



When Presidents Lie: A History of Official Deception and Its Consequences

Eric Alterman

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Lying has become pervasive in American life—but what happens when the falsehoods are perpetrated by the Oval Office? As the lies told by our government become more and more intricate, they begin to weave a tapestry of deception that creates problems far larger than those lied about in the first place.

Eric Alterman's *When Presidents Lie* is a compelling historical examination of four specific post-World War II presidential lies whose consequences were greater than could ever have been predicted. FDR told the American people that peace was secure in Europe, setting the stage for McCarthyism and the cold war. John F. Kennedy's unyielding stance during the Cuban missile crisis masked his secret deal with the Soviet Union. Misrepresented aggression at the Gulf of Tonkin by the North Vietnamese gave LBJ the power to start a war. Finally, Ronald Reagan's Central American wars ended in the ignominy of the Iran-contra scandal.

In light of George W. Bush's war in Iraq, which Alterman examines in the book's conclusion, *When Presidents Lie* is a warning—one more relevant today than ever before—that the only way to prevent these lies is America's collective demand for truth.

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