The Origins of the Cold War

Before U.S. combat units were deployed to Vietnam, presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy strove to defeat a communist-led insurgency in Laos. This improvised, landlocked Southeast Asian kingdom was geopolitically significant because it bordered more powerful communist and anticolonial nations. The Ho Chi Minh Trail, which traversed the country, was also a critical route for North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam. In so doing, Ho Chi Minh was using American Policy in Laos to undermine the nascent anti-communist government in the country without committing American combat troops. Rust continues to examine the rapid breakdown of these accords, the U.S. administration’s response to their collapse, and the consequences of that response. At the time of Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, U.S. policy in Laos was confused and contradictory, and Lyndon B. Johnson inherited not only an insolvent strategy, but also this plan for taking the war to North Vietnam. By assessing the complex political landscape of Laos within the larger context of the Cold War, this book offers fresh insights into American foreign policy decisions that still resonate today.

John F. Kennedy

The United States president preserved, protects, and defends the U.S. Constitution. Each president’s term influences events in America and around the world for years to come. This biography introduces young readers to the life of John F. Kennedy, beginning with his childhood in Massachusetts. Information about Kennedy’s education at Princeton University, the London School of Economics, Harvard University, where he wrote his thesis on the effectiveness of public opinion, and Stanford University Graduate School of Business, as well as his early career as a newspaper reporter is discussed. In addition, his family and personal life is highlighted. Easy-to-read text details Kennedy’s military service in the U.S. during World War II, his early political career, and his leadership as U.S. Senator, where he was a strong supporter of international alliances and the Marshall Plan. Kennedy’s speeches are included, and Profiles in Courage, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize. Finally, students will explore key events from Democratic president Kennedy’s administration, including his New Frontier programs, the Cold War, the fight against the spread of Communism, the space race, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile crisis, the Alliance for Progress, and the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, as well as his assassination in Dallas, Texas, by Lee Harvey Oswald. Reading levels are based on the Flesch Reading Ease formula and the Gunning Fog Index.

The Missiles of October

A harrowing account of the Cuban Missile crisis and how the US and USSR came to the brink of nuclear apocalypse. Nearly thirty years after the end of the Cold War, today’s world leaders are abandoning disarmament treaties, building up their nuclear arsenals, and exchanging threats of nuclear war. To survive this new atomic age, we must retrace the lessons of the most dangerous moment of the Cold War: the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. What led to the crisis, tracing the making that produced and then resolved it, which involved John Kennedy and his advisors, Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro, and their commanders in the background. In this detailed, Phibbs vividly recounts the young JFK being played by the same Khrushchev, the hotheaded Castro willing to defy the USSR and threatening to align himself with China; the Soviet troops on the ground clearing jungle foliage in the tropical heat; and desperately trying to conceal nuclear installations on Cuba, which were nonetheless easy to spot by U-2 spy planes; and the hair-raising near misses at sea that nearly caused a Soviet nuclear-armed submarine to fire its weapons. More often than not, the Americans and Soviets misread each other, operated under false data, and came perilously close to nuclear catastrophe. Despite these errors, nuclear war was ultimately avoided for one central reason: fear, and the realization that any escalation on either side of the Soviets’ or the Americans’ part would lead to mutual destruction. Drawing on a range of Soviet archival sources, including previously undisclosed KGB documents, as well as White House tapes, Phibbs masterfully illustrates the drama and anxiety of those tense days, and provides a ready for us to grapple with the problems posed in our present day.

High Noon in the Cold War

John F. Kennedy

Bruce Riedel provides a new and incisive perspective into Kennedy’s most dangerous crisis in the most critical days of the cold war. The Cuban Missile Crisis defined the presidency of John F. Kennedy. But during the same week that the world stood transfixed by the possibility of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, it transpired the possibility of war that had escaped history’s attention, yet still significantly re-energized today: the Sino-Indian conflict. As well-armed troops from the People’s Republic of China surged into Indian-held territory in October 1962, Kennedy ordered an emergency airlift of supplies to the Indian army. He engaged in diplomatic talks that kept the neighboring Pakistanis out of the fighting. The conflict came to an end with a unilateral Chinese ceasefire, relying Kennedy of a decision to intervene militarily in support of India. Bruce Riedel, a CIA and National Security Council veteran, provides the first full narrative of this crisis, which played out during the tense negotiations with Moscow over Cuba. He also describes another major conflict, the Sino-Indian war, espionage during the war, and the misperceptions of the Chinese and Indian occupation of Tibet. He details how the United States, beginning in 1957, trained and parachuted Tibetan guerrillas into Tibet to fight Chinese military forces. The United States did not abandon this covert support until relations were normalized with China in the 1970s. Riedel tells this story with authority, drawing on the secret written records of former Kennedy and Indian leaders. His book sheds new light on the Kennedy and Nehru, along with the diaries and memoirs of key players and other sources, to make this the definitive account of JFK’s forgotten crisis. This, is Riedel’s written Kennedy’s finest hour as you have never read it before.

