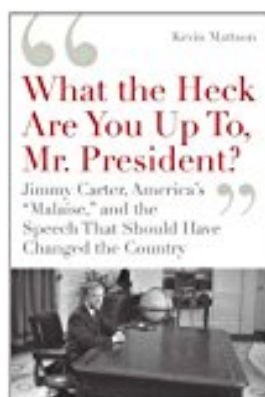


[PDF] "What The Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?": Jimmy Carter, America's "Malaise," And The Speech That Should Have Changed The Country

Kevin Mattson - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Publishers Weekly The 1979 national malaise speech that defined Jimmy Carter's presidency—though he never used the word malaise—gets its due in this contrarian homage. Ohio University historian Mattson (*When America Was Great*) considers the speech—which expressed Carter's own crisis of confidence, bemoaned Americans' loss of faith in government and deplored the country's selfishness and consumerism—to be a thoughtful response to the problems of the day that initially won public acclaim, before political opponents caricatured it as a gloomy scolding. Following the speech from its bizarre provenance in an apocalyptic memo by pollster Pat Cadell through its honing during a messianic domestic summit, the author sets his colorful study against a recap of the gasoline shortages, inflation and Me Decade angst that provoked it. He interprets it as a tantalizing road not taken: with its prescient focus on energy, limits and sacrifice, its humility and honesty, it was, the author says, the antithesis of the Reagan era's sunny optimism. Mattson makes Carter's maligned speech a touchstone for a rich retrospective and backhanded appreciation of the soul-searching '70s. (July)

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Review

"Excellent... a cautionary tale and a great read... Those of us who were around back in the day will be ruefully reminded of those bygone times. And those who weren't will be scratching their heads in disbelief at this fascinating and frequently improbable history."-**Wall Street Journal**

"That Mr. Carter felt he had to deliver such a risky speech says a great deal about the political fix he was in at the time. It says plenty, too, about where the wobbling American psyche stood during the weird, unnerving summer of 1979... In his new book, *What the Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?*, Kevin Mattson... lays out the events of that summer like a big, rolling banquet... the historical ingredients are fascinating and first-rate...Mr. Mattson writes well about Mr. Carter's staff and the intense jockeying that led up to the malaise speech." -**Dwight Garner, New York Times**

"[A] detailed unpacking of the speech and the tumultuous events that inspired it." - **LA Times**

"Despite a brief bump in the president's approval ratings, the address became forever disparaged as the "malaise" speech, and it doomed Carter's reelection chances. That speech, history has concluded, was a huge mistake. Ohio University historian Kevin Mattson challenges that conclusion in his feisty new book...Chronicling the mood inside the White House and across the nation in the months surrounding the speech -- months when gas lines and Three Mile Island monopolized the news while "The Deer Hunter" and "disco sucks!" dominated the zeitgeist -- Mattson offers a radically different reading." -**Carlos Lozada, Washington Post**

"[In] the summer of 1979, the country seemed to be imploding in the face of a gas crisis, resulting in long lines at the pump, trucker strikes and violence. The nation's confidence plummeted and calls for "inspirational and innovative leadership" remained unheeded. Starting on July 4, Carter holed up at Camp David for ten days, emerging with a legendary address... that would both galvanize and deeply cleave the country. Mattson... sifts through the varied media coverage of the event to isolate this crucial moment in America's recognition of itself... A galloping history full of interesting characters and significant moments." --**Kirkus**

"This book becomes a page-turner for those interested in the decadent disco decade, Jimmy Carter himself, and the modern presidency." -**Library Journal**

"In *What the Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?* Kevin Mattson revisits Jimmy Carter's speech

delivered to a national audience on July 15, 1979. That address came to be known as the 'malaise' speech, though Carter never used the word. The President did mention 'paralysis and stagnation and drift,' but he also spoke of 'strength' and 'a rebirth of the American spirit.' Mattson offers a deep reading of the speech, placing it in the cultural and political contexts of the late 1970s. The result is an eye-opening inquiry into the power of words at a pivotal moment in history." --**Louis P. Masur, author of *The Soiling of Old Glory***

"Boldly and with great style, Kevin Mattson captures the political, social, and cultural events that shaped Jimmy Carter's 'Malaise' speech of July 15 1979. He reveals how events abroad and at home--in the White House, at gas stations, on TV, and in learned books--shaped an opportunity to confront the energy problem, which the nation avoided at its own peril." --**Daniel Horowitz, professor of American Studies at Smith College and author of *The Anxieties of Affluence***

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