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# political book notes

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*Public affairs books to be published in July and August*

**An American Renaissance.** Jack F. Kemp. Harper and Row, \$8.95. The publishers of this volume would like readers to believe that Congressman Kemp has written a book of deep new thoughts free from the label of "left" or "right." The truth is that this is mostly a standard recitation of traditional conservatism glorifying the individual over the collective, subsidies over taxes, and hatred of Washington.

—Eric Schnurer

**Energy from Heaven and Earth.** Edward Teller. W.H. Freeman, \$15.

**Energy Future: The Report of the Harvard Business School Energy Project.** Robert Stobaugh, Daniel Yergin. Random, \$12.95

**Financing and Managing State and Local Government.** Richard W. Lindholm, Hartojo Wignjowijoto. Lexington, \$29.50.

**The Flying White House.** J.F. ter Horst, Col. Ralph Albertazzie. Coward McCann & Geoghegan, \$11.95. Jerry ter Horst was noble in his leaving of the Ford White House and Col. Albertazzie is said to be a fine pilot, but they share a taste for dull trivia that makes for some truly numbing passages in their book about Air Force One, including 36 lines of whether the book Johnson held when he took the presidential oath was a Bible or a Catholic missal. There are, however, some genuinely interesting anecdotes. One—concerning Haldeman's arbitrary firing of Robert Taylor, the chief of the White House secret service detail—illustrates the extent to which Haldeman's power was universally resented, but virtually unchallenged even by those personally closest to the President:

"... [Taylor's] departure from the White

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House—without a parting word of commendation from the President—puzzled even members of the Nixon family.

“Flying out to California aboard Air Force One a few weeks later, Mrs. Nixon remarked to Albertazze, ‘Isn’t it terrible what they did to Bob Taylor? I don’t know why Dick let them get away with it.’ Julie Nixon Eisenhower told a flight steward that she couldn’t understand her father’s decision. Rose Mary Woods, the President’s secretary, complained openly about ‘the hatchet job on Bob Taylor.’”

—*Charles Peters*

**Friends in High Places.** Lucianne Goldberg, Sondia Till Robinson. Marek, \$11.95. Another book setting out to demonstrate that power is the greatest aphrodisiac but only succeeding in demonstrating that Washington novels are a great soporific.

**Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy.** Peter G. Brown, Douglas Maclean. Lexington, \$16.95. This collection of essays is remarkably good for its species—born-in-academia. Particularly helpful is the chapter by Abraham Sirkin on the difficulties of implementing a consistent human rights policy. But recent events—which unfortunately have rendered some of the book’s chapters out of date—emphasize the importance of trying to overcome those problems. Our boycott of Ugandan goods, for example, helped begin a destabilization process that ended in Idi Amin’s removal. And the revolution in Iran illustrated that a slighting of human rights issues, far from being sophisticated *realpolitik*, can simply be shortsightedness.

—*Daniel Ambrose*

**Katharine the Great: Katharine Graham and *The Washington Post*.** Deborah Davis. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$10.

**Modern Government and Constitutionalism.** Raymond Polin. Nelson-Hall, \$18.95/\$9.95. A lengthy political science primer, out-of-date concerning important recent developments on Capitol Hill such as the budget process and the out-of-control, individualistic atmosphere dominant in both Houses.

—*Thomas A. Dine*

**Nuclear Disaster in the Urals.** Zhores A. Medvedev. Norton, \$12.95. The world’s most serious nuclear accident did not occur at Three Mile Island. It is believed to have occurred in the Southern Urals of Russia in late 1957. Its exact nature is still

an official secret—both in the East and in the West—but Zhores A. Medvedev, a dissident Soviet biologist now living in London, has pieced together a coherent account of the devastation from a curiously large body of Soviet scientific literature on the irradiation of fish, birds, mice, deer, trees, and even entire irradiated lakes.

Medvedev believes that in 1957 there was an explosion in underground tanks or trenches where the Soviets had stored the nuclear wastes from their weapons program, then struggling to catch up with a huge U.S. lead. As the U.S. has since discovered at Hanford, Washington, wastes that are laced with a residue of plutonium have to be carefully watched. If the plutonium ever collects together in the same area, you could have what the scientists sometimes refer to as a “poof.” It would not be a very large explosion as nuclear explosions go, but it would be large enough to blast a great deal of highly radioactive, long-lived debris into the environment. Medvedev estimates that an area between 800 and 1,200 miles square was severely contaminated; a chunk of land roughly the size of Rhode Island was suddenly rendered uninhabitable. What is least known about the accident is what has happened to the people. Medvedev estimates that “possible tens of thousands” of Russians had to be evacuated. Some probably died quite soon from the vomiting and diarrhea induced by the radiation sickness, others may be dying now from cancers, still others will survive to see the deformity of their children and their grandchildren.

The Russians have not had their debate about the hazards of nuclear technology. As Medvedev points out, western intelligence agencies, including the CIA, have helped keep the secret, letting it out in dribbles and drabbles a decade or two later that, yes, something serious might have happened in the Southern Urals.

—*John J. Fialka*

**Nuclear Power and the Public Safety.** Elizabeth S. Rolph. Lexington, \$17.95.

**Plea Bargaining or Trial? The Process of Criminal Case Disposition.** Lynn M. Mather. Lexington, \$16.95.

**Shall America Be Defended: Salt II and Beyond.** Lt. Gen. Daniel Graham, USA (Ret). Arlington, \$10.95.

**Union Rule in the Schools: Big-City Politics in Transition.** William J. Grimshaw. Lexington, \$18.50.