defense of academic freedom during McCarthyism). Unlike me, Jennet also generally steers clear of digressions (whether in text or footnotes) on source issues or historiographical controversies—which in the case of the decision to use the bomb are, of course, extensive. She does, however, offer some notable comments on Conant’s role in that act. She contends (and I agree) that Conant’s “main argument” for endorsing the bomb’s use on Japan was “the need to prove its ‘devastating strength’ to the world” (p. 340) in order to enhance the slim chances for postwar international control (as opposed to primarily valuing either the bomb’s military import in compelling Japan’s surrender or diplomatic impact vis-à-vis the Soviet Union)—and suggests that in later denying any guilt for his part in the decision, “he doth protest too much” and “was perhaps a man in desperate search of vindication” (p. 385).

For the most part, Jennet is content to tell the story, demonstrating particular command and comfort with her grandfather’s nuclear involvement. Her take is generally sympathetic or at least understanding, though not uncritical. In these days of degraded political discourse, it is hard to disagree with her ultimate conclusion: that the passing of this “vital centrist” (to use Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.’s term) who, despite his shortcomings, combined immense personal achievement in multiple fields with a largely bipartisan, or nonpartisan, public stature, left a “vacancy” that has not really been filled (p. 495). Well crafted, thoroughly researched, and not lacking literary flair, Man of the Hour vividly recounts a protean life story vital to understanding the birth of the nuclear age, the Cold War, the post–World War II U.S. foreign policy establishment, the transformation in science-military relations, and much more.

H. Bruce Franklin, Crash Course: From the Good War to the Forever War. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018. 315 pp. $34.95.

Reviewed by Arthur Eckstein, University of Maryland

There are two fundamental ways of discussing the roots of foreign policy. One is Primat der Innenpolitik (“the primacy of domestic politics”), the view that domestic policy and the needs of the domestic economic structure determine foreign policy. The other is Primat der Aussenpolitik (“the primacy of external relations”), the view that pressure from external competitors and predators is what determines foreign policy. The debate is not over whether external and internal policies are interdependent (scholars accept that they are) but over which has primacy in government thinking and decision-making. H. Bruce Franklin, holder of a chair in English and American Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, has always been a proponent of the first view of the sources of U.S. foreign policy—that they are internal and founded on the influence of wealthy elites and the military-industrial complex. His latest book is no different. The problem with this first view is that it creates a picture of the world in which the only real actor is the United States, behaving in a predatory manner for
reasons of capitalist-imperialist ideology, culture, and economics. All the other states on the planet are, fundamentally, the victims, passive and relatively inoffensive.

Franklin’s new book is a mixture of memoir entwined with standard Marxist analysis. The parts of it that are memoir are charming: for instance, his memory of visiting the 1939 New York World’s Fair with his mother—a visit that set in motion Franklin’s lifelong fascination with science fiction (he is an authority on the science-fiction novelist Robert H. Heinlein). During his military service in the latter half of the 1950s, he was also part of the U.S. Strategic Air Command, a navigator on a flying tanker for B-47 bombers. He includes a hair-raising account of attempting midair refueling on a pitch-dark winter night in fog over the featureless Arctic (the bomber ended up directly below the tanker). To this Franklin adds a chilling analysis of the B-47 scandal of the late 1950s, when scores of this early turbojet bomber were falling out of the skies because of long-term metal stress at the base of their wings (including one B-47 that exploded directly behind Franklin’s own KC 97 Stratotanker almost over Buffalo, New York). Franklin’s account of the Air Force cover-up is equally appalling. No one who reads Franklin will ever see Jimmy Stewart’s film *Strategic Air Command* (1955), in the same light. Stewart at the time was a colonel in the Air Force, and his character idolizes the B-47 (“the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen”)—just as these planes were beginning to crash in large numbers.

For Franklin, however, the U.S. war in Vietnam was what transformed his worldview. His account of his role and that of his wife, Jane Morgan, from 1965 onward in trying to prevent the export of napalm from its main manufacturer (whose plant was only twenty miles south of Haight-Ashbury) is a fascinating example of what a small local group of protesters can do.

