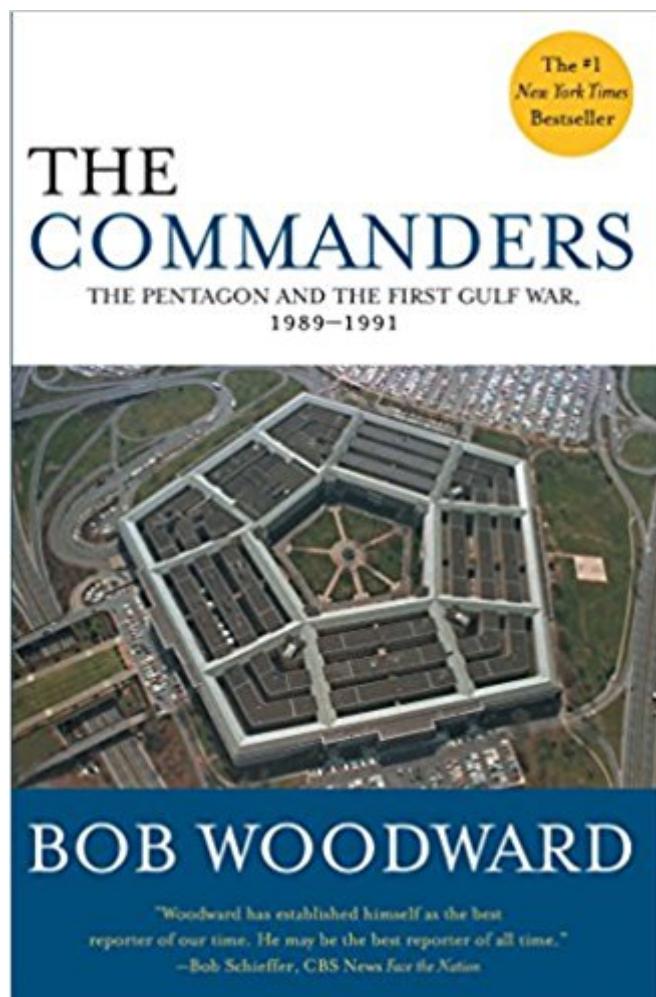


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# The Commanders



## **Synopsis**

It is impossible to examine any part of the war on terrorism in the twenty-first century without seeing the hand of Dick Cheney, Colin Powell or one of their loyalists. The Commanders, an account of the use of the military in the first Bush administration, is in many respects their storyâ "the intimate account of the tensions, disagreements and debates on the road to war. It is impossible to examine any part of the war on terrorism in the twenty-first century without seeing the hand of Dick Cheney, Colin Powell or one of their loyalists. The Commanders, an account of the use of the military in the first Bush administration, is in many respects their storyâ "the intimate account of the tensions, disagreements and debates on the road to war.

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## **Customer Reviews**

I am a big fan of Woodward, so much so that I would even consider reading his shopping list. Overall this book gives the reader some very interesting stories about the military preparation and political decision making that led up to the Attack on Panama and the Gulf War. The book also gives you the details of the inner workings of the Pentagon and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I do not think there is a current writer / investigative reporter that has the ability to get the inside information Woodward always does, at time I wonder if he does not pay people to take tape recorders with them to meetings. He provides so much detail and very useful explanations of the process that you really feel that you are there. He always puts together a great book and he has done it here again. I also have the book by the 1st Bush "A World Transformed", and in the book he states that for the most

part everything in this Woodward book is correct, I do not think you can get a better recommendation then that. You will defiantly enjoy this book.

I found this book well worth the read. I quite honestly had forgotten many of the events surrounding the invasion of Panama and the Gulf War. This book brought it all back into perspective.

Woodward's research and ability to tell the whole story gives you a "fly on the wall" status. He tries not to make any judgements either on the events themselves or the players involved. Woodward succeeds in laying it all out there for you. I will admit Woodward does seem to have a bias toward Powell, but not enough so that you think he is forcing him on you. He doesn't paint an overly rosy picture of Bush, often leaving you wondering about Bush's decision-making skills or intentions. This may only be because he was not able to personally use Bush as a source.

Woodward's books are all the same. They are detailed, well researched and incredibly readable. Each one a treat. The most amusing aspect of them, (considering that he is co-author of the book that brought down Nixon) is the reverence with which he treats the establishment figures. Doubtless this is because they are his sources. If one keeps this bias in mind and reads between the lines a bit, you can generally get a good idea of who's who and what's what. This particular book is an examination of the military preparation and political decision making that led up to the Attack on Panama and The Gulf War. The insight into the military command structure and the perspectives of the men in the chain of command is excellent. It could also be viewed as a love letter to Colin Powell, doubtless it helped to establish the Generals reputation as a 'great man'. Riveting and gripping, I recommend the book highly.

This book starts at the beginning of the GHW Bush Administration and goes through to the very beginning of the Gulf War. It's always a little difficult to know how accurate Woodward's recounts are of conversations and inner-thoughts of the most important people, but there are rarely serious complaints about the accuracy of his books - at least as far as I am aware. For the most part, the book comes from the perspective of Powell and Cheney, with important additions from other key folks at the Pentagon and White House. The beauty of reading about the GHW Bush Administration is that one also learns about the GW Bush Administration, for many of the key players came back for an encore. Woodward did a top notch job of discussing important issues in a way that appeals to the general reader. I hope he continues to do so with the GW Bush Administration; both "Bush at War" and "Plan of Attack" are fine books, but "The Commanders" is much better.

I bought this off the bargain list about a year ago but only recently picked it up to read. Frankly, I thought it was going to be a somewhat boring replay of the gulf war with some special attention paid to the inner workings of the Pentagon and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). I bought it to get some insight into the workings of the JCS. Yes, it was about those topics but boring - absolutely not. The other reviewers are not kidding when they refer to a 'fly on the wall'. I frequently read a line and found myself staring at the quotation marks and asking "How did Woodward get that quote?".

I am an 11th grade history student who is very intellectual but has one problem- I cannot read nonfiction. However, when I read this book by Woodward for a class assignment, I found the book so readable that I was enthralled and even enjoyed reading through the engrossing decision-making and conversations. What's more, a reader feels like they get the real facts from the book and see the real reasons that decision makers act in certain ways; it is hardly a random action- these men take their jobs seriously and do it well. Cynicism I may have felt towards government has become more controlled and more muted after reading this book. I recommend it.

I enjoyed this book and learned a great deal about what is right and what is wrong with the American political-military machine. It shocked me how much infighting went on, but at least the persons involved USUALLY put aside their egos for the sake of the common cause. I don't know how the author got all the fly-on-the-wall dialogue and facts, but it all seems credible and the author's record for reliability is pretty high, isn't it. This is an exceptional book and I will in time read it again.

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