

# PERIODICALS

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

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## POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

### *Beware the Good Prince*

"The reigns of good princes have always been most dangerous to the liberties of their peoples," wrote the philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), because "their successors, managing the government with different thoughts, would draw the actions of those good rulers into precedent."

American conservatives, writes Rep. Edwards (R-Okla.), chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, have forgotten Locke's warning as well as the views of America's Founding Fathers. They have become advocates of the Imperial Presidency. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan launched a campaign to win a line-item veto for the president, and conservatives in and out of Congress (including George Bush) joined in. Complaints about congressional "meddling" in foreign policy—Central America, arms control treaties, weapons sales to other nations—have become standard fare in Republican stump speeches.

"The call for a line-item veto," says Edwards, "became a convenient shorthand means of blaming congressional Democrats (correctly, I believe) for excessive

"Of Conservatives and Kings" by Rep. Mickey Edwards, in *Policy Review* (Spring 1989), 214 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20002.

federal spending." But the precedents for congressional power of the purse are clear. In 17th-century England, the king was denied the power to amend money bills passed by the House of Commons. At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the Founders only barely agreed to give the chief executive any veto power at all; even then, they made the vote subject to congressional override.

Yet, the Founders specifically reversed English precedent on war powers—raising fleets and armies, declaring war—vesting powers that had belonged to the king in Congress alone.

How quickly conservatives have forgotten that Democrats controlled the White House for 32 of the 48 years before Reagan! During those years, Edwards reminds his colleagues, congressional Republicans used their power to challenge, among other things, President Jimmy Carter's SALT II treaty. Edwards shares their frustration with the Democratic Congress. But he maintains that the answer is to win more House and Senate seats, not to cloak the presidency in royal purple.

### *Dividing the Spoils*

The Irish did it, the Italians did it, the Poles did it, and so did other American ethnic groups. In city after city during the 19th and early 20th centuries, these ethnic communities gathered their strength,

"Blacks and Hispanics in Urban Politics" by Kenneth R. Mladenka, in *American Political Science Review* (March 1989), 1527 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

elected one of their own to city hall, and then reaped the rewards: an array of municipal jobs, from street sweeper to budget director. Are blacks repeating this storied pattern of upward mobility?