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Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions

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BOOK REVIEWS

HOW SENIOR LEADERS VIEW THE WORLD

Saunders, Elizabeth N. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2011. 320pp. \$35

In today's political environment, military intervention is frequently debated. These discussions often bring to light interesting points of agreement and perhaps surprising instances of disagreement. In the end, it is with the president that the final decision rests. Elizabeth Saunders explores the rationales that U.S. presidents have used for deciding whether or not to initiate military interventions. Dr. Saunders, a graduate of Yale, now teaching at George Washington University, advances a thesis that the model of intervention depends mainly on a president's formative ways of thinking about foreign policy. While it may seem that these views would follow party lines, Saunders shows that this is not necessarily true. On one hand, the internal approach focuses on how the foreign state is organized and follows the transformative model. In contrast, the external approach looks at states' outward behavior and uses a surgical strike-type model to coerce change in behavior. The author chose to examine Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson for two important reasons. First, among the three a

consensus would be expected based on the prevalent Cold War mentality and context. In fact, these three did not follow in lockstep. The shared case of Vietnam, the second reason for the author's selections, highlights their differences.

Eisenhower was an externally focused president; if states' external policies were successful, he chose largely to ignore internal issues in those same states. A decreased priority on conventional forces translated under Eisenhower to less investment in transformative capabilities. Lebanon was his only overt intervention; Eisenhower did not intervene in Vietnam in 1954 or in Iraq in 1958. In contrast, Kennedy sought to influence states' domestic institutions. His predetermined agenda, based on his congressional career, explains his choice and method of intervention in Vietnam. This theme held true with the murder of Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963, which preceded Kennedy's own assassination by only a few weeks. Johnson, despite his obvious ties to Kennedy, was an externally focused president as regarded foreign affairs. Saunders highlights that while this diverges from his transformative

domestic agenda, it explains Johnson's expansion of the Vietnam War in such a different direction from Kennedy.

The well-researched text concludes by looking beyond Vietnam at how well the pattern holds under different circumstances and time periods, to include the Iraq war. Saunders's framework categorizes presidents as belonging to either of two ideal types. While this may hold from a strictly political science view, it falls short of the reality of history. For this reason, the book will appeal more to political scientists or those seeking model-centric explanations of events. This work should also have strong appeal for strategists and people serving on planning or policy staffs. Understanding how senior leaders view the world is often as significant as factual knowledge of a given situation when providing recommended courses of action.

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Marrin, Stephen. *Improving Intelligence Analysis: Bridging the Gap between Scholarship and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2011. 192pp. \$130

A former CIA analyst turned scholar, Stephen Marrin attempts to bridge the gap between intelligence studies as an academic discipline and intelligence as a bureaucratic function. His analysis grounded in the intelligence literature, Marrin provides readers a good overview of such intelligence-studies classics as those of Sherman Kent, Roger Hilsman, and Richards Heuer, along with more contemporary work by Roger George, James Bruce, Richard Betts, and Amy Zegart. Marrin certainly

displays a penchant for the academic that is informed by his former role as an intelligence analyst. He believes "intelligence scholarship can provide knowledge and insight useful for the analytic practitioner; so useful in fact, that it will help improve the quality of the resulting intelligence analysis."

With such a goal, Marrin offers six ways to improve intelligence analysis, but it is unclear how he derives these. Marrin does not draw his conclusions from known cases of highly publicized intelligence assessments. In the case of Iraq, it would have been useful to illustrate why the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research had a better answer on the status of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program than the Defense Intelligence Agency. Had Marrin tested his advice against known intelligence failures or drawn from assessments of failed analysis, his advice would be more convincing.

With intelligence increasingly public and used to justify or explain foreign-policy decisions, it seems one more piece of advice Marrin could offer is how to incorporate public discussions or open sources into analysis. Fortunately or not, the intelligence community does not have a monopoly on the "facts," so discussing the ways in which analysts can more readily connect with scholars and the private sector would be useful.

To be fair, the book is focused on intelligence analysis, but it seems to ignore how, why, and where facts are collected. In an era when both scholars and private citizens have access to information, it is important that Marrin address the epistemological underpinnings of what is being analyzed. There is a logical and important