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POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

Volume 115 · Number 2 · Summer 2000

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Political Science Quarterly

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The retrospective defenders of pro-Soviet espionage rarely argue that American laws in the 1940s and 1950s had no compelling legitimacy that democrats were obliged to respect. Yet referring to the law cannot be enough as it leaves open the problem of when civil disobedience can be justified in matters of foreign policy and security.

In the United States there is no consensus for a nationalist self-understanding in which spies simply deserve severe punishment for betraying the nation-family. Democratic political commitments are supposed to do much of the work of providing civic bonds. This framework makes espionage based on principle a serious issue because such espionage challenges the basic claim that American institutions are decently democratic and thus legitimate. Those who imagine that all this ended with the cold war have a limited memory and imagination. Recall recent arguments about Israli spying in the United States. Or think about the activities of some members and allies of the Reagan administration in covertly aiding combatants during the Central American wars. If things had gone differently in the 1980s and South African conflicts became a civil war, it is easy to imagine that some Americans would have sought to aid a besieged anticommunist regime. As national attachments are widely questioned but national realities persist, we have not yet seen the last of what some too easily dismiss as antique cold war debates about betrayal and loyalty.

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Edward M. Kennedy: A Biography *by Adam Clymer. New York, William Morrow and Company, 1999. 692 pp. $27.50.*

In writing this book, Adam Clymer has accomplished a rare feat. He has produced a work that has great value to scholars of American politics as well as the general public, because it explains a single legislative career in the context of the changes in the legislative process that have occurred over the past thirty years. That career happens to belong to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who just may be the most famous senator in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Rather than focus on Senator Kennedy's family triumphs and tragedies, and his personal travails, most of the book is devoted to drawing a comprehensive picture of a master legislator. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Kennedy's partisanship or ideology, it is without dispute that he has been involved in more major legislation (and even minor) than any other senator or representative. Clymer points out that Senator Kennedy has a reputation today of being involved in the areas of health care and civil rights, but his long career has encompassed a far broader spectrum of issues, including arms control, foreign policy, immigration, crime, and even some pork barrel politics. The author

adeptly shows how Kennedy increased his standing and influence in the Senate by watching, listening, and learning in his early years, and always offering the possibility of compromise. Kennedy has consistently relied on negotiation and outreach to those with whom he disagrees in order to get bills enacted into law. Over time, he has worked successfully and repeatedly with conservative Republican senators, including Senator Ted Stevens (R–AK), Senator Orrin Hatch (R–UT), and even former Senator Lauch Faircloth (R–NC). At the same time, Senator Kennedy was no stranger to manipulating the complex rules of the Senate to ensure consideration of legislation on the Senate floor, even at the risk of incurring the wrath of his colleagues—Democrats and Republicans alike.

But Clymer is also careful to balance the picture he draws of the hard working and dedicated Senator Kennedy with the man who makes repeated mistakes in his personal life. He does not elaborate on these mistakes but they are included in the book at the points at which they highlight the limitations that personal mistakes can have on a political career. Of course there is a good deal of discussion of the ever potential run for the presidency that never truly materialized, but this biography highlights the transition Kennedy made from potential presidential candidate to full time senator. Some senators never rebound from a failed stab at the presidency; given how much pressure Kennedy endured for over a decade, it is remarkable that he emerged to be the legislator that Clymer so accurately portrays.

As with any book, however, there are some drawbacks, but none so severe as to deter the reader. In his efforts to be clear and analytical, Clymer sometimes writes with too little emotion or enthusiasm about a particular event, or gives too little of his own thoughts about Kennedy's actions in and outside the Senate. Along these lines, the author might have included more excerpts from Kennedy's floor speeches, particularly on South Africa and civil rights, so that readers could get a sense of Kennedy's true passion for particular issues. Lastly, Clymer pays too little attention to the relationship between Kennedy and his committee and personal staff. Though he describes several key staff members over the years, the book does not adequately explore the amount of leeway and flexibility that Kennedy gave to his staff to act in his name while negotiating the legislative process.

In showing us how Kennedy has accomplished so much over these past three decades, Clymer provides an important window into the future of American politics. In a time when partisanship in the Congress seems to be at an all time high, the story of Senator Kennedy—the legislator—should be required reading for all students and scholars of American politics, as well as more than a few new members of Congress.

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