This chapter analyzes events in 1950 when U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced at the New York Conference that the U.S. government was willing to send “substantial forces” to Europe. The American combat force would be part of a collective force with a unified command structure, a force that would ultimately be capable of defending Western Europe on the ground. But the Americans were willing to take that step only if the European allies, for their part, were prepared to do what was necessary to “make this defense of Europe a success.” The U.S. government, he said, had come to the conclusion that the whole effort could not succeed without a German military contribution. So if the NATO allies wanted the American troops, they would have to accept the idea of German rearmament.

Why Korea?

Steven Casey


The massive Chinese intervention also led many Americans to question the wisdom of the Korean War: in January 1951, one Gallup poll even found that two-thirds of the public wanted to withdraw from Korea altogether. Although the administration had successfully defused the
broader debate over Cold War mobilization, it had far more trouble explaining why it was necessary for Americans to continue fighting and dying in faraway Korea. In fact, the government's mobilization campaign was part of the problem: in the first months of 1951, senior officials spent so much time trying to win the “great debate” that they said very little about Korea. But even efforts to reach out to the mass public by using emotive letters or the power of Hollywood movies largely backfired.

Ebb Tide
Paul J. Heer

This chapter outlines the “strategic concept” or vision for US policy in East Asia that Kennan formulated in 1948, which arguably originated the idea of a “defensive perimeter” or “offshore island” defense posture. Kennan, however, was subsequently inconsistent in his promotion of the concept; and the chapter highlights how his influence over policy direction started to diminish after Dean Acheson succeeded Marshall as Secretary of State in January 1949. This was reflected in deliberations over multiple aspects of China policy over the course of 1949—especially the dilemma over the status of Taiwan, on which Kennan played an uncharacteristically aggressive role.

Prelude to the Korean War
Paul J. Heer

This chapter discusses how Kennan attempted to apply his strategic vision along the periphery of East Asia, after having assessed that China and the rest of the mainland were strategically expendable to the United States. He advocated the neutralization of Japan and the Philippines—but did so inconsistently—and the avoidance of any US security commitments on the Korean Peninsula or in Southeast Asia, especially Indochina. The chapter chronicles the roles that Kennan and Davies played in various policy deliberations on these countries under Acheson.
It concludes with a benchmark summary of Kennan’s cumulative impact on US policy towards East Asia on the eve of the outbreak of the Korean War.

Korea
Paul J. Heer

in Mr. X and the Pacific: George F. Kennan and American Policy in East Asia

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: January 2019
Item type: chapter

This chapter chronicles and assesses Kennan’s role in policy deliberations following the outbreak of the Korean War. It examines the inconsistency between his support for US military intervention—on behalf of US credibility and prestige—and his prior dismissal of Korea’s strategic importance. It highlights his warnings against US military intervention by General MacArthur north of the 38th Parallel, and his role in dealing with the disastrous consequences that followed that intervention. The chapter characterizes Kennan’s growing disillusionment with his marginalization in policymaking under Acheson, and with the overall direction of US policy toward East Asia in the wake of the war crisis.

Trouble at the United Nations
Jill Edwards

in Anglo-American Relations and the Franco Question, 1945–1955

Published in print: 1999 Published Online: October 2011
Item type: chapter

Following the enormous acrimony of 1947 on the Spanish issue, the matter had been allowed to lie dormant in the United States. Despite the uncertain support of Britain and France, Harry S. Truman's advisers reviewed and decided to maintain U.S. policy. The State Department's policy and instructions on Spain to their United Nations (UN) delegation were also circulated to selected embassies. These reiterated that although the United States UN delegation should not take the initiative, they were to make known the United States government's sympathy with Brazil's motion for repeal. Dean Acheson's attempt to explain the government's change of policy after the last-minute decision in May to abstain on the Spanish question, riddled as it was with contradictions, sounded falsely contrived.
‘Funny People’
Rudra Chaudhuri

in Forged in Crisis: India and the United States Since 1947
Published in print: 2014 Published Online: May 2014
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

This chapter revises, carefully narrates and analyses India’s approach to and participation in the deliberations at the United Nations with regards to the Korean War. It traces how Indian envoys in the US and at the UN sought to guard against the counter-Chinese positions adopted by President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson. In doing so, it details how India negotiated a middle path with both the US and the recently formed Peoples Republic of China to reach a final settlement on repatriations. Further and challenging present accounts in the existing literature, it forcefully argues why the Eisenhower administration and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles too came to appreciate and even better understand the relative advantage of India’s non-aligned advance. It makes clear why historians and political scientists have essentially misunderstood India’s approach to America at a time when Eisenhower chose to ally with Pakistan.

