

Introduction: The Challenge of the Third World

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The rise of the Third World stands unquestionably as one of the key defining features of modern international history. The newly emerging areas of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America threw off the shackles of colonialism and neocolonialism in the half century that followed World War II, boldly articulated their own national aspirations, strove to achieve economic as well as political independence, and became increasingly influential actors on the world stage. In the broadest world-historical sense, the rise of the Third World posed a fundamental challenge to Western global dominance—the most sweeping such challenge of the modern era. “We propose to stand on our own legs,” proclaimed India’s Jawaharlal Nehru in March 1947. “We do not intend to be the playthings of others.”¹

The emergence of the Third World, together with the bloody, conflict-ridden process of decolonization that brought it forth, not only coincided temporally with the Cold War but was inextricably shaped by that same Cold War—as each of the essays in this volume powerfully demonstrates. Indeed, it was the all-encompassing struggle between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their respective allies for global power, influence, and ideological supremacy that gave birth to the very term *Third World*. A convenient political catchphrase that rather loosely lumped together the predominantly poor and uncommitted areas of the planet, *Third World* originally connoted an arena of contestation between West and East, the so-called First World and Second World. It was an arena, in the view of many pundits, academics, and geopoliticians, whose ultimate political orientation might well determine the outcome of the Cold War.

The United States and the Soviet Union each identified vital national

interests in Third World territories. For Washington, as for Moscow, the developing areas appeared critical to the achievement of basic strategic, economic, political, and ideological goals. Significantly, most of the major East-West crises of the Cold War era erupted in the Third World, including nearly all that threatened to escalate into direct U.S.-Soviet confrontations. The only wars involving U.S. military forces during this period also took place in the Third World. In fact, the vast bulk of the armed conflicts that have broken out since the end of the Second World War have been fought there. It is particularly telling that all but two hundred thousand of the estimated twenty million people who died in wars fought between 1945 and 1990 were felled during conflicts that raged across various parts of the Third World.²

The United States's interest in and involvement with the Third World is not, of course, exclusively a post-1945 phenomenon. The United States itself became a Third World power—though the term itself had not yet been coined—when it seized possession of several Pacific and Caribbean territories following the Spanish-American War of 1898. Its extensive trade links with the non-Western world, of course, long predated the imperial surge of the 1890s. During the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, the United States substantially deepened its diplomatic, military, and commercial involvement with non-Western areas. Roosevelt and Wilson went a long way toward converting the Caribbean into a U.S. lake; they helped establish, in the process, the commercial and military preeminence of the United States throughout Latin America. Each of those activist presidents also regularly inserted the United States into East Asian affairs, viewing that corner of the globe, too, as a necessary preoccupation for a burgeoning industrial power with rapidly expanding commercial and geopolitical interests. Even if other parts of the Third World—Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia—commanded considerably less attention from U.S. leaders at this time, the U.S. fixation with the Third World during the post-World War II era clearly had strong historical antecedents.

But U.S. concern about, and involvement with, the Third World assumed dramatically increased proportions during the post-World War II period. That concern derived from an interrelated set of economic, geostrategic, political, ideological, and psychological factors—many of which predated the Cold War and all of which were further magnified by U.S.-Soviet antagonism. The lessons U.S. planners took from the Second World War had elevated the importance of Third World territories well before the onset of the U.S.-Soviet struggle. Determined to build a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous world order out of the ashes of humanity's most horrendous conflict, and realizing that technology and trade had shrunken the globe, Roosevelt

and Truman administration planners were convinced that the United States needed to assume a more activist role in the Third World. To actualize their vision of an open, orderly, and peaceful world—and hence a more secure and prosperous United States—U.S. strategists believed it essential to integrate the developing regions more fully into the global economy, spur freer trade, ensure equal access to all of the planet’s resources and markets, and establish a reliable, worldwide network of U.S. military bases. Those strategists also considered it imperative that the nationalist aspirations of dependent peoples be accommodated so as to defuse more revolutionary tendencies. Sumner Welles, Roosevelt’s undersecretary of state, cautioned that failing to plan for the transfer of power to “peoples clamoring for freedom from the colonial powers” would “be like failing to install a safety valve and then waiting for the boiler to blow up.”³ The Cold War reinforced and strengthened each of those already established priorities; it did not by itself create them.