But these chapters of memoir alternate with a Marxist analysis in which the United States is always the villain. Franklin justifies the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, imposed on millions of unwilling subjects, as a defensive and understandable buffer zone against Western aggression (p. 74). He claims that in the Korean War it was actually South Korea that invaded North Korea in June 1950, not the spectacular reverse—or at least that the South was planning to invade (p. 53). He believes that the late-1950s air patrols of the Soviet frontier in the Arctic were not a defensive project but a “provocation” that was perhaps even intended to instigate a war with the USSR (pp. 113, 126–129). He believes that President John Kennedy was murdered by a conspiracy involving the Central Intelligence Agency (and Lord knows who else—pp. 170–171). The same is true concerning the assassination of Robert Kennedy five years later (p. 262).

With regard to international relations, Franklin’s view is conspiratorial and simplistic. He imposes his views on the reader by presenting a crude and fundamentally misleading narrative. Space forbids detailed discussion of every simplistic and misleading statement in a book that is filled with them. Let us instead concentrate on Franklin’s discussion of the U.S. development and use of the nuclear bomb in World War II—a discussion fundamental to (and exemplary of) Franklin’s jaundiced conception of U.S. foreign relations since 1941.
Franklin’s hypothesis is that the bomb was developed because of an inherently genocidal element in American culture, combined with a fascination with technology dating back to the eighteenth century. Starting with Robert Fulton and the steamship, there has been a fascination in the United States with superweapons designed to establish imperial domination by annihilating all opposition (pp. 29–30). Even without the nuclear bomb, one can see this annihilatory American culture in Walt Disney’s 1943 cartoon Victory through Air Power, in which fleets of U.S. super-bombers based in Alaska destroy the cities of Japan with conventional weapons—a cartoon that fascinated Franklin when he was a boy, and innocent (pp. 7, 21–22). But the problem with ascribing the U.S. pursuit of nuclear weapons to a supposedly annihilatory culture is all the other states that were striving to build the bomb at the same time. Leaving aside Nazi Germany (where you could push the same cultural meme), there was also Great Britain (cooperating with the United States), the Soviet Union (from 1942), and Japan (from late 1940). All of these countries had their most renowned scientists working on the projects. In the case of Japan, for example, as Per F. Dahl shows in his Heavy Water and the Wartime Race for Nuclear Energy (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1999), the wartime Japanese team included Hideki Yukawa, who in 1949 became the first Japanese physicist to win the Nobel Prize, and a factory near Tokyo was already producing centrifuges when Japan surrendered. The only way for Franklin to make the condemnatory cultural argument—to underline a negative American exceptionalism—is to ignore the wider political and scientific picture.

Franklin echoes scholars such as Gar Alperovitz in arguing that the purpose of dropping nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 was not to compel the Japanese government to surrender but to frighten the Soviet Union. Thus, he sees the bombings not as the last act of World War II but as the first act of the Cold War. To maintain this hypothesis, Franklin argues that, on the one hand, the Japanese were so defeated in the summer of 1945 that sustained resistance was impossible and everyone knew it: their main armies were in Manchuria and China and could not be transported across the sea to defend the homeland from a U.S. invasion (p. 22). On the other hand, Franklin also argues that any invasion of the Japanese home islands would have been so costly in U.S. lives that Truman never really intended such an invasion anyway (p. 25). But if an invasion of the Japanese home islands would have been so costly in American lives, this means (a) the Japanese army had plenty of ways to defend the home islands, and (b) this would explain the use of the nuclear bomb as an alternative to conventional invasion. I do not see how you can have this both ways—or how Franklin could not notice the contradiction between these two arguments.

Franklin conveniently neglects to mention that by August 1945 the Japanese Home Army had 900,000 troops on Kyushu, the southern main island destined for a U.S. attack in November. The potential ferocity of the resistance from these troops is underscored in D. M. Giangreco, Hell to Pay: Operation Downfall and the Invasion of Japan, 1945–1947 (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2010), a book not cited by Franklin. The 21,000 Japanese soldiers on Iwo Jima in February–March 1945 had...
fought tenaciously against the vastly superior U.S. invading force. With more than 40 times that number of Japanese soldiers on Kyushu, immense bloodshed would have resulted.

