



# Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime

*Eliot Cohen*

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## **Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime** Eliot Cohen

Using the example of great modern leaders - Lincoln, Clemenceau, Churchill and Ben Gurion - all of whom were without military experience, Supreme Command argues that, in fact, civilian statesman can be brilliant commanders in times of war. Supreme Command is about leadership in wartime, or more precisely about the tension between two kinds of leadership, civil and military. Eliot Cohen uncovers the nature of strategy-making by looking at four great democratic war statesman and seeing how they dealt with the military leaders who served them. In doing so he reveals fundamental aspects of leadership and provides not merely an historical analysis but a study of issues that remain crucial today. By examining the cases of four of the greatest war statesmen of the twentieth century he explores the problem of how people confront the greatest challenges that can befall them, in this case national leaders. Beginning with a discussion of civil-military relations from a theoretical point of view, Cohen lays out the conventional beliefs about how politicians should deal with generals and the extent to which either can influence the outcome of war. From these he draws broader lessons for students of leadership generally.

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