Long-standing U.S. interests in the raw materials and markets of the developing world deepened appreciably as a result of World War II. U.S. planners were keenly aware of how important Third World resources had been in the German-Japanese drive for world hegemony. Control over such resources had strengthened the Axis powers militarily and economically, bolstering significantly their ability to wage global war. U.S. industry’s dependence on the tin and rubber of Southeast Asia was painfully driven home when the Japanese occupation of key tin- and rubber-producing areas caused major production bottlenecks for the United States. And perhaps no lesson of World War II proved more basic to Western strategists than that concerning the crucial importance of oil to modern warfare. Much of the world’s oil, of course, was located beneath the soil and seas of Third World territories, a fact that would have spurred much closer U.S. attention to those areas after the war even if no Soviet Union had existed. The close economic links between the industrialized nations and the primary producing areas of the Third World also drew U.S. interest and involvement; world economic recovery, one of the top postwar policy goals of the United States, was in large part dependent upon the rapid reestablishment of such links.⁴

The enhanced strategic value of the Third World for the United States also derived in significant measure from the lessons of World War II. As technology, and especially air power, seemed to contract the globe, U.S. generals and admirals grew convinced that their nation’s security demanded a defense that began well beyond the home shores. The concept of defense in depth, widely accepted by military planners of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, necessitated the development of an integrated network of air and naval bases, along with widespread military air transit rights, so that the

United States could project its power more easily into trouble spots while providing an extra measure of protection against prospective enemies. In 1946, the State Department formulated an expansive list of “essential” or “required” base sites that included, among others, Burma, the Fiji Islands, New Zealand, Cuba, Ecuador, French Morocco, Senegal, Liberia, Panama, and Peru. That same year, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved a list of twenty locales where the United States desired military air transit rights; they included Algiers, Cairo, Dhahran, Karachi, Saigon, Acapulco, San Jose, and the Cook Islands.⁵ From the very inception of the postwar era, then, the United States was identifying vital economic and security interests across the Third World.

The Cold War made those interests ever more vital. U.S. policy makers feared that some of the resources and markets of the Third World, already deemed indispensable to the health of the world economy, the economic recoveries of Western Europe and Japan, and the United States’s own commercial and military requirements might fall under Soviet control. The Soviet Union could, as a result, realize an appreciable gain in its military and economic capabilities, much as Germany and Japan had during the Second World War; the West would then be correspondingly weakened. Furthermore, if the Cold War ever turned hot, U.S. war plans called for the use of Middle Eastern base sites for air and atomic attacks against the Soviet heartland. Those expansive economic and strategic priorities were woven into the seamless web of U.S. national security requirements.⁶ The containment of the Soviet Union and the construction of “a healthy international environment” were, as National Security Council Paper 68 (NSC-68) pointed out in April 1950, the two most basic policy goals of the United States—distinct, but overlapping.⁷ The Third World clearly was crucial to the achievement of each.

Other factors also contributed to the U.S. Cold War fixation with the Third World. For one, the political exigencies of the nation’s two-party system made the “loss” of any additional territory to communism, from the Truman administration onward, a political liability of potentially catastrophic proportions. The vilification of Harry S. Truman by Republican opponents following the successful Chinese communist revolution of 1949 served as a powerful object lesson to all future White House occupants. Referring specifically to Vietnam, for example, President John F. Kennedy confessed to a journalist early in his presidency: “I can’t give up a piece of territory like that to the Communists and get the American people to reelect me.”⁸ Similarly, President Lyndon B. Johnson worried, according to political adviser Jack Valenti, that Republicans and conservative Democrats together would have “torn him in pieces” had he failed to hold the line against communism in Southeast Asia.⁹

