



A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s

By Daniel J. Sargent

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During the 1970s, American foreign policy faced a predicament of clashing imperatives-US decision makers, already struggling to maintain stability and devise strategic frameworks to guide the exercise of American power during the Cold War, found themselves hampered by the emergence of dilemmas that would come to a head in the post-Cold War era. Their choices proved to be of enormous consequence for the development of American foreign policy in the final decades of the twentieth century and beyond.

In *A Superpower Transformed*, Daniel J. Sargent chronicles how policymakers across three administrations worked to manage complex international changes in a tumultuous era. Drawing on many newly-released archival documents and interviews with key figures, including President Jimmy Carter and Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Sargent explores the collision of geopolitics and globalization that defined the decade. From the Nixon administration's efforts to stabilize a faltering Pax Americana; to Henry Kissinger's attempts to devise new strategies to manage or mitigate the consequences of economic globalization after the oil crisis of 1973-74; to the Carter administration's embrace of human rights promotion as a central task for foreign policy, Sargent explores the challenges that afflicted US policymakers in the 1970s, offering new insights into the complexities that emerged as the new forces of globalization and human rights transformed the United States as a superpower.

A sweeping reinterpretation of a pivotal era, *A Superpower Transformed* is a must-read for anyone interested in U.S. foreign relations, American politics, globalization, economic policy, human rights, and contemporary American history.



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Editorial Review

Review

"This is an exceptionally thorough and eloquent history, of relevance not merely to historians of U.S. foreign relations but to scholars of international history, human rights, and globalization. The book maps the foundational moment when the contours of the 21st century came into being at a staccato, haphazard cadence. The sheer difficulty of assessing this reordering of the world, which was largely bereft of design and dominated by contingency and accident, is daunting. Sargent's contribution will be a lodestar for future treatments of the period. The book is remarkably bold in ambition and still more remarkable for its successful execution."--*Journal of Cold War Studies*

"Deeply researched and well-written, Sargent's analysis contributes to the argument that the seventies was a crucial era in which the chaotic and challenging contemporary world emerged, and in which the 'sole superpower' is powerful, yet unable to succeed consistently."-- *Choice*

"Daniel Sargent's comprehensive assessment of Nixon, Ford, and Carter foreign policies integrates geopolitical, economic, and human rights issues with such skill that it now must be the starting point for all future scholarship on that era. A major accomplishment by a talented young historian." --John Lewis Gaddis, Yale University

"Daniel Sargent's new book goes a long way toward illuminating the course of the Cold War and the U.S. engagement with globalization. Deeply researched and wonderfully well written, *A Superpower Transformed* blends world politics and international economics to explain the momentous changes in 1970s U.S. foreign relations. This is a brilliant contribution to our understanding of America's place in the world today." -- Thomas ("Tim") Borstelmann, author of *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*

"Daniel Sargent's book shows how the 'Cold War order' imploded during the 1970s, as rapid globalization shaped a new era of unpredictability, fragmentation, and improvised policies. With its deep research, fresh interpretations, beautiful writing, and tight focus on questions of how power is exercised, *A Superpower Transformed* is a work of major importance." --Emily S. Rosenberg, author of *Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World, 1870-1945*

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"Sargent's book is also highly relevant today, as it demonstrates the challenges of policy making in turbulent and changing times."--*The Journal of American History*

"Sargent writes eloquently, comprehensively, and persuasively about the limits of power in a pluralizing, chaotic, interdependent world."-*American Historical Review*

About the Author

Daniel J. Sargent is Assistant Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley. He is the co-editor of *The Shock of the Global: The International History of the 1970s*.

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