



# Machiavelli on Modern Leadership: Why Machiavelli's Iron Rules Are As Timely And Important Today As Five Centuries Ago

By Michael A. Ledeen

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Niccolò Machiavelli, one of the eminent minds of the Italian Renaissance, spent much of a long and active lifetime trying to determine and understand what exceptional qualities of human character-- and what surrounding elements of fortune, luck, and timing-- made great men great leaders successful in war and peace.

In perhaps the liveliest book on Machiavelli in years, Michael A. Ledeen measures contemporary movers and doers against the timeless standards established by the great Renaissance writer. Titans of statecraft (Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterrand, Pope John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton); business and finance (Bill Gates); Wall Street and investing (Warren Buffett); the military (Colin Powell), and sports (Michael Jordan) are judged by Machiavelli's precepts on leadership and the proper use of power. The result is a wide-ranging and scintillating study that illuminates the thoughts of the Renaissance master and the actions of today's truly towering figures as well as the character-challenged pretenders to greatness.

Here is an exceptional book on Machiavelli and his ultra-realistic exploration of human nature-- then and now.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

American Enterprise Institute resident scholar Michael A. Ledeen sees the same parallels today between human nature, power, and the state of our institutions that venerable Renaissance writer Niccolò Machiavelli established and expounded upon in Italy nearly 500 years earlier. In *Machiavelli on Modern Leadership*, he examines a variety of political, religious, economic, and even athletic leaders from the last days of the 20th century according to the exceptional tenets originally laid out in classic works such as *The Prince* and *The Discourses*.

His purpose now, Ledeen writes, is essentially the same as his subject's was then: "to present the basic principles of the proper and successful use of power in language that contemporary leaders can understand, the better to advance the common good." Although somewhat brief at less than 200 pages, this spirited book nonetheless manages to measure successfully the characters of Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Ted Turner, Casper Weinberger, Colin Powell, Yasir Arafat, and many others against the exceedingly rigorous (and often controversial) standards set by one of the most enduring of all leadership theorists. Despite following a string of moral philosophers and political analysts who have previously produced extensive material on both the man and his ideas, Ledeen shows in a fresh way precisely why Machiavelli's precepts remain as valid as when they were first penned. --Howard Rothman

#### From Kirkus Reviews

American Enterprise Institute resident scholar Ledeen (Perilous Statecraft: An Insiders Account of the Iran-Contra Affair, 1988, etc.) offers an updated version of the rules for leadership laid down by Machiavelli. Its the nature of humans to do evil, and war is our natural state. Anyone who would wield power in such a setting, writes Ledeen, echoing Machiavelli, ``must be prepared to fight at all times." This is as true in business, sports, and politics as it is on the battlefield. The leader must fight not only enemies but his (and in the rare instance her) own tendency toward indolence and contentment, for these will bring ruin to any endeavor. A leader must be of ``manly vigor"; he must be virtuous, possessing the military values of prudent judgment, alertness to changing conditions, bravery, courage, total commitment to mission; only when the leader is virtuous in this way will the people follow him. While there have been strong female leaders, such as Margaret Thatcher, on the whole women cannot achieve virtue for they lack the ``physical wherewithal and the passionate desire to achieve" military glory. (Women are also a temptation to men while they are busy trying to lead.) One might then justly call a weak state with a feeble leader ``effeminate." And there is no better example of this, according to the author, than the US under Clinton, whose personal corruption and lack of military virtue endanger us all. The military has become, under Clinton, a place for bizarre social experiments, such as men and women serving together aboard ship. What Ledeen thinks we all need, then, is a sort of virtue Viagra, and this exemplifies his simplistic and decidedly dated answers to the complex problems of politics. This is an analysis of neither Machiavelli nor leadership, but, rather, a partisan broadside for which Machiavelli serves as a useful prop. -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

#### Review

"To illustrate his ideas, Machiavelli made it a practice to give two examples, one ancient and one 'fresh.' With a firm grasp on American contemporary domestic and foreign policy, Michael Ledeen has provided what readers of Machiavelli need today--modern or 'fresh' examples. *Machiavelli on Modern Leadership*

goes beyond the Medici and Borgias, reaches for intelligent and courageous examples in the corrupt worlds of modern government, business, the armed forces and religion, to reveal that Machiavelli's warnings are hammering on the door of the 21st century." ?*Sebastian de Grazia, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Machiavelli in Hell*

"*Machiavelli on Modern Leadership* slaps modern society across the face with ancient truths about human nature and power. Its honesty takes your breath away and its many stories ring true." ?*Phillip K. Howard, author of The Death of Common Sense*

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