The Most Dangerous Area in the World

Weinstein moves beyond new common perspectives to argue that JFK in fact explored new policy frontiers but rather faultily reflected a remarkable cold war consensus.

Nuclear Folly: A History of the Cuban Missile Crisis

Kennedy and the Middle East

In March 1961, President John Kennedy announced the formation of the Alliance for Progress, a program dedicated to creating prosperity, socially just, democratic societies throughout Latin America. Over the next few years, the United States spent nearly $20 billion in pursuit of the Alliance’s goals, but Latin American economies barely grew, Latin American societies remained inequitable, and sixteen extraconstitutional changes of government rocked the region. In this close, critical analysis, Stephen Rabe explains why Kennedy’s grand plan for Latin America proved such a signal policy failure. Drawing on recently declassified materials, Rabe investigates the limits and consequences of Kennedy’s grand plan for Latin America. The book is a vivid account of Kennedy and Latin America under Kennedy’s presidency, and a comprehensive account of Kennedy’s foreign policy, from the Bay of Pigs invasion to the Cuban Missile crisis and the Alliance for Progress. The book is richly illustrated with photographs, maps, and diagrams, making it a must-read for students of Latin American history and policymakers.


The US in the 1950s and 1960s wanted to prevent a new communist regime in the Western hemisphere at any cost. Under President Eisenhower the US pursued a policy of support for dictators, the economic shoring up of repressive governments, and covert operations. As President Kennedy came to power, he promised a reset of relations and set about putting aid into Latin America. Yet in 1961 Kennedy also attempted to intervene in Central American domestic politics with the Bay of Pigs operation. How far was each of the approaches pursued by the two administrations responsible for increasing tensions and encouraging violence on the continent? In answering this question Benno Besson shows how Eisenhower’s strategic stance on the Cold War became increasingly detrimental to Latin America over time, and shows how similar policies were continued by the Kennedy administration. The US and Latin America provides a new lens through which to assess US policy towards Latin America in an important time in US-Latin American relations.

Mars Rising: John Glenn, John Kennedy, and the New Battleground of the Cold War

In his thousand days presidency, John F. Kennedy led America through one of its most difficult and potentially explosive eras. With the Cold War at its height and the threat of communist advances in Europe and the Third World, Kennedy had the unenviable task of maintaining U.S. solidarity without leading the western world into a nuclear catastrophe. In Kennedy’s War, noted historian Lawrence Freedman draws on the best Cold War sources—diaries, letters, speeches, and other primary sources—including interviews with key figures of the time, to provide a first-hand view of the events that shaped Kennedy’s decisions. The book, filled with Kennedy’s letters, day-by-day accounts of his press conferences, and original reporting, provides a comprehensive account of Kennedy’s role in the Cold War. In the afterword, the author assesses the impact of Kennedy’s actions on U.S. foreign policy, and the consequences of his decisions on the world.

The US and Latin America 1958-1963

For seven days in October 1962, the world held its breath. The Soviet Union and the United States were on the brink of a nuclear war. The two men at the center of the conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis, were US president John F. Kennedy and Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev. Readers will discover the critical role that Kennedy and Khrushchev played in the crisis, the consequences of their decisions, and the impact of the crisis on the Cold War and the world.

Mars Rising: John Glenn, John Kennedy, and the New Battleground of the Cold War

Explores the course of action President John F. Kennedy chose to take during the Cuban Missile Crisis, looking at how the outcome of a world war was prevented and how his decisions impacted his legacy.

