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The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil-Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush

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doing so, the authors have bypassed any discussion of older events that might have provided opportunities for some long-term perspective.

They report the recommendations of Admiral David Jeremiah's investigation of the intelligence community's failure to provide advance warning of India's 1998 tests. Yet those recommendations—including altering collection priorities, better human intelligence, and improved coordination—are eerily similar to those of the community's post-mortem of its failure to warn of India's 1974 test. The similarities raise a number of questions—possibly, that the intelligence community has simply proven it is unable or unwilling to correct its shortcomings.

Another problem for the reader (although not the authors' fault) is that the book only briefly refers to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. There is only a brief mention of Colin Powell's presentation of intelligence to the UN, and none at all of the postwar findings on U.S. intelligence performance. Had the book been completed a year or two later, these would have been prime topics. However, *Combating Proliferation* is not a book overtaken by events but rather a valuable guide to the issues concerning intelligence and proliferation.

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National Security Archive



Herspring, Dale R. *The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil-Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush*. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2005. 512pp. \$45

Civil-military relations are the subject of considerable scrutiny and debate throughout the Clinton presidency. Unfortunately, the academicians, journalists, and occasional uniformed professionals who joined in that debate have been inexplicably mute since the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld regime came to power. So this inquiry by Kansas State University political science professor Dale Herspring offers a welcome shot of intellectual adrenalin to an enduringly important, if temporarily moribund, topic. Herspring confronts two issues that are central to the canonical discourse of civil-military relations: civilian control of the military by elected and appointed political officials, and the political neutrality or nonneutrality of those in uniform. Herspring is well qualified to address the subject, having spent twenty years as a foreign service officer in relatively senior State Department and Defense Department assignments, as well as some thirty-two years of combined active and reserve duty in the Navy.

Focusing his attention primarily on the senior ranks of the military—the controlled—rather than on the civilian controllers, Herspring considers the intersection of presidential leadership and military culture an arena of inevitable conflict. Where the two are compatible, he argues, conflict is minimized; where they are not compatible, the frequency and intensity of conflict are magnified. He holds that since the Truman administration the military has become progressively more political, displaying common interest-group behavior by using Congress and the media to serve its own institutional self-interest at the expense of dutiful obedience to executive civilian authority.

Herspring devotes a chapter to each of the twelve presidencies from Franklin D. Roosevelt to George W. Bush. Each chapter, identical in structure, begins with a brief examination of the leadership style of the president concerned, along with two or three case studies depicting the military's reaction to it on particular critical issues, and concludes with a discussion of two questions: To what degree did the president's leadership style mirror or violate military culture, and how did that style affect civil-military relations? Did military culture change or employ new methods to oppose change?

Conflict between senior civilian officials and the senior military, though inevitable, Herspring believes, can be mitigated by presidential behavior. Over time, such conflict has been most pronounced in administrations where presidential leadership style and military culture have been most at odds.

Herspring adjudges the level of conflict as high in the Johnson, Nixon, and Clinton administrations; moderate under Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Carter, and George W. Bush; but minimal under Roosevelt, Ford, Reagan, and George H. W. Bush.

This is a book that should command attention from students of civil-military relations. Although it is an interesting read—thoroughly but not exhaustively researched, tightly and coherently structured—its ultimate value is as descriptive historical synthesis. It offers no conceptual breakthroughs and does not examine in any detail such important issues as the highly political behavior of senior officers like Colin Powell and Alexander Haig or the growing practice of retired senior officers, like William Crowe, to endorse presidential candidates

(arguably for political patronage) and, like Wesley Clark and Barry McCaffrey, to provide regular news commentary on controversial public policy issues; the firings and resignations of selected senior officers (John Singlaub, Michael Dugan, Frederick Woerner, Ron Fogleman, even Eric Shinseki), and the associated failure of senior officers to accept responsibility for gross military lapses like Abu Ghraib and the bombing of the Beirut Marine barracks, Khobar Towers, or the USS *Cole*; and, most notably, Iran-Contra and its aftermath, particularly the roles played by Robert McFarlane, John Poindexter, Oliver North, and Colin Powell. More discussion on these issues would have strengthened the author's thesis and the reader's understanding of military politicization and professionalism.

Although such omissions do not weaken the book noticeably, the author's avoidance of normative judgment is a shortcoming worth noting. Is conflict between civilian officials and the military healthy or unhealthy? Is there a proper distinction to be drawn between responsible military dissent and disobedience? Which of the military's obligations takes precedence, dutiful obedience to civilian authority or checking and balancing civilian impetuosity, ineptitude, or misconduct?

Such questions remind us that civil-military relations are an endless contest of principle and personality in democracies fledgling and mature. One suspects that this contribution from Dale Herspring will have the salutary effect of reminding us of that fact and rekindling much-needed debate on the subject.

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