



The Cold War: A New History

By John Lewis Gaddis

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The “dean of Cold War historians” (*The New York Times*) now presents the definitive account of the global confrontation that dominated the last half of the twentieth century. Drawing on newly opened archives and the reminiscences of the major players, John Lewis Gaddis explains not just what happened but *why*—from the months in 1945 when the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. went from alliance to antagonism to the barely averted holocaust of the Cuban Missile Crisis to the maneuvers of Nixon and Mao, Reagan and Gorbachev. Brilliant, accessible, almost Shakespearean in its drama, *The Cold War* stands as a triumphant summation of the era that, more than any other, shaped our own.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Gregory and Sklar, reading Yale history professor Gaddis's study of the American-Soviet standoff, give voice to their inner television announcer, their twin brands of masculine sonorousness verging on virile parody before settling comfortably on the side of familiar voice-over solidity. Gaddis's work unravels the tangled threads of the Cold War, from the tense Allied conferences at the end of WWII to the Korean War and onward, and his book's readers give it the sensation of every word being carefully cultivated and primed before being spoken. If this leads to some of the immediacy, the heart-in-throat sensation, of the events described being diluted, so be it, for Gregory and Sklar give Gaddis's book the grandeur its subject matter so richly deserves. Sounding more professorial, in the I-play-an-Ivy-League-professor-on-television sort of way, than the good professor himself, Gregory and Sklar do an admirable job of making Gaddis's learned words their own.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Gaddis, professor of history at Yale and the Cold War's preeminent historian, delivers a concise, readable introduction to an era about which Americans have increasingly little recollection. The author has had the somewhat unusual opportunity to examine his period of expertise both from within—in his books *Strategies of Containment* (1982) and *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (1987), for instance—and now, with the benefit of new archival documents and hindsight, as a series of historical events. Although the relative brevity of the volume might suggest that Gaddis values concision over detail, the study gives new focus and meaning to one of the United States' watershed periods.

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From [Booklist](#)

Gaddis, a Yale history professor who often faced students for whom the cold war might as well have been ancient history, offers a comprehensive but highly accessible look at the dominant force in world history from 1945 until 1991. With the end of the cold war and the availability of Soviet, Chinese, and East European archival sources, Gaddis offers a rich examination of the political strife that he has detailed in several previous works. But Gaddis concedes it is not a deep examination, offering no original scholarship or exploration of how the cold war relates to more-current geopolitical concerns. Gaddis focuses each chapter on a significant theme: the return of fear following the end of World War II and U.S. acceptance of its role as a superpower, even a chapter on major actors in the conflict that focuses on Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul III. Gaddis highlights other major figures from Khrushchev to Gorbachev, and Eisenhower to Nixon. Aimed at a new generation, this book is nonetheless enlightening for all generations. *Vanessa Bush*
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Users Review

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