

political scientist.

Johnson was at times "a difficult boss," Barrett acknowledges. Indeed, according to former White House Press Secretary George Reedy, LBJ was a "miserable" human being—"a bully, sadist, lout, and egotist." Nevertheless, Barrett says, Johnson eagerly sought out "an impressive array of advisers" who were *not* overly deferential. And he cloaked the advisory process in secrecy not just to satisfy the desires of his own psyche but to exploit his "considerable political understanding of how to achieve policy goals."

That is how Johnson made key decisions concerning the Vietnam War, Barrett says. Until just a few days before his fateful July 1965 decision to commit 50,000 more troops to South Vietnam, for example, he met with advisers who rejected the notion "that it was necessary to 'save' South Vietnam." The prediction of Under Secretary of State George Ball that the war could not be won has been widely reported, but at least five other people told LBJ much the same thing. These consultations were not just window dressing, Barrett maintains. "The best

evidence shows Johnson acting on Vietnam as he did on other issues—keeping his options open until the virtual moment of decision, all the while moving toward that denouement."

LBJ followed a similar *modus operandi* in domestic affairs. His penchant for secrecy, Barrett says, reflected a "rational, even sophisticated understanding of how leaders might achieve political and policy goals." From 1964 to '68, for example, Johnson appointed 40 task forces to develop domestic-policy proposals. Composed largely of people from outside his administration, the task forces played an important part in shaping LBJ's legislative program. But they were kept out of sight. They "will operate without publicity," Johnson told his cabinet in 1964. "It is very important that this not become a public operation." He wanted the task forces to be free to suggest unconventional ideas, without stirring up public controversy—and he wanted to remain free himself to decide which ideas were politically feasible and worth pursuing. But some of his own advisers, and many later analysts, failed to see the method in LBJ's mania for secrecy.

## Farewell To Conservatism?

"The End of Conservatism" by John B. Judis, in *The New Republic* (Aug. 31, 1992), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The conservative movement that was born during the 1950s and won national power with Ronald Reagan in 1980 hardly exists any more as a coherent force, contends Judis, the biographer of William F. Buckley, Jr., and a contributing editor of the *New Republic*. Now that the Cold War is over, he says, American conservatives "have slipped back into the chaos and impotence that prevailed before the mid-1950s."

The movement emerged about 35 years ago as a powerful force, in Judis' analysis, largely as a result of the efforts of Whittaker Chambers and other conservative intellectuals, many of them ex-leftists, associated with Buckley's *National Review*. They made it conservatism's first priority to meet the communist threat to the free world, and read isolationists, nativists, and anti-Semites out of the movement. Chambers and his peers, Judis writes, "influenced a new generation of politicians led by [Arizona Senator Barry] Goldwater, and the politicians in turn mediated between the intellectuals and the general electorate." After Goldwater's overwhelming defeat in the presidential election of 1964, the conservative movement adopted fresh political strategies (such as emphasizing

so-called social issues) to win over new constituencies, such as Protestant fundamentalists and disenchanted Democrats. "Reagan's landslide victory [in 1980] seemed to augur the beginning of a conservative realignment comparable in depth and scope to the New Deal realignment of 1932," Judis notes, "but the big shift never took place."

Victory in the Cold War took away "the movement's underlying focus and rationale. Without the priority of national defense, existing squabbles over federal spending, appointments, arts policy, and school prayer suddenly became major conflicts." And older conflicts that the movement had long suppressed began to resurface. "Conservatives began fighting over foreign aid, immigration, Israel, and even Jewish influence in terms little different from 1948," Judis writes.

The "noisiest quarrel" took place between the traditionalist "paleoconservatives" and the ex-liberal "neoconservatives." The former accused the latter "of being crypto-socialists and of mistaking, in [author Russell] Kirk's words, 'Tel Aviv for the capital of the United States.'" The neoconservatives accused the "paleocons"

of reviving, as Richard John Neuhaus put it, "the forbidden bigotries once confused with conservatism." The presidential bid of paleocon Pat Buchanan—whom some conservatives accused of having made anti-Semitic statements—widened the rift.

Since Reagan's retirement, the conservative movement has had no agreed-upon national leader. Conservatives have been loudly discon-

tented with President George Bush. Judis suggests that this discontent is a form of self-denial. If "Bush lacks a domestic policy, and the Republicans lack what [a conservative congressman called] a 'coherent national agenda,'" Judis concludes, it is a result of the fact that "the conservatives, who provided both policy and agenda for the party over the last decade, are no longer capable of doing so."

## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

### *The Gulf War's 'Friendly Fire'*

"Friendly Fire: The Inevitable Price" by Charles R. Shrader, in *Parameters* (Autumn 1992), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pa. 17013-5050.

Of a total of 467 U.S. battle casualties in the Persian Gulf War, nearly one-fourth were caused by "friendly fire." Thirty-five U.S. soldiers were killed by U.S. weapons, and 72 were wounded. While there have been "friendly fire" casualties in all wars, modern weapons have made such losses more likely, according to Shrader, a military historian and author of *Amicide: The Problem of Friendly Fire in Modern War* (1982).

The great range of today's weapons sometimes makes it harder to tell friend from foe. The use of high-tech thermal, radar, and laser sights can make identification more difficult. In one Gulf War incident, six U.S. soldiers were killed and 25 were wounded when the crews of Abrams tanks using thermal sights in a blinding rainstorm fired on other U.S. armored vehicles. In earlier conflicts, tankers unable to sight their targets likewise would have been unable to fire.

Although there were only nine air-to-ground incidents (resulting in 11 dead and 15 wounded) in the Gulf War, they have been the most common—and most destructive—type of "friendly fire" incident in the past, Shrader observes. "The speed of modern high-performance jet aircraft equipped with area weapons such as napalm, cluster

bombs, and high-volume-of-fire cannon significantly reduce decision and reaction time for pilots."

The reporting of friendly-fire incidents was thorough during the Persian Gulf War, in part because its limited scope and duration made full investigations feasible. Commanders are often reluctant to report such incidents, however, and until 1985, U.S. Army regulations did not require it. During the Vietnam War, in fact, they provided that friendly-fire casualties be classified as "killed in action" or "result of hostile action."

During the Gulf War, Shrader notes, various



*An Army sergeant grieves for a comrade, in the body bag at right, killed by friendly fire during the Persian Gulf War.*