



The Cold War: A New History

John Lewis Gaddis

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In 1950, when Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh and Kim Il-Sung met in Moscow to discuss the future, they had reason to feel optimistic. International communism seemed everywhere on the offensive: Stalin was at the height of his power; all of Eastern Europe was securely in the Soviet camp; America's monopoly on nuclear weapons was a thing of the past; and Mao's forces had assumed control over the world's most populous country. Everywhere on the globe, colonialism left the West morally compromised. The story of the previous five decades, which saw severe economic depression, two world wars, a nearly successful attempt to wipe out the Jews, and the invention of weapons capable of wiping out everyone, was one of worst fears confirmed, and there seemed as of 1950 little sign, at least to the West, that the next fifty years would be any less dark.

In fact, of course, the century's end brought the widespread triumph of political and economic freedom over its ideological enemies. How did this happen? How did fear become hope? In *The Cold War*, John Lewis Gaddis makes a major contribution to our understanding of this epochal story. Beginning with World War II and ending with the collapse of the Soviet Union, he provides a thrilling account of the strategic dynamics that drove the age, rich with illuminating portraits of its major personalities and much fresh insight into its most crucial events. The first significant distillation of cold war scholarship for a general readership, *The Cold War* contains much new and often startling information drawn from newly opened Soviet, East European, and Chinese archives. Now, as America once again finds itself in a global confrontation with an implacable ideological enemy, *The Cold War* tells a story whose lessons it is vitally necessary to understand.

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