

many respects, the challenges facing the United States closely parallel the uncertain political environment after World War II. Despite key differences between the Cold War and current national security challenges, policy makers can draw many lessons from the Truman administration's early Cold War decisions. Arnold A. Offner's richly detailed and balanced portrait of Harry S. Truman's record in international affairs makes a significant contribution to studies of presidential leadership and American foreign policy, with important implications for U.S. actions in the twenty-first century.

Offner writes that the purpose of his exhaustive analysis is "to reconsider President Truman's role in the Cold War" (p. xii). Although Truman left office in 1953 with low public approval ratings and widespread critiques of his efforts to contain Communism, his historical reputation has outstripped those initial appraisals. Presidential ratings surveys routinely rank Truman highly, in large measure because of his containment policies, especially the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Offner presents a revisionist critique of those evaluations, questioning Truman's vision, analytical abilities, and policy choices. Drawing upon the voluminous declassified record for the early Cold War, which includes American, British, and Soviet sources, Offner argues that Truman was a "parochial nationalist who lacked the leadership to move the U.S. away from conflict and toward *détente*" (p. 470).

To make that argument, Offner meticulously traces Truman's foreign policy choices from 1945 to 1953. From the time Truman became president, he was suspicious of Soviet intentions and determined to show that the United States would not be outmaneuvered in the competition to control the global balance of power. With the Truman Doctrine, the president broadly cast states as either "free" or "totalitarian," thus indicating, as Offner writes, "his abandonment of diplomacy as a means to deal with the Soviets" (p. 211). The Marshall Plan further increased Cold War tensions and removed any possibility of German unification. U.S. support for Taiwan and involvement in the Korean War brought the

Cold War into Asia, expanding U.S. commitments in the conflict without any prioritization of interests or long-term goals.

Offner's comprehensive research makes this book an essential reference text on Truman's foreign policy legacy. The historical review would benefit from more analysis in some places—for example, Offner's title alludes to the phrase "Pyrrhic victory," suggesting that the costs of U.S. actions in the early Cold War may have hindered U.S. interests in the long run. But Offner does not develop that argument beyond pointing out Truman's limitations as president; the consequences of Truman's decisions for later policy choices are not examined in detail.

Still, as the United States undertakes the long-term initiative of destroying the roots of terrorism, studying successes and failures in the early Cold War is essential for recognizing how policy decisions set the foundation for, and circumscribe, future actions. Offner's thoughtful analysis is required reading for scholars and policy makers who seek to understand that process.

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*Saving International Capitalism during the Early Truman Presidency: The National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems.* By Kevin M. Casey. (New York: Routledge, 2001. xii, 252 pp. \$70.00, ISBN 0-8153-3954-2.)

From the earliest days of World War II, U.S. planners devoted a great deal of thought to how international economic relations should be reordered in the postwar world. This attention reflected their understanding of how the war began in the first place. To their mind, the Great Depression ushered in economic nationalism, as countries installed trade barriers and monetary controls, devalued their currencies, formed trading blocs, and granted imperial preferences, all in an effort to protect foreign reserves, gain access to raw materials, and create trade surpluses. To most, there was a causal link between those so-called beggar-thy-neighbor policies and war. The collapse of

the liberal economic order produced economic nationalism; economic nationalism led to dictatorships; and dictators unleashed global conflagration. According to that view, the Great Depression itself had its roots in the American failure effectively to confront the massive economic problems that emerged from World War I, namely, wartime debt, reparations, massive reconstruction needs, the destruction of traditional trade, and a chaotic, unstable international monetary system. Roosevelt and early Truman administration officials vowed to prevent history from repeating itself and strove to create an open, nondiscriminatory, and multilateral trading system, with convertible currencies and the free flow of capital, upheld by strong international institutions.

In his fine study, Kevin M. Casey charts the rise and fall of a key part of that American effort. Casey demonstrates that the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems (NAC), largely ignored by the secondary literature, played the key role in shaping U.S. foreign financial policy between 1945 and 1948. NAC was an interdepartmental committee created as part of a compromise to win support for the Bretton Woods agreements from skeptical U.S. banking and business leaders. The NAC coordinated a wide range of previously ad hoc U.S. foreign aid programs and tackled the complex issues surrounding the end of Lend-Lease aid and the negotiation of the Anglo-American financial arrangement.

Casey successfully demonstrates that the goals of American foreign economic policy shifted early in the Truman presidency. As the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union changed from reluctant allies to Cold War adversaries, NAC's mission moved from creating a worldwide liberal trade and currency order to undertaking economic containment of the eastern bloc. Casey also contends that NAC's operations represented corporatism, the effort by government and private industry and finance to cooperate to advance the economic goals of the United States.

Casey's own detailed narrative, however, makes it clear that the NAC was largely a failure. Its one major accomplishment, negotiat-

ing the Anglo-American loan, was a disaster, as Great Britain ran down its proceeds in a brief and futile attempt to achieve sterling convertibility. The NAC never succeeded in making Great Britain end its imperial preferences or in resolving the tricky question of their large, blocked sterling debts. By early 1948, it was clear that neither the IMF (International Monetary Fund) nor the World Bank could fulfill their mandate of promoting reconstruction and creating a stable, open, and multilateral trading and currency order. Into that void, the United States initiated the European Recovery Plan, or Marshall Plan, thereby rendering the NAC irrelevant. While the Marshall Plan provided the reconstruction aid western Europe desperately needed, European and British trade barriers and monetary controls *against* the United States remained in place well into the late 1950s and beyond. The NAC's goals of currency convertibility and the free flow of international capital were not fully achieved, ironically, until after the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system in 1971.

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*Maboroshi no Shinchitsujo to Ajia Taiheiyo: Dainijisekaitaisenki no Beichuu-Domei no Atsureki, 1941-1945* (Illusionary new orders and the Asian Pacific: The Chinese-American alliance in the war against Japan, 1941-1945). By Xiaohua Ma. (Tokyo: Sairyusha, 2000. 350 pp. ¥4,000, ISBN 4-88202-557-4.) In Japanese.

The history of Sino-American relations during World War II is a well-researched field. Historians from Barbara Tuchman (*Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 1970) to Liu Xiaoyuan (*A Partnership for Disorder*, 1996) have explored the political dimension of the important yet troubled alliance between the two countries across the Pacific. Xiaohua Ma's book takes a somewhat different approach. Focusing largely on the United States, it examines wartime Sino-American relations through issues such as the movement to aid China, abolition of the unequal treaties, and above all the repeal of anti-Chinese immigration laws in