America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945–1991 is the first post–Cold War analysis of the origins of the Soviet-American confrontation and its extension from the central arena in Europe to the periphery in the Third World, particularly East Asia and the Middle East. It explores the conditions in the international system at the end of World War II, the American determination to provide leadership, and the "security dilemma" each superpower posed for the other.

Although Professor Cohen perceives the American-Soviet conflict as systemic, he points to the nature of the Stalinist state, its secrecy and its brutal dictatorship, to explain the course of the confrontation. He also contends that the character of the American political system, the separation of powers and the role of interest groups, prompted American leaders to exaggerate dangers abroad to enhance their power at home. Using information recently released by Chinese and Soviet sources, he provides fresh insight into Chinese and Soviet actions during the Korean War, the Taiwan Straits crises of the 1950s, and the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. His chapter on the war in Vietnam is easily the best brief history of that tragic encounter. The author explains the rise and fall of détente in the 1970s, describes how imperial overreach strained both the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and ultimately reflects on what the Cold War has meant for the world, and what "victory" has meant for Americans in the 1990s. The book includes a valuable bibliographic essay on the large historical literature on American foreign relations during the period.

The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations

Volume IV

America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945–1991

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Warren I. Cohen, Editor

Volume I: The Creation of a Republican Empire, 1776–1865 – Bradford Perkins
Volume II: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865–1913 – Walter LaFeber
Volume III: The Globalizing of America, 1913–1945 – Akira Iriye
Volume IV: America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945–1991 – Warren I. Cohen

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FOR NANCY
HER TURN

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General Editor's Introduction

My goal for the Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations was to make the finest scholarship and the best writing in the historical profession available to the general reader. I had no ideological or methodological agenda. I wanted some of America's leading students of diplomatic history, regardless of approach, to join me and was delighted to have my invitations accepted by the first three to whom I turned. When I conceived of the project nearly ten years ago, I had no idea that the Cold War would suddenly end, that these volumes would conclude with a final epoch as well defined as the first three. The collapse of the Soviet empire, just as I finished writing Volume IV, astonished me but allowed for a sense of completion these volumes would have lacked under any other circumstances.

The first volume has been written by Bradford Perkins, the preeminent historian of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American diplomacy and doyen of currently active diplomatic historians. Perkins sees foreign policy in the young Republic as a product of material interests, culture, and the prism of national values. He describes an American pattern of behavior that existed before there was an America and demonstrates how it was shaped by the experience of the Revolution and the early days of the Republic. In his discussion of the Constitution and foreign affairs, he spins a thread that can be pulled through the remaining volumes: the persistent effort of presidents, beginning with Washington, to dominate policy, contrary to the intent of the participants in the Constitutional Convention.

The inescapable theme of Perkins's volume is presaged in its title, the ideological commitment to republican values and the determination to carry those values across the North American continent and to obliterate all obstacles, human as well as geological. He sees the American empire arising out of lust for land and resources rather

than for dominion over other peoples. But it was dominion over others – native Americans, Mexicans, and especially African Americans – that led to the last episode he discusses, the Civil War and its diplomacy. This is a magnificent survey of the years in which the United States emerged as a nation and created the foundations for world power that would come in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Walter LaFeber, author of the second volume, is one of the most highly respected of the so-called Wisconsin School of diplomatic historians, men and women who studied with Fred Harvey Harrington and William Appleman Williams and their students, and were identified as "New Left" when they burst on the scene in the 1960s. LaFeber's volume covers the last third of the nineteenth century and extends into the twentieth, to 1913, through the administration of William Howard Taft. He discusses the link between the growth of American economic power and expansionism, adding the theme of racism, especially as applied to native Americans and Filipinos. Most striking is his rejection of the idea of an American quest for order. He argues that Americans sought opportunities for economic and missionary activities abroad and that they were undaunted by the disruptions they caused in other nations. A revolution in China or Mexico was a small price to pay for advantages accruing to Americans, especially when the local people paid it. His other inescapable theme is the use of foreign affairs to enhance presidential power.

The third volume, which begins on the eve of World War I and carries the story through World War II, is by Akira Iriye, past president of the American Historical Association and our generation's most innovative historian of international relations. Japanese-born, educated in American universities, Iriye has been fascinated by the cultural conflicts and accommodations that permeate power politics, particularly as the United States has confronted the nations of East Asia. Iriye opens his book with a quick sketch of the international system as it evolved and was dominated by Europe through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. He analyzes Wilsonianism in war and peace and how it was applied in Asia and Latin America. Most striking is his discussion of what he calls the

"cultural aspect" of the 1920s. Iriye sees the era about which he writes as constituting the "globalizing of America" – an age in which the United States supplanted Europe as the world's leader and provided the economic and cultural resources to define and sustain the international order. He notes the awakening of non-Western peoples and their expectations of American support and inspiration. In his conclusion he presages the troubles that would follow from the Americanization of the world.

