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# Review of Eisenhower, Science Advice, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate, 1945-1963

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the fourth chapter, which evaluates the industrialization of natural-resource management during World War II. This chapter is paired with a compelling epilogue that explores the expansion of U. S. conservation planning abroad during the postwar era, thereby linking New Deal ideology to the modern global economy.

This ambitious, well-researched study engages many of the questions that have driven recent histories of the 1930s. It convincingly traces the connections between the idealism of the New Deal and postwar developments that often seem detached from the ideas embraced by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his cohort of agrarian planners. Although it has much to recommend it, particularly as a study of regional planning and economic change, it is not, strictly speaking, an interdisciplinary study; methodologically it does little to bridge the gaps between disciplines. Nevertheless, historians and scholars from other fields interested in American conservation will find that this engaging book contributes significantly to a more sophisticated understanding of the New Deal era.

Sara M. Gregg  
Iowa State University

*Eisenhower, Science Advice, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate, 1945–1963.* By Benjamin P. Greene (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2006) 358 pp. \$65.00

Numerous scholars have examined the Eisenhower presidency within the past few decades, but few have ventured so deeply into the complex scientific and technical issues surrounding nuclear testing during the 1950s as Greene does in his analysis of Eisenhower's desire to obtain a nuclear test-ban treaty while struggling with conflicting scientific opinions. Greene lauds Eisenhower for his commitment to a test-ban treaty and his eventual willingness to overrule opponents within his administration, but he criticizes the former president for failing to provide decisive leadership that might have changed the ultimate outcome. Greene relies on a wide range of primary sources and a detailed understanding of the scientific and technical issues surrounding nuclear testing to describe Eisenhower's difficulty in obtaining clear scientific advice to use in policy making.

Greene's objectives include analyses of Eisenhower's commitment to a nuclear test ban, of the scientific advice given to him, and of the extent to which divisions within the scientific community affected his decision making. He adopts an interesting research design that focuses not only on positions within the Eisenhower administration concerning radioactive fallout, nuclear testing, and the ability to detect nuclear tests, but also on the debates within the scientific community. This approach

provides a nuanced view of the complex issues that helped shaped Eisenhower's decisions about nuclear testing.

Greene's study reveals how difficult it was for anyone in the 1950s to understand the scientific and technical questions surrounding nuclear weapons. He argues that after the BRAVO nuclear test in 1954, the "sharply contrasting interpretations" of many leading scientists made "an informed opinion on the matter for laymen even more difficult" (62). These "contrasting interpretations" are vital to understanding Eisenhower's policies. Although Eisenhower eventually secured a better grasp of nuclear weapons than most non-scientists, he was no less challenged than the average person in understanding their complexity. By exploring the scientific debates and the scientific advice that Eisenhower ultimately received, Greene provides insight into the difficulties that ultimately doomed the test-ban negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Greene reveals Eisenhower's strong commitment to a nuclear test ban from at least 1954, but the conflicting and, at times, inadequate scientific advice that he received made it virtually impossible for him to negotiate a test ban with the Soviet Union while he was in office. Greene emphasizes the role that Lewis Strauss, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission during Eisenhower's first term, played in controlling the information that Eisenhower received before 1957. Strauss was vehemently opposed to a nuclear test ban; he prevented almost any dissenting opinions from ever reaching the president. Only after Eisenhower had created the Presidential Science Advisory Committee in 1957 did he begin to receive advice supporting his desire for a test ban. Unfortunately, the lack of any scientific consensus prevented Eisenhower from formulating a coherent, and successful, negotiating strategy.

David L. Snead  
Liberty University

*Calculating a Natural World: Scientists, Engineers, and Computers during the Rise of US Cold War Research.* By Atsushi Akera (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 2007) 408 pp. \$40.00

Akera has written a complicated and nuanced retelling of Cold War computing history in the United States. He argues that "the intensity of technological innovation during the Cold War years resulted neither from military foresight nor from academic influence, but rather from a fundamental pluralism in the demands that were placed upon research" as it unfolded in a myriad of different "institutional ecologies" across the nation (1). In this way, Akera agrees with other "constructivist" scholars of technology that "the study of innovation is as much about institutional innovation as it is about technological innovation" (338). His con-