

The Confidante  
Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy  
*Glenn Kessler*



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**EXCERPT**

In his riveting glimpse into the life of one of the most powerful Secretaries of State in recent years, *Washington Post* diplomatic correspondent Glenn Kessler provides not only a revealing look at Condoleezza Rice but a rich portrait of the Bush administration's controversial foreign policy regime. From her grievous errors in judgment as national security advisor to her notable influence over the president as Secretary of State, Rice has not gone unnoticed during her rise to power. But, as an intensely private person, she has—despite endless media attention—remained a mystery. As the first critical examination of Rice's skills as policy-maker, politician and manager, this definitive biography explains not only her rise to power, but the pivotal role she has played in our nation's history.

Full of candor as well as honesty, *The Confidante* shows unseen moments in Rice's life and of her frequently divisive performance during one of the most tumultuous foreign-policy periods in U.S. history. Drawing on personal interviews with Rice, an intimacy afforded to Kessler as one of the few reporters granted the opportunity to travel with her, Kessler takes readers inside the secret meetings Rice has held with foreign leaders and even her private conversations with President Bush. With access to all of Rice's top aides and sources in many overseas governments, Kessler also provides dramatic new information about one of the most secretive administrations in U.S. history. He shows how Rice molded herself into the image of a globe-trotting diplomatic super star, negating memories of her past failures. He exposes new details about her secret role in Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, her maneuvers around government bureaucracy to strike a pivotal nuclear-energy deal with India, her persuasion of Bush to support a dramatic gesture to Iran, her failure to prevent the North Korean nuclear test, and her struggle to contain the devastating war between Israel and Lebanon. This brilliantly written book reveals not only her public and private humiliation of foreign officials but also how her charm and grace have been successful assets in repairing fractured relations overseas.

Condoleezza Rice remains today and in the future one of the most alluring, controversial, and ultimately influential decision makers in the United States. With this captivating

work, Kessler shows what traits could solidify her shot at greatness or what cracks in her hard veneer could send her career hurtling to ruin.

#### QUOTES

"A tour de force. I have followed Rice for years, yet reading this book I feel like I only now understand her."--**Thomas E. Ricks, author of *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq***

"Kessler, in this timely and important book, identifies the principal weakness of Rice's stewardship as the absence of any 'coherent foreign policy vision,' especially regarding the Middle East. The calamitous consequences for America of this shortcoming are likely to be felt for years to come."--**Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security advisor, 1977-1981**

"Glenn Kessler is a tough, independent beat reporter of the old school. His chronicle of Condoleezza Rice's turn as Secretary of State is meticulous and fair, but it provides a devastating account of how Rice's diplomacy often rested on wish and illusion, and was finally overwhelmed by the Bush Administration's failed foreign policies."--**Steve Coll, author of *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001***

"Glenn Kessler has amassed a wealth of new material about Condoleezza Rice and the people around her. If you want to get beyond the image-makers and find out what Condoleezza Rice has actually been doing as secretary of state, this is the right book for you."--**James Mann, Johns Hopkins University and author of *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of the Bush War Cabinet***

"As foreign policy tutor, security adviser, and now as secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice has stood at the center of George Bush's foreign policy from day one. Glenn Kessler provides a fair and balanced assessment of how Rice's actions and inactions in these first incarnations made her job of guiding foreign policy now so much more difficult. A masterful treatment that is bound to stand the test of time."--**Ivo Daalder, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and co-author of *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy***

#### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

GLENN KESSLER is a diplomatic correspondent for *The Washington Post* and has been recipient of numerous awards, including two shared Pulitzer Prizes. Kessler, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, has reported from dozens of countries and also has covered the White House and Congress. He is a graduate of Brown University and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and lives in McLean, Virginia.