorter time horizon, since he is now seventy-five, is a recurrent theme in the book). He is appalled at the way America's reputation in the world, and its ability to persuade others to its cause, have been destroyed by its own policy on the "war on terror" (a concept which he dissects forensically).[return][return]"There is a confusion in President Bush's mind about what democracy means. When he says that democracy will prevail, he really means that America will prevail. But a democratic government needs to gain the backing of the electorate and that is not necessarily the same as the backing of the United States. The contradiction became evident in the recent elections in Egypt, and even more in Palestine."[return][return]He swipes also at globalisation and fundamentalist belief in the free market, and devotes a brief but intensely argued section to the question of energy and preventing global warming (a cause to which he says he was converted by Al Gore), but criticises the anti-globalisation Left's attacks on the WTO and various summits on the grounds that these are the wrong target: "The international institutions largely reflect the policies of the member states; it is the member states that have to be held responsible."[return][return]So, rather a thought-provoking little book; much less shrill, much more reflective, more prescriptive, and in many ways much sadder than what I've read of, say, Noam Chomsky. I think anyone who is seriously interested in fixing what's wrong with the US should try and get hold of it.