Franklin argues that the Japanese were ready to “surrender” in July 1945 and repeatedly made that plea to the Allies. This, he insists, means the nuclear attacks were superfluous to the ending of the war and thus indicates that the real purpose of the bombs could not have been to compel the Japanese government to surrender—because it was already offering to do so (pp. 22–29). Franklin again asserts that the real purpose of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was to accomplish something else: to frighten the Soviet Union. But what is missing here is a discussion of the precise terms of the July 1945 Japanese offer to “surrender.” Far from embracing the Potsdam Declaration’s demand for unconditional surrender, the Japanese offer in July contained four conditions: the maintenance of the emperor with full powers; latitude for the Japanese armed forces to demobilize themselves and maintain at least a minimum existence; no Allied occupation of Japan; and any prosecutions for war crimes would be handled by the Japanese themselves. The idea that the Allies would accept such a peace was a delusion on the part of the Japanese government. None of these terms could ever have been acceptable. Franklin knows the actual content of the Japanese “offer to surrender” in July 1945. He even refers—though only once and in the most cursory way (p. 26)—to the existence of Japanese demands, without detailing them. To claim there was a true Japanese offer of surrender in July or that the Japanese government was fundamentally accepting surrender according to the Potsdam Declaration is simply an attempt to mislead the uninformed reader.

Finally, Franklin argues that the real reason the Japanese government limited its terms of surrender solely to the maintenance of the emperor (without full powers) is not the dropping of the nuclear bombs on 6 and 9 August 1945 but the entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan on the Allied side on 9 August. This development was followed by the rapid Soviet conquest of Japanese Manchuria and the utter defeat of the Japanese army there. The inference Franklin wants us to draw is that the Soviet entry into the war against Japan would in itself have been sufficient, rendering the dropping of the nuclear bombs militarily superfluous—and thus, politically suspect. A similar argument has been put forth by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, a well-respected scholar, in his Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

But here again, Franklin fails to acknowledge the strong evidence contradicting this thesis. In general, he never presents or deals with any evidence that might complicate or undermine his arguments. In this case, there is plenty of evidence to show that the decisive factor in Emperor Hirohito’s decisive intervention for peace at the Supreme War Council in Tokyo on 9–10 August 1945 was the dropping of the nuclear bombs. Sadao Asada thoroughly explores this evidence in his first-rate essay “The Shock of the Atomic Bomb and Japan’s Decision to Surrender—A Reconsideration,” in Robert James Maddox, ed., Hiroshima in History: The Myths of Revisionism (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2007), pp. 24–58. For instance, there
is the emperor's own message to the Japanese people, in which he focuses almost exclusively on the nuclear attacks and barely mentions the Soviet invasion of Manchuria:

The war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage, while the general trends of the world have all turned against her interest. Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is indeed incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. If we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but would also lead to the total extinction of human civilization. Such being the case, how are we to save the millions of our subjects; or to atone ourselves before the hallowed spirits of Our Imperial Ancestors? This is why we have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the Joint Declaration of the Powers.

Perhaps one could argue that Hirohito, in informing his people of the decision, relied on the nuclear bombs as the reason for surrender because this was less dishonorable to the Japanese army than admitting it had been defeated by the Soviet Union in Manchuria. But at the least, Franklin's failure even to have mentioned the Imperial Rescript on Surrender is a gross disservice to his readers.


Reviewed by Nathan Pavalko, Pellissippi State Community College (Tennessee)

Bob Woodward's recent book Last of the President's Men is a work that reexamines already heavily trodden ground. Woodward is synonymous with the Nixon administration and Watergate, and his book is reminiscent of a 1960s or 1970s rock star going back on tour and playing all his greatest hits. Woodward offers no earth-shatteringly new information about the Nixon administration but does give readers a more detailed look at the inner workings of Richard Nixon's White House through the eyes of Deputy Chief of Staff Alexander Butterfield.

Woodward explains in his prologue that Butterfield approached him in 2014 and 2015 with a trove of unpublished original memoranda, letters, and personal papers from the Nixon White House that he acquired as deputy chief of staff. Over the next year Woodward began interviewing Butterfield to learn more about his relationship with President Richard Nixon. The resulting book is a glimpse into a sometimes friendly and often contentious relationship.

The first two chapters describe Butterfield's career in the Air Force before coming to the Nixon White House. After approaching H. R. Haldeman, an old college friend who was serving as Nixon's Chief of Staff, Butterfield was offered a job. He learned quickly that his job in the White House would involve much more than organizing