Much of my work, like Iriye's, has focused on American–East Asian relations. My friend Michael Hunt has placed me in the "realist" school of diplomatic historians. Influenced by association with Perkins, LaFeber, Iriye, Ernest May, and younger friends such as John Lewis Gaddis, Michael Hogan, and Melvyn Leffler, I have studied the domestic roots of American policy, the role of ideas and attitudes as well as economic concerns, the role of nongovernmental organizations including missionaries, and the place of art in international relations. In the final volume of the series, *America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945–1991,* I also rely heavily on what I have learned from political economists and political scientists.

I begin the book in the closing months of World War II and end it with the disappearance of the Soviet Union in 1991. I write of the vision American leaders had of a postwar world order and the growing sense that the Soviet Union posed a threat to that vision. The concept of the "security dilemma," the threat each side's defensive actions seemed to pose for the other, looms large in my analysis of the origins of the Cold War. I also emphasize the importance of the two political systems, the paradox of the powerful state and weak government in the United States and the secrecy and brutality of the Stalinist regime. Throughout the volume, I note the importance of the disintegration of prewar colonial empires, the appearance of scores of newly independent states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and the turmoil caused by American and Soviet efforts to force them into an international system designed in Washington and Moscow. Finally, I trace the reemergence of Germany and Japan as major powers, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the drift of the United States, its course in world affairs uncertain in the absence of an adversary.

There are a number of themes that can be followed through these four volumes, however differently the authors approach their subjects. First, there was the relentless national pursuit of wealth and power, described so vividly by Perkins and LaFeber. Iriye demonstrates how Americans used their wealth and power when the United States emerged as the world's leader after World War I. I discuss America's performance as hegemon in the years immediately following World War II, and its response to perceived threats to its dominance.

A second theme of critical importance is the struggle for control of foreign policy. Each author notes tension between the president and Congress, as institutionalized by the Constitution, and the efforts of various presidents, from 1789 to the present, to circumvent constitutional restraints on their powers. The threat to democratic government is illustrated readily by the Nixon-Kissinger obsessions that led to Watergate and Reagan's Iran-Contra fiasco.

Finally, we are all concerned with what constitutes American identity on the world scene. Is there a peculiarly American foreign policy that sets the United States off from the rest of the world? We examine the evolution of American values and measure them against the nation's behavior in international affairs. And we worry about the impact of the country's global activity on its domestic order, fearful that Thomas Jefferson's vision of a virtuous republic has been forgotten, boding ill for Americans and for the world they are allegedly "bound to lead."

WARREN I. COHEN

Acknowledgments

My thanks go first to Akira Iriye, Walt LaFeber, and Brad Perkins for joining me in this project and to Frank Smith and Martin Dinitz for shepherding it to the point of completion. The first three read my manuscript and suggested improvements, some of which I effected. Don Lammers, my regular critic, performed his usual role with the patience of a great teacher. Mel Leffler and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker examined my first draft with excruciating care. They failed in their efforts to intimidate me. Mel will probably never understand Dean Acheson or American policy toward China. Nancy will have to settle for the dedication.

Most of the work for this book was undertaken during a sabbatical leave from Michigan State University. I am grateful to MSU for its consistent support over the thirty years when I taught there. I am especially grateful to John Eadie, dean of the College of Arts and Letters, who did all that was possible to make the years of commuting between East Lansing and Washington painless, and to Gordon Stewart, chair of the Department of History, who tolerated my frequent absences.

I was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1990–1, where Mary Bullock, Rob Litwak, Sam Wells, and Lindsay Collins looked after me, providing all the support one hopes for from a residential program. Sergo Mikoyan's comments on a paper I presented at the Center in June 1991 were most helpful.

A work of this kind rests heavily on the research and writing of many other scholars, most of whom are mentioned in my notes and bibliographic essay. I benefited also from conversations over the years with many of those cited and with British, Chinese, German, Japanese, Korean, and Soviet colleagues at a wide range of international conferences. Equally rewarding has been the teaching of my

students. Listening to Qing Simei probably delayed completion of this manuscript by a year.

Finally, I regret to note that on the day I finished revising this manuscript, I lost my most faithful reader and most gentle critic, my uncle, Raphael Avin.