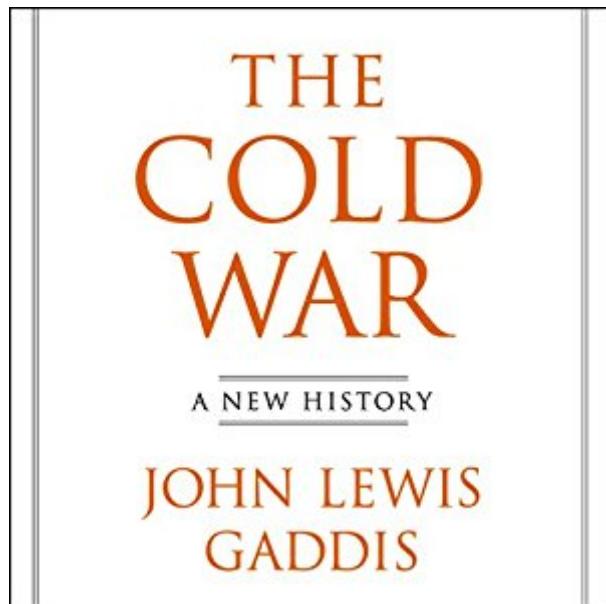


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The Cold War: A New History



Synopsis

From "the dean of Cold War historians" (New York Times): an important new reckoning with the hostile relationship that defined our age. It began during the Second World War, when American and Soviet troops converged from east and west. Their meeting point—a small German city—became part of a front line that solidified shortly thereafter into an Iron Curtain. It ended in a climactic square-off between Ronald Reagan's America and Gorbachev's Soviet Union. In between were decades of global confrontation, uncertainty, and fear. Drawing on new and often startling information from newly opened Soviet, Eastern European, and Chinese archives, this thrilling account explores the strategic dynamics that drove the Cold War, provides illuminating portraits of its major personalities, and offers much fresh insight into its most crucial events. Riveting, revelatory, and wise, it tells a story whose lessons it is vitally necessary to understand as America once more faces an implacable ideological enemy. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As the author stated in the preface, this book is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of the Cold War. But rather an overview of the important events of the Cold War and the root cause of it. However, contrary to what the title suggests, this book doesn't provide any new insights or information about the Cold War. (The author states that his research is based mostly on previous works and not on new sources.) Gaddis follows a chronological order while analyzing the important issues of the Cold War. Due to the shortness of the book (only 270 pages not including the

footnotes), important events such as: the Suez Crisis, Watergate, Cuban Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs receive a few mere pages. Having said that, Gaddis did a great job of providing the reader with a basic understanding of the events that shaped the Cold War and the mindset of the world leaders who were running the show. All in all, this is a fine book for people who are looking for a quick and enjoyable read on the Cold War. Highly recommended.

This is the definitive assessment of the Cold War written by the dean of America's Cold War historians. On such a subject, it is far more difficult to write a brief rather than a 1000+ page chronicle. Professor Gaddis has previously written exhaustively on diverse phases and aspects of the Cold War. Here he succinctly distills what he has learned within an analytical context that well serves both Cold War experts as well as those with but a casual knowledge. What I find especially valuable is Gaddis's ability to describe and analyze the rationale behind the often failed policies of the protagonists. He highlights the ignorance, misunderstandings, and complexities on both sides. Just as Ulbricht and the East Germans held the Soviets 'captive' with their parochial needs, so too did the Koreans and others confound American policymakers. Vietnam is an example where both the Soviets and the Americans were hoisted on their own petards. De Gaulle was a 'cross of Lorraine' borne by the West, while Mao, especially after Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech, continually shafted the less ideological Soviets. Tony Judt was highly critical of Gaddis's casual treatment of the Third World, which Judt considered critical to the Cold War struggle in the 1960s-1970s. As a career diplomat who served in various Third World countries during this period, I heartily support Gaddis's view that the Third World sorties were peripheral to the key elements of the Cold War contest. Indeed, both the Soviets and the Americans behaved badly in these Third World encounters. Top Soviets reflected that they were held 'hostage' by some peripheral situations as Angola and Ethiopia. Gaddis focuses on the basic fallacies of the communist ideology: economically, Marxist (or central planning) economics were doomed to fail, and denying people liberty and a decent standard of living was ultimately a losing hand. Over the coming years, scholars will, with further archival materials, will be able to dot some of Gaddis's historical "i"s and cross some of his "t"s. I doubt that all but the most determined revisionists will significantly alter the basic thrust of Gaddis's seminal assessment.

A very good one volume overview of the Cold War but I was hoping for something more detailed and comprehensive.

Not overly detailed but hits all the essentials. Believe Gaddis has written a more extensive version if you are interested,

This book was simply phenomenal. I haven't read Gaddis before but I'm aware of his reputation as THE academic par excellence regarding Cold War history. Well, his writing and analysis was a real treat, a testament to fresh, clear sentence writing and sober thought. I'd say that books about history make up about 15% of my reading material, so while I'm not an expert on everything being written recently, I can confidently say that Gaddis's book is an amazing contribution to our understanding of this incredibly complex and revolutionary time period. Additionally, the book is a real page turner...I know this sounds strange given its subject matter and the fact that we know the "ending," but believe me, Gaddis will have you flipping along, wondering how each country and leader got from point A to point Z.

The book is easy to read, more like a mystery novel than a history book - specific events and anecdotes are well interspersed with author's commentary. Events might not be in strict chronological order but I doubt this book is meant to be an academic text. At the same time, I could easily follow the broad order of events and phases of the Cold War. So obviously, not the most exhaustive book on Cold War yet something everyone should read to understand the outline, actors and lessons of the Cold War.

It was kind of brief in its depiction of the events but thoughtful and insightful. It WAS meant to be a overview of the issue. I wanted to read it because it was mentioned a number of times in other books on foreign affairs that I read. I think it is a useful read for other people interested in how and why the Cold War came about.

I've been looking this book because there has been very little that I've found that adequately describes this extraordinary event in occurred during the lifetime of most us. I do not believe that anyone who grew up in the baby boomer generation would have ever predicted that our great adversary in the Cold War, a secretive country with the capability of annihilating us in a matter of minutes, would simply and quietly fold up its tent and leave the battlefield

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