

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910453571703321
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Titolo	In Sputnik's shadow [[electronic resource]] : the President's Science Advisory Committee and Cold War America // Zuoyue Wang
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Brunswick, N.J., : Rutgers University Press, c2008
ISBN	1-281-77645-9 9786611776459 0-8135-4514-5
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (478 p.)
Classificazione	MK 2300
Disciplina	338.973/0609045
Soggetti	Science and state - United States - History - 20th century Sputnik satellites Cold War Electronic books. United States Politics and government 1953-1961
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- List of Illustrations -- Preface -- Note to the Reader -- Abbreviations Used in Text -- Introduction -- Part I. Prelude: Before Sputnik -- 1. American Public Science, 1863-1945 -- 2. The Origins of Technological Skepticism, 1945-1950 -- 3. Mobilizing Science for the Korean War under Truman, 1950-1952 -- 4. Science and the National Security State under Eisenhower, 1952-1957 -- Part II. Ike, Sputnik, and the Rise of PSAC -- 5. Eisenhower, Sputnik, and the Creation of PSAC, 1957 -- 6. PSAC and the Launching of NASA, 1957-1960 -- 7. Military Technology, 1957-1960 -- 8. The Search for a Nuclear Test Ban, 1957-1960 -- 9. The Politics of Big Science, 1957-1960 -- 10. The Control of Science Policy under Eisenhower, 1957-1960 -- Part III. The Politics of Technological Skepticism -- 11. Science at the New Frontier under Kennedy, 1960-1963 -- 12. Responding to Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, 1962-1963 -- 13. Testing the Limits, 1961-1963 -- 14. "Scientists for Johnson," 1964 -- 15. PSAC, the Vietnam War, and the ABM Debate, 1964-1968 -- 16. The Politics of Technological Dissent under Nixon, 1969-1973 -- Epilogue --

Sommario/riassunto

In today's world of rapid advancements in science and technology, we need to scrutinize more than ever the historical forces that shape our perceptions of what these new possibilities can and cannot do for social progress. In *Sputnik's Shadow* provides a lens to do just that, by tracing the rise and fall of the President's Science Advisory Committee from its ascendance under Eisenhower in the wake of the Soviet launching of Sputnik to its demise during the Nixon years. Members of this committee shared a strong sense of technological skepticism; they were just as inclined to advise the president about what technology couldn't do-for national security, space exploration, arms control, and environmental protection-as about what it could do. Zuoyue Wang examines key turning points during the twentieth century, including the beginning of the Cold War, the debates over nuclear weapons, the Sputnik crisis in 1957, the struggle over the Vietnam War, and the eventual end of the Cold War, showing how the involvement of scientists in executive policymaking evolved over time. Bringing new insights to the intellectual, social, and cultural histories of the era, this book not only depicts the drama of Cold War American science, it gives perspective to how we think about technological advancements today.
