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BOOK REVIEW

The Making Of Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy And The Rise Of The Post-Cold War Order, by Hal Brands. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016, p. 480.

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The unipolar moment is the rise of the United States to sole superpower of the world after the end of the Cold War. The U.S. dominated the world as no state did. Brands' book becomes a remarkable reflection on the United States' standing in the world and an eye-opening account that challenges the pervasive and now tired notion that America is on the decline.

In *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order*, Hal Brands presents an impressive and comprehensive analysis to better understand the unipolar moment in the 1990s and explains why it is necessary to trace America's ascent back to historical phenomena in the 1970s. It challenges many widespread notions about the lead-up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, particularly the deep structural shifts within global politics occurring in the 1970s and the role of President Jimmy Carter.

At the heart of Brands' analysis is an examination of three-decades, where he argues that U.S. foreign policy rebounded from a disastrous war in Vietnam, oil-price shocks, and increasing volatility in the Middle East. In the shadow of the third

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wave of democratization, Brands notes that the decline of the Soviet system, the globalisation and a free market strategy revitalised the U.S. economy and enlarged its global dominance. U.S. policymakers embraced them to U.S. advantage. For example, the Carter Administration lacked a consistent and coherent foreign policy orientation. By contrast, Reagan helped bring an end to the 46-year-old Cold War, through a combination of hostile, anti-communist rhetoric and a massive arms buildup followed by skillful diplomacy and disarmament. Finally, Brands acknowledges George H.W. Bush's achievements in foreign policy issues such as negotiating the reunification of Germany, helping to ease the end of the Soviet domination, prosecuting the Persian Gulf war.

“Making the Unipolar Moment” also explains about Soviet decline, nuclear competition, culmination of neoliberal economic policies, and Third World conflicts. Brands stresses the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy. However, Brands recognises that United States foreign policy encompasses many failures and shortcomings. For example, he argues that Reagan left a complicated arms control legacy behind and systematically disregarded human rights and democracy in his policies.

Central to Brands's account is that it was a combination of structure - that turned global affairs sharply to U.S. advantage - , and strategy that ultimately led to an era of American supremacy. Herein lies the importance of the book. He demonstrates how external international factors influence foreign policy and provides a detailed account of the role and effect that foreign policy has on decision-making. Brands confirms that America has pursued an ambitious and deeply engaged grand strategy meant to shape the global order during and post-Cold War period.

American domination is based on the fact that it is the only country with the military, diplomatic, political and economic assets to be a decisive player in any conflict in whatever part of the world it chooses to involve itself.

Overall, Brands' research and sound analysis produce a very valuable study that fills an important gap in the historical knowledge of American foreign policy and the emergence of US preponderance during the latter half of the twentieth century throughout all six chapters. At a time when American grand strategy often seems consumed by crisis, this books provides an invaluable guide to thinking about both the recent past and the future of America's role in the world.

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