Scoundrel or Über-Lieutenant? The Vice Presidency of Dick Cheney

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ABSTRACT In this essay I evaluate the vice presidency of Dick Cheney. Although roundly criticized throughout his tenure in the mainstream media and popular press for the policies he advocated and presumably helped implement, his secretive nature, his tendency to subvert standard bureaucratic procedures, and exercising undue influence over the president, there is actually no objective framework within which to evaluate vice presidents. After reviewing criticism about Cheney's tenure in office, I offer an alternative view based on what presidents expect from their vice presidents. From this perspective, in his role as loyal lieutenant for George W. Bush, we are forced to conclude that Cheney was actually a successful vice president.

REFERENCES


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Adam McKay's new biopic, Vice, has Dick Cheney for a protagonist, but the former vice president isn't quite shown in a favorable light. The film delves into how Cheney became one of the most powerful VPs in history, and the downsides that came with his quest for power. McKay read various Cheney biographies, including Angler by Barton Gellman and Cheney's own memoir In My Time, in order to make Vice as accurate as possible, according to The New York Times. But what does Cheney actually think about Vice? In an interview with Screen Daily, McKay claimed that Cheney didn't want Vice In his memoir, Cheney claims he did not want the job and would merely vet a list of potential candidates, despite Bush's appeal. “You know Dick, you're the solution to my problem.” The movie suggests he was always keen for the job and played a shrewd hand. The events of 9/11 would be the trigger not just for the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan to drive out the Taliban from Kabul and mission to kill or capture Osama bin Laden. Five days after the attacks, Cheney was asked by Tim Russert how the government would respond to the terror attacks that killed about 3,000 people. The US military, he said, would of course have a role. Dick Cheney is the most powerful yet most unpopular vice president in U.S. history. He has thrived alongside a president who from day one had little interest in policy and limited experience in the ways of Washington. Yet Cheney's quiet, steady rise to prominence over a span of three decades occurred largely behind the scenes. Now veteran reporters Lou Dubose and Jake Bern Dick Cheney is the most powerful yet most unpopular vice president in U.S. history. He has thrived alongside a president who from day one had little interest in policy and limited experience in the ways of Washington.