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Sommario/riassunto	A brilliant meditation on the nature of the American empire that ranges widely between past and present. ... Few books I've read on recent US foreign policy cut both as deep and as broadly as this one. Professor Marilyn Young, New York University; A fine example of how to write contemporary history. Ryan provides readers with a real understanding of the dilemmas of the American empire. Professor Lloyd Gardner, Rutgers University; A majestic work, moving from the Cold War to now. ... An essential critique of the world of the 21st century.; Professor William S. Lucas, University of Birmingham David Ryan examines the broad contexts of US foreign policy and the lingering aftermath of the Vietnam War that shaped the opportunistic framing of 9/11 and paved the way for the long-held neo-conservative desire for regime change and war in Iraq. He examines the construction of the cultural framework for war following 9/11, the legitimacy of military force in Afghanistan, the rise of anti-Americanism, within the broader contexts over the struggle over legitimacy, identity and leadership. Turning the

'clash of civilisations' thesis on its head, Ryan presents a careful analysis of the evolution of US foreign policy and its engagement with Iraq through the 1980's. While 9/11 provided the opportunity, the post-Vietnam context provides a more pertinent framework for this reflection on the Gulf War, the Iraq War and the strategic implications for US foreign policy.
