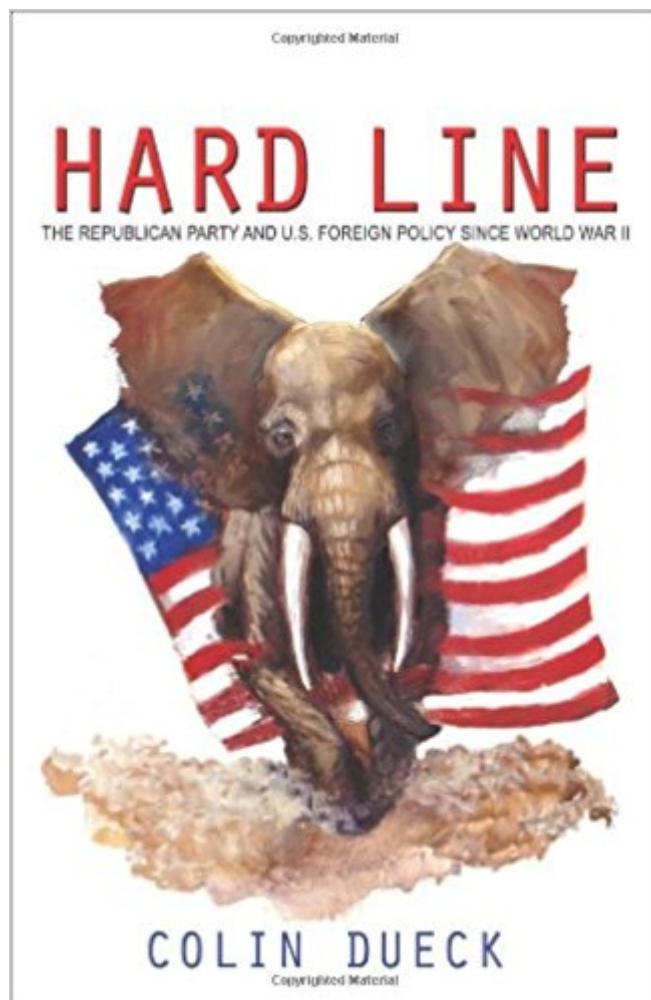


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Hard Line: The Republican Party And U.S. Foreign Policy Since World War II



Synopsis

Hard Line traces the history of Republican Party foreign policy since World War II by focusing on the conservative leaders who shaped it. Colin Dueck closely examines the political careers and foreign-policy legacies of Robert Taft, Dwight Eisenhower, Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush. He shows how Republicans shifted away from isolationism in the years leading up to World War II and oscillated between realism and idealism during and after the cold war. Yet despite these changes, Dueck argues, conservative foreign policy has been characterized by a hawkish and intense American nationalism, and presidential leadership has been the driving force behind it. What does the future hold for Republican foreign policy? Hard Line demonstrates that the answer depends on who becomes the next Republican president. Dueck challenges the popular notion that Republican foreign policy today is beholden to economic interests or neoconservative intellectuals. He shows how Republican presidents have been granted remarkably wide leeway to define their party's foreign policy in the past, and how the future of conservative foreign policy will depend on whether the next Republican president exercises the prudence, pragmatism, and care needed to implement hawkish foreign policies skillfully and successfully. Hard Line reveals how most Republican presidents since World War II have done just that, and how their accomplishments can help guide future conservative presidents.

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Customer Reviews

Hard Line is a persuasive and timely analysis of conservative policy in the 20th century. Reviewing Hard Line for the National Review, former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton wrote that Dueck's "central conclusion is powerful: 'The triumph of one foreign-policy type over another is crucially shaped by the president's own choices.' This insight alone is significant, emphasizing the key role of individual presidents in shaping and articulating 'Republican' foreign policy..."[A]s we enter another presidential season, it is worth remembering Dueck's central insight about the importance of presidential discretion in shaping foreign policy. Once a Republican president takes office, the various factions within the party defer to their elected leader in a fashion very different from their conduct on important domestic issues. We need, therefore, a more robust vetting on foreign-policy issues during the candidate-selection process. While far from foolproof, this vetting process is the only thing that stands between the Republican electorate and potentially disastrous foreign-policy and political consequences."That observation seems even more apt on the heels of the 2010 midterm elections which leave many within the GOP -- and outside of it -- wondering how the outcome will shape foreign as well as domestic policy. Hard Line is a useful history of how the party has approached these questions in the past, and provides valuable insights into where Republicans are likely to lead the party now.

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