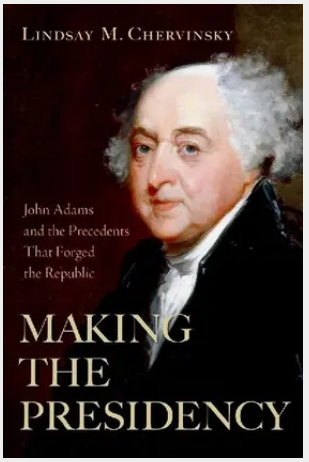
Chervinsky

Making the Presidency

John Adams and the Precedents That Forged the Republic



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An authoritative account of the second president of the United States that shows how John Adams's leadership and legacy defined the office for those who followed and ensured the survival of the American republic. The United States of 1797 faced enormous challenges, provoked by enemies foreign and domestic. The father of the new nation, George Washington, left his vice president, John Adams, with relatively little guidance and impossible expectations to meet. Adams was confronted with intense partisan divides, debates over citizenship, fears of political violence, potential for foreign conflict with France and Britain, and a nation unsure that the presidency could even work without Washington at the helm. Making the Presidency is an authoritative exploration of the second US presidency, a period critical to the survival of the American republic. Through meticulous research and engaging prose, Lindsay Chervinsky illustrates the unique challenges faced by Adams and shows how he shaped the office for his successors. One of the most qualified presidents in American history, he had been a legislator, political theorist, diplomat, minister, and vice president--but he had never held an executive position. Instead, the quixotic and stubborn Adams would rely on his ideas about executive power, the Constitution, politics, and the state of the world to navigate the hurdles of the position. He defended the presidency from his own often obstructionist cabinet, protected the nation from foreign attacks, and forged trust and dedication to election integrity and the peaceful transfer of power between parties, even though it cost him his political future. Offering a portrait of one of the most fascinating and influential periods in US history, Making the Presidency is a must-read for anyone interested in the evolution of the presidency and the creation of political norms and customs at the heart of the American republic.

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