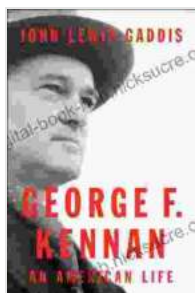


George Kennan: An American Life

George Frost Kennan (February 16, 1904 – March 17, 2005) was an American diplomat and historian who served as a leading policy planner for the United States Department of State from 1947 to 1950. He was best known for his "long telegram" (1946), which outlined the Soviet Union's intentions in Eastern Europe, and for his "X Article" (1947), which advocated a policy of containment towards the Soviet Union. Kennan's views on the Soviet Union were highly influential in shaping American foreign policy during the Cold War.

Early Life and Education

Kennan was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1904 to Kossuth Kent Kennan, a lawyer and businessman, and Florence James Kennan. He had two siblings, a sister named Mary and a brother named Kent. Kennan's father was a prominent figure in the Republican Party and served as a member of the Wisconsin State Assembly. Kennan's mother was a devout Episcopalian and instilled in her son a strong sense of Christian morality.



George F. Kennan: An American Life by John Lewis Gaddis

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3818 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 800 pages

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Kennan attended Princeton University, where he studied history and politics. He graduated summa cum laude in 1925 and was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to study at Oxford University. At Oxford, Kennan studied under the historian Arnold J. Toynbee, who became a major influence on his thinking.

Diplomatic Career

After graduating from Oxford, Kennan joined the United States Foreign Service in 1926. He served in a variety of posts in Europe, including Berlin, Vienna, and Moscow. In 1944, Kennan was appointed chargé d'affaires at the American embassy in Moscow. In this role, he witnessed firsthand the rise of Soviet power in Eastern Europe.

In 1946, Kennan sent a long telegram to the State Department, in which he outlined his views on the Soviet Union. In this telegram, Kennan argued that the Soviet Union was not interested in world conquest, but rather in consolidating its power in Eastern Europe. He also argued that the Soviet Union was a deeply suspicious and paranoid state, and that it would not be deterred by force. Kennan's telegram had a major impact on American foreign policy, and it helped to set the stage for the Cold War.

In 1947, Kennan published an article in *Foreign Affairs* under the pseudonym "X". In this article, Kennan advocated a policy of containment towards the Soviet Union. He argued that the United States should not try to overthrow the Soviet regime, but rather should focus on preventing its further expansion. Kennan's article was highly influential in shaping American foreign policy during the Cold War.

Kennan served as the head of the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department from 1947 to 1950. In this role, he played a key role in developing American foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. Kennan resigned from the State Department in 1950 in protest over the Truman administration's decision to intervene in the Korean War.

Later Life

After leaving the State Department, Kennan became a professor at Princeton University. He also wrote extensively about American foreign policy and the Soviet Union. Kennan was a vocal critic of the Vietnam War, and he also supported the nuclear freeze movement. Kennan died in Princeton, New Jersey, in 2005 at the age of 101.

Legacy

George Kennan was one of the most influential American diplomats of the 20th century. His "long telegram" and "X Article" helped to shape American foreign policy during the Cold War. Kennan was a brilliant thinker and a gifted writer, and his work continues to be read and studied today.

Kennan's legacy is complex and controversial. He has been praised for his realism and his understanding of the Soviet Union. However, he has also been criticized for his pessimism and his support for containment. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Kennan was a major figure in American history, and his work continues to have a profound impact on the world today.

Long Descriptive Alt Attributes



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 Russian people, is remarkably small. We have here no investments to guard, no actual trade to lose, virtually no citizens to protect, few cultural contacts to preserve. Our only stake lies in what we hope rather than what we have; and I am convinced we have better chance of realizing those hopes if our public is enlightened and if our dealings with Russians are placed entirely on realistic and matter of fact basis.

(Three) Much depends on health and vigor of our own society. World communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue. This is point at which domestic and foreign policies meet. Every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems of our own society, to improve self confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit of our own people, is a diplomatic victory over Moscow worth a thousand diplomatic notes and joint communiques. If we cannot abandon fatalism and indifference in face of deficiencies of our own society, Moscow will profit--Moscow cannot help profiting by them in its foreign policies.

(Four) We must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of sort of world we would like to see than we have put forward in past. It is not enough to urge people to develop political processes similar to our own. Many foreign peoples, in Europe at least, are tired and frightened by experiences of past, and are less interested in abstract freedom than in security. They are seeking guidance rather than responsibilities. We should be better able than Russians to give them this. And unless we do, Russians certainly will.

(Five) Finally we must have courage and self confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet Communism, is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping.

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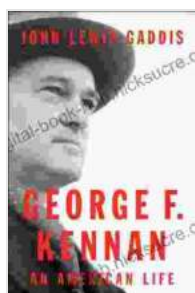
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE

W.P.

Dept. of State, Wash., Aug. 28, 1952

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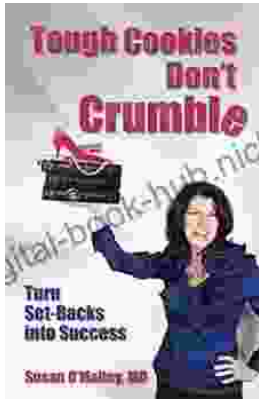


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