

ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY – SECOND EDITION



REWRITING • HISTORIES

EDITED BY MELVYN P. LEFFLER
DAVID S. PAINTER

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ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

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'An excellent collection, which offers works with which students would be unfamiliar. The articles demonstrate a real commitment to international history.'

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The Cold War dominated the world political arena for forty-five years. Focusing on the international system and on events in all parts of the globe, Melvyn P. Leffler and David S. Painter have brought together a truly international collection of articles that provide a fresh and comprehensive analysis of the origins of the Cold War.

Moving beyond earlier controversies, this edited collection focuses on the interaction between geopolitics and threat perception, technology and strategy, ideology and social reconstruction, national economic reform and patterns of international trade, and decolonization and national liberation. The editors also consider how and why the Cold War spread from Europe to Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America and how groups, classes, and elites used the Cold War to further their own interests.

This second edition brings the collection right up to date, including the newest research from the Communist side of the Cold War and the most recent debates on culture, race, and the role of intelligence analysis. Also included is a completely new section dealing with the Cold War crises in Iran, Turkey, and Greece and a guide to further reading.

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For my brothers, Sheldon and Fred Leffler

and

For my wife, Flora Montealegre Painter,
and our son, Charles

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

Rewriting history, or revisionism, has always followed closely in the wake of history writing. In their efforts to re-evaluate the past, professional as well as amateur scholars have followed many approaches, most commonly as empiricists, uncovering new information to challenge earlier accounts. Historians have also revised previous versions by adopting new perspectives, usually fortified by new research, which overturn received views.

Even though rewriting is constantly taking place, historians' attitudes towards using new interpretations have been anything but settled. For most, the validity of revisionism lies in providing a stronger, more convincing account that better captures the objective truth of the matter. Although such historians might agree that we never finally arrive at the 'truth,' they believe it exists and over time may be better approximated. At the other extreme stand scholars who believe that each generation or even each cultural group or subgroup necessarily regards the past differently, each creating for itself a more usable history. Although these latter scholars do not reject the possibility of demonstrating empirically that some contentions are better than others, they focus upon generating new views based upon different life experiences. Different truths exist for different groups. Surely such an understanding, by emphasizing subjectivity, further encourages rewriting history. Between these two groups are those historians who wish to borrow from both sides. This third group, while accepting that every set of individuals sees matters differently, still wishes somewhat contradictorily to fashion a broader history that incorporates both of these particular visions. Revisionists who stress empiricism fall into the first of the three camps, while others spread out across the board.

Today the rewriting of history seems to have accelerated to a blinding speed as a consequence of the evolution of revisionism. A variety of approaches has emerged. A major factor in this process has been the enormous increase in the number of researchers. This explosion has reinforced and enabled the retesting of many assertions. Significant ideological shifts have also played a major part in the growth of revisionism. First, the crisis of Marxism, culminating in the events of Eastern Europe in 1989, has given rise to doubts about explicitly Marxist accounts. Such doubts have spilled over into the entire field

of social history which has been a dominant subfield of the discipline for several decades. Focusing on society and its class divisions implied that these are the most important elements in historical analysis. Because Marxism was built on the same claim, the whole basis of social history has been questioned, despite the very many studies that directly had little to do with Marxism. Disillusionment with social history simultaneously opened the door to cultural and linguistic approaches largely developed in anthropology and literature. Multi-culturalism and feminism further generated revisionism. By claiming that scholars had, wittingly or not, operated from a white European/American male point of view, newer researchers argued that other approaches had been neglected or misunderstood. Not surprisingly, these last historians are the most likely to envision each subgroup rewriting its own usable history, while other scholars incline towards revisionism as part of the search for some stable truth.

Rewriting Histories will make these new approaches available to the student population. Often new scholarly debates take place in the scattered issues of journals which are sometimes difficult to find. Furthermore, in these first interactions, historians tend to address one another, leaving out the evidence that would make their arguments more accessible to the uninitiated. This series of books will collect in one place a strong group of the major articles in selected fields, adding notes and introductions conducive to improved understanding. Editors will select articles containing substantial historical data, so that students – at least those who approach the subject as an objective phenomenon – can advance not only their comprehension of debated points but also their grasp of substantive aspects of the subject.

For forty-five years the Cold War stood at the center of world politics. It dominated the foreign policies of the United States and the Soviet Union and affected the diplomacy and domestic politics of almost every nation in the world. Understanding the origins of the Cold War is central to understanding the international history of the last half of the twentieth century.

Focusing on the international system and on events in all parts of the globe, this path-breaking volume provides a fresh and comprehensive analysis of the origins of the Cold War. Moving beyond earlier controversies over responsibility for the Cold War and avoiding myopic preoccupation with Soviet-American relations, the editors have brought together articles that deal with a broad range of issues surrounding the beginning and development of the Cold War. This second edition features contributions that utilize a greater range of archival sources on the policies and actions of the Soviet Union and its allies than was possible for many of the articles assembled for the 1994 edition. Whereas previously scholars often had to deduce motives from behavior, now they are able to examine the documentary record much more closely. They can now see how Stalin and his subordinates shaped the course of internal and foreign policy. Interestingly, the new documents do not simplify interpretation. In fact, Stalin emerges even more complex, enigmatic, and erratic, as well as more brutal.

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

In broad perspective, this volume explains how and why the Cold War began, and how and why it spread from the industrialized core of Europe and Japan to the rest of the world. It also shows how allies and clients as well as elites, classes, and interest groups used the Cold War to further their own agendas. Finally, by highlighting the systemic factors that contributed to the onset of the Cold War, this volume provides new insights into the Cold War's persistence and its unexpected and precipitous end.

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Editorial note: In order to cover a wide range of topics, most of the articles and essays in this volume have been edited to reduce their length. With the exception of two of the chapters (Naimark and Borstelmann), where the publisher made a specific request, we have not indicated the cuts with ellipses. Readers wishing to examine the original articles and essays are encouraged to do so by consulting the acknowledgments above for full citations.

INTRODUCTION

The international system and the origins of the Cold War

David S. Painter and Melvyn P. Leffler

For forty-five years the Cold War was at the center of world politics. It dominated the foreign policies of the two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union – and deeply affected their societies and their political, economic, and military institutions. The Cold War also shaped the foreign policy and domestic politics of most other nations around the globe. Few countries, in fact, escaped its influence. Because the distinctive characteristics of the Cold War era took form in the years immediately following the Second World War, examining its origins is central to understanding international history in the last half of the twentieth century.

Historians have offered conflicting interpretations of the Cold War's outbreak, interpretations often grounded in deep, if unacknowledged, ideological and philosophical differences. Many of these interpretations were themselves shaped by the ongoing Cold War. The end of the Cold War, coupled with the limited opening of archives in the former Soviet Union and its allies, provides an opportunity to reassess its beginnings. Scholars and students alike can move beyond earlier controversies over responsibility for the Cold War and try to understand what happened and why. It is now possible to ask new questions about the origins of the Cold War.

In this volume we focus on the international system and on events in all parts of the globe. We bring together essays that deal with geopolitics and threat perception, technology and strategy, ideology and social reconstruction, national economic reform and patterns of international trade, race and culture, de-colonization and revolutionary nationalism. The essays examine how the global distribution of power, the configuration of social forces, the state of the international economy, and deeply embedded ideological predispositions influenced American and Soviet perceptions of their respective national security interests. They also demonstrate how Soviet–American competition helped shape the political, economic, and social conditions of other nations. And lastly, they reveal how classes, factions, ethnic groups,

and revolutionary nationalist movements in other countries used the Cold War to further their own interests and manipulate the great powers. The interconnected tapestry of domestic histories and international history is one of the most salient features of the Cold War era.

In the United States two views of the Cold War once competed. Defenders of US policies blamed the Soviet Union for the outbreak of the Cold War. This orthodox rendition of events portrayed the Soviet Union as relentlessly expansionist and ideologically motivated. According to this view, US officials wanted to get along with the Soviets but slowly came to realize that accommodation was impossible because of the Kremlin's drive for world domination. The traditional view made a modest comeback in the 1990s as some scholars seized on newly available Soviet and other Communist records to argue that Soviet foreign policy (and the foreign policy of Communist regimes in general) was ideologically motivated, aggressively expansionist, and morally repugnant.

The second group, known as revisionists, emerged in the 1960s as the Vietnam War and the growing availability of US records led to a more critical appraisal of US policies. The revisionists argued that US policies were also expansionist and thus played an important role in starting the Cold War. Many revisionists pointed to the long history of American economic expansionism and argued that ideological beliefs and economic interests significantly shaped US policies.

After the early 1970s, the contrasting explanations of US behavior became blurred by a proliferation of studies that have been characterized as post-revisionist, neo-realist, corporatist, and world systems. Although a consensus on the roots of American Cold War policies no longer exists, this new scholarship has greatly enriched our knowledge of a wide range of issues by focusing more carefully on geopolitics, social structures, institutional arrangements, and the functioning of the US economy within the world capitalist system.

American archival materials for the early Cold War are plentiful, but documentation on Soviet foreign policy remains incomplete and the meaning of the available documents is often ambiguous. It is still difficult to discern with a high degree of confidence the motives and goals of the Soviet Union. Even though many more Soviet records are now available, we still lack a definitive account of Soviet foreign policy in this period. Nevertheless, historians and political scientists have become more nuanced in their interpretations of developments in the Kremlin. Early views that the Soviet Union had a clear blueprint for world domination have been discredited. Although Soviet archival materials and Russian memoirs again underscore the importance and the brutality of Communist dictator Joseph Stalin, they also suggest that he was opportunistic and pragmatic in his foreign policy, seeking to further Soviet power but keenly attuned to constraints and risks. Recent research also takes a more sophisticated view of the importance of ideology in Soviet foreign policy and illuminates the role other communist parties and leaders

played in influencing Soviet policy. These accounts represent provocative new approaches to studying the sources and dynamics of Soviet decision-making.

Additional archival materials are not necessary to see that the Second World War wrought profound changes in the international state system, bringing about a massive redistribution of power, ending centuries of European dominance, and influencing the evolution of the Cold War. Before the Second World War there were six important powers (or seven if Italy is included): Great Britain, France, Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States. By the end of the conflict, the United States stood alone as the strongest nation in the world, its power enhanced by its war effort, its rivals defeated, and its allies exhausted. The Soviet Union experienced almost incalculable human and material losses and was a distant second. Great Britain, drained by six years of fighting (which cost it a quarter of its wealth) and facing upheaval in its empire, was an even more distant third. Humiliated by its collapse in 1940, deeply divided over the issue of collaboration, severely damaged by the war, and beleaguered by rebellious colonies, France slipped from the ranks of the great powers. Germany lay in ruins. Having been thwarted in its second bid for European hegemony, it was occupied by its enemies and was anticipating partition. Japan, too, was devastated and demoralized. Shocked by the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, shorn of their colonial empire, and occupied by US forces, the Japanese appeared powerless.

The United States entered the postwar era in a uniquely strong position. Practically unscathed by the fighting, the United States almost doubled its gross national product (GNP) during the conflict: by 1945, it accounted for around half of the world's manufacturing capacity, most of its food surpluses, and almost all of its financial reserves. The United States held the lead in a wide range of technologies essential to modern warfare as well as economic prosperity. Possession of extensive domestic oil supplies and control over access to vast repositories of foreign oil provided an additional and essential element in its power position. Although the United States demobilized its armed forces from 12.1 million troops in 1945 to 1.7 million by mid-1947, the nation still possessed the world's mightiest military machine. Its navy controlled the seas, its air forces dominated the skies, and it alone possessed atomic weapons and the means to deliver them. Yet the depression and the war left the United States feeling vulnerable and uncertain. Consequently, American officials entered the postwar era thinking more expansively than ever before about their nation's security requirements.

In the first essay in this volume, Melvyn P. Leffler argues that US policymakers believed that their nation's security depended on a favorable balance of power in Eurasia, an open and prosperous world economy, a strategic sphere of influence in Latin America, an elaborate overseas base system, and continuation of the American monopoly of atomic weapons. Leffler demonstrates that the key obstacles to US objectives were socioeconomic dislocation, revolutionary nationalism, and vacuums of power in Europe and Asia, rather than the policies and actions of the Soviet Union. Leffler's work, which is

based on extensive research in US military and diplomatic records, demolishes the myth of a naive and reactive United States. It raises interesting questions about the accuracy of US perceptions and the ramifications of US actions, however unintended, on the Kremlin.

The Soviet Union, despite its victory in the war, suffered massive damage. Estimates of Soviet war dead range from 20 to 27 million; damage to the economy left it one-quarter the size of its American counterpart. The Soviets also demobilized rapidly, from approximately 11.3 million troops in 1945 to around 2.9 million in early 1948. Notwithstanding the size of Soviet ground forces in central Europe, overall Soviet military capabilities could not match those of the United States. In addition to a greatly inferior industrial base and meager air defenses, the Soviets had no long-range strategic air force, no meaningful surface fleet, and no atomic weapons. But in comparison to its neighbors, the relative power position of the Soviet Union had improved, primarily as a result of the defeat of Germany and Japan, countries that historically had checked Russian power in central Europe and northeastern Asia.

In the second essay in this volume, Geoffrey Roberts draws on recently available Soviet records to trace how Stalin's views and policies evolved during the Second World War and the early postwar years. Roberts argues that the views and policies revealed in these records are strikingly similar to those in Soviet speeches and other public statements at the time. His research suggests that while Stalin wanted a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and security from future German aggression, he hoped, until late 1947, that he could achieve his goals while maintaining good relations with the United States and Great Britain.

The Second World War also accelerated dramatic changes in the technology of warfare. Conventional weapons reached new heights of destructiveness. Power projection capabilities, in particular, took a quantum leap forward, with the development of the aircraft carrier and long-range bombers. The atomic bomb magnified the scale of destruction, and fears of an 'atomic Pearl Harbor' placed a premium on preparedness and preemption. While the existence of atomic weapons may have helped prevent a war between the superpowers, the arms race that resulted contributed greatly to international tensions as the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and other nations sought to develop their own atomic weapons and the United States tried to maintain its lead.

Over the last three decades historians have examined the strategic arms race between the two superpowers, and one of the most important developments in historical scholarship has been the attempt to unravel the interdependence of strategy and diplomacy in the making of the Cold War. Martin J. Sherwin's essay examines the great coalition between the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Sherwin demonstrates how the US decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan grew out of Anglo-American thinking about its use as a diplomatic tool in peacetime as well as a winning weapon in wartime.

INTRODUCTION

Looking at Washington's adversary and making effective use of newly available sources, David Holloway analyzes the impact of atomic weapons on Soviet foreign policy. Stalin, he argues, grasped the implications of the bomb for postwar diplomacy. Although the American monopoly of atomic weapons increased Stalin's determination to avoid war with the United States, it also made him less cooperative on a wide range of issues, lest he appear weak, and strengthened his determination to expedite the development of Soviet nuclear weapons.

In late 1945 and early 1946, crises in Iran, Turkey, and Greece intersected with great power rivalries to increase tensions between the Soviet Union and its Anglo-American allies. These crises were part of a general restructuring of power relationships in the region, changes that threatened the Western position in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. After the Second World War, France was forced to grant independence to Lebanon and Syria and faced challenges in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. Britain was weakened by the loss of the Indian Army, its main power projection force east of Suez. It also encountered strong resistance to its rule in Palestine as well as formidable challenges to its privileged position in Egypt and Iran. And all these events occurred precisely when the Middle East's importance to Western security and prosperity was dramatically increasing. Not only had the Second World War demonstrated the crucial importance of oil to modern warfare, but after hostilities ended the West counted on Middle Eastern oil to fuel European and Japanese economic reconstruction. Iran was central to these efforts because it contained extensive petroleum reserves and the world's largest oil refinery at Abadan. Its rugged terrain, moreover, constituted a barrier between the Soviet Union and the oilfields along the Persian Gulf.

The crises in Iran, Turkey, and Greece arose from declining British power, Soviet probes regional rivalries, and internal political polarization. All three nations were affected by the Second World War. Iran was occupied by British and Soviet forces, and 30,000 US troops were stationed there to expedite delivery of supplies to the Soviet Union. While technically neutral, Turkey carefully adjusted its allegiance as the tides of wars shifted, moving from a pro-German position to a pro-allied stance. Greece suffered under brutal German occupation that exacerbated already existing tensions within its society.

Historians have long viewed the Iranian crisis as a pivotal event in the Cold War. Although the crisis itself was the result of Soviet support for an Azeri nationalist movement in northern Iran and Soviet refusal to withdraw their occupation forces as specified by treaty with Iran, its roots lay in great power rivalry and internal Iranian politics. Britain held a monopoly over Iranian oil and dominated Iranian politics, but the presence of Soviet and American forces in Iran during the war threatened to undermine Britain's position. As the war came to an end and the United States and Britain worked out their differences, the Soviets looked for ways to maintain their influence in their southern neighbor. Drawing on research in the Communist party archive in Baku, Fernande Scheid Raine examines the intersection of local

interests and great power politics as she explores how Stalin sought to use Azeri nationalism as a means to protect Soviet interests in Iran without alienating his wartime allies.

The Soviets viewed Turkish control of the straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea as a strategic liability and hoped to change the rules governing the straits after the war. The United States and Britain viewed Turkey as critical to the defense of the Middle East, and opposed Soviet efforts to force Turkey to share control of the straits and to cede some long disputed territory in northeast Turkey. On the basis of extensive research in US intelligence documents, Soviet archival evidence, and oral interviews, Eduard Mark argues that the United States and Britain took the Soviet threat to Turkey very seriously and stepped up their collaboration on war plans to defend the region against the Soviets. According to Mark, when Stalin realized the seriousness of US counteractions, he called off his efforts to pressure Turkey. Although not all scholars agree with his arguments, Mark's essay raises important questions about Soviet goals and illuminates the fascinating relationship between intelligence and foreign policy.

Soviet actions in Iran and Turkey led to increased US involvement in both nations. Ironically, Soviet inaction in Greece led to similar results. The Greek Communists played a leading role in the resistance against the Germans, and only British military intervention prevented the Communists and their allies from taking power in late 1944. Viewing a communist-controlled Greece as an ideological and strategic threat, the United States and Britain provided anticommunist Greeks extensive military and economic assistance. The Soviet Union, in contrast, provided relatively little assistance to its ideological allies, leaving them at a severe disadvantage in the civil war. In the excerpt included in this volume, Thanasis D. Sfikas draws on research in Greek archives and examines the choices facing Greek Communists as they sought to win power. His essay underscores the dynamic interaction between local power struggles and great power politics.

Many historians have found British records to be an invaluable source for understanding the origins of the Cold War. Arguing that Britain played a key role in postwar developments, these scholars claim that British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and his advisers initially were more alert to the threat posed by the Soviet Union than were officials in Washington. Faced with the rumblings of revolutionary nationalism in their far-flung empire, British policymakers were acutely sensitive to the intersection of their own reconstruction plans with nationalist upheaval in the Third World and the expansion of Soviet power and influence. In a provocative essay, John Kent contends that British concerns about the strategic position of the British empire and Bevin's hopes to draw on the resources of the Middle East and Africa prompted Britain to take a defiant stand against the Soviet Union and thus contributed to the outbreak of the Cold War.

Geopolitics and strategy alone did not cause the Cold War. Changes in the balance of political forces both within and among nations after the Second

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World War further complicated international relations. Transnational ideological conflict merged domestic and international developments and affected the relative power positions of different countries. In terms of ideology, the outcome of the Second World War seemed to favor the left and the Soviet Union, at least in the short run. Almost everywhere people yearned for significant socioeconomic reforms, for structural changes in their economies and political institutions, and for improvements in their living conditions. In most countries, right-wing groups were discredited because of their association with the defeated Axis powers. After fifteen years of depression, war, and genocide, many of the bourgeois middle-of-the-road parties of inter-war Europe also were weakened. In contrast, Communist Party membership soared because of the major role Communists played in anti-fascist resistance movements. In many countries the Communists and their allies appeared ready to take power either peacefully or forcefully. US policymakers worried that wherever and however Communist groups attained power they would pursue policies that served the interests of the Soviet Union.

The potential international impact of internal political struggles invested the latter with strategic significance and embroiled the United States and the Soviet Union in the internal affairs of other nations. Yet this process was subject to pull as well as push: in many cases the superpowers were drawn into the internal politics of other nations by local allies who sought external assistance in order to prevail in the internal struggle for power.

The postwar transnational ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was part of the ongoing structural refashioning of European political economies and internal power relationships. A growing number of historians in Great Britain and on the continent contest the bipolar interpretation of the origins of the Cold War. The division of Europe, they argue, must be understood in the context of the social, economic, and political history of Europe as well as in terms of Soviet-American rivalry. European nations and elites, they maintain, had more responsibility for developments than is usually assigned to them by American scholars. Indigenous economic, political, and social developments, regional rivalries, and traditional ethnic animosities significantly shaped the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. In an essay synthesizing scholarship on the European dimension of the Cold War, David Reynolds argues that circumstances within Europe affected the options and tactics available to US and Soviet policymakers. In turn, US and Soviet actions helped shape the outcome of many of Europe's internal struggles.

Reynolds argues that what to do about Germany lay at the heart of the Cold War. Most historians agree. In his book on Soviet actions in their occupation zone in Germany, Norman Naimark details how the Soviets were unable to find a balance between their desires for revenge and reparations and their security needs, which called for a friendly Germany. In the portion of his study reprinted here, Naimark examines the brutal behavior

of Soviet soldiers in their occupation zone in Germany. This behavior, which included rape on a massive scale, created formidable obstacles to friendly relations with the German people. As a result, the German communists were discredited and Soviet security objectives compromised.

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe traditional ethnic hostilities, regional strife, ideological rivalries, and the impact of the war on social and economic relationships influenced political developments. Recent research has shown that until the fall of 1947, the postwar configuration of power in many countries in Eastern Europe was the result of a complex weaving of indigenous circumstances, great power rivalries, and transnational ideological conflict. The political and ideological ambiguities were removed only in late 1947 and early 1948 when Stalin moved to consolidate the Soviet position in the region. He felt beleaguered by dissonance within his own orbit, the launching of the Marshall Plan, and Anglo-American attempts to rebuild and unify the western zones in Germany.

In his essay on the tangled web of political intrigue in postwar Bulgaria, Vesselin Dimitrov shows that while Stalin seemed to be in no hurry to impose Communism on Bulgaria, Bulgarian Communists constantly sought to crush their enemies and seize complete control. In contrast to Hungary and Czechoslovakia, where non-communist parties survived until late 1947 and early 1948, Dimitrov argues that the Bulgarian Communists, at times acting against Soviet wishes, had by this time already gone a long way towards liquidating their opponents and completing their seizure of power.

Although not crude, heavy-handed, and brutal as was Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe, US and British intervention in Western Europe was extensive and effective. As they liberated and occupied Italy, the Americans and British moved quickly to exclude the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and other leftist groups from power. Rather than resisting, the PCI sought to work with the Italian government headed by Marshal Pietro Badoglio. Silvio Pons, using newly available Soviet records and PCI materials, examines the constraints placed on Italian Communists by Stalin's reluctance to jeopardize relations with his coalition partners. Pons suggests that Stalin did not plan to spread Communism to Western Europe. Rather, Stalin sought to prevent Communist parties in Western Europe from taking actions that could precipitate the formation of an anti-Soviet Western bloc.

Although economic conditions improved in most of Western Europe in 1946, recovery faltered in 1947 as a result of an unusually harsh winter and a fuel crisis producing social unrest, political instability, and declining foreign exchange reserves. US officials feared that economic distress would translate into support for Communist parties, especially in France and Italy, or expanded controls on trade and investment. To solve these problems, the United States provided sixteen Western European nations with billions of dollars of economic assistance that enabled them to devote massive resources to reconstruction and to expand their exports without resorting to socially and politically divisive austerity programs.

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Marshall Plan aid gave the United States tremendous influence over the internal balance of political power in many Western European countries. In an illuminating essay on Western Europe, Charles S. Maier shows that American officials nevertheless had to work within the constraints posed by indigenous European traditions, institutions, and power arrangements. Britain, France, Italy, West Germany, and even the smaller European states like Belgium and the Netherlands retained considerable leverage and helped shape the social and economic order that arose in Western Europe. According to Maier, that order was designed to mitigate class conflict and accelerate productivity, and it shared important continuities with reconstruction efforts after the First World War.

International economic developments also shaped the Cold War. Economic hardship threatened to spark conflict between nations as well as to rekindle class strife within nations. In the 1930s the world had, in effect, split into economic blocs: the United States turned inward and, to a lesser extent, toward Latin America; the British closed off their empire behind financial and trade barriers; the Germans built an informal economic empire in central and southeastern Europe; the Soviets tried to construct socialism in one country through collectivization of agriculture and forced industrialization; and the Japanese sought to organize all of East Asia in a 'co-prosperity sphere.' International trade and national production plummeted as attempts to gain unilateral advantages elicited countermeasures which further restricted production, entrenched mass unemployment, accentuated class conflict, and exacerbated national rivalries. Subsequently, wartime mobilization intensified the autarkic, insulated, nationalistic tendencies of the 1930s.

Although the allies created new financial institutions (like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, the end of the war threatened to revive the policies of the 1930s rather than create an open world economy. Faced with massive reconstruction requirements and inadequate financial resources, many governments extended economic controls into the postwar period. These developments portended not reform and reconstruction, but a repeat of the experiences of the 1930s – economic stagnation, political extremism, and interstate conflict.

Many scholars have examined the problems of postwar economic disorder. In the excerpt in this book Robert E. Wood shows that the United States provided dollars to Western European countries and the western zones of Germany in order to help them purchase the raw materials, fuel, and food-stuffs they desperately needed for reconstruction. US assistance was a temporary expedient, however. The leaders of all the Western nations believed that an important way to overcome Western Europe's shortage of dollars was to expand trade and investment in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Dollars would flow to the Third World primarily through US procurement of raw materials. Western Europe, in turn, could earn these dollars through the repatriation of profits from investments in rubber, petroleum, and other natural resources, and through its own exports to the

Third World. As a result, efforts to promote European reconstruction eventually pitted the West against the rising tide of national liberation in Asia and Africa. The Cold War came to engulf the whole world, not simply as a result of Soviet expansionism, but because US, European, and Japanese leaders believed that the needs of the industrial economies of northwestern and northeastern Eurasia demanded the retention of markets and the preservation of access to raw materials in the underdeveloped periphery. Otherwise, the economies of Western Europe and Japan would be drawn into the Soviet orbit or remain dependent on US grants and loans (like the Marshall Plan) for the indefinite future.

De-colonization had a profound impact on the postwar international system and accentuated Soviet–American competition. Many independence movements in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa were radicalized by years of protracted struggle and repression. Revolutionary nationalist leaders sought more than political sovereignty. They wanted to free their economies from foreign control and to eradicate vestiges of colonial society and culture. Because they were fighting against Western control, many independence movements brought to power parties and individuals hostile to capitalism. Marxist-Leninist doctrine seemed to explain their countries’ backwardness, and the Soviet pattern of development appeared to provide a model for rapid industrialization. De-colonization, therefore, challenged the continuation of Western hegemony over the Third World. In terms of the international distribution of power, it did not affect the United States directly, but it did disrupt the economies of key American allies, fomented political strife, and weakened the overall Western position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

In Asia in particular de-colonization and local power struggles intersected with Soviet–American rivalries and Western reconstruction efforts. During the last twenty-five years many historians have turned their attention to Japan and its former empire. They have explained Asia’s revolutionary movements in terms of indigenous developments and the widespread repulsion against European and Japanese domination. Independence movements were particularly strong where the Japanese empire had spread in the early part of the century and where it had supplanted Western colonial regimes during the Second World War. After the war, the Japanese lost their extensive holdings in Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria; the British ceded independence to India, Burma, and Ceylon; and the United States redeemed its wartime pledge to grant freedom to the Philippines. In addition, the British, French, and Dutch faced challenges to their control of Malaya, Indochina, and Indonesia respectively, colonies which were economically important, especially as sources of raw materials and foreign exchange earnings. In the essay included in this volume concerning revolutionary movements in China, Vietnam, and the Philippines, Michael H. Hunt and Steven I. Levine stress the role of local dynamics and the consequences of US and Soviet strategic, political, and economic initiatives.

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Communist and other radical groups were also active throughout Korea as the peninsula was rocked by widespread violence following the end of Japanese colonial rule. In two exhaustively researched and strongly argued volumes on the origins of the Korean War, Bruce Cumings maintained that the conflict was a civil war that grew out of local conditions, indigenous circumstances, and regional history. In the essay included in this volume, Kathryn Weathersby, on the basis of extensive research in Soviet records first available in the late 1980s and 1990s, argues that the indigenous roots of the conflict notwithstanding, North Korea would not have been able to mount its attack on South Korea without substantial Soviet assistance. The final decision for the North Korean attack on South Korea, she concludes, was made by Stalin, not by the North Korean leadership.

US leaders interpreted the North Korean attack as a test of Western resolve and sent US troops to prevent a communist victory. When US armies drove the North Koreans out of the south, crossed the 38th parallel, and approached the border with China, Chinese forces intervened, leading to a long and bloody stalemate. In recent years, scholars have written extensively about the sources of Chinese foreign policy. In the excerpt included in this volume, Chen Jian draws on newly available Chinese documents and argues that the actions of Mao Zedong and his comrades were profoundly influenced by their commitment to revolutionary change and their desire to restore China to its central role in the region. Chen's essay makes it clear that ideology, history, and culture as well as traditional security concerns must be grasped if the international history of postwar Asia is to be placed properly in the broader context of the Cold War.

These essays on East Asia suggest that agency rested not simply with the great powers but also with local elites and popular movements. To portray the Cold War in all its complexity scholars now realize that they must analyze the interconnections between the rivalry of the United States and the Soviet Union and the unfolding of internal developments elsewhere. To do this effectively they have to integrate the geopolitical, strategic, and ideological competition of the great powers with local and regional socioeconomic trends and political struggles.

Such considerations also apply to Latin America. Traditional accounts of the origins of the Cold War often neglected Latin America. Yet recent scholarship demonstrates that the dynamics of social and political change in postwar Latin America were deeply intertwined with the Cold War. In a synthetic essay drawing on this new scholarship, Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough make a strong case that windows of opportunity for democratization in postwar Latin America were rapidly closed as the balance of domestic forces in many nations shifted to the right in conjunction with changes in the international scene and in US foreign policy.

A North-South axis divided the world almost as deeply as the East-West axis of the Cold War. Thomas Borstelmann explores how this division interacted with the politics of racial prejudice and racial discrimination within

the United States. He challenges the Western definition of the Cold War as a struggle for freedom and human rights. Although the portion of his book reprinted here focuses on Africa, racism was a significant, if often unacknowledged, factor in Western policy toward all of the Third World. Borstelmann's contribution is an outstanding example of how concerns with race and culture are now shaping the scholarship on postwar international history in general and the Cold War in particular.

After the Second World War five developments shaped the international system: great power rivalries, changes in the technology of warfare, transnational ideological conflict, reform and reconstruction of the world capitalist system, and movements of national liberation. Events in each of these areas affected one another, accentuating tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, generating an arms race, polarizing domestic and international politics, and splitting the world into military and political blocs. This new international order became known as the Cold War.

Part I

SOVIET AND AMERICAN
STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY

NATIONAL SECURITY AND US FOREIGN POLICY

Melvyn P. Leffler

During the late 1960s and the 1970s historians and political scientists bitterly debated the origins of the Cold War. An eclectic group of scholars, known as revisionists, challenged traditional views of how the Cold War got started. Revisionists insisted that the United States was not an innocent bystander. Focusing on the expansionist tradition and the entrepreneurial capitalism that had characterized US history from its inception and influenced by their hostility to the war in Vietnam, some revisionists argued that deeply embedded economic and ideological imperatives inspired American officials to assume global responsibilities. Others focused more directly on the legacy of the great depression which, they said, reinforced an elite consensus in favor of overseas market expansion in order to avert domestic business stagnation and unacceptable levels of unemployment. Still others turned a harsh lens on the diplomacy of Harry S. Truman who, they believed, reversed his predecessor's desire to maintain the wartime coalition with the Soviet Union.

These revisionist arguments angered many retired government officials and a good number of traditional scholars. Traditionalists reiterated their views that the Kremlin started the Cold War. They pointed to the paranoid personality of Joseph Stalin and the revolutionary implications of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Traditional scholars believed that given the experiences of totalitarian aggression in the 1930s and the dramatic failure of appeasement practices, US officials had no alternative but to respond as they did to the possibility of postwar Soviet/Communist expansion.

*By the mid-1980s this controversy was losing its intensity. In a famous article John Lewis Gaddis declared that a post-revisionist consensus was emerging. According to this consensus, the United States had become an imperial nation after the Second World War, but American officials were not inspired by capitalist greed or fears of another depression. The postwar American empire was a response to the entreaties of governments and peoples who felt threatened by the opportunistic expansion of the Soviet Union. Stalin had no blueprint for world domination, but his barbaric regime threatened his neighbors throughout Eurasia. The United States was obligated to respond to their pleas for help and to become embroiled in a host of disputes that many American policymakers would have preferred to avoid.**

* John L. Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Thesis on the Origins of the Cold War,' *Diplomatic History*, 7 (Summer 1983): 171–190.

Just as Gaddis was declaring a new consensus, Melvyn P. Leffler presented a version of postwar US national security policy that appeared irreconcilable with the emerging post-revisionist paradigm. Using a vast array of newly declassified documents from the armed services and the intelligence agencies, Leffler argued that US officials had a clear definition of national security, that it was the product of the lessons of the Second World War, and that it was inherently in conflict with the strategic imperatives of the Soviet Union. Studying American assessments of Soviet intentions and capabilities, Leffler demonstrated that it was not so much the actions of the Kremlin as it was fears about socioeconomic dislocation, revolutionary nationalism, British weakness, and Eurasian vacuums of power that triggered US initiatives to mold an international system to comport with its concept of security. The Cold War, he suggested, was the unfolding of the security dilemma whereby nations taking steps to enhance their own security infringe upon the security concerns of their adversaries, thus triggering a spiral of distrust.

Leffler's essay evoked strong rebuttals from post-revisionists.* Yet revisionists also were not altogether comfortable with its implications. Readers should try to clarify Leffler's argument and explicate the factors that shaped the American conception of national security. Does Leffler understate the role of Soviet behavior and Stalin's actions? Does he overlook the extent to which the United States demobilized its armed forces at the end of the war and wanted to turn inwards? In what ways does Leffler's interpretation support or contradict key elements of orthodoxy, revisionism, and post-revisionism?

* * *

In an interview with Henry Kissinger in 1978 on "The Lessons of the Past," Walter Laqueur observed that during the Second World War "few if any people thought . . . of the structure of peace that would follow the war except perhaps in the most general terms of friendship, mutual trust, and the other noble sentiments mentioned in wartime programmatic speeches about the United Nations and related topics." Kissinger concurred, noting that no statesman, except perhaps Winston Churchill, "gave any attention to what would happen after the war." Americans, Kissinger stressed, "were determined that we were going to base the postwar period on good faith and getting along with everybody."¹

That two such astute and knowledgeable observers of international politics were so uninformed about American planning at the end of the Second World War is testimony to the enduring mythology of American idealism and innocence in the world of *realpolitik*. It also reflects the state of scholarship on the interrelated areas of strategy, economy, and diplomacy. Despite the publication of several excellent overviews of the origins of the Cold War,² despite the outpouring of incisive monographs on American foreign policy in many

* See the comments by John L. Gaddis and Bruce Kuniholm in *American Historical Review*, 89 (April 1984): 382-390.

areas of the world,³ and despite some first-rate studies on the evolution of strategic thinking and the defense establishment,⁴ no comprehensive account yet exists of how American defense officials defined national security interests in the aftermath of the Second World War. Until recently, the absence of such a study was understandable, for scholars had limited access to records pertaining to national security, strategic thinking, and war planning. But in recent years documents relating to the early years of the Cold War have been declassified in massive numbers.⁵

This documentation now makes it possible to analyze in greater depth the perceptions, apprehensions, and objectives of those defense officials most concerned with defining and defending the nation's security and strategic interests.⁶ The goal here is to elucidate the fundamental strategic and economic considerations that shaped the definition of American national security interests in the postwar world. Several of these considerations – especially as they related to overseas bases, air transit rights, and a strategic sphere of influence in Latin America – initially were the logical result of technological developments and geostrategic experiences rather than directly related to postwar Soviet behavior.⁷ But American defense officials also considered the preservation of a favorable balance of power in Eurasia as fundamental to US national security. This objective impelled defense analysts and intelligence officers to appraise and reappraise the intentions and capabilities of the Soviet Union. Rather modest estimates of the Soviets' ability to wage war against the United States generated the widespread assumption that the Soviets would refrain from military aggression and seek to avoid war. Nevertheless, American defense officials remained greatly preoccupied with the geopolitical balance of power in Europe and Asia, because that balance seemed endangered by Communist exploitation of postwar economic dislocation and social and political unrest. Indeed, American assessments of the Soviet threat were less a consequence of expanding Soviet military capabilities and of Soviet diplomatic demands than a result of growing apprehension about the vulnerability of American strategic and economic interests in a world of unprecedented turmoil and upheaval. Viewed from this perspective, the Cold War assumed many of its most enduring characteristics during 1947–8, when American officials sought to cope with an array of challenges by implementing their own concepts of national security.

American officials first began to think seriously about the nation's postwar security during 1943–4. Military planners devised elaborate plans for an overseas base system. These bases were defined as the nation's strategic frontier. Beyond this frontier the United States would be able to use force to counter any threats or frustrate any overt acts of aggression. Within the strategic frontier, American military predominance had to remain inviolate. These plans received President Franklin D. Roosevelt's endorsement in early 1944.⁸

Two strategic considerations influenced the development of an overseas base system. The first was the need for defense in depth. Since attacks against

the United States could emanate only from Europe and Asia, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded as early as November 1943 that the United States must encircle the western hemisphere with a defensive ring of outlying bases. In the Pacific this ring had to include the Aleutians, the Philippines, Okinawa, and the former Japanese mandates.⁹ In the Atlantic, strategic planners maintained that their minimum requirements included a West African zone, with primary bases in the Azores or Canary Islands. The object of these defensive bases was to enable the United States to possess complete control of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and keep hostile powers far from American territory.¹⁰

Defense in depth was especially important in light of the Pearl Harbor experience, the advance of technology, and the development of the atomic bomb. According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Experience in the recent war demonstrated conclusively that the . . . farther away from our own vital areas we can hold our enemy through the possession of advanced bases . . . the greater are our chances of surviving successfully an attack by atomic weapons and of destroying the enemy which employs them against us." Believing that atomic weapons would increase the incentive to aggression by enhancing the advantage of surprise, military planners never ceased to extol the utility of forward bases from which American aircraft could seek to intercept attacks against the United States.¹¹

The second strategic consideration that influenced the plan for a comprehensive overseas base system was the need to project American power quickly and effectively against any potential adversary. In conducting an overall examination of requirements for base rights in September 1945, the Joint War Plans Committee stressed that the Second World War demonstrated that the United States had to be able to take "timely" offensive action against the adversary's capacity and will to wage war. The basic strategic concept underlying all American war plans called for an air offensive against a prospective enemy from overseas bases. Delays in the development of the B-36, the first intercontinental bomber, only accentuated the need for these bases.¹²

In October 1945 the civilian leaders of the War and Navy Departments carefully reviewed the emerging strategic concepts and base requirements of the military planners. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal and Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson fully endorsed the concept of a far-flung system of bases in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans that would enhance the offensive capabilities of the United States.¹³ From these bases on America's "strategic frontier," the United States could preserve its access to vital raw materials, deny these resources to a prospective enemy, help preserve peace and stability in troubled areas, safeguard critical sea lanes, and, if necessary, conduct an air offensive against the industrial infrastructure of any power, including the Soviet Union.

Control of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through overseas bases was considered indispensable to the nation's security regardless of what might happen to the wartime coalition. So was control over polar air routes. The first postwar base system approved by both the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the civilian secretaries in October 1945 included Iceland as a primary base

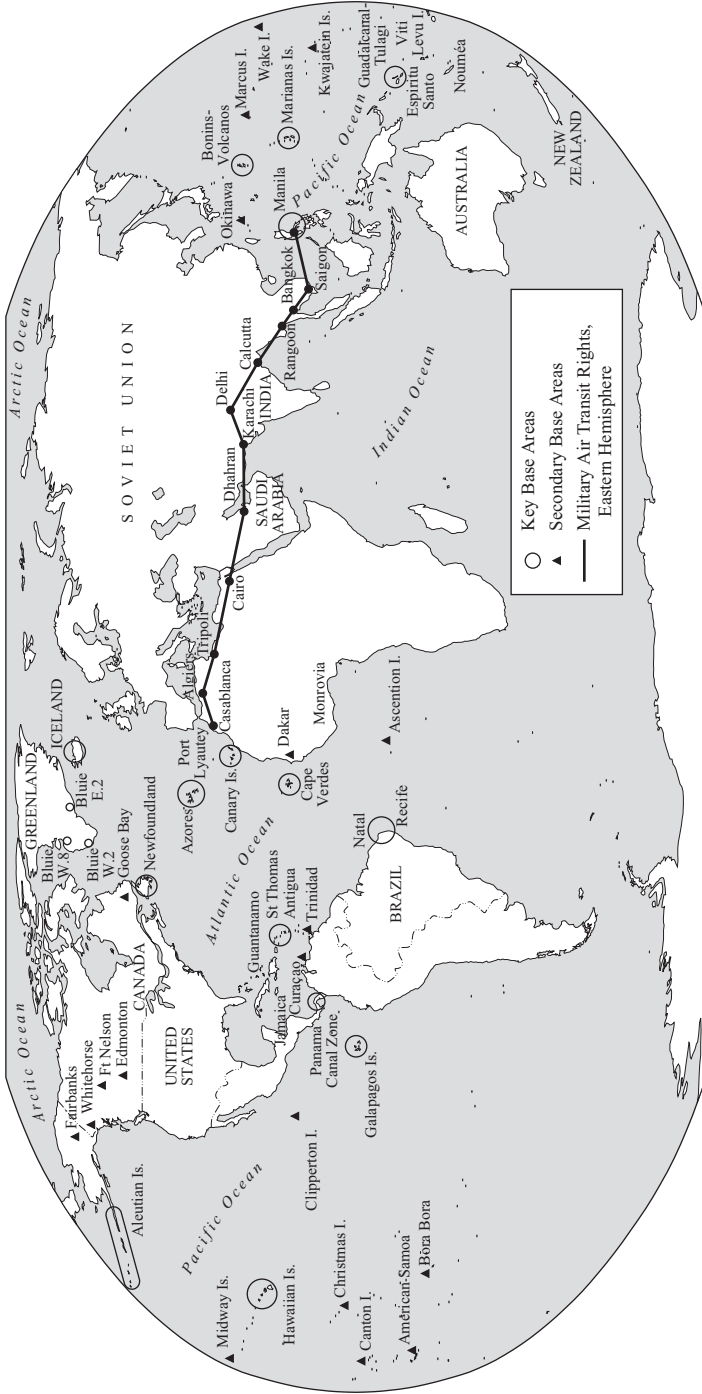
area. The Joint War Plans Committee explained that American bases must control the air in the Arctic, prevent the establishment of enemy military facilities there, and support America's own striking forces. Once Soviet-American relations began to deteriorate, Greenland also was designated as a primary base for American heavy bombers and fighters because of its close proximity to the industrial heartland of the potential enemy.¹⁴

In the immediate postwar years American ambitions for an elaborate base system encountered many problems. Budgetary constraints compelled military planners to drop plans for many secondary and subsidiary bases, particularly in the South Pacific and Caribbean. By early 1948, the joint chiefs were willing to forgo base rights in such places as Surinam and Nouméa if "joint" or "participating" rights could be acquired or preserved in Karachi, Tripoli, Algiers, Casablanca, Dhahran, and Monrovia. Budgetary constraints, then, limited the depth of the base system but not the breadth of American ambitions.¹⁵

Less well known than the American effort to establish a base system, but integral to the policymakers' conception of national security, was the attempt to secure military air transit and landing rights. Military planners wanted such rights at critical locations not only in the western hemisphere but also in North Africa, the Middle East, India, and Southeast Asia. They delineated a route from Casablanca through Algiers, Tripoli, Cairo, Dhahran, Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, and Saigon to Manila.¹⁶ According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, military air transit rights would permit the rapid augmentation of American bases in wartime as well as the rapid movement of American air units from the eastern to the western flank of the US base system.¹⁷

In Latin America, American requirements for effective national security went far beyond air transit rights. In a report written in January 1945 the War Department urged American collaboration with Latin American armed forces to ensure the defense of the Panama Canal and the western hemisphere. Six areas within Latin America were considered of special significance either for strategic reasons or for their raw materials: the Panama Canal and approaches within 1,000 miles; the Straits of Magellan; northeastern Brazil; Mexico; the River Plate estuary and approaches within 500 miles; and Mollendo, Peru-Antofagusta, and Chile. These areas were so "important," Secretary of War Patterson explained to Secretary of State Marshall in early 1947, "that the threat of attack on any of them would force the United States to come to their defense, even though it were not certain that attack on the United States itself would follow." The resources of these areas were essential to the United States, because "it is imperative that our war potential be enhanced . . . during any national emergency."¹⁸

The need to predominate throughout the western hemisphere was not a result of deteriorating Soviet-American relations but a natural evolution of the Monroe Doctrine, accentuated by Axis aggression and new technological imperatives.¹⁹ Patterson, Forrestal, and Army Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower



Map 1 US military base requirements following the Second World War

initially were impelled less by reports of Soviet espionage, propaganda, and infiltration in Latin America than by accounts of British efforts to sell cruisers and aircraft to Chile and Ecuador; Swedish sales of anti-aircraft artillery to Argentina; and French offers to build cruisers and destroyers for both Argentina and Brazil.²⁰ To foreclose all foreign influence and to ensure US strategic hegemony, military officers and the civilian Secretaries of the War and Navy Departments argued for an extensive system of US bases, expansion of commercial airline facilities throughout Latin America, negotiation of a regional defense pact, curtailment of all foreign military aid and foreign military sales, training of Latin American military officers in the United States, outfitting of Latin American armies with US military equipment, and implementation of a comprehensive military assistance program.²¹

Although Truman favored these initiatives to Latin America, not all of them could be implemented. In June 1948, for example, the Inter-American Military Cooperation Act died in the Senate.²² But this signified no diminution in American national security imperatives; indeed, it underscored that US priorities now lay in Eurasia.

