4. The Cold War Intensifies: Containment Superseded, 1948–53

This chapter examines the intensification of the Cold War and the decision of the US to abandon ‘containment’ in favour of ‘liberation’ during the period 1948–53. By 1948, the dominant relationship between the Soviet Union, the US, and Britain had moved from one of cooperation to confrontation, and then to hostility and conflict. In this situation, the Cold War required a clearly defined strategy for fighting it. Western interpretations of this strategy have largely been based on the idea of containment and especially about the form of containment that should be adopted. The chapter discusses the origins of Cold War fighting; armaments and militarization; the Cold War and European integration; the NSC 68 memorandum, rearmament, and the Cold War offensive controversy; and the growing importance of communist China and the conflict in Korea.
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