BOOK REVIEW - Bruce Riedel, Kings and Presidents. Saudi-Arabia and the United States Since FDR (Geopolitics in the 21st Century)

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Summary/Abstract: There is a growing tendency to view the Middle East through four overarching nexuses: the terrorism-repression, the tribal-modern, the geopolitical-geoeconomic and the money-buys-everything-social alienation. Each of these, at times all of them, have been taken to explain the unfolding trends in this expansive, ill-defined region, called the Middle East. Such broad strokes also forms the bedrock decision-makers in Europe, and beyond, utilise to make sense of, and design
Kings and Presidents book. Read 18 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. An insider's account of the often-fraught U.S.-Saudi relationship. Bruce Riedel for decades has followed these kings and presidents during his career at the CIA, the White House, and Brookings. This book offers an insider's account of the U.S.-Saudi relationship, with unique insights. Using declassified documents, memoirs by both Saudis and Americans, and eyewitness accounts, this book takes the reader inside the royal palaces, the holy cities, and the White House to gain an understanding of this complex partnership. It began with a 1945 meeting between U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and King Ibn Saud and has always rested, as Riedel states, “on shared interests, but no shared values.” The terms of the arrangement have not changed: Washington offers Riyadh security protection in exchange for affordable oil for the world economy. He makes clear that Saudi leaders have shared a sincere commitment to the Palestinian cause and a consistent desire to see Washington involved in seeking Arab-Israeli peace. Riedel echoes others who have depicted the Saudi monarchy as shocked by U.S. President Barack Obama's abandonment of Egyptian ruler Hosni Mubarak during the uprising that rocked Egypt in 2011. Bruce Riedel has followed these kings and presidents during his decades-long career at the CIA, the White House, and the Brookings Institution. Kings and Presidents offers an insider's account of the U.S.-Saudi relationship. This book is profoundly instructive and insightful about Saudi Arabia and its relationships with neighboring Arab nations and the United States. Despite spanning a mere 203 pages in length, this book provides a full understanding of Saudi Arabia from its birth to its current influential position as a powerful driver of global economic life.