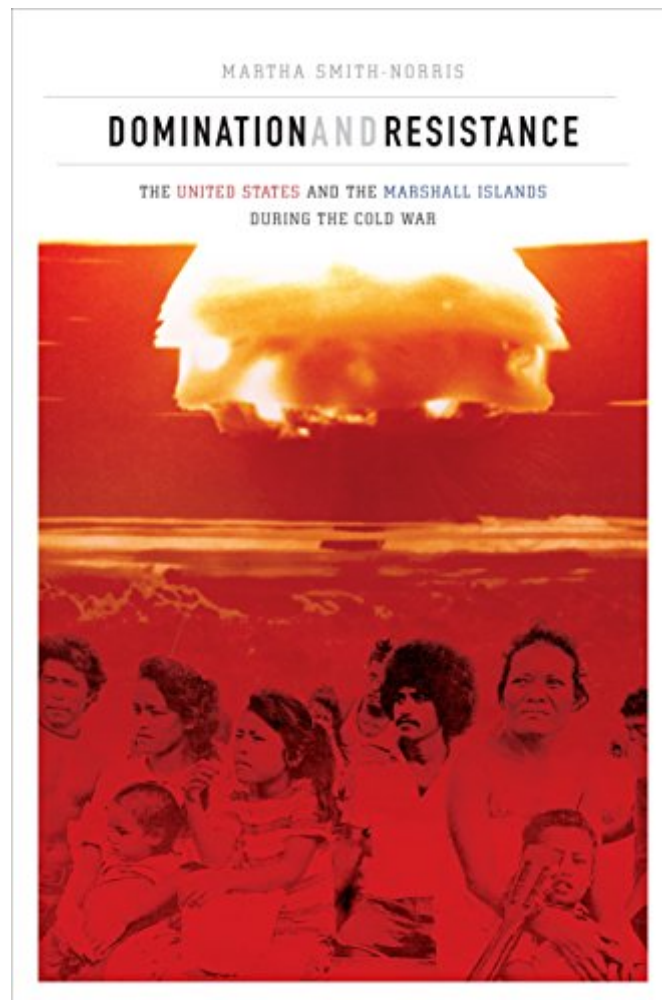




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Domination And Resistance: The United States And The Marshall Islands During The Cold War



Synopsis

Domination and Resistance illuminates the twin themes of superpower domination and indigenous resistance in the central Pacific during the Cold War, with a compelling historical examination of the relationship between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. For decision makers in Washington, the Marshall Islands represented a strategic prize seized from Japan near the end of World War II. In the postwar period, under the auspices of a United Nations Trusteeship Agreement, the United States reinforced its control of the Marshall Islands and kept the Soviet Union and other Cold War rivals out of this Pacific region. The United States also used the opportunity to test a vast array of powerful nuclear bombs and missiles in the Marshalls, even as it conducted research on the effects of human exposure to radioactive fallout. Although these military tests and human experiments reinforced the US strategy of deterrence, they also led to the displacement of several atoll communities, serious health implications for the Marshallese, and widespread ecological degradation. Confronted with these troubling conditions, the Marshall Islanders utilized a variety of political and legal tactics—petitions, lawsuits, demonstrations, and negotiations—to draw American and global attention to their plight. In response to these indigenous acts of resistance, the United States strengthened its strategic interests in the Marshalls but made some concessions to the islanders. Under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) and related agreements, the Americans tightened control over the Kwajalein Missile Range while granting the Marshallese greater political autonomy, additional financial assistance, and a mechanism to settle nuclear claims. Martha Smith-Norris argues that despite COFA's implementation in 1986 and Washington's pivot toward the Asia-Pacific region in the post-Cold War era, the United States has yet to provide adequate compensation to the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the extensive health and environmental damages caused by the US testing programs.

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Customer Reviews

So far, I've only read the intro and chapters one and two. It is difficult to read. I have several frustrations with the book:

1. The author switches back and forth between the anthropology school and the realism school, based on whichever one better supports her argument at that point in the book.
2. The author makes wild accusations and assumptions about US goals and interests during the Cold War to support an underlying implication that has US evil intentions 100% of the time.
3. The author confuses radiation monitoring with using humans as medical experiment guinea pigs. The accusation is as historically inaccurate as it is irresponsible.
4. The author starts with a point that we can all agree on: what happened to the Bikinians was terrible. She ignores the fact that the degree to which it was and is terrible was completely unexpected. She then lists legal cases, several of which were heard or considered by the US Supreme Court. She's clearly not a lawyer and supports the Bikinians every time without examining the cases from a legal perspective. The fact that the Bikinians sue and re-sue for the same reason every time, despite having already won previous cases and received compensation several times is lost on her.
5. She ignores the fact that it takes two to tango. The Bikinians *demanded* to return to their island. She blames the US Government for pussyfooting their return, then she blames the US government for not supporting them enough after they returned, then she blames the US government for returning them to a radiation-contaminated island.

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