



At the Point of a Gun: Democratic Dreams and Armed Intervention

David Rieff

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Veteran journalist David Rieff's essays draw a searing portrait of what happens when the grandiose schemes of policymakers and human rights activists go horribly wrong in the field.

Writing for publications ranging from the *Wall Street Journal* to *The Nation* to France's *Le Monde*, David Rieff witnessed firsthand most of the armed interventions since the Cold War waged by the West or the United Nations in the name of human rights and democratization. In this timely collection of his most illuminating articles, Rieff, one of our leading experts on the subject, reassesses some of his own judgments about the use of military might to solve the world's most pressing humanitarian problems.

At the Point of a Gun raises critical questions we cannot ignore in this era of gunboat democracy. When, if ever, is it appropriate to intervene militarily in the domestic affairs of other nations? Are human rights and humanitarian concerns legitimate reasons for intervening, or is the assault on sovereignty a flag of convenience for the recolonization of part of the world? And, above all, can democracy be imposed through the barrel of an M16? This is not an optimistic report, but the questions Rieff raises are of the essence as the United States grapples with the harsh consequences of what it has wrought on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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