From the closing days of the Second World War, American defense officials believed that they could not allow any prospective adversary to control the Eurasian land mass. This was the lesson taught by two world wars. Strategic thinkers and military analysts insisted that any power or powers attempting to dominate Eurasia must be regarded as potentially hostile to the United States.²³ Their acute awareness of the importance of Eurasia made Marshall, Thomas Handy, George A. Lincoln, and other officers wary of the expansion of Soviet influence there. While acknowledging that the increase in Soviet power stemmed primarily from the defeat of Germany and Japan, postwar assessments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized the importance of deterring further Soviet aggrandizement in Eurasia.²⁴ Defense officials hoped to avoid an open rift with the Soviet Union. But at the same time they were determined to prevent the Eurasian land mass from falling under Soviet and Communist influence.

Studies by the Joint Chiefs of Staff stressed that, if Eurasia came under Soviet domination, either through military conquest or political and economic "assimilation," America's only potential adversary would fall heir to enormous natural resources, industrial potential, and manpower. By the autumn of 1945, military planners already were worrying that Soviet control over much of Eastern Europe and its raw materials would abet Russia's economic recovery, enhance its warmaking capacity, and deny important foodstuffs, oil, and minerals to Western Europe. By the early months of 1946, Secretary Patterson and his subordinates in the War Department believed that Soviet control of the Ruhr-Rhineland industrial complex would constitute an extreme threat. Even more dangerous was the prospect of Soviet predominance over the rest of Western Europe, especially France.²⁵ Strategically, this would undermine the impact of any prospective American naval blockade

and would allow Soviet military planners to achieve defense in depth. The latter possibility had enormous military significance, because American war plans relied so heavily on air power and strategic bombing, the efficacy of which might be reduced substantially if the Soviets acquired outlying bases in Western Europe and the Middle East or if they "neutralized" bases in Great Britain.²⁶

Economic considerations also made defense officials determined to retain American access to Eurasia as well as to deny Soviet predominance over it. Stimson, Patterson, McCloy, and Assistant Secretary Howard C. Peterson agreed with Forrestal that long-term American prosperity required open markets, unhindered access to raw materials, and the rehabilitation of much – if not all – of Eurasia along liberal capitalist lines. In late 1944 and 1945, Stimson protested the prospective industrial emasculation of Germany, lest it undermine American economic well-being, set back recovery throughout Europe, and unleash forces of anarchy and revolution. Stimson and his subordinates in the Operations Division of the army also worried that the spread of Soviet power in Northeast Asia would constrain the functioning of the free enterprise system and jeopardize American economic interests. A report prepared by the staff of the Moscow embassy and revised in mid-1946 by Ambassador (and former General) Walter Bedell Smith emphasized that "Soviet power is by nature so jealous that it has already operated to segregate from world economy almost all of the areas in which it has been established." Therefore, Forrestal and the navy sought to contain Soviet influence in the Near East and to retain American access to Middle East oil; Patterson and the War Department focused on preventing famine in occupied areas and resuscitating trade.²⁷ But American economic interests in Eurasia were not limited to Western Europe, Germany, and the Middle East. Military planners and intelligence officers in both the army and navy expressed considerable interest in the raw materials of Southeast Asia, wanted to maintain access to those resources, and sought to deny them to a prospective enemy.²⁸

While civilian officials and military strategists feared the loss of Eurasia, they did not expect the Soviet Union to attempt its military conquest. In the early Cold War years, there was nearly universal agreement that the Soviets, while eager to expand their influence, desired to avoid a military engagement. In October 1945, the Joint Intelligence Staff predicted that the Soviet Union would seek to avoid war for five to ten years. In April 1946, while Soviet troops still remained in Iran, General Lincoln, the army's principal war planner, concurred with Secretary of State Byrnes's view that the Soviets did not want war. In May, when there was deep concern about a possible Communist uprising in France, military intelligence doubted the Kremlin would instigate a coup, lest it ignite a full-scale war. At a high-level meeting at the White House in June, Eisenhower stated that he did not think the Soviets wanted war; only Forrestal dissented. In August, when the Soviet note to Turkey on the Dardanelles provoked consternation in American policy-making circles, General Hoyt Vandenberg, director of central intelligence,

informed President Truman that there were no signs of unusual Soviet troop movements or supply build-ups. In March 1947, while the Truman Doctrine was being discussed in Congress, the director of army intelligence maintained that the factors operating to discourage Soviet aggression continued to be decisive. In September 1947, the CIA concluded that the Soviets would not seek to conquer Western Europe for several reasons: they would recognize their inability to control hostile populations; they would fear triggering a war with the United States that could not be won; and they would prefer to gain hegemony by political and economic means.²⁹

Even the ominous developments during the first half of 1948 did not alter these assessments. Despite his alarmist cable of March 5, designed to galvanize congressional support for increased defense expenditures, General Lucius Clay, the American military governor in Germany, did not believe war imminent. A few days later, the CIA concluded that the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia would not increase Soviet capabilities significantly and reflected no alteration in Soviet tactics. After talking to Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov in June, Ambassador Smith concluded that Soviet leaders would not resort to active hostilities. During the Berlin blockade, army intelligence reported few signs of Soviet preparations for war. In October 1948, the Military Intelligence Division of the army endorsed a British appraisal that "all the evidence available indicates that the Soviet Union is not preparing to go to war in the near future." In December, Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett summed up the longstanding American perspective when he emphasized that he saw "no evidence that Soviet intentions run toward launching a sudden military attack on the western nations at this time. It would not be in character with the tradition or mentality of the Soviet leaders to resort to such a measure unless they felt themselves either politically extremely weak, or militarily extremely strong."³⁰

Although American defense officials recognized that the Soviets had substantial military assets,³¹ they remained confident that the Soviet Union did not feel extremely strong. The Soviets had no long-range strategic air force, no atomic bomb, and meager air defenses. Moreover, the Soviet navy was considered ineffective except for its submarine forces.³² The Joint Logistic Plans Committee and the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department estimated that the Soviet Union would require approximately fifteen years to overcome wartime losses in manpower and industry, ten years to redress the shortage of technicians, five to ten years to develop a strategic air force, fifteen to twenty-five years to construct a modern navy, ten years to refurbish military transport, ten years (or less) to quell resistance in occupied areas, fifteen to twenty years to establish a military infrastructure in the Far East, three to ten years to acquire the atomic bomb, and an unspecified number of years to remove the vulnerability of the Soviet rail-net and petroleum industry to long-range bombing.³³ For several years at least, the Soviet capability for sustained attack against North America would be very limited. In January 1946 the Joint Intelligence Staff concluded that "the offensive

capabilities of the United States are manifestly superior to those of the USSR. And any war between the US and the USSR would be far more costly to the Soviet Union than to the United States."³⁴

Key American officials like Lovett, Clifford, Eisenhower, Bedell Smith, and Budget Director James Webb were cognizant of prevailing Soviet weaknesses and potential American strength. Despite Soviet superiority in manpower, General Eisenhower and Admiral Forrest E. Sherman doubted that Russia could mount a surprise attack, and General Lincoln, Admiral Cato Glover, and Secretaries Patterson and Forrestal believed that Soviet forces would encounter acute logistical problems in trying to overrun Eurasia – especially in the Near East, Spain, and Italy. Even Forrestal doubted reports of accelerating Soviet air capabilities. American experts believed that most Soviet planes were obsolescent, that the Soviets had insufficient airfields and aviation gas to use their new planes, and that these planes had serious problems in their instrumentation and construction.³⁵

In general, improvements in specific areas of the Soviet military establishment did not mean that overall Soviet capabilities were improving at an alarming rate. In July 1947, the Military Intelligence Division concluded, "While there has been a slight overall improvement in the Soviet war potential, Soviet strength for total war is not sufficiently great to make a military attack against the United States anything but a most hazardous gamble." This view prevailed in 1946 and 1947, even though the American nuclear arsenal was extremely small and the American strategic bombing force of limited size. In the spring of 1948 the Joint Intelligence Committee at the American embassy in Moscow explained why the United States ultimately would emerge victorious should a war erupt in the immediate future. The Soviets could not win because of their "inability to carry the war to US territory. After the occupation of Europe, the USSR would be forced to assume the defensive and await attacks by US forces which should succeed primarily because of the ability of the US to outproduce the USSR in materials of war."³⁶

Awareness of Soviet economic shortcomings played a key role in the American interpretation of Soviet capabilities. Intelligence reports predicted that Soviet leaders would invest a disproportionate share of Russian resources in capital goods industries. But, even if such Herculean efforts enjoyed some success, the Soviets still would not reach the pre-Second World War levels of the United States within fifteen to twenty years. Technologically, the Soviets were behind in the critical areas of aircraft manufacturing, electronics, and oil refining. And, despite Russia's concerted attempts to catch up and to surpass the United States, American intelligence experts soon started reporting that Soviet reconstruction was lagging behind Soviet ambitions, especially in the electronics, transportation, aircraft, construction machinery, nonferrous metals, and shipping industries. Accordingly, throughout the years 1945–8 American military analysts and intelligence experts believed that Soviet transportation bottlenecks, industrial shortcomings, technological backwardness, and agricultural problems would discourage military adventurism.³⁷

If American defense officials did not expect a Soviet military attack, why, then, were they so fearful of losing control of Eurasia? The answer rests less in American assessments of Soviet military capabilities and short-term military intentions than in appraisals of economic and political conditions throughout Europe and Asia. Army officials in particular, because of their occupation roles in Germany, Japan, Austria, and Korea, were aware of the postwar plight of these areas. Key military men – Generals Eisenhower, Clay, Douglas MacArthur, John Hilldring, and Oliver P. Echols and Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel – became alarmed by the prospects of famine, disease, anarchy, and revolution. They recognized that Communist parties could exploit the distress and that the Russians could capitalize upon it to spread Soviet influence.³⁸

Civilian officials in the War, Navy, and State Departments shared these concerns. In the autumn of 1945, McCloy warned Patterson that the stakes in Germany were immense and economic recovery had to be expedited. During the first half of 1946 Secretary Patterson and Assistant Secretary Peterson continually pressed the State Department to tackle the problems beleaguering Germany and Western Europe. Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote Truman in April 1946, “We have now reached the most critical period of the world food crisis. We must either immediately greatly increase the exports of grain from the United States or expect general disorder and political upheaval to develop in [most of Eurasia].”³⁹

American defense officials, military analysts, and intelligence officers were extremely sensitive to the political ferment, social turmoil, and economic upheaval throughout postwar Europe and Asia. In their initial postwar studies, the joint Chiefs of Staff carefully noted the multiplicity of problems that could breed conflict and provide opportunities for Soviet expansion. In the spring of 1946 army planners were keenly aware that conflict was most likely to arise from local disputes (for example, between Italy and Yugoslavia) or from indigenous unrest (for example, in France), perhaps even against the will of Moscow. A key War Department document in April 1946 skirted the issue of Soviet military capabilities and argued that the Soviet Union’s strength emanated from totalitarian control over its satellites, from local Communist parties, and from worldwide chaotic political and economic conditions. “The greatest danger to the security of the United States,” the CIA concluded in mid-1947, “is the possibility of economic collapse in Western Europe and the consequent accession to power of Communist elements.”⁴⁰

During 1946 and 1947, defense officials witnessed a dramatic unraveling of the geopolitical foundations and socioeconomic structure of international affairs. Britain’s economic weakness and withdrawal from the eastern Mediterranean, India’s independence movement, civil war in China, nationalist insurgencies in Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, Zionist claims to Palestine and Arab resentment, German and Japanese economic paralysis, Communist inroads in France and Italy – all were ominous developments. Defense officials recognized that the Soviet Union had not created these circumstances but believed that Soviet leaders would exploit them. Should

Communists take power, even without direct Russian intervention, the Soviet Union would gain predominant control of the resources of these areas because of the postulated subservience of Communist parties everywhere to the Kremlin. Should nationalist uprisings persist, Communists seize power in underdeveloped countries, or Arabs revolt against American support of a Jewish state, the petroleum and raw materials of critical areas might be denied the West. The imminent possibility existed that, even without Soviet military aggression, the resources of Eurasia could fall under Russian control. With these resources, the Soviet Union would be able to overcome its chronic economic weaknesses, achieve defense in depth, and challenge American power – perhaps even by military force.⁴¹

In this frightening postwar environment American assessments of Soviet long-term intentions were transformed. Spurred by the “long telegram,” written by George F. Kennan, the US chargé d’affaires in Moscow, it soon became commonplace for policymakers, military officials, and intelligence analysts to state that the ultimate aim of Soviet foreign policy was Russian domination of a Communist world.⁴² There was, of course, plentiful evidence for this appraisal of Soviet ambitions – the Soviet consolidation of a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe; Soviet violation of the agreement to withdraw troops from Iran; Soviet relinquishment of Japanese arms to the Chinese Communists; the Soviet mode of extracting reparations from the Russian zone in Germany; Soviet diplomatic overtures for bases in the Dardanelles, Tripolitania, and the Dodecanese; Soviet requests for a role in the occupation of Japan; and the Kremlin’s renewed emphasis on Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the vulnerability of capitalist economies, and the inevitability of conflict.

Yet these assessments did not seriously grapple with contradictory evidence. They disregarded numerous signs of Soviet weakness, moderation, and circumspection. During 1946 and 1947 intelligence analysts described the withdrawal of Russian troops from northern Norway, Manchuria, Bornholm, and Iran (from the latter under pressure, of course). Numerous intelligence sources reported the reduction of Russian troops in Eastern Europe and the extensive demobilization going on within the Soviet Union. In October 1947 the Joint Intelligence Committee forecast a Soviet army troop strength during 1948 and 1949 of less than 2 million men. Other reports dealt with the inadequacies of Soviet transportation and bridging equipment and the moderation of Soviet military expenditures. And, as already noted, assessments of the Soviet economy revealed persistent problems likely to restrict Soviet adventurism.⁴³

Experience suggested that the Soviet Union was by no means uniformly hostile or unwilling to negotiate with the United States. In April 1946 Ambassador Smith reminded the State Department that the Soviet press was not unalterably critical of the United States, that the Russians had withdrawn from Bornholm, that Stalin had given a moderate speech on the United Nations, and that Soviet demobilization continued apace. The next month

General Lincoln acknowledged that the Soviets had been willing to make numerous concessions regarding Tripolitania, the Dodecanese, and Italian reparations. In the spring of 1946, General Echols, General Clay, and Secretary Patterson again maintained that the French constituted the major impediment to an agreement on united control of Germany. In early 1947 central intelligence delineated more than a half-dozen instances of Soviet moderation or concessions. In April the Military Intelligence Division noted that the Soviets had limited their involvement in the Middle East, diminished their ideological rhetoric, and given only moderate support to Chinese Communists.⁴⁴

In their overall assessments of Soviet long-term intentions, however, military planners dismissed all evidence of Soviet moderation, circumspection, and restraint. In fact, as 1946 progressed, these planners seemed to spend less time analyzing Soviet intentions and more time estimating Soviet capabilities.⁴⁵ They no longer explored ways of accommodating a potential adversary's legitimate strategic requirements or pondered how American initiatives might influence the Soviet Union's definition of its objectives.⁴⁶ Information not confirming prevailing assumptions either was ignored in overall assessments of Soviet intentions or was used to illustrate that the Soviets were shifting tactics but not altering objectives. A report from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the President in July 1946, for example, deleted sections from previous studies that had outlined Soviet weaknesses. A memorandum sent by Secretary Patterson to the President at the same time was designed to answer questions about relations with the Soviet Union "without ambiguity." Truman, Clark Clifford observed many years later, liked things in black and white.⁴⁷

The conjunction of Soviet ideological fervor and socioeconomic turmoil throughout Eurasia contributed to the growth of a myopic view of Soviet long-term policy objectives and to enormous apprehension lest the Soviet Union gain control of all the resources of Eurasia, thereby endangering the national security of the United States. American assessments of Soviet short-term military intentions had not altered; Soviet military capabilities had not significantly increased; and Soviet foreign policy positions had not greatly shifted. But defense officials were acutely aware of America's own rapidly diminishing capabilities, of Britain's declining military strength, of the appeal of Communist doctrine to most of the underdeveloped world, and of the opportunities of Communist parties to exploit prevailing socioeconomic conditions. In this turbulent international arena, the survival of liberal ideals and capitalist institutions was anything but assured. "We could point to the economic benefits of Capitalism," commented one important War Department paper in April 1946, "but these benefits are concentrated rather than widespread, and, at present, are genuinely suspect throughout Europe and in many other parts of the world."⁴⁸

In this environment, there was indeed no room for ambiguity or compromise. Action was imperative – action aimed at safeguarding those areas

of Eurasia not already within the Soviet sphere. Even before Kennan's "long telegram" arrived in Washington the joint chiefs adopted the position that "collaboration with the Soviet Union should stop short not only of compromise of principle but also of expansion of Russian influence in Europe and in the Far East."⁴⁹

During late 1946 and early 1947, the Truman administration assumed the initiative by creating German Bizonia, providing military assistance to Greece and Turkey, allocating massive economic aid to Western Europe, and reassessing economic policy toward Japan. These initiatives were aimed primarily at tackling the internal sources of unrest upon which Communist parties capitalized and at rehabilitating the industrial heartlands of Eurasia. American defense officials supported these actions and acquiesced in the decision to give priority to economic aid rather than rearmament. "In the necessarily delicate apportioning of our available resources," wrote Assistant Secretary of War Peterson, "the time element permits present emphasis on strengthening the economic and social dikes against Soviet communism rather than upon preparing for a possibly eventual, but not yet inevitable, war."⁵⁰

Yet if war should unexpectedly occur, the United States had to have the capability to inflict incalculable damage upon the Soviet Union. Defense officials sought to perpetuate America's nuclear monopoly as long as possible in order to counterbalance Soviet conventional strength, deter Soviet adventurism, and bolster American negotiating leverage. While Truman insisted on limiting military expenditures, the Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to enlarge the atomic arsenal and increase the number of aircraft capable of delivering atomic bombs. After much initial postwar disorganization, the General Advisory Committee to the Atomic Energy Commission reported to the President at the end of 1947 that "great progress" had been made in the atomic program. From June 30, 1947, to June 30, 1948, the number of bombs in the stockpile increased from thirteen to fifty. Although at the time of the Berlin crisis the United States was not prepared to launch a strategic air offensive against the Soviet Union, substantial progress had been made in the development of the nation's air-atomic capabilities. By the end of 1948, the United States had at least eighteen nuclear-capable B-50s, four B-36s, and almost three times as many nuclear-capable B-29s as had been available at the end of 1947.⁵¹

During late 1947 and early 1948, the administration also responded to pleas of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to augment the overseas base system and to acquire bases in closer proximity to the Soviet Union. Negotiations were conducted with the British to gain access to bases in the Middle East and an agreement was concluded for the acquisition of air facilities in Libya. Admiral Conolly made a secret deal with the French to secure air and communication rights and to stockpile oil, aviation gas, and ammunition in North Africa.⁵² Plans also were discussed for post-occupation bases in Japan, and considerable progress was made in refurbishing and constructing airfields in Turkey.⁵³

The joint chiefs and military planners realized that American initiatives placed the Soviet Union on the defensive, magnified tensions, and made war

more likely – though still improbable. In July 1947, intelligence analysts in the War Department maintained that the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan provoked a more aggressive Soviet attitude toward the United States. They also understood that the Soviets would perceive American efforts to build strategic highways, construct airfields, and transfer fighter bombers to Turkey as threats to Soviet security. And defense officials were well aware that the Soviets would react angrily to plans for currency reform in German Trizonia and to preparations for a West German republic. “The whole Berlin crisis,” army planners informed Eisenhower in June 1948, “has arisen as a result of . . . actions on the part of the Western Powers.”⁵⁴

The real consternation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other high-ranking civilian and military officials in the defense agencies stemmed from their growing conviction that the United States was undertaking actions and assuming commitments that now required greater military capabilities. Recognizing that American initiatives, aimed at safeguarding Eurasia from further Communist inroads, might be perceived as endangering Soviet interests, it was all the more important to be ready for any eventuality. Indeed, to the extent that anxieties about the prospects of war escalated in March and April 1948, these fears did not stem from estimates that the Soviets were planning further aggressive action after the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia but from apprehensions that ongoing American initiatives might provoke an attack. On March 14 General S. J. Chamberlin, director of army intelligence, warned the Chief of Staff that “actions taken by this country in opposition to the spread of Communism . . . may decide the question of the outbreak of war and of its timing.” The critical question explicitly faced by the intelligence agencies and by the highest policymakers was whether passage of the Selective Service Act, or of universal military training, or of additional appropriations for the air force, or of a military assistance program to Western European countries, or of a resolution endorsing American support for West European Union would trigger a Soviet attack. Chamberlin judged, for example, that the Soviets would not go to war just to make Europe Communist but would resort to war if they felt threatened. The great imponderable, of course, was what, in the Soviet view, would constitute a security threat justifying war.⁵⁵

The priority accorded to Western Europe did not mean that officials ignored the rest of Eurasia. Indeed, the sustained economic rejuvenation of Western Europe made access to Middle Eastern oil more important than ever. Marshall, Lovett, Forrestal, and other defense officials, including the joint chiefs, feared that American support of Israel might jeopardize relations with Arab nations and drive them into the hands of the Soviet Union. Although Truman accepted the partition of Palestine and recognized Israel, the United States maintained an embargo on arms shipments and sought to avoid too close an identification with the Zionist state lest the flow of oil to the West be jeopardized.⁵⁶ At the same time, the Truman administration moved swiftly in June 1948 to resuscitate the Japanese economy. Integrating Japan and Southeast Asia into

a viable regional economy, invulnerable to Communist subversion and firmly ensconced in the Western community, assumed growing significance, especially in view of the prospect of a Communist triumph in China.⁵⁷

The problem with all of these undertakings, however, was that they cost large sums, expanded the nation's formal and informal commitments, and necessitated larger military capabilities. Truman's Council of Economic Advisors warned that accelerating expenditures might compel the President "to set aside free market practices – and substitute a rather comprehensive set of controls." Truman was appalled by this possibility and carefully limited the sums allocated for a buildup of American forces.⁵⁸ Key advisers, like Webb, Marshall, Lovett, and Clifford, supported this approach because they perceived too much fat in the military budget, expected the Soviets to rely on political tactics rather than military aggression, postulated latent US military superiority over the Soviet Union, and assumed that the atomic bomb constituted a decisive, if perhaps short-term, trump card.⁵⁹

As Secretary of Defense, however, Forrestal was beleaguered by pressures emanating from the armed services for a buildup of American military forces and by his own apprehensions over prospective Soviet actions. He anguished over the excruciatingly difficult choices that had to be made between the imperatives of foreign economic aid, overseas military assistance, domestic rearmament, and fiscal orthodoxy. In May, June, and July 1948, he and his assistants carefully pondered intelligence reports on Soviet intentions and requested a special study on how to plan American defense expenditures in view of prospective Soviet policies. Forrestal clearly hoped that this reassessment would show that a larger proportion of resources should be allocated to the military establishment.⁶⁰

The Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State prepared the initial study that Forrestal requested. Extensively redrafted it reappeared in November 1948 as NSC 20/4 and was adopted as the definitive statement of American foreign policy. This paper reiterated the longstanding estimate that the Soviet Union was not likely to resort to war to achieve its objectives. But war could erupt as a result of "Soviet miscalculation of the determination of the United States to use all the means at its command to safeguard its security, through Soviet misinterpretation of our intentions, and through US miscalculation of Soviet reactions to measures which we might take."⁶¹ Although NSC 20/4 did not call for a larger military budget, it stressed "that Soviet political warfare might seriously weaken the relative position of the United States, enhance Soviet strength and either lead to our ultimate defeat short of war, or force us into war under dangerously unfavorable conditions." Accordingly, the National Security Council vaguely but stridently propounded the importance of reducing Soviet power and influence on the periphery of the Russian homeland and of strengthening the pro-American orientation of non-Soviet nations.⁶²

Language of this sort, which did not define clear priorities and which projected American interests almost everywhere on the globe, exasperated the

joint chiefs and other military officers. They, too, believed that the United States should resist Communist aggression everywhere, "an overall commitment which in itself is all-inclusive." But to undertake this goal in a responsible and effective fashion it was necessary "to bring our military strength to a level commensurate with the distinct possibility of global warfare." The Joint Chiefs of Staff still did not think the Soviets wanted war. But, given the long-term intentions attributed to the Soviet Union and given America's own aims, the chances for war, though still small, were growing. The United States, therefore, had to be prepared to wage a war it did not seek, but which could arise as a result of its own pursuit of national security goals.⁶³

The dynamics of the Cold War after 1948 are easier to comprehend when one grasps the breadth of the American conception of national security that had emerged between 1945 and 1948. This conception included a strategic sphere of influence within the western hemisphere, domination of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, an extensive system of outlying bases to enlarge the strategic frontier and project American power, an even more extensive system of transit rights to facilitate the conversion of commercial air bases to military use, access to the resources and markets of most of Eurasia, denial of those resources to a prospective enemy, and the maintenance of nuclear superiority. Not every one of these ingredients, it must be emphasized, was considered vital. Hence, American officials could acquiesce, however grudgingly, to a Soviet sphere in Eastern Europe and could avoid direct intervention in China. But cumulative challenges to these concepts of national security were certain to provoke a firm American response. Postulating a long-term Soviet intention to gain world domination, the American conception of national security, based on geopolitical and economic imperatives, could not allow for additional losses in Eurasia, could not risk a challenge to its nuclear supremacy, and could not permit any infringement on its ability to defend in depth or to project American force from areas in close proximity to the Soviet homeland.

To say this, is neither to exculpate the Soviet government for its inhumane treatment of its own citizens nor to suggest that Soviet foreign policy was idle or benign. Indeed, Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe was often deplorable; the Soviets sought opportunities in the Dardanelles, northern Iran, and Manchuria; the Soviets hoped to orient Germany and Austria toward the East; and the Soviets sometimes endeavored to use Communist parties to expand Soviet influence in areas beyond the periphery of Russian military power. But, then again, the Soviet Union had lost 20 million dead during the war, had experienced the destruction of 1,700 towns, 31,000 factories, and 100,000 collective farms, and had witnessed the devastation of the rural economy with the Nazi slaughter of 20 million hogs and 17 million head of cattle. What is remarkable is that after 1946 these monumental losses received so little attention when American defense analysts studied the motives and intentions of Soviet policy; indeed, defense officials did little to analyze the threat perceived by the Soviets. Yet these same officials had absolutely no

doubt that the wartime experiences and sacrifices of the United States, though much less devastating than those of Soviet Russia, demonstrated the need for and entitled the United States to oversee the resuscitation of the industrial heartlands of Germany and Japan, establish a viable balance of power in Eurasia, and militarily dominate the Eurasian rimlands, thereby safeguarding American access to raw materials and control over all sea and air approaches to North America.⁶⁴

To suggest a double standard is important only in so far as it raises fundamental questions about the conceptualization and implementation of American national security policy. If Soviet policy was aggressive, bellicose, and ideological, perhaps America's reliance on overseas bases, air power, atomic weapons, military alliances, and the rehabilitation of Germany and Japan was the best course to follow, even if the effect may have been to exacerbate Soviet anxieties and suspicions. But even when one attributes the worst intentions to the Soviet Union, one might still ask whether American presuppositions and apprehensions about the benefits that would accrue to the Soviet Union as a result of Communist (and even revolutionary nationalist) gains anywhere in Eurasia tended to simplify international realities, magnify the breadth of American interests, engender commitments beyond American capabilities, and dissipate the nation's strength and credibility. And, perhaps even more importantly, if Soviet foreign policies tended to be opportunist, reactive, nationalistic, and contradictory, as some recent writers have claimed and as some contemporary analysts suggested, then one might also wonder whether America's own conception of national security tended, perhaps unintentionally, to engender anxieties and to provoke countermeasures from a proud, suspicious, insecure, and cruel government that was at the same time legitimately apprehensive about the long-term implications arising from the rehabilitation of traditional enemies and the development of foreign bases on the periphery of the Soviet homeland. To raise such issues anew seems essential if we are to unravel the complex origins of the Cold War.

Notes

- 1 Henry Kissinger, *For the Record: Selected Statements, 1977–80* (Boston, MA, 1980), 123–4.
- 2 For recent overviews of the origins of the Cold War, which seek to go beyond the heated traditionalist-revisionist controversies of the 1960s and early 1970s, see, for example, John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York, 1972); Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, MA, 1978); Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War* (New York, 1979); and Roy Douglas, *From War to Cold War, 1942–48* (New York, 1981).
- 3 For some of the most important and most recent regional and bilateral studies, see, for example, Bruce Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, NJ, 1980); Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece* (New York, 1982); Aaron Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939–1949* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1980); Timothy Ireland, *Creating the Entangling Alliance: The Origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Westport, CT, 1981); William W. Stueck, Jr, *The Road to*

Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea (Chapel Hill, NC, 1981); Dorothy Borg and Waldo Heinrichs (eds), *Uncertain Years: Chinese-American Relations, 1947–4950* (New York, 1980); Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and the Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945–49* (Ithaca, NY, 1981); Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War; Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–47* (Princeton, NJ, 1982); Geir Lundestad, *America, Scandinavia and the Cold War, 1945–49* (New York, 1980); Kenneth Ray Bain, *March to Zion: United States Foreign Policy and the Founding of Israel* (College Station, TX, 1979); Robert M. Hathaway, *Ambiguous Partnership: Britain and America, 1944–47* (New York, 1981); Eduard Mark, "American Policy toward Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–46: An Alternative Interpretation," *Journal of American History* [hereafter *JAH*], 68 (1981–2): 313–36; Michael Schaller, "Securing the Great Crescent: Occupied Japan and the Origins of Containment in Southeast Asia," *JAH*, 69 (1982–3): 392–414; and Michael J. Hogan, "The Search for a 'Creative Peace': The United States, European Unity, and the Origins of the Marshall Plan," *Diplomatic History*, 6 (Summer 1982): 267–85.

- 4 For recent works on strategy, the national military establishment, and the emergence of the national security bureaucracy, see, for example, Richard Haynes, *The Awesome Power: Harry S. Truman as Commander in Chief* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1973); Alfred D. Sander, "Truman and the National Security Council, 1945–1947," *JAH*, 59 (1972–3): 369–88; Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941–45* (New Haven, CT, 1977); James F. Schnabel, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, Vol. 1: 1945–1947 (Wilmington, DE, 1979); Kenneth W. Condit, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, Vol. 2: 1947–1949 (Wilmington, DE, 1979); Gregg Herken, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb and the Cold War, 1945–1950* (New York, 1980); David Alan Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," *JAH*, 66 (1979–80): 62–87; Harry R. Borowski, *A Hollow Threat: Strategic Air Power and Containment before Korea* (Westport, CT, 1982); Anna K. Nelson, "National Security I: Inventing a Process, 1945–1960," in Hugh Heclo and Lester M. Salamon (eds), *The Illusion of Presidential Government* (Boulder, CO, 1981), 229–45.
- 5 For the records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, see Record Group 218, National Archives, Washington [hereafter RG 218]; for the records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, see Record Group 330, National Archives, Washington [hereafter RG 330]; and, for the records of the National Security Council, see Record Group 273, Judicial, Fiscal, and Social Branch, National Archives, Washington. There are important National Security Council materials in the Harry S. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO [hereafter HTL, HSTP, PSF], boxes 191–208. For assessments by the CIA, including those prepared for meetings of the National Security Council (NSC), especially see *ibid.*, boxes 249–60, 203–7. For a helpful guide to War and Army Department records in the National Archives, see Louis Galambos (ed.), *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 9 vols (Baltimore, MD, 1970–8), Vol. 9: 2262–70. Of greatest utility in studying the views of civilian and military planners in the War and Army Departments are Record Group 165, Records of the Operations Division [OPD], and Records of American-British Conversations [ABC]; Record Group 319, Records of the Plans and Operations Division [P&O]; Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Robert P. Patterson Papers [RPPP], safe file and general decimal file, and Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, Howard C. Peterson Papers [HCPP], classified decimal file; and Record Group 335, Records of the Under-Secretary of the Army, Draper; Voorhees files, 1947–50. The records of the navy's Strategic Plans Division [SPD] and the Politico-Military Division [PMD] are divided into many sub-series; helpful indexes are available at the Naval Historical Center [NHC]. The center also contains, among many other collections, the records of the

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations [CNO], double zero files, as well as the manuscript collections of many influential naval officers, including Chester Nimitz, Forrest Sherman, Louis Denfeld, and Arthur Radford. For air force records, I tried – with only moderate success – to use the following materials at the National Archives: Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Plans, Policies, and Agreements, 1943–7; Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Establishments of Air Fields and Air Bases, 1940–5; and Incoming and Outgoing Cablegrams, 1942–7; and Record Group 18, Records of the Office of the Chief of Air Staff, Headquarters Army Air Forces: Office of the Air Adjutant General, confidential and secret decimal correspondence file, 1945–8. For the records of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee [SWNCC] and its successor, the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee, see Record Group 353, National Archives, Washington, and, for the important records of the Committee of Three (meetings of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy), see Record Group 107, RPPP, safe file.

- 6 I use the term “defense officials” broadly in this essay to include civilian appointees and military officers in the departments of the army, navy, and air force, in the office of the Secretary of Defense, in the armed services, in the intelligence agencies, and on the staff of the National Security Council. While I purposefully avoided a systematic analysis of career diplomats in the Department of State, who have received much attention elsewhere, the conclusions I draw here are based on a consideration of the views of high-ranking officials in the State Department, including James F. Byrnes, Dean Acheson, George C. Marshall, and Robert Lovett.
- 7 Any assessment of postwar national security policy must also take note of the role of the atomic bomb in US strategy and diplomacy. But, since nuclear weapons have received extensive attention elsewhere, I deal with this issue rather briefly. For excellent work on the atomic bomb, see, for example, Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York; 1973); Barton J. Bernstein, “The Quest for Security: American Foreign Policy and International Control of Atomic Energy, 1942–1946,” *JAH*, 60 (1973–4): 1003–44; Herken, *The Winning Weapon*; Rosenberg, “American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision”; Richard C. Hewlett and Francis Duncan, *Atomic Shield: A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, 1947–52* (University Park, PA, 1969); Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York, 1965).
- 8 Plans for America’s overseas base system may be found in RG 218, Combined Chiefs of Staff [CCS] series 360 (12–9–42); Joint Strategic Survey Committee [hereafter JSSC], “Air Routes across the Pacific and Air Facilities for International Police Force,” March 15, 1943, JSSC 9/1; Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], “United States Military Requirements for Air Bases, Facilities, and Operating Rights in Foreign Territories,” November 2, 1943, JCS 570/2; Joint War Plans Committee [hereafter JWPC], “Overall Examination of the United States Requirements for Military Bases,” August 25, 1943, JWPC 361/4; and JWPC, “Overall Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases,” September 13, 1945, JWPC 361/5 (revised). For Roosevelt’s endorsement, see Roosevelt to the Department of State, January 7, 1944, *ibid.*, JWPC 361/5.
- 9 JCS, “Strategic Areas and Trusteeships in the Pacific,” October 10, 18, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12–9–42), JCS 1619/15, 19; JCS, “United States Military Requirements for Air Bases,” November 2, 1943; JCS, “Overall Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases and Base Rights,” October 25, 1945, *ibid.*, JCS 570/40.
- 10 JCS, “United States Military Requirements for Air Bases,” November 2, 1943; JCS, Minutes of the 71st meeting, March 30, 1943, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12–9–42); and Joint Planning Staff [hereafter JPS], “Basis for the Formulation of a Post-War Military Policy,” August 20, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 (5–13–45), JPS 633/6.
- 11 JCS, “Statement of Effect of Atomic Weapons on National Security and Military Organization,” March 29, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 471.6 Atom (8–17–45), JCS 477/10.

- 12 For the emphasis on “timely” action, see JWPC, “Overall Examination of Requirements for Military Bases” (revised), September 13, 1945; for the need for advance bases, see JCS, “Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces,” September 19, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 (5–13–45), JCS 1518. Also see, for the evolution of strategic war plans, many of the materials in RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3–2–46).
- 13 For the discussions and conclusions of civilian officials, see William Leahy to Patterson and Forrestal, October 9, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret); Patterson to the Secretary of Navy, October 17, 1945, *ibid.*; and Forrestal to Byrnes, October 4, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12–9–42). For Forrestal’s views, also see Forrestal to James K. Vardaman, September 14, 1945, Mudd Library, Princeton University, James Forrestal Papers [hereafter ML, JFP], box 100.
- 14 For the utility of Iceland and Greenland as bases, see JWPC, “Attributes of United States Overseas Bases,” November 2, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12–9–42), JWPC 361/10; NSC, “Report by the NSC on Base Rights in Greenland, Iceland, and the Azores,” November 25, 1947, *ibid.*, NSC 2/1. For the dilemma posed by prospective Soviet demands for similar base rights at Spitzbergen, see, for example, JCS, “Foreign Policy of the United States,” February 10, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 US (12–21–45), JCS 1519/2; Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter *FRUS*], 1947, 8 vols (Washington, DC, 1971–3), Vol. 1: 708–12, 766–70, and Vol. 3: 657–87, 1003–18; and Lundestad, *America, Scandinavia, and the Cold War*, 63–76.
- 15 See, for example, Report of the Director, Joint Staff, March 18, 1948, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12–9–42), Joint Strategic Plans Group [hereafter JSPG] 503/1. For the special emphasis on North African bases, see, for example, Forrestal to Truman, January 6, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 156. And, for further evidence regarding plans for the development of the base system in 1947–8, see notes 52–3, below.
- 16 JCS, “Over-All Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases and Rights,” September 27, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12–9–42), JCS 570/34; JPS, “Over-All Examination of Requirements for Transit Air Bases in Foreign Countries,” January 8, 1946, *ibid.*, JPS 781.
- 17 JPS, “Over-All Examination of Requirements for Transit Air Bases,” January 20, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (10–9–42), JPS 781/1; and McCloy, Memorandum to the Department of State, January 31, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret).
- 18 P&O, “The Strategic Importance of Inter-American Military Cooperation” [January 20, 1947], RG 319, 092 (top secret). Also see H. A. Craig, “Summary,” January 5, 1945, RG 107, Records of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Establishment of Air Fields and Air Bases, box 216 (Latin America); and War Department, “Comprehensive Statement” [January 1945], *ibid.*
- 19 This evaluation accords with the views of Chester J. Pach, Jr; see his “The Containment of United States Military Aid to Latin America, 1944–1949,” *Diplomatic History*, 6 (1982): 232–4.
- 20 For fears of foreign influence, see, for example, [no signature] “Military Political Cooperation with the Other American Republics,” June 24, 1946, RG 18, 092 (International Affairs), box 567; Patterson to the Secretary of State, July 31, 1946, RG 353, SWNCC, box 76; Eisenhower to Patterson, November 26, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, general decimal file, box 1 (top secret); S. J. Chamberlin to Eisenhower, November 26, 1946, *ibid.*; Minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, December 11, 1946, *ibid.*, RPPP, safe file, box 3; and Director of Intelligence to Director of P&O, February 26, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 091 France. For reports on Soviet espionage, see, for example, Military Intelligence Service [hereafter MIS], “Soviet-Communist Penetration in Latin America,” March 24, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret).
- 21 See, for example, Craig, “Summary,” January 5, 1945; JPS, “Military Arrangements Deriving from the Act of Chapultepec Pertaining to Bases,” January 14, 1946, RG 218,

- ser. CCS 092 (9–10–45), JPS 761/3; Patterson to Byrnes, December 18, 1946; and P&O, "Strategic Importance of Inter-American Military Cooperation" [January 20, 1947].
- 22 Pach, "Military Aid to Latin America," 235–43.
- 23 This view was most explicitly presented in an army paper examining the State Department's expostulation of US foreign policy. See S. F. Giffin, "Draft of Proposed Comments for the Assistant Secretary of War on 'Foreign Policy'" [early February 1946], RG 107, HCPP 092 international affairs (classified). The extent to which this concern with Eurasia shaped American military attitudes is illustrated at greater length below. Here I should note that in March 1945 several of the nation's most prominent civilian experts (Frederick S. Dunn, Edward M. Earle, William T. R. Fox, Grayson L. Kirk, David N. Rowe, Harold Sprout, and Arnold Wolfers) prepared a study, "A Security Policy for Postwar America," in which they argued that the United States had to prevent any one power or coalition of powers from gaining control of Eurasia. America could not, they insisted, withstand attack by any power that had first subdued the whole of Europe or of Eurasia; see Frederick S. Dunn *et al.*, "A Security Policy for Postwar America," NHC, SPD, ser. 14, box 194, A1–2. The postwar concept of Eurasia developed out of the revival of geopolitical thinking in the United States, stimulated by Axis aggression and strategic decisionmaking. See, for example, the reissued work of Sir Halford F. Mackinder: *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919; reprint edn, New York, 1942), and "The Round World and the Winning of Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, 21 (1943): 598–605. Mackinder's ideas were modified and widely disseminated in the United States, especially by intellectuals such as Nicholas John Spykman, Hans W. Weigert, Robert Strausz-Hupé, and Isaiah Bowman.
- 24 For views of influential generals and army planners, see OPD, Memorandum, June 4, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret). Also see the plethora of documents from May and June 1945, US Military Academy, West Point, New York [hereafter USMA], George A. Lincoln Papers [hereafter GLP], War Department files. For the JCS studies, see, for example, JPS, "Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces," September 14, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 (5–13–45), JPS 744/3; and JCS, "United States Military Policy," September 17, 1945, *ibid.*, JCS 149/2.
- 25 Joint Logistic Plans Committee [hereafter JLPC], "Russian Capabilities," November 15, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45), JLPC 35/9/RD: Military Intelligence Division [hereafter MID], "Intelligence Estimate of the World Situation and Its Military Implications," June 25, 1946, RG 319, P&O 350.05 (top secret); Joint Intelligence Committee [hereafter JIC], "Intelligence Estimate Assuming that War between the Soviet Union and the Non-Soviet Powers Breaks Out in 1956," November 6, 1946, RC 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45), JIC 374/1; and JIC, "Capabilities and Military Potential of Soviet and Non-Soviet Powers in 1946," January 8, 1947, *ibid.*, JIC 374/2. For concern with the Ruhr-Rhineland industrial complex, especially see Patterson to the Secretary of State, June 10, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified); and, for the concern with Western Europe, especially France, see, for example, JCS, "United States Assistance to Other Countries from the Standpoint of National Security," April 29, 1947, in *FRUS*, 1947, Vol. 1: 734–50, esp. 739–42.
- 26 See, for example, JIS, "Military Capabilities of Great Britain and France," November 13, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 000.1 Great Britain (5–10–45), JIS 211/1; JIS, "Areas Vital to Soviet War Effort," February 12, 1946, *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 (3–27–45), JIS 226/2.
- 27 Moscow embassy staff, "Russia's International Position at the Close of the War with Germany," enclosed in Smith to Eisenhower, July 12, 1946, Dwight David Eisenhower Library [hereafter DDEL], Dwight David Eisenhower Papers, file 1652, box 101. Also see, for example, Stimson to Roosevelt, September 15, 1944, ML, JFP, box 100; Stimson to Truman, May 16, 1945, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 157; numerous memoranda, June 1945, USMA, GLP, War Dept files; numerous documents, 1946 and 1947, RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified); and Rearmament Subcommittee, Report to the Special Ad Hoc Committee, July 10, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 400.336 (3–20–47). For

- Forrestal's concern with Middle Eastern oil, see, for example, "Notes in Connection with Navy's 'Line' on Foreign Oil" [late 1944 or early 1945], ML, JFP, box 22; Walter Millis (ed.), *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, 1951), 272, 356–8.
- 28 Strategy Section, OPD, "Post-War Base Requirements in the Philippines," April 23, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret); MID, "Positive US Action Required to Restore Normal Conditions in Southeast Asia," July 3, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); and Lauris Norstad to the Director of Intelligence, July 10, 1947, *ibid.*
 - 29 JIS, "Russian Military Capabilities," October 25, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45), JIS 80/10; Lincoln to M. B. Gardner and F. F. Everest, April 10, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 336 Russia (8–22–43); O. S. P., Memorandum for Hull, May 3, 1946, *ibid.*, ser. ABC 381 (9–1–45); S. W. D., Memorandum for the Record, June 12, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President, August 24, 1946, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; Chamberlin, "Reevaluation of Soviet Intentions," March 27, 1947, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Russia (top secret); CIA, "Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States," September 26, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 203.
 - 30 MID; "Intelligence Division Daily Briefing," October 18, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); Lovett to John L. Sullivan, December 20, 1948, NHC, double zero files, 1948, box 2. Also see Jean Edward Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany, 1945–1949*, 2 vols (Bloomington, IN, 1974), Vol. 2: 564–5, 568–9, 602; CIA, "Review of the World Situation," March 10, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 203; R. H. Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, March 16, 1948, *ibid.*, box 249; Chamberlin, Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, March 14, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); Smith to Kennan, June 11, 1948, ML, George F. Kennan Papers [hereafter GFKP], box 28; and Carter Clarke to the Chief of Staff, August 6, 1948, RG 330, CD 2–2–2, box 4.
 - 31 The war plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff outline the extensive ground capabilities of Soviet forces. See especially the documents in RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3–2–46).
 - 32 See, for example, JIS, "Estimate of Soviet Postwar Military Capabilities and Intentions," November 8, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45), JIS 80/14; JWPC, "Military Position of the United States in Light of Russian Policy," January 8, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45), JWPC 416/1; and Inglis, Memorandum of Information, January 21, 1946, ML, JFP, box 24.
 - 33 JLPS, "Russian Capabilities," November 15, 1945; and MID, "Intelligence Estimate of the World Situation for the Next Five Years," August 21, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret).
 - 34 JIS, "Soviet Post-War Military Policies and Capabilities," January 15, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45), JIS 80/24; P&O "Estimate of the Situation Pertaining to the Northeast Approaches to the United States," August 12, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 381 (top secret).
 - 35 For the views of Eisenhower and Sherman, see S. W. D., Memorandum for the Record, June 12, 1946; Galambos, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Vol. 7: 1012–13, 1106–7; Sherman, "Presentation to the President," January 14, 1947, NHC, Forrest E. Sherman Papers, box 2; for the views of Lincoln, Glover, Patterson, Forrestal, and others on Soviet logistical problems, see JPS, Minutes of the 249th meeting, May 22, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3–2–46); Glover to Lincoln and Kissner, June 24, 1947, NHC, SPD, ser. 4, box 86; Louis Denfeld, Memorandum, March 29, 1948, *ibid.*, central files, 1948, A16–3 (5); and Millis, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 272. For assessments of Soviet air power, see, for example, Office of Naval Intelligence [hereafter ONI], "A Study of B-29 Airfields with a Capacity in Excess of 120,000 Pounds" [Spring 1948], NHC, General Board 425 (ser. 315); General Board, "National Security and Navy," Enclosure B, June 25, 1945, *ibid.*, page 16; Forrestal and Clarence Cannon, Excerpt of Conversation, April 9, 1948, ML, JFP, box 48; Inglis to Op-30, December 1, 1948, NHC, SPD, central files, 1948, A8; and Robert Lovett, Diary Entry, December 16, 1947, New York Historical Society, Robert Lovett MS Diaries. For an assessment of

- Soviet conventional strength, see Matthew A. Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised," *International Security*, 7 (1982-3): 110-38.
- 36 MID, "Estimate of the Possibility of War between the United States and the USSR Today from a Comparison with the Situation as It Existed in September 1946," July 21, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); and JIC, Moscow Embassy, "Soviet Intentions," April 1, 1948.
- 37 For assessments of the interrelationships between the state of the Soviet economy and Soviet military capabilities, see, for example, JIS, "Postwar Economic Policies and Capabilities of the USSR," November 1, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/12; JIS, "Soviet Postwar Economic Capabilities and Policies," January 8, 1946, *ibid.*, JIS 80/22; W. B. Shockley, "Relative Technological Achievements in Weapons Characteristics in USSR and USA," January 30, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 6; MID, "Ability of Potential Enemies to Attack the United States," August 8, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 381 (top secret); US Military Attaché (Moscow) to Chamberlin, March 21, 1947, NHC, Operations Division, ser. 2 (secret and under), box 33, EF 61; JIC, "Soviet Military Objectives and Capabilities," October 27, 1947.
- 38 For MacArthur's view, see J. W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Cambridge, MA, 1979), 292-303; for the situation in Germany, see materials in RG 165, ser. ABC 387 Germany (12-18-43), sects 4D, 4E; Smith, *Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, Vol. 1: 165-6, 184, 187-9, 196-8, 201-2, 207-8, 217; for Eisenhower's concern, see Galambos, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Vol. 8: 1516-20.
- 39 Acheson to Truman, April 30, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, general subject file, box 1. Also see McCloy to Patterson, November 24, 1945, *ibid.*, RPPP, safe file, box 4. For pressure on the State Department, see Patterson to Byrnes, December 10, 1945, RG 165, Civil Affairs Division [hereafter CAD], ser. 014 Germany; Patterson to Byrnes, February 25, 1946.
- 40 CIA, "Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States," September 26, 1947. Also see, for example, JCS, "Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces," Appendix A, September 19, 1945; JPS, Minutes of the 249th and 250th meetings; [Giffin (?)] "US Policy with Respect to Russia" [early April 1946], RG 165, ser. ABC 336 (8-22-43); MID, "World Political Developments Affecting the Security of the United States during the Next Ten Years," April 14, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret).
- 41 See, for example, JCS, "Presidential Request for Certain Facts and Information Regarding the Soviet Union," July 25, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JCS 1696; P&O, "Strategic Study of Western and Northern Europe," May 21, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); and Wooldridge to the General Board, April 30, 1948.
- 42 For Kennan's "long telegram," see *FRUS*, 1946 (Washington, DC, 1970), Vol. 4: 696-709; for ominous interpretations of Soviet intentions and capabilities, also see JCS, "Political Estimate of Soviet Policy for Use in Connection with Military Studies," April 5, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JCS 1641/4; and JCS, "Presidential Request for Certain Facts and Information Regarding the Soviet Union," July 25, 1946.
- 43 For the withdrawal of Soviet troops, see, for example, MID, "Soviet Intentions and Capabilities in Scandinavia as of 1 July 1946," April 25, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret). For reports on reductions of Russian troops in Eastern Europe and demobilization within the Soviet Union, see MID, "Review of Europe, Russia, and the Middle East," December 26, 1945, RG 165, OPD, 350.05 (top secret); Carl Espe, weekly calculations of Soviet troops, May-September 1946, NHC, SPD, ser. 5, box 106, A8; and JIC, "Soviet Military Objectives and Capabilities," October 27, 1947. For references to Soviet military expenditures, see Patterson to Julius Adler, November 2, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 5; and for the Soviet transport system, see R. F. Ennis, Memorandum for the P&O Division, June 24, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 336 (8-22-43); Op-32 to the General Board, April 28, 1948, NHC, General Board 425 (ser. 315).

