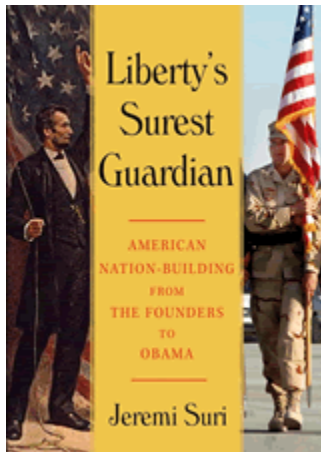


**Liberty's Surest Guardian: American Nation-Building from the Founders to Obama (Free Press/Simon & Schuster, Fall 2011)**



Americans are a nation-building people, and in *Liberty's Surest Guardian*, Jeremi Suri looks to America's history to see both what it has to offer to failed states around the world and what it should avoid. Far from being cold imperialists, Americans have earnestly attempted to export their invention of representative government to failing states throughout the world. We have had successes (Reconstruction after the American Civil War, the Philippines, Western Europe) and failures (Vietnam), and we can learn a good deal from both. Nation-building is in America's DNA. It dates back to the days of the Revolution when the founding fathers invented the concept of popular sovereignty—the idea that you cannot have a national government without a collective will. The framers of the Constitution initiated a policy of cautious nation-building, hoping not to conquer other countries, but to build a world of stable, self-governed societies that would support America's way of life. Yet no other country has created more problems for itself and for others by intervening in distant lands and pursuing impractical changes.