



# Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan

*By Richard E. Neustadt*

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Thirty years ago Richard Neustadt published *Presidential Power*, which became a widely studied book on the theory and practice of presidential leadership. Presidents themselves read it and assign it to their staff for study, as did the instructors of hundreds of thousands of students of government. Now Richard Neustadt re-examines the theory of presidential power by testing it against events and decisions in the administrations of the later modern presidents who followed FDR, Truman and Eisenhower. To the original study of presidential power, Neustadt has added a series of chapters appraising the presidential styles and skills of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan in the light of his guiding belief that the President must consider the effect a decision will have on his prospects for the successful exercise of presidential power in the future.

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### Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Twenty-nine years ago Neustadt wrote *Presidential Power* ( LJ 6/1/61), a classic on the modern American presidency. This is the fourth revised edition of that work, in which his thesis continues to be that U.S. presidents who lead by persuasion are more successful than those who rely on the formal executive powers of command found in the Constitution. Although this edition doubles the length of the first, Neustadt is still unable to explain why some presidents ignore the tenets of democratic leadership. James David Barber's *Presidential Character* ( LJ 7/72) is a vastly more readable and predictive classic which, in a sense, builds on Neustadt's thesis. This latest edition continues a patched-on quality, with the addition of new chapters for each administration after Eisenhower's. Older editions will be sufficient for most libraries.

- William D. Pederson, *Louisiana State Univ. in Shreveport*

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Review

*Washington Post* Remains brilliant, significantly strengthened and enlarged.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Our most brilliant commentator on the Presidency brings his diagnosis up to date in this witty, inclusive and stylish book.

Aaron Wildavsky University of California, Berkeley Savvy, insightful political portraits of recent presidents, including Ronald Reagan, in relation to what is still the contemporary classic on the Presidency.

Representative Stephen J. Solarz New York An operational Bible for Presidents and their staffs, and an indispensable Baedeker for those who seek to understand both.

Fred I. Greenstein Princeton University Neustadt's book remains *the* classic account of presidential leadership, and the latest edition has a bonus -- two fascinating new chapters.

Paul E. Peterson Harvard University The discussion of Iran-Contra reveals how profound was Dick Neustadt's original interpretation of Presidential power.

Charles O. Jones University of Wisconsin He is so much in command that he doesn't have to tell all. A personal characteristic, a response, an insight -- and soon you see what he sees.

Clark M. Clifford For thirty years, *Presidential Power* has influenced students of the Presidency -- from the quiet comers of the White House to college and university campuses across the nation.

About the Author

**Richard E. Neustadt** is Douglas Dillon Professor of Government Emeritus at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. For three decades an advisor to presidents, their aides, and to members of the cabinet, he is also the author with Ernest R. May of *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (The Free Press, 1986).

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