The psychological underpinnings of power, best captured by the frequently invoked concept of U.S. credibility, further elevated the stakes at play for the United States in the Third World. By the late 1940s, U.S. analysts were convinced that the belief that historical momentum lay with the communist powers and not with the West had taken hold, especially in the developing areas. They feared that such a perception, whether rooted in fact or fantasy, might take on a life of its own, producing a bandwagon effect that would pull nations inexorably out of the “Free World” pantheon and into the “communist bloc.” NSC-68 warned pointedly that the Soviet Union sought “to demonstrate that force and the will to use it are on the side of the Kremlin [and] that those who lack it are decadent and doomed.”¹⁰ If the United States appeared incapable of stemming this tide, or so U.S. officials fretted, its enemies would grow more aggressive and its allies would come to doubt its power and distrust its resolve.

Given that mind-set, Washington policy makers reflexively viewed any Soviet intervention, threatened intervention, aid offer, or diplomatic initiative anywhere in the Third World as a test from which other states, large and small, would derive important lessons about the power and resolve of the respective superpowers. After 1949, U.S. officials viewed Beijing’s expansive inclinations with nearly as wary an eye as Moscow’s and worried that they posed just as dangerous a test. The United States, consequently, vested enormous significance in each and every Third World challenge or hot spot—from South Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Indonesia to Egypt, the Congo, Angola, and Nicaragua—regardless of the intrinsic strategic or economic value of the territory in question. A State Department white paper on Laos of 1959, for example, insisted that that landlocked country of three million people actually constituted “a front line of the free world.”¹¹ Similarly, President Ronald Reagan, in his various appeals for additional aid to the Nicaraguan contras, emphasized that the security and welfare of the United States were at stake in Central America. “If we cannot defend ourselves there,” he warned in one speech, “we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble, and the safety of our homeland would be put in jeopardy.”¹²

The abiding need of the United States to demonstrate, to allies and adversaries alike, its strength, resolution, determination, and dependability thus led to a blurring of distinctions between vital and peripheral interests. By the 1950s and 1960s, U.S. officials were viewing all corners of the Third World as potentially vital to the geostrategic and politico-psychological balance of power between East and West—and to the credibility of the United States.¹³ The essays in this volume by Douglas Little and Robert Buzzanco help illuminate the extent to which the United States’s fixation with its

credibility critically shaped the decisions to intervene in Lebanon and Vietnam, respectively, as it did in so many other areas.

The Third World posed a monumental conceptual and policy challenge for U.S. officials throughout the postwar epoch. How could the United States best use its military and economic clout, political influence, and whatever cultural or ideological appeal it might have in the quest to “win” the Third World for the West? What mix of aid offers, security commitments, diplomatic backing, multilateral or bilateral treaties, or just plain sympathy and understanding would work most effectively as it sought to convert the newly emerging areas into stable, productive nation-states firmly committed to the West? How could the United States most efficiently inoculate the diverse populations of the Third World against the communist virus? How could it most effectively harness Third World resources and markets for the cause of global capitalist resurgence—and for the benefit of U.S. industry and commerce? What means, in short, were most appropriate to the ends that the United States sought?

Those daunting instrumental challenges were further complicated by the painful legacy of colonialism. The United States’s closest and most important Cold War allies were, of course, the very European powers whose heavy-handed colonial rule had triggered the wave of nationalist, anticolonial revolts that swept Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in the aftermath of World War II. The United States endeavored throughout the early Cold War period to balance its desire for friendly, cooperative relationships with the emerging postcolonial states with its need to maintain harmony within the Western alliance. It proved an impossible balancing act. Whenever Washington tilted too far toward one side, it risked alienating the other. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations’ inclination to defer to the European colonial powers in Southeast Asia and the Middle East (Suez excepted) gradually gave way to the Kennedy administration’s activist campaign to woo Third World states—even if European feathers got ruffled in the process. But the essential problem lingered, defying simple solutions, as Piero Gleijeses’s essay on the Congo crisis of 1964–65 so expertly demonstrates.

