



Eagle Hill Online Discussion Forum

The Good American: The Epic Life of Bob Gersony, the US Government's Greatest Humanitarian

by Robert D. Kaplan

Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 4:30 PM

In his long career as an acclaimed journalist covering the “hot” moments of the Cold War and its aftermath, bestselling author Robert D. Kaplan often found himself crossing paths with Bob Gersony, a consultant for the U.S. State Department whose quiet dedication and consequential work made a deep impression on Kaplan. Gersony, a high school dropout later awarded a Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam, conducted on-the-ground research for the U.S. government in virtually every war and natural-disaster zone in the world. In Thailand, Central and South America, Sudan, Chad, Mozambique, Rwanda, Gaza, Bosnia, North Korea, Iraq, and beyond, Gersony never flinched from entering dangerous areas that diplomats could not reach, sometimes risking his own life. Gersony’s behind-the-scenes fact-finding, which included interviews with hundreds of refugees and displaced persons from each war zone and natural-disaster area, often challenged the assumptions and received wisdom of the powers that be, on both the left and the right. In nearly every case, his advice and recommendations made American policy at once smarter and more humane—often dramatically so.



Robert D. Kaplan is the bestselling author of nineteen books on foreign affairs and travel translated into many languages, including *The Good American*, *The Revenge of Geography*, *Asia’s Cauldron*, *Monsoon*, *The Coming Anarchy*, and *Balkan Ghosts*. He holds the Robert Strausz-Hupé Chair in Geopolitics at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. For three decades he reported on foreign affairs for *The Atlantic*. He was a member of the Pentagon’s Defense Policy Board and the U.S. Navy’s Executive Panel. *Foreign Policy* magazine twice named him one of the world’s “Top 100 Global Thinkers.”

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