



# Apocalypse Management: Eisenhower and the Discourse of National Insecurity (Stanford Nuclear Age Series)

*Ira Chernus*

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## **Apocalypse Management: Eisenhower and the Discourse of National Insecurity (Stanford Nuclear Age Series)** Ira Chernus

For eight years President Dwight Eisenhower claimed to pursue peace and national security. Yet his policies entrenched the United States in a seemingly permanent cold war, a spiraling nuclear arms race, and a deepening state of national insecurity. Ira Chernus uncovers the key to this paradox in Eisenhower's unwavering commitment to a consistent way of talking, in private as well as in public, about the cold war rivalry. Contrary to what most historians have concluded, Eisenhower never aimed at any genuine rapprochement with the Soviet Union. His discourse always assumed that the United States would forever face an enemy bent on destroying it, making national insecurity a permanent way of life. The "peace" he sought was only an endless process of managing apocalyptic threats, a permanent state of "apocalypse management," intended to give the United States unchallenged advantage in every arena of the cold war. The goal and the discourse that supported it were inherently self-defeating. Yet the discourse is Eisenhower's most enduring legacy, for it has shaped U.S. foreign policy ever since, leaving us still a national insecurity state.

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