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Secrets of State

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This provocative suggestion requires fuller treatment than it receives in *Citizens and Soldiers*. Although Cohen makes a convincing case that some form of UMT best satisfies America's ideological commitment, he is less convincing about its military effectiveness. Perhaps this is because it is to serve chiefly as a deterrent. But even if deterrence works, and full-scale conventional war is averted, can we be certain we will not need conscripts to augment our volunteer forces in more limited wars? Perhaps, as Cohen suggests, if American generals had had to rely exclusively on volunteers in Vietnam, they would have pursued a more intelligent strategy, but what about our other "small" war, Korea? Cohen's paradigm, though useful as a general framework, may be a bit too neat. Finally, I found puzzling the absence of any discussion of Soviet forces. For surely, Soviet military strength must be considered as one of the larger "necessities" which circumscribe American "choices" in foreign policy.

But these are minor quibbles. In any future debate over conscription, Cohen's masterful analysis will be indispensable to citizen and soldier alike.

JEAN YARBROUGH
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One would think that any book trying to trace the development of the American foreign policy apparatus from George Washington to Ronald Reagan which manages to misspell Henry Kissinger's name three times in two pages can't be all bad. But *Secrets of State* comes close. Barry Rubin (fellow, Council of Foreign Relations) aims to tell us how the foreign policy system has worked by taking a middle course between "dry diplomatic history" and journalism. His reliance upon the anecdotal and chronological, instead of the analytical and conceptual, gives him a steaming track closer to the Charybdis of Jack Anderson than the Scylla of Samuel Flagg Bemis (who is not very often "dry"). Fortunately, Mr. Rubin is a lively writer, and if some of the anecdotes seem apocryphal or hoary, they can be enjoyed.

The problem Mr. Rubin sets out for himself is real: How does the policy process work and why does the State Department of today usually fail to bring some order to the process. The problem is an old one. Can there be anyone concerned with foreign policy who doesn't know or vaguely remember the dictum: The Constitution is an open invitation to struggle for the privilege of conducting American foreign policy? From the beginning of the Republic until 1919 that struggle was usually between the President and the Senate. The game changed with Woodrow Wilson. He began the building of the imperial Presidency (Mr. Rubin includes two books by Arthur

Rubin, Barry. *Secrets of State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. 335pp. \$25

Schlesinger in his bibliography but omits *The Imperial Presidency*). The argument can be put in a different way. With Wilson begins serious American involvement in world politics, and the Constitution has not been found flexible enough to allow the "Executive" to handle the complications of world power without accruing to itself more and more power that has been taken from the Congress and from the State Department. This power has usually been grabbed under the excuse of outside dangers or emergencies that could not wait for diplomatic or congressional action. Mr. Rubin perspicaciously quotes John Quincy Adams: "There is an inevitable tendency to direct interference in foreign wars, even wars for freedom, to change the very foundations of our government from liberty to power." Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger were prepared, indeed seemed to welcome, that risk; the Congress did not. That is where we stand today, and emotional appeals against a Vietnam "syndrome" can only be used to paint over what is a constitutional problem. Mr. Rubin suggests there are administrative, procedural, and personnel solutions to his problem. These are important, but they are not the question. A powerful Presidential staff pursuing an ideological foreign policy in the Third World will not allow the State Department to bring practicality and proportion to the decisionmaking process. Only the Congress can do this, and can do it only through an adversarial relationship which is messy and confusing

both to Americans and foreigners. Mr. Rubin's book describes a striking similarity in how this problem has bedeviled two Administrations as different as the Carter and Reagan ones.

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Stoessinger, John G. *Why Nations Go To War*. 4th ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 220pp. \$25

Now in its fourth edition, John G. Stoessinger's *Why Nations Go To War* has become something of a chestnut among American textbooks dealing with violence and war. This edition does little more than update the third edition published in 1982. As a result, it retains all the good features that have made this thin volume an enduring work. Unfortunately, some of the warts which mar the text remain as well.

The chief advantages of the book are its clear, highly readable prose style and its brevity. Stoessinger is a masterful writer and storyteller, characteristics not altogether common in American political scientists, and he tells the stories of seven 20th century wars with color, literacy and grace. Moreover, he tells the tales in a manner that compacts information into a minimum of space and verbiage. For both reasons, *Why Nations Go To War* is always a favorite assigned text, especially with undergraduates.

This brevity becomes a curse for the serious student. The book surveys seven important and complex mili-