- 44 Smith to the Secretary of State, April 11, 1946, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Russia; and, for Soviet negotiating concessions, see Lincoln, Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, May 20, 1946, USMA, GLP, War Dept/files. For the situation in Germany, see OPD and CAD, "Analysis of Certain Political Problems Confronting Military Occupation Authorities in Germany," April 10, 1946, RG 107, HCPP 091 Germany (classified); Patterson to Truman, June 11, 1946, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Germany. For Clay's references to French obstructionism, see, for example, Smith, *Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, Vol. 1: 84-5,88-9, 151-2, 189-90, 212-17, 235-6. For overall intelligence assessments, see Central Intelligence Group [hereafter CIG], "Revised Soviet Tactics in International Affairs," January 6, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 254; MID, "World Political Developments Affecting the Security of the United States during the Next Ten Years," April 14, 1947.
- 45 My assessment is based primarily on my analysis of the materials in RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45); ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46); RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); and NHC, SPD, central files, 1946-8, A8.
- 46 During 1946 it became a fundamental tenet of American policymakers that Soviet policy objectives were a function of developments within the Soviet Union and not related to American actions. See, for example, Kennan's "long telegram," in *FRUS*, 1946, Vol. 4: 696-709; JCS, "Political Estimate of Soviet Policy," April 5, 1946.
- 47 Norstad, Memorandum, July 25, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret). For references to shifting tactics and constant objectives, see Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President, September 27, 1946, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; CIG, "Revised Soviet Tactics," January 6, 1947; and, for the JCS report to the President, compare JCS 1696 with JIC 250/12. Both studies may be found in RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45). For Clifford's recollection, Clark Clifford, HTL, oral history, 170.
- 48 [Giffin (?)] "US Policy with Respect to Russia" [early April 1946]. Also see MID, "Intelligence Estimate," June 25, 1946; JPS, "Estimate of Probable Developments in the World Political Situation," October 31, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 (10-9-46), JPS 814/1; MID, "World Political Developments," April 14, 1947; and CIA, "Review of the World Situation," September 26, 1947.
- 49 JCS, "Foreign Policy of the United States," February 10, 1946.
- 50 Peterson, as quoted in Chief of Staff, Memorandum (July 1947), RG 165, ser. ABC 471.6 Atom (8-17-45). Also see, for example, Lovett diaries, December 16, 1947, January 5, 15, 1948; Forrestal to Baruch, February 10, 1948, ML, JFP, box 78.
- 51 For the views of the General Advisory Committee, see Robert Oppenheimer to Truman, December 31, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 200; for the views of the JCS, see, for example, JCS, "Guidance on Military Aspects of United States Policy, to Be Adopted in Event of Continuing Impasse in Acceptance of International Control of Atomic Energy," July 14, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 471.6 Atom (8-17-45), JCS1764/1; and, for the size and quality of the stockpile and the number of nuclear-capable aircraft, see especially David Alan Rosenberg, "US Nuclear Stockpile, 1945 to 1950," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 38 (1982): 25-30. Both Borowski and Rosenberg have stressed the problems beleaguering the Strategic Air Command until the Korean War, but their work also illustrates the significant changes and improvements that began to occur late in 1947 and especially during 1948. See Borowski, *Hollow Threat*; David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," *International Security*, 7 (Spring 1983): 11-27.
- 52 For negotiations with the British over Middle East strategy and bases, see *FRUS*, 1947 (Washington, DC, 1971), Vol. 5: 485-626; for facilities in Libya, see, for example, Leahy to the Secretary of Defense, March 18, 1948, RG 319, P&O 092 (top secret); and *FRUS*, 1948 (Washington, DC, 1974), Vol. 3: 906-7; for negotiations with the French, see Spaatz to Symington [October 1947], RC 107, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, 1947, 090, box 187B; Symington to Spaatz, October 30, 1947, *ibid.*, and Wooldridge, Memorandum for Op-09, October 25, 1948, NHC, SPD, central files, 1948,

- A14. For bases in North Africa, see Forrestal to Truman, January 6, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 156.
- 53 For references to Japanese bases, see, for example, "Discussion of Need of Obtaining Long-Term Rights for a US Naval Operating Base in Japan" (approved by Nimitz) [Autumn 1947], NHC, SPD, ser. 4, box 86; Denfeld, Memorandum for Schuyler, February 20, 1948, *ibid.*; central files, 1948, box 245, EF37; for the uses of military assistance to Turkey, see Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945–1952," *JAH*, 71 (1984–5): 814–19.
- 54 "National Military Establishment Views on Germany" [appended to memorandum for Maddocks], June 30, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret). For the repercussions of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, see Chamberlin to Chief of Staff, July 9, 1947, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Greece; and Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, November 7, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; and, for a similar view in the State Department, see *FRUS*, 1947, Vol. 1: 770–5. For prospective Soviet reactions to American assistance to Turkey, also see General Board, "National Security and the Navy," enclosure D, June 25, 1948; and Conolly to CNO, December 4, 1947, NHC, Operations Division, ser. 1, A4/FF7. For assessments of Soviet reactions to Western initiatives in Germany, also see Hillenkoetter, Memoranda for the President, March 16, 1948, and June 9, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249.
- 55 For Chamberlin's views, see, for example, Chamberlin, Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, March 14, 1948, and Chamberlin, Memorandum for Wedemeyer, April 14, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret). For the view from Moscow, see JIC, "Soviet Intentions," April 1, 1948 (extracts of this report are printed in *FRUS*, 1948 (Washington, DC, 1976), Vol. 1: 550–7); also see, for example, Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, March 16, 1948; Inglis, Memorandum of Information, March 16, 1948; CIA, "Possibility of Direct Soviet Military Action during 1948," April 2, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 255.
- 56 See, for example, *FRUS*, 1948, (Washington, DC, 1975), Vol. 5: 545–54, 972–6, 1005–7, 1021–2, 1380–1; Leahy, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, October 10, 1947, RG 330, box 20, CD 6–1–8; Millis, *Forrestal Diaries*, 344–9, 356–65, 376–7; Bain, *March to Zion*, 137–213; and Miller, *Search for Security*, 175–203.
- 57 For the rehabilitation of Japan, see Special Ad Hoc Committee [of SWNCC], Country Report on Japan, August 8, 1947, RG 353, box 109; Royall, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, May 18, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 182; and CIA, "Strategic Importance of Japan," May 24, 1948, *ibid.*, box 255. Also see *FRUS*, 1948 (Washington, DC, 1974), Vol. 6: 654–6, 694–5, 712–17, 733–4, 750–1, 964–5. For Japan and Southeast Asia, see Ad Hoc Committee, "Study of a United States Aid Program for the Far East," February 16, 1949, RG 319, P&O, 092 Pacific (top secret); and Schaller, "Securing the Great Crescent," 392–414.
- 58 Edwin G. Nourse, Leon Keyserling, and Clark to Truman, March 24, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 143; Truman to Nourse, March 25, 1948, *ibid.*; Statement by the President to the Secretary of Defense, the Secretaries of the Three Departments, and the Three Chiefs of Staff, May 13, 1948, *ibid.*, box 146; and Truman to Forrestal, July 13, 1948, RG 330, box 18, CD 5–1–20.
- 59 For the views of Lovett and Webb, see Lovett diaries, December 16, 1947, January 15, 1948, April 21, 1948; for Clifford's view of the importance of the atomic bomb, see Clifford, oral history, 88; and, for Marshall's reliance on the atomic bomb, see McNarney, Memorandum for the JCS, November 2, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 114.
- 60 For the conflicting pressures on Forrestal and his own uncertainties, see, for example, Excerpt of Phone Conversation between Forrestal and C. E. Wilson, April 2, 1948, ML, JFP, box 48; Forrestal to Ralph Bard, November 20, 1948, *ibid.*, box 78; for Forrestal's intense interest in the assessments of Soviet intentions, see Forrestal to Charles A. Buchanan [July 1948], RG 330, box 4, CD 2–2–2; for Forrestal's request

for a comprehensive study of American policy and Truman's responses, see *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 1: 589–93.

- 61 NCS 20/1 and 20/4 may be found in Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Security, 1945–1950* (New York, 1978), 173–211 (the quotations appear on p. 208).
- 62 Etzold and Gaddis, *Containment*, 209–10.
- 63 NSC 35, "Existing International Commitments Involving the Possible Use of Armed Forces," November 17, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 1: 656–62. For assessments of Soviet intentions and the prospects of war, see CIA, "Possibility of Direct Soviet Military Action during 1948–49," September 16, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 255; CIA, "Threats to the Security of the United States," September 28, 1948, *ibid.*, box 256; and *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 1: 648–50, and Vol. 5: 942–7.
- 64 For Soviet losses, see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (3rd edn, New York, 1977), 584–5. While Russian dead totaled almost 20 million and while approximately 25 percent of the reproducible wealth of the Soviet Union was destroyed, American battlefield casualties were 300,000 dead, the index of industrial production in the United States rose from 100 to 196, and the gross national product increased from \$91 billion to \$166 billion. See Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War* (New York, 1968), 264–5.

2

STALIN AND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Geoffrey Roberts

When Leffler wrote his analysis of US national security policy, there were virtually no Soviet archival materials available. Whether his account of US initiatives and Soviet threat perception would withstand scrutiny would depend greatly on what scholars would find when they examined Soviet sources.

*Since the early 1990s, historians have been working in Soviet archives. Their access often has been limited, occasioning many criticisms. But their accounts nonetheless have greatly enriched the literature on the Cold War. They have reignited older controversies and catalyzed new debates. In a major book summing up the first years of archival research, John Lewis Gaddis claimed that the new evidence lent credibility to the most traditional interpretation of postwar history. The Cold War, Gaddis insisted, was Stalin's project, resulting from his paranoid personality, his revolutionary zeal, and his ideological fervor.**

Many scholars were less certain of the meaning of the new evidence. They agreed with Gaddis that the new documents demonstrated Stalin's importance. Earlier notions that Stalin may have been ill, engulfed by intrigues in the Kremlin, and forced to accommodate potential adversaries were clearly incorrect. Stalin was in control. He dominated every aspect of policy and cruelly manipulated and managed even his closest colleagues. But beyond agreeing on Stalin's overarching importance, scholars often disagreed on his motives and goals. Some historians placed a tremendous emphasis on the ideological foundations of Stalin's foreign policies; others stressed the importance of geopolitics; still others focused on the exigencies of postwar domestic economic reconstruction and stabilization. What precisely drove Stalin seemed uncertain. And the uncertainty seemed likely to last, especially as scholars often had no access or extremely limited access to Stalin's own papers in the presidential archives.

In this context, several analysts of Soviet foreign policy began observing that Stalin's public statements often resembled what scholars were discovering in the official and confidential records of the party and foreign ministry archives. 'Perhaps the greatest surprise so far to have come out of the Russian archives,' wrote Vojtech

* John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 29–31, 290–293.

Mastny in 1996, 'is that there was no surprise: the thinking of the insiders conformed substantially to what Moscow was saying publicly.'^{*}

In the article that follows, Geoffrey Roberts, a professor of modern history at University College Cork, in Ireland, agrees with Mastny. But he notes another irony: although public and private utterances often resembled one another, their meaning remains opaque. Roberts previously wrote extensively on Soviet relations with Nazi Germany and with the Western democracies on the eve of the Second World War. He sees continuities in Soviet foreign policy before and after the Second World War, but the continuities are fraught with ambiguities.

In this article, Roberts shows how Stalin's thinking, rhetoric, and policy evolved during the war and its immediate aftermath. Competing impulses struggled for primacy. Stalin wanted to cooperate with the United States and United Kingdom, but he also distrusted his wartime allies. Stalin wanted security, but his fears were rooted in his ideological presuppositions as well as his country's historical experience. The fear of a revived Germany loomed large. But strategies for containing Germany wavered. Could he rely on the collaboration of the United States and Great Britain, the democratic faction of capitalists with whom he had waged war, or must he guard against them? His answers varied as he went through phases, trying to discern Allied intentions even while struggling to define his own policies.

Roberts' brief but suggestive article raises many intriguing questions of a methodological and substantive nature. For the researcher, what are the relative merits of public speeches and private memoranda, and what are the interrelationships between rhetorical pronouncements and private decision-making? How do we sort out the geopolitical and ideological components of Soviet policy? Can we write historical analyses that capture the contingency of policy, if, in fact, even leaders as powerful as Stalin possessed conflicting strategies and multiple options, responding as much to external stimuli and to assessments of potential allies and adversaries, whose own intentions were sometimes as contingent as Stalin's?

* * *

The aim of this article is to trace the evolution of Stalin's views on the wartime coalition between Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. Stalin's changing perspectives on the Grand Alliance¹ – his view of the nature, goals and direction of that alliance – shaped not just Moscow's relations with London and Washington but the general character and orientation of Soviet foreign policy during the war and early Cold War period.

There were four phases in the evolution of Stalin's views on the Grand Alliance:

- 1 An initial phase – the phase of *liberation and spheres of influence* – in which the Grand Alliance was viewed primarily as a military and political

^{*} Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

- instrument for the defeat of the Axis alliance and the liberation of Europe from Nazi hegemony; and, secondarily, as a framework for arriving at spheres of influence agreements between the great powers.
- 2 From 1943 onwards there developed a *tripartite phase* in which Stalin embraced the idea of a trilateral shaping and policing of a post-war security order – a Great Power peace, or in the phraseology of the time, a peace defined and safeguarded by the ‘leading powers’ of Britain, the USSR and the USA.
 - 3 As the war came to an end, and as the Soviet armies advanced through Eastern Europe, it seems a more ideological concept of the peace began to figure in Stalin’s thinking – a peace of a *people’s democratic Europe* in which Soviet security and interests would be guaranteed by communist and left-wing hegemony in Europe. At the same time, a people’s democratic Europe and a people’s democratic peace were not seen as necessarily incompatible with a continuation of tripartite negotiations, arrangements and institutions with Britain and the United States.
 - 4 Finally, in the early post-war years, Stalin reverted to a more traditional and limited concept of relations with the Western powers, one in which a continuing Grand Alliance was seen as merely a framework for *peaceful coexistence and co-operation*. This final shift in Stalin’s thinking on the Grand Alliance was occasioned by difficulties in post-war negotiations with the Western powers; by Western opposition to Soviet and Communist hegemony in Eastern Europe; and by the growing perception in Moscow of the rise of anti-Soviet and anti-Communist forces in the Western states.

In mid-late 1947 Stalin finally abandoned the Grand Alliance and embraced the Cold War perspective delineated by Zhdanov’s ‘two-camps’ speech at the founding conference of the Cominform in September 1947. Even so, at no time during the Cold War did Stalin or his successors give up completely on the idea of collaboration with the West. Indeed, on one reading Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War years was one long search for a return to some kind of ‘Grand Alliance’.²

In tracing the evolution of Stalin’s views on the Grand Alliance, the primary source will be his public and semi-public statements on international relations and foreign policy. This is not to deny the importance of Stalin’s strictly confidential political and diplomatic communications – such as his correspondence with Molotov, recently uncovered in the ‘presidential archive’ in Moscow by Rzheshesvkii, Pechatnov and others³ – or of Soviet archival sources in general for understanding Stalin’s views and positions on foreign policy. But these kinds of materials by their very nature tend to emphasize policy issues and diplomatic tactics as opposed to strategy and perspectives. Furthermore, the impact of Stalin’s public pronouncements on the content and direction of the internal discourse on foreign policy, including that at the highest levels of the political leadership, are not to be underestimated. Quite often

the most important source of guidance for participants in Soviet policymaking and decision-taking was what Stalin himself was saying publicly or public statements by others, which had obviously been sanctioned by Stalin.

Ironically, the real value of the recent Soviet archival revelations may be less the addition of new knowledge than the enhancement of our ability to read and evaluate the long-available public sources: to compare public and private policy agendas; to distinguish rhetoric and propaganda from genuine policy preferences; and to identify the continuities in the policy discourse from the private to the public realm.

In his radio broadcast of 3 July 1941, Stalin characterized the Soviet-German war as an anti-fascist war of liberation and as a war for national independence and democracy, not just for the USSR but for the whole of Europe.⁴ In his speech on the 24th anniversary of the October Revolution in November 1941, Stalin elaborated on the 'liberation mission' of the Soviet Union, speaking of a just war for the liberation of enslaved Europe and denying any predatory Soviet war aims:

We have not, and cannot have, such war aims as the seizure of foreign territories and the subjugation of foreign peoples [. . .] We have not, and cannot have, any such war aims as that of imposing our will and our regime upon the Slavonic and enslaved nations of Europe [. . .] Our aim is to help these nations in their struggle for liberation [. . .] and then to leave it to them quite freely to organise their life in their lands as they think fit.⁵

Needless to say, Stalin's words figured prominently in the Soviet press and were frequently quoted in editorials and feature articles in *Pravda*, *Izvestiia* and other Soviet publications.

In December 1941, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden came to Moscow to discuss the conclusion of a long-term Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance. In his meetings with Eden from 16 to 20 December 1941, Stalin proposed a secret agreement that was, in effect, a preliminary settlement of the post-war order. Stalin proposed British recognition of the territories the USSR had gained as a result of the Nazi-Soviet pact and the recognition of the Soviet Union's special interests in Eastern Europe, including the right to Soviet military bases in Finland and Romania.

The projection of a post-war Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe was very much in line with Stalin's policy and practice in 1939–1941, during the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact.⁶ However, Stalin's 'spheres of influence' proposal to the British was relatively modest – effectively a demand for a special post-war role in Finland and Romania, which were two enemy states. One should also note that the other major thrust of Stalin's proposal to Eden – the restoration in the main of Europe's pre-war borders and state structure – was very much in line with his public commitment to a 'liberation mission' and

with various formal Soviet commitments regarding the post-war order, such as endorsement of the Atlantic Charter.

Eden was prepared to make some kind of deal, but Churchill was not. As a result Stalin's initiative for a wide-ranging Anglo-Soviet pact, including extensive commitments concerning the post-war order, was rebuffed by London. In the end, Stalin settled in May 1942 for a twenty-year pact of alliance, including a general, but unspecified, commitment to Anglo-Soviet consultation and co-operation over post-war questions.⁷

Stalin's retreat from the 'spheres of influence' proposal of December 1941 has generally been interpreted in terms of the Soviet leader accepting what he could get from Churchill and of the priority he attached to securing Anglo-American commitments on the opening of a Second Front in Western Europe. Further, when instructing Molotov to accept the British terms for an Anglo-Soviet alliance, Stalin made clear his view that the question of the USSR's post-war frontiers would ultimately be settled by force.⁸

There may also have been another aspect of Stalin's calculations, one connected to his negative conception of the Grand Alliance at this time. Militarily, the Grand Alliance was an anti-Hitler war coalition; politically it was seen as a coalition whose very existence thwarted the perceived main aim of German foreign policy – isolating the USSR and enlisting Britain and the US in some kind of anti-Soviet bloc. In his November 1941 speech, Stalin spoke of this aim and, in June 1942, a major Sovinform statement, published on the first anniversary of the Nazi attack, highlighted Soviet success at averting isolation and successfully forming an alliance with Britain and the US.⁹ In addition, Stalin continued to be concerned about Hitler's former deputy, Rudolph Hess, imprisoned in the Tower of London since his ill-fated flight to Britain in May 1941 in an attempt to broker an Anglo-German peace. In October 1942 Stalin cabled Ambassador Maisky in London:

All of us in Moscow have formed the impression that Churchill is holding to a course of the defeat of the USSR in order then to make an agreement with Germany [. . .] at our country's expense. Without such a supposition it is difficult to explain Churchill's conduct on the question of the second front in Europe, on the question of military supplies for the USSR [. . . and] the question of Hess, whom Churchill seems to be keeping in reserve. . .¹⁰

Arguably, the conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance, like other inter-allied agreements of this period, was mainly a political device, designed as much to preclude an anti-Soviet alliance as to build a grand, allied coalition. There were certainly signs of a more ambitious, forward-looking concept of the Grand Alliance in various public and press statements¹¹ but the predominant emphasis was on a limited and defensive alliance. For example, in his October Revolution anniversary speech in November 1942, Stalin reiterated the liberationist and democratic aims of the allied coalition but defined

the basis of the coalition in largely negative terms saying that it was based on the existence of a common enemy that represented 'savagery and medieval barbarism'.¹²

A year later Stalin was much more positive. In his November 1943 anniversary speech, he said that 'the victory of the allied countries [. . .] will put on the agenda the important questions of organising and rebuilding the state, economic and cultural life of the European peoples' and spoke of the need to establish a post-war order that will 'completely exclude the possibility of fresh aggression on the part of Germany' and of the need for 'lasting economic, political and cultural collaboration among the peoples of Europe'.¹³

There were other signs of a shift towards a collaborationist agenda. In May 1943, the Communist International was, at Stalin's behest, abolished.¹⁴ Answering a question from a Reuters correspondent on the reasons for the abolition of the Comintern, Stalin emphasized the demands of the anti-fascist struggle – the strengthening of allied unity and the facilitation of 'the work of patriots of all countries in uniting the progressive forces [. . .] thus clearing the way for the future organisation of a companionship of nations based upon their equality'.¹⁵ Much the same rationalization was propounded internally.¹⁶

At the Teheran Conference, in November 1943, Stalin joined Churchill and Roosevelt in a public pledge to seek an enduring peace.

Indeed, autumn 1943 marked the beginning of the tripartite phase in Stalin's conception of the Grand Alliance. The first indication of this new phase came before Teheran, at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers of October 1943. The Moscow Conference was the first of the big wartime tripartite meetings convened to discuss allied policy and perspectives on the post-war world. For the Soviet side, the conference's decisions, discussions and commitments signalled Moscow's intention to shape the peace and the post-war order jointly with the British and Americans. Stalin took no direct part in the conference proceedings but he did closely supervise the work of the Soviet delegation headed by Molotov.¹⁷ Following the conference, the public discourse of Soviet propaganda was increasingly dominated by talk of a long, durable and stable peace established and guaranteed by the 'Big Three'. In private the conference was lauded as 'a big event in the life of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs' (PCFA), which 'all PCFA workers must study in detail [. . .] and, if possible, make proposals on the realisation of its decisions'.¹⁸

The Moscow Conference also prompted the beginning of serious work on planning and preparations for the post-war world within the PCFA. Various commissions were established on post-war questions. The political, ideological and organizational framework of the work of the commissions headed by Litvinov (peace treaties and the post-war order), Voroshilov (armistice terms) and Maisky (reparations) was trilateralism – a commitment to a peacetime Grand Alliance that would cooperate in the organization of the post-war world.¹⁹



Map 2 The Soviet Union in Eurasia at the end of the Second World War. Adapted from Woodford McClellan, *Russia: A History of the Soviet Period* (2nd edn, New York: Prentice Hall, 1990), 199.

As far as Stalin was concerned, one of the major imperatives for a tripartite approach to the peace seems to have been the danger of renewed German aggression. There is plenty of evidence concerning Stalin's (understandable) obsession with the German question at this time. Already in December 1941, Stalin had raised with Eden the question of a permanent weakening of Germany. At Teheran he supported Roosevelt's inclination to break up Germany.²⁰ In May 1944 Stalin made clear to the Polish-American socialist Oscar Lange his preference for a harsh, punitive peace against Germany, not repeating the Versailles mistake of too many concessions:

Com. Stalin says that regarding Germany, it would be necessary [not] to go for a halfway peace like Versailles. Versailles resulted in a half-peace because they began to make concessions to Germany. Such a peace would not only contribute to the birth of thoughts about revenge, but would also create the possibilities for this revenge [. . .] Stalin said that he believed that a halfway decision regarding Germany would mean a new war in fifteen years' time.²¹

A permanent resolution of the problem of German power was also one of Stalin's major themes in his revolution anniversary speech of November 1944:

After Germany has been defeated she will [. . .] be disarmed [. . .] But it would be simple-minded to think that she will not attempt to restore her power and develop some new aggression [. . .] What means are there to avert a new aggression on the part of Germany and, if war nevertheless breaks out, to stifle it at the very outset, and prevent it developing into a great war [. . .]?

Stalin's answer to this question was the need to establish a 'special organisation for the defence of peace and the safeguarding of security [. . .] to place at the disposal of that controlling body of that organisation the minimum quantity of armed forces essential and requisite for averting aggression'.²² Referring to the 'melancholy' experience of the League of Nations, Stalin emphasized that such a security organization could only be effective if the Great Powers continued to 'act in the spirit of unanimity and agreement'.²³

Stalin's public advocacy of a powerful, interventionist post-war security organization, founded on the mutual consent of the Big Three, was eloquent testimony to his commitment to the institutions and structures of the tripartite peace then under negotiation within the Grand Alliance.²⁴

The other way of dealing with the German question was more direct: long-term occupation of the country and implementation of a policy of the disarmament, de-nazification, democratization and dismemberment of Germany. Again, this was a policy conceived and elaborated in a tripartite context. Policy work within the commissions of the PCFA was conducted on

that basis and the formulation and implementation of a joint policy on Germany was a major theme of Stalin's discussions with Western leaders.

It is notable that at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Stalin pushed very hard for an allied commitment on the *dismemberment* of Germany.²⁵ A few weeks after Yalta, however, Stalin abruptly abandoned the dismemberment policy, which had been central to Soviet thinking and planning on the post-war German question since 1941.²⁶ There are various reasons why Stalin might have changed his mind. First, it was evident at Yalta that there was a certain resistance to dismemberment on the British and American part. This may have been linked in Stalin's mind to a general perception of Western allied weak will in relation to Germany. In March 1945 he reportedly told a visiting Czechoslovak delegation:

We are now smashing the Germans, and many people now assume that the Germans will never be able to threaten us again. Well, that's simply not true. I HATE THE GERMANS! [. . .] It's impossible to destroy the Germans for good [. . .] We are fighting the Germans, and we will finish the job. But we must bear in mind that our allies will try to save the Germans and conspire with them. We will be merciless toward the Germans, but our allies will seek to treat them more leniently.²⁷

Second, a sort of dismemberment was already occurring in the form of the division of Germany into allied military occupation zones and the proposed transfer of substantial German territories to Poland, as well as the return of lands to Czechoslovakia and the re-establishment of an independent Austria. In such circumstances, an elaborate and complex formal scheme of German dismemberment had less relevance, particularly when Stalin was concerned to avoid shouldering the political responsibility for a post-war division of Germany. Third, Stalin's priorities in relation to Germany were by 1945 increasingly economic i.e. the securing of large-scale reparations to aid Soviet post-war reconstruction. Dismemberment could be a distraction, perhaps even a hindrance, in relation to such a priority.

But there may have been a more fundamental political-ideological reason for Stalin's change of heart on dismemberment. An alternative solution to the German problem was beckoning: a people's democratic Germany controlled by a left-wing regime under Soviet influence. Such a perspective was in accordance with a more general shift in Stalin's strategy for the post-war period that developed in 1944–1945.

In 1945, Stalin's foreign policy had three components: tripartism – a peacetime Grand Alliance; a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe; a people's democratic Europe.

The policy of seeking allied agreement on a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe had been abandoned in 1942 when it became clear that no

agreements on spheres of influence with the British and Americans were possible in advance, if indeed at all.²⁸ The Soviet military advance into Eastern Europe in 1944–1945, however, presented the opportunity for the sponsorship of friendly governments in the various East European states. At the same time, political developments in the region – namely, the collapse of the old order and political gains by the East European Communist parties and of the left more generally – offered the prospect of Soviet political and ideological influence and leadership in the region. Hence Stalin began to seek a *geo-ideological* as well as a *geopolitical* space of Soviet security in Eastern Europe.

Stalin made no public pronouncement on his political and ideological goals in Eastern Europe but his preference for people's democracy was evident in numerous discussions with various leaders of the European Communist parties.²⁹ At the same time Stalin remained committed to the Grand Alliance and thought it would be possible to combine a continuation of tripartism with the establishment in Eastern Europe of left-wing regimes under Soviet direction. These people's democracies were undoubtedly conceived as radical regimes but not as socialist or Soviet and hence constituted no immediate threat to capitalism. Moreover, the political power and influence of the Communists and the left seemed to be growing in Western as well as Eastern Europe. Even in Britain and the United States there were substantial pro-Soviet forces, or so Moscow believed. Therefore the possibilities opening up for Soviet foreign policy in the post-war period were seen as a function of the political balance of forces and of the nature of the historical conjuncture. In January 1945 Stalin told Yugoslav Communists:

In his time Lenin did not dream of the correlation of forces that we have achieved during the war. Lenin reckoned that everyone would attack us and it would be good if some distant country, such as America, remained neutral. Now it turns out that one group of the bourgeoisie has gone against us, while another is with us. Lenin then did not know that it was possible to remain in alliance with one wing of the bourgeoisie and to fight against the other one.³⁰

Around the same time, Stalin told former Comintern leader Georgii Dimitrov:

The crisis of capitalism is evident in the division of the capitalists into two factions – one fascist, the other democratic. The alliance between ourselves and the democratic faction of the capitalists succeeds because the latter had an interest in preventing Hitler's domination [. . .] At present we are with one faction against the other, but in the future we shall be against this faction of the capitalists as well.³¹

As these two quotes indicate, Stalin's emphasis in private – at least at this time and when speaking to 'comrades' – was somewhat different from his public insistence, in November 1944, that 'the foundation for the alliance of

the USSR, Great Britain and the USA lies not in chance and passing considerations, but in vitally important and long-term interests'.³² Nevertheless, fundamental conflicts, threatening the very existence of the Grand Alliance, seemed to be a matter for the distant future not the immediate present. At the Yalta and Potsdam conferences of 1945, Moscow had achieved its aims of continuing tripartite unity and co-operation, implicit Anglo-American acceptance of a Soviet sphere of influence, and exclusion of Western influence and interference from the process of building people's democracies in Eastern Europe – or so Stalin and Molotov believed at the time.³³

However, in the post-Potsdam period problems in Soviet-Western relations began to develop. At the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting in London in September 1945, it became apparent that there was considerable Western resistance to Soviet and Communist domination of Eastern Europe. Indeed, negotiations at the CFM broke down over the issue of Western recognition of the Communist-dominated coalition governments of Bulgaria and Romania. In its post-conference assessment the PCFA emphasized the role of 'reactionary' forces in the West in undermining the tripartism of Yalta and Potsdam and seeking to force the Soviet Union to retreat from its wartime gains.³⁴ From autumn 1945 onwards, the perception that a struggle had ensued between pro- and anti-Soviet forces in Western states was the major theme of both public and private Soviet discourse on foreign policy and international relations. Other elements of this discourse included emphasis on the rise of an Anglo-American global post-war bloc (as opposed to previous expectations concerning inter-imperialist rivalries); the role of right-wing social democracy (especially the British Labour Party) in a developing anti-Soviet and anti-Western bloc; and British and American support for reactionary anti-Soviet forces – in Eastern Europe, in Germany, and in other parts of the globe.³⁵

In March 1946, Stalin himself entered the fray when he gave a substantial interview in reply to Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech in Fulton, Missouri. He denounced Churchill as a warmonger and accused him of advocating a racial theory of the superiority of English-speaking nations, just as Hitler had proclaimed the racial superiority of the Aryans. Stalin defended the Soviet Union's right to ensure friendly governments in Eastern Europe and talked up the rise of Communist influence in Europe:

Mr Churchill comes somewhere near the truth when he speaks of the increasing influence of the Communist parties in Eastern Europe. It must be remarked, however, that he is not quite accurate. The influence of the Communist Parties has grown not only in Eastern Europe but in nearly all the countries of Europe which were previously under fascist rule [. . .] The increased influence of the Communists cannot be considered fortuitous. It is a perfectly logical thing. The influence of the Communists has grown because [. . .] the Communists showed

themselves trusty, fearless, self-sacrificing fighters against the fascist regime for the liberty of the people.³⁶

However, counter-balancing the critique of Churchill and other warmongers and reactionaries was a talking down of the war danger and the extent of Soviet-Western differences and a strong insistence on the desirability of peaceful coexistence and co-operation. This was the substance of a series of written replies to questions put to Stalin by Western interlocutors in 1946–1947.³⁷ In April 1947 Stalin conducted a major interview with the American Senator Harold Stassen. Stalin's particular theme in this discussion was that the capitalist and socialist systems, while very different, could coexist and co-operate. Which system was superior would be decided by history.³⁸ This was a very definite return to traditional Soviet themes and a long way from wartime visions of a tripartite post-war world shaped and organized by the Grand Alliance – a perspective that implied a certain convergence between the capitalist and socialist systems.

This shift from tripartism to a more limited and traditional concept of peaceful coexistence was informed by perceptions of Western ideological animosity but it also reflected the political and diplomatic realities of the early post-war period. Various negotiations with the Western states – in the CFM, in the United Nations and in occupied Germany – had revealed the difficulties of positive Soviet-Western collaboration in the post-war world. The best that could be achieved in negotiations with the West, it seemed, was a series of acceptable but often deeply problematic compromises. At the same time, there were, in 1945–1946, a series of minor crises and confrontations in Soviet-Western relations (for example, in relation to Turkey's control of the Black Sea straits and Iranian oil concessions) arising from Stalin's efforts to maximize the fruits of victory. Most important, whether or not even minimal peaceful coexistence could be maintained was seen increasingly to depend on the outcome of a great struggle between progressive and reactionary forces in the post-war world. Here we can refer to a speech by A.A. Zhdanov on the 29th anniversary of the October Revolution in November 1946.

Zhdanov was a member of the Politburo and had special responsibility for questions of ideology and international affairs. In his speech he defined post-war Soviet foreign policy in terms of the 'struggle for a stable and democratic peace'³⁹ – a struggle that was being impeded by reactionary elements in the West. Speaking of the Paris Peace Conference of summer 1946, he argued:

The conference demonstrated the existence of two tendencies in post-war policy [. . .]. One policy, conducted by the Soviet Union, is [. . .] to consolidate peace and prevent aggression [. . .]. The other [. . .] opening the path for the forces of expansion and aggression.⁴⁰

A year later, at the founding Cominform conference, Zhdanov gave a speech that is somewhat more famous. In this speech the two tendencies and

policies had consolidated themselves into *two camps*. The struggle for a stable and democratic peace had been superseded by a struggle against American supremacism and against a very definite threat of war. Peaceful coexistence remained the Soviet aim but it was to be achieved by methods of Cold War: diplomatic confrontation, ideological struggle, political, economic and military competition.⁴¹

The transition from the 'two tendencies' view to the two-camps view was fundamentally the result of the perception that reactionary forces were now wholly in charge of Western foreign policy. The evidence for this conclusion was the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the exclusion of West European Communists from coalition governments, and the failure of Soviet-Western negotiations on the post-war future of Germany.⁴²

Conclusion

- 1 The evolution of Stalin's views on the Grand Alliance is quite transparent and can be read from the public record of his statements on the alliance.
- 2 The internal Soviet discourse on the Grand Alliance was commensurate with the public discourse. Discussions, analyses and interpretations conducted privately mirrored those conducted in the public domain and vice versa.
- 3 There is little doubt concerning Stalin's commitment to the maintenance of the Grand Alliance. He seems to have thought, however, that it would be possible to have a peacetime Grand Alliance on his own terms. He underestimated the strength of Western resistance to both his political and ideological goals. The ultimate failure of the Grand Alliance was by no means Stalin's sole responsibility but the pursuit of a less ambitious political and ideological agenda may well have helped to avert or ameliorate the polarizations of the Cold War.

Notes

- 1 The use of the term 'Grand Alliance' is somewhat anachronistic since the terminology of the time was 'allied coalition', 'united nations' or, as the Soviets preferred 'anti-Hitler coalition'. In 1938-39, however, Churchill had campaigned for a 'grand alliance' against Hitler and he recycled this terminology in his history of the Second World War published in the 1950s. It is now the most common label for the American-British-Soviet coalition of World War II.
- 2 For an overview of Soviet foreign policy in the post-war period see G. Roberts, *The Soviet Union in World Politics: Coexistence, Revolution and Cold War, 1945-1991*, London, 1999.
- 3 O.A. Rzheshhevskii, *Voina i Diplomatiia: Dokumenty, Kommentarii (1941-1942)*, Moscow, 1997. (English translation: *War and Diplomacy: The Making of the Grand Alliance*, Amsterdam, 1996 [hereafter *War and Diplomacy*]); V.O. Pechatnov, "'Soiuzniki Nazhimaiut na Dlia Togo, Shtoby Slomit' u Tebia Volu. . ." (Peripiska Stalina s Molotovym I Drugimi Chlenami Politburo po Vneshnepoliticheskim Voprosam v Sentiabre-Dekabre 1945g.), *Istochnik*, 2-3, 1999. (English translation: "'The Allies are Pressing on You to Break Your Will . . ." (Correspondence Between Stalin and

- Molotov and other Politburo Members, September 1945–December 1946)', *Cold War International History Project, Working Paper*, No.26.
- 4 I. Stalin, *O Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine Sovetskogo Soiuza*, Moscow, 1946, pp.9–16. This is the most comprehensive edition of Stalin's public speeches, statements and orders during war. For the period 1941–1944, translations may be found in *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War: Documents and Materials*, two vols, London, 1945 (hereafter: *Soviet Documents*).
 - 5 *Soviet Documents*, p.32.
 - 6 See G. Roberts, 'Ideology, Calculation and Improvisation: Spheres of Influence and Soviet Foreign Policy 1939–1945', *Review of International Studies*, 25, 1999, pp.655–673 (hereafter: 'Ideology, Calculation').
 - 7 The Anglo-Soviet negotiations of 1941–1942 are documented in Rzheshhevskii op.cit. and *Sovetsko-Angliiskie Otnosheniia vo Vremia Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny 1941–1945*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1983 (hereafter: *Sovetsko-Angliiskie Otnosheniia*).
 - 8 Rzheshhevskii, *War and Diplomacy*, doc.38.
 - 9 'Politicheskie i Voennye Itogi Goda Otechestvennoi Voiny', *Izvestiia*, 23 June 1942. Sovinform was the wartime Soviet public information bureau.
 - 10 *Sovetsko-Angliiskje Otnosheniia*, doc.147.
 - 11 For example Molotov's speech to the Supreme Soviet on the ratification of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, reported in *Pravda*, 19 June 1942.
 - 12 *Soviet Documents*, pp.43–50.
 - 13 *Ibid.* p.69.
 - 14 See N. Lebedeva & M. Narinsky, 'Dissolution of the Comintern in 1943', *International Affairs*, Moscow, 8, 1994, pp.87–99 and A. Dallin & F.I. Firsov (eds), *Dimitrov and Stalin, 1934–1943: Letters from the Soviet Archives*, New Haven, 2000, chap.8 (hereafter: *Dimitrov and Stalin*).
 - 15 *Soviet Documents*, p.61.
 - 16 See *Dimitrov and Stalin*, p.238 and *Protocol Zasedanie Politburo TsK VKP (b)*, F. 17, Op.3, D.1047, L.63 (microfilm in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI – formerly RTsKIDNI)).
 - 17 Stalin's role in relation to the conference can be deduced from his meetings with members of the Soviet delegation recorded in his appointments diary in 'Posetiteli Kremlevskogo Kabineta I.V. Stalina', *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 3, 1996, pp.82–84 and from the records of the PCFA's preparations for the conference. Of particular interest is a document prepared for Stalin summarizing the PCFA's preparations for the conference and the policy positions it proposed to adopt (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki RF (hereafter: AVP), F.6, Op.5b, Por.6, Pap.39, D.6, L. 16–27.
 - 18 AVP F.0511, Op.1, D. 1, L.72.
 - 19 On the work of the PCFA commissions: S. Pons, 'In the Aftermath of the Age of Wars: the Impact of World War II on Soviet Foreign Policy' in S. Pons & A. Romano (eds), *Russia in the Age of Wars, 1914–1945*, Milan, 2000; A.M. Filitov, 'Problems of Post-War Construction in Soviet Foreign Policy Conceptions during World War II' in F. Gori & S. Pons (eds), *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1943–1953*, London, 1996; V.O. Pechatnov, 'The Big Three after World War II: New Documents on Soviet Thinking about Post-War Relations with the United States and Great Britain', *Cold War International History Project, Working Paper* No.13; and A.M. Filitov, 'V Kommissiyakh Narkomindela' in O.A. Rzheshhevskii (ed.), *Vtoraiia Mirovaia Voina*, Moscow, 1995.
 - 20 In the discussion at Teheran on the German question Churchill asked Stalin if his preference was for a divided Europe. 'Not Europe, Germany', replied Stalin. Stalin's response was omitted from the published Soviet record of the Teheran Conference. Compare: *Tegeranskaia Konferentsiia Pukovoditelei Trekh Soiuznykh Derzhav*, Moscow, 1984, p.150 and AVPF.0555, Op.1, Pap.12, D.24, L.100.

