Public opinion lagged only slightly behind that of the President and was affected more by world events than by anything Roosevelt said or did. Fehrenbach underestimates the significance of the Senate's confirmation of Stimson and Knox and the sponsorship of the Selective Service Bill by an anti-New Deal Democrat and a Republican as indicators of widespread concurrence with administration policy. He takes little account of the fact that the nomination of Willkie demonstrated the belief, even of the Republican party, that no isolationist candidate could win the presidency in 1940. Nor does he recognize the America First Committee for what it really was: a last-ditch effort to rally the opponents of Roosevelt's foreign policy in the hope of stemming the tide.

A number of overstatements and inaccuracies mar the book. For example, the cash-and-carry provisions never applied to "all buying of raw materials by foreign powers" (p. 2) and had already expired in March, 1939; Borah, Johnson, and Wheeler never served on the Nye Committee (p. 4); Roosevelt did not accept Hoover's tariff policies (p. 11); there were no "urgent pressures" for a declaration of war from either the Cabinet or the State Department in June, 1940 (p. 67); the Committee to Defend America First was formed not two days after but two months before the destroyer deal, and its name was changed to America First Committee prior to the date mentioned by Fehrenbach (pp. 163-64); and the United States-British staff talks early in 1941 produced contingency plans and not formal American commitments to specific actions (pp. 222-25).

Fehrenbach, in short, has produced an interesting, readable, but not particularly enlightening book.

Union College

The Diplomacy of a New Age: Major Issues in U.S. Policy since 1945.

Dexter Perkins, one of the most distinguished historians of American diplomacy, has had a long and amazing professional life. He has retired from two teaching careers, one at the University of Rochester and the other at Cornell University, and since his last retirement in 1959 has kept active lecturing and writing on American foreign relations. In 1966 he was visiting professor for the Patten Foundation at Indiana University. This book is an outgrowth of his Patten Lectures.

As could be expected from a book based on lectures, this volume offers a series of essays on selected topics, such as the Marshall Plan, that are loosely connected and focused most often on United States relations with the Soviet Union. Despite the brevity of the book and the selectivity of the author, these essays do analyze or touch on most
of the important developments in American foreign policy since 1945. Since the book covers ground well known through other works, its unique qualities must be sought in Perkins' analyses, interpretations, and judgments. He does not disappoint the reader. His mind appears to be as incisive as ever; if the reader is willing to accept his basic premises, his judgments are sound and logical.

Two notable themes run through these essays. The first states that the outstanding feature of the past thirty years is the development of massive American economic and military power and the use of that power in the nation's expanding global commitments. Few historians would quarrel with this assumption. A number of them might, however, find it difficult to accept the implications of Perkins' second theme, that the United States has made good use of its vast influence. What flows from this second theme is a defense of American foreign policy in almost all instances, even in such controversial matters as the nonrecognition of Red China, the intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and the war in Vietnam. This defensive attitude gives the deceptive impression that Perkins sees foreign policy in black and white. The American side invariably comes out as the upholder of justice and righteousness; the other side usually emerges as being wrong and bad. So the result, for those who are critical of recent American policies, is a conservative analysis of foreign policy of the past thirty years.

This reviewer agrees with Perkins' major theme, and also with many of his moral judgments. On the whole, Americans have used their great power with remarkable restraint.

In presenting his assessments Perkins is seldom dogmatic and always calm, urbane, and civilized. Everywhere, even when one might boggle at his judgment, he is shrewd and knowing. For example, he points out that the scholar and the statesman have to go beyond fact to understand foreign policy. "The roots of diplomacy," he writes, "are to be found in feeling, feeling often rationalized by the appropriate symbols, but feeling none the less. To understand this fact is the business of every student of foreign policy" (p. 18). Wisdom such as this justifies the reading and re-reading of this gracefully written and charmingly provocative book by a man whose mind seems to stay forever young.

University of California, Santa Barbara

Alexander DeConde


This volume is a lucidly written and readable analysis of a complex series of issues evolving out of a complex period of history. The post-war years posed unique problems for the United States, some of the most urgent of them farm problems. Unprepared for the awesome