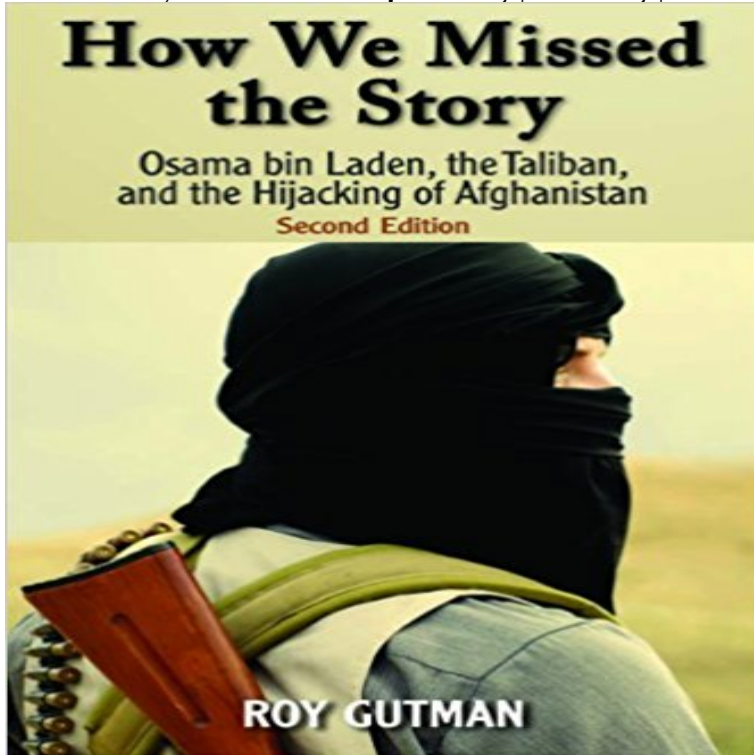


# How We Missed the Story, Second Edition: Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Hijacking of Afghanistan



In *How We Missed the Story*, Second Edition, Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Roy Gutman extends his investigation into why two successive U.S. administrations failed to head off the assaults of 9/11 and to look at the U.S. military intervention that followed. With American forces due to withdraw in 2014 from a country far from stable, he suggests that the longest ever U.S. military intervention was doomed by the same flawed outlook that prevailed in the 1990s. During that twenty-five-year span, U.S. policymakers showed little interest in the country's history and culture and assumed Afghanistan could serve principally as a platform for attacking U.S. foes. Gutman contends that the key to preventing a reversion to radical jihadism lies in acknowledging the enormous sacrifices Afghans made in the 1980s war and committing to the country's long-term stability. Anyone who thinks Afghanistan doesn't matter, or that Washington can walk away once again, is missing the story. Expanded by nearly a third, this new edition focuses on American missteps from 1989 through 2012. Gutman draws upon his own research and interviews, beginning with the Soviet withdrawal that gave way to the American withdrawal of the 1990s and the ensuing security vacuum Islamic militants used to American detriment. While many political figures and outside observers blame the U.S. lack of preparedness for the 9/11 attacks on intelligence and law enforcement agencies, Gutman argues that the strategic failure prior to 9/11 lay in U.S. foreign policy. Addressing 9/11 solely with a counterterrorism approach, Washington missed the story and failed to put things right. By going to war in Iraq, it effectively abandoned Afghanistan again. This study also illuminates American engagement in the broader world after the Cold War and asks: Whatever happened to foreign policy? Anyone who wants to avoid

repeating the mistakes of the past, whether a general reader, scholar, or government official needs to know How We Missed the Story.

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