



Recarving Rushmore: Ranking the Presidents on Peace, Prosperity, and Liberty

By *Ivan Eland*

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Evaluating presidents on the merits of whether their policies promoted peace, prosperity, and liberty, this ranking system takes a distinctly new approach. Historians and scholars have long tended to give higher rankings to presidents who served during wartime, were well spoken, or exceeded in expanding the power of the executive office. However, this new examination cuts through these longstanding biases and political rhetoric to offer a new nonpartisan system of ranking that is based purely on how well each president's policies adhered with the founders' original intention of limiting federal power in all its aspects. As a result, the book provides an alternative history of the United States as seen through the founders' likely vision of subsequent presidential actions. These presidential rankings will surprise most and enlighten even acknowledged experts on the presidency.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Well-written and fascinating, *Recarving Rushmore* provides a long-overdue reassessment of the actual record of all U.S. presidents. Thanks to Ivan Eland's efforts, the traditional classroom narrative of our 'great presidents' and their glorious deeds lies in well-deserved ruin." —Thomas E. Woods, Jr., senior fellow, Ludwig von Mises Institute, and author, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* and *33 Questions About American History You're Not Supposed to Ask*

"While conventional accounts glorify the flagrant misdeeds of the 'Imperial Presidency,' this insightful and crucial book provides an inspiring vision for both conservatives and liberals on the crucial need to reign in White House power and restore peace, prosperity and liberty." —Ron Paul, U.S. Congressman

"According to American historians, the best presidents get us into the biggest wars, impose the most interventionist economic policies, and trample civil liberties by expanding executive power beyond what the Constitution permits. Eland makes a novel proposal: Why not rank presidents according to the traditional American values of peace, prosperity, and liberty? Read this important new book and find out why John Tyler may be America's greatest president!" —Thomas DiLorenzo, professor of economics, Loyola College, Maryland, and author, *Hamilton's Curse: How Jefferson's Archenemy Betrayed the American Revolution*

"A much-needed corrective to the American history we are all taught in our schools. We are propagandized to adulate all American presidents regardless of what their record might have been. Dr. Eland has provided a far more accurate account of the actions of these men (and they are indeed men, not gods). Historians who are dedicated to the truth are indebted to him for his efforts." —Ronald Hamowy, professor emeritus of history, University of Alberta

"By focusing on peace, prosperity, and liberty, *Recarving Rushmore* moves us miles closer to a proper evaluation of America's presidents—especially those of the 20th century—than the hallowed (but misleading) Schlesinger poll of prominent historians. Eland makes an eloquent and persuasive case, for example, that Harding and Coolidge were better presidents than were FDR and LBJ." —Burton W. Folsom, Charles F. Kline Chair in History, Hillsdale College, and author, *New Deal or Raw Deal? How FDR's Economic Legacy Has Damaged America*

"Judging presidents by a deceptively simple metric—their impact on peace, prosperity, and liberty—leads Eland to reach radical conclusions about the rankings of presidents. Whether you agree that Coolidge was a good president and FDR a bad one, you'll never again glibly think that it is obvious which presidents are good or bad. It isn't—and Eland shows us why." —Richard Shenkman, editor, *History News Network*, and author, *Cherished Myths of American History*

"Colorful, entertaining, and profound. Ivan Eland shatters the grand illusion that great presidents are those who wage war or deprive people of their liberty, either here or abroad. This new 'gold standard' for

measuring presidential performance will upend what we 'know' about 'great' presidents and will challenge your view of political history, one president at a time." —Jonathan Bean, professor of history, Southern Illinois University

"A 'very good' collection of concise assessments of each administration's domestic, defense, and foreign policies. This book is 'better' in terms of the analysis of each administration's role in an evolving process of shaping the legacy of prior administrations for their successors. And the book is 'best' in the ways it provides insights into how a libertarian perspective on these issues is meaningful for the broader policy debates. Hence this volume's focus concurrently warrants the praise: 'Very Good, Better, and Best.'" —Edward A. Olsen, emeritus professor, National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School

About the Author

Ivan Eland is a senior fellow and director of the Center on Peace & Liberty at the Independent Institute, a former director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute, and a former principal defense analyst with the Congressional Budget Office. He is the author of *The Empire Has No Clothes*, *No War for Oil*, *Partitioning for Peace*, and *Putting Defense Back Into U.S. Defense Policy*. His work has been featured in numerous publications, including the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Northwestern Journal of International Affairs*, and the *Washington Post*, and on television programs such as ABC's *World News*, CNN's *Crossfire*, and various Fox News shows. He lives in Washington, DC.

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