



The Politics of National Security : Its Emergence as an Instrument of State Policy

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The evolution of the national security state in the United States can be traced from the political, military, and economic dimensions of American power in the postwar world. In Raskin's view, the United States emerged from the Second World War with tremendously increased prestige and material power, and American leadership created a national security apparatus as a planning instrument to ensure national stability, to mute class conflicts, and to secure the domestic economy. This state then became the basis around the world for covert and overt imperialism. The consensus that developed served to maintain stability at home and to guide the modern empire abroad. This development required a state that was orderly and that was predicated on modern bureaucracy, which operated within the values and assumptions of the ruling elites. The national security state system was successful primarily in the economic sphere, with bipartisan foreign-policy decision making aimed at ensuring a stable business climate at home and abroad. Military involvement in Indochina evidenced the decline of American hegemony, the genocidal nature of the arms race, and the questions raised by protestors of the sixties signaled the break up of the national security consensus. Raskin concludes the book with an examination of alternative directions, especially regarding the need and the possibilities for renewed public debate of national policy and purpose.

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