- 21 Cited by A.M. Cienciala, 'New Light on Oskar Lange as an Intermediary Between Roosevelt and Stalin in Attempts to Create a New Polish Government', *Acta Poloniae Historica* 73, 1996, p.114.
- 22 *Soviet Documents*, vol.2, pp.31–32.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 A venerable but still valuable general text on the wartime negotiations is W.H. McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict 1941–1946*, London, 1953. See also J. Wheeler-Bennett & A. Nicholls, *The Semblance of Peace: The Political Settlement after the Second World War*, London, 1972. On Soviet foreign policy during the war the classic text remains V. Maslany, *Russia's Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare, and the Politics of Communism, 1941–1945*, New York, 1979.
- 25 Stalin's insistence on the need for dismemberment comes out most clearly in passages excised from the published Soviet record of the conference proceedings. Compare: *Krymskaia Konferentsiia Rykovoditelei Trekh Soiuznykh Derzhav*, Moscow, 1984, pp.59 ff. and AVP F.06, Op.7a, D.7, L.20–27.
- 26 See the archive documents published in G.P. Kynin & J. Laufer (eds), *SSSR I Germanskii Vopros, 1941–1949*, vol. 1, 1941–45, Moscow, 1996.
- 27 Cited by M. Kramer, 'The Soviet Union and the Founding of the German Democratic Republic', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 51, no.6, 1999, pp. 1097–1098.
- 28 The so-called Stalin-Churchill spheres of influence agreement of October 1944 was, it seems, more mythical than real. See Roberts, 'Ideology, Calculation' for a detailed review.
- 29 See *inter alia* various articles in Gori and Pons op.cit. and N. Naimark and L. Gibianskii (eds), *The Establishment of the Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944–1949*, Boulder CO, 1997; M. Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, New York, 1962; W.O. McCagg, *Stalin Embattled 1943–1948*, Detroit, 1978; T.V. Volkitina, 'Stalin i Smena Strategicheskogo Kursa Kremlya v Kontse 40–x godov' in A.O. Chubarian et al, *Stalinskoe Desyatiletie Kholodnoi Voiny*, Moscow, 1999; M.M. Narinskii, 'Tol'yatti, Stalin i "Povorot v Salerno"' in Rzheshhevskii, *Vtoraia Mirovaia Voina* op.cit.; and E. Mark, 'Revolution by Degrees: Stalin's National Front Strategy for Europe during World War II' (forthcoming). A number of the relevant documents are published in *Vostochniia Evropa v Dokumentakh Rossiiskikh Arkhivov, 1944–1953*, vol. 1, 1944–1948, Moscow, 1997 and *Sovetskii Faktor v Vostochnoi Evrope, 1944–1953*, vol. 1, 1944–1948, Moscow, 1999.
- 30 *Vostochnaia Evropa v Dokumentakh Rossiiskikh Arkhivov* op.cit. doc. 37.
- 31 Cited by V.V. Poznyakov, 'The Soviet Intelligence Services and the Government' in N.E. Rosenfeldt et al, *Mechanisms of Power in the Soviet Union*, London, 2000, n.46 pp.102–121. This much-quoted quote is from Dimitrov's diary, one of the most important sources for Stalin's private thinking in the 1930s and 1940s. Unfortunately, the diary is very difficult to obtain, although it was published in Bulgaria in 1997.
- 32 *Soviet Documents*; vol.2, p.31. Note also Stalin's statement to the pro-Soviet Polish Committee of National Liberation in October 1944: 'The three-power alliance is based on a compromise involving the capitalist countries on the one side and the USSR on the other. This was the source of certain divisions in aims and views, These were, however, subordinate to the fundamental issue of the war against Germany and the establishment of a new set of relationships in Europe. Like any other compromise the alliance also contained certain areas of conflict [. . . but] there have not been any threats of disruption to the basic nature of the alliance. As regards particular current events, each ally had his own point of view.' A. Polonsky & B. Drukier (eds), *The Beginnings of Communist Rule in Poland*, London, 1980, doc.48.
- 33 For evidence concerning Stalin and Molotov's assessment of the Potsdam Conference see L. Ya. Gibianskii, 'Doneseniia Ugoslavskogo Posla v Moskve ob Otsenkakh Rukovodstvom SSSR Potsdamskoi Konferentsii I Polozheniia v Vostochnoi Evrope', *Slavyanovedenie*, no.1, 1994.

- 34 AVP F.0431/1., Op.1, Pap.5, D.26, L.22–24. The evaluation in the Soviet press of the reasons for the failure of the CFM was similarly critical but much less harsh. See editorials in *Izvestiia* on 5 October 1945 and *Pravda* on 6 October 1945.
- 35 See, for example, the central committee's biweekly confidential bulletin on international affairs, *Voprosy Vneshnei Politiki*, which commenced publication at the end of 1944 (RGASPI, F.17, Op.128, D.49, 94, 266). However, the contents of the bulletin were mirrored in the Soviet press. For example, what one read in *Novoe Vremya* was not that much different from that in the CC bulletin (except that the latter carried more coverage of the Communist and labour movement and less on foreign policy and international affairs). *Novoe Vremya* (1945–) was the successor to *Voina i Rabochii Kiass* – a fortnightly journal of news and views on international affairs. When the journal was established in 1943 it was exempted by the Politburo from the censorship regime of Glavlit (RGASPI, F.17, Op.3, D.1047, L.63–64). Its content was, it seems, directly and closely controlled by Stalin and Molotov.
- 36 English translation of Stalin's interview in W. LaFeber (ed.), *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947*, New York, 1971, doc.37.
- 37 These are collected in I.V. Stalin, *Socheneniia*, vol.16, 1946–1952, Moscow, 1997 (also in a similar volume published by The Hoover Institution in 1967). For a summary, see A. Werth, *Russia: The Post-war Years*, London: Robert Hale & Co. 1971, pp.142–147 (hereafter: *Russia*).
- 38 The interview was published in *Izvestiia* and *Pravda* on 8 May 1947. For a summary see Werth, *Russia*, pp.250–252.
- 39 Zhdanov speech published in *Izvestiia* 7 November 1946.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 For Zhdanov's speech and other Cominform documents see G. Procacci (ed.), *The Cominform: Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947/1948/1949*, Milan, 1994. The collection also contains commentaries providing detailed evidence of Stalin's role in the composition of Zhdanov's two-camps speech. The Russian edition of this collection contains additional documentation, including the reports sent to Stalin by Soviet representatives at the conference (*Soveshchaniya Kominforma*, Moscow, 1998).
- 42 See G. Roberts, 'Moscow and the Marshall Plan: Politics, Ideology and the Onset of the Cold War, 1947', *Europe-Asia Studies* 46 (no.8, 1994) pp.1371–1386.

THE ATOMIC BOMB AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

Martin J. Sherwin

The dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan and its relationship to the breakdown of the allied coalition has evoked enormous controversy among historians. In one of the most important revisionist works of the 1960s Gar Alperovitz argued that the United States used atomic weapons to impress the Soviets more than to defeat the Japanese.*

*Suggesting that the Japanese were on the verge of surrender, and asserting that US officials knew they would surrender if only they were permitted to retain their emperor, Alperovitz claimed that President Harry S Truman and his new Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, could have ended the war without using atomic weapons. But, according to Alperovitz, they dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki because they wanted to end the conflict before the Soviet Union had an opportunity to declare war on Japan, march into Manchuria, and lay claim to the concessions (including Sakhalin and the Kuriles) that Roosevelt had promised Stalin at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. Alperovitz also maintained that Truman and Byrnes hoped that upon seeing the power of atomic weapons, the Soviets would relax their policies in Eastern Europe and accept free elections and open trade. And finally, Alperovitz suggested that the possession of atomic weapons altered US thinking about Germany and encouraged US officials to turn quickly to the problems of reconstructing Germany on the assumption that the power of the atomic bomb afforded the United States the ability to control future German strength.***

Traditional scholars attacked this line of reasoning. They insisted that US officials did not know and could not know (even though Japanese codes had been broken) that the Japanese were about to surrender. The use of atomic weapons, therefore, was essential to save American lives. Other scholars, even some revisionists, argued that the momentum of decisionmaking had its own logic, and that Truman and his advisers took it for granted that they would use the new weapon once it was ready. Still others stressed that officials like Byrnes felt impelled to use the atomic bomb for fear of the political repercussions of not using it, having spent so much money developing it and having insisted that they would accept nothing less than unconditional surrender.

* J. Samuel Walker, 'The Decision to Use the Bomb: A Historiographical Update,' in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97–114.

** Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York: Vintage, 1965).

In the selection that follows, Martin Sherwin makes a major contribution by taking the issue back from the early months of Truman's tenure in office and placing it in the context of overall wartime diplomacy between Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt. Roosevelt died in April 1945 just as the European war was coming to an end. But Sherwin shows that the American President had established patterns for dealing with the atomic bomb that left a clear legacy to his successor. Sherwin's contribution is not only important for understanding the origins of postwar attitudes toward atomic weapons, but equally significant for inspiring a reassessment of Roosevelt's alleged naivety in dealing with Stalin.

Readers should reflect on the conflicting goals that Roosevelt and Truman hoped to accomplish and on the variable strategies that might have been used to achieve those goals. Did Roosevelt try to work out a system of international control of atomic energy? Was he willing to share knowledge of the atomic bomb with Stalin? How did he and Truman expect the bomb to affect postwar diplomacy?

* * *

During the Second World War the atomic bomb was seen and valued as a potential rather than an actual instrument of policy. Responsible officials believed that its impact on diplomacy had to await its development and, perhaps, even a demonstration of its power. As Henry L. Stimson, the Secretary of War, observed in his memoirs: "The bomb as a merely probable weapon had seemed a weak reed on which to rely, but the bomb as a colossal reality was very different."¹ That policymakers considered this difference before Hiroshima has been well documented, but whether they based wartime diplomatic policies upon an anticipated successful demonstration of the bomb's power remains a source of controversy.² Two questions delineate the issues in this debate. First, did the development of the atomic bomb affect the way American policymakers conducted diplomacy with the Soviet Union? Second, did diplomatic considerations related to the Soviet Union influence the decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan?

These important questions relating the atomic bomb to American diplomacy, and ultimately to the origins of the Cold War, have been addressed almost exclusively to the formulation of policy during the early months of the Truman administration. As a result, two anterior questions of equal importance, questions with implications for those already posed, have been overlooked. Did diplomatic considerations related to Soviet postwar behavior influence the formulation of Roosevelt's atomic energy policies? What effect did the atomic legacy Truman inherited have on the diplomatic and atomic energy policies of his administration?

Although Roosevelt left no definitive statement assigning a postwar role to the atomic bomb, his expectations for its potential diplomatic value can be recalled from the existing record. An analysis of the policies he chose from among the alternatives he faced suggests that the potential diplomatic value of the bomb began to shape his atomic energy policies as early as 1943.

He may have been cautious about counting on the bomb as a reality during the war, but he nevertheless consistently chose policy alternatives that would promote the postwar diplomatic potential of the bomb if the predictions of scientists proved true. These policies were based on the assumption that the bomb could be used effectively to secure postwar diplomatic aims; and this assumption was carried over from the Roosevelt to the Truman administration.

Despite general agreement that the bomb would be an extraordinarily important diplomatic factor after the war, those closely associated with its development did not agree on how to use it most effectively as an instrument of diplomacy. Convinced that wartime atomic energy policies would have postwar diplomatic consequences, several scientists advised Roosevelt to adopt policies aimed at achieving a postwar international control system. Churchill, on the other hand, urged the President to maintain the Anglo-American atomic monopoly as a diplomatic counter against the postwar ambitions of other nations – particularly against the Soviet Union. Roosevelt fashioned his atomic energy policies from the choices he made between these conflicting recommendations. In 1943 he rejected the counsel of his science advisers and began to consider the diplomatic component of atomic energy policy in consultation with Churchill alone. This decisionmaking procedure and Roosevelt's untimely death have left his motives ambiguous. Nevertheless it is clear that he pursued policies consistent with Churchill's monopolistic, anti-Soviet views.

The findings of this study thus raise serious questions concerning generalizations historians have commonly made about Roosevelt's diplomacy: that it was consistent with his public reputation for cooperation and conciliation; that he was naive with respect to postwar Soviet behavior; that, like Wilson, he believed in collective security as an effective guarantor of national safety; and that he made every possible effort to ensure that the Soviet Union and its allies would continue to function as postwar partners.³ Although this article does not dispute the view that Roosevelt desired amicable postwar relations with the Soviet Union, or even that he worked hard to achieve them, it does suggest that historians have exaggerated his confidence in (and perhaps his commitment to) such an outcome. His most secret and among his most important long-range decisions – those responsible for prescribing a diplomatic role for the atomic bomb – reflected his lack of confidence. Finally, in light of this study's conclusions, the widely held assumption that Truman's attitude toward the atomic bomb was substantially different from Roosevelt's must also be revised.

Like the grand alliance itself, the Anglo-American atomic energy partnership was forged by the war and its exigencies. The threat of a German atomic bomb precipitated a hasty marriage of convenience between British research and American resources. When scientists in Britain proposed a theory that explained how an atomic bomb might quickly be built, policymakers had to

assume that German scientists were building one.⁴ "If such an explosive were made," Vannevar Bush, the director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, told Roosevelt in July 1941, "it would be thousands of times more powerful than existing explosives, and its use might be determining." Roosevelt assumed nothing less. Even before the atomic energy project was fully organized he assigned it the highest priority.⁵

The high stakes at issue during the war did not prevent officials in Great Britain or the United States from considering the postwar implications of their atomic energy decisions. As early as 1941, during the debate over whether to join the United States in an atomic energy partnership, members of the British government's atomic energy committee argued that the matter "was so important for the future that work should proceed in Britain."⁶ Weighing the obvious difficulties of proceeding alone against the possible advantages of working with the United States, Sir John Anderson, then Lord President of the Council and the minister responsible for atomic energy research, advocated the partnership. As he explained to Churchill, by working closely with the Americans British scientists would be able "to take up the work again [after the war], not where we left off, but where the combined effort had by then brought it."⁷

As early as October 1942 Roosevelt's science advisers exhibited a similar concern with the potential postwar value of atomic energy. After conducting a full-scale review of the atomic energy project, James B. Conant, the president of Harvard University and Bush's deputy, recommended discontinuing the Anglo-American partnership "as far as development and manufacture is concerned."⁸ What prompted Conant's recommendations, however, was his suspicion – soon to be shared by other senior atomic energy administrators – that the British were rather more concerned with information for postwar industrial purposes than for wartime use.⁹ What right did the British have to the fruits of American labor? "We were doing nine-tenths of the work," Stimson told Roosevelt in October.¹⁰ Early in January 1943 the British were officially informed that the rules governing the Anglo-American atomic energy partnership had been altered on "orders from the top."¹¹

By approving the policy of "restricted interchange" Roosevelt undermined a major incentive for British cooperation. It is not surprising, therefore, that Churchill took up the matter directly with the President and with Harry Hopkins, "Roosevelt's own, personal Foreign Office."¹²

Conant and Bush understood the implications of Churchill's intervention and sought to counter its effect. Information on manufacturing an atomic bomb, Conant noted, was a "military secret which is in a totally different class from anything the world has ever seen if the potentialities of this project are realised."¹³ Though British and American atomic energy policies might coincide during the war, Conant and Bush expected them to conflict afterward.

The controversy over the policy of "restricted interchange" of atomic energy information shifted attention to postwar diplomatic considerations. The central issue was clearly drawn. The atomic energy policy of the United States

was related to the very fabric of Anglo-American postwar relations and, as Churchill would insist, to postwar relations between each of them and the Soviet Union. The specter of Soviet postwar military power played a major role in shaping the Prime Minister's attitude toward atomic energy policies in 1943.

Churchill could cite numerous reasons for his determination to acquire an independent atomic arsenal after the war, but Great Britain's postwar military-diplomatic position with respect to the Soviet Union invariably led the list. When Bush and Stimson visited London in July, Churchill told them quite frankly that he was "vitally interested in the possession of all [atomic energy] information because this will be necessary for Britain's independence in the future as well as for success during the war." Nor was Churchill evasive about his reasoning: "It would never do to have Germany or Russia win the race for something which might be used for international blackmail," he stated bluntly and then pointed out that "Russia might be in a position to accomplish this result unless we worked together."¹⁴ Convinced that the British attitude toward the bomb would undermine any possibility of postwar cooperation with the Soviet Union, Bush and Conant vigorously continued to oppose any revival of the Anglo-American atomic energy partnership.¹⁵

On July 20, however, Roosevelt chose to accept a recommendation from Hopkins to restore full partnership, and he ordered Bush to "renew, in an inclusive manner, the full exchange of information with the British."¹⁶ At the Quebec Conference, the President and the Prime Minister agreed that the British would share the atomic bomb. The Quebec Agreement revived the principle of an Anglo-American atomic energy partnership, albeit the British were reinstated as junior rather than equal partners.¹⁷

The debate that preceded the Quebec Agreement is noteworthy for another reason; it led to a new relationship between Roosevelt and his atomic energy advisers. After August 1943 the President did not consult with them about the diplomatic aspects of atomic energy policy. Though he responded politely when they offered their views, he acted decisively only in consultation with Churchill. Bush and Conant appear to have lost a large measure of their influence because they had used it to oppose Churchill's position. What they did not suspect was the extent to which the President had come to share the Prime Minister's view.

Roosevelt was perfectly comfortable with the concept Churchill advocated – that military power was a prerequisite to successful postwar diplomacy. As early as August 1941, during the Atlantic Conference, Roosevelt had rejected the idea that an "effective international organization" could be relied upon to keep the peace: an Anglo-American international police force would be far more effective, he told Churchill.¹⁸ By the spring of 1942 the concept had broadened: the two "policemen" became four, and the idea was added that every other nation would be totally disarmed. "The Four Policemen" would have "to build up a reservoir of force so powerful that no aggressor would dare to challenge it," Roosevelt told Arthur Sweetser, an

ardent internationalist. Violators first would be quarantined, and, if they persisted in their disruptive activities, bombed at the rate of a city a day until they agreed to behave. A year later, at the Tehran Conference, Roosevelt again discussed his idea, this time with Stalin. As Robert A. Divine has noted: "Roosevelt's concept of big power domination remained the central idea in his approach to international organization throughout World War II."¹⁹

Precisely how Roosevelt expected to integrate the atomic bomb into his plans for keeping the peace in the postwar world is not clear. However, against the background of his atomic energy policy decisions of 1943 and his peace-keeping concepts, his actions in 1944 suggest that he intended to take full advantage of the bomb's potential as a postwar instrument of Anglo-American diplomacy. If Roosevelt thought the bomb could be used to create a more peaceful world order, he seems to have considered the threat of its power more effective than any opportunities it offered for international cooperation. If Roosevelt was less worried than Churchill about Soviet postwar ambitions, he was no less determined than the Prime Minister to avoid any commitments to the Soviets for the international control of atomic energy. There could still be four policemen, but only two of them would have the bomb.

The atomic energy policies Roosevelt pursued during the remainder of his life reinforce this interpretation of his ideas for the postwar period. The following three questions offer a useful framework for analyzing his intentions. Did Roosevelt make any additional agreements with Churchill that would further support the view that he intended to maintain an Anglo-American monopoly after the war? Did Roosevelt demonstrate any interest in the international control of atomic energy? Was Roosevelt aware that an effort to maintain an Anglo-American monopoly of the atomic bomb might lead to a postwar atomic arms race with the Soviet Union?

The alternatives placed before Roosevelt posed a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, he could continue to exclude the Soviet government from any official information about the development of the bomb, a policy that would probably strengthen America's postwar military-diplomatic position. But such a policy would also encourage Soviet mistrust of Anglo-American intentions and was bound to make postwar cooperation more difficult. On the other hand, Roosevelt could use the atomic bomb project as an instrument of cooperation by informing Stalin of the American government's intention of cooperating in the development of a plan for the international control of atomic weapons, an objective that might never be achieved.

Either choice involved serious risks. Roosevelt had to balance the diplomatic advantages of being well ahead of the Soviet Union in atomic energy production after the war against the advantages of initiating wartime negotiations for postwar cooperation. The issue here, it must be emphasized, is not whether international control was likely to be successful, but rather whether Roosevelt demonstrated any serious interest in laying the groundwork for such a policy.

Roosevelt knew at this time, moreover, that the Soviets were finding out on their own about the development of the atomic bomb. Security personnel had reported an active Communist cell in the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California. Their reports indicated that at least one scientist at Berkeley was selling information to Russian agents.²⁰ "They [Soviet agents] are already getting information about vital secrets and sending them to Russia," Stimson told the President on September 9, 1943. If Roosevelt was indeed worried to death about the effect the atomic bomb could have on Soviet-American postwar relations, he took no action to remove the potential danger, nor did he make any effort to explore the possibility of encouraging Soviet postwar cooperation on this problem.

Had Roosevelt avoided all postwar atomic energy commitments, his lack of support for international control could have been interpreted as an attempt to reserve his opinion on the best course to follow. But he had made commitments in 1943 supporting Churchill's monopolistic, anti-Soviet position, and he continued to make others in 1944. On June 13, for example, Roosevelt and Churchill signed an Agreement and Declaration of Trust, specifying that the United States and Great Britain would cooperate in seeking to control available supplies of uranium and thorium ore both during and after the war.²¹ This commitment, taken against the background of Roosevelt's peacekeeping ideas and his other commitments, suggests that the President's attitude toward the international control of atomic energy was similar to the Prime Minister's.

Churchill rejected the assumption that international control of atomic energy could be used as a cornerstone for constructing a peaceful world order. An atomic monopoly would be a significant diplomatic advantage in postwar diplomacy, and Churchill did not believe that anything useful could be gained by surrendering this advantage. The argument that a new weapon created a unique opportunity to refashion international affairs ignored every lesson Churchill read into history. "You can be quite sure," he would write in a memorandum less than a year later, "that any power that gets hold of the secret will try to make the article and this touches the existence of human society. This matter is out of all relation to anything else that exists in the world, and I could not think of participating in any disclosure to third or fourth parties at the present time."²²

When Roosevelt and Churchill met at Hyde Park in September 1944 following the second wartime conference at Quebec, they signed an *aide-mémoire* on atomic energy. The agreement bears the markings of Churchill's attitude toward the atomic bomb. It contained an explicit rejection of any wartime efforts toward international control: "The suggestion that the world should be informed regarding tube alloys [the atomic bomb], with a view to an international agreement regarding its control and use, is not accepted. The matter should continue to be regarded as of the utmost secrecy." The *aide-mémoire* then revealed the full extent of Roosevelt's agreement with Churchill's point of view. "Full collaboration between the United States and

the British Government in developing tube alloys for military and commercial purposes," it noted, "should continue after the defeat of Japan unless and until terminated by joint agreement." Finally the *aide-mémoire* offers some insight into Roosevelt's intentions for the military use of the weapon in the war: "When a bomb is finally available, it might perhaps, after mature consideration, be used against the Japanese, who should be warned that this bombardment will be repeated until they surrender."²³

Within the context of the complex problem of the origins of the Cold War the Hyde Park meeting is far more important than historians of the war generally have recognized.²⁴ Overshadowed by the Second Quebec Conference on one side and by the drama of Yalta on the other, its significance often has been overlooked. But the agreements reached in September 1944 reflect a set of attitudes, aims, and assumptions that guided the relationship between the atomic bomb and American diplomacy during the Roosevelt administration and, through the transfer of its atomic legacy, during the Truman administration as well. Two alternatives had been recognized long before Roosevelt and Churchill met in 1944 at Hyde Park: the bomb could have been used to initiate a diplomatic effort to work out a system for its international control, or it could remain isolated during the war from any cooperative initiatives and held in reserve should cooperation fail. Roosevelt consistently favored the latter alternative. An insight into his reasoning is found in a memorandum Bush wrote following a conversation with Roosevelt several days after the Hyde Park meeting: "The President evidently thought he could join with Churchill in bringing about a US-UK postwar agreement on this subject [the atomic bomb] by which it would be held closely and presumably to control the peace of the world."²⁵ By 1944 Roosevelt's earlier musings about the Four Policemen had faded into the background. But the idea behind it, the concept of controlling the peace of the world by amassing overwhelming military power, appears to have remained a prominent feature of his postwar plans.

Harry S Truman inherited a set of military and diplomatic atomic energy policies that included partially formulated intentions, several commitments to Churchill, and the assumption that the bomb would be a legitimate weapon to be used against Japan. But no policy was definitely settled. According to the Quebec Agreement the President had the option of deciding the future of the commercial aspects of the atomic energy partnership according to his own estimate of what was fair.²⁶ Although the policy of "utmost secrecy" had been confirmed at Hyde Park the previous September, Roosevelt had not informed his atomic energy advisers about the *aide-mémoire* he and Churchill signed. Although the assumption that the bomb would be used in the war was shared by those privy to its development, assumptions formulated early in the war were not necessarily valid at its conclusion. Yet Truman was bound to the past by his own uncertain position and by the prestige of his predecessor.²⁷ Since Roosevelt had refused to open negotiations with the Soviet government for the international control of atomic energy, and since he had never

expressed any objection to the wartime use of the bomb, it would have required considerable political courage and confidence for Truman to alter those policies. Moreover it would have required the encouragement of his advisers, for under the circumstances the most serious constraint on the new President's choices was his dependence upon advice. So Truman's atomic legacy, while it included several options, did not necessarily entail complete freedom to choose from among all the possible alternatives.

"I think it is very important that I should have a talk with you as soon as possible on a highly secret matter," Stimson wrote to Truman on April 24. It has "such a bearing on our present foreign relations and has such an important effect upon all my thinking in this field that I think you ought to know about it without further delay."²⁸ Stimson had been preparing to brief Truman on the atomic bomb for almost ten days, but in the preceding twenty-four hours he had been seized by a sense of urgency. Relations with the Soviet Union had declined precipitously. The State Department had been urging Truman to get tough with the Russians.²⁹ He had. Twenty-four hours earlier the President met with the Soviet Foreign Minister, V. M. Molotov, and "with rather brutal frankness" accused his government of breaking the Yalta Agreement. Molotov was furious. "I have never been talked to like that in my life," he told the President before leaving.³⁰

With a memorandum on the "political aspects of the S-1 [atomic bomb's] performance" in hand, Stimson went to the White House on April 25. The document he carried was the distillation of numerous decisions already taken, each one the product of attitudes that developed along with the new weapon. The Secretary of War himself was not entirely aware of how various forces had shaped these decisions: the recommendations of Bush and Conant, the policies Roosevelt had followed, the uncertainties inherent in the wartime alliance, the oppressive concern for secrecy, and his own inclination to consider long-range implications. It was a curious document. Though its language revealed Stimson's sensitivity to the historic significance of the atomic bomb, he did not question the wisdom of using it against Japan. Nor did he suggest any concrete steps for developing a postwar policy. His objective was to inform Truman of the salient problems: the possibility of an atomic arms race, the danger of atomic war, and the necessity for international control if the United Nations Organization was to work. "If the problem of the proper use of this weapon can be solved," he wrote, "we would have the opportunity to bring the world into a pattern in which the peace of the world and our civilizations can be saved." To cope with this difficult challenge Stimson suggested the "establishment of a select committee" to consider the postwar problems inherent in the development of the bomb.³¹

What emerges from a careful reading of Stimson's diary, his memorandum of April 25 to Truman, a summary by Groves of the meeting, and Truman's recollections is an argument for overall caution in American diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union:³² it was an argument against any showdown. Since the atomic bomb was potentially the most dangerous issue facing the

postwar world and since the most desirable resolution of the problem was some form of international control, Soviet cooperation had to be secured. It was imprudent, Stimson suggested, to pursue a policy that would preclude the possibility of international cooperation on atomic energy matters after the war ended. Truman's overall impression of Stimson's argument was that the Secretary of War was "at least as much concerned with the role of the atomic bomb in the shaping of history as in its capacity to shorten the war."³³ These were indeed Stimson's dual concerns on April 25, and he could see no conflict between them.

Despite the profound consequences Stimson attributed to the development of the new weapon, he had not suggested that Truman reconsider its use against Japan. Nor had he thought to mention the possibility that chances of securing Soviet postwar cooperation might be diminished if Stalin did not receive a commitment to international control prior to an attack. Until the bomb's "actual certainty [was] fixed," Stimson considered any prior approach to Stalin as premature.³⁴ As the uncertainties of impending peace became more apparent and worrisome, Stimson, Truman, and the Secretary of State-designate, James F. Byrnes, began to think of the bomb as something of a diplomatic panacea for their postwar problems. Byrnes had told Truman in April that the bomb "might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war."³⁵ By June, Truman and Stimson were discussing "further *quid pro quos* which should be established in consideration for our taking them [the Soviet Union] into [atomic energy] partnership." Assuming that the bomb's impact on diplomacy would be immediate and extraordinary, they agreed on no less than "the settlement of the Polish, Rumanian, Yugoslavian, and Manchurian problems." But they also concluded that no revelation would be made "to Russia or anyone else until the first bomb had been successfully laid on Japan."³⁶

Was an implicit warning to Moscow, then, the principal reason for deciding to use the atomic bomb against Japan? In light of the ambiguity of the available evidence the question defies an unequivocal answer. What can be said with certainty is that Truman, Stimson, Byrnes, and several others involved in the decision consciously considered two effects of a combat demonstration of the bomb's power: first, the impact of the atomic attack on Japan's leaders, who might be persuaded thereby to end the war; and second, the impact of that attack on the Soviet Union's leaders, who might then prove to be more cooperative. But if the assumption that the bomb might bring the war to a rapid conclusion was the principal motive for using the atomic bomb, the expectation that its use would also inhibit Soviet diplomatic ambitions clearly discouraged any inclination to question that assumption.

Thus by the end of the war the most influential and widely accepted attitude toward the bomb was a logical extension of how the weapon was seen and valued earlier – as a potential instrument of diplomacy. Caught between the remnants of war and the uncertainties of peace, policymakers were trapped by the logic of their own unquestioned assumptions. By the summer

of 1945 not only the conclusion of the war but the organization of an acceptable peace seemed to depend upon the success of the atomic attacks against Japan. When news of the successful atomic test of July 16 reached the President at the Potsdam Conference, he was visibly elated.³⁷ Stimson noted that Truman "was tremendously pepped up by it and spoke to me of it again and again when I saw him. He said it gave him an entirely new feeling of confidence." The day after receiving the complete report of the test Truman altered his negotiating style. According to Churchill the President "got to the meeting after having read this report [and] he was a changed man. He told the Russians just where they got on and off and generally bossed the whole meeting."³⁸ After the plenary session on July 24 Truman "casually mentioned to Stalin" that the United States had "a new weapon of unusual destructive force."³⁹ In less than three weeks the new weapon's destructive potential was demonstrated to the world. Upon learning of the raid against Hiroshima Truman exclaimed: "This is the greatest thing in history."⁴⁰

As Stimson had expected, as a colossal reality the bomb was very different. But had American diplomacy been altered by it? Those who conducted diplomacy became more confident, more certain that through the accomplishments of American science, technology, and industry the "new world" could be made into one better than the old. But just how the atomic bomb would be used to help accomplish this ideal remained unclear. Three months and one day after Hiroshima was bombed Bush wrote that the whole matter of international relations on atomic energy "is in a thoroughly chaotic condition."⁴¹ The wartime relationship between atomic energy policy and diplomacy had been based upon the simple assumption that the Soviet government would surrender important geographical, political, and ideological objectives in exchange for the neutralization of the new weapon. As a result of policies based on this assumption American diplomacy and prestige suffered grievously: an opportunity to gauge the Soviet Union's response during the war to the international control of atomic energy was missed, and an atomic energy policy for dealing with the Soviet government after the war was ignored. Instead of promoting American postwar aims, wartime atomic energy policies made them more difficult to achieve. As a group of scientists at the University of Chicago's atomic energy laboratory presciently warned the government in June 1945: "It may be difficult to persuade the world that a nation which was capable of secretly preparing and suddenly releasing a weapon as indiscriminate as the [German] rocket bomb and a million times more destructive, is to be trusted in its proclaimed desire of having such weapons abolished by international agreement."⁴² This reasoning, however, flowed from alternative assumptions formulated during the closing months of the war by scientists far removed from the wartime policymaking process. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the culmination of that process, became the symbols of a new American barbarism, reinforcing charges, with dramatic circumstantial evidence, that the policies of the United States contributed to the origins of the Cold War.⁴³

Notes

- 1 Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, 1947), 637.
- 2 Compare the evidence and interpretations in the following studies: Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York, 1965); Herbert Feis, *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* (Princeton, NJ, 1966); Richard G. Hewlett and Oscar E. Anderson, Jr, *The New World 1939/1946: A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission*, Vol. 1 (University Park, PA, 1962); and Walter Smith Schoenberger, *Decision of Destiny* (Athens, OH, 1969).
- 3 These views are represented in the following books and articles: Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy*, 12–13; William Bullitt, “How We Won the War and Lost the Peace,” *Life* (August 30, 1948): 82–97; Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “Origins of the Cold War,” *Foreign Affairs*, 46 (1967): 26–9; and Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, NJ, 1957), 596–8.
- 4 The critical breakthrough was made by Otto R. Frisch and Rudolph E. Peierls in April 1940. For details of the British contribution, see Margaret Gowing, *Britain and Atomic Energy* (London, 1964), pt 1, app. 1.
- 5 Bush to Roosevelt, July 16, 1941; Roosevelt to Bush, March 11, 1942: President’s Secretary’s File [hereafter PSF], Bush folder, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library [hereafter FDRL], Hyde Park, NY; Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War* (New York, 1962), Vol. 4: *The Hinge of Fate*, 330.
- 6 This option was impractical due to scarce resources and the danger to project sites from German bombing. Quotation from Gowing, *Britain*, 73, 78.
- 7 “Minute from Sir John Anderson to Prime Minister, 30.7.42,” in *ibid.*, app. 3, 437–8.
- 8 James B. Conant to Vannevar Bush, “Some thoughts concerning the S-1 project,” October 26, 1942, Atomic Energy Commission [hereafter AEC] doc. 295.
- 9 Conant to Bush, March 25, 1943, Harry Hopkins Papers [hereafter HHP], A-Bomb folder, FDRL; Conant to Bush, “US – British Relations on S-1 Project,” November 13, 1942, AEC doc. 310; Leslie R. Groves, “Diplomatic History of the Manhattan Project” [hereafter “DHMP”], 7, 9, in Manhattan Engineer District Files [hereafter MED Files], National Archives. The Manhattan Engineer District, most commonly referred to as the Manhattan Project, was the cover name assigned by the United States Army to the atomic energy project.
- 10 Memorandum by Stimson, October 29, 1942, in Groves, “DHMP,” annex 5.
- 11 “Excerpt from Report to the President by the Military Policy Committee, December 15, 1942, with Particular Reference to Recommendations Relating to Future Relations with the British and Canadians,” in *ibid.*, annex 6; Roosevelt to Bush, December 28, 1942, PSF, Bush folder; Conant, “Memorandum on the interchange with the British and Canadians on S-1,” January 7, 1943, AEC doc. 152.
- 12 Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History* (New York, 1948), 202, 704; Churchill to Roosevelt, April 1, 1943, HHP, A-Bomb folder.
- 13 Conant to Bush, March 23, 1943, HHP, A-Bomb folder.
- 14 Harvey Bundy, “Memorandum of Meeting at 10 Downing Street on July 23, 1943,” in Groves, “DHMP,” annex 11; Bush to Conant, July 23, 1943, AEC doc. 312.
- 15 Their arguments can be followed in Hewlett and Anderson, *New World*, 270–80; but see also Bush to Hopkins, March 31, 1943, HHP, A-Bomb folder.
- 16 Hopkins to Roosevelt, July 20, 1943; Roosevelt to Bush, July 20, 1943; Roosevelt to Churchill, July 20, 1943, HHP, A-Bomb folder.
- 17 Articles of Agreement Governing Collaboration between the Authorities of the USA, and the UK in the Matter of Tube Alloys [hereafter Quebec Agreement], in Groves, “DHMP,” annex 18; also in Gowing, *Britain*, app. 4. “Tube Alloys” was the British code name for the atomic energy project.

- 18 *Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter *FRUS*], 1941 (Washington, DC, 1958), Vol. 1: 363, 365–6.
- 19 Roosevelt, quoted in “Mr Sweetser’s Notes,” May 29, 1942, Arthur Sweetser Papers, box 39, Library of Congress [hereafter LC]. This memorandum was brought to my attention by Mr Günter Brauch. See also *FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran*, 1943 (Washington, DC, 1961), 530–2, and Robert A. Divine, *Roosevelt and World War II* (Baltimore, MD, 1970), 58.
- 20 See the testimony of Groves and of John Landsdale, Jr, in United States Atomic Energy Commission, *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer: Transcript of Hearing before Personnel Security Board* (Washington, DC, 1954), 163–80, especially 171–4, and 258–81; Nuel Pharr Davis, *Lawrence and Oppenheimer* (New York, 1968), 191–2. Though the exact information being passed was not known, there can be no doubt that by the spring of 1944 Roosevelt was aware of Soviet interest in the Manhattan Project. See also Niels Bohr to Roosevelt, July 3, 1944, J. Robert Oppenheimer Papers [hereafter JROP], box 34, Frankfurter-Bohr folder.
- 21 Agreement and Declaration of Trust, June 13, 1944, in Groves, “DHMP,” annex 22a; also in Gowing, *Britain*, app. 7.
- 22 Churchill, quoted in Gowing, *Britain*, 360.
- 23 For the *aide-mémoire*, see Gowing, *Britain*, 447.
- 24 Herbert Feis mentions it in *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*, 33–4. He does not, however, draw out its full implications. See also John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York, 1972), 87.
- 25 Bush to Conant, September 25, 1944, AEC doc. 280.
- 26 See point four of the Quebec Agreement, in Gowing, *Britain*, app. 4: 439.
- 27 Kenneth Glazier, Jr, “The Decision to Use Atomic Weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” *Public Policy*, 18 (1969): 463–516. Glazier emphasizes the bureaucratic momentum toward this decision.
- 28 Stimson to Truman, April 24, 1945, in Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1: 1945: *Year of Decisions* (Garden City, MO, 1955), 85.
- 29 Stimson, diary, April 23, 1945, Henry L. Stimson Papers, Yale University Library.
- 30 Truman, *Year of Decisions*, 82; William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York, 1950), 351; Walter Millis (ed.), *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, 1951), 48–51.
- 31 Stimson, “Memorandum discussed with the President,” in his diary, April 25, 1945.
- 32 Stimson, diary, April 25, 1945; Groves, “Report of Meeting with the President, April 25, 1945,” in Records of the Chief of Engineers, Commanding General’s File 24, tab, D, MED Files; Truman, *Year of Decisions*, 87.
- 33 Truman, *Year of Decisions*, 87.
- 34 Stimson, diary, May 31, 1945.
- 35 Byrnes, quoted in Truman, *Year of Decisions*, 87.
- 36 Stimson, diary, June 6, 1945.
- 37 Truman scheduled the Potsdam Conference to coincide with the test of the atomic bomb. See Stimson, diary, June 6, 1945; Joseph E. Davies, diary, May 21, 1945, Joseph E. Davies Papers, box 17, LC; Hewlett and Anderson, *New World*, 352; and Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy*, 62–90.
- 38 Stimson, diary, July 21, 1945; Churchill is quoted in *ibid.*, July 22, 1945.
- 39 Truman, *Year of Decisions*, 416. Stalin knew that Truman was referring to the atomic bomb. See Georgii K. Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*, tr. APN (New York, 1971), 674–5. In addition to Truman’s own description of his studied attempt to avoid any serious discussion with Stalin about the atomic bomb, see Charles E. Bohlen to Herbert Feis, January 25, 1960, Herbert Feis Papers, box 14, LC.
- 40 Truman, *Year of Decisions*, 421.
- 41 Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service*, 637; Bush to Conant, November 7, 1945, Vannevar Bush Papers, box 27, LC.

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- 42 "The Franck Report," June 11, 1945, in Alice Kimball Smith, *A Peril and a Hope: The Atomic Scientists' Movement, 1945-1947* (Chicago, 1965), app. B.
- 43 The charge was first made in the West by British physicist P. M. S. Blackett: "So we may conclude that the dropping of the atomic bomb was not so much the last military act of the second World War, as the first major operation of the cold diplomatic war with Russia now in progress." *Fear, War and the Bomb: Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy* (London, 1948), 139.

STALIN AND THE BOMB

David Holloway

*In his pathbreaking book, Sherwin argued that from its inception US policymakers regarded the atomic bomb as an instrument of diplomacy. Until recently, however, there was uncertainty about how Stalin regarded the advent of atomic power. Some analysts maintained that it did not shape his thinking or his strategy, even though he immediately embarked upon a determined effort to catch up with the United States. Indeed we have known for quite some time that as soon as President Harry S Truman intimated at the Potsdam Conference on July 20, 1945 that the United States possessed a powerful new weapon, Stalin suspected that it was the atomic bomb. His secret agents had been spying on the Manhattan Project for most of the war. After Hiroshima, Stalin put the Soviet atomic project under the auspices of Lavrentii Beria, the former head of the NKVD, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, or secret police. His mandate was to get the Bomb as soon as possible. Beria was an able organizer. He was also a ruthless bureaucrat and obedient servant of Stalin. 'An order from any Politburo member,' writes David Holloway, 'carried great authority, but an order from Beria was a matter of life and death.'**

*In his book, *Stalin and the Bomb*, Holloway analyzes Stalin's thinking with great subtlety and sophistication. Previously, Holloway had written extensively about the Soviet Union and the strategic arms race. But with the appearance of new Soviet archival materials, Holloway was able to write about Stalin's plans and actions with much greater precision and authority. As the extract that follows suggests, Stalin's attitudes about the Bomb were complex. He certainly believed that it constituted a powerful new factor in international politics. The American monopoly of the Bomb increased his desire to avoid war, but it did not necessarily make him more conciliatory. The Bomb, argues Holloway, both restrained and constrained Stalin, but also made him more ornery and less cooperative.*

Readers of this excerpt should ponder whether Stalin was right to think that the Americans wanted to use the Bomb as a tool of coercive diplomacy. Did Stalin shrewdly grasp that the Bomb was probably unusable in war, but a mighty club in peace? Did he intuit correctly that concessions under pressure would only tempt the Americans to use their leverage more frequently? Or did Stalin's recalcitrance in

* David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1938–1956* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 134.

the face of American power and his penchant to engage in a 'war of nerves' reinforce American predilections to think that he was a defiant, cynical, and aggressive adversary intent on world domination? What options did Stalin have given his fears of revived German power and his assumption of innate capitalist hostility? Were there ways of breaking out of the security dilemma in which US efforts to prolong its monopoly and Soviet efforts to acquire parallel capabilities perpetuated and magnified fears of each other's intentions?

* * *

Stalin believed at the end of World War II that postwar international relations would resemble those of the interwar period. Germany and Japan would rise from defeat. World capitalism would run into crisis, and sharp contradictions would emerge between the leading capitalist states. These contradictions would lead inevitably to a new world war. Since the Soviet Union would be drawn into this war, as it had been drawn into World War II, it had to be prepared. Exactly when or how the war would start was not clear, but it was clear that it would happen, probably after about twenty years, the interval of time between World War I and World War II.

