

MOVING BEYOND POLITICS
IN THE SELECTION OF
NATIONAL SECURITY LEADERS

ONLY *the* MOST ABLE



ONLY THE MOST ABLE:

MOVING BEYOND POLITICS IN THE SELECTION OF NATIONAL SECURITY LEADERS

BY STEPHEN M. DUNCAN

ABOUT THE BOOK

The nature of the threats facing America today has drastically reduced the margin for error in certain political appointments. In *Only the Most Able*, Stephen M. Duncan draws on a lifetime of military, public service, executive, and legal experience to study the contrasts in civilian and military leadership and the inevitable tensions in the civil-military relationship. He focuses critical attention on the political appointment process, especially in those departments and agencies of the government that deal with national and homeland security. He explains how the current methods for making appointments too often permit appointees to assume positions for which they are not qualified and not prepared. He argues that candidates for political appointment should already have successful executive, military, and/or other experience which is directly relevant to the position for which they are being considered. Identifying the successful traits of leaders such as Winston

Churchill, General George Marshall, nationally-known business executives, and others, Duncan argues with unusual insight and candor why the quality and performance of senior political appointees who are charged even in part with the nation's security, must be improved, and offers specific recommendations on how this can be accomplished. This timely book will appeal to Americans of all political persuasions, as well as those with particular interests in political and military history.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"President Reagan said that "To control and successfully implement policy, you need to control appointments." Stephen Duncan gives insight and illustrations of mistakes officials in various Administrations have made in not heeding this advice. A must-read for all serving in higher levels of government, and for all Americans who desire a government that works."

— Hon. E. Pendleton James, Former Special Assistant to the President and Director, White House Office of Presidential Personnel

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Duncan served as Assistant Secretary of Defense in two presidential administrations and as the Pentagon's senior Drug War official.

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