

Rise to Globalism, Eighth Edition

Authors: Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley

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Ambrose and Brinkley's Rise to Globalism is a comprehensive review of foreign policy in the 20th century. It examines the presidential administrations of the past 58 years, focusing on foreign policy and internal affairs. Rise to Globalism is relatively short, covering a wide variety of topics over a long period of time, and the narrative moves rather quickly.

Rise is written in narrative format, which makes it an engaging and quick read. One is able to sit and read painlessly for a long period of time, and come away with an understanding of the events and conflicts happening today. However, this is mainly a book intended to summarize the major political events of the 20th century, rather than to digest and analyze them. The authors choose not to include discussion of their political theories, and make no forecasts of future disputes or incidents. One can tell, however, that Ambrose and Brinkley identify with the notion that "history repeats itself," which also explains their purpose for writing the book. Rather than promoting their beliefs for the future, they leave the reader with the tools to form his own opinions and speculations.

One of the most beneficial, but widely overlooked features of the book is its extensive bibliography for each chapter. By referring to the resources used by the authors during their research, the reader is able to delve more deeply into the topics they explore in this book. This is a great way to find other high quality books on related subjects.

A significant conclusion that one can draw from Rise to Globalism is the disproportionality of America's power to its influence. The authors make it clear that one is not always in equal proportion to the other, and gives several examples to illustrate this point. For instance, Ambrose and Brinkley contend that America has always believed that if it has more weapons (power), it will automatically be respected and feared (influence). This is the same mentality as an elementary school bully: looking tough will get you more respect from your peers, which isn't always the case. Even with the most advanced weapons technologies in the world, the United States often was challenged, or even ignored by countries with far less power, as was the case with the arms race against Russia, the war in Vietnam, or the Iranian hostage crisis.

As a resource for understanding the history of U.S. foreign policy, Rise to Globalism is a good overview of America's growth into the world policeman it is today. However, if you're looking to analyze trends in policies and foreign affairs, you will find that Ambrose and Brinkley do not focus on this type of speculation.