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Rethinking the Administrative Presidency (Johns Hopkins Studies in American Public Policy and Management)

William G. Resh

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Why do presidents face so many seemingly avoidable bureaucratic conflicts? And why do these clashes usually intensify toward the end of presidential administrations, when a commander-in-chief's administrative goals tend to be more explicit and better aligned with their appointed leadership's prerogatives? In *Rethinking the Administrative Presidency*, William G. Resh considers these complicated questions from an empirical perspective.

Relying on data drawn from surveys and interviews, Resh rigorously analyzes the argument that presidents typically start from a premise of distrust when they attempt to control federal agencies. Focusing specifically on the George W. Bush administration, Resh explains how a lack of trust can lead to harmful agency failure. He explores the extent to which the Bush administration was able to increase the reliability—and reduce the cost—of information to achieve its policy goals through administrative means during its second term.

Arguing that President Bush's use of the administrative presidency hindered trust between appointees and career executives to deter knowledge sharing throughout respective agencies, Resh also demonstrates that functional relationships between careerists and appointees help to advance robust policy. He employs a "joists vs. jigsaws" metaphor to stress his main point: that mutual support based on optimistic trust is a more effective managerial strategy than fragmentation founded on unsubstantiated distrust.

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