The atomic bomb did not alter Stalin's conception of the postwar world. The bomb was, nevertheless, a factor which had to be taken into account in military strategy and foreign policy. War plans and military theory tell us something about the way in which the Soviet Union hoped to counter the United States atomic air offensive, and use its own nuclear weapons, in the event of war. They do not, however, reveal how Stalin assessed the impact of the atomic bomb on international relations. Stalin said very little about the bomb between 1946 and 1953, and what he did say was intended to create a particular impression. His statements have to be interpreted in the context of Soviet foreign policy.

After Hiroshima Stalin saw no immediate danger of war. Atomic diplomacy seemed to him the greater threat – atomic bombs were “meant to frighten those with weak nerves,” he told Alexander Werth in September 1946 – and he took steps to show that the Soviet Union would not be intimidated. This remained the basic Soviet position as the Cold War took shape in 1947. The Soviet leaders regarded the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan as attempts to put pressure on the Soviet Union, and to weaken its influence in Europe, but they did not see these developments as the prelude to war.

When the British government decided in February 1947 that it could no longer supply aid to Greece and Turkey, Truman resolved to step into the breach. In his address to Congress on March 12, 1947 he framed the issue in a stark and dramatic way. “Totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States,” he declared. The United States should “support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”¹

Six days later, Nikolai Novikov, who had returned from Washington to Moscow to take part in a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, discussed Truman's speech with Molotov. The speech showed, said Novikov, that the United States would support "reactionary regimes" in those countries where they existed, and would try to undermine the progressive regimes of Eastern Europe. Molotov replied with an ironical smile, Novikov writes in his memoirs. "The President is trying to intimidate us," Molotov said, "to turn us at a stroke into obedient little boys. But we don't give a damn. At the meeting of the Council [of Foreign Ministers] we will firmly pursue our principled line."²

Germany was the main topic at the Moscow meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, which lasted for six weeks in March and April 1947. No progress was made towards a peace settlement. General George Marshall, who had replaced Byrnes as Secretary of State in January, was worried by this situation, and alarmed by the attitude of Stalin, whom he met on April 15. Stalin described the talks on Germany so far as "only the first skirmishes and brushes of reconnaissance forces on this question." "It was necessary to be patient and not to become depressed," he added.³ Marshall took this to mean that Stalin believed that Soviet interests were best served by political stalemate while the economic situation in Western Europe worsened. On his return to Washington Marshall asked George Kennan to work out a plan of action for Europe.⁴

Marshall first publicly mentioned the idea of large-scale economic assistance for Europe on June 5, 1947. There was as yet no detailed plan, for American aid was to be given in response to coordinated initiatives by the European governments. The Soviet Union was not excluded from participation, though neither Marshall nor Kennan believed that it would cooperate on terms acceptable to the United States.⁵ Novikov cabled Moscow on June 9 that Marshall's proposal was a "perfectly clear outline for a West European bloc directed against us."⁶ In spite of such suspicions, Molotov went to Paris at the end of June to discuss the plan with the British and French foreign ministers.⁷ The Soviet Union was willing, he said, to cooperate in establishing what aid Europe needed and how that aid might be obtained from the United States.⁸ It soon appeared, however, that Britain and France had no intention of agreeing to a plan that the Soviet Union would accept.⁹ Molotov accused the British and the French of seeking to create a new organization that would infringe upon the sovereignty of the European states: "it is now proposed to make the possibility of any country's obtaining American credits dependent on its obedience to the above-mentioned organization and its 'Steering Committee'."¹⁰ He then withdrew from the conference.¹¹

Molotov recalled towards the end of his life that he had come to his senses. "At first we in the Foreign Ministry wanted to propose to all the socialist countries to take part," he said,

but we quickly surmised that that would be wrong. They were sucking us into their company, but in a subordinate role. We would

have been dependent on them, but would clearly have got nothing, while we would have undoubtedly been dependent. And even more so the Czechs, Poles, they were in a difficult position . . .¹²

Fear that the countries of Eastern Europe would come under American hegemony lay behind Moscow's rejection of the Marshall Plan. Moscow now instructed the governments of Eastern Europe to reject the plan as well.¹³

In August 1947, after these developments, Novikov wrote a memorandum at Molotov's request.¹⁴ The Marshall Plan, he argued, was formulated as a way of putting the Truman Doctrine into practice. It envisaged the formation of an American–West European bloc directed against the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. After discussing the ways in which the United States planned to attain this goal, Novikov concluded that

the adoption of all these measures would make it possible to create a strategic ring around the USSR, passing in the west through West Germany and the West European countries, in the north through a network of bases on the northern islands of the Atlantic Ocean, and also in Canada and Alaska, in the east through Japan and China, and in the south through the countries of the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

Molotov described this memorandum as a "useful document."¹⁵

The strategic situation had taken a turn for the worse. The United States now had the initiative in Europe. Stalin decided to create a new organization to coordinate the activities of the European communist parties.¹⁶ The founding meeting of the Communist Information Bureau (the Cominform) was held in Szklarska Poręba, a spa near Wrocław, from September 22 to 29, 1947. Delegates came from all the countries of Eastern Europe apart from Albania, as well as from France and Italy, which had the two largest communist parties in Western Europe.¹⁷

Zhdanov's report on the international situation was one of the key postwar statements of Soviet foreign policy. He echoed the Truman Doctrine by saying that there were now two diametrically opposed camps in world politics: the imperialist and anti-democratic camp, which was preparing a "new imperialist war," and the anti-imperialist camp, which was struggling "against the threat of new wars and imperialist expansion."¹⁸ American imperialism was searching for markets for its goods and capital, and using economic aid to extort concessions from other countries and to subjugate them; it was building up its military power, stockpiling atomic bombs, and building bases around the world.

The Soviet Union, the new democracies of Eastern Europe, and the working class in the capitalist countries stood in the way of American expansion, Zhdanov argued. Wicked and unbalanced politicians, like Churchill, were proposing a preventive war against the Soviet Union, and calling for the use

of the “temporary American monopoly on atomic weapons” against Soviet people.¹⁹ But the overwhelming majority of Americans did not want war and the sacrifices it would entail. Monopoly capital was trying to overcome the opposition to expansionism, but the warmongers knew that, because the Soviet Union had won immense popularity during the war, long ideological preparation would be needed before they could send their soldiers to fight the Soviet Union.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, Zhdanov asserted, were part of the policy of expansion aimed at bringing West European states under American control and at “restoring the power of imperialism in the countries of the new democracy and forcing them to reject close economic and political collaboration with the Soviet Union.”²⁰ The Truman Doctrine was an attempt to intimidate the countries of Eastern and southeastern Europe; the Marshall Plan aimed to lure them into a trap and shackle them with “assistance.” Communists had to close ranks, and to lead all anti-Fascist freedom-loving forces in the struggle against the American plans for enslaving Europe.

Although he pointed to imperialist preparations for war, Zhdanov insisted that there was a huge distance between the desire to unleash a new world war and the possibility of doing so. “The peoples of the world do not want war,” he asserted.²¹ Imperialist agents were raising a ballyhoo about the danger of war in order to frighten those who were unstable or had weak nerves, and to obtain concessions by means of blackmail. The main danger for the working class was in underestimating its own strength and exaggerating the strength of the enemy. The “Munich policy” of appeasement had encouraged Hitler’s aggression, and concessions to the American imperialists would have a similar effect.

Zhdanov’s report, which had been approved by Stalin, struck a more militant tone than previous Soviet statements.²² There were limits, however, to the degree of confrontation that Stalin sought. His aim was to put pressure on West European governments, not to bring the class war in individual countries to the point of revolution.²³ A wave of strikes swept France and Italy in October and November 1947, but the communist parties, which had recently been pushed out of coalition governments in those countries, had no success in turning these strikes against the Marshall Plan. In December Stalin, apparently worried that disorder might lead to civil war, indicated to the French and Italian communist leaders that they should restrain their supporters, and draw back from confrontation.²⁴

In organizing the Cominform, Stalin rejected the idea – which he had tolerated after the war – that communist parties could act independently, each pursuing its own path to socialism.²⁵ He now took steps to consolidate the Soviet position in Eastern Europe by replacing coalition governments, whether genuine or bogus, with a communist monopoly of power. The most dramatic instance of this took place in Prague in February 1948 when the communists, who already formed part of the government, seized complete control.²⁶

The same impulse to exercise control brought about the rift with Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav communists, who had come to power by their own efforts, had a self-assurance that other East European leaders lacked.²⁷ When Stalin learned in January 1948 that Yugoslavia had promised to send a division to Albania to guard the border with Greece, he sent a message to Belgrade warning that the "Anglo-Saxons" might use this as a pretext for military intervention to "defend" Albania's independence. A further message followed, with a more threatening tone: it was "abnormal" that Yugoslavia should take such a decision without consulting the Soviet Union or even informing it.²⁸

Stalin summoned a Yugoslav delegation to Moscow. He made clear his opposition to insurrectionism, and declared that the revolution in Greece should be folded up. He also made it clear that Moscow was determined to control the foreign policies of its allies. At Soviet insistence, Molotov and Edvard Kardelj, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, signed an agreement on consultation in foreign policy.²⁹ This did not settle the rift, however. At Szklarska Poręba the Yugoslavs had supported Moscow's view that communist parties had to act in concert. Now Yugoslavia found itself isolated in asserting the very principle of party autonomy that it had helped to undermine. On June 28, 1948 the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia and called on Yugoslav communists to overthrow Tito's regime. Stalin mistakenly believed that "healthy" (pro-Soviet) elements would replace Tito with someone more pliable.³⁰

By the end of 1947 the Cold War had begun in earnest. In Moscow's view, however, there was no immediate danger of war. Zhdanov had ruled out this danger in his report to the Cominform meeting. The Central Committee did not consider war to be imminent, Malenkov told Pietro Nenni on November 25, 1947. The United States was not in a position to start a war, he said, but was conducting a cold war, a war of nerves, with the aim of blackmail. The Soviet Union would not be intimidated, and would persist with its policy. All the forces of peace had to be mobilized. When the United States decided to start a war, said Malenkov, it would not declare it first, but would foment it in Europe by using Greece, De Gaulle if he came to power in France, De Gasperi in Italy, or Franco in Spain.³¹

Although postwar demobilization came to an end in 1947, Soviet military policy did not betray any fear that war was imminent. In December 1947 Viacheslav Malyshev was appointed deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers with special responsibility for military research, development, and production.³² This suggests that some increase in military production and research and development was now planned, but there is no evidence of a build-up of forces in 1947 or 1948.³³ The Soviet leaders continued to regard the atomic bomb, in the short term at least, as a political rather than a military threat.

On November 6, 1947, in a speech to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution, Molotov claimed that

a sort of new religion has become widespread among expansionist circles in the USA: having no faith in their own internal forces, they put their faith in the secret of the atomic bomb, *although this secret has long ceased to be a secret.*³⁴ [Emphasis added]

The timing of this remark was not dictated by any particular development in the atomic project; it was tied, rather, to the international situation following the formation of the Cominform. It was a move in the war of nerves, an attempt once again to disabuse the United States of the idea that it could gain political advantage from the bomb.

The Truman administration did not take Molotov's statement seriously and felt secure in its monopoly.³⁵ Moscow, however, seems to have believed that the statement carried some credibility. The secret bulletin of the Central Committee's information bureau reported that it had been treated as a sensation by the Western press. "The majority of reactionary politicians and journalists," it continued,

realizing that the broad masses of the people will certainly believe Comrade Molotov's statement, and that the imperialist camp has lost thereby one of its most powerful means for blackmailing people, try to prove that the Soviet Union, knowing the secret of the atomic bomb, has not yet mastered the "technology of production" in this area.³⁶

The Berlin blockade of June 1948 was the first nuclear crisis of the Cold War. With the growing division of Europe the German question had moved increasingly to center stage. The Council of Foreign Ministers met in London in November–December 1947 to make another attempt to devise a German settlement. Once again Molotov pressed for reparations and for four-power control of the Ruhr, and argued for an all-German government that could negotiate a peace agreement with the Allies. Against the background of widespread strikes in Western Europe, however, Soviet proposals were regarded with suspicion by the United States and Britain, which feared that a unified Germany would fall prey to Soviet subversion.³⁷ The London meeting failed to produce agreement, and this failure reinforced the growing Western belief that a separate West German state should be created. In February 1948 delegates from the United States, Britain, and France, and later from the Benelux countries as well, met in London to discuss the situation in Germany. On March 6 they announced preliminary agreement on the formation of a West German government. Further discussions resulted on June 1 in the London Program on procedures and a timetable.³⁸ This effectively closed the door to a four-power settlement of the German problem.

The Soviet Union protested against these moves, arguing that they contravened the Potsdam agreement on the formation of a unified, democratic German state.³⁹ On March 20, 1948 Marshal V.D. Sokolovskii, Commander-

in-Chief of the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany and the Soviet representative on the Allied Control Council, walked out of the council, declaring that the actions of the Western powers made it impossible for the council to continue its work.⁴⁰ On June 18 the Western powers informed the Soviet Union that a new currency – the Deutsche Mark – was to replace the Reichsmark in the western zones. Sokolovskii told the Western commanders that this was illegal and would complete the division of Germany. In retaliation, the Soviet Union introduced a new currency into all sectors of Berlin, whereupon the Western powers, on June 23, extended their currency reform to the western sectors of Berlin. On the following day the Soviet Union, claiming unspecified “technical difficulties,” imposed a blockade of rail, road, and water routes to Berlin.⁴¹

Stalin was engaged in what George Kennan called a “kind of squeeze play.”⁴² He wanted to force the Western powers either to give up their moves towards a separate West German state, or to relinquish West Berlin. At dinner in his *dacha* on January 10, 1948, and again a month later in a meeting with Yugoslav and Bulgarian communist leaders, Stalin had “stressed that Germany would remain divided: ‘The West will make Western Germany their own, and we shall turn Eastern Germany into our own state.’”⁴³ His main aim was to prevent the establishment of a West German state, but he may have regarded control over West Berlin as a more realistic goal by the summer of 1948 – Khrushchev later commented that “when access to West Berlin was cut off the purpose was more or less clear. We wanted to exert pressure on the West to create a unified Berlin in a GDR [German Democratic Republic] with closed borders.”⁴⁴

Soviet policy had another, more general, purpose. Soviet leaders regarded relations with the West as a war of nerves, and were determined to show that they would not be intimidated. That was a recurrent theme in Soviet speeches, and it had been the central message of Zhdanov’s report at the Cominform meeting. The attitude is nicely illustrated by a remark of Zhdanov to Jacques Duclos, one of the French delegates at the Cominform meeting. After the Yugoslavs had criticized French communist policy at the end of the war, Zhdanov said: “I think that Duclos agrees that we are not trying to say that an insurrection was called for.” But, he asked, “is it useful to disclose your own cards to the enemy? To say: I am unarmed. Then the enemy will say to you: good, I will beat you. The law of the class struggle is such that only the law of force counts.”⁴⁵ Khrushchev suggested the same kind of attitude when he described the blockade in his memoirs as “prodding the capitalist world with the tip of a bayonet.”⁴⁶ If the Western powers were able to set up a West German state unopposed, they would see the Soviet Union as a weak opponent and be encouraged to pursue a more active policy. It was important for the Soviet Union to take a stand.⁴⁷

The blockade confronted the Western powers with a serious dilemma: if they acquiesced in it, they would suffer the political setback of giving up West Berlin. If they made concessions on Germany, that would disrupt their plans

for postwar Europe. If they tried to remove the blockade by force, they would risk war. This does not mean that Stalin, in imposing the blockade, was willing to start a war. Alexander George and Richard Smoke have argued plausibly that the Berlin blockade was a “classical example of a low-risk, potentially high-gain strategy,” because it could be controlled and reversed. “Soviet leaders were not committed to persisting in the blockade,” they have written. “They could at any time find a solution to the ‘technical difficulties’ and open up ground access to West Berlin. Nor need the Soviets persist in the blockade if the Western powers threatened to overreact to it in ways that raised the danger of war.”⁴⁸

Andrei Gromyko, who was Deputy Foreign Minister at the time, later commented that “I believe that Stalin – of course nobody actually asked him directly – embarked on that affair in the certain knowledge that the conflict would not lead to nuclear war. He reckoned that the American administration was not run by frivolous people who would start a nuclear war over such a situation.”⁴⁹ Stalin wanted to apply pressure to achieve his goals, but he did not want to precipitate war. Although his policy caused alarm in the West – as it was intended to do – it is clear in retrospect that he behaved cautiously, and in the end he was willing to forgo his goals in the interests of avoiding war.⁵⁰

The Western powers organized an airlift of supplies to the western sectors of Berlin. Conceived at first as a temporary expedient, the airlift proved unexpectedly successful, and gradually the Western governments realized that they would be able to support their position in the city without resorting to arms. Now Stalin faced a choice between letting the airlift go ahead, thus forfeiting his political goals, and stopping the airlift, thereby increasing the risk of war. The Soviet Union had superior conventional forces in and around Berlin, but Stalin did not send up fighters to shoot down the Western transport aircraft, or to harass them; nor did he send up barrage balloons in the air lanes, or jam the Western air traffic control systems – steps he could have taken as part of a war of nerves.⁵¹

How was Stalin’s calculation of risk affected by the atomic bomb? He certainly recognized that it was a powerful weapon. In January 1948 he had waxed enthusiastic about the bomb: “That is a powerful thing, pow-er-ful!” His expression as he said this, according to Milovan Djilas, was “full of admiration.”⁵² Yet the American atomic monopoly did not deter him from imposing the blockade in the first place. On July 15, however, the nuclear element in the crisis was boosted when Truman decided to deploy two bomber wings – sixty B-29s – to Britain. The bombers were officially described as going on a routine training exercise, but press reports, inspired by the administration, said that they were capable of carrying atomic bombs, and hinted that they did so.⁵³ The bombers were not in fact nuclear-capable, and no explicit threat was made against the Soviet Union; nor was any hint dropped that a nuclear attack might be made if the Soviet Union did not lift the blockade.⁵⁴ The transfer of the bombers nevertheless served as a reminder that the United

States had the atomic bomb and the Soviet Union did not, and signified that the United States regarded the bomb as an appropriate instrument of policy. "Not coercion but deterrence was the vaguely conceived objective of the move: deterring the Russians from escalating in response to the airlift," writes Avi Shlaim in his careful study of the crisis.⁵⁵

Stalin did not try to stop the airlift. Whether his caution was induced by the implied threat of nuclear war is impossible to say with certainty. The Soviet press made no mention of the B-29s. Soviet leaders, however, did not need to be reminded about the American atomic monopoly. Only the month before, the Soviet embassy in Washington had made a formal protest about an article in *Newsweek* in which General George C. Kenney, Commander-in-Chief of Strategic Air Command, had written of plans to attack Soviet cities with atomic bombs.⁵⁶ The transfer of the B-29s may not in itself have been decisive,⁵⁷ it may have been the general fear of war with the United States that made Stalin cautious. But the bomb was, in Soviet eyes, a central element in American military power, and the element most capable of inflicting damage on the Soviet Union.

On the evening of August 2 Stalin, wearing his uniform as Generalissimus, received the American, British, and French ambassadors in the Kremlin.⁵⁸ He took an affable tone, perhaps because he still believed that the blockade would be effective. The "restrictive measures," he explained, were designed to prevent the economy in the Soviet zone of occupation from being upset by the introduction of the currency reform into the western sectors of Berlin. Because the Western powers were breaking Germany into two states, Berlin was no longer the capital of Germany. The Western powers had to realize that they had lost their legal right to be in Berlin, but this did not mean, he said, that the Soviet Union wanted to force their troops out of the city. The blockade could be lifted if two conditions were met: if the currency in the western sectors of Berlin were replaced by the currency used in the Soviet zone; and if an assurance were given that the London Program for the creation of a West German state would not be implemented until the representatives of the four countries had met and agreed on all the basic questions affecting Germany.⁵⁹

This meeting did not break the stalemate; nor did a further meeting between Stalin and the ambassadors. Disagreement continued over the currency and the London Program. Talks dragged on. On September 4 Sokolovskii informed the other military governors that the Soviet Union would start air maneuvers in two days' time, and that these would extend into the air corridors and over Berlin. Nothing came of this threat to interfere with the airlift, but Sokolovskii's statement suggests that thought was given in Moscow to escalating the crisis.⁶⁰ Moscow tried to create an atmosphere of pressure and tension in Berlin, but it did not interfere directly with the airlift.

In January 1949 Stalin hinted in an interview that the Soviet position had shifted.⁶¹ Informal soundings by the Truman administration led to negotiations, which resulted in a four-power agreement, on May 5, 1949, to end the

blockade. Stalin had not prevented the creation of a separate West German state: the Federal Republic of Germany was established on September 1, 1949. Nor had he succeeded in dislodging the Western powers from Berlin. He did not, however, abandon the Soviet claim that the Western powers no longer had a legal right to be in Berlin; that issue remained, to be revived at a later time.

Stalin showed in the Berlin crisis that he was willing to put pressure on the West and to raise the level of tension. He showed also that he was aware that pressure and tension should not exceed certain limits. Molotov later emphasized the importance of limits in Stalin's policy:

Well, what does the "Cold War" mean? Aggravated relations . . . They, of course, became hardened against us, and we had to secure what had been conquered. To make our own socialist Germany out of part of Germany, while Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia – they were in a fluid state, we had to introduce order everywhere. To squeeze the capitalist orders. That's the Cold War. Of course you have to know the limits. I think that in that respect Stalin kept very sharply within the limits.⁶²

But if Stalin knew the limits to which he could go without provoking war, his pressure on the West helped to solidify the division of Europe into two blocs. Tension was an essential element in the "war of nerves," which was how Soviet leaders characterized their relationship with the West. But tension enhanced the cohesion of the West. With the formation of NATO in April 1949, the United States was committed to a military as well as an economic presence in Europe. By this time the Soviet Union had imposed tight control on the countries of Eastern Europe, with the important exception of Yugoslavia. The division of the continent had now congealed.

The Berlin blockade was the first nuclear crisis, and it gave new impetus to the nuclear competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. The atomic bomb came to occupy a central role in United States military strategy, while the deployment of B-29s to Britain signified an American nuclear commitment to the defense of Western Europe.⁶³ For the Soviet Union the Berlin blockade was not a nuclear crisis to the same degree. There were, however, several signs in 1948 that the American atomic threat was being taken more seriously. The National Air Defense Forces were established as a separate service, and the first Instruction on the atomic bomb was issued by the Ministry of the Armed Forces.⁶⁴ It is not clear whether these were a response to the Berlin crisis or – more probably – to the general trend of American military policy. But the crisis, at the very least, made these steps more urgent by its effect on United States policy.⁶⁵

Stalin's communications with the Chinese communists in the spring and summer of 1949 throw interesting light on his attitude to nuclear weapons.

In March or April Ivan Kovalev, Stalin's personal emissary to Mao Zedong, received information from a Chinese communist agent about "supersecret" American plans that had been found in Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters. These plans purported to describe the "Asian option" for a third world war, according to which the United States was to conclude a military alliance with Japan and Nationalist China. The United States would then land a 3-million-man army in China, the Japanese would revive the Imperial Army, and the Kuomintang would mobilize millions of Chinese soldiers. This general offensive was to be preceded by a sudden nuclear strike against more than one hundred targets in Manchuria, the Soviet Maritime Province, and Siberia. Once the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Soviet forces in the Far East had been defeated, the United States would organize an offensive in the general direction of the Urals.⁶⁶

Kovalev was skeptical about this information – and it appears that the plans were a fabrication – but he passed the document on to Stalin nonetheless. When he dispatched further information of a similar kind to Moscow, "Comrade Filippov" (as Stalin was known in these communications) sent an answer, some time after late May 1949:

War is not advantageous to the imperialists. Their crisis has begun, they are not ready to fight. They frighten [us] with the atomic bomb, but we are not afraid of it.

The material conditions for an attack, for unleashing war, do not exist.

The way matters stand now, America is less ready to attack than the USSR to repulse an attack. That is how matters stand if one analyses them from the point of view of normal people – objective people.

But in history there are abnormal people. The US Secretary of Defense Forrestal [who committed suicide on May 22, 1949] suffered from hallucinations.

We are ready to repulse an attack.⁶⁷

Stalin gave a similar assessment when a high-level delegation of Chinese communists visited Moscow in July and August 1949. He told Liu Shaoqi, the Politburo member who headed the delegation, that "the Soviet Union is now strong enough not to be frightened by the nuclear blackmail of the USA."⁶⁸ "A third world war was improbable," he said, according to the recollections of the Chinese interpreter,

if only because no one had the strength to start it. The revolutionary forces were growing, the peoples were more powerful than before the war. If the imperialists wanted to start a world war, preparations for it would take at least twenty years. If the peoples did not want a war, there would be no war. How long the peace would last

depended on how hard we worked for it and how events would develop. We wanted to devote ourselves to building. Peace was most important. The thing to do was to safeguard peace for as long as possible. But who could be sure no madmen appeared on the scene?⁶⁹

Stalin presented a confident face to the Chinese communists, whom he was eager to impress with Soviet strength; so eager indeed that Liu Shaoqi was shown a film that was said to be of a Soviet nuclear test. This was weeks before the first Soviet atomic bomb test took place.⁷⁰ Stalin told Liu that the Soviet Union would soon have weapons that were even more formidable.⁷¹

Stalin gave two main reasons for his confidence that war was not imminent. The first was that the United States was unlikely to attack because the Soviet Union was ready to repulse an attack. This judgment corresponded with Soviet and American assessments of the military balance in the summer of 1949.⁷² The second reason was that people were not willing to fight another war, and that imperialist governments would find it difficult to make them fight.⁷³ Popular attitudes in the West had assumed an important place in Stalin's foreign policy. The peace movement had started in France in 1948, and the first World Congress of "Fighters for Peace" was held in Paris in April 1949.⁷⁴ The peace movement was a means for fostering popular opposition to Western policies: it called for a ban on nuclear weapons, and opposed NATO and German rearmament. It was closely controlled by the communist movement, and its positions were carefully coordinated with Soviet foreign policy.⁷⁵

Stalin, for his part, was anxious to avoid war with the United States. "Stalin assessed the correlation of forces in the world soberly enough," Kovalev said, "and strove to avoid any complications that might lead to a new world war."⁷⁶ The Chinese communists had asked the Soviet Union to provide air and naval support for an attack on Taiwan. When Liu arrived in Moscow Stalin explained to him that the Soviet Union was not ready for war. He emphasized that the Soviet economy had suffered colossal damage during World War II, and that the country had been laid waste from its western borders to the Volga. Soviet military support for an attack on Taiwan, he said, would mean a collision with the American Air Force and Navy, and would create a pretext for unleashing a new world war. "If we, as leaders, do this," said Stalin, "the Russian people will not understand us. More than that. It could dismiss us. For underestimating its wartime and postwar misfortunes and efforts. For thoughtlessness . . ."⁷⁷

"Of course," Kovalev comments, "these arguments of Stalin's about the Russian people smack of the demagoguery so characteristic of this leader."⁷⁸ Certainly there was a demagogic element in Stalin's remark that the Russian people "could dismiss us." But this remark is particularly interesting because it recalls the toast Stalin made to the Russian people in May 1945, when he referred to the desperate situation in 1941–2 and the retreat of the Red Army. "Another people," he said, "could have said to the government: you have not

justified our expectations, go away, and we will install another government which will conclude peace with Germany and guarantee us a quiet life."⁷⁹ That toast was demagogic too, but it was the closest Stalin ever came to acknowledging how close the Soviet regime was to collapse in 1941–2. The fear that the state would collapse in the event of war remained with Stalin, according to Khrushchev.⁸⁰ Stalin's comment that the Russian people "could dismiss us" provides an echo of that fear, a recognition that war might mean the end of the Soviet regime. It stands in sharp contrast to the confidence he tried to project to the Chinese leaders and to the world at large.

The first Soviet atomic bomb test took place on August 29, 1949, but the world learned of it only three and a half weeks later, from the United States. On September 23 President Truman announced that the United States had "evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the USSR."⁸¹

The question of war and peace now cast a darker shadow than it had done in the previous four years. In 1949 and 1950 Stalin began a major military build-up: Soviet forces in Germany were increased; the East European armies were strengthened; a new naval shipbuilding program was launched; and Stalin put pressure on aircraft designers to develop an intercontinental turbojet bomber.⁸² These programs would strengthen the Soviet ability to attack Western Europe in the short term but, even with the intense pressure that Stalin now applied, it would be some years before the new naval and bomber programs came to fruition.

In the meantime the situation was dangerous. Stalin "was afraid that the capitalist countries would attack the Soviet Union," writes Khrushchev, who moved from Kiev to take over the Moscow Party organization in December 1949.

Most of all, America. America had a powerful air force and, most important, America had atomic bombs, while we had only just developed the mechanism and had a negligible number of finished bombs. Under Stalin we had no means of delivery. We had no long-range bombers capable of reaching the United States, nor did we have long-range rockets. All we had was short-range rockets. This situation weighed heavily on Stalin. He understood that he had to be careful not to be dragged into a war.⁸³

Khrushchev's memoirs, even allowing for their characteristic hyperbole, suggest that Stalin's view of the strategic situation was far from sanguine. Khrushchev was in a good position to know what Stalin's view was, since after his move to Moscow he was, along with Malenkov, Beria, and Bulganin, one of the leaders closest to Stalin. His account suggests that behind the confident statements of Soviet policy lay a sense of military inferiority, and anxiety about the possibility of war.

How different would Soviet foreign policy have been if the atomic bomb had not existed? Did the bomb deter the Soviet Union from doing things it would otherwise have done – for example, from invading Western Europe, or escalating the Berlin crisis? Did it compel the Soviet Union to do things it would not otherwise have done? How important a factor was it in Stalin's foreign policy?

There is little evidence to suggest that the United States was able to use the bomb to compel the Soviet Union to do things it did not want to do. Atomic diplomacy played no part in the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Iran in 1946, the example of compellence (to use the political science term) most frequently cited in the postwar period. There is more evidence for the *deterrent* effect of the atomic bomb, especially during the Berlin crisis, but even in this instance the case is not conclusive. There is no convincing evidence to show that the atomic bomb deterred a Soviet invasion of Western Europe in the first four years after the war. The United States did not have enough atomic bombs in the early postwar years to be able to prevent the Soviet Union from occupying Western Europe; and the Soviet leaders were aware of this. There is no evidence to show that Stalin intended to invade Western Europe, except in the event of a major war; and his overall policy suggests that he was anxious to avoid such a war, and not merely because the United States possessed the atomic bomb.

Stalin's policy on the bomb was guided by two principles: the concept of the "war of nerves," and the idea of "limits." The first of these principles sprang from the assumption that the United States would use the atomic bomb to intimidate the Soviet Union, to wring concessions from it, in order to impose its own conception of the postwar order. Stalin had concluded after Hiroshima that atomic diplomacy rather than war was the immediate danger, and this assumption underpinned his policy until 1949. It was crucial therefore to show that the Soviet Union was tough, that it could not be frightened. This sometimes involved putting pressure on the West and raising international tension. Even if the Western powers did not yield, they would be forced to understand, as Byrnes had done in 1945, that the Soviet leaders were "stubborn, obstinate, and they don't scare." Stalin's conduct of the "war of nerves" had the great drawback of reinforcing the conviction of the Western powers that the Soviet Union was an aggressive expansionist power, and that they needed to defend themselves by forming NATO and building up their armed forces. This effect was not the result of a tactical miscalculation on the part of the Soviet leaders, but a consequence of the way in which they conceived of the nature of their relationship with the West.

The second principle – the concept of limits – acted as a brake on the war of nerves. Stalin did not want war with the West; he did not believe that the Soviet Union was ready for war. If the Soviet Union pursued a conciliatory and accommodating policy towards the West, it would appear weak, and its weakness would invite pressure and an aggressive Western policy. That was why he thought it necessary to conduct the war of nerves. But in the war of

nerves it was crucial not to go too far, for fear of precipitating a real war. Hence the importance of limits. Soviet awareness of limits was evident in the Berlin crisis of 1948.

The bomb did not come into play only when discrete threats – explicit or implicit – were made by the United States. By symbolizing American might and Soviet backwardness, it cast a pervasive shadow over Soviet relations with the United States. It helped to shape the Soviet view of the nature of the relationship and of the appropriate policies to pursue. It was a crucial element in the war of nerves. It enhanced the American ability to strike the Soviet Union, and thereby affected the limits that restrained Soviet action. At the same time the bomb, by conjuring up the danger of intimidation, strengthened the incentive to appear tough and unyielding. Thus the bomb had a dual effect. It probably made the Soviet Union more restrained in its use of force, for fear of precipitating war. It also made the Soviet Union less cooperative and less willing to compromise, for fear of seeming weak.

Notes

- 1 Harry S Truman, *Memoirs, Vol. 2: Years of Trial and Hope, 1946–1952*, New York: Signet Books, 1965, pp. 127–9; Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992, pp. 141–6.
- 2 N.V. Novikov, *Vospominaniia diplomata*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1989, p. 379.
- 3 *FRUS* 1947, ii, pp. 343–4.
- 4 George Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1967, pp. 325–6.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 340–2; Leffler, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–64.
- 6 Novikov to Molotov, June 9, 1947; document reproduced in Galina Takhnenko, “Anatomy of a Political Decision: Notes on the Marshall Plan,” *International Affairs*, July 1992, p. 116.
- 7 Molotov’s instructions are reproduced *ibid.*, pp. 121–2.
- 8 V.M. Molotov, *Problems of Foreign Policy: Speeches and Statements April 1945–November 1948*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1949, pp. 459–64.
- 9 Molotov drew this conclusion not only from British and French attitudes at the meeting, but also from intelligence about conversations between the British and the French and US Assistant Secretary of State William Clayton. See Mikhail Narinskii, “The Soviet Union and the Marshall Plan,” Paper given at a conference on “New Evidence on Cold War History,” Moscow, January 1993.
- 10 Molotov, *op. cit.*, p. 466.
- 11 Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 52.
- 12 *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: iz dnevnika F. Chueva*, Moscow: Terra, 1991, pp. 88–9.
- 13 See Takhnenko, *loc. cit.*, pp. 122–5.
- 14 This memorandum has not been published, but Novikov provides a brief account, *op. cit.*, pp. 391, 394–5.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 396.
- 16 Dmitrii Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia*, Book II, 2nd edn, Moscow: Novosti, 1990, p. 487.
- 17 On the founding meeting of the Cominform see Jonathan Haslam, “The Soviet Union and the Foundation of the Cominform 1947,” unpublished paper; Paolo Spriano, *Stalin and the European Communists*, London: Verso, 1985, pp. 292–306; Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement from Comintern to Cominform*, Harmondsworth:

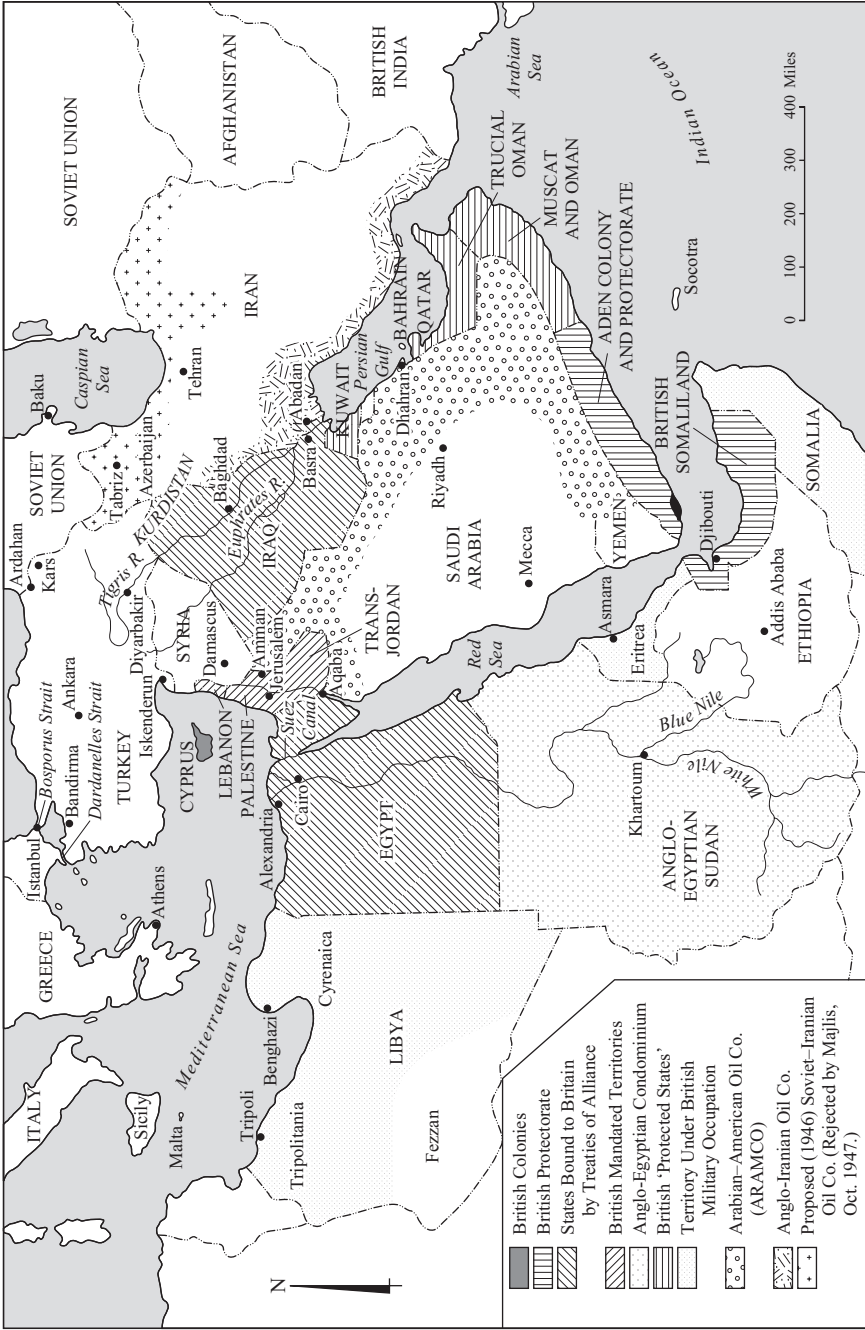
- Penguin, 1975, pp. 455–79; Lilly Marcou, *Le Komiform*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1977, pp. 39–72.
- 18 *Informatsionnoe soveshchanie predstavitelei nekotorykh kompartii*, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1948, pp. 22–3.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
 - 22 On Stalin's approval see Volkogonov, *op. cit.*, p. 489.
 - 23 Spriano writes that "no decision in the international Communist movement was ever more pragmatic and 'state-motivated' than the foundation of the Cominform in 1947. And never was the real motive more carefully buried in a flood of doctrinal argumentation and principled pronouncements." *Op. cit.*, p. 292.
 - 24 Haslam, *loc. cit.*, pp. 30–3.
 - 25 Spriano, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
 - 26 On the postwar coalitions and the effect of the Cominform meeting see Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986, pp. 73–99, 108–23.
 - 27 The Soviet ambassador in Belgrade complained in his dispatches to Moscow that the Yugoslavs put too much stress on the role of the Partisan movement in liberating the country. "Konflikt, kotorogo ne dolzhno bylo byt'," *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, 1990, no. 6, p. 54.
 - 28 Iu.S. Girenko, *Stalin-Tito*, Moscow: Politizdat, 1991, pp. 336–7.
 - 29 Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963, pp. 136, 141; Edvard Kardelj, *Reminiscences*, London: Blond and Briggs, 1982, p. 108.
 - 30 N.S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1990, pp. 102–3.
 - 31 Pietro Nenni, *Tempo di Guerra Fredda: Diari 1943–1956*, Milan: SugarCo Edizioni, 1981, p. 400.
 - 32 V. Chalmaev, *Malyshev*, Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1978, p. 311. Malyshev's special responsibility for military technology and production was not announced at the time, but it has become clear since then.
 - 33 In the autumn of 1947 Moscow set up a Committee of Information, headed by Molotov, to coordinate and evaluate foreign intelligence. This was a response to the creation of the CIA earlier in the year. Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, New York: HarperCollins, 1990, p. 381.
 - 34 Molotov, *op. cit.*, p. 488.
 - 35 See the memorandum of November 13, 1947 by Edmund A. Gullion, Special Assistant to Under-Secretary of State Lovett, *FRUS* 1947, i, p. 861.
 - 36 "Zarubezhnye otkliki na doklad V.M. Molotova o tridtsatiletii Velikoi Oktiabrskoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii," *Biulleten' Biuro infomatsii TsK VKP(b): Voprosy vneshnei politiki*, no. 22(69), November 15, 1947, p. 2. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 128, t. 1, d. 265.
 - 37 Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary*, London: Heinemann, 1983, p. 489.
 - 38 *Ibid.*, pp. 531, 547, 566–7; Kennan, *op. cit.*, p. 419; Avi Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade, 1948–1949*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, pp. 33–4, 149–50.
 - 39 Hannes Adomeit, *Soviet Risk-Taking and Crisis Behavior*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1982, p. 81.
 - 40 *Ibid.*
 - 41 Shlaim, *op. cit.*, pp. 151–62; Adomeit, *op. cit.*, pp. 89–93. Frank Roberts, "Stalin, Khrushchev and the Berlin Crises," *International Affairs*, November 1991, p. 121.
 - 42 Kennan, *op. cit.*, p. 420.
 - 43 Djilas, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
 - 44 Khrushchev, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
 - 45 Haslam, *loc. cit.*, p. 27.

- 46 N.S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers, Vol. 2: The Last Testament*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977, p. 235.
- 47 One account says that Molotov was the mastermind of the blockade. Arkady Vaksberg, *Stalin's Prosecutor*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991, p. 280.
- 48 Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, p. 118.
- 49 Andrei Gromyko, *Memoirs*, New York: Doubleday, 1989, pp. 391–2. This was in response to a question from Henry Kissinger, who asked why Stalin was prepared to risk war for the sake of an insignificant advantage. Gromyko added that Stalin was determined to avoid a general war, but that he would have resisted a Western attempt to relieve Berlin. See *ibid.*, p. ix.
- 50 Reports from Donald Maclean, who was at the British embassy in Washington until August 1948, may have made him feel more secure in his management of the crisis. Maclean would have known that there was no Western contingency plan to deal with the blockade, and also that the Western Allies were anxious to avoid war. Robert Cecil, *A Divided Life*, London: The Bodley Head, 1988, p. 87.
- 51 Shlaim, *op. cit.*, p. 288.
- 52 Djilas, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
- 53 Shlaim, *op. cit.*, pp. 235–40; Simon Duke, *US Defence Bases in the United Kingdom*, London: Macmillan, 1987, pp. 29–36.
- 54 Margaret Gowing, *Independence and Deterrence: Britain and Atomic Energy, 1945–1952, Vol. 1: Policy Making*, London: Macmillan, 1974, p. 311.
- 55 Shlaim, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
- 56 Adomeit, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
- 57 It is perhaps unimportant whether Stalin knew that the B-29s could not carry atomic bombs. They could, after all, be replaced by nuclear-capable aircraft, and even if he believed that they were nuclear-capable, he would apparently still have doubted the American willingness to go to war.
- 58 Shlaim, *op. cit.*, pp. 313–14; *FRUS* 1948, ii, pp. 999–1006; part of the Soviet record of these talks was published in *Moskovskie Novosti*, May 22, 1988. pp. 8–9.
- 59 Shlaim, *op. cit.*, p. 314; *FRUS* 1948, ii, p. 1005.
- 60 Shlaim *op. cit.*, pp. 330–1; Adomeit, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–2.
- 61 Shlaim, *op. cit.*, p. 380.
- 62 *Sto sorok besed*, p. 86; see also p. 15.
- 63 Duke, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–36.
- 64 See pp. 236, 237.
- 65 Soviet commentaries argue that the United States used the crisis as a pretext to deploy the B-29s to Britain; they do not present that transfer as a move in the crisis itself. See, for example, S.I. Viskov and V.D. Kul'bakin, *Soiuzniki i "Germanskii Vopros" 1945–1949 gg.*, Moscow: Nauka, 1990, pp. 279–89.
- 66 I. V. Kovalev, "Istoriia bez 'belykh piaten': perelomnye gody v sovetsko-kitaiskikh otnosheniakh (1948–1950)," interview with S.N. Goncharov, unpublished manuscript, 1990, pp. 14–15. I am grateful to Dr Goncharov for letting me see this document. Kovalev played an important role in the Soviet war effort in World War II, organizing the railways. In May 1948 Stalin sent him to China as his personal representative, and he held that position until January 1950.
- 67 Kovalev, *loc. cit.*, p. 16.
- 68 *Ibid.*
- 69 Sin Zhe, "I Accompanied Chairman Mao," *Far Eastern Affairs*, no. 2, 1989, p. 127. Shi Zhe was a member of Liu Shaoqi's delegation.
- 70 "Shortly after the fourth talk between Stalin and Liu Shaoqi, the Soviet side showed a documentary film on the test explosion of their atomic bomb." Shi Zhe, "On the Eve of the Birth of the New China," in *Mianhuai Liu Shaoqi*, Beijing, 1988, p. 224. See also Zhu Yuanshi, "Liu Shaoqi's Secret Visit to the Soviet Union in 1949," *Dang de*

- Wenxian*, 1991, no. 3, p. 77. I am grateful to Xue Litai and John Lewis for these references. Liu returned to Beijing on August 14.
- 71 Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 71. Stalin turned down Liu's request to visit atomic installations.
- 72 See pp. 230, 238–40.
- 73 Stalin's remarks to Liu Shaoqi echoed his response to Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, which had been repeated in *Bol'shevik*, the Party's leading theoretical journal, in April 1949: "not a single great power at the present time, even if its government strives to, could raise a large army for a struggle against another great power, since at the present time no one can fight without his people, and the peoples do not want to fight." "Peredovaia: Bor'ba narodnykh mass za mir, protiv podzhigatelei novoi voiny," *Bol'shevik*, April 1949, no. 8, p. 3.
- 74 On the origins of the peace movement see Marshall Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963, pp. 80–103. See also Lawrence S. Wittner, *One World or None*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, Chapters 10–13.
- 75 Claudin, *op. cit.*, pp. 576–82, gives a very skeptical account of the movement.
- 76 Kovalev, *op. cit.*
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 78 *Ibid.*
- 79 I.V. Stalin, "Vystuplenie na prieme v Kremle v chest' komanduiushchikh voiskami Krasnoi Armii," in Robert H. McNeal (ed.), *I. V. Stalin Works, Vol. 2, 1941–1945*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1967, pp. 203–4.
- 80 Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, p. 101.
- 81 Richard G. Hewlett and Francis Duncan, *Atomic Shield: A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, Vol. 2, 1947–1952*, Berkeley: University of California Press repr., 1990, p. 362.
- 82 See Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, pp. 240–1.
- 83 Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, pp. 100–1.

