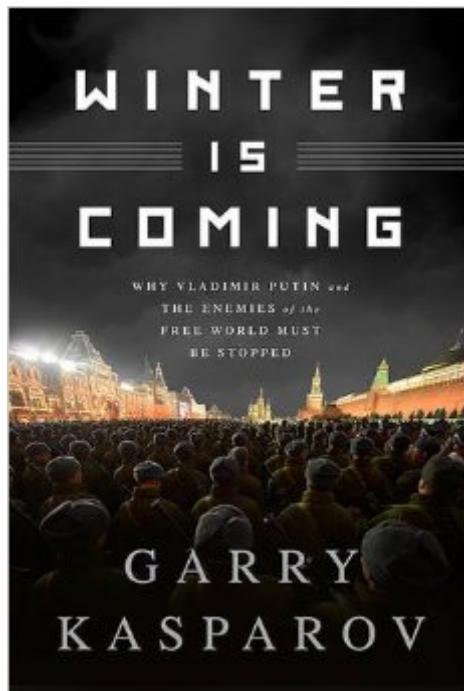


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Winter Is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin And The Enemies Of The Free World Must Be Stopped



Synopsis

The stunning story of Russia's slide back into a dictatorship; and how the West is now paying the price for allowing it to happen. The ascension of Vladimir Putin; a former lieutenant colonel of the KGB; to the presidency of Russia in 1999 was a strong signal that the country was headed away from democracy. Yet in the intervening years; as America and the world's other leading powers have continued to appease him; Putin has grown not only into a dictator but an international threat. With his vast resources and nuclear arsenal, Putin is at the center of a worldwide assault on political liberty and the modern world order. For Garry Kasparov, none of this is news. He has been a vocal critic of Putin for over a decade, even leading the pro-democracy opposition to him in the farcical 2008 presidential election. Yet years of seeing his Cassandra-like prophecies about Putin's intentions fulfilled have left Kasparov with a darker truth: Putin's Russia, like ISIS or Al Qaeda, defines itself in opposition to the free countries of the world. As Putin has grown ever more powerful, the threat he poses has grown from local to regional and finally to global. In this urgent book, Kasparov shows that the collapse of the Soviet Union was not an endpoint; only a change of seasons, as the Cold War melted into a new spring. But now, after years of complacency and poor judgment, winter is once again upon us. Argued with the force of Kasparov's world-class intelligence, conviction, and hopes for his home country, *Winter Is Coming* reveals Putin for what he is: an existential danger hiding in plain sight.

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Customer Reviews

It would be easy to dismiss "Winter Is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World Must Be Stopped" as a polemical attack upon Vladimir Putin, but Garry Kasparov, with the assistance of Mig Greengard, has written a most thoughtful account on the history of Russian politics since the rapid decline and fall of the Soviet Union; a cautionary tale explaining how the democratic aspirations of the Russian people were derailed by uninspired leadership from Boris Yeltsin, the unlikely succession and subsequent consolidation of power by his successor Vladimir Putin, and the West's inability in promoting democracy during Yeltsin's rule, and then, in turning a blind eye to Putin's revival of a one-party dictatorship. "Winter Is Coming" should be viewed as required reading by politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen throughout the Free World who think we should maintain a "normal" diplomatic and commercial ties with Putin's dictatorial Russian regime. What makes "Winter Is Coming" especially compelling is in recognizing it as a notable historical overview of Russian politics in the last quarter century seen personally through the eyes of Kasparov, a notable Russian democrat and critic of Putin's kleptocratic dictatorship. A notable critic who recognized immediately, the seismic shifts in Russian politics months, even years, before many Western diplomats, historians and political scientists. (For example, he predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union months before it occurred, offering a realistic assessment of current Soviet politics which eluded American foreign policy experts, including the likes of Brent Scowcroft and Condoleezza Rice.) Kasparov offers us a far more realistic appraisal of Putin than historian Stephen F. Cohen, who has argued consistently that Putin is more a creature of the nomenklatura – the entrenched Soviet Union-born bureaucracy – and the powerful oligarchs controlling and manipulating Russia's economy. Instead of this relatively passive view of Putin, we are introduced instead to a real-life Mafia don emerging from the pages of Mario Puzo's "The Godfather" trilogy, "The Last Don"; "Omerta"; and "The Sicilian"; all of which Kasparov regards as required reading for anyone wishing to understand Putin and what makes him tick: "A Puzo fan sees the Putin government more accurately; a strict hierarchy, extortion, intimidation, a tough-guy image, eliminating traitors, the code of secrecy and loyalty, and, above all, a mandate to keep the revenue flowing. In other words, a mafia. " As long as you are loyal to the capo, he will protect you. If one of the inner circle goes against the capo, his life is forfeit. Once Russia's richest man, Mikhail Khordorkovsky, wanted to go straight and run his Yukos oil company as a legitimate corporation and not as another cog in Putin's KGB Inc., he quickly found himself in a

