



The United States and the Global Struggle for Minerals

Alfred E., Jr. Eckes

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In 1973–1974 soaring commodity prices and an oil embargo alerted Americans to the twin dangers of resource exhaustion and dependence on unreliable foreign materials suppliers. This period seemed to mark a watershed in history as the United States shifted from the era of relative resource abundance to relative materials scarcity.

Alfred E. Eckes's comprehensive study shows that resource depletion and supply dislocations are not concerns unique to the 1970s. Since 1914, the quest for secure and stable supplies of industrial materials has been an important underlying theme of international relations and American diplomacy.

Although the United States has been blessed with a diversified materials base, it has pursued a minerals strategy designed to exploit low-cost, high-quality ores abroad. Eckes demonstrates how this policy has led to official protection for overseas private investments, involving a role for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Some modern historians have neglected the importance of resources in shaping diplomacy and history. This book, based on a vast variety of unutilized archival collections and recently declassified government documents, helps to correct that imbalance. In the process it illuminates an important and still timely aspect of America's global interests.

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