Part II

THREE COLD WAR CRISES: IRAN, TURKEY, AND GREECE



Map 3 The Middle East, 1945-1946. Adapted from Wm Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), xviii-xix.

THE IRANIAN CRISIS OF 1946 AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

Fernande Scheid Raine

During 1946 and early 1947, three crises helped to catalyze the Cold War. The first took place in Iran during the winter and spring of 1946 when the Soviets delayed the withdrawal of their troops. At almost the same time, the Soviets reiterated their desire for bases in the Turkish Straits or, at least, for an enlargement of their rights to guarantee and protect shipping from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean. At the same time, the Kremlin berated the British for their intervention in the civil war in Greece and communicated their sympathy for the Greek communists who were being crushed by the royalists and other right wing forces. These three crises have long attracted the attention of historians. There is universal agreement that they played a key role in the breakdown of the great coalition that had waged the Second World War.

But there is much less agreement on what triggered these crises and what motivated the great powers. Under wartime agreement with the British, the Soviets deployed troops to northern Iran in 1941. Along with British troops in southern Iran, they were supposed to ensure Iran's alignment with the allies, safeguard its oil, and protect the movement of lend lease supplies through the Persian Gulf from the factories and farms of the United States to the battlefields of the Caucasus and the Ukraine. By wartime treaty with Iran, Soviet and British troops were obligated to withdraw six months after the end of the Second World War.

But Soviet troops did not withdraw. Indeed, signs mounted that the troops were assisting the emergence of an Azeri nationalist movement in northern Iran. At the United Nations in January 1946, the Americans and the British accused the Kremlin of bad faith. Newspapers around the world announced the onset of a major crisis. The wartime coalition, already frayed, seemed to be dissolving.

What was Stalin seeking? Contemporary analysts in London and Washington feared the worst. They suspected that this might be part of Stalin's master plan to spread Soviet power and Communist ideology wherever vacuums of power existed or wherever opportunity beckoned. Other observers saw the crisis in more modulated terms, suspecting that Stalin's aims might be more limited, or claiming that his motives were defensive and reactive. If the Americans and the British needed bases in far away places to defend in depth and project power, was it not understandable

that the Kremlin would want the same, especially in Soviet Russia's vulnerable southern periphery, where past and future adversaries calculated the existence of invasion routes?

In recent years, scholars have been mining the new Soviet archival materials seeking to understand Stalin's aims and motives in Iran. They agree that Stalin acted opportunistically; that there was no master plan. They also see the crisis in Iran as a much more complicated event than previously imagined, with Iranian factions and Azeri nationalists and separatists playing more independent roles and maneuvering to further their own ambitions and interests.

In one of the most surprising archival discoveries of recent years, Fernande Scheid Raine, while a graduate student at Yale University, found a treasure trove of documents in the local party archive in Baku. Here was the correspondence between Mir Bagirov, the head of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, with top officials in Moscow, including Stalin and Lavrentii Beria. By sifting through these documents, Scheid Raine illuminates the intersection of local interests and great power politics, of periphery and core, of culture and power. She highlights opportunism and contingency, uncertainty and improvisation. She portrays how Azeris sought to express their cultural identity and how Stalin sought to exploit circumstances for his own ends. But she also takes care to highlight how those ends were limited, how Stalin was not eager to cast aside the grand coalition, and how allied cooperation remained a constraint.

This path-breaking account of the crisis of 1946 should provoke many questions. What was Stalin trying to do in Iran? How much forethought went into his actions? Why was he so concerned with exploiting local circumstances? In light of what we now are learning about Stalin's actions and motives and what we now know about local conditions, should the Iranian crisis be viewed as a test case of Soviet intentions or as the product of complex and unique circumstances? Finally, while Fernande Scheid Raine's use of Bagirov's records provides unparalleled access to the inner workings of Soviet foreign policy, readers might question whether Bagirov himself may have exaggerated his own influence over events in Iran.

* * *

For those inclined to suspect expansionist Soviet ambitions, the Iranian Crisis of 1945–46 was the first of many examples of Soviet aggression being successfully contained by the United States. For others, Iran first demonstrated the kind of US anti-Soviet paranoia that caused the Cold War. The fall of the Soviet Union provided access to archival documents allowing the emergence of a much more nuanced picture. Reassessments of the role of ideology emphasized not the programmatic content of revolutionary Communism, but the importance of Communist ideology as a 'means to power',¹ while newly discovered idiosyncrasies in Soviet policy discredited the theory of a 'grand plan', and lent credibility to the image of [Soviet leader Joseph] Stalin as a paranoid and power-hungry opportunist, with a deep longing for security.² Integrating seemingly contradictory aspects of Stalin's wartime policies, these new

documents are beginning to show Stalin's dual policy of confrontation and collaboration as two sides of the same coin.³ An excellent analysis of newly available documents in the Foreign Ministry archives illustrated that in making his bid for Iranian oil Stalin was reacting to a perceived threat from Britain and the United States in his sphere of interest. Egorova's study also provided conclusive evidence that it was not pressure from the United States, but the combination of a deal on Azerbaijan and the promise of an oil concession that made the Soviet Union withdraw its troops from Iran in 1946.⁴

Open questions concerning Stalin's policy in Iran still remained, however, leaving holes in our understanding of Stalin's foreign policy, of Iranian politics and of the early Cold War. There was no clear picture of what his interests were in Iran, nor of the means by which he pursued them. There was no consensus on the level of interconnectedness between Moscow and Iran's leftist People's Party, known as Tudeh.⁵ Similar disagreement was found regarding the driving force behind the founding of the Azerbaijan National Government of 1945/46, with some pointing towards the revolutionary-nationalist tradition of Azeri opposition to Tehran's centralizing tendencies, and others assuming that it was primarily a creation of Moscow.⁶ With so many open questions, it was difficult to gain a clear view of how important the existence of a Soviet Azerbaijan was in shaping Stalin's goals and methods in Iran, and of what Stalin's actions in Iran reveal about his view of world politics.

The recently unearthed correspondence between Moscow and Mir Bagirov, chief of the Communist Party in Azerbaijan, casts light on many of these questions.⁷ First of all, the correspondence between Moscow and Bagirov, who was a long-time friend of Lavrentii Beria [head of the secret police], reveals the central importance which the Baku official played in Stalin's policy in Iran. Although rumour had it that Bagirov had played a role of sorts, no one suspected just how central he was to the shaping and execution of Stalin's ideas.⁸ Secondly, the communications reveal a lack of clarity and firmness regarding goals in Iran. Not even among Stalin, Beria and Bagirov, a trio well-weathered by joint battle in the civil war, was it clear at any point where the policy in Iran was ultimately supposed to lead: the ends were adjusted as the means became available. Thirdly, the events of 1945 reveal a willingness on Stalin's part to play with various instruments of power as they appeared, one of them being resurgent national sentiment. Azeri nationalism, for which Stalin had shown little tolerance in the past, became a key to the plan of increasing Soviet control over the strategically important area of northern Iran. Finally, the emerging story confirms the hypothesis that Stalin was quite aware of his limits and was attempting to play a rather old-fashioned game of power politics, taking as much as he could without jeopardizing the relationship with his allies.

When Soviet troops entered Iranian Azerbaijan in August of 1941, Stalin immediately summoned Bagirov to Moscow and made him responsible for supervising and enacting Soviet policy in Iran. Bagirov was not only a weathered party functionary and an admirer of Stalin's political style, he was also

an Azeri, who had been instrumental during the past decades in realizing Stalin's policy of allowing nations to develop a culture that was 'national in content, but socialist in form'. When Bagirov looked around from his elevated position in Baku, he saw a flourishing Azeri national culture and an oil industry, which he knew to be the lifeline of the Soviet army. Looking over the Araxes River into Iran, Bagirov saw an underdeveloped industry and Azeris who did not enjoy the right to develop their cultural identity. It was Bagirov's dream to bring these Azeris and their resources into the Soviet fold. From 1941 to 1945, Bagirov nurtured the hope that Stalin would play the card of Azeri nationalism as a means of expanding Soviet influence in Iran. It was only in the summer and autumn of 1945 that such hopes were to be fulfilled.

As the Second World War came to a close, Stalin did not have a clear, idea of what the postwar world would look like.⁹ Perhaps the present great power dynamic would give way to a new system based on serious adherence to the principles of collective security in which countries like Iran really would have some say. Perhaps the months before a new world order was put in place were Stalin's last chance to achieve the level of security he considered necessary. Stalin knew that the Soviet troops would have to leave Iran six months after the end of the war. If he wanted to secure a firm hold over northern Iran, Moscow would have to act soon, either by obtaining an oil concession, or by installing a friendly government in Azerbaijan, or by achieving both.

The news Stalin was receiving from Iran in the spring of 1945 indicated that none of these goals would be easy to achieve. Despite the fact that Moscow maintained only tenuous ties to Iran's leftwing Tudeh party, it could not overlook the fact that the widespread anti-Tudeh demonstrations and threats to Tudeh's most prominent members were directed against the presence of Soviet forces and the growth of Soviet influence in Iran. Adding insult to injury was the fact that these actions were taking place on territory still under Soviet occupation, organized by Iranian policemen and military units who had obviously lost their respect for and fear of the Soviet army. The Iranian government authorities were aggravating the situation by issuing orders 'increasing repressive measures against pro-Soviet people and forbidding the execution of any demands made by Soviet representatives'.¹⁰

Such reports held the British responsible for the unrest and reactionary behaviour currently on display in Iran. In June, the Foreign Commissariat received a long report from the Political Directorate of the Red Army warning against British activities all over Iran. Both in tone and structure the report was precisely like the ones that only months before had warned about the activities of Nazi agents. Signs of provocative behaviour were identified everywhere, particularly among the tribes whom the British were inciting to subversive and unpeaceful behaviour.¹¹

For almost four years, Bagirov had been trying to increase Soviet influence in northern Iran, with a focus in the last 12 months on the population of Iranian Azerbaijan. Until now, however, his activities had borne little fruit and had only sensitized the Iranian authorities to the danger of Soviet

infiltration.¹² In April of 1945, Bagirov drafted a plan for future work in Iran, the goal of which he defined loosely as the unification of 'southern Azerbaijan with Soviet Azerbaijan, or the formation of an independent southern Azerbaijani People's Republic, or the establishment of an independent bourgeois-democratic system or, at least, cultural autonomy in the framework of the Iranian state'.¹³ The Kurds, too, should be helped to establish autonomy. In order to reach these goals, Bagirov suggested three measures:

- 1 Form a group in Tabriz of responsible workers to conduct all preparatory work in southern Azerbaijan.
- 2 Manage the leadership of the group directly from Baku. Keep the group under cover as military employees.
- 3 Take all necessary measures to guarantee the election of pro-Soviet and useful people at the upcoming Majlis elections. Provide the necessary financial means for this work.

Although the final version of this letter to Moscow has not surfaced in the archives, the further development of events suggests that a plan very similar to Bagirov's draft was given the Kremlin's full approval.

Meanwhile, in Iran, government and society were longing to begin their own path to normalcy and undertake the first steps towards ridding themselves of foreign troops, rebuilding the economy and stabilizing the domestic situation. Above all, Tehran was eager to reestablish its authority in all Iranian provinces and to regain the sovereignty with which it hoped to assert an independent role in the new United Nations. Ten days after Germany's unconditional surrender, [Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav] Molotov received a politely phrased note (sent in similar form to the American and British governments) expressing the Iranian government's wish to 'return the country to normal' and asking that the Soviet troops go home.¹⁴ None of the Allies sent a response. Tehran waited throughout the summer to hear whether the troops would leave on time, let alone early.¹⁵

For those [Iranian officials] who had hoped that the final conference of the leaders of the Big Three would bring a reversal of Soviet actions or at least set firm limits for the future, the results of the Potsdam Conference were a disappointment. Iran was only mentioned in a secret protocol assuring that allied troops would leave Tehran, but postponing the consideration of all further stages until the London Conference of Foreign Ministers in September.¹⁶ The Western powers even accepted Stalin's announcement that the six months until the withdrawal of allied troops would be counted not from the German surrender, but from the end of the hostilities with Japan.

One of Moscow's key goals was the achievement of an oil concession. After the failed attempt by the Soviet foreign commissariat's special emissary Kavtaradze to resume oil negotiations with the Iranian government in the spring of 1945, it seemed as though Tehran was serious about not wanting to grant any oil concessions until after all allied troops had left Iran and a new Majlis had been elected.¹⁷ Since Moscow wanted neither to wait nor to

risk rejection by a new Majlis, it decided to take what it could get while its troops were on Iranian soil. Bagirov had had geologists working in Iran ever since Soviet troops had reached Iran. But in mid-June of 1945, Stalin's War Cabinet, the State Committee of Defence (GKO) worked out a new, comprehensive plan for the conduct of clandestine research on the oil resources in northern Iran, as well as for drilling and exploiting the ones already known to exist.¹⁸ By September, over 300 specialists and assistants were active in northern Iran, preparing for Moscow's next bid for Iranian oil.¹⁹

Until this work was done, Moscow carefully kept the subject of oil off the negotiating table. Neither in their copious correspondence with the Iranian government over the timing of troop withdrawal and the continuing unrest in northern Iran, nor in their discussions with the Soviet Union's wartime allies did the Soviet leaders mention their undying interest in receiving an oil concession.

On 6 July 1945, the Politburo passed a resolution commissioning Bagirov to execute a list of 'measures to organize a separatist movement in southern Azerbaijan and other Provinces of Northern Iran'.²⁰ Bagirov's primary task was to lay the groundwork for the creation of a 'national-autonomous Azerbaijani province in the context of the Iranian State' and to unleash separatist movements in the Iranian provinces of Gilan, Masanderan, Gorgan and Khorasan. Then the separatist movements were to be given leadership by 'creating a democratic party in southern Azerbaijan under the name "Azerbaijani Democratic Party" (ADP), founded by re-forming the Azerbaijani branch of the People's Party of Iran and attracting supporters of the separatist movement from all layers of society'. Similar work was to be done among the Kurds of the North, convincing them to join a movement for an autonomous Kurd province.²¹

The Politburo memo placed the organizational responsibility upon Bagirov, who was ordered to form a group with the help of Yakubov (formerly Soviet Azerbaijan's deputy Commissar of Interior Affairs and now adviser to the Soviet consul in Tabriz) that would coordinate the separatist movement and make sure that it kept in close touch with the local Soviet consulate. Furthermore, the Politburo instructed Bagirov to begin campaigning for the next parliamentary elections in southern Azerbaijan, and even provided him with a list of slogans and bullet-points with which to curry favour among the local population, including redistribution of land, liquidation of unemployment, improvement of the water supply, improvement of health care, reallocation of tax funds to local needs, equal rights for national minorities and improvement of Soviet-Iranian relations.²²

The Politburo entrusted Bagirov with the formation of well-armed partisan groups within the separatist movement, to be supplied, they cleverly added, with 'equipment of foreign make' to hide its origins. Financing for this grandiose project was to come from a special fund under control of the Azerbaijani TsK (once again, Bagirov), consisting of one million rubles in convertible currency (approximately US\$190,000).

This Politburo decision created the Azerbaijan Democratic Party (ADP). Views on how the ADP was born have ranged from being a fabrication without roots in Azeri culture, to being an entirely spontaneous expression of Azeri nationalism, with the majority of evaluations falling somewhere in the middle, acknowledging the existence of a popular element, but attributing some responsibility to the Soviet Union.²³ Common to most arguments was the assumption that the ADP grew out of a combination of Azerbaijan's national and radical traditions.²⁴ As the new documents reveal, the whole party, from its inception to its demise, was created and controlled by the cabal running Soviet policy towards Iran in Moscow and Baku.

Bagirov and Yakubov took over the task of recruiting leaders for the ADP. Their first and most important personnel decision was to pick [Ja'far] Pishevari as the new party's head. Pishevari was an excellent choice, for although he had been a Communist, he was known in Iranian Azerbaijan first and foremost as the popular, left-liberal journalist who despite winning a landslide victory in Azerbaijan's elections to the 14th Majlis had been barred from his seat on procedural grounds.²⁵ He was distanced enough from Tudeh to be able plausibly to start up a new party, yet enough of a martyr of the leftist cause to become its new hero.²⁶ Pishevari led the effort of vetting other influential men who might be helpful in getting the movement off the ground, and succeeded within days in sparking the enthusiasm of prominent Tudeh and Non-Tudeh political figures in Iranian Azerbaijan for his idea of founding a new, 'truly democratic' party to serve the interests of the people.²⁷

For most Tudeh members, the founding of the ADP was an unpleasant surprise, for they felt driven out of an area where they had fought to build a tradition and reputation of success.²⁸ In response, Bagirov's associate and head of Soviet Azerbaijan's Council of People's Commissars Kuliev led long talks with the leaders of the Azerbaijani branch of Tudeh, 'preparing them for the upcoming measures at the conference'.²⁹ Their efforts were not in vain: on 7 September 1945, against the wishes of many of its members, the Azerbaijani committee of the Tudeh party declared its dissolution and merger with the ADP.³⁰ Nonetheless, many leading members of Tudeh remained vehemently opposed to the new creation and sought to disrupt the new party's activities.³¹ Tudeh's Central Committee in Tehran remained aloof and refused to associate with the new ADP.³²

For the next three weeks, an organizational committee busily organized the formation of local party cells and elections to the founding congress, scheduled to open on 2 October 1945. Only a month after the party had proclaimed its existence, it could report over 6,000 registered members, not including former members of the People's Party.³³

After recovering from the initial shock, the Iranian government and critics of Azeri autonomy in Iranian society began focusing all of their attention on fighting the separatist movement in southern Azerbaijan. Since the Iranian government still enjoyed only limited authority in Azerbaijan due to the

presence of Soviet troops, it vented its immediate frustration on the leftist political organizations in Tehran. Pro-Soviet newspapers were banned from the capital, demonstrations were prohibited and Tudeh clubs were closed, with guards posted at the doors. Prominent journalists and union activists were put behind bars.³⁴ Pro-Soviet government officials were recalled from their posts in the north and replaced with men better able to restrain the ADP.³⁵

Immediately after the founding of the ADP, the Tehran government issued an order to all regional authorities that the ADP was to be treated just as strictly as the Tudeh.³⁶ As the ADP grew stronger, the rightist press denounced the demand for autonomy, accused the members of the ADP of treason, actively campaigned for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops and painted gruesome pictures of what awaited all pro-Soviet groups and individuals when their protectors left. The Iranian government authorities sent out orders to their representatives to obstruct the work of the separatist movement; there even were reports that Shiite mullahs were proclaiming a holy war against the Azerbaijanis.³⁷

By the end of September, the leadership of the ADP began fearing a government crackdown, similar to what had happened to Tudeh in Tehran. Realizing that the time had come to give the new movement the means to defend itself, Pishvari and Padegan commissioned one of the party members to compile an application for weapons and ammunition and, after approving of his suggestions, sent the proposal to Baku.³⁸

To Bagirov's great relief, the founding Congress of the ADP from 25 to 30 September in Tabriz, ran as smoothly as he could have wished.³⁹ The 237 delegates unanimously accepted the party programme and elected precisely the leadership they were supposed to elect.⁴⁰

In the last days of September, Bagirov travelled to Moscow to discuss what had been achieved so far and how to proceed. He returned with clear instructions to spread the idea of creating a popularly elected body of self-government for Iranian Azerbaijan.⁴¹ With this in mind, delegates of the ADP's central committee travelled from city to city throughout the autumn, organizing party conferences and overseeing the elections of their leaders.

After successfully establishing such strong control over its local branches, the Tabriz central committee had no difficulty in getting the regional conferences to 'suggest', 'discuss' and 'decide upon' the creation – as suggested by Moscow – of an Azerbaijan National Congress in Tabriz. The ADP officials were very careful about how they presented the planned Congress, for they wanted to remain within the boundaries of what was defensible through clauses in the Iranian constitution. Since there was a clause – albeit an ignored one – in the constitution providing for the creation of local organs of self government (Enjumens), the declared goal of the upcoming Azerbaijani Congress was merely to help organize the elections to the Iranian Majlis and to the forgotten Enjumens. At a plenary meeting on 9 November, the ADP passed a resolution declaring that in order to realize the programme of the

party, it was necessary immediately to begin elections to constitutional bodies (Majlis and Enjumens).⁴²

Together with the ADP leadership and the commander of the Baku Military District Maslennikov, Bagirov began organizing the *fedai* partisan forces, which became the army of the Azerbaijani separatist movement.⁴³ By late November they had assembled 30 militarized units with a total strength of 3,000 men, supplied with 11,500 rifles, 1,000 pistols, 400 machine guns, 2,000 grenades and over two million rounds of ammunition, ready to fight whoever stood in the way of realizing autonomy for Azerbaijan.⁴⁴

The *fedai* units began their activities on November 16, murdering 'well known reactionaries', and 'taking revenge' on the Iranian *gendarmierie* for years of anti-democratic behaviour.⁴⁵ In order to make it impossible for the local authorities to contact the capital for instructions, the ADP severed all telephone and telegraph lines between Tabriz and Tehran, as well as between the garrisons in Tabriz. The Chief of the Red Army General Staff Antonov gave strict orders to the regional commander Maslennikov to 'not give permission for the introduction of new Iranian units without the express permission in each case of the General Staff' and to report immediately on all Iranian troop movements in the Soviet zone.⁴⁶ Bagirov tried to instill the ADP leaders with confidence in the military might standing behind them, and instructed them to pursue a relentlessly hard line when negotiating with Iranian authorities.⁴⁷ By 1 December, Bagirov saw need to give instructions to 'take all measures to destroy the reactionary gangs, and if necessary, to liquidate them with the help of the local partisan units'.⁴⁸

It was in this atmosphere of growing tension between the Iranian government and the Azeri rebels that the elections to the Azerbaijan National Congress took place (12–19 November 1945). The term 'elections' is a bit of a misnomer, for the process was informal at best. The ADP staged large demonstrations all over Iranian Azerbaijan calling for immediate elections to the Majlis and Enjumens; at the end of the demonstrations, candidates stepped forth and were hailed as representatives to the National Congress. By 20 November, the 546 delegates were already gathered in Tabriz, in the theatre where Pishevari had first presented the new party to the public.⁴⁹ All major questions of policy, from the formation of the *fedai* units down to the declaration of the Constitutional Assembly, had been coordinated with and approved by Moscow.⁵⁰ For the fine-tuning – the drafting of declarations and resolutions, the selection of candidates – Pishevari had received guidance from Bagirov's 'troika' in Tabriz.

Lambasting the interference of London and Turkey in Iranian affairs, Pishevari called upon the delegates to 'confirm that the Azerbaijani question must be decided here in Tabriz'. The delegates responded – as planned – with the enthusiastic call to broaden the powers of the National Congress and declare it a Constitutional Assembly.⁵¹ Late on 20 November, the Congress elected a committee to draft the various resolutions needed for its 'spontaneous' transformation.

Both the committee's 'Address to the Azerbaijani people' and the 'Declaration of the Constitutional Assembly' received the Assembly's unanimous approval the next morning.⁵² The Declaration, which was sent to the Shah and the leaders of all Western governments, stated Azerbaijan's wish for autonomy, national culture and language rights, invoking the high principles of the Atlantic Charter, human rights, constitutionalism, democracy and self-government. Although it underlined that Azerbaijani autonomy was in no way meant as a threat to the territorial integrity of Iran, the Declaration made very clear that Azerbaijan was not going to wait to be granted autonomy, but was ready to claim it on its own. If the Iranian government was willing to cooperate, the declaration maintained, there would be no need for the use of force. If, on the other hand, Tehran tried to stop them, the Azerbaijani people would 'fight to the last drop of blood for its national autonomy'.⁵³ For the realization of its declared aims, the Assembly elected a national committee to ensure that official correspondence and primary school instruction were forthwith conducted in Azeri, and, most importantly, organize the elections to the Azerbaijani parliament and the Iranian Majlis.

Since the elections to the Iranian Majlis were not scheduled to begin until after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the national committee focused all of its attention on organizing elections to a National Majlis of Azerbaijan.⁵⁴ Elections began only a week after the congress had concluded its work and were completed by 5 December, for the opening session scheduled on 10 December. During the days before the opening of the parliament, every movement of the Azeri national committee was monitored by Baku and sanctioned by Moscow. Bagirov sent a daily update on the situation to Stalin, Beria, Molotov and Malenkov, soliciting their approval of the measures taken and those planned. The draft of the government programme and schedule for the first parliamentary session were prepared in Tabriz, passed on to Bagirov and confirmed by the authorities in Moscow.⁵⁵ At the same time, Moscow gave the ADP express permission to use the partisan troops should the Iranians refuse to recognize the Azerbaijani national government or use force to quell the movement for autonomy.⁵⁶ Moscow's support strengthened Pischevari's resolve to reject a compromise with the Tehran government and to insist that the Azeris would settle for nothing less than full autonomy.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, preparations for the creation of an autonomous government proceeded full force.

For the last two days before the opening of the parliament, telegrams buzzed back and forth between Tabriz, Baku and Moscow with last-minute suggestions and corrections to the programme of the new Azeri government. By the evening of 11 December, Bagirov could inform Moscow of the plan for the next day: the Majlis would begin by confirming its composition and commissioning Pischevari to form a government. Pischevari would spend the afternoon 'assembling' a government and in the evening have it confirmed by the Majlis. The Majlis would then proceed to pass laws on partisan warfare and discuss the programme of the new government. All of these texts were

read and amended by Moscow.⁵⁸ The intense preparations paid off. When the parliament met on 12 December, the suggested candidates for all government positions were elected and the government programme unanimously accepted. Considering how poorly the Soviet system is rumoured to have functioned on most levels, it is astonishing to see how smoothly the Azerbaijani project ran, with every step going according to plan.

The problems of the new government were not immediately apparent, for it moved quickly enough to gain ground merely on the strength of its surprise tactic. The state apparatus in the capital of Azerbaijan changed hands almost effortlessly when the rebel Azeris, not even a day in power, called all leading Iranian officials to a meeting and gave them the choice between leaving state service or pledging allegiance to the Azeri government. In Tabriz, bloodshed was avoided thanks to the commander of the Tabriz division who was the first to announce that he was willing to prevent unnecessary loss of lives, and that he had ordered his troops not to shoot at the partisan units.⁵⁹ The Tabriz garrisons surrendered their arms to the Democrats, just before the garrison commander received an order to prepare a massive repression of the partisan forces. The phase of numbness did not last for long; in some areas, counter-activities began right away. The Iranian army commanders concentrated their troops around cities; the commander in Resaie even put signs up warning that whoever was found bearing arms would be shot on the spot.⁶⁰

Resistance from the central government was not the only problem for the Azeri leaders. The new government also turned out to be less versatile at leading state affairs than Bagirov had hoped. Only a few days after the government had assumed its duties, transport and communications, administration and basic civil services threatened to fall apart. Warning that a new food, health and cash crisis could mean the end of the government's popular support, Bagirov suggested that the party focus above all on keeping the administrative and economic machinery running smoothly.⁶¹

All the while, the Soviet diplomats had to face accusations and suspicions regarding the separatist movement in Azerbaijan, coming both from the Iranian government and the diplomatic corps in Tehran. In part, the diplomats who were assuring their hosts and colleagues that the Soviet Union had nothing to do with the Azeri movement were telling what they perceived to be the truth. Only a very small group of people was informed about Moscow's actual involvement with the events in Azerbaijan. Bagirov strictly forbade his people on 'special assignment' to 'chatter' about their work even to high-ranking Soviet officials and insisted that the Azeri project be kept under a conspiratorial cover.⁶²

Since the Allies had never even responded to the Iranian note of 18 May requesting troop withdrawal, the Iranian government sent a reminder to London, Washington and Moscow on 9 September, refreshing their memory that the issue of troops in Iran was still on the table. Again, the note received no answer and, again, the Iranian request was brushed aside at the next meeting of allied representatives.⁶³ At the Council of Foreign Ministers in

London on 19 September, Britain's Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin addressed a letter to Molotov, asking the Soviet government to agree to a three-stage plan for withdrawal, beginning on 15 December 1945 and ending on 2 March 1946. Molotov answered that there was no need for discussion of the matter, for both the final date and the terms for withdrawal had been determined earlier by the Tripartite Agreement of 1942.⁶⁴

The Iranian government on 17 November addressed a long complaint to Moscow, listing only the most blatant cases of Soviet interference in Iranian affairs, including its support for the Kurds, its limitation on the free movement of Iranian citizens, its meddling with Azerbaijan's economy and its obstruction of the judicial system. The Soviets denied all charges, and reiterated their insistence that they had no connection with the ADP: 'Soviet representatives and the Soviet military authorities did not and do not interfere with the domestic-political life of northern provinces.'⁶⁵

After a fresh set of urgent Iranian protests to the Soviet Union on 22 and 23 November, US ambassador to Moscow Harriman delivered a note to Molotov, suggesting immediate withdrawal of all allied troops from Iran by 1 January.⁶⁶ Pointing out that the United Nations had been created to protect interests of nations like Iran, the letter ended with the expression of hope that the leaders of the Soviet Union and of Great Britain were as anxious as the United States government to demonstrate that the trust of these nations had not been misplaced.

Molotov answered with a flat-out rejection of the American portrayal of the events in Iranian Azerbaijan. 'Not only is it not an armed insurrection', he argued, 'it is not even directed against the Shah's government of Iran.' The recently published declaration of the National Congress proved that the movement was merely about 'the wish to realize the democratic rights of the Azerbaijani people aiming for national autonomy in the context of the Iranian State'. The Soviet government, he underlined, had no interest in the matter, other than maintaining a modicum of stability and peace in the region. In the current tense situation, the Soviet military authorities considered the additional deployment of Iranian government troops to be more of a danger than an asset; it was for this reason that the Soviet military authorities had barred the entry of any further Iranian government troops into Azerbaijan. As for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, Molotov reminded Harriman that the plan had been discussed and approved at the London Conference of Foreign Ministers and needed no further mention.⁶⁷ London, after hearing of the Soviet refusal to withdraw its troops, informed Washington that it, too, would no longer pursue its plans to arrange for complete withdrawal by the New Year.⁶⁸

The closer the Azeri Democrats came to realizing complete autonomy, the more adamant the Soviets became about having nothing to do with either the ADP or the partisan units.⁶⁹ Not only did Moscow deny any involvement in the creation of what could hardly have been a friendlier regime to its interests, it even continued to emphasize the way in which 'reactionary elements' posed a threat to the Soviet Union from Iranian territory and legitimized the

continued presence of Soviet troops. Stalin and Molotov repeatedly argued that the schedule for withdrawal was ruled by the Tripartite Agreement of 1942 and the Soviet–Iranian treaty of 1921.⁷⁰

Just before the Allied foreign ministers were scheduled to meet again in Moscow, the crisis in Azerbaijan came to a head with the formation of the Azerbaijan National Government. At the Council of Foreign Ministers in Moscow (12–21 December 1945), [US Secretary of State James F.] Byrnes made an effort to convince Stalin that the United States was concerned and that the Iranians would compromise the Soviet Union by bringing it up in the Security Council at its first meeting. Stalin, however, was still very much in the belligerent, assertive mode to which he had just sworn his inner circle.⁷¹ Stalin reminded Byrnes that Baku was vulnerable to hostile actions, that Iran was hostile to the Soviet Union, and that therefore the Soviet Union had the right to maintain its troops in Iran. Stalin added that since his position was legitimate, he had nothing to fear from the Security Council and that ‘no one need blush if it should come up’.⁷²

When [US President Harry S] Truman heard of what had transpired in Moscow, he did not merely blush, he turned purple with rage. He had not been consulted during the conference, and had expected to see at least a reference to Soviet withdrawal from Iran in the final communiqué.⁷³ In a long letter which he is said to have read to Byrnes in the Oval Office, Truman declared that the *fait accompli* in Iran that Russians had presented in Moscow was an ‘outrage’. ‘I do not think we should play compromise any longer’, Truman announced. ‘We should refuse to recognize Rumania and Bulgaria until they comply with our requirements, we should let our position on Iran be known in no uncertain terms . . . I’m tired of babying the Soviets.’⁷⁴

As the year of 1945 came to a close, Iran was already casting dark shadows into the future. Stalin’s interests in Iran had unleashed powers that were pulling at him in all directions. First of all, time was running out for his project of securing an oil concession, and Stalin hardly needed a reminder from the Foreign Commissariat that the Soviets would be able ‘achieve a more favourable agreement on this question now than after the withdrawal of our troops’.⁷⁵ Secondly, the Azeri puppet regime was getting its hopes up regarding the future of their nation. Bagirov surely showed him the letter he received from Tabriz, expressing the wishes of the Azeri leaders for the coming year:

In order to protect the rights of the Azeri people . . . we consider it necessary to found an independent republic of Azerbaijan. Therefore . . . we ask you to render us assistance and create the conditions to realize the treasured dream of our people, consisting of the unification of these two republics.⁷⁶

Finally, the pressure was on from Washington and London to maintain at least the semblance of cooperation while the Allies were reshaping the mould for a recasting of war-ravaged Europe. During the following year, Stalin

would have to realize that these expectations were irreconcilable with his aspirations and would have to learn the final, most bitter lesson of the great power schooling he had been through during the war: that between all of the roles he could possibly play, as the hero of Soviet security interests, the father of world national liberation movements and a cooperative partner in the creation of world peace, he would have to begin choosing where to set his priorities.

These open questions resulted in confusion on the Azerbaijani frontline. The partisans were fighting, the Azeri government working, and still, by 31 December 1945, even Bagirov did not yet know what the ultimate goal was: separation from or autonomy within Iran. Moscow was not in favour of separatism, or of violence.⁷⁷

With such restrained support coming from above, the ADP leadership was concerned to hear that Iran's new Prime Minister Qavam was planning a trip to Moscow.⁷⁸ The Azerbaijani Democrats began to worry that their fate would be a mere bargaining chip on the negotiating table, and that their interests would invariably be compromised.⁷⁹ The outcome was just as they feared. Qavam left Moscow with the promise in hand that the Soviet troops would leave Iran in exchange for a Soviet oil concession and for a conciliatory stance of the Iranian government towards the Azerbaijani government. Pischevari warned Bagirov that the Iranian government would not only short-change Moscow on the oil deal, but also crush the ADP as soon as the troops left the country, endangering Azerbaijan's autonomy and its advocates' lives.

Despite the warnings from Tabriz and Baku, Stalin kept his word, and on 24 March instructed Bagirov and Maslennikov to organize and oversee the withdrawal of the troops by 10 May.⁸⁰ While the plans for withdrawal were being drafted, Bagirov, Maslennikov and Stalin discussed the possibility of helping the Azerbaijani partisan units by leaving some of the Red Army's equipment behind.⁸¹ But these vague promises of scant military supplies were only a small consolation for Pischevari, who saw his bright hopes of achieving autonomy for Azerbaijan replaced by dire premonitions of government repression. Nonetheless, although he was devastated at the outcome of Qavam's talks in Moscow and did not hide his worries or disappointment from Bagirov, Pischevari agreed to swallow his concerns and continue to do as he was told.⁸² He immediately entered upon negotiations with the Tehran government regarding national rights for Azerbaijan (primed, of course, in every step by Moscow and Baku) and on 13 June signed an agreement by which the Azerbaijan national government was transformed into a provincial *Enjumen*, the parliament into a provincial assembly.⁸³

The end of the Azeri movement was a bloody one, marked by broken promises and disappointed hopes. The Iranian government backed off from the oil agreement, putting an end to the Soviets' long struggle for control over the rich resources of the north and pushing their aspirations back behind the Soviet Union's pre-war borders. The Soviet Union, in turn, did not keep out of Iranian affairs and continued to support the partisan groups of the ADP,

although not nearly as much as Pishevari would have liked. The continued activity of partisan groups in Azerbaijan caused the Iranian government to renege on its promise to allow the Azerbaijani Democratic Party to function as a regular part of the Iranian political system. After months of partisan warfare, the Iranian government decided in early December 1946 to dissolve the Azerbaijani independence movement and send its troops into Azerbaijan. The leaders of the ADP were desperate for help. Frantic telegrams from Tabriz implored Bagirov to provide military assistance and refuge for those endangered by the wrath of Iranian government troops. Many of the movement's activists hurried to the Soviet consulates to apply for Soviet citizenship.⁸⁴

Although some of the leaders were given refuge, Bagirov relayed that all others should stay put, surrender to the Iranian authorities and play the final act of the tragedy.⁸⁵ Many of the democrats were killed in the early months of 1947, while most of the leaders managed to survive the worst phase of repression in December 1946 in the safe haven of Baku, and many others continued fighting in the hills until early summer 1947.

The creation of the Azeri Democratic Party in 1945 provides a unique illustration of the interior workings of Stalin's foreign policy in the aftermath of the Second World War. The presence of Soviet troops in Iran, Bagirov's greater Azeri inclinations, and the interest in an oil concession were not a complete policy until Stalin wove them together. It was Stalin who set priorities, gave go-aheads and set stop signs. The mystique around the dictator and the sparseness of his orders had his subordinates in constant fear of overstepping their goals, for they assumed that there was a grand plan, and they wanted to be sure they would fit into it. But for the first four years of the war, Stalin had no plan in Iran, let alone a grand one, and bumbled along, giving Bagirov the vague order to increase influence in Iran but to stay out of trouble. Bagirov, although he was driven by the wish to see a united Azerbaijan, was very subtle about revealing this wish to Stalin. In his reports, he did not openly suggest uniting the two Azerbaijanis, but he did try to place the option in the realm of possibility by extolling the growth of Soviet influence, the success of his cultural aid, the extent of his network of agents. Stalin only bit when diplomacy had failed to achieve an oil concession, and the only option left for pressurizing the Iranian government into compliance was to 'squeeze on' Iran's most sensitive spot: Azerbaijan.

Bagirov restrained his pursuit of a united Soviet Azerbaijan not only because he knew what would happen to him if he did not. He was deeply loyal to Stalin because he believed that Stalin was the genius who best knew how to realize Soviet interests and the Soviet mission. Soviet, in Bagirov's mind, was not synonymous with Communist, but also stood for the chances which the Soviet Union gave nationalities to develop their culture and identity. With his constant reminder that the Soviet Union had a mission to help the Azerbaijanis in Iran, Bagirov helped Stalin to recognize the potential of national liberation movements in a world of crumbling empires.

Key to Stalin's backing of Azeri nationalism was not his sudden realization that he could destabilize the world by supporting national liberation movements. Stalin was desperate for an oil concession, and fostering Azeri autonomy seemed to be his only chance left to secure it. What was more, Stalin believed it was a plan he would be able to get away with. Since the beginning of the war, Stalin had carefully stayed away from those activities that he knew would attract suspicion and get him in trouble with his allies. None of the multiple 'offers' by eager revolutionaries to seize power in Tehran were given approval from above. No matter how much they assured him that the country was unstable and the apple of revolution ripe for picking, again and again Stalin resisted the temptation. Moscow even seems to have kept its distance from Tudeh until it needed to rally public support for a Soviet oil concession. When the Tudeh-led demonstrations of late 1944 backfired, Stalin completely turned away from the crypto-Communist Tudeh and played the Azeri card that Bagirov had been holding for so long, again because he hoped that it would help him to realize his economic goals. When Stalin gave full support to the ADP, he hoped for one of two options. Either the movement would be so successful that Iranian Azerbaijan would separate from Iran and solve both his security dilemma and his desire for oil; or it would scare Teheran enough to obtain the concession he really wanted from the present Iranian government. Nowhere, however, was there a sense that he wanted to make a bid for territory in the interest of expanding world Communism.

Notes

This article is an abbreviated excerpt from the author's Ph.D. dissertation: 'Stalin, Bagirov and Soviet Policies in Iran, 1939–1946' (Yale University, 2000).

- 1 Voitech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.35.
- 2 Vladislav Zubok and Konstantin Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p.12.
- 3 See, for example, Eduard Mark, 'Revolution by Degrees: Stalin's National Front Strategy for Europe, 1941–1947', *Cold War International History Project Working Paper (CWIHP)* No. 31 (Feb. 2001).
- 4 Natalia Egorova, 'The "Iran Crisis" of 1945–1946: A View from the Russian Archives', *CWIHP Working Paper* No. 15 (May 1996).
- 5 On Tudeh's tense relations with Moscow see Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp.30–58, and Sephehr Zabih, *The Communist Movement in Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp.123–65.
- 6 For the most recent and explicit defence of the 'continuity theory', claiming that the Republic of 1946 grew from a deep-seated tradition of Azerbaijani national separatism, see Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Autonomy and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century Iran* (London: British Academy Press, 1993).
- 7 It is to Timothy Naftali and to his inspiring tale of a conversation with an ex-spy who remembered Bagirov as a key figure in Soviet policy in Iran that I owe the idea to go to Baku. My gratitude to Mais Bagirov (no relation to Mir Bagirov) and Emma

- Mikhaelovna of GAPPOD AzR (State Archive of Political Parties and Social Movements of the Republic of Azerbaijan) knows no limits. Documents from the archive shall be cited as GAPPOD, by Fond (F), Opis (Op.), Delo (D.) and page.
- 8 See Egorova, 'The Iran Crisis', p.11. See also Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp.105, 142–3.
 - 9 See Vladimir Pechatnov, 'The Big Three After World War II: New Documents on Soviet Thinking about Post War Relations with the United States and Britain', *CWIHP Working Paper* No. 13, and idem, 'The Allies are Pressing on You to Break your Will ...', *Foreign Policy Correspondence between Stalin and Molotov and Other Politburo Members, September 1945–December 1946*, *CWIHP Working Paper* No. 26 (1999).
 - 10 Bagirov to Stalin, 23.3.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.1–2.
 - 11 Burtsev to Lozovskii, 22.6.1945, *Archiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AVPRF)* F. 013a, Op. 7, Pap. 3, D. 27, pp.18–36.
 - 12 See Bagirov to Shcherbakov, 31.12.1944, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 71, pp.24–7.
 - 13 Bagirov, Draft proposal, April 1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 104, pp.93–103.
 - 14 Note from Foreign Ministry of Iran to the Ambassador of the USSR, 19.5.1945. Forwarded to Bagirov, 15.6.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 101, pp.14–15.
 - 15 On the Allied (non-)reaction to the Iranian note see B.R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p.271.
 - 16 Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, p.273.
 - 17 The oil negotiations of 1944 and 1945 are discussed at length in Egorova, 'The Iran Crisis 1945–1946'.
 - 18 GKO resolution No. 9168, 21.6.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 104, pp.1–3.
 - 19 See telegrams from Bagirov to Beria in GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 104; Bagirov to Stalin, 6.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.18.
 - 20 Politburo to Bagirov, 6.7.1945, GAPPOD AzR. F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.4–5.
 - 21 On the development of the Kurdish national movement in Iran and the Soviet sponsorship of the Kurdish Democratic Party in 1945, see David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), pp.236–46.
 - 22 Politburo to Bagirov, 6.7.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.45.
 - 23 With strong emphasis on Soviet involvement, see Martin Sicker, *The Bear and the Lion: Soviet Imperialism and Iran* (New York: Praeger, 1988); Rouhollah Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941–1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1975), pp.112–13; Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, pp.217–18. Minimizing the importance of the Soviets and underlining the power of Azeri nationalism: M.S. Ivanov, *Novoishaia Istoriia Irana* (Moscow: Mysl, 1965); Atabaki, *Azerbaijan*, pp.99ff.
 - 24 See Louise L'Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis, 1945–46* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.5–6.
 - 25 Pishevari's 'founding' of the ADP is often presented as his 'reaction' to being barred from the *Majlis*. See Fawcett, *Azerbaijan Crisis*, p.50; Abrahamian, *Iran*, p.198; Zabih, *Communist Movement*, pp.87, 98.
 - 26 On Pishevari's early criticism of Tudeh, see Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, pp.289f.
 - 27 Key recruits included Shabustari, head of the left-liberal journalistic 'Freedom Front' and Padegan, chairman of the Azeri branch of Tudeh. See GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 110, pp.1–7.
 - 28 Ervand Abrahamian, 'Communism and Communalism in Iran: Firqeh I Dimokrat and Tudeh', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 1/4 (1970), pp.291–316. See also Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War*, pp.40–1.
 - 29 Talks were conducted with Biriya, Cheshm Azer, Fridun Ibragimi, Gulam Iakhia and Kalantari. Gasanov, Atakishiev, Ibragimov and Kuliev, 21.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 95, pp.135–55, 138.

