Volume I of *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* examines the origins and early years of the conflict. In the first comprehensive historical reexamination of the period, a team of leading scholars shows how the Cold War evolved from the geopolitical, ideological, economic, and sociopolitical environment of the two world wars and the interwar period, and discusses how markets, ideas, and cultural interactions affected political discourse, diplomacy, and strategy after World War II. The chapters focus not only on the United States and the Soviet Union, but also on critical regions such as Europe, the Balkans, and East Asia. The authors deal with the most influential statesmen of the era and address issues that mattered most to people around the globe: food, nutrition, and resource allocation; ethnicity, race, and religion; science and technology; national autonomy, self-determination, and sovereignty. In so doing, they illuminate how people worldwide shaped the evolution of the increasingly bipolar conflict and, in turn, were ensnared by it.

**Melvyn P. Leffler** is Edward Stettinius Professor of American History at the Department of History, University of Virginia. His previous publications include *To Lead the World: American Strategy After the Bush Doctrine* (2008, as co-editor), *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (2007, winner of the AHA George Louis Beer Prize), and *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration and the Cold War* (1992, winner of the Bancroft Prize, the Robert Ferrell Prize, and the Herbert Hoover Book Award).

The Cambridge History of the Cold War is a comprehensive, international history of the conflict that dominated world politics in the twentieth century. The three-volume series, written by leading international experts in the field, elucidates how the Cold War evolved from the geopolitical, ideological, economic, and socio-political environment of the two world wars and the interwar era, and explains the global dynamics of the Cold War international system. It emphasizes how the Cold War bequeathed conditions, challenges, and conflicts that shape international affairs today. With discussions of demography and consumption, women and youth, science and technology, ethnicity and race, the volumes encompass the social, intellectual, and economic history of the twentieth century, shedding new light on the evolution of the Cold War. Through its various geographical and national angles, the series signifies a transformation of the field from a national – primarily American – to a broader international approach.

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF THE COLD WAR

VOLUME I

Origins

Edited by

MELVYN P. LEFFLER

and

ODD ARNE WESTAD
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Contributors to volume I

Csaba Békés is Director of the Cold War History Research Centre in Budapest. He is the author of *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom a világpolitikában* [The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and World Politics] and coeditor of *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*.

Mark Philip Bradley is Professor of History at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam* and *Vietnam at War: The Search for Meaning*.

Anne Deighton is Professor of European International History in the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford. Among her publications are *The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany, and the Origins of the Cold War* and *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948–1963*.

David C. Engerman is Associate Professor of History at Brandeis University. He has published *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* and, as coeditor, *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*.

Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht is Professor of International History at the University of Cologne. She is the author of *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945–1955* and *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations*.

Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu is Professor of History at Michigan State University. She is the author of *Creating People of Plenty: The United States and Japan’s Economic Alternatives, 1950–1960*.

William I. Hitchcock is Professor of History at Temple University. He is the author of *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* and *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945–Present*.

David Holloway is Raymond A. Spruance Professor of International History at Stanford University. He is the author of *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956* and *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*. 
List of contributors to volume I

**Melvyn P. Leffler** is Edward Stettinius Professor of American History at the University of Virginia. He is the author of *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* and *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War.*


**Robert J. McMahon** is the Ralph D. Mershon Distinguished Professor at the Ohio State University. He is the author of *Dean Acheson and the Creation of an American World Order and Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan.*

**Charles S. Maier** is Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University. He is the author of *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* and *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany.*

**Vojtech Mastny** is coordinator of the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security. His books include *Russia’s Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare, and the Politics of Communism, 1941–1945* and *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years.*


**Niu Jun** is Professor in the School of International Studies at Peking University. His publications include *From Yan’an to The World: The Origin and Development of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and China’s Foreign Policy Decision Making during the Cold War.*

**David S. Painter** teaches international history at Georgetown University where he has a joint appointment with the Department of History and the School of Foreign Service. His publications include *Oil and the American Century: The Political Economy of US Foreign Oil Policy, 1941–1954* and *The Cold War: An International History.*

**Vladimir O. Pechatnov** is Professor of European and American Studies at the Moscow Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). He has written *Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman: SSSR i SSHA v 1940-kh gg. Dokumental’nye ocherki* [Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman: The USSR and the USA in the 1940s. Documentary Essays] and is coauthor of *Debating the Origins of the Cold War: American and Russian Perspectives.*

**David Priestland** is University Lecturer at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *Stalinism and the Politics of Mobilization: Ideas, Power, and Terror in Inter-War Russia and The Red Flag: A History of Communism.*
List of contributors to volume I

Svetozar Rajak is Academic Director at LSE IDEAS, the London School of Economics and Political Science’s center for the study of international affairs, diplomacy, and strategy. He is the author of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War, 1953–1957.

Hans-Peter Schwarz is Professor Emeritus of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. His publications include Das Gesicht des Jahrhunderts: Monster, Retter, und Mediokritäten and the two-volume Adenauer: A German Politician and Statesman in a Period of War, Revolution, and Reconstruction.

William Stueck is Distinguished Research Professor of History at the University of Georgia. His books include The Korean War: An International History and Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History.

Odd Arne Westad is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Among his publications are Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946–1950 and The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times.