Deep-seated rivalries among Third World states compounded the United States’s policy dilemmas. If the United States forged an alliance with countries that it considered valuable strategic assets—as the Eisenhower administration did with Pakistan and Iraq, to take two prominent examples—it virtually ensured the enmity of those nations’ enemies: India, in the first case, Egypt in the second. If the United States then tried to rebalance the scales by supplying economic or military assistance to nations left outside its alliance system, as the Kennedy administration was wont to do, it almost

guaranteed that Third World allies would protest vigorously. How could nonalignment be seen as offering greater dividends than alignment? That dilemma, too, often proved insuperable.

The positive appeal that the Soviet Union, China, and communist ideology more broadly held for Third World states posed an equally insuperable problem. Deeply held resentments against the exploitative policies and racism of the West, joined with an abiding desire for rapid economic development, made Third World areas highly susceptible to Soviet, and Chinese, overtures. Many Third World leaders and intellectuals both admired and sought to emulate the Soviet developmental model. In little more than a generation, after all, Lenin, Stalin, and their compatriots had transformed a backward, underdeveloped country into a military-industrial powerhouse. How could the architects of Third World development help but take notice? In November 1955, the Eisenhower administration debated this issue at length during several National Security Council meetings. Allen W. Dulles, director of Central Intelligence, conceded that many Third World leaders were impressed with the Soviet Union's economic progress under a statist, command-style economy. They had come to believe, he lamented, that the Soviet system "might have more to offer in the way of quick results than the U.S. system."¹⁴ U.S. analysts were convinced that they needed to demonstrate the efficacy of the capitalist road to economic development and prove, by any means possible, its superiority over the communist/socialist route. That task proved difficult in the extreme.

The Soviet Union held other advantages, especially during the early Cold War years. It remained unimpeachable on the all-important colonial question, whereas this issue was a crippling vulnerability for the Western powers. Moscow also appeared relatively free from the racism and the culturally superior attitudes that Third World leaders found so grating among many Westerners. Nor did the persistent efforts of U.S. diplomats to highlight the tyranny and brutality of Soviet communism meet with much success among peoples who considered the exercise of European imperial and neocolonial authority to be far more tyrannical and brutal.

The Third World has featured very prominently in the scholarly literatures on modern U.S. foreign relations and on the history of the Cold War. In view of the centrality of the Third World's place in both, that is entirely fitting. Few questions remain as central to our comprehension of the international politics of the postwar epoch than the following: How and why did the Cold War move from Europe to the Third World? Why did the developing areas become focal points for Cold War tension? What specific interests and forces led to the intensification of U.S. and Soviet interests in Third

World areas? To what degree did Third World nations themselves affect that process? And what impact has the Cold War had on the course of political and economic developments within Third World states? Given the importance and complexity of such questions, scholars have, not surprisingly, offered widely divergent answers to them. In many respects, the conflicts among scholars seeking to explicate the U.S.–Third World encounter replicate the wider interpretive battles waged by scholars over the international politics of the Cold War era writ large.

Traditional scholarship viewed the early Cold War largely through a Eurocentric lens. Historians, political scientists, and former government officials writing in that vein considered the clash between the Soviet Union and the United States of the mid- and late 1940s as essentially a struggle over the fate of Europe. Consequently, they tended to slight, or even ignore, the non-Western world. Those traditionalists, and the so-called realists that they closely resembled, interpreted the movement of the Cold War to the peripheral areas as a direct result of the Soviet- and Chinese-directed aggression that brought war to the Korean peninsula in June 1950. The Korean War, according to this framework, triggered a defensive, and wholly appropriate, Western response to the threat of unbridled communist adventurism.¹⁵

As with so many other issue areas, the first wave of revisionist scholars of the 1960s and 1970s proposed a radically different interpretive framework for understanding U.S. policy in the Third World. Many of the revisionists insisted from the first on the centrality of the Third World to the purported U.S. drive for global hegemony. The determination of the United States to exploit the resources and dominate the markets of the developing nations, according to historians such as Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, stood as a prime causal factor in the onset of the Cold War.¹⁶ For the revisionists, it was the desire of the United States to dominate and exploit the Third World for the benefit of U.S. capital—and to help underwrite the United States's larger mission of global hegemony—that lay behind the rapid expansion of U.S. interests and commitments into the periphery.

