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America, Russia And The Cold War 1945-2006



Synopsis

Using extensive materials from both published and private sources, this concise text focuses on United States-Soviet diplomacy to explain the causes and consequences of the Cold War. It explores how the Cold War was shaped by domestic events in both the U.S. and the Soviet Union and presents a variety of other points of view on the conflict--Chinese, Latin American, European, and Vietnamese. The text includes both engaging anecdotes and quotes from primary sources to support key points and exemplify policies, and recent scholarship and materials from openings of the U.S., Soviet, and Chinese archives.

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Customer Reviews

I had to buy this book for a Cold War class during my masters program. It is a fairly thin book considering all that went on the Cold War but this is just meant to be a light survey of the Cold War years. To tell of the major events to people who may not be familiar with them. I did not think of it as having a very liberal bent to it like the previous reviewer. It is a little more liberal than other books out there but that is bound to happen. Just as there are more conservative leaning books written about the cold war. I recommend this book for anyone who is taking a class on the Cold War and needs some background information on it. It is easy to read and get through and tells of the major points in the Cold War between Russia and America.

LaFeber's book certainly deserves its place in the canon of Cold War scholarship. The writing is concise, accessible, and witty, while the scholarship is excellent. This book will be invaluable to anyone looking for an introduction to superpower relations in the Cold War era. I must admit I am surprised to find LaFeber's work attacked from the "left" by the esteemed reviewer from Edgewood, Washington. After all, LaFeber has received criticism almost exclusively from the right. It is true, as the reviewer points out, that the book does not deal extensively with the Third World aspects of the Cold War. That is because the title of the book is not "The Complete History of the Cold War," but rather "America, Russia, and the Cold War." The reviewer from Washington's heart is certainly in the right place. I agree that the Cold War was often experienced as a "Hot War" by the Southern Hemisphere. But LaFeber's book explicitly examines the United States and the Soviet Union during this era. The Third World civil wars and insurgencies of this period were seldom directly related to U.S.-Russian relations. The reviewer's examples of Vietnam and Nicaragua are good ones, but they are misplaced. He is aiming his barbs at the wrong historian. True, Noam Chomsky has led the effort to recognize Third World suffering in the Cold War era. But so has Walter LaFeber. I refer you especially to *Inevitable Revolutions*. I applaud the reviewer's conviction. I only wish he would direct his criticisms at more legitimate targets, such as John Lewis Gaddis and Tony Smith.

Previous reviewers on .com have called LaFeber's opus 'Revisionist Junk' which only shows the ignorance of this reader who hasn't the guts to publish their name. It is unlikely that this person has even read the book. LaFeber presents with strong documentary evidence, particularly new evidence that has only recently been released in the US and former Soviet Union, that details the events that led the two countries into the cold war. These documents and other evidence do not portray the US as big and bad nor does it portray the USSR as the poor Russians, rather it is an even account of how misunderstandings on behalf of both countries led the two down the path of fifty years of cold war. LaFeber shows that security concerns, and economic concerns are part of one's security, led the two nations into conflict. Ideology is a small part of this conflict, and economics makes up a part of ideology. LaFeber shows how these mutual misunderstandings and continual distrust that had been growing between these two emerging powers since the end of the 19th century played as important part in the coming of the cold war as any 'traditional' sources. LaFeber's book is one of the most concise, readable, and accurate explanations of the Cold War available. It is a must read for anyone interested in this time period, and one should not be deterred by the ignorance of one who thinks that revisionist is a curse word and who's mind is shut by their own ideological beliefs.

Overall a very efficient, analytic and even-handed overview of the Cold War's issues and origins. The anti-American bias perceived by other reviewers wasn't evident to me, particularly as the author takes a widely holistic approach to his subject. Political, economic, cultural and historical factors are considered, as are the personal predilections of key policy-makers on both sides. Motives and decisions are laid out within the qualitative context of their time, while consequences are relevantly tied to ours. If LaFeber has an agenda, it's to implicitly demonstrate that rational and productive foreign policy can not come from a place of pride, fear and cynicism. In this he lets the records of Washington and Moscow speak for themselves, neither excusing nor apologizing for anyone.

a really useful book for all students of cold war history and politics. This an updated edition, the first edition was produced in 1966. extensively updated with a new chapter dealing with the post September 11 world. Well written with a web link for access to copies of all primary documents.

This book is an essential addition to any library for anyone interested in knowing the facts of the Cold War. It's breathless in it's rapid-fire espousing of the facts and events that cover the emergence of America as THE true global power of the past seventy five years. This isn't the book to solely own if you want to understand the "whys" and "hows" America adopted rabid religiosity, rampant capitalism, got sucked into Vietnam and became the crucible for cultural change across the globe but it is the bedrock of an understanding not just America of today but also the wider world in which we live. LaFeber pumps out facts at a pace that at times is hard to keep up with but that's because this is indeed a fascinating time of world history. Get the book and hold on for dear life...then be inspired to read other historians to get the complete picture, if you dare; it isn't always pretty reading.

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