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Book Review: To Serve the President: Continuity and Innovation in the White House Staff, by Bradley H. Patterson

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The author of two previously well-received books on White House staffing, Patterson (National Academy of Public Administration) is the single best source for understanding and explaining the changes in staffing brought about by the consequential and controversial presidency of George W. Bush. Intended as "an encyclopedic look at the contemporary White House Staff," Patterson succeeds at both explaining and evaluating the changes made in the past several years and how they impact governing. In his analysis of the controversial Cheney vice presidency (Patterson says Americans "should applaud this transformation of the vice presidential role") and the Bush innovations in policy (strengthening the powers of the presidency), organization, (for example, the Department of Homeland Security and the Executive Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives), and physical structures (modernizing and updating key offices such as the Situation Room), he concludes that all contribute to increasing the president's reach and impact. This masterful work will serve as a valuable resource for the incoming administration, and should be widely read by those interested in the art and craft of governing.

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Summing Up: Highly recommended. All readership levels.