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Top-level bureaucrats must be skillful politicians to maintain their power. Many of the most successful, such as Admiral Hyman Rickover and J. Edgar Hoover, were political entrepreneurs. Others, such as Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, learned to serve and often manipulate many masters. This entertaining selection from the Washington Monthly describes the games that bureaucrats play.

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"The single most effective bureaucrat in the government," was the way in which Washington insiders described Richard Perle. As a top Senate staffer he honed the political skills that he took with him to the bureaucracy.