

The Academy of Political Science

475 Riverside Drive · Suite 1274 · New York, New York 10115-1274
(212) 870-2500 · FAX: (212) 870-2202 · aps@psqonline.org · <http://www.psqonline.org>

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Here is a book to be recommended, then, for the lessons to be learned from the shortcomings of its participants as well as from their valuable insights, a primer on how important government officials of a certain age and background have reflected on world affairs. Although events are sure soon to date much of the specific policy recommendations advanced here, the style of analysis represented by these two leading statesmen deserves careful attention.

TONY SMITH
Tufts University

Lessons in Disaster: McGeorge Bundy and the Path to War in Vietnam
by Gordon M. Goldstein. New York, Times Books, 2008. 320 pp. \$25.00.

I started this book with three skeptical questions. Would it contribute anything new to the Vietnam War literature? Would it be compromised by the author's relationship with his subject? Would it live up to its title of drawing "lessons" for the present and future? I was pleased with the answers to all three.

While others have focused on McGeorge Bundy (Kai Bird, for example), Gordon M. Goldstein does so with primary source material to which he had unique access. Goldstein started the project as a research assistant for Bundy's own memoir, intended to finally address Vietnam after decades of his limited willingness to do so. Bundy died in the midst of this project, but not before extensive interviews and substantial drafting (what Goldstein calls "Bundy fragments" in citing them). These bear especially on two key points.

One is Bundy's own greater willingness to finally acknowledge failure and his role in it. For years, he stuck to the position that the war "was necessary and right" (p. 19), acknowledging little more than some tactical mistakes. When Robert McNamara published his memoir, *In Retrospect* (1995), with its strong critique that "we were wrong, terribly wrong," Bundy did shift a bit to saying "it's very unlikely we were right looking at the evidence as we now have it" (p. 22). But in the Bundy fragments Goldstein draws on, we get much more: "I had a part in a great failure. I made mistakes of perception, execution and recommendation ... the war was, overall, a war we should not have fought" (pp. 24–25).

This book also contributes to the "what would JFK have done had he lived" debate? Goldstein has Bundy coming down on the side of those such as McNamara and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., that John F. Kennedy would not have escalated the commitment to ground troops and likely would have withdrawn. Bundy had "mused" on this in a 1964 oral history interview with Richard Neustadt (p. 230). Goldstein goes further, that "in his final years ... Bundy arrived at a firm judgment ... that President Kennedy would not have deployed ground combat forces to Vietnam and thus would not have Americanized the war" (p. 231). This is not conclusive; it cannot be as a matter of empirics. But Goldstein does a good job of not just asserting his

view but also of addressing the counter-arguments from other scholars and writers to substantiate his conclusion.

On this and other points, it is natural to question how much is apologia, given the author's relationship with the subject. Overall, this reviewer is comfortable with the author's analytic rigor and objectivity, that he achieves his goal of "to convey the essential insights of my collaboration with Bundy while also offering an independent analysis" (p. 24).

The book also does well in drawing lessons. These are numerous, some reflected in chapter titles (for example, "never trust the bureaucracy to get it right," "politics is the enemy of strategy"). A particularly crucial one is on the prevailing conception of credibility. Bundy's support for the war was heavily premised on Vietnam as a Munich-like test of U.S. resolve—"a fixation with 'credibility'—the quintessential Bundy conviction" (p. 240). The alternative view, stressing credibility as judgment and the capacity to distinguish between what is and is not an interest requiring making major commitments, was argued at the time inside government by some including Under Secretary of State George Ball and outside by the likes of Hans Morgenthau. But Bundy et al. dismissed more than refuted it, treating their conception of credibility as a premise to be assumed, not a proposition to be tested.

The assumption of credibility-as-resolve was even more glaring for the Iraq war and much of the George W. Bush global war on terrorism. To the extent that the foreign policy of Barack Obama operates from a more-balanced conception of credibility, American foreign policy will be well served.

BRUCE W. JENTLESON
Duke University

The Constitution and 9/11: Recurring Threats to America's Freedoms
by Louis Fisher. Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2008. 395 pp.
Cloth, \$45.00; paper, \$19.95.

Louis Fisher's *The Constitution and 9/11: Recurring Threats to America's Freedoms* is both worldly-wise and nuanced. The author critically examines post-September 11 antiterrorist policies with the detachment of a Machiavellian political scientist and the vigor of someone deeply concerned about the misuse of executive power. With two centuries of history as his topical backdrop, Fisher leaves no stone unturned as he analyzes everything from the treatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib, to military tribunals and detention, to Bush-era invocations of the state secrets privilege, to contemporary uses of warrantless surveillance, among other things. Ideologies notwithstanding, it is difficult not to be alarmed by Fisher's comprehensive and documented account of constitutional government gone awry.

It is a fact: sweeping exercises of presidential power wreak havoc on checks and balances and make a mockery of separation-of-powers princi-