

Dictators and Their Secret Police

How do dictators stay in power? When, and how, do they use repression to do so? *Dictators and Their Secret Police* explores the role of the coercive apparatus under authoritarian rule in Asia – how these secret organizations originated, how they operated, and how their violence affected ordinary citizens. Greitens argues that autocrats face a coercive dilemma: whether to create internal security forces designed to manage popular mobilization, or defend against a potential coup. Violence against civilians, she suggests, is a by-product of their attempt to resolve this dilemma.

Drawing on a wealth of new historical evidence, this book challenges the conventional wisdom on dictatorship: what autocrats are threatened by, how they respond, and how this affects the lives and security of the millions under their rule. It offers an unprecedented view into the use of surveillance, coercion, and violence, and sheds new light on the institutional and social foundations of authoritarian power.

Sheena Chestnut Greitens is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Missouri. She is also a non-resident senior fellow at the Center for East Asian Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution and an associate in research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University. Greitens' research focuses on East Asia, security studies, and the politics of authoritarian states. Her doctoral dissertation, on which this book is based, won APSA's Walter Dean Burnham Award for the best dissertation in politics and history, as well as Harvard's Richard J. Herrnstein Prize.

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Dictators and Their Secret Police

Coercive Institutions and State Violence

SHEENA CHESTNUT GREITENS



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*To my parents,
Tim and Janet Chestnut*

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A note on romanization

Chinese-language names and terms have been romanized using the pinyin system. Korean-language names and terms have been romanized using the McCune-Reischauer system. Following Korean and Chinese custom, surnames precede given names unless otherwise stated.

Exceptions were made for authors who have published in English under alternate transliterations, and for names, places, and organizations with other official or standard English spellings that are more widely known and accepted (Chiang Kai-shek, Park Chung Hee, Seoul, etc.).

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