



Richard B. Cheney and the Rise of the Imperial Vice Presidency

Bruce P. Montgomery

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On taking office in 2001, Dick Cheney crowned himself the first imperial vice president in the nation's history, transforming a traditionally inconsequential office into a de facto fourth branch of government. Taking a less journalistic and personal approach to Cheney than previous biographers, this critical new biography shows exactly how Cheney engineered his arrogation of vast executive powers—and the dire consequences his power grab has had and will long continue to have for the office of the vice presidency, the balance of powers, the Constitution, geopolitics, and America's security, strength, and prestige.

Taking advantage of the administration's global war on terrorism, a president inexperienced in matters of war and peace, and a Republican Congress that rated party power above institutional prerogatives, Vice President Cheney moved with astonishing speed and energy to assume a dominant role on the national and international stage as the effective president-in-proxy of the United States. Cheney asserted that all constitutional checks and balances and all individual liberties under the Bill of Rights are subservient to the president's powers as commander-in-chief in confronting international terrorism. Although former administrations had made power grabs in the past in times of national crisis, no president-and certainly no vice president-has ever exerted such sweeping claims of executive power on so many fronts in violation of the bedrock principles of the Constitution.



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