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Book Review of "Warren G. Harding" by John W. Dean

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Dean, John W. **Warren G. Harding.**

Times Bks. (American Presidents). Jan. 2004. c.208p. bibliog. index. ISBN 0-8050-6956-9. \$20. POLITICS

Dean (yes, *that* John Dean), former counsel to President Richard M. Nixon, the man who blew the lid off the Watergate scandal, and a former resident of President Harding's hometown of Marion, OH, argues that Harding has received a bum deal from historians, who rate him among the worst presidents in history (he served from 1921 to 1923). Dean attempts a revisionist view of Harding, arguing that his accomplishments have not received the credit they deserve. More advocacy effort than neutral biography, Dean credibly highlights Harding's successes. He is less effective, though, when skating very quickly over Harding's many flaws, especially the rampant corruption that took place under his unsuspecting nose. Dean does, however, get it about right when he writes that Harding "was a natural at being head of state, but not at the administrative side of the presidency, that of being head of government." This indictment alone undermines Dean's effort at a revival of the Harding reputation. Although the book is well written and a welcome addition to the sparse Harding literature, one is forced to conclude that while Harding may deserve more credit than currently granted, he remains near the bottom of the presidential pack. For large political collections.—*Michael A. Genovese, Loyola Marymount Univ., Los Angeles*

Horowitz, David. **Left Illusions: An Intellectual Odyssey.**

Spence. Nov. 2003. c.500p. ed. by Jamie Glazov. bibliog. index. ISBN 1-890626-51-1. \$29.95. POLITICS

This new collection of 43 essays complements Horowitz's powerful 1996 memoir, *Radical Son*. Beginning with his early work, composed while he helped found the New Left during the 1960s, Horowitz (*Hating Whitey*) recounts his intellectual progression from leftist to conservative by the beginning of the Reagan administration. While Horowitz had intellectual reasons for his change, a powerful one was also personal. When a friend was murdered, allegedly by a member of the Black Panthers, the lack of concern his political allies seemed to display led Horowitz to question his beliefs. As with his other books, Horowitz explains his political shift plus his views on race, multiculturalism, political strategy, and the war on terrorism. Particularly interesting is the section containing chapters on Marx's Communist Manifesto, the environmental movement, and what constitutes the Left and Right in contemporary American politics. Horowitz of course continues his sparring with former colleagues on the Left. One does not need to agree with his

political, social, or cultural views to appreciate his sharp intellectual and writing skills. Like another political convert, Whittaker Chambers, he is worth reading. Recommended for all politics collections.—*Stephen L. Hupp, West Virginia Univ. Lib., Parkersburg*

O'Hanlon, Michael & Mike Mochizuki. **Crisis on the Korean Peninsula: How To Deal with A Nuclear North Korea.**

McGraw-Hill. 2003. c.172p. ISBN 0-07-143155-1. \$19.95. INT AFFAIRS

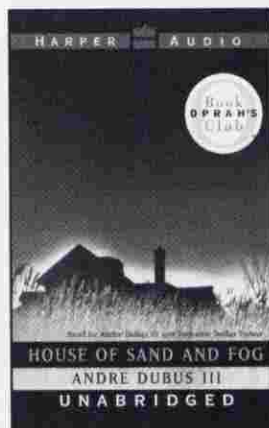
In October 2002, the North Korean government startled the world by announcing that it possessed nuclear weapons and by withdrawing from the 1970 Nonproliferation Treaty. This new work by two scholars associated with the Brookings Institution provides helpful background on the country and the current dilemma it poses for world leaders. The authors propose a "roadmap" approach to resolving the issues: beginning with the 1994 Agreed Framework (which denuclearized North Korea), North Korea would be required to dismantle its nuclear capability immediately, then reduce its conventional forces, and then improve its human rights record. Each step would bring a benefit from the United States, e.g., immediate resumption of fuel oil shipments for the power plants. Though other think tanks have recently issued policy recommendations on this topic, this report is the most detailed and concrete to date. Unfortunately, issues of nuclear weapons and rogue states have always proven to be intractable, and those with short attention spans lose interest quickly. For this reason, this comprehensive report will appeal primarily to policy wonks. For academic libraries.—*Marcia L. Sprules, Council on Foreign Relations Lib., New York*

Shattuck, John. **Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America's Response.**

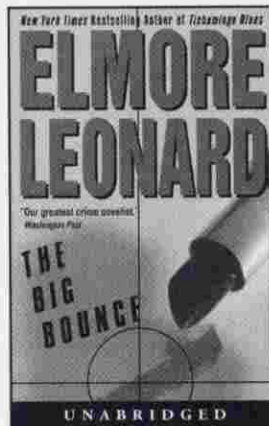
Harvard Univ. Nov. 2003. c.352p. index. ISBN 0-674-01162-7. \$29.95. INT AFFAIRS

Shattuck, a former assistant secretary of state and self-described "human rights hawk," draws on his experiences in the Clinton administrations to argue forcefully and persuasively that the United States must work with other nations to fight terror decisively whenever and wherever it emerges. He recounts his role in failing to prevent the genocide in Rwanda just after the U.S. fiasco in Somalia, and he strongly criticizes U.S. reluctance to intervene as well as French complicity in protecting the Hutu perpetrators of the genocide against the Tutsis. He also discusses how the United States was finally persuaded to intervene militarily in Haiti and shows that the partial success in Haiti affected Clinton's willingness to take decisive action in

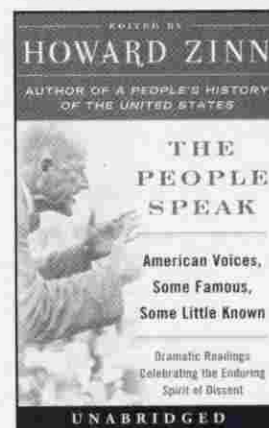
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