Masculinity and Modernization in Democratic Party Politics during the 1950s
Sean J. McLaughlin

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Publisher: University Press of Kentucky
Item type: chapter

This chapter addresses the impact on Democrats of a dominant postwar political framework that demanded a certain ideal of robust manhood in response to international and domestic circumstances. This rediscovered emphasis on toughness had its roots in the upheaval of World War II and the rise of totalitarian ideologies, leading liberal Democrats to revamp the entire way they viewed the world in the early Cold War years. During the same period France was led by a series of seemingly weak, unstable Fourth Republic coalition governments. This fed American perceptions of French decadence and irrationality to the point that they grew into fears that France was undermining Washington’s efforts to win the Cold War. Liberal Democrats were on the defensive, attacked for their privilege and softness by McCarthyites and right-wing conservatives. McCarthyism had
strong lingering effects on Democrats into the 1960s, prompting party leaders to adopt an exaggeratedly tough approach just as Kennedy was beginning to make his mark in American politics. Kennedy had already concluded that France was an obstacle to American defense of the “free world,” while many of his fellow Democrats concluded that offering strong public support for any French position in international affairs was political suicide.

Pursuing Hegemony
William O. Walker III

in The Rise and Decline of the American Century

This chapter describes how the United States forged the American Century while pursuing hegemony from 1945 through 1949. More than consultation with friends and allies was necessary after the onset of the Cold War. To demonstrate the nation’s credibility, the Department of State, through the efforts of George Marshall, George Kennan, and Dean Acheson, fashioned programs for military aid and economic assistance, namely, the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. The former prefigured the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, whereas the Marshall Plan, thanks to the work of the Economic Cooperation Administration, became a model for economic reconstruction in strategically vital places in Western Europe and beyond, most notably Japan.

The Revolutionary Summer
Sidney Pash


Chapter 6, The Revolutionary Summer, examines how the June 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union impacted American containment. This chapter maintains that the German attack led directly to Hull’s decision to end his dialogue with Nomura as well as the administration’s decision the following month to freeze Japanese assets. This chapter
emphasizes that the trade embargo against Japan that grew out of the freeze was always the goal of the administration and was not the result of either a bureaucratic failure or the actions of hawks such as future secretary of state Dean Acheson. Finally, this chapter considers how Axis setbacks and broad support for the freeze and embargo—from Axis opponents, the public, administration interventionists, and even many in the armed forces—assured that the administration would not scale back the embargoes.

The Long Haul to the Accords
Jill Edwards

in Anglo-American Relations and the Franco Question, 1945–1955
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Item type: chapter

For Dean Acheson and Harry S. Truman, the ascendancy of military planners appeared to mark an admission of defeat on the Spanish question. The removal of the United Nations recommended sanctions on Spain facilitated the United States' pursuit of negotiations with Spanish leader Francisco Franco. Britain's negative response about the possible role of Spain in relation to the general defence of Western Europe was not simply a matter of socio-political factors, but military and economic as well. British defence chiefs placed the importance of Iberia high in the new NATO defence structure, but had more immediate and engrossing considerations in the Mediterranean than popular opinion or union pressure, had it so endeavoured, could alone have influenced. Like their American counterparts they had the politico-strategic dilemma presented by Spain under constant review. This chapter looks at the issue of military bases, accords, and the British armament industry in relation to Spain.

Transition
Lori Clune

in Executing the Rosenbergs: Death and Diplomacy in a Cold War World
Published in print: 2016 Published Online: May 2016
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

This chapter begins with the growing fears that accompanied America's first hydrogen bomb test. The election of Republican Dwight Eisenhower
to the presidency showed a turn towards conservative leadership as the Cold War tensions increased at home and abroad. The international spotlight on the Rosenberg case intensified as the Truman administration slowly learned of the global significance of the Rosenberg case. During the final two months of Truman’s presidency, administration officials, including those with the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) attempted to manage the propaganda spin as opposition spread from Communists to anti-Communists, from Jews to Protestants and Catholics. Just as Secretary of State Dean Acheson began to recognize the importance of the case to America’s image abroad, the administration’s term was over. The new president moved into the White House and inherited a stalemated war in Korea and two Communist spies on death row.

Reshaping China
Xiaoyuan Liu

in Negotiating China's Destiny in World War II

Published in print: 2014 Published Online: May 2015
Item type: chapter

Most historians of the Sino-US relationship have focused on such issues as the Stilwell Incident, the Dixie Mission, and Lend-Lease. Liu Xiaoyuan demonstrates that in US foreign policy to China, China’s ethnic frontiers was an important issue, just as much as the future of China’s former dependencies or tributary states. He also shows that the future of China as a multinational and unified country was important US State Department concern. He thus shows that US strategy was far more sophisticated and comprehensive than earlier analyses have allowed us to conclude.

Leaving on a Jet Plane
Marcus Anthony Hunter and Zandria F. Robinson

in Chocolate Cities: The Black Map of American Life

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: May 2018
Item type: chapter

The last of three chapters on the power of chocolate cities, this chapter centers the lives, activism, and pioneering efforts of Mos Def (a.k.a. Yasiin Bey) and W. E. B. Du Bois. Exploring their lives, legal setbacks, and push against global imperialism and racial oppression, the authors
highlight their sophisticated and politically informed racial geography of the United States. Detailing the movement of black people throughout the domestic diaspora and into and throughout Africa, this chapter illustrates the how place, race, peace politics, and power collide in the lives of black people here, there, and everywhere around the globe.