



The Folly of War: American Foreign Policy, 1898-2005

Donald E. Schmidt

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This is a disturbing book that raises questions about how we go to war, how we fight wars, and how we eventually lose wars. This historical examination of American foreign policy in the 20th century questions how we conduct wars, and how we maintain the proud self assurance known as "American exceptionalism." The Folly of War is a hard-hitting, critical analysis of American wars in the 20th century. Drawing on a wide range of sources and rigorously marshalling the facts, the book concludes that American wars in the past century have been futile, unnecessary and foolish. Rejecting the Left's contention that American foreign policy has been driven by greedy corporate interests, the author starts from the premise that average Americans have supported these wars out of a will to do good but have failed in that aim, and in the process done much harm.

Many Americans view the military defeat in Vietnam as an aberration, interrupting a string of foreign military successes. This book sees that tragedy as part of a line of politically reckless engagements that span the century. Driven by a proud self assurance that is often termed American exceptionalism, the nation arms itself to the teeth and intrudes into every region, pacing on a treadmill of perpetual war to achieve perpetual peace.

At the end of seven major wars and after one million American soldiers have been killed, we are no closer to the perfect security we seek.

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