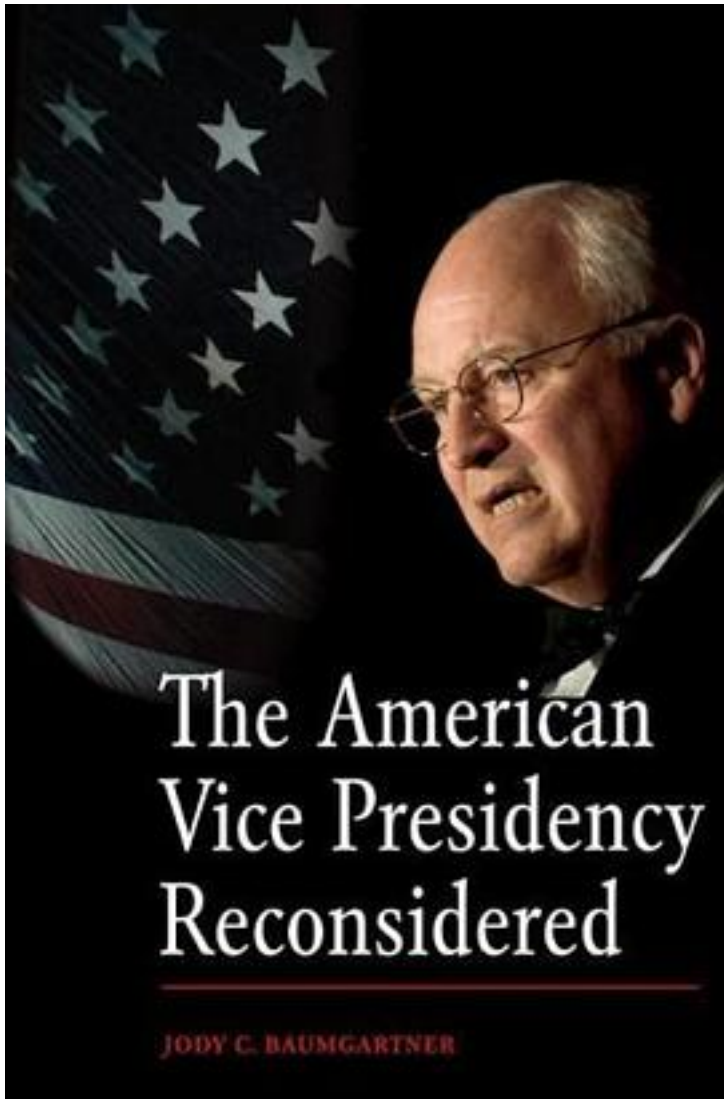


The American Vice Presidency Reconsidered



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US Vice President Dick Cheney has taken the office of second-in-command to an entirely new level of importance. He is a key advisor to the president on both domestic issues and foreign policy. When the 9/11 terrorists struck, Cheney was sequestered in an undisclosed location for longer than the president. No longer a ceremonial figurehead or legislative drudge, the vice president today consults closely with the president and plays an important role in executive decisions. Therefore, those who are chosen as running mates are examined more thoroughly than ever before, not merely for the boost they might give the presidential candidate in the general election, but also for what kind of president they might be if fate called upon them to serve. The vice presidency has only recently been recognised as very important. It was not until 1967 that the 25th Amendment provided for filling the post should it become vacant, as it had been for a total of 37 years in American history. From 1841 to 1975, more than one-third of all U.S. presidents have either died in office or quit, paving the way for the vice president to occupy the White House. Eight have become president due to the death of a sitting president and one, Gerald Ford, became president as a result of President Richard M. Nixon's resignation. The author examines the 18 men and one woman who have been vice presidents or candidates for the office since 1960 and finds that the institution has evolved into one that is fundamentally different from that envisioned by the founders.

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