Preface to volumes I, II, and III

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Cold War has gradually become history. In people’s memories, the epoch when a global rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union dominated international affairs has taken on a role very much like that of the two twentieth-century world wars, as a thing of the past, but also as progenitor of everything that followed. As with the two world wars, we now also have the ability to see developments from the perspectives of the different participants in the struggle. Declassification, however incomplete, of a suggestive body of archival evidence from the former Communist world as well as from the West makes this possible. The time, therefore, is ripe to provide a comprehensive, systematic, analytic overview of the conflict that shaped the international system and that affected most of humankind during the second half of the twentieth century.

In this three-volume *Cambridge History*, the contributors seek to illuminate the causes, dynamics, and consequences of the Cold War. We want to elucidate how it evolved from the geopolitical, ideological, economic, and sociopolitical environment of the two world wars and the interwar era. We also seek to convey a greater appreciation of how the Cold War bequeathed conditions, challenges, and conflicts that shape developments in the international system today.

In order to accomplish the above goals, we take the *Cambridge History of the Cold War (CHCW)* far beyond the narrow boundaries of diplomatic affairs. We seek to clarify what mattered to the greatest number of people during the Cold War. Indeed, the end of the conflict cannot be grasped without understanding how markets, ideas, and cultural interactions affected political discourse, diplomatic events, and strategic thinking. Consequently, we shall deal at considerable length with the social, intellectual, and economic history of the twentieth century. We shall discuss demography and consumption, women and youth, science and technology, culture and race. The evolution of the Cold War cannot be comprehended without attention to such matters.
Preface to volumes I, II, and III

The CHCW is an international history, covering the period from a wide variety of geographical and national angles. While some chapters necessarily center on an individual state or a bilateral relationship, there are many more chapters that deal with a wider region or with global trends. Intellectually, therefore, the CHCW aspires to contribute to a transformation of the field from national – primarily American – views to a broader international approach.

The authors of the individual chapters have been selected because of their academic standing in the field of Cold War studies, regardless of their institutional affiliation, academic discipline, or national origin. Although the majority of contributors are historians, there are chapters written by political scientists, economists, and sociologists. While most contributors come from the main research universities in North America and Britain – where Cold War studies first blossomed as a field – the editors have also sought to engage scholars working in different universities and research centers around the globe. We have included a mixture of younger and more established scholars in the field, thereby seeking to illuminate how scholarship has evolved as well as where it is heading.

The CHCW aims at being comprehensive, comparative, and pluralist in its approach. The contributors have deliberately been drawn from various "schools" of thought and have been asked to put forward their own – often distinctive – lines of argument, while indicating the existence of alternative interpretations and approaches. Being a substantial work of reference, the CHCW provides detailed, synthetic accounts of key periods and major thematic topics, while striving for broad and original interpretations. The volumes constitute a scholarly project, written by academics for fellow academics as well as for policymakers, foreign affairs personnel, military officers, and analysts of international relations. But we also hope the CHCW will serve as an introduction and reference point for advanced undergraduate students and for an educated lay public in many countries.

The present Cambridge History was first conceived in 2001 and has therefore been almost ten years in the making. It has been a large, multinational project, with seventy-three contributors from eighteen different countries. We have met for three conferences and had a large number of hours on the phone and in conference calls. Most chapters have been through three, if not four, different versions, and have been read and commented upon – in depth – not only by the editors, but also by other participants in the project. In the end, it was the spirit of collaboration among people of very different backgrounds and very different views that made it possible to bring this Cambridge History to completion in the form that it now has.
Preface to volumes I, II, and III

While the editors’ first debt of gratitude therefore is to the contributors, a large number of others also deserve thanks. Jeffrey Byrne, our editorial assistant, did a remarkable job organizing meetings, keeping track of submissions, and finding maps and illustrative matter, all while completing his own doctoral thesis. He has been a model associate. Michael Watson, our editor at Cambridge University Press, helped keep the project on track throughout. Michael Devine, the director of the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, worked hard to set up the conferences and provide essential funding for the project. At the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the wonderful administrative staff of the International History Department, the Cold War Studies Centre, and LSE IDEAS provided help far beyond the call of duty; Arne Westad is especially grateful to Carol Toms and Tiha Franulovic for all the assistance rendered him during a difficult period when he juggled the CHCW editorship with being head of department and research center director.

Both editors are grateful to those who helped fund and organize the three CHCW conferences, at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri; at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas; and at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. Besides the Truman Library director, Michael Devine, we wish to thank the director of the Johnson Library, Betty Sue Flowers, the director of the History and Public Policy Program at the Wilson Center, Christian Ostermann, and the director of the National Security Archive, Thomas S. Blanton. We are also grateful to Philip Bobbitt, H. W. Brands, Diana Carlin, Francis J. Gavin, Mark Lawrence, William Leogrande, Robert Littwak, William Roger Louis, Dennis Merrill, Louis Potts, Elspeth Rostow, Mary Sarotte, Strobe Talbott, Alan Tully, Steven Weinberg, and Samuel Wells.

Being editors of such a large scholarly undertaking has been exhausting and exhilarating in turn (and roughly in equal measure). The editors want to thank each other for good comradeship throughout, and our families, students, and colleagues for their patience, assistance, and good cheer. It has been a long process, and we hope that the end product will serve its audiences well.

Melvyn P. Leffler
and
Odd Arne Westad

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