Recent scholarship has offered a variety of middle grounds. Some historians, often labeled by the vague and imprecise tag of “postrevisionists,” have emphasized the centrality of strategic variables in the United States's Third World policies. Melvyn P. Leffler, for example, has highlighted the critical importance of the Third World in U.S. global planning and strategy, insisting that the geopolitical dimension of U.S. interests significantly outweighed the economic dimension. He argues that the Truman administration valued Southeast Asia and the Middle East primarily for the commercial links that both regions maintained with core states in Western Europe and Japan, states

whose quick recoveries were essential to the U.S. blueprint for maintaining a preponderance of global power. With Peter Hahn and others, Leffler likewise underscores the salience that Truman and Eisenhower administration planners attached to the valuable military base sites located in the Middle East; they loomed as indispensable in all U.S. war-fighting scenarios.¹⁷

Still other experts, in addressing some of the aforementioned questions, have attempted to move beyond the long-standing debate between those who stress the primacy of geopolitics and those who stress the primacy of political economy. A growing number of historians of U.S.–Third World relations have called needed attention to the rich tableau of culture, exploring the manifold ways in which cultural biases and predispositions among Westerners and non-Westerners alike shaped and colored all interactions between societies with markedly different histories, traditions, values, and needs. They have also begun to examine the impact that the United States exerted on the cultural systems and values of Third World societies, a particularly compelling issue in an age in which the symbols of U.S. popular culture—from music, movies, and television programs to fast food franchises, consumer products, and styles of clothing—have become ubiquitous in virtually every corner of the globe. Other scholars have concentrated more on developments *within* Third World societies, analyzing how various Third World statesmen tried to manipulate Cold War tensions for their own purposes or exploring the Cold War's effect on struggles for power inside Third World countries.

Still others have focused on the differential impact that foreign aid, domestic development priorities, and macroeconomic growth strategies have had on the economic performances of Third World states. And some U.S.–Third World scholars have scrutinized the manifold contributions made by various nonstate actors, ranging from businessmen and investors to labor unionists, missionaries, philanthropists, and lobbyists of every imaginable stripe.

Finally, an important trend spurred by the recent opening of long-closed archival sources in Russia and China has been the careful examination of the “other side.” Much of the important and innovative work that has used sources from former “enemy” archives in the search for a more fully rounded history of the Cold War has been set in the Third World—including seminal books and articles on the Korean War, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Vietnam imbroglio.

For all those wide variations in interpretation, focus, and approach, and perhaps in part *because* of those differences, scholarship on the United States and the Third World has ranked among the more vigorous and pioneering

subfields within twentieth-century diplomatic history.¹⁸ The essays in this book provide ample testimony of the strengths as well as the diversity of that literature. No overarching synthesis is presented here; nor should one be expected. The theories, methods, and sources used by the individual authors represented in this volume differ nearly as markedly as do the geographical targets of their respective scholarly investigations. The interested reader should expect no comforting consensus, no new master narrative. Instead, this volume offers a multihued, panoramic portrait of the Cold War in the Third World. It contains a provocatively wide-ranging collection of ten state-of-the-art surveys of ten singular diplomatic episodes. Although each essay is self-contained, each also illuminates the critical intersection between postwar U.S. power, the Cold War, and an increasingly assertive, nationalistic Third World. Taken together, these ten essays help us appreciate the manifold ways in which that intersection shaped the modern world.

