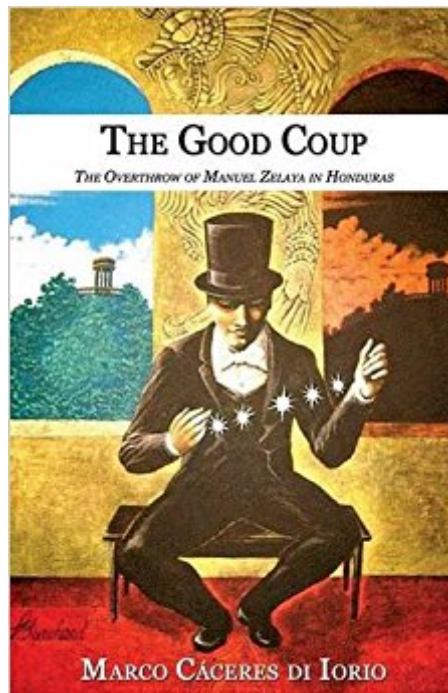




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The Good Coup: The Overthrow Of Manuel Zelaya In Honduras



Synopsis

Honduras is known as the classic "Banana Republic" - a characterization of a politically backward country ruled by a tiny wealthy class. The phrase was coined by the North American writer O. Henry in his book, *Cabbages and Kings*. It conveys the image of a nation plagued by military coup d'États... historically undeniable in the case of Honduras. The controversial overthrow of President Manuel Zelaya on June 28, 2009 represents a watershed in Honduran history. Was President Zelaya an innocent victim of the military and judicial systems, or did government officials act wisely in rescuing Honduras from a president intent on remaining in power indefinitely and dismantling the country's democratic institutions? Although it awakened memories of past coups, it is unclear whether this was a traditional or a "hybrid coup", featuring some elements of what the world tends to associate with coups, but lacking others. The collection of short essays in this book offers personal insights on these questions and on a wide range of events, themes, and philosophical struggles that defined the political crisis in Honduras. About the Author: Marco Cáceres di Iorio is the editor of the online newspaper Honduras Weekly. He is also the cofounder of projecthonduras.com, an international network of volunteers involved in humanitarian development projects aimed at empowering the people of Honduras. He directs the annual Conference on Honduras in the town of Copán Ruinas in northwestern Honduras. He was born in Tegucigalpa.

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Customer Reviews

Mr Cáceres di Iorio has created an easy reading book from a series of articles he produced for the

Honduras Weekly. This collection of articles has the virtue of presenting the chronology of events in a reasonably ordered way. However, the tendency to repeat and recapitulate in succeeding articles means in effect that much revision and editing was left undone. A cleaner, smoother, and leaner narrative could have been achieved with a little attention to editing. That said, events are unfolded for the reader without haste and the author takes time to provide his own opinion on many of the topics raised as he goes along. The book is generally informative, and provides detail that was unavailable to those of us in North America receiving our facts from the mainstream media. His take on what the US Department of State did and why is speculative but probably correct in its outline. It is hoped that someday we will hear from Hugo Llorens on the various opinions, attitudes, and reasoning held by significant players in the US DoS, Mrs Clinton, and President Obama in detail.

Disclaimer: I bat center-right and am not a fan of Boliviarism, or whatever Chavez, his cronies/allies, and the cool kids are calling their ideological beliefs these days. That said, I found this collection of articles problematic. Much like the other reviewer, I was a little disappointed that the book was a series of 1-5pg articles printed from Spring '09 to Summer '10. A lot of subjects unfamiliar to non-Honduras experts received shallow treatment (i.e. circumstances in Honduras, legal interpretations of the Honduras Constitution and its enforcement by the military-check Hugo Llorens cable on wikileaks for a good synopsis-, and more background on motivating factors for other countries as well as regional and international institutions) Few articles appear from late September and October 2009 when there were claims of curfews and abusive by gov't security forces, some of which were supposedly scaled back before the November election. Mr. Caceres di Iorio's distaste with Zelaya goes from being barely concealed to outright disgust by the end of the book. That is fair for a personal opinion, but bad for a professional journalist, especially when couched in pseudo-psychological observation and cutesy hyperbolic language. Still, Caceres di Iorio's point that Zelaya's self-aggrandizing missteps irresponsibly put Honduras on the brink of civil war is well taken. Caceres di Iorio's observations of US handling of the affair are speculative, but probably correct nonetheless. They constitute the most worthwhile insights in the book. Otherwise, Mr. Caceres di Iorio's english speaking audience probably has difficulty evaluating his other claims because most of us need way more background and context. One thing I found particularly annoying was Caceres di Iorio's penchant for waxing philosophical about all the problems Honduras faces. Insights that sound like, "We can't have peace and prosperity until we start listening to each other." Yeah, generally that's true of a lot of problems in world. It's true that Zelaya's drama was divisive and provided a convenient means for all involved to ignore actual problems and Honduras's record

in poverty and human rights. But reiterating the point 20 times dilutes it's impact on the reader. A specific example, talking about Obama's experience as a community organizer and how people are too focused on top down solutions when he's a clear example of bottom up. Besides being a lazy observation, it also is incorrect. Read "The Bridge", Obama gave up on community organizing because he wasn't getting anything done and sought more credentials and higher office because he believed them a more effective way to rectify issues. (I voted for Obama, this isn't hating, just an example of the author's lackadaisical approach) So, as stated in the title, the book could be condensed and better focused. Probably the best attribute of the book is its title and the intro because they hit on a very important issue in Latin America: How to deal with movements/leaders that ride legitimate grievances of the disenfranchised to power and then slowly erode weak democratic institutions into autocratic regimes under the pretense of helping "the people". I don't know:-/

The Good Coup: The Overthrow of Mel Zelaya in Honduras is so far the only book I've seen about the Honduran political crisis in 2009. Having spent a significant amount of time in Honduras over the past 3 years I have to agree with the authors idea that the 'coup' wasn't exactly a coup as much of the media suggested, but it was rather a more complex, partially legal succession of power that was supported by the majority of Hondurans. So, the book offers a good perspective, but not in a great format. It is a series of 1-3 page op-eds written by the author during the crisis. When I made the purchase I was hoping for a more coherent and detailed analysis of what happened. But it is still worthwhile for anyone very interested in Honduras or Latin American politics in general. Vaya pues

Zelaya Was a disgusting pig, this comes from someone who lived through it. The book does well to represent that. For you didn't live through it you really have no right to criticize the articles and or narrative

I wouldn't even buy a book that even suggests Zelaya was trying to destroy a democratic nation, because first it would have to eliminate the foreign interest there to be truly democratic, which I believe it was trying to do when this coup took place, So, you lost me before the book even gets read with your subtle but abusive description.

I rate it as okay because of the time and effort you took to write the book. However, AS A PERSONAL friend to Mel, your "facts" are not correct and are tainted with the bs typically put out by

Washington baiters.

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