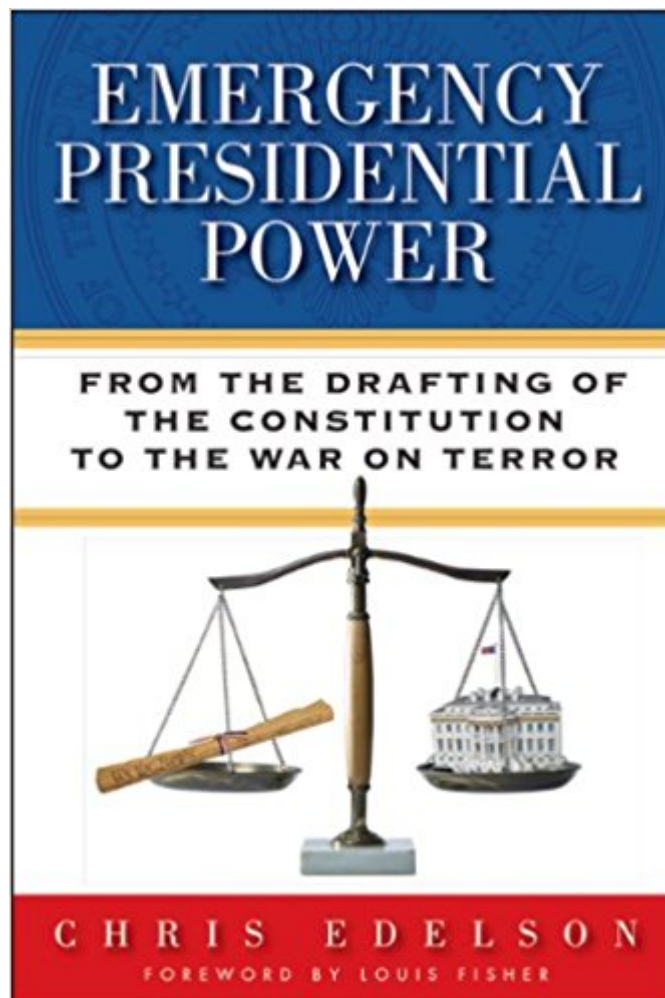




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Emergency Presidential Power: From The Drafting Of The Constitution To The War On Terror



Synopsis

Can a U.S. president decide to hold suspected terrorists indefinitely without charges or secretly monitor telephone conversations and e-mails without a warrant in the interest of national security? Was the George W. Bush administration justified in authorizing waterboarding? Was President Obama justified in ordering the killing, without trial or hearing, of a U.S. citizen suspected of terrorist activity? Defining the scope and limits of emergency presidential power might seem easy—just turn to Article II of the Constitution. But as Chris Edelson shows, the reality is complicated. In times of crisis, presidents have frequently staked out claims to broad national security power. Ultimately it is up to the Congress, the courts, and the people to decide whether presidents are acting appropriately or have gone too far. Drawing on excerpts from the U.S. Constitution, Supreme Court opinions, Department of Justice memos, and other primary documents, Edelson weighs the various arguments that presidents have used to justify the expansive use of executive power in times of crisis. *Emergency Presidential Power* uses the historical record to evaluate and analyze presidential actions before and after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The choices of the twenty-first century, Edelson concludes, have pushed the boundaries of emergency presidential power in ways that may provide dangerous precedents for current and future commanders-in-chief. Winner, Crader Family Book Prize in American Values, Department of History and Crader Family Endowment for American Values, Southeast Missouri State University

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Customer Reviews

"Chris Edelson has successfully tackled a big and controversial topic with skill and grace. His balanced, fair-minded work is a welcome addition to a literature on presidential power in times of crisis that is often captured by partisans with a cause." — Michael Genovese, author of *Presidential Prerogative*

"Edelson . . . lays down a foundation from which the current debate about the powers of the presidency can be more clearly understood." — Kirkus Reviews

Chris Edelson is assistant professor of government at American University's School of Public Affairs. He practiced law in the District of Columbia and New York and served as state legislative director for the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C.

Very well written, even-handed documentation of prime cases in American history of president's expanding, and testing the limits of their executive power in times of crisis, whether real or contrived. Really a fantastic job of tracing the philosophical underpinnings our founders based their ideas on, as well as places where they broke from tradition, to craft a truly unprecedented executive branch. Edelson then provides careful accounts of the most notable cases in the evolution of presidential power, including the wonderful inclusion of excerpted Supreme Court opinions, in line with his mission of providing as neutral a presentation of the theories and events as possible. This book becomes increasingly important every day, and is really a must have for anyone interested in the Presidency, or the character of US Government.

The author, Chris Edelson, as both lawyer and historian, provides us with a readable, comprehensive, and compelling summary of important historical precedents for recent increases in the use of power by both the Bush and Obama administrations in the wake of 9/11/01. Mr. Edelson's approach is balanced and largely nonpartisan. Like the framers of the Constitution, he does not want our president to become either a monarch or a dictator. He chooses to define the problem rather than offering solutions, viewing his role as concerned, well-informed, and insightful reporter. A great read.

This is a very timely book, well researched and well written dealing with many of the problems of our time. Mr. Edelson makes use of current and former Supreme Court decisions, Constitutional principles and prior precedent in order to supply the reader with examples of the abuse of

Presidential authority. I would highly recommend this book for anyone interested in political theory, Constitutional principles and the furtherance of justice.

Excellent reference materials, arguments and points placed in context and easy to understand. Somewhat surprised by long quotes from Supreme Court cases.

This is a good read in addition to being an incredible source of historical analysis that enables us to look at the past, present and foresee a future through informed eyes. I was amazed at what a page turner it was. As I completed each chapter, Locke, Lincoln spoke to me and I looked forward to the 411 on Korea and Truman, Nixon and Watergate on to Bush and Obama. The clarity of vision is superb. The opinions cited by the Supreme court are compelling and knocked me over with the intelligence we have as a nation brought to our discussion of presidential power, individual liberty and justice. The internment of Japanese Americans with its hat doffing to the atrocities going on in Hitler's Europe were moving and as disturbing as they should be. This book is a must for all of us as we try to understand the past and intelligently understand the present.

This book would be useful as a text book or as a read for the "wonky" and not-so-wonky among us that want to understand how the constitution governs presidential decision making especially in this era of the war on terror. Excellently written, very readable and informative.

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