



Elusive Victories: The American Presidency at War (Hardback)

By Andrew J. Polsky

Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 2012. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 236 x 163 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. On April 4, 1864, Abraham Lincoln made a shocking admission about his presidency during the Civil War. I claim not to have controlled events, he wrote in a letter, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Lincoln's words carry an invaluable lesson for wartime presidents, writes Andrew J. Polsky in this seminal book. As Polsky shows, when commanders-in-chief do try to control wartime events, more often than not they fail utterly. In *Elusive Victories*, Polsky provides a fascinating study of six wartime presidents, drawing larger lessons about the limits of the power of the White House during armed conflict. He examines, in turn, Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, showing how each gravely overestimated his power as commander-in-chief. In each case, these presidents' resources did not match the key challenges that recur from war to war. Both Lincoln and Johnson intervened in military operations, giving orders to specific units; yet both struggled with the rising unpopularity of their conflicts. Both Wilson and Bush entered hostilities with idealistic...



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