

1994

## The Cold War as Rhetoric: The Beginnings, 1945-1950

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### Recommended Citation

Ratliff, Mike; Hinds, Lynn Doyd; and Windt, Theodore Otto Jr. (1994) "The Cold War as Rhetoric: The Beginnings, 1945-1950," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 47 : No. 2 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol47/iss2/17>

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## 128 Naval War College Review

If you're interested in how the news media reported the Gulf War, this book is a good starting point.

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Hinds, Lynn Boyd and Windt, Theodore Otto, Jr. *The Cold War as Rhetoric: The Beginnings, 1945-1950*. New York: Praeger, 1991. 272pp. \$52

While this period of history, one of central interest to students of national security, has been often explored, Lynn Hinds and Theodore Windt offer a fresh perspective. They apply techniques of rhetorical analysis to the juncture when Churchill, Truman, Marshall, and others established the terms that defined national security debate for more than forty years. This challenging evaluation is especially timely as we move beyond the rhetoric of the Cold War and our leaders engage in a still-incomplete effort to establish new metaphors, images, narratives, and arguments to shape national security policies during coming decades.

We are accustomed to thinking of rhetoric as the froth on the waves, something carried forward by deeper, more substantial economic, military, or social currents. However, the authors ask us to reverse that view of the world and look at rhetoric as the force that shapes and constrains economic and military actions. They argue convincingly that metaphor and image shape both our understanding and the reality in which we live.

Building on Kenneth Burke's published writings (spanning the period 1931-1966), which are the foundation for much of contemporary thinking about rhetoric, Hinds and Windt argue that to name a thing is "magical," because it gives meaningful existence. By naming events we give them meaning, and the new events achieve clearer meaning when we associate them by analogy with something already known; thus Saddam Hussein is compared to Hitler, and the Somali situation is compared to U.S.-style gangsterism. The authors distinguish between actuality (the world of actual events and objects) and reality (the world of meaning). Reality is the world in which men and women live most of the time, and it is a world created by and sustained by rhetoric.

Once a meaning gains popular acceptance, it shapes our perception. For example, after Walter Lippmann popularized the phrase "Cold War," Churchill had created the image of the iron curtain, and Truman and others had associated Munich and appeasement with efforts to accommodate Soviet demands, Americans came to see all Soviet actions and statements within those contexts. Certain policies could be deduced from this rhetorical reality, and other security policies were literally inconceivable.

Rhetorical analyses of a range of subjects have appeared in recent years, reflecting the growing maturity of communication studies. Contemporary scholars such as Dan Nimmo, Kathleen Jamieson, and Lynda Kaid have produced an impressive literature with important lessons for students of national

security. The best chapters of the present book, and the authors' most important contributions, are the careful discussions of Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech and the development and statement of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan.

The authors' methodology is to identify "language-events," such as Churchill's speech at Fulton, Missouri, that name events and create a common vocabulary. When they occur at "generic moments," such as the early post-World War II years, perception and rhetoric join to create policy. Finally, when language events become fixed in the popular mind, they become part of what unites the community. Once rhetorical realities are established in the culture, they have profound impact; we become predisposed toward some policy options and foreclose others.

Both authors are professors of communication studies and have distinguished reputations among their peers. Hinds is at West Virginia University and Windt, who has previously published a number of books, is at the University of Pittsburgh.

There are occasional small lapses, such as "Archeson" on page 47, and when the authors use language that is "rhetorical" instead of "analytical" (on page 226, "hysteria" carries forward an "enraged" Richard Nixon). Further, the authors lean toward Henry Wallace, who led the left-idealist opposition to Truman's policies, as opposed to those who were to the right of the developing reality and that came to dominate American thinking; in fact, Wallace later recanted his own position. Such

shortcomings are minor and should not detract from the insights provided.

It is important today that we understand the linguistic lens through which Americans viewed the world during the decades of the Cold War—if we are to free ourselves fully from its effects, and if we are to understand what is at stake as opinion leaders shape a new rhetorical reality.

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Rovere, Richard H. and Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr. *General MacArthur and President Truman: The Struggle for Control of American Foreign Policy*. New Jersey: Transaction, 1992. 359pp. \$19.95

Originally published in 1951 in the wake of the congressional hearings surrounding the relief of Douglas MacArthur, *General MacArthur and President Truman* remains the classic examination of civil-military relations. This current edition, with a new introduction by Schlesinger (his co-author died in the mid-1980s), was republished, in Schlesinger's words, not only to provide a first-hand portrayal of the hysterical reaction to MacArthur's dismissal and the calming influence of the senate hearings, but also because the book represents a style of political writing that hardly exists any more.

According to Schlesinger, he and Rovere sought to bring out the historical context and to submit geopolitical issues to scrupulous analysis. Shaped in their approach by Walter Lippmann and H.L. Mencken, the authors sought