- 30 Report by Atakishiev, Gasanov, Ibragimov and Kuliev, 21.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 95, pp.135–55.
- 31 Bagirov to Stalin, 28.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.32.
- 32 Bagirov to Stalin, 28.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.34–5.
- 33 Report by Atakishiev, Gasanov, Ibragimov and Kuliev, 21.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 95, p.142; Bagirov to Stalin, 28.9.1945 GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.33–4.
- 34 Bagirov to Stalin, 6.9.1945; GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D 90, p.21.
- 35 Report by Atakishiev, Gasanov, Ibragimov and Kuliev, 21.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 95, p.153.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p.149.
- 37 Bagirov to Stalin, 28.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.37.
- 38 Bul' to Bagirov, 28.9.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 95, pp. 174–5.
- 39 Bagirov to Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 23.11.1945, D. 90, p.68.
- 40 'On the progress in realizing the measures in Iranian Azerbaijan', unsigned draft report, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 97, pp.149–77, 152. Quoted below as 'Draft report'.
- 41 Bagirov to Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 23.11.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.69.
- 42 Draft Report, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 97, p.160.
- 43 In Azeri, 'fedai' has the meaning not only of 'partisan', but also of 'volunteer, sacrificing himself to fight for a dangerous cause'.
- 44 Bagirov and Maslennikov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 19.11.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.49f. The numbers are from a later report: GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 97, p.165. Only in the late autumn were Beria, Molotov and Malenkov informed in detail about what was going on in Azerbaijan. See GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.66–9.
- 45 GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 97, p.166.
- 46 Maslennikov to Bagirov, 22.11.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 101, p.76.
- 47 Bagirov issued these orders when Sigatul Islam, a Tabriz clergyman, organized a meeting of the local Iranian authorities and representatives of the ADP on 25 November. Bagirov and Maslennikov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 27.11.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.87.
- 48 Bagirov and Maslennikov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov, 1.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.133.
- 49 Draft report, p. 168.
- 50 Bagirov and Maslennikov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov, 19.11.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.49.
- 51 Draft report, pp. 174–6.
- 52 For a translation of the Declaration see Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp.144f.
- 53 Declaration of Azerbaijan National Convention, 23.11.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.106–8.
- 54 Resolutions of the first National Convention of the Azerbaijani People, 21.11.1945, GAPPOD, AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp. 111–13.
- 55 Bagirov and Maslennikov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 1.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.137.
- 56 On the agenda for the first meeting of parliament and planning of partisan activities, see Bagirov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 11.11.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.199.
- 57 Notes on conversation between Pishevari and Bayat, 3.12.1945; Bagirov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 4.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.149f.
- 58 Emelianov (on orders of 'the elder one') to Atakishiev, Ibragimov and Gasanov, 10.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.234f.

- 59 Bagirov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov, 13.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.245.
- 60 Bagirov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov, 17.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.266ff.
- 61 Bagirov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Malenkov, 19.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, p.281.
- 62 Bagirov to Atakishiev, Ibragimov and Gasanov, Nov. 1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 98, pp.1f.
- 63 Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy*, pp.124f.
- 64 Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, pp. 277–8.
- 65 Note from Molotov to Iranian Foreign Ministry, 17.11.1945, passed on to Bagirov by Silin on Molotov's orders. GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 91, pp.216–21.
- 66 For the text see Raymond Dennett and Robert K. Turner (eds.), *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), Vol.8, pp.851–2.
- 67 Molotov to Harriman, 29.11.1945, AVPRF, F. 07, Op. 10, pap. 20, D. 264, p.1.
- 68 Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy*, p.123.
- 69 Krasnykh, the Soviet consul in Tabriz, upheld this line with iron consistency. See, for example, his conversation with Bayat, 1.12.1945 described in Bagirov to Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov, 3.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 90, pp.145f.
- 70 Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, pp.280f.
- 71 See Pechatnov, 'The Allies are Pressing on You', pp.22–30.
- 72 Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, pp.285–7; Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy*, pp.126f.
- 73 Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, pp.295–6.
- 74 John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p.281.
- 75 Silin to Molotov, Dekanosov, 12.12.1945, AVPRF, F. 012, Op. 6, pap. 79, D. 118, pp.2–3. Molotov noted in the margin that the report had to be 'urgently discussed'.
- 76 Pishevari, Shabustari, Padegan, Javid and Biriya to Bagirov, 23.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 110, p.425.
- 77 Bagirov to Emelianov and Yakubov, 31.12.1945, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 98, pp.46–7.
- 78 On Qavam's visit to Moscow see Egorova, 'The Iran Crisis', pp.18ff.
- 79 Bagirov and Maslennikov to Stalin and Molotov, 22.2.1946, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 112, p.28.
- 80 Stalin and Antonov to Bagirov and Maslennikov, 24.3.1946, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 112, p.39.
- 81 Bagirov and Maslennikov to Stalin, 18.3.1946, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 112, pp.36–8.
- 82 Bagirov became concerned about Pishevari's mental stability when he broke down several times in conversation, begging Bagirov not to let the Soviets drop the ADP. GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 117, pp.66–9.
- 83 Bagirov to Stalin, 2.12.1946, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 112, p.142.
- 84 Bagirov forwarded their plea to Stalin, 2.12.1946, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 112, p.143.
- 85 Bagirov to Stalin, 14.12.1946, GAPPOD AzR, F. 1, Op. 89, D. 112, p.160.

THE TURKISH WAR SCARE OF 1946

Eduard Mark

Whether Stalin was acting opportunistically and reacting to local circumstances or whether he was planning carefully and acting globally to intimidate foes and expand Soviet power, territory, and influence remains a hotly debated topic. In the preceding article, Fernande Scheid Raine presents one view of Stalin during the Iranian Crisis. In the following essay, the historian Eduard Mark casts Stalin in a very different light.

At the same time that Stalin was maneuvering in Iran, the Soviet dictator was exerting pressure on Turkey. According to Mark, Stalin wanted control of the Turkish Straits and acquisition of the long-disputed territory of Kars and Ardahan in north-east Turkey. Aggression and war were real possibilities, argues Mark; what occurred was not an imaginary crisis, but an impending war situation. 'At a minimum,' Mark writes, 'Stalin was willing to engage in strategic intimidation—brinkmanship.' He backed down only because he was informed by Donald Maclean, a high ranking British diplomat and Soviet agent in Washington, that the Americans were determined to go to war, if necessary.

Mark employs a vast array of American intelligence documents, new Soviet archival evidence, and oral interviews to illuminate the relationship between intelligence gathering, war planning, and decisionmaking. He shows how signs of Soviet aggressive intentions accelerated the making of war plans in the United States and spurred Anglo-American strategic collaboration. The origins of Washington's commitments to the Middle East stemmed from this crisis because the area was viewed as critical to waging war successfully against a predatory enemy. Stalin, Mark claims, realized the seriousness of US counteractions. Deterrence worked. Stalin backed down. Thereafter, he was more wary and perhaps even more calculating.

*Mark's essay has stirred a great deal of interest, but not everyone is convinced by his evidence. His thesis, writes Arnold Offner in his recent study of Truman's diplomacy, 'is questionable.' Was Stalin really determined to go to war? The Turks did not think so. Curiously their views seem to be left out of Mark's analysis. More troubling are the bits of evidence that suggest Truman himself never thought war imminent. On September 21, even in the midst of all the troubling signs of Soviet activities, Offner notes that Truman wrote that he did not expect any 'shooting trouble' with the Russians.**

* Arnold Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945–1953* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 172–173.

*Although Mark's essay is far from conclusive about Stalin's intentions and Truman's expectations, his research is impressive and his argument suggestive. Researchers can glimpse the potential of harnessing intelligence data for studies of decision making. We now know a great deal about the spy network that the Kremlin managed in the United States. But the implications of this network for Soviet policymaking and for Cold War diplomacy are often left unexplored. Did Stalin back-pedal because of Maclean's information? Do we know whether Stalin paid close attention to these reports in August and September 1946? Prior to June 1941, for example, Stalin had voluminous warnings of an impending Nazi attack, but he disregarded them. In August and September 1946, was he deterred, or was he tentative, ambivalent, and inconsistent to begin with? And were Truman and Acheson fearful of an attack, or eager to use ambiguous evidence to advance US strategic planning?**** Mark claims that the fears of US decisionmakers were real; alarm existed. But having declared that the United States was ready to fight on August 15, Truman went off on a vacation, hardly suggestive that he thought war was imminent. For scholars, the joy and the challenge of writing history inhere in sorting through and making sense of such contradictory evidence.

* * *

The mood in the White House was grim on 15 August 1946 when President Harry S Truman met with Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, Acting Secretary of War Kenneth C. Royal, and representatives of the military services. Some days before, Truman had asked for a report on the Soviet threat to Turkey; the hour of presentation was now at hand. The memorandum prepared the day before by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee asserted that the Soviet Union purposed the subjugation of Turkey and warned that the fall of that state would lead to a strategically perilous spread of Soviet influence throughout the Near and Middle East. The paper raised the possibility of "Soviet aggression against Turkey" and advised that "the only thing which will deter the Russians will be the conviction that the United States is prepared, if necessary, to meet aggression with force of arms." Truman approved the document, asserting that he would follow its recommendations "to the end." At one point Acheson asked him if he understood that the decision might mean war. Truman left little doubt that he did, saying that "we might as well find out whether the Russians were bent on world conquest now as in five or ten years."¹

Many scholars have recounted this episode, but it is still curiously lacking in context. One searches the historiography of the Cold War in vain for compelling reasons why the president and his advisers so plainly feared that Soviet pressure on Turkey might take the form of armed aggression. The Soviets, to be sure, had on 7 August restated their desire for a revision of

** Melvyn P. Leffler, 'Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945-1952,' *The Journal of American History*, 71 (March 1985): 807-825.

the Montreux Convention governing the Turkish Strait. They had again insisted that the revision provide for joint Soviet-Turkish defense of the waterway – for Soviet bases on Turkish territory. But Moscow’s note had also conspicuously failed to repeat earlier demands for the Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan. Outwardly, at least, the Turkish crisis, which had been brewing since the summer of 1945, seemed somewhat *less* serious than it had before the note of 7 August. And yet American officials had never been more concerned.²

Few historians would disagree that the year 1946 was (to borrow a phrase from Winston Churchill) a hinge of fate when the contradictions of the Grand Alliance ripened into discord and suspicions congealed into fears. In that year, Washington’s mistrust of the Soviet Union increased sharply. For this fact historians of the Cold War have offered many explanations. But notably absent from the list has been a focused and informed concern on the part of American officials that Soviet armies might take to the field against a state lying beyond the limits of their wartime advances. Scholars sympathetic to Western concerns have observed, to be sure, that the Soviets maintained large armies in the Balkans and waged a strident propaganda campaign against Turkey. They have also noted that in March 1946 there were ominous reports of Soviet troop movements and warlike preparations in the Balkans.³ But the apparent danger to Turkey thereafter receded so markedly that in late June both the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department (MID) and the Joint Intelligence Subcommittee (JIS) of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee concluded that the danger of attack had vanished for the near term.⁴

Inasmuch as so little evidence yet adduced seems to justify fears of a Soviet invasion of Turkey, many historians have understandably viewed the crisis skeptically. Some have seen it as symptomatic of Washington’s tendency to overreact to Soviet initiatives, denying even that Turkey had been subject to serious pressure. Others have seen a “Holy Pretense” that masked other concerns. In the latter vein, Melvyn P. Leffler, in his prize-winning *A Preponderance of Power*, asserts that Washington’s fears for Turkey had been “contrived” with a view to justifying military aid to that country so that it could be integrated into the war plans then taking shape in Washington.⁵

While serious gaps remain in the evidence, intelligence reports and military planning files declassified in recent years now permit a much fuller understanding of the Turkish crisis than has been possible hitherto.⁶ The intelligence reports show that Washington’s anxiety that Turkey might be attacked or intimidated into submission to Moscow was sincere and justified within the context of the strategic premises that informed American foreign policy. Information from sensitive sources – some of them within the Communist parties of southeastern Europe – indicated that the Soviets might be contemplating an attack on Turkey.⁷

Washington’s anxieties over Turkey crested twice – once in late spring, when the president met with his highest civilian and military advisers to

ponder whether war would erupt that summer, and again in the late summer, when there was a sudden and dramatic increase in Soviet military activities in the Balkans. Soviet troop movements, magnified by an erroneous order-of-battle estimate from the British JIS, made an invasion of Turkey seem possibly imminent and put the United States on a path toward mobilization.

The Turkish crisis of 1946 did not have the clear focus or the dramatic denouements of later confrontations over Berlin and Cuba. There were few public announcements, and cautious efforts to mobilize public opinion had scarcely begun before the acute phase of the crisis suddenly ended.⁸ But the effects were significant. Until the Turkish crisis and the better understood confrontation over Iran, most American officials held that war with the Soviet Union was a remote possibility.⁹ But the Near Eastern emergencies led them to conclude that war was possible at any time – not because the Soviets wanted war with the Western powers, but because their attempts to intimidate smaller states might spill over into general conflict if Moscow misjudged Western determination.¹⁰ The concern was not misplaced, for it now appears that the Soviets did in fact misconstrue American policy until a well-placed spy in Washington informed them of the Truman administration's resolve to defend Turkey even to the extremity of war. That the United States began to plan for war with the Soviet Union in 1946 has been known.¹¹ What has not been understood is that while the Iran crisis of March 1946 put the planning seriously in train, fears for Turkey sustained the preparations for conflict and pushed them to lengths heretofore unsuspected. These included, *inter alia*, the first Anglo-American agreements on how to fight World War III, the earliest plans for a strategic air offensive against the USSR, and the first efforts at covert paramilitary operations in the Balkans.

The background of the Turkish crisis may be quickly summarized. In 1925 the Soviet Union and Turkey signed a treaty of friendship and neutrality that committed each state to nonaggression *vis-à-vis* the other. On 19 March 1945 the Soviets denounced the treaty, alleging that changed circumstances required a new instrument. This much the Turks had expected, and they received the news with equanimity. They were, however, entirely unprepared for the price of renewal, which the Soviet foreign minister, V. M. Molotov, imparted on 7 June 1945: cession of the provinces of Kars and Ardahan to the USSR, joint defense of the Turkish Strait, and a complete revision of the Montreaux Convention that governed the passage of ships through the waterway. The Turks, resolving to fight, rather than yield to the importunities of their giant neighbor, rejected all these demands but the last. Inasmuch as the Soviets had repeatedly raised the issue of the Turkish Strait at wartime conferences, the United States and Great Britain had every reason to suppose that the Soviets were very much in earnest about revision of the convention and joint defense of the channel.¹² Nor had the Western powers forgotten that the first step in the enforced absorption of the Baltic states in 1940–41 had been the emplacement of Soviet bases on their soil.

Within the context of the Soviet claims on Turkey, the initial focus of Washington's concern was the size of the forces the Soviets maintained in the Balkans. Even before the Potsdam Conference of July 1945 – where Churchill rather sharply asked Stalin why there were 200,000 troops in Bulgaria – Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew warned Truman that well-informed Bulgarian sources had stated that the Soviets were massing troops on the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The Bulgarians believed that an eventual invasion of Turkey was by no means improbable. According to MID's estimates Turkey's military position with respect to the USSR was parlous indeed. After consultations with the British, French, and Turkish general staffs, MID placed about 200,000 Soviet soldiers in Bulgaria, 500,000 in Romania, and about 175,000 in the Trans-Caucasian regions of the USSR adjacent to eastern Turkey.¹³

Both the War Department and the British JIS believed that the Soviets probably intended only the intimidation of Turkey. But unsettling reports persisted. President Truman, clearly disposed to believe the worst, increasingly inclined to pessimism. On 1 November an assistant found him brooding over a map showing Turkey fenced in by a mass of tabs representing Soviet divisions. One day, Truman said on 16 December, the Soviets were "going to move down and take the Black Sea Strait." He added that the United States could do nothing to prevent this. "I don't know what we're going to do," he added ruefully.¹⁴

The movement of hundreds of Soviet tanks toward Tehran in March had shown Stalin's willingness to use the threat of force in support of his objectives in Iran. That this display of might had, on 4 April, apparently compelled the Iranian government to accede to his demands for an oil concession did nothing to relieve fears for Turkey. The US delegation to the Allied Control Commission for Romania signaled that many new Soviet military units were entering the country and moving south toward Bulgaria. The leader of the Bulgarian Communist party, Georgi Dimitrov, had given a speech at the military academy that seemed to indicate that war was near. A Bulgarian colonel recently returned from staff training in Moscow stated that Soviet generals commonly spoke of a sudden attack on Turkey in the near future, expressing confidence that the Turks could not resist effectively and that the United States and Britain would not respond to a sudden *fait accompli*.¹⁵

Until this time the Middle East had attracted only the fitful attention of American statesmen. Although there was considerable interest in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, Washington had not defined the Middle East as vital to American interests, and there were no plans to defend the region. The threat to Turkey and Iran soon changed everything. In a letter of 6 March 1946, Secretary Byrnes had asked the Joint Chiefs for "an appraisal from the military point of view" of the Soviet demands on Turkey. To underscore the seriousness of the request, President Truman scrawled "approved" across the bottom of the page and added his signature. Replying on 17 March, the JCS stated that Soviet demands on Turkey and Iran evidenced a desire to

dominate the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. Soviet domination of the “vital Suez-Canal-Aleppo-Basra triangle” would mean that “Britain must ultimately fight or accept the eventual disintegration of the Empire.” These prospects were of the greatest moment to the United States: “The defeat or disintegration of the British Empire would eliminate from Eurasia the last bulwark of resistance between the United States and Soviet expansion.” From this conclusion there was but a short inferential leap to a decision that American policymakers would soon make: that the United States itself should fight for Turkey in the event of a Soviet invasion.¹⁶

In their reply to Secretary Byrnes, the Joint Chiefs did not discuss the *direct* military value of the Middle East to the United States. They could have done so, however, for the region already figured in war planning under way in the Joint Staff.¹⁷

By March 1946 the Joint War Planners had prepared partial drafts of a concept for a joint war plan (Pincher). The strategic premises of Pincher were those the JCS had communicated in March to Secretary Byrnes: the Soviets did not seek war with the other Great Powers, but their expansionism in the Middle East might, through miscalculation, lead to war with Britain. So essential to the United States was Britain that if Britain fought Russia, so too must the United States, lest Britain be defeated, its military potential lost, and the USSR gain total mastery of the resources of Eurasia. The USSR disposed ground forces far larger than those of the United States and its potential allies. It followed that the Soviets would have the initiative in any war and would quickly overrun most of Western Europe. Fortunately, however, technology had given the United States two incalculable advantages: strategic air power and the atomic bomb. While American and allied ground forces retreated into Spain and Italy (or evacuated the Continent altogether), bombers based in the United Kingdom and Egypt would hollow out the Soviet homeland. As strategic air power did its deadly work, the United States would raise and train large ground forces with a view to mounting a counteroffensive in the region of the Black Sea. With Pincher, matters had come full circle. The threat to Turkey hastened the creation of Pincher, while Pincher itself defined a new reason for Turkey’s importance to the United States: the longer Turkey held out against a Soviet invasion, the longer B-29s based in the Cairo-Suez region would be able to pound the vital Soviet industries of the Urals, which lay beyond the range of aircraft based in Britain.¹⁸

March’s reports, while hardly conclusive, pointed quite uniformly in the direction of an impending Soviet onslaught on Turkey. In April the evidence became less uniform. On 4 April 1946 the American ambassador in Moscow, Walter Bedell Smith, spoke to Stalin of his government’s concerns. He asked, “How far is Russia going to go?” Stalin replied, “We’re not going much further.” Did that “much” encompass Turkey, Smith inquired. The dictator reminded the ambassador that he had assured Truman at Potsdam that he would not attack Turkey. That pledge, he added, still held.¹⁹

Talk is of course cheap. But the day after Stalin met with Smith the Soviet Foreign Ministry announced that an agreement had been reached with Iran. By the third week in May, Soviet troops had evacuated Iran, save for Azerbaijan. Matters looked somewhat better for Turkey, too. Placing the number of Soviet troops in Bulgaria at 235,000, the British JIS ventured that "previous suggestions of a build-up of Russian forces in Bulgaria may have been exaggerated." MID now put the Soviet forces in Bulgaria at only 130,000, and the US representative to the Allied Control Commission for Bulgaria reported that, while the Soviet forces were well equipped and fully capable of offensive action, there were no signs that any impended.²⁰

Other indications of Soviet purposes were less reassuring. The Strategic Services Unit (SSU) established authoritatively that the Soviets were flagrantly violating the agreement reached at Potsdam that categorically banned the production in Germany of "arms, ammunition and implements of war." Other reports held that the Soviets were pushing development of advanced versions of the V-1 and V-2 rockets with a view to early production. Reports of this character continued through the fall.²¹

There was also new evidence that Turkey remained in some kind of danger. In early May the SSU reported that the Soviets were sending infiltrators into Turkey to foment separatist sentiment among the Georgians and other minority groups. Several weeks later there came from Greece a seemingly authoritative report of Soviet designs on Turkey. Representatives of the European Communist parties had attended the congress of the Czech Communist party between 28 February and 3 March 1946. The Communist delegates had decided that one of the overriding tasks of the Communist movement was "to see that Turkey is thrown out of Europe and that her European territories are restored to their original owners, i.e., those who are interested in them from a national or geographic point of view." It appeared, in short, that Moscow had not only ordered the European Communist parties to support its demands for Kars and Ardahan but had promised the Balkan comrades a share of the spoils from a far-reaching dismemberment of Turkey.²²

June saw a flurry of alarming reports: American representatives to the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria reported large Soviet troop movements that appeared to represent a substantial reinforcement of the existing occupation forces. From Belgrade there came a report of Soviet plans for imminent offensives against Western Europe and Greece. In Odessa an informant deemed reliable told the American assistant naval attaché that the preeminent Soviet military figure, Marshal G. K. Zhukov, had recently arrived in the city to oversee preparations for a major campaign against an unspecified objective. The SSU reported to MID on 19 June that Czech officers attending the Higher Staff School in Moscow had said that the military problems under study predominantly concerned offensive operations against Turkey and other states south of the USSR. At this time, too, there began a strange phenomenon that lasted through the fall. Soviet officers, sometimes

belligerent, less often friendly and solicitous, approached Americans to warn that a war was fast approaching in which the Red Army would inflict a humiliating defeat on the demobilized Anglo-Americans.²³

By June USFET had completed its emergency plan. Brig. Gen. George A. Lincoln, who was both the vice chief of P&O and the army planner on the Joint Staff Planners, briefed the president on 12 June. Lincoln explained how in the event of war the Anglo-American occupation forces would retreat across the Rhine to Antwerp for evacuation to the United Kingdom.²⁴

After General Lincoln's briefing and a presentation by Col. Carter Clark of G-2, President Truman met with Secretary of State Byrnes, Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, and the Joint Staff Planners. There was only one question on the agenda: Would there be a war with Russia? Byrnes and Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the army's chief of staff, thought that the Soviets would avoid war for the time being; Forrestal and Truman believed war possible under certain conditions. Adm. William D. Leahy, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said that no one could predict what the Soviets would do. The other participants did not commit themselves. There was no formal decision as to the likelihood of conflict, but the implicit conclusion was that war was possible but not imminent.²⁵

Planning for war continued accordingly. Pursuant to Pincher's call for high-level coordination with the Royal Air Force (RAF), Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, chief of staff of the US Army Air Forces, went to London in late June for a series of meetings with Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, the RAF's chief of staff. Spaatz and his counterpart agreed that the RAF would undertake to build facilities at two bases to meet the special requirements of B-29s modified to carry the atomic bomb. Five other bases were to be readied for standard B-29s.²⁶ By early August an American officer had arrived in the United Kingdom to supervise the construction of bomb-loading pits and other specialized facilities required for staging an atomic offensive. By the time of Spaatz's trip the Joint Staff had begun work on regional plans to realize the Pincher concept. First priority went to Griddle, a plan for aiding Turkey.²⁷

The Joint Staff did not limit itself to planning. In July it approached the Office of Special Operations (OSO) of the newly formed Central Intelligence Group (CIG) to undertake a covert operation in Romania. In the event the Soviets invaded European Turkey, their lines of communication would pass through that country. While the Romanian government was firmly in the hands of the Communists and about a half million Russian troops weighed on the land, there still existed a large and spirited opposition in the form of the National Peasant party (NPP). The Joint Staff asked the OSO to organize an underground army in Romania that, in the event of hostilities, could be used to interdict Soviet supply lines, much as the French Maquis had hindered German communications during Operation Overlord. In early August the SSU set up a program to collect information on armed underground movements throughout the Soviet bloc.²⁸

July saw no increase in the Soviet ground forces in the Balkans, but toward Turkey the USSR still maintained a menacing front. The Soviet ambassador to Ankara, withdrawn in June for "consultations," remained in Moscow. Soviet naval maneuvers continued off the Turkish coast, as did the noisy press campaign. The Soviet note of 7 August 1946 calling for revision of the Montreux Convention and joint defense of the Turkish Strait therefore came as no bolt from the blue. Policymaking circles in Washington, on edge from months of ceaseless reports and rumors about Soviet intentions, fell into a mood of crisis.

On 14 August the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee met in Acheson's office to determine what policy should be recommended to the president the following day. Acheson appears to have dominated the meeting. Foreshadowing the advice that Truman would receive on the morrow, he argued that the "only real deterrent to Soviet plans for engulfing Turkey and the Middle East" would "be a conviction that the pursuance of such a policy will result in war with the United States." Logic suggested that the Soviets would seek their objectives by means short of war. The question remained, however, "when, and under what circumstances, would they go to war for those objectives, if means short of war do not succeed." If the United States stood firm, so too, presumably, would the Turks and the British. Then, the undersecretary added, "we shall learn whether the Soviet policy includes an *affirmative* provision to go to war *now*." Acheson concluded his presentation by arguing that Turkey was important to the global balance of power and would be an indispensable ally in the event of war. There appears to have been no dissent from his conclusion that "our national policy should be to support Turkey."²⁹

During the meeting in the Oval Office on 15 August, President Truman agreed with the suggestion that the time had come to prepare public opinion for the new policy on Turkey and the dangers that attended it. On 20 August Acheson met with about fifteen leading journalists to explain the urgency of the situation. "He was asked the \$64 dollar question" – what would happen if the Soviets invaded Turkey? Acheson "replied that, if something started, it was supposed that the victim would raise it in the UN, and he had every confidence that the US would fully meet its commitments."³⁰

The administration informed the British ambassador of its new policy. In a conversation of 19 August, Loy Henderson, director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, disconcerted Lord Inverchapel by alluding "to the unsatisfactory attitude which Mr. Stimson adopted at the time of the Manchukuo crisis. The present administration, he declared, were determined that there should be no repetition in regard to the Turkish problem of what has occurred in the Manchukuo affairs. 'They mean business,' he asserted, 'and would, if necessary, go all the way.'" But probably no British diplomat paid closer attention to the reports of American determination to defend Turkey than the first secretary of the embassy in Washington – Donald Maclean.³¹

The Truman administration quickly took a number of steps to show support for Turkey. In a note to the Soviet Union of 19 August 1946, the United States repeated its previously expressed willingness to see the Montreaux Convention revised but firmly rejected the USSR's call for a joint Turkish-Soviet condominium over the Strait, pointedly warning that aggression against Turkey would fall within the purview of the UN Security Council. The newest American aircraft carrier, the *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, went on station in the eastern Mediterranean, where it was soon joined by three cruisers, eight destroyers, and many support vessels.³²

What had been in August a steady trickle of reports about Soviet military preparations in the Balkans became in mid-September a torrent. For these reports there were two principal sources: the British and MID. MID was initially cautious. The British reports were from the first alarming – and probably more influential, for MI-6, unlike the SSU and CIG, had networks of agents in the Balkans. MID relied chiefly on a handful of officers attached to the Allied Control Commissions for Romania and Bulgaria.³³

Between mid-September and late October the SSU distributed several dozen reports of British origin detailing the establishment of airfields and large supply depots in Bulgaria. From the same source – probably MI-6 – the SSU received and disseminated a somewhat smaller number of reports about the arrival of new Soviet formations in Bulgaria. The reports of troop movements reached a climax with intelligence the SSU disseminated on 16 October about Soviet activity in the Romanian port of Constanta on the Black Sea: “The number of Soviet troops in the area surrounding Constanta and the region inland from that city has increased considerably during the middle of August. Every village in the region is literally packed with troops and equipment and all big hotels in the town have been requisitioned for military use.” The town itself had apparently become a major command center, for “two Soviet ‘Colonel Generals’, three Lieutenant Generals, and a number of Major Generals” had been observed.³⁴

The British Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee viewed these reports and other reports of Soviet activities in the Middle East with mounting alarm. On 16 September the chiefs cabled their representatives in Washington that they attached “great importance to impressing the United States Chiefs of Staff with the seriousness of the situation.” A week later they reviewed the JIS's latest report on Soviet troop movements in the Balkans and decided that it should be called immediately to the attention of the JCS.³⁵

To judge from the many copies preserved in military planning files, the JIS's report, which had been prepared on 20 September, had considerable effect. The senior British intelligence body advised that a new Soviet armored corps had moved into Bulgaria and that it was probably the vanguard of an entire armored army. While the JIS thought that intimidation of the Turks was the most probable explanation for the deployment, it warned that an invasion of Turkey should not be excluded. As the JIS estimated that there were already 230,000 Soviet troops in Bulgaria, the deployment of a new army

would raise the total Soviet force in the country well above the number required for offensive action. Also ominous, in the view of the JIS, were reports of Soviet mine laying in the Black Sea and of stockpiling in Germany.³⁶

MID at first treated with reserve a flurry of disquieting reports from the American delegations to the Allied Control Commissions. On 8 October, however, American representatives to the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria reported that they had learned from local sources that Soviet units, both infantry and armor, were infiltrating into Bulgaria from Romania under cover of darkness. On 11 October officers of the delegation returned from a tour of the countryside to report that there were at least 120,000 Soviet troops in the country and that they were moving ever closer to the Turkish border. "More men, equipment, and ammunition are now present in Bulgaria than are needed for occupation duties."³⁷

A series of steps to prepare the United States for war accompanied the Truman administration's public support of Turkey. Spurred by the stream of disquieting intelligence reports, they continued into October. Extreme secrecy characterized most of them. Maj. Gen. Lauris Norstad, P&O's deputy chief of staff, warned the American commander in Germany that nothing was to be committed to paper – everything was to be handled "by personal contact between the few key individuals concerned." Where secrecy was impossible, dissimulation and circumlocution prevailed. Though by 1 October the administration had sent an entire carrier task force to the eastern Mediterranean, a bland press release spoke vaguely of supporting the occupation forces and protecting unspecified "interests."³⁸

The first secret measure to see completion was Griddle, which the Joint Staff finished on the very day that Truman and his advisers reached their momentous decision. Griddle, strictly speaking, was the first American plan for war with the Soviet Union. Griddle outlined in some detail steps that could be taken to aid Turkey after D-day. The plan called for about ten fighter groups, which would have to be in action by D+120 days. On 23 August the JCS reviewed the threat to Turkey for President Truman and, after stressing the country's strategic importance, called for the program of aid delineated in Griddle.³⁹

By 17 August the War Department had begun to study the feasibility of rapid mobilization. One directive in particular starkly underscored the dangers of the hour. On 10 September 1946 the War Department ordered the United States Army Air Forces to prepare for "the immediate initiation of strategic air operations to the eastward." A plan was to be completed and submitted for the department's approval within the extraordinarily short time of twenty days. Alongside the directive in the files of the Air Staff lies a copy of the British report of 20 September on the reinforcement of Soviet forces in Bulgaria.⁴⁰

The delicate circumlocution "to the eastward" did not mislead the Air Staff. By 1 October it had prepared the appropriately named Makefast, a plan for the conventional bombardment of the Soviet petroleum industry. Designed

to govern operations during the first four months of a war against the Soviet Union, Makefast projected that by D+120 days six groups of B-29s would be engaged in operations against the Soviet Union from bases in the United Kingdom and Egypt. This phase of the strategic air offensive was to be directed exclusively against the Soviet oil industry, which the Air Staff's planners judged the most vulnerable of potential target systems and the one whose destruction would contribute most to slowing the Soviet offensive. They calculated that if sustained operations began from Britain by D+90 days and from Egypt by D+120 to D+150 days, the B-29s could destroy 70–80 percent of the Soviet Union's capacity to refine petroleum by D+240 at a cost of 39,000 tons of bombs and 151 aircraft. An additional month would be required to achieve the same effect if the Superfortresses simultaneously undertook to mine the Black and Caspian Seas with 10,000 tons of mines in order to hinder the transportation of petroleum from the Caucasian oil fields to the refineries.⁴¹

At this time, too, the Air Staff began to plan for an atomic strike on the Soviet Union. Planning proceeded slowly, however, as staff officers were hampered by the reluctance of the Manhattan Engineering District to release vital information. The Air Staff completed the atomic plan late in the fall, and General Spaatz approved it in December 1946.⁴²

September also saw significant meetings in Bucharest and London. The leaders of the National Peasant party needed no encouragement when two officers of the OSO approached them about organizing a partisan army. By 30 September 1946, plans had been worked out for a clandestine army, based upon the NPP and financed by the United States, for use in the event of war. A committee in Romania was to supervise the preparations of the underground force, while another abroad provided liaison with the United States and other foreign governments.⁴³

Generals Lincoln and Everest met with their British counterparts on the Joint Staff Committee in the fourth week of September under conditions of the greatest secrecy. (The British even requested that the Americans wear civilian clothes.) On 28 September the conferees formally accepted the Pincher concept as a guide for conducting a war with the Soviet Union. The European mainland, they agreed, would have to be abandoned. The importance of the Middle East derived not from its oil fields – which could not be defended – but from the necessity to use Egypt as a base for the strategic air offensive. The United States and Britain would send what aid they could to Turkey, to slow down the expected Soviet advance on the Egyptian base area.⁴⁴

Even as Anglo-American staff officers were hammering out their strategy for World War III, the Turkish crisis had suddenly begun to recede. On 24 September, Soviet diplomacy had abruptly turned conciliatory. On that day Stalin replied in writing to questions put to him by the British journalist Alexander Werth. He dismissed the danger of war and “unconditionally” affirmed his belief in the possibility of peaceful coexistence. The very same day the Soviet Foreign Ministry sent a note to Turkey much milder in tone

than the communication of 7 August. Coming as they did only two weeks after the USSR had recognized Bulgaria's claims to Turkey's European provinces and barely more than six weeks after the restatement of Soviet claims on 7 August, the gestures of 24 September self-evidently marked a retreat. It is now apparent that the timing of the volte-face was hardly coincidental. In his recent memoirs, Yuri Modin, the Soviet intelligence officer who for some years served as the control officer for the famous Cambridge spy ring, writes that Soviet intelligence gave its agent in Britain's Washington embassy, Donald Maclean, the task of establishing "how far the West would go to defend this part of the world." Maclean informed Moscow "that Truman . . . was firmly opposed to Stalin's policies of hegemony and that he would never abandon Turkey. Result: Stalin back-pedaled."⁴⁵

Both continued conciliatory Soviet diplomacy and new military intelligence quickly dispelled what remained of the Turkish imbroglio after the Soviet initiatives of 24 September. There was a last round of diplomatic exchanges in October during which the United States, Britain, and Turkey restated the positions they had taken in August. Moscow's reply of 26 October stated that a conference to review the Montreaux Convention would be premature. But the note proposed no preparatory steps, thereby effectively shelving Soviet claims and ending the crisis.⁴⁶

On 26 October the British JIS revised its alarming report of 20 September. "The previous suggestion that a newly arrived mechanized corps might be the forerunner of a whole mechanized Army in the process of moving from Romania to Bulgaria was almost certainly incorrect." There had therefore been no net increase in the size of the Soviet forces in Bulgaria. Indeed, the JIS reduced its estimate of the Soviet force in Bulgaria to 160,000 men, fewer than would be needed for an invasion of Turkey.⁴⁷

The JIS's report of 26 October, like its predecessor of 20 September, received wide circulation and probably did much to ease the tensions that had crested not long before. Although he had been deeply involved with the recent military preparations, General Norstad of P&O evinced no particular concern for imminent conflict when he reviewed the strategic outlook for the president on 29 October.⁴⁸

Whether Washington's fears of a Soviet invasion of Turkey were an over-reaction, as has so often been charged, depends on the frame of reference. If the measure is the information arriving in Washington, then the answer must be no, for it is now apparent that officials had ample grounds for believing that an attack on Turkey was possible, perhaps even imminent. These included the large forces the Soviets maintained on the Turkish border, the decision of the clandestine Prague Conference that Turkey should be relieved of much of its territory, reports that Soviet officers both discussed and planned for an attack on Turkey, extensive logistical preparations that seemed designed to support an attack, the sudden halt to Soviet demobilization, and the erroneous order-of-battle estimate by the British JIS at the very height of the tension produced by the Soviet note of 7 August.

It is certainly no longer possible to argue that American officials feigned alarm for ulterior motives. Their anxiety rose or fell with the latest intelligence. When, in October 1946, the evidence indicated that the USSR was not planning to invade Turkey, the crisis faded, even though it might have been expedient to stoke the cooling embers because of a potentially expensive program of aid for Turkey upon which the United States had just embarked in the face of anticipated congressional opposition.⁴⁹

The American support for Turkey surely came as a great revelation for the Soviet leadership. It had been a fundamental postulate of Soviet diplomacy, well grounded in Marxist-Leninist thought, that the rival imperialisms of Britain and America must fall out to the ultimate advantage of the USSR. A number of historians, writing without benefit of Soviet sources, have speculated that perceptions of discordant British and American interests in the Near East encouraged the Soviets to encroach on what had been a British preserve. New evidence has startlingly vindicated their insights. On 27 September 1946, even as the United States was forging ahead with measures to defend Turkey, the Soviet ambassador in Washington traced putative Anglo-American rivalries in the Middle East and pronounced complacently that the United States was "not interested in providing assistance and support to the British Empire at this vulnerable point." But Soviet officials with access to the sensitive information from Donald Maclean already knew that the United States was more willing to fight for Britain's "Mediterranean lifeline" than Britain itself!⁵⁰

Upon the authority of V. M. Molotov himself we now know that Stalin sought not only control of the Turkish Strait but also possession of Kars and Ardahan. Still unknown are the lengths to which he would have gone to achieve those ends had he not learned of Truman's determination to oppose him. On this point Molotov's recollections in his now-famous interviews with Felix Chuyev are contradictory. Modin is emphatic that Stalin was deterred from something but seems not to know just what. The available records of the Soviet Foreign Ministry reveal no preparation for war with Turkey. But Soviet foreign policy was highly centralized in the hands of Stalin and Molotov, and the records of their deliberations – if they exist – would be in the so-called Presidential Archive, which remains closed to all but a favored handful of Russian researchers. Soviet military planning files remain inaccessible.⁵¹

At a minimum, Stalin was willing to engage in strategic intimidation – "brinkmanship" – on a very large scale. He denied, of course, that he planned to attack Turkey. But actions speak louder than words. Wholly without provocation, the dictator who not many years before had attacked Finland and conquered Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina, and who was even then riveting alien regimes upon half a continent, made exorbitant claims on Turkey that threatened its independence and the British Empire's lines of communication. While so doing he maintained in the Balkans forces large enough to overwhelm Turkey's defenses. Part of that force was deployed on natural avenues of approach to the Turkish frontier, toward which Soviet divisions periodically advanced on "maneuvers." It is inconceivable that a

man as astute as Stalin failed to appreciate that these and other actions – the “hate-Turkey” campaign in the Soviet press, the reassignment of Marshal Zhukov to Odessa, the stockpiling of supplies in Bulgaria, the naval demonstrations in the Black Sea, the dispatching of infiltrators – would appear menacing. The belligerence of Marshal Tolbukhin and of many officers of lesser rank which was perhaps orchestrated with the rest – completed the impression that the Soviet Union stood poised on the brink of war.⁵²

By November 1946 the Soviet threat to Turkey had vanished so suddenly and so completely that in later years knowledgeable observers would wonder if it had not been a figment of excited minds or even a duplicitous “Holy Pretense” of American anticommunism. Of the Soviet claims against Turkey no more was heard until after Stalin’s death, when his successors almost immediately repudiated them. Never again did the tyrant so blatantly threaten another state. And when, as in the case of Berlin in 1948, he did confront the West, he kept a watchful eye on the dangers of escalation. The contrast between Stalin’s flagrant intimidation of Turkey in 1946 and the greater subtlety he later displayed suggests that he may owe his reputation for caution to the discovery that there were positions for which the president he dismissed as a “gentleman shopkeeper” would fight.⁵³

Notes

- 1 US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946* (Washington, 1969), 7: 840–2; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, 1969), 195–6; Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, 1951), 192. The military representatives were Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, and Lt. Gen. Thomas T. Handy. Lt. Gen. Thomas T. Handy to Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, 15 August 1946, RG 165, Records of the War Department and Special Staffs, ABC files, box 102, 093 Kiel (6 July 1945), sect. 1-B, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 2 Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, 1994), 359–62.
- 3 For reviews of the literature see Howard Jones and Randall B. Woods, “The Origins of the Cold War in Europe and the Near East,” *Diplomatic History* 17 (Spring 1993): 251–76 and Mark A. Stoler, “A Half Century of Conflict Interpretations of U.S. World War II Diplomacy,” *ibid.* 18 (Summer 1994): 375–403. For a review of the historiography on the Near Eastern crises see Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 441–56.
- 4 Joint Intelligence Subcommittee, “Russian Troop Movements in Eastern and South-East Europe and on the Iran Frontier,” 26 June 1946, Record Group 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File (hereafter G-2 Intelligence Document File), doc. no. 926187, National Archives, Washington, DC; Military Intelligence Division, War Department General Staff (hereafter WDGS), *Intelligence Review* 20 (27 June 1946), Naval Aide Files, box 16, Harry S Truman Library, Independence, Missouri. The reports of the British JIS on Soviet troop movements cited in this paper are the “sanitized” versions prepared by the American Joint Staff for dissemination to the intelligence staffs of the services. These documents, which were “Top Secret,” have no heading to betray their origins. The copies received from the British remain classified in RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946–1947, CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45), boxes 37–8.

