



A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War (Stanford Nuclear Age Series)

By Melvyn P. Leffler

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In the United States the Cold War shaped our political culture, our institutions, and our national priorities. Abroad, it influenced the destinies of people everywhere. It divided Europe, split Germany, and engulfed the Third World. It led to a feverish arms race and massive sales of military equipment to poor nations. For at least four decades it left the world in a chronic state of tension where a miscalculation could trigger nuclear holocaust. Documents, oral histories, and memoirs illuminating the goals, motives, and fears of contemporary U.S. officials were already widely circulated and studied during the Cold War, but in the 1970s a massive declassification of documents from the Army, Navy, Air Force, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Department of Defense, and some intelligence agencies reinvigorated historical study of this war which became the definitive conflict of its time. While many historians used these records to explore specialized topics, this author marshals the considerable available evidence on behalf of an overall analysis of national security policy during the Truman years. To date, it is the most comprehensive history of that administration's progressive embroilment in the Cold War.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Offering a new slant on the early years of the Cold War, this major reassessment traces the development of national security policy during the Truman administration. Based on a rich vein of recently declassified material, Leffler's majestic study describes how Harry Truman and his advisers sought to mobilize America's power in order to deal with the dangers of the postwar world and create a global environment hospitable to U.S. interests and values. There was much to be apprehensive about, in particular, the presence of Soviet armies in Eastern Europe and Northeast Asia; the rise of the left in Greece, Italy, France, China and Korea; nationalist uprisings in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. Leffler, a history professor at the University of Virginia and author of *America's Pursuit of European Security and French Stability, 1919-1933*, analyzes the daring American initiatives launched during this period, including the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the effort to promote economic recovery in Japan and the commitment of troops to the defense of South Korea in 1950. Illustrations.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Massive, brilliant post-glasnost analysis of early cold-war realities by Leffler (History/Univ. of Virginia). This study of how Truman dealt with a world sealed off to him by FDR is a book and a half. It deals with the inception of the cold war in terms that make the Korean War a logical extension of existing policy rather than an atypical crystallizing event. It penetrates the strident rhetoric that gripped American thinking for 40 years down to the eternal verities of economic advantage and the pursuit of power, carefully articulating their linkage and diplomacy. At stake, Leffler explains, was domination of European and Asian resources: The US had its incomparable economy, a highly visible standard of living, and a State Department not yet hobbled by willful chief executives; the Soviet Union had an ideology that could "capitalize on social dislocation and take advantage of nascent nationalism in the third world." The feisty Truman emerges here as unprepared to formulate serious foreign policy, with his subordinates often at odds; and despite jingoistic political fulminations and the progressive eroding of security, Leffler says, there really wasn't much fear at the top of a hot war between the US and the Soviets. Rather, the heart of the matter was the US- financed revival of free European and Asian economies. Khrushchev's famous "We will bury you" was a whistling in the dark, Leffler says: the US had already forged its "configuration of power in the core of Eurasia." Indispensable for anyone interested in what really happened during this period, although Leffler's conclusions may be too optimistic. "Capitalizing on past successes" seems difficult for a nation that today probably could not capitalize a Marshall Plan, and stability via "curtailing arms sales that fuel local rivalries" seems a fond dream for the world's largest exporter of arms. (Fifteen halftones, nine maps--not seen.) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

"A brilliant new book. . . . An invaluable contribution." (*The Nation*)

"The best book to date on the Truman administration and the origins of the Cold War." (*Detroit Free Press*)

"Magisterial . . . This book is without question a major achievement. It is a masterly work of synthesis, weaving together in a single coherent study the various and often contradictory trends in previous historical writing on the Cold War's origins. It is indefatigably researched . . . and most important, it is an intellectually honest work. . . . A fine book." (*The Atlantic*)

Users Review

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James Boyd:

The guide with title A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War (Stanford Nuclear Age Series) possesses a lot of information that you can understand it. You can get a lot of benefit after read this book. This book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this reserve represented the condition of the world now. That is important to yo7u to learn how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you inside new era of the globalization. You can read the e-book in your smart phone, so you can read it anywhere you want.

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