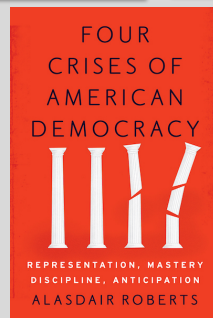
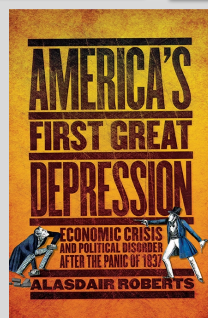
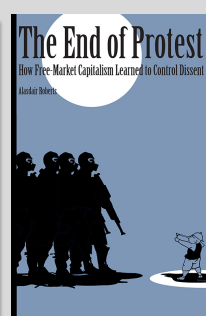
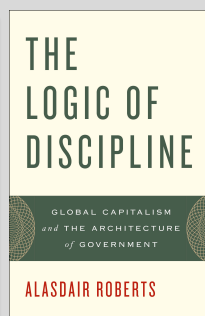
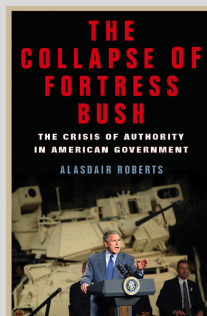
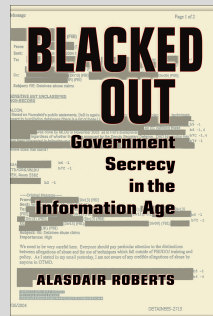


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Strategies for governing



**CAN
GOVERNMENT
DO ANYTHING
RIGHT?**

Alasdair

Government leaders craft strategies to pursue national objectives given the circumstances that confront them at a particular moment. Leaders want to believe that they have crafted an overall strategy that will work forever, a durable way of managing national problems. But leaders are always disappointed. Circumstances change and strategies have to be reconsidered and overhauled. This process of self-scrutiny and adaptation is unpleasant but unavoidable.

STRATEGIES FOR GOVERNING

*Reinventing Public Administration
for a Dangerous Century*

Cornell University Press, December 2019
Preorder on Amazon
\$25.95 Paperback / \$12.99 Kindle

The loss of the stable state means that our society and all of its processes are in continuing processes of transformation. We cannot expect new stable states that will endure even for our own lifetimes. We must learn to understand, guide, influence and manage these transformations.

—DONALD SCHÖN, 1971

Strategy should be thought of as glue that holds together the purposeful activities of state.

—COLIN S. GRAY, 2015

The limits of public management

- “Middle level” focus
 - Agency and program effectiveness
 - Domestic social programs
- Makes sense given context
 - Late 20th century welfare-state problems
- New challenges:
 - Bigger “crises of ideas” in advanced democracies
 - Broader challenges in developing countries
 - Problems of fragile states

Need for a new approach

- Higher level analysis: country/state level
- Focus on problems of leadership
- Multiple, conflicting objectives
 - Internal order and legitimacy
 - External security and legitimacy
 - Economic growth
 - Human rights
- Difficult and shifting circumstances
 - Geography, climate, demography, technologies, economic structure, international order

Strategies for governing

- *Strategies for governing* establish priorities, main lines of policy
 - ≈ Thatcherism, Reaganism, Clintonism, Blairism, Modi-ism, Xi Jinping Thought
- Extension of concept of grand strategy in international relations
 - Integration of domestic and foreign policy
- Strategy is
 - expressed through institutions
 - informed by an understanding of institutional capacities

Challenges in strategy-making

- Trade-offs between goals
- “Clouds of uncertainty”
 - About prevailing conditions
 - About the likely effectiveness of interventions
- Cultural and institutional legacies
- Turbulence / changing conditions
- Analytic complexity

Implications

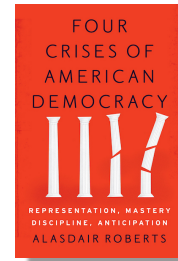
- Strategic fragility and realism
 - No strategy lasts forever; no permanent solution
 - Phases of strategic exhaustion and adaptation
- Contradictions of institutional stewardship
 - Consolidation and commitment *versus*
 - Preserving room for maneuver
- Contingency
 - We should expect strategies to differ
 - Imported middle-level reforms may not fit with overall strategy
- Unexceptionalism
 - All leaders face similar general challenges of strategy-making

No “great convergence”

What we may be witnessing is . . . the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and **the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.** -- Francis Fukuyama, 1989

The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom -- **and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.** -- George W. Bush, 2002

Strategic renewal



- Four moments of strategic shift in US:
 - Progressive era (1890-1915)
 - New Deal / WWII / Cold War (1929-1948)
 - Keynesianism to globalism/neoliberalism (1969-1993)
 - The end of neoliberalism? (2007 onward)
- Elements
 - Mounting evidence of strategic exhaustion
 - Malaise, confusion
 - Political entrepreneurship
 - Ideological consolidation and institutional reform
 - A long process

Middle-level reform and fit

- Strategy matters for middle-level managers
 - Overall strategy constrains options for middle-level management
 - Practices, reforms must fit with the *zeitgeist*
- No “one size fits all” approach to management/policy reform
 - No “global convergence” of policies and practices
 - Policies are more likely to be imported and fully implemented if they are compatible, not just with “circumstances,” but with leaders’ overall strategy