Siberian prison, his company dismantled and looted, and its pieces absorbed by the state mafia apparatus of Rosneft and Gazprom. Private companies were absorbed into the state while at the same time the assets of the state companies moved into private accounts. State and corporate power merged. It became a perverse combination of Adam Smith and Karl Marx in which the profits were privatized and the expenses were nationalized. (pages 160 -161) Kasparov condemns all of Ronald Reagan's successors as President of the United States, who have consistently tried normalizing relations with Russia, instead of demanding extensive and radical reforms to promote democratic values and free market capitalism. Some of his worst criticism is aimed specifically at both George W. Bush and Barack Obama, whom he thinks missed ample opportunities to demand genuine reforms from Putin's government, possibly discouraging it from seizing territories in neighboring Georgia and Ukraine. He also blames Russia's first post-Soviet Union president, Boris Yeltsin, for not instituting political and economic reforms akin to those implemented by Czech playwright Vaclav Havel, who, as president of Czechoslovakia, ensured not only a peaceful dissolution of his country into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but also the survival of democracy and free market capitalism, allowing both to become spectacular political and economic successes in post-Soviet Empire Eastern Europe. He casts ample doubt on the actions of National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, calling into question Snowden's asylum request, and implying that Snowden may have been aided and abetted by Putin's KGB. Kasparov concludes by demanding that Western " and indeed, all of the Free World - political leaders try emulating the moral leadership shown by Reagan and Havel, in insisting that human rights remain the cornerstone of any diplomatic and economic overtures to the Putin regime and other newly ascendant enemies of the free world, especially ISIS in the Middle East. Kasparov thinks that when Western political leaders cease offering appeasement to the Putin regime and other dictatorships, then we may no longer fear that "Winter is Coming".

In my first years as an activist I often said that Putin was a Russian problem for Russians to solve, but that he would soon be a regional problem and then a global problem if his ambitions were ignored. This regrettable transformation has come to pass and lives are being lost because of it. It is cold comfort to be told "You were right!" It is even less comforting when so little is being done to halt Putin's aggression even now. What is the point of saying you should have listened and acted when you still aren't listening and acting? -- from Introduction to "Winter is Coming" According to author Garry Kasparov Western appeasers with names like Bush, Merkel, Major, Chirac, Obama, Schroder, Berlusconi, Sarkozy and

the International Olympic Committee have been playing ball with Russian President Vladimir Putin for 15 years now. During the term of his predecessor Boris Yeltsin there had been a short window of opportunity to introduce democratic reforms to Russia and Yeltsin's efforts met with limited success. Unfortunately, aided and abetted by the aforementioned Western leaders Vladimir Putin has reversed course since 2000 and has fashioned a KGB police state with far-reaching consequences for his own country and for the rest of humanity. Kasparov lays out precisely how we got here from there in his hard-hitting new book "Winter Is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World must be Stopped". This is easily one of the most important books I have read in 2015. When the Berlin Wall came tumbling down on November 9, 1989 it appeared to be a powerful symbol that evil had finally been defeated. Yet the reality was that Communism did not disappear when the Wall fell. There were still a billion people around the globe living under Communist rule. Despite the sincere efforts of Boris Yeltsin to affect change and modernize the Russian economy the hardliners in the Kremlin had no intention of giving up their control. They bided their time until Vladimir Putin took the reins of power in 2000. Putin quickly and systematically began to consolidate power. He eliminated opposition by any means necessary and co-opted the press. When Putin began to crack down Western leaders had an opportunity to push back. Instead they chose to look the other way and rewarded Putin with ever greater access to their markets. They needed the gas, oil, minerals and timber and Putin was all too happy to oblige. If there is a recurring theme in "Winter is Coming" it is this: if the West acknowledged the horrible truth then they would have to act. Sadly, the leaders of the free world never did. So what did the West get in return for giving cover to Putin over the past decade and a half? According to Kasparov: "Just like old times, Moscow has become an ally of troublemakers and anti-Democratic rulers around the world. Nuclear aid to Iran, missile technology to North Korea, military equipment to Sudan, Myanmar and Venezuela, making friends with Hamas." You get the picture. The bottom line is that Putin's primary goal is to stay in power. In order to make that happen he needs to foster constant conflict and bitter hatred. This is just one of the reasons why he is such a dangerous player. He also has designs on expanding the Russian empire as evidenced by his invasion of Georgia in 2008 and the blatantly illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Kasparov makes a very cogent point when he argues towards the end of the book that "It is long past time to stop listening to Harvard professors and think-tank experts lecture us about what Putin would never do and high time to respond to what he is actually doing." Touche! Whether we are talking about Putin, Al-Qaeda or ISIS it is clear that these forces cannot possibly be defeated without a commitment by Western governments to stand up for freedom and human rights. I had

read precious little about Mr. Putin and as such found "Winter Is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World must be Stopped" to be a real eye-opener. This is an exceptionally thoughtful and extremely well-written book. It is a "must read" for history buffs and anyone interested in international affairs. Very highly recommended!

Superbly written account of how Russia got to where it is today by a dedicated and famous dissident who has been in the middle of it for a long time. All of this has pretty much been glossed over in the US media in my view. It is truly scary to contemplate what has actually been happening there. Many brave souls have been in the fight to maintain some level of democracy but have unfortunately received little assistance from the West. Some have died for their efforts. It is chilling to contemplate where the Putin mafia will go next. God help us all!

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