Douglas Little, Stephen G. Rabe, and Piero Gleijeses all emphasize the national security dynamic in U.S. policy making. A connective thread runs through all three contributions. The U.S. dispatch of troops to Lebanon in 1958, U.S. enlistment of Venezuela in various initiatives aimed at overthrowing both the Dominican Republic's right-wing autocrat Rafael Trujillo and Cuba's left-wing autocrat Fidel Castro, Washington's encouragement of and support for the white mercenaries who helped suppress a secessionist insurgency in the Congo in 1964–65—all were prompted by Cold War fears. Those fears, according to Little, Rabe, and Gleijeses, derived from the heightened sense of vulnerability that led U.S. strategists in the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations to exaggerate the potential dangers posed to U.S. interests by instability, communist inspired or not, anywhere in the Third World. Each of those essays also thoughtfully probes the tangled consequences and troubled legacy of intervention—for the United States as well as for the nations that became targets of covert or overt U.S. meddling. Although the United States always professed that it stood foursquare for freedom, democracy, human rights, and self-determination and held that those principles lay behind its Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union, each of these episodes provides powerful evidence of how the U.S. drive for security and stability often came to trump more idealistic values.

Of course, idealism never disappeared entirely from U.S. Cold War policy making, as Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman reminds us in her examination of the genesis of John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps. Cobbs Hoffman demonstrates how a genuine commitment to the alleviation of Third World poverty could coexist and merge seamlessly with a nakedly self-interested determination to win Third World hearts and minds for the United States's Cold War pur-

poses. Her contribution also underscores the multiple diplomatic and domestic contexts that brought forth a voluntarist initiative not just in the United States but throughout other “First World” countries as well. Cobbs Hoffman’s internationalist perspective shows, as many of the more accomplished studies of the U.S.–Third World encounter have, that a wider angle of vision can open fresh interpretive vistas.

In their contributions, Nick Cullather and Darlene Rivas direct their vision in other directions. Cullather’s analysis of Taiwan’s industrial surge of the 1950s and 1960s proves that it was in every sense a collaborative U.S.–Taiwanese project. The Taipei officials who forged a statist growth strategy did so with the active support and encouragement of U.S. development specialists, individuals who displayed a surprising degree of flexibility in their approach to development issues. In the long run, U.S. dollars and expertise wound up underwriting an industrial growth strategy that actually represented a fundamental departure from the liberal, free-market gospel so ritualistically identified by the U.S. government as the one true path to economic success. For her part, Rivas focuses on the role that private businessman Nelson Rockefeller played in Venezuela’s early postwar development efforts. Rockefeller’s influence flowed not just from the enormous capital that he and his firms commanded but also from the congruence between his own vision for Venezuelan economic progress and that held by the postwar *Acción Democrática* (AD) government. Those parallel strategies ultimately failed, however, in the face of staunch resistance from opposing commercial-political interests within Venezuela.

Although Cold War–derived priorities often prompted U.S. economic initiatives, governmental and private, both the Cullather and Rivas essays make clear that the fate of such initiatives was determined in the end by the shifting currents of Third World political and economic nationalism. Those currents formed a critical part of the larger pattern of conflicting institutional and individual agendas within host societies, a subject fully as complex as that of the competing institutional and individual agendas within the U.S. policy-making community.

Like Rivas, Peter Hahn also focuses centrally on nonstate actors: in his case, the labor union leaders in the United States and Israel who together sought to forge a stronger U.S.–Israeli relationship. To be sure, the precise impact of the numerous lobbying efforts so expertly detailed in Hahn’s essay elude precise measurement. But his innovative study certainly demonstrates how extensive such efforts were, while calling attention to the probable influence that appeals from prominent laborites exerted on Washington policy makers. The corporatist structure of the U.S. state, in which close

cooperation among governmental authorities, union spokesmen, and business people often proved the norm, makes approaches such as Hahn's especially valuable to students of U.S. foreign relations.

The new cultural history has of late also inspired an expansion in the traditional scholarly boundaries of U.S.–Third World studies. Culturalist approaches are well represented in the present volume with the unusually provocative contributions of Mary Ann Heiss and Andrew Rotter. Each author imaginatively exposes the deep cultural biases that conditioned U.S. attitudes toward non-Western societies and leaders—attitudes that abounded with dismissive stereotypes regarding the presumably effete, emotional, unstable, and, above all, inferior nature of Third World peoples. Such deep-seated attitudes could, and did, influence policy decisions, even if the direct relationship between generalized attitudes and specific policies remains hard to pin down. Heiss and Rotter, both closely attuned to the symbolic importance of language, show how traditional narratives about conflicts in the economic and geopolitical realms can be deepened, if not transformed, through an examination of the fundamental cultural chasm between Western and non-Western societies that undergirded virtually all such conflicts.

