

Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime

Who makes the key decisions in war, elected civilian leaders or professional soldiers? Few questions are more consequential or complex. Using the leadership of Abraham Lincoln, Georges Clemenceau, Winston Churchill, and David Ben-Gurion to build his argument, Cohen offers compelling proof that, as Clemenceau put it, "War is too important to leave to the generals." By examining the shared leadership traits of four politicians who triumphed in extraordinarily varied military campaigns, Cohen argues that active statesmen make the best wartime leaders, pushing their military subordinates to succeed where they might have failed if left to their own devices.

Session I - The Soldier and the Statesman

Topics: Normal theory of civil-military relations; War as a political instrument; Expertise and error in wartime

Reading: Preface, pp. 1-13

Session II - Lincoln Sends a Letter

Topics: Lincoln: inspired amateur; The right strategy and generals; Campaign and statecraft: "inseparable and interdependent"

Reading: pp. 15-51

Session III - Clemenceau Pays a Visit

Topics: Going to the front; Balancing strategies: Coalition stresses

Reading: pp. 52-94

Session IV - Churchill Asks a Question

Topics: "Public menace;" Art of interrogation; Probing for choices

Reading: pp. 95-132

Session V - Ben-Gurion Holds A Seminar

Topics: Starting afresh; Fundamentals amidst complexity

Reading: pp. 133-172

Session VI - Leadership Without Genius

Topics: Vietnam's lessons; War and democracy; "Routine methods"

Reading: pp. 173-207

Session VII - The Unequal Dialogue

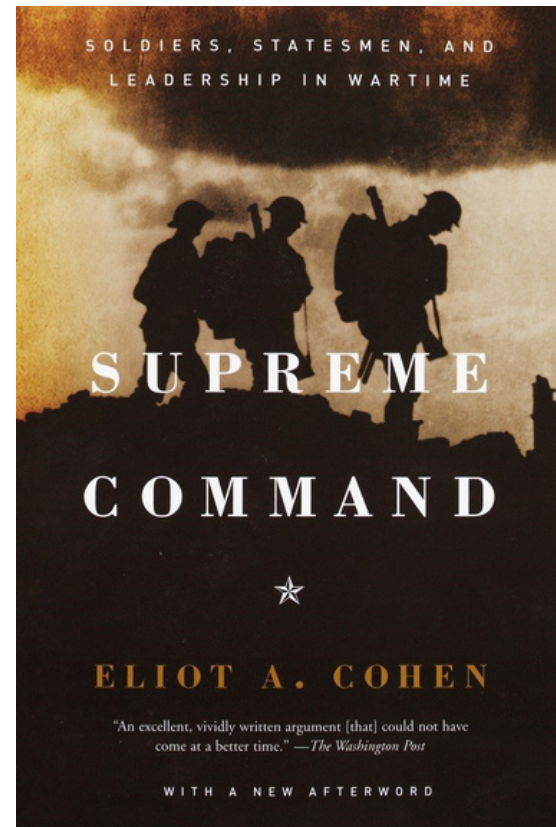
Topics: Salutory arguments; Virtues of moderation and change

Reading: pp. 208-224

Session VIII - Rumsfeld's War

Topics: Clash at the Pentagon; Rumsfeld's convictions; the Iraq War

Reading: pp. 225-240



Additional Reading

- Samuel Huntington. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations.*