Defending the Free World

One of the Washington Post's 20 Books to Read This Summer A riveting history of the epic orbital flight that put America back into the space race. If the United States couldn't catch up to the Soviets in space, how could it compete with them on Earth? That was the question facing John F. Kennedy at the height of the Cold War—perilous times when the Soviet Union built the wall in Berlin, tested nuclear bombs more destructive than any in history, and beat the United States to every major space milestone. In the race to the heavens seemed a race for survival—and America was losing. On February 20, 1962, when John Glenn blasted into orbit aboard Friendship 7, his mission was not only to circle the planet, but to inspire the crew of the crew to the fear of the new world and renew America’s sense of self-belief. Mercury Rising re-creates the tension and excitement of a flight that shifted the momentum of the space race and put the United States into space for the first time. Drawing on new archival sources, personal interviews, and previously unpublished notes by Glenn himself, Mercury Rising reveals how the astronaut's heroics lifted the nation’s hopes in what Kennedy called the "hour of maximum danger."
One Minute to Midnight

Nigel J. Ashton analyses Anglo-American relations during a crucial phase of the Cold War. He argues that although policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic used the term 'interdependence' to describe their relationship, this concept had different meanings in London and Washington. The Kennedy Administration sought more centralized control of the Western alliance, whereas the Macmillan Government envisaged an Anglo-American partnership. This book, drawing on perspective papers to a 'crisis of interdependence' during the winter of 1962-3, encompassing issues as diverse as the collapse of the British EEC application, the civil war in the Yemen, the denouement of the Congo crisis and the fate of the British independent nuclear deterrent.

Jacqueline Kennedy in the White House

A lively and accessible introduction to the origins and emergence of the Cold War. Caroline Kennedy-Pipe brings to life the clashes of ideas and personalities that led Russia and America into decades of conflict and draws out important lessons for policy and analysis in today's equally formative period in world affairs.

Kennedy's Wars

This collection brings together the most influential and commonly-studied articles on the Cold War. Together with an introductory section and concise headnotes, this book provides students with easy access to seminal work and an analytical framework with which to approach their studies.

JFk's Inaugural Address

Szwab examines Kennedy's decision to stand in Vietnam with a fresh perspective provided by new archival materials and the intellectual synthesis of institutional, political and diplomatic history. Vietnam policy is shown at many different levels, from the presidency down to the level of CIA operatives in the field and public opinion specialists on the White House staff. The views of State Department officers, foreign public opinion, editors of mass media and representatives of the powerful business community are drawn on. American combat forces were sent to war in Vietnam in March 1965. The numbers of American personnel in Vietnam rose from zero in the summer of 1965. The study begins with John F. Kennedy's inaugural address in January 1961 and proceeds to show the decision-making process regarding Vietnam and Indochina through the various critical events that led to Johnson's famous press conference speech of 1965. The author contends that responsibility for the war and its tragic consequences should not be placed upon individuals, but rather at the levels of the state, society, and the international system. This view of agency existing at a higher level than the presidency challenges the dominant view of most diplomatic historians and other writers who have focused on the blunders and miscalculations of policy makers.

Maximum Danger

At the height of the Cold War, the JFk administration designed an ambitious plan for the Middle East that was known as the Nasser project to neutralize the Arab world and to contain the perceived communist threat. In order to effect this approach, Kennedy sought to grow relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and embrace Israel's defense priorities—a decision which would begin the US-Israel 'special relationship'. Here, Antonio Perera shows for the first time how new relations with Saudi Arabia and Israel which would come to shape the Middle East for decades were in fact a by-product of Kennedy's efforts.

Above and Beyond

The exiles landed in Cuba and were expected to be greeted by anti-Castro forces within the country, after which the U.S. would provide air reinforcement to the rebels and the Castro regime would slowly collapse. Kennedy's Trafford deals led young American volunteers to help with economic and community development in poor countries. Both programs were integral pieces of the Cold War and were attempts to align disadvantaged groups with the goals of the Kennedy administration. The book is divided into four sections: The Cold War and the Cuban revolution; Kennedy and the CIA; The Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis; Kennedy and the Cold War. Each section includes an introduction, a historical overview, analysis of key events, and a discussion of the impact of those events on the Cold War and the world. The book is written in a clear and accessible style, making it suitable for students, policymakers, and anyone interested in understanding the Cold War and its impact on the world.

Margro's Cold War

Hugh Brogan's trenchant Profile is a study of the Kennedy Presidency, not a full-scale political biography (and still less an intimate personal portrait). In order to understand Kennedy's aims and achievements in the White House, however, it necessarily pays attention to Kennedy the man, his background and his earlier career, and the influences upon him. Brogan concentrates on the major themes: Kennedy's successful candidacy for office; his foreign policy; his part in the civil rights revolution; his handling of economic affairs; his agenda as a reference; and, of course, the significance of his murder. Hugh Brogan succeeds admirably in his object of presenting Kennedy as a credible statesman and human being, not as a figure of legend - nor, in the modern way, as a figure of legend to be debunked.

Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War

From the authors of the bestselling The Finest Hours comes the riveting, deeply human story of President John F. Kennedy and two U-2 pilots, Rudy Anderson and Chuck Maultsby, who risked their lives to save America during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The two weeks of the Cold War's terrifying peak saw two things save humanity: the strategic wisdom of JFK and the U-2 aerial spy program. On October 27, 1962, Kennedy, strained from back pain, sleeplessness, and days of impossible tension, was briefed about a missing spy plane. Its pilot, Chuck Maultsby, was on a surveillance mission over the North Pole, but had become lost over the Soviet Union. The U.S. government was in a huddle of panic, and Khrushchev issued a series of warnings. In the end, the U-2 had gone missing, this one belonging to Rudy Anderson in his mission: to photograph missile sites over Cuba. For the president, any wrong move could turn the Cold War nuclear. Above and Beyond is the gripping account of the loss of these three war heroes, brought together on a day that changed history.

Cold War and Counterrevolution

A comprehensive reassessment of JFK's foreign policy

President Kennedy Fights the Cold War

Nigel J. Ashton analyses Anglo-American relations during a crucial phase of the Cold War. He argues that although policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic used the term 'interdependence' to describe their relationship, this concept had different meanings in London and Washington. The Kennedy Administration sought more centralized control of the Western alliance, whereas the Macmillan Government envisaged an Anglo-American partnership. This book, drawing on perspective papers to a 'crisis of interdependence' during the winter of 1962-3, encompassing issues as diverse as the collapse of the British EEC application, the civil war in the Yemen, the denouement of the Congo crisis and the fate of the British independent nuclear deterrent.

Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War

A dramatic reinterpretation of a seminal event of the Cold War—based on documents recently made available at the National Security Archive. Thompson recreates the hysterical anti-communist atmosphere of the early 1960s, shedding light on one of the darkest moments in recent history. Photos.

IFK's Forgotten Crisis

A comprehensive account of the ExComm meetings provides running commentary on the issues and options that were discussed, explaining in accessible terms their specific themes and the roles of individual participants while offering insight into how JFK steered policy makers away from a nuclear conflict. (History)

President Kennedy Fights the Cold War

Half a century after his assassination, John F. Kennedy continues to evoke widespread fascination, looming large in America's historical memory. Popular portraiture often shows Kennedy as a mythic, heroic figure, but these depictions can obscure the details of his actual achievements and challenges. Despite the short length of his time in office, during his presidency, Kennedy dealt with many of the issues that would come to define the 1960s, including the burgeoning Cold War and the growing Civil Rights movement. In John F. Kennedy: The Spirit of Cold War Liberalism, Jason K. Dunca examines the Kennedy presidency as a crucial moment in the history of U.S. foreign policy, offering a fresh perspective on the Cold War and the Kennedy Administration's response to it. Dunca explores the strategic and diplomatic decisions made by Kennedy and his advisors, examining the challenges they faced in managing the Cold War and the broader complexities of American foreign policy in a rapidly changing world. Through a detailed analysis of key events and decisions, Dunca offers new insights into the Kennedy presidency and its role in shaping the Cold War.

Living with Peril

Does JFK's legacy still burn bright? Discover the answer to this compelling question and more in this exciting book. A host of fascinating facts, time lines and activities take students back to the turbulent 1960s when they will see the trials and tribulations of living through the cold war. Kennedy's fight for civil rights, the African and Asian struggle for independence and more.

John F. Kennedy

Includes pictures. *Includes quotes from participants, including declassified CIA files. *Includes footnotes and a bibliography for further reading. Within just a month of becoming President, the issue of communism became a major challenge to Kennedy and his administration. On February 2nd, 1961, President Kennedy called a啸 to support Cuban refugees in the U.S., and a month later, he created the Peace Corps, a program that trained young American volunteers to help with economic and community development in poor countries. Both programs were integral pieces of the Cold War and were attempts to align disadvantaged groups with the goals of the administration. The book is divided into four sections: The Cold War and the Cuban revolution; Kennedy and the CIA; The Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis; Kennedy and the Cold War. Each section includes an introduction, a historical overview, analysis of key events, and a discussion of the impact of those events on the Cold War and the world. The book is written in a clear and accessible style, making it suitable for students, policymakers, and anyone interested in understanding the Cold War and its impact on the world.