Robert Buzzanco's essay reflects other important scholarly trends in U.S.–Third World studies. He correctly depicts the Vietnam War as a critical episode in the international history of the modern world, weaving together the distinct but intersecting stories of U.S. fear and ambition, revolutionary nationalism within Vietnam, and the Sino-Soviet struggle for leadership of the Communist bloc. Buzzanco thus aligns himself firmly with those scholars—Cobbs Hoffman, Rivas, and Hahn among them—who seek to decenter the United States in their studies of the diplomacy of the Cold War era. The recent availability of Chinese and Soviet archival sources relating to Vietnam allows Buzzanco to paint on an impressively wide canvas. At the same time, he aligns himself interpretively with revisionist scholars who emphasize the primacy of internal, material forces in propelling the United States's expanding global commitments in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Indeed, Washington's role as leader of the world capitalist system serves for Buzzanco as the most compelling explanation both for its decision to intervene in Vietnam in the mid-1960s *and* for its decision to disengage from Vietnam in the late 1960s.

All of the essays in the present volume engage long-standing debates among scholars about the nature and impact of the U.S.–Third World encounter. Yet taken together they also succeed in pushing those debates in exciting new directions. The rich diversity of *Empire and Revolution*, accordingly, provides students and specialists alike with a superb introduction to a

topic of commanding importance. Understanding the complex relationship between the United States, the Third World, and the Cold War remains, quite simply, essential for all who seek to understand the second half of the twentieth century.

Notes

1. Quoted in Dennis Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1990), 15.

2. David S. Painter, "Explaining U.S. Relations with the Third World," *Diplomatic History* 19 (Summer 1995): 525.

3. Quoted in Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War* (New York, 1992), 32-33.

4. See, e.g., Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1949* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1980); and Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York, 1991).

5. Paterson, *On Every Front*, 107-8; Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941-45* (New Haven, CT, 1977); Melvyn P. Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-1948," *American Historical Review* 89 (April 1984): 346-81.

6. See especially Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA, 1992).

7. National Security Council, "NSC-68," in *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*, ed. Ernest R. May (New York, 1993), 40-41.

8. Quoted in Thomas G. Paterson, "Introduction: John F. Kennedy's Quest for Victory and Global Crisis," in *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York, 1989), 10.

9. Quoted in Ted Gittinger, ed., *The Johnson Years: A Vietnam Roundtable* (Austin, TX, 1993), 101.

10. National Security Council, "NSC-68," 53.

11. U.S. Department of State, *The Situation in Laos* (Washington, DC, 1959), i.

12. Ronald Reagan, address before a Joint Session of the Congress on Latin America, 27 April 1983, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Ronald Reagan*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1984), 604-5.

13. Robert J. McMahon, "Credibility and World Power: Exploring the Psychological Dimension of Postwar American Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 15 (Fall 1991): 455-71.

14. Memorandum of discussion at National Security Council meeting, 15 November 1955, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957* (Washington, DC, 1987), 8:275-76. For the wider context, see also Robert J. McMahon, "The Illusion of Vulnerability: American Reassessments of the Soviet Threat, 1955-1956," *International History Review* 18 (August 1996): 591-619.

15. Representative works include John W. Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York, 1960); and Norman A. Graebner, *Cold War Diplomacy: American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960* (Princeton, NJ, 1962).

16. See especially Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York, 1972). For an important restatement and modification of the thesis presented in that book, see Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York, 1988).

17. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*; Peter Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991).

18. For historiographical reviews that assess much of this rich and diverse literature, see the essays by Gary R. Hess, Mark T. Gilderhus, Douglas Little, and Robert J. McMahon in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1941*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (New York, 1995), 358-94, 424-61, 462-500, 501-30. For a recent effort to apply neotraditionalist interpretive categories to the Cold War in the Third World, see Peter W. Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace: The Cold War and the Struggle for the Third World* (New York, 1994); and John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York, 1997).