



America's Search for Security: The Triumph of Idealism and the Return of Realism

Sean Kay

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This book details the ways in which America's ascendancy to global superpower status was the result of its dueling foreign policy philosophies and forces: an historically expansive idealism balanced with an equally constant realist restraint.

In *America's Search for Security*, Sean Kay surveys major historical trends in American foreign policy and provides a new context for thinking about America's rise to power from the founding period through the end of the Cold War. It details the post-Cold War rise of idealist foreign policy goals and the costs of abandoning realist roots, analyzing in-depth the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as examples of what disappointing, if not disastrous, outcomes can befall America abroad when foreign policy objectives are muddled, unclear, and fail to remain grounded in what historically has made America an unquestionable world power.

This book also focuses on America's recent "pivot" to Asia, and efforts to restore a realist balance abroad and at home in the second Obama administration, concluding with a look at what the future of American power will look like in a rapidly evolving world in need of newer, more modernized, and adaptable forms of leadership. Tracing the tension between idealism and realism, Kay provides a detailed explanation of the rise of a post-Cold War idealist consensus in Washington, D.C.—and shows how that culminated in a return to realism in both the 2013 debates over intervention in Syria and the 2014 crisis with Russia.

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