- 5 See, for example, Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War* (New York, 1979), 55–6; Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, 1978), 234–5. The phrase “Holy Pretense” is of course Lloyd Gardner’s. See Gardner’s chapter on Dean Acheson in *Architects of Illusion: Man and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941–1949* (Chicago, 1970); Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, 1992), 124–5; idem, “Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945–1952,” *Journal of American History* 71 (March 1985): 807–25.
- 6 There are various reasons for the evidentiary lacunae. Certainly the most serious loss is the postwar minutes of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which were burned at the time of the Watergate scandal of 1974 – a perfect catastrophe. The minutes of the Committee of Three are missing for some critical periods, and the Secretary of State’s Staff Committee did not meet at the height of the Turkish crisis in August–September 1946. The daily intelligence briefings for the secretary of state have not been preserved for the early postwar period.
- 7 The whole question of the relation of intelligence to policymaking in the early Cold War remains virgin territory. While a certain smugness on the part of scholars about the sufficiency of traditional diplomatic records has contributed to this state of affairs, the chief cause has of course been the tardy declassification of intelligence records. The chief exceptions to this are the very general and often banal “assessments” and “appreciations” of the CIA, many of which have long been available in the presidential libraries. I can attest that these documents convey little of the flavor of the daily intelligence reports that passed over officials’ desks – the sort of reports that figure prominently in the present essay. The British, as is well known, declassify little in the way of intelligence records. Strange to say, for the period after 1946 the situation is better in Russia than in the United States or Britain. Many files in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation contain reports from the NKGB, SMERSH, and other intelligence organizations that afford some insights into the daily intelligence stream. Lists of the daily intelligence reports sent to Stalin and Molotov have been published in the series *Arkhiv noveishei istorii Rossii* (Archive of Contemporary Russian History). V. A. Kozlova and C. V. Mironenko, eds., “*Osobaya papka*” I. V. Stalina [The “Special Notebook” of J. V. Stalin] and “*Osobaya papka*” V. M. Molotova [The “Special Notebook” of V. M. Molotov] (Moscow, 1994). (The reports themselves are available in the State Archive of the Russian Federation.) Also useful are various studies and publications by the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in Fond 17 of the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents on Recent History, which incorporate intelligence.
- 8 The Truman administration did not decide that it would take a firm stand on Turkey until 15 August, and the crisis ended rather suddenly before attempts to mobilize public opinion had gone beyond “off-the-record” briefings for leading journalists, as recounted below. For American public opinion, see “Fortnightly Review of American Opinion on International Affairs,” no. 47 (20 March 1946), Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Records of the Office of Public Opinion Studies, box 11, National Archives.
- 9 The Joint Intelligence Committee, for example, concluded in October 1945 that “the USSR is likely to avoid the risk of major armed conflict for 5 to 10 years, except for purely defensive purposes.” The Joint War Plans Committee reached a similar conclusion in the first days of 1946. JIC 80/10, Joint Intelligence Committee to the Joint Chiefs, “Russian Capabilities,” 25 October 1945, RG 218, CCS 092 USSR (3–27–45) sec. 2; Appendix B, “Russian Intentions and Capabilities,” to Enclosure B to JWPC 416/1, Joint War Plans Committee to the Joint Chiefs, 8 January 1946,

- "Military Position of the United States in the Light of Russian Policy," RG 218, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45) sec. 3.
- 10 In April 1946, while the Turkish crisis was approaching its first peak of tension, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee delivered this warning: "There is no evidence that the Soviet Union desires a *major war* at this time. On the contrary, there are many indications that it needs and wishes a period of reconstruction and development. The great danger therefore is that the Soviet leaders may extend their expansionist policies to a point beyond which Great Britain or the United States in their own vital security interest, could tolerate." "Political Estimate of Soviet Policy for Use in Connection with Military Studies: Memorandum by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee," 6 April 1946, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946-1947, CCS 092 USSR (3-2.7-45) sec. 6.
 - 11 See, for example, Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 111-14.
 - 12 Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 255, 257-8. The map on page 289 of Kuniholm's book illustrates the seriousness of the Soviet claims.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, 262; Joseph C. Grew to Harry S Truman, 3 July 1945, "Current Foreign Developments," Harry S Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File (hereafter PSF), "Reports - Current Foreign Developments, Folder 2," Truman Library; James F. Byrnes to Truman, 5 July 1945, "Current Foreign Developments," Truman Papers, PSF, "Reports - Current Foreign Developments, Folder 2"; Gen. George C. Marshall to Truman, 8 November 1945, "USSR Troop Movements along Turkish Border," RG 165, Office of the Chief of Staff: TS General Correspondence, 1944-1945, 091 Russia, box 2; Military Intelligence Division, WDCS, *Intelligence Review* 4 (7 March 1946), Naval Aide Files, box 15, Truman Library. One of the closest observers of Soviet troop movement in the Balkans was Brig. Gen. Cortlandt Van R. Schuyler, the US representative to the Allied Control Commission for Romania. He began to wonder in June 1945 whether the Soviet concentrations in the Balkans might presage an attack on Turkey, and with his small staff he began to keep close watch on Soviet troop movements. Gen. Cortlandt Van R. Schuyler diary, Papers of Gen. Cortlandt Van R. Schuyler, 18, 26 June 1945, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
 - 14 For the cited opinions on the purpose of the Soviet concentrations, see General Marshall's memorandum cited in the previous note and Joint Intelligence Committee, memorandum for information no. 189, "Discussion of the Reported Soviet Threat to Turkey," 31 October 1945, transmitting British Joint Intelligence Subcommittee, "The Russian Threat to Turkey: Report by the Joint Intelligence Subcommittee," RG 226, OSS Archives of the CIA, roll 8, entry 190, National Archives; "S.W.D." to chief, Strategy Section, 15 October 1945, "Situation in Turkey," RG 165, ABC files, 336 Russia, box 96; Maj. Gen. Clayton Bissell to Gen. George C. Marshall, 15 November 1945, "The Soviet-Turkish Situation," RG 165, Office of the Chief of Staff: TS General Correspondence, 1944-1945, box 2, 091 Russia; Gen. George C. Marshall to Truman, 16 November 1945, "Soviet-Turkish Military Situation," RG 165, Office of the Chief of Staff: TS General Correspondence, 1944-1945, 091 Russia, box 2; Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 297-8; Diary of Eben A. Ayres, Papers of Eben A. Ayres, 1 and 19 November and 16 December 1945, Harry S Truman Library.
 - 15 SSU Istanbul, original report D-3090, 18 March 1946, RG 226, box 4, entry 108A; Schuyler Diary, 488 (13 March 1946); SSU dissemination report A-66323, 19 March 1946, RG 226, box 4, entry 108A. State Department indicates that this particular report was sent to the office of the secretary, which was most unusual.
 - 16 James F. Byrnes to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946-1947, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-4.) sec. 5; Adm. William D. Leahy to James F. Byrnes, JCS 1641/3, 13 March 1946, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946-1947, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45) sec. 6.

- 17 James F. Schnabel, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, vol. 1, 1945–1947 (Wilmington, DE, 1979), 146–9.
- 18 Joint Planning Staff minutes, 13 March 1946, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946–1947, CCS 381 (5–13–45) sec. 2. For other remarks by the planners about the possibility of early war see Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, 150. For an early version of Pincher see report by the Joint War Plans Committee, JWPC 423/3, 27 April 1946, “Staff Studies of Certain Military Operation Deriving from Concept of Operations for ‘Pincher,’” RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946–1947, CCS 381 USSR (3–2–46) sec. 1. On 10 June the JWPC accepted the most recent version of Pincher as the basis for future emergency war planning, a decision the JPS ratified on 18 June. Joint War Plans Committee, “Staff Studies of Certain Military Operation Deriving from Concept of Operations for ‘Pincher,’” 10 June 1946, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946–1947, CCS 381 USSR (3–2–46) sec. 2; Joint Planning Staff minutes, 18 June 1946, RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1946–1947, CCS 381 USSR (3–2–46) sec. 2.
- 19 Walter Bedell Smith, *My Three Years in Moscow* (Philadelphia, 1950); *Foreign Relations of the United States 1946* (Washington, 1969), 6:732–6.
- 20 Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Middle East*, 285–6, 334; British Joint Intelligence Subcommittee, “Russian Troop Movements in South East Europe and Iran,” 22 May and 27 April 1946, RG 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, docs. nos. 926151 and 926244; MID *Intelligence Review*, 9 May 1946, Naval Aide Files, box 16; Maj. Gen. W. M. Robertson to Lt. Gen. John E. Hull, 13 April 1946, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 1946–1948, 092 TS, box 30.
- 21 *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers: The Conference of Berlin* (Washington, 1960), 2:1481; SSU Germany, original report L-1724, 21 September 1946, RG 226, box 23, entry 108A; SSU Germany, original report L-1310, 28 February 1946, RG 226, box 21, entry 108A; SSU dissemination reports A-67331 and A-67340, 23 April 1946, RG 226, entry 153A, roll 1, frames 1150 and 1163; SSU dissemination report A-67016, 18 April 1946, RG 226, entry 153A, roll 1, frame 0792; SSU dissemination report A-67331, 23 April 1946, RG 226, entry 153A, frame 1150.
- 22 SSU dissemination report A-67762, 10 May 1946, RG 226, box 4, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-68030, 24 May 1946, RG 226, box 4, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-68030, 24 May 1946, RG 226, box 4, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-68122, 28 May 1946, RG 226, entry 153A, roll 2, frame 342. Reports of this kind from inside the KKE were common, as Anglo-American intelligence had it wired from top to bottom.
- 23 *FRUS, 1946* 6:605n.; Burton Y. Berry to the secretary of state, 4 June 1946, *ibid.*, 604–5. US military attaché in Moscow to War Department, 15 and 16 June 1946, RG 218, Chairman’s File (Admiral Leahy), box 11; SSU to Maj. Wilbur Ward, MID, 19 June 1946, enclosing original report LC-745, 14 June 1946, RG 226, box 28, entry 108A; US military attaché in Moscow to War Department for General Vandenberg, 16 June 1946, RG 218, Chairman’s File (Admiral Leahy), box 11. There were many such reports from all over Europe. See, for example, military attaché in Warsaw, report R-104–46, 13 June 1946, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 926154; SSU Austria, original report LA-418, 22 March 1946, RG 226, box 22, entry 108A; Schuyler Diary, 15 September 1946, 573–5.
- 24 Lincoln to Gardner and Everest, 10 August 1946, enclosing report, 10 August 1946, “USFET Planning,” RG 341, entry 335, box 356; “Brief of USFET Study of Courses of Action to be Taken by the Theater Commander in Event of Hostilities with the Soviet Union,” RG 341, box 356, entry 335.
- 25 Forrestal said there would be a war if the Kremlin judged the time propitious to complete the world revolution (which prompted Leahy’s agnostic remark). Truman thought that unsettled political conditions in Russia might lead to war if the leadership decided to distract public attention from the problems of demobilization.

- Memorandum for record by "S.W.D.," 12 June 1945, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 092 TS, box 30; "O.S.P." to Lt. Gen. John Hull and Maj. Gen. Howard A. Craig, 12 June 1946, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 092 TS, box 30; diary, 11 June 1946, Papers of William D. Leahy, Library of Congress.
- 26 Maj. Gen. Clayton Bissell to Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, 6 July 1946, "Reminder on decisions taken during London visit July 4 to 6, 1946," RG 341, box 4, entry 334.
 - 27 John T. Greenwood, "The Emergence of the Postwar Strategic Air Force, 1945–1953," in *Air Power and Warfare: The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium, United States Air Force Academy, 18–20 October 1978*, ed. Col. Alfred F. Hurley and Maj. Robert C. Ehrhard (Washington, 1979), 226. The size of early atomic bombs dictated a cumbersome loading procedure: The weapon had to be placed into a pit in order to be winched into the bomb bay of the receiving aircraft. The bombs, moreover, had to be shipped disassembled to the forward bases from which the attack would be staged. Facilities and equipment had to be in place, lest time be lost in beginning the strategic air offensive. For war plans, see RG 218, JCS Geographic File, 1948–1950, CCS 381 USSR (3–2–46).
 - 28 Memorandum of conversation with Ira C. Hamilton by the author, 13 March 1990; interview of Ioana Bujoiu by the author, 26–27 July 1991; interview of Gen. Cortlandt Van R. Schuyler by the author, 26 March 1993; Charles W. Hostler to the author, 22 May 1995; acting chief, PBM and DR-136 to CO, SSU Mission to Austria, attention DD-III, 5 August 1946, "Ukrainian activities in Austria," RG 226, box 21, entry 108C.
 - 29 Briefing by Colonel McCormack on the meeting of 14 August 1946, RG 165, ABC Files, ABC 093 Kiel (6 July 1945), box 102, sec. 1-B (emphasis in original).
 - 30 Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 35–9. With the benefit of the information on intelligence and planning provided in this essay, readers may find it profitable to reread the entries in James Forrestal's diary for August and September 1946, Millis, ed., *Forrestal Diaries*, esp. 191–3, 195–7, 198. Also useful is the description of the crisis that Dean Acheson gave to the Turkish foreign minister in 1949: Memorandum of conversation by Dean Acheson, 12 April 1949, *FRUS*, 1946 6:1649.
 - 31 Lord Inverchapel to the Foreign Office, 19 August 1946, and various minutes appended thereto, FO 371/59227, Public Record Office, Kew, England (hereafter PRO); memorandum of conversation by Dean Acheson, 20 August 1946, RG 59, 767.681/8–2046. Maclean's role in this affair is discussed below.
 - 32 In separate notes of 21 and 22 August, Britain and Turkey also stated that they were willing to revise the convention but categorically rejected the introduction of Soviet forces into the Dardanelles. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 359–62, 373–4. Richard A. Best, Jr., "Cooperation with Like-Minded Peoples": *British Influences on American Security Policy, 1945–1949* (Westport, CT, 1986), 97.
 - 33 Intelligence operations in Bulgaria had for some time been at a standstill, and the CIG's 3-man team in Romania was thoroughly occupied in Bucharest. For the background on intelligence operations in Bulgaria see Maj. Gen. W. M. Robertson to Lt. Gen. John E. Hull, 13 April 1946, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 1946–1948, 092 TS, box 30.
 - 34 SSU dissemination report A-71005, 27 September 1946, RG 226, box 64, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-71084, 2 October 1946, RG 226, box 64, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-71125, 2 October 1946, RG 226, box 64, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-71325, 14 October 1946, RG 226, entry 153A, roll 5, frame 561; SSU dissemination report A-71341, 15 October 1946, RG 226, entry 153A, roll 5, frame 580; SSU dissemination report A-70801, 18 September 1946, RG 226, box 63, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-70998, 26 September 1946, RG 226, box 64, entry 108A; SSU dissemination report A-71344, 16 October 1946, RG 226, entry 153A, roll 5, frame 583.
 - 35 Chiefs of Staff Committee to British Joint Services Mission, 16 September 1946, PRO, CAB 121/64 COS (46), 144th meeting, 23 September 1946, CAB 121/64, PRO.

- 36 Joint Intelligence Subcommittee, "The General Military Situation in Europe with Particular Reference to a Possible Threat to Turkey," 6 September 1946, RG 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 925404. The British original is to be found in CAB 121/64.
- 37 Intelligence Division, WDGS, "Notes on Soviet Armed Forces," 15 (20 September 1946), RG 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 925373; Intelligence Division, WDGS, "Notes on Soviet Armed Forces," 17 (4 October 1946), RG 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 925399; ACC delegation Bulgaria to War Department G-2, report no. 899, 8 October 1945, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 925353; SSU dissemination report A-70801, 18 September 1946, RG 226, box 63, entry 108A; Intelligence Division, WDGS, "Notes on Soviet Armed Forces" 14 (13 September 1946), RG 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 925415; Intelligence Division, WDGS, "Notes on Soviet Armed Forces," 18 (11 October 1946), RG 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 925360.
- 38 Major General Lauris Norstad to Lt. General Clarence R. Huebner, 11 September 1946, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 1946-1948, 333 TS, box 66; *New York Times*, 1 October 1946.
- 39 Pincher, it will be recalled, was a *concept* on which planning was to be based. Joint War Plans Committee, JWPC 467/1, 15 August 1946, "GRIDDLE," RG 341, box 992, entry 335; Preparation of Joint Plan Griddle (JWPC 467/1), RG 341, box 992, entry 335. The administration concluded that for the moment, military aid from Britain would be less provocative, though it did undertake economic aid. *FRUS*, 1946 7:856-8, 894-7, 910-11, 913-17.
- 40 Brig. Gen. George A. Lincoln to Maj. Gen. Lauris Norstad, 17 August 1946, RG 165, ABC Files, box 102, 093 Kiel (6 July 1945) sec. 1-B; Brig. Gen. to Rear-Adm Mathias B. Gardner, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 1946-1948, 333 TS, box 66; Brig. Gen. George A. Lincoln to Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, 10 September 1946, tab A to Strategy Branch, War Plans Division, Assistant Chief of Staff, Air Staff 5, 1 October 1946, "Outline Air Plan for Makefast," RG 341, box 380, entry 335.
- 41 Strategy Branch, War Plans Division, Assistant Chief of Staff, Air Staff 5, 1 October 1946, "Outline Air Plan for Makefast," RG 341, box 380, entry 335.
- 42 Unsigned and untitled memo, 10 September 1946, RG 341, box 280, entry 335; Maj. Gen. O.P. Weyland to General Carl A. Spaatz, 28 May 1947, RG 341, box 280, entry 335. This first atomic plan had no name and appears not to have survived. In March 1947 the Air Staff revised Makefast and renamed it Earshot. The atomic plan was also revised and became Earshot, Jr.
- 43 Adrian Holman to the Foreign Office, 11 November 1946, PRO, FO 371/59107; interview of Ira C. Hamilton by the author, 13 October 1987; memorandum of conversation with Ira C. Hamilton by the author, 13 March 1990; *Trial of the Former National Peasant Party Leaders Maniu, Mihalache, Penescu Niculescu-Buzesti and others - After the short-hand notes* (Bucharest, 1947); Ion de Mocsony-Styrcea to Ioana Bujoiu, 9 February 1947 (copy courtesy of Ioana Bujoiu [Lady Roderic Gordon]); interview of Ioana Bujoiu by the author, 26-7 July 1991.
- 44 Maj. Gen. Lauris Norstad to Gen. Huebner (draft), 11 September 1946, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 1946-1948, 344 TS, box 66; "Notes of Air Planner on European Trip," n.d., Tab P to "File on Planning Trip to Europe, September 1946," RG 341, box 379, entry 335; "Itinerary of Generals Lincoln and Everest," n.d., Tab O to "File on Planning Trip to Europe, September 1946," "Planning Memorandum," 28 September 1946, Tab A to "File on Planning Trip to Europe," September 1946, RG 341, box 379, entry 335.
- 45 *New York Times*, 25 September 1944. For the note of 24 September and British, American, and Turkish assessment of it see *FRUS*, 1946 7:860-6, 867-8, 869-71. That Stalin, contrary to his usual practice, had answered Werth at all - and the speed with

- which he did so (Werth had written only on 17 September 1946) – suggest that the dictator was anxious to cool off the Turkish crisis. So too does the urgency with which the mild note was sent to the Turks – it was delivered to the Turkish embassy in Moscow in the middle of the night. For Werth’s account, see Alexander Werth, *Russia: The Postwar Years* (New York, 1971), 129–33, 142–7. Yuri Modin with Jean-Charles Deniau and Aguiieszka Ziarek, *My Five Cambridge Friends: Burgess, Maclean, Philby, Blunt, and Cairncross by their KGB Controller*, trans. Anthony Roberts (New York, 1994), 119–21.
- 46 Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, 372–3, 393–5. For a comprehensive if skeptical look at the conciliatory trend of Soviet diplomacy in late 1946 see Francis B. Stevens to H. Freeman Matthews and Dean Acheson, 23 December 1946, “Some Recent Soviet ‘Concessions,’” RG 59, Records of Charles E. Bohlen, box 4.
- 47 Joint Intelligence Subcommittee, 26 October 1946, “The General Military situation, in Europe with Particular Reference to a Possible Threat to Turkey,” RG 319, War Department G-2 Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 926027; report no. 915, American representation to the Allied Control Commission for Bulgaria, 30 October 1946, RG 319, War Department Intelligence Document File, doc. no. 926040.
- 48 “Presentation Given to President by Major General Lauris Norstad on 29 October 1945, ‘Postwar Military Establishment,’” RG 341, box 9, entry 337.
- 49 Some officials feared that Congress might object to the sale of military equipment to Turkey, even if it was surplus. See, for example, Will Clayton to James Patterson, 13 September 1946, enclosing Will Clayton to James F. Byrnes, 12 September 1946, RG 319, P&O Decimal File, 1946–1948, 092 TS, box 31.
- 50 For the views of the Soviet ambassador, Nikolai Novikov, see Nikolai Novikov, “US Foreign Policy in the Postwar Period,” 27 September 1946, *Diplomatic History* 15 (Fall 1991): 532, 535. Novikov would not have had access to the highly sensitive information from Maclean, which was reserved exclusively for Stalin, Molotov, and Lavrentii Beria. Modin, *My Three Cambridge Friends*, 122. Russian diplomat and historian Vladimir O. Pechatnov has traced the influence on Soviet diplomacy of the idea of inevitable British-American rivalry. Vladimir O. Pechatnov, “The Big Three after World War II: New Documents on Soviet Thinking about Postwar Relations with the United States and Great Britain,” Working Paper No. 13 of the Cold War International History Project (June 1995), 4–5, 11, 13, 17–18. For perceptive treatments of Soviet Middle Eastern policy see William O. McCagg, Jr., *Stalin Embattled, 1943–1948* (Detroit, 1978), 191–2, 201–2; Fraser J. Harbutt, *The Iron Curtain: Churchill, America, and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, 1986), 212–14; William Taubman, *Stalin’s American Policy: From Entente to Détente to Cold War* (New York, 1982), 82–3.
- 51 Felix Chuyev, *Sto sorok beced c Molotovim: Iz dnyevnika F. Chyeva* [One hundred and forty conversations with Molotov: From the diaries of F. Chuyev] (Moscow, 1991), 14, 101–3. I rely on the extensive research of Vladimir Batyuk of the Institute of the USA and Canada (Moscow) in the files of the Russian Foreign Ministry relating to Turkey.
- 52 Not even Molotov, in his conversations with the sympathetic Chuyev, attempted to argue that the Soviet claims on Turkey had been provoked by foreign powers. On the contrary, he said in their first conversation on the subject that “In this affair we of course overdid it a bit.” In later talks he characterized the demands on Turkey as a “mistake,” adding that it was well that he and Stalin had “backed down in time.” As to why the USSR had made claims against Turkey, Molotov spoke vaguely of Stalin’s vaulting *amour propre*, about honoring the Soviet armed forces, and of the desires of the Soviet Azerbaijanis and Georgians to unify their peoples within the USSR. Whatever the reason for the demands on Turkey, it is clear that the “security dilemma” (a “no-fault” theory of the origins of the Cold War that holds that each side acted defensively but in ways that unintentionally alarmed the other side) does not explain Soviet policy toward Turkey. One suspects, indeed, that Molotov

would have had little sympathy for the concept generally: "Now, what was the Cold War? Strained relations. Everything simply depended on that or because we were attacking. They [the Anglo-Americans] of course became embittered, but we had to consolidate what had been conquered. To make from part of Germany our own socialist Germany. As for Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia – they were in a fluid state and it was necessary to bring order everywhere. To press the capitalist order. That was the 'Cold War.'" Chuyev, *Sto sorok beced c Molotovim*, 15, 86, 102–3.

- 53 For Stalin's reference to Truman as a "gentleman shopkeeper," see G.A. Tokaev, *Stalin Means War* (London, 1951), 115.

THE GREEK CIVIL WAR

Thanasis D. Sfikas

The third major crisis of 1946–1947 related to Greece. Even before the defeat of the Nazis and the liberation of the country, rightists and leftists had been waging a deadly struggle for political control. In December 1944, British forces intervened on the side of the royalists. Thereafter, the Greek Communists (KKE) had to decide whether they should try to win power politically or to seize it militarily. Of course, they were not operating in a vacuum. They had to calculate whether their local adversaries, who were backed by the British and the Americans, would seek to eradicate them physically or battle them politically and whether their foreign patron, the Soviet Union, would assist them militarily or caution them to behave moderately and operate peacefully.

In this pathbreaking article utilizing new documents of Greek communist leaders found in Athens, Thanasis D. Sfikas examines the conflicting impulses shaping the strategy of the KKE. What is significant about Sfikas's approach is the careful attention he pays to the dynamic interaction of internal and external actors. In writing the new history of the Cold War, historians are increasingly cognizant of the complex and subtle interaction of domestic and international events. In this article, Sfikas illuminates how Greek communist leaders had to assess carefully what the Kremlin wanted them to do and balance that advice against what they thought they had to do in order to survive and triumph. In this painstaking assessment of conflicting considerations, KKE leaders often made choices of their own. They wanted change and they craved power.

Defying the wishes of the Kremlin, the Greek communists complicated the international situation, as Stalin feared they would. The communists in Greece might be acting autonomously, but they were often viewed in London and Washington as either the pawns of the Kremlin or its potential allies. In other words, Soviet leaders grasped that the independent actions of the KKE could alarm the British and embroil the Americans. They were right.

In early 1947, the Americans did become alarmed. The British announced that financial exigencies would compel them to reduce their presence in the region. But before they departed, they sought to enlist American power in behalf of traditional British policies in the Eastern Mediterranean. The United States responded. 'At the present moment in world history,' President Harry S Truman announced to Congress on March 12, 1947, 'nearly every nation must choose between alternate ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.' The United States, Truman declared, must

adopt a policy 'to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.' The Truman Doctrine made it clear that the United States would help anticommunist forces in Greece and elsewhere defeat their adversaries.*

Yet Sfikas's article should alert readers to the degree to which the Cold War was the result of complicated local battles for power in the aftermath of the Second World War. Were Stalin and Truman eager to assert their nations' power in Greece, or were they sucked in against their better wishes, fearing that if they did not act they would be accused of betraying indigenous allies or partisans? Much was contingent, as local actors sought foreign assistance, and foreign patrons made portentous decisions based on uncertain estimations of their adversaries' intentions.

* * *

Studies of the strategy and tactics of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) during the Greek Civil War of the 1940s fall broadly into three categories. The traditionalist interpretation views the KKE as conspiring to seize power and force Greece into the Soviet camp.¹ The two other interpretations are revisionist and sympathetic to the Left, but they differ from one another in many details. One revisionist school believes in the "justice" of the KKE's cause but focuses on the litany of "errors" committed by the party leadership that resulted in the defeat of the Left.² The other revisionist interpretation accepts the official position of the KKE that the party was left with no choice but to fight a "patriotic," "anti-fascist," and "anti-imperialist" war against English imperialism and the indigenous plutocratic oligarchy.³ All three interpretations are monolithic in their approach to the subject: They allow little room for the study of the diversification and gradual evolution of the strategy of the KKE, and they do not accurately periodize the events of the Greek Civil War.⁴

A more nuanced history of the KKE during the Civil War can now be written by using newly declassified materials from the archives in Athens and elsewhere, and by taking a fresh look at records that have been available for some time. This article focuses on the interplay between the concepts of war and peace in the evolution of Communist policy. It demonstrates that the choices facing the KKE changed quite dramatically – more than once – in the years from 1945 to 1949. The article discusses the interactions among KKE strategy, Soviet advice to the Communists, and the policies of the KKE's domestic and foreign adversaries.

The concepts of war and peace were virtually inseparable in the strategy of the KKE throughout the 1940s. During most of that period the party waged

* Harry S Truman, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Containing the Published Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, 1947* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 176–179.

war to secure a compromise that would improve the terms of its participation in the Greek political process. In 1941–1944, when Greece was occupied by the Axis powers, the expansion and performance of the KKE-led National Liberation Front (EAM) furthered the social and political realignments that had begun in the 1930s. By 1944 the traditional power structures had been rendered obsolete, and a widespread desire had emerged for far-reaching changes in Greece’s social, economic, and political structures. The EAM offered a vision of a radical transformation of Greek society, whereas the older political parties, including the monarchists (the Populist Party) and the republicans (the Liberal Party), wanted to proceed more cautiously. The Populists and Liberals received generous support from Britain, whose strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East necessitated a friendly postwar regime in Athens.

When liberation came in October 1944, the KKE did not initially try to seize power by force. Instead, relying on popular support for the EAM, the Communists sought to work within Greece’s postwar political system, convinced that a political mobilization of the masses would allow them to impose their program by peaceful means.

When Britain and the EAM’s Greek opponents attempted to diminish the influence of the EAM, a military confrontation broke out in Athens between the British forces and the EAM’s military wing, known as the National People’s Liberation Army (ELAS). The fighting lasted from December 1944 to January 1945. The contradictory impulses of nonviolent action and military mobilization in KKE ranks resulted from the party’s initial willingness to pursue legal forms of political struggle, an approach the Communists abandoned only when they realized that it was self-defeating. The KKE did not wish to cooperate with the forces in Greek society that it would later have to eliminate in order to effect a complete political, social, and economic transformation of the country.⁵

In this sense there was a major continuity between the strategies of the KKE in December 1944–January 1945, when it clashed with the British forces in Athens, and in 1946–1947, during the first phase of the Greek Civil War. During both phases the Communists evidently believed that a limited show of strength would suffice to secure a compromise and bring the party back to the leading position it had held prior to December 1944. What distinguished those two periods was the intervention of key events: the signing of the Varkiza Agreement on 12 February 1945 by the EAM and the British-backed Greek government, which ended the military confrontation and provided a framework for the peaceful evolution of Greek politics; widespread violations of this agreement by successive Greek governments, which sought to keep the Communists from gaining power; and, ultimately, the abandonment of the KKE’s and EAM’s hopes for a peaceful interval in which the Left could consolidate itself and dislodge the non-Communist parties.

Three days after the signing of the Varkiza Agreement, which called for the disarmament and demobilization of the ELAS as well as the surrender of its

stockpiles of weapons, the KKE leadership instructed all party organizations to conceal large quantities of arms for use in "an hour of emergency that could present itself to us."⁶ This measure was less a preparation for the launching of an armed attack at an opportune moment than a precautionary measure against the possibility of renewed violence on the part of the KKE's British and Greek adversaries. It is conceivable that the KKE was planning to resume armed action at some future point, but in early 1945 the party certainly had plenty of reason to be cautious and apprehensive about the intentions of its opponents. In the same telegram that ordered the concealment of weapons, the leadership also outlined the tasks that lay ahead for the Greek Communists: The party would focus its struggle on the restoration of democratic liberties, the pursuit of economic development, and the establishment of a broad democratic front. Whatever the precise reasons may have been for the KKE's secret retention of its weapons in February 1945, the party did not begin using them until eighteen months later. Until the late summer of 1946 the Greek Communists adhered to a policy that relied not on violence, but on political and industrial pressure. Moreover, even when the KKE resumed its armed campaign, it did not wholly abandon nonviolent means of struggle. The shift to violence did not signify a full breach with the quest for a peaceful solution and was motivated not by any shifting of the balance of power in the KKE's favor, but by the growing perception that political struggles alone could not work in a climate of repression and persecution. Thus, the notion that developments after the summer of 1946 were pre-ordained by the order issued on 15 February 1945 is untenable. The policy of the KKE is understandable only if it is assessed within the rapidly evolving political context of 1945–1947.⁷

In late May 1945, after years of imprisonment in Dachau, the charismatic but autocratic Nikos Zachariadis, the secretary general of the KKE Central Committee, returned to Athens. Upon his arrival he publicly declared that the KKE did not aspire to a violent seizure of power. Instead, the party would try to win support among workers, peasants, and the lower and middle classes for a "bourgeois-liberal" transformation of the country.⁸ By the end of July 1945 the KKE and its minor political allies in the EAM (which now operated as a coalition of Leftist parties) had published a "Program of the People's Democracy," which was essentially a moderate political document that downplayed any revolutionary intent or rhetoric.⁹

A shift in KKE thinking was first discernible in early 1946 after ten months of persecution by the British-backed governments in Athens. In January 1946, a KKE Politburo member, Mitsos Partsalidis, visited Moscow to discuss the situation in Greece and the strategy of the Greek Communists. Partsalidis told Soviet officials that the persecution of the Left and Britain's political and military presence in the country cast doubt on the prospects for a peaceful transition to normality and necessitated an "energetic counter-attack." He wanted to see whether Moscow would actively support an armed struggle, though he added that the Greek party should take advantage "of even the

tinest possibility for peaceful and democratic evolution."¹⁰ Partsalidis asked whether the KKE should undertake a violent insurrection against the regime in Athens or prepare an armed defense while seeking the political mobilization of the masses. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov urged the KKE not to yield to provocations or ignite domestic armed conflict that would provide a justification for the continued presence of British troops in Greece.¹¹

On 12–15 February 1946 the Second Plenum of the KKE Central Committee reached a political decision to embark on military action that would initially remain defensive and would become offensive only if the search for a compromise failed.¹² Although this decision confirms the inseparability of the concepts of war and peace in the strategy of the KKE, the latter ingredient may easily be overlooked or dismissed as a mere anomaly. In reality, it is impossible to understand one element without considering the other.

Despite the KKE's new orientation and the decision of the EAM coalition to boycott the elections, the Communists made two proposals to the Liberal prime minister, Themistoklis Sofulis, in March 1946: a two-month postponement of the elections and electoral cooperation between the EAM and Sofulis's Liberals; and an extension of the deadline for submitting lists of candidates so that the Left might increase its popular appeal by voting en bloc for the small party of the so-called leftist Liberals. Sofulis did not respond to either suggestion.¹³

In early April 1946 Zachariadis met in Sofia with Georgi Dimitrov, the long-time head of the Soviet-sponsored Communist International (Comintern) who had continued to serve as a liaison for Moscow with foreign Communist parties after the Comintern was disbanded in 1943. According to Dimitrov, the KKE leader informed him of the situation in Greece, the elections, and the condition of the KKE and EAM. The two men "agreed on mutual relations and cooperation in the future."¹⁴ Zachariadis also handed over some "brief notes on the political situation in Greece," which predicted that the domestic climate would deteriorate after the elections. Zachariadis reaffirmed "the position of peaceful development at home," but he also said that the KKE would "take concrete measures" for the forthcoming clash.¹⁵ Even so, the Greek Communists apparently were still trying to keep their options open. In a meeting with the Soviet ambassador in Athens on 4 May 1946, Zachariadis explained that when the choice came down to civil war or participation in the elections of 31 March 1946, the party "opted for a third solution, namely a boycott of the elections and the further conduct of the struggle with every possible means short of armed insurrection."¹⁶ In August of that year Yiannis Ioannidis and Petros Rousos, both of whom were members of the KKE Politburo, arrived in Belgrade to meet with the Yugoslav and other "fraternal" parties to coordinate outside assistance to the KKE. Upon arriving, Ioannidis wrote a report on the Greek guerrilla movement, which, he claimed, "ought to be reinforced not to precipitate an armed insurrection, but to make life in the country difficult for the English." He added that the KKE needed a guerrilla movement for the protection of our forces and for the

preservation of the morale of party and non-party members.¹⁷ Then, in mid-September 1946, the KKE informed the “fraternal parties” that it aimed to raise a guerrilla force numbering 15,000–20,000. The KKE defined its long-term objectives as the overthrow of the monarchy and the expulsion of the British, and it advanced the radical concept of Greek neutrality under United Nations (UN) auspices.¹⁸

On 6 February 1947 Zachariadis publicly stated that the KKE wanted the formation of a government that respected popular sovereignty, the restoration of democratic order, equality before the law, and free elections. The EAM offered the same explanation to the UN Commission of Investigation that arrived in Athens in late January 1947 to investigate the Greek government’s accusations that its Balkan neighbors were assisting the KKE and fomenting civil war.¹⁹ Zachariadis added that the KKE wanted elections to be held by a government that would include the Center parties and the EAM. The KKE rejected a purely Center government because that had been tried under Sofoulis in 1945–1946 and had failed even to curb the persecution of the Left.

By this time, however, the KKE Politburo had already reached a momentous decision to give priority to its war effort and intensify the armed struggle. This decision, adopted in mid-February 1947, was first mentioned in Zachariadis’s memorandum of 13 May 1947 to the Soviet leadership, entitled “On the Situation in Greece.” The EAM and the KKE reiterated their unmitigated opposition to the British “occupation” of Greece and demanded the participation of the EAM in the government and the conduct of free elections. At the same time, the KKE showed itself optimistic and wanted to convert its guerrilla force, the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), into a regular army.²⁰ This was a major shift in the KKE’s strategy, but it is important to emphasize that it had already been explicitly proposed in the decision of the Second Plenum in February 1946. The shift was confirmed on 17 April 1947 when Zachariadis and Ioannidis sent their top-secret directive to the DSE commander, Markos Vafiadis. The DSE, they wrote, must become a regular army, and its aim must now be to set up a “people’s democratic regime.”²¹

In a meeting with a high-ranking Soviet official, Andrei Zhdanov, in Moscow on 22 May 1947, Zachariadis detailed the situation in Greece, the decisions of the KKE, and the party’s requirements in terms of outside assistance. Zachariadis claimed that the KKE was supported by a majority of the population in northern Greece, but the main urban centers and communication lines were controlled by the government and were well-fortified, beyond the reach of the DSE. “But it is not possible to allow this situation to continue any longer,” Zachariadis added. The KKE had decided to “create a new situation” by occupying northern Greece and Thessaloniki. To accomplish that, the DSE would seek to recruit 50,000 guerrillas, a task for which Zachariadis requested Soviet assistance.²²

During the initial period, from February 1945 to February 1946, the strategy of the KKE was based on peaceful means of struggle. But when this approach failed to bring the KKE to power, the party shifted its strategy. From February

1946 to February 1947, the KKE embarked on a guerrilla struggle to force the government to make certain concessions. The decision of February 1946 had explicitly stated that the KKE would not launch a full-fledged war unless the search for a compromise failed. Not until February 1947 did the KKE finally decide in favor of all-out war. To understand this decision, it is crucial to examine the policies and initiatives of the major non-Communist actors in Greece.

The Varkiza Agreement of February 1945, which had provided for the capitulation and disarmament of the Left after its defeat by the British in Athens in December 1944, had been followed by a crackdown on thousands of leftist Greeks by the security forces and the state apparatus. Even the Center government – which took office in late November 1945 under Sofulis – found it difficult to stop the clampdown.²³

In a statement before the Greek parliament on 17 May 1946, Konstantinos Tsaldaris, the Greek prime minister and leader of the monarchist and staunchly anti-Communist Populist Party, announced that the government would respond forcefully to the KKE's armed campaign. He implied, however, that the government would not wait for the Communists to move. Tsaldaris justified the attacks on the Left by citing "the legacy of the past and especially the horror of the December [1944] events," as well as the violence unleashed by the Communists against their opponents during the occupation.²⁴ This justification may explain the violence waged against left-wingers in 1945–1946 by monarchist bands, but it fails to account for the persecution of republicans who had not been associated with the EAM and the KKE. Nor does it explain the numerous forms of intimidation and discrimination against leftists and republicans perpetrated by the state apparatus. It is telling that one of the most vociferous protests against "the terror of the extreme right" and "the suppression of every democratic wind" was issued in early June 1945 by Sofulis and four other centrist politicians, none of whom had been tainted by any association with the Communists.²⁵

Despite Sofulis's condemnation of right-wing violence, the position of the Liberal Party was distinctly ambivalent after the elections of March 1946. In a reply to Tsaldaris's statement before the parliament, Sofulis spoke about "the Communist peril" and denounced "the criminal activity" of the KKE, but he also launched a strong attack on the Populist government and the institution of the monarchy.²⁶

On 10 July 1946 Zachariadis proposed an all-party agreement to restore law and order. Even the British ambassador in Athens thought that Prime Minister Tsaldaris might well be advised to accept the proposal, but he doubted that the Populist deputies would tolerate it. At the same time the centrist leaders rejected the KKE's appeal for a common front against the forthcoming plebiscite on the constitutional question. Evidently, the Liberals feared that they would be branded as fellow travelers if they actively cooperated with the KKE.²⁷ This came as a disappointment to Communist leaders, who had

been heartened by Sofulis's vehement attack on the monarchy and the exiled King George II, who had helped establish the dictatorial regime of the "Fourth of August" 1936.²⁸

On 25 July 1946 *Rizospastis* reported with apparent regret that on the previous day, during a conference of the leaders of the parliamentary parties, disagreements had emerged when Sofulis proposed a government of parliamentary and nonparliamentary parties and a policy of "appeasement."²⁹ Tsaldaris showed the limits of Populist goodwill by declaring that he was willing to grant the Left parliamentary representation without new elections, but only on the basis of the 9.3 percent that Allied observers claimed was the rate of politically motivated abstention from the elections of March 1946.³⁰ Sofulis, on the other hand, proposed to the Populists a coalition government of Liberals and Populists, which would offer the DSE guerrillas an amnesty and treat the Right and the Left equally. His proposals were rejected by the Populists.

A new but essentially Populist government was formed in January 1947 under the retired banker Dimitrios Maximos and without the participation of the Liberals. Rendis explained that the Liberals' decision to remain in opposition stemmed from the party's belief that its political program differed from that of the Populists and that there should be three, not two, political "camps" in Greece. The Liberals, he added, "did not wish the opposition to consist only of the KKE." In explaining the differences between the Liberals, the Populists, and the KKE, Rendis argued that the Liberals would be willing to consider the Communists' proposals for social policies that favored the poorer classes, but would not be willing to "sacrifice the freedom of the individual in the name of a chimerical economic justice". Liberal disagreements with the Populists, he added, were also important: No "self-respecting state," he claimed, could allow "the extreme right to set up paramilitary organizations . . . similar to the organizations of the Communists." The Liberals instead wanted to pursue an "appeasement" policy that would include a general amnesty.³¹

When in April 1947 Sofulis called once more for a general amnesty, the minister of interior, Georgios Papandreou, rejected it on the grounds that this would "open the prisons and reinforce the [Communist] bands with first-class graduates of the Academy of crime." Rendis hastened to explain that the Liberals' political differences with the Populists "are of a theoretical character" and that the general amnesty was a measure designed to weaken, not strengthen, the guerrillas. Sofulis's lieutenant also acknowledged that if there were to be a peaceful settlement, "we are afraid that the KKE will not be sincere and will again attempt a new insurgency and a forceful seizure of power."³²

It was therefore not surprising when in June 1947 the KKE claimed that although it still distinguished between the Liberals and the Populists, it wanted the participation of the Left in government to be guaranteed. Because Sofulis's Liberal government had earlier failed to stop the attacks against the

Left, the KKE claimed that a guarantee was now essential. Contacts ensued between EAM, Sofulis, and Prime Minister Maximos in Athens. After the announcement in late June 1947 of the KKE's intention to set up its own government in northern Greece, however, Sofulis was the only one who blamed the government and the Right for allowing "things to come to such a pass."³³

Sofulis's ambivalence and the arrest of almost 14,000 leftists in Athens and Piraeus on 9–10 July angered the KKE. In a report to the Soviet Communist Party on 17 July 1947, a member of the KKE Politburo, Petros Rousos, claimed that the arrests had "essentially blocked the road to the pacification of the country and an agreement among all the parties." The EAM issued a resolution stating that it would "exhaust even the last possibility for pacification," but Rousos denounced Sofulis for allegedly having "played quite a double-faced role" in this regard. He claimed that on the eve of the arrests Sofulis had "obliquely" promised the EAM that he would contact the government to discuss the possibility of a compromise, but had subsequently stated that if the Communists proceeded with the formation of a provisional government, he would approve all measures recently taken by the Greek government. In the eyes of the KKE this meant that Sofulis "hastened once more to express his submission to the American orders, hoping that they will baptize him prime minister."³⁴

In reality, Sofulis's attitude was even more hesitant than the KKE implied. By early August 1947 the Populists claimed that the Liberals "were orienting themselves more intensely" in favor of the dissolution of parliament and the formation of a Government of their own" – a plan for which they were "expecting *a lot* of American support [emphasis in original]."³⁵ The situation was further complicated on 2 August 1947 when Sofulis once more "flatly" denied that the Liberals had accepted the EAM's proposals for a general amnesty, the withdrawal of foreign troops and missions, and Greek neutrality.³⁶ Yet that same day, Sofulis sent a note to the EAM with his "definitive decisions" regarding cooperation between the Left and the Liberals. He proposed to form his own government, with which the EAM would have to cooperate for a year. Within three months the DSE guerrillas would have to be disarmed and disbanded with some preconditions, including recognition of the national resistance movement against the Axis occupation, a general amnesty for "political offenses on both sides," and the assumption of command in the armed forces by officers who enjoyed the confidence of all parties. Following the surrender of weapons, the government would be broadened to include two EAM representatives as ministers without portfolios, and then the withdrawal of foreign troops shall be officially requested. Municipal elections on the basis of new registers would be held no later than three months after the surrender of arms, and the government would be broadened to include all parties in accordance with the election results. Then Sofulis would hand over the premiership to a person acceptable to all parties, and a plebiscite on the constitutional question and general elections for a new, "representative" parliament would follow.³⁷

On 6 August the EAM replied with a note that proposed the following modifications in Sofulis's terms: a nine-month (rather than one-year) period of cooperation between the EAM and the new government; the surrender of arms to committees comprising individuals whom the Democratic Army could trust; the trial of collaborationist officers and the voluntary retirement of other officers; the allocation of the portfolios of Labor and Economics to the two EAM ministers; and a statement by the US Economic Mission to the effect that it would not interfere with the political and military affairs of the Greek state and that its presence was aimed only at facilitating the implementation of the program for economic reconstruction. As for the elections, the EAM agreed with Sofulis's plan but wanted the new parliament to have the power to revise the constitution. Finally, the EAM wanted to annul legislation on the purging of the civil service and to allow those removed for their Leftist sympathies to return to their posts.³⁸

The position of the KKE vis-à-vis contacts with the Liberals was that "any negotiation must be carried out by the appropriate bodies."³⁹ The real alternative for the Communists was a settlement negotiated with a Center government *after* its formation. In May 1947 Zachariadis had written to the Soviet leadership that the KKE held to its demands for a new government with the participation of the EAM, a general amnesty, a cease-fire, and free elections: "Provided that the elections are free[,] the Democratic Army of Greece will subsequently decide about its future existence in agreement with the government that will emerge from the elections."⁴⁰ But by the beginning of September 1947 the KKE abandoned attempts at compromise, arguing that Sofulis was heading what *Rizospastis* called "the grotesque government of superdynamic appeasement." The KKE objected to the surrender of arms prior to an amnesty, claiming that Sofulis had become a prisoner of the Populists and the Americans. The EAM once more demanded the immediate suspension of hostilities, a general amnesty, and the "equal" participation of the Left in the government.⁴¹

By this point, however, the EAM sensed that its demands could be imposed only by force. Not only was this strongly implied in Zachariadis's articles in the monthly military and political journal of the DSE headquarters, *Dimokratikos Stratos*;⁴² it also was articulated on two other occasions: on 4 August 1947, when the DSE military commander, Markos Vafiadis, informed the Yugoslav leadership that the DSE's military objective was "to transform the situation radically and force [the opponent] into [a] compromise";⁴³ and on 21 February 1948, when Zachariadis told Yugoslav leaders Josip Broz Tito and Edvard Kardelj that "if we succeed in breaking up the offensive that the enemy is preparing, we will be able to force them into concessions before the elections."⁴⁴ After the formation of the Liberal-Populist coalition government in September 1947, the KKE believed that it was running out of alternatives. The party's own inclination to use force was strengthened by certain actions of the new government. When, for example, the government announced its amnesty proposals, even the British Foreign Office considered them fit "only for sneaks and betrayers."⁴⁵

Apart from Populist intransigence and Liberal ambivalence, the KKE also had to cope with the presence – or absence – of foreign powers, a factor that further limited the range of alternatives available to the Communists. In 1945–1946 Britain had not allowed Sofulis's centrist government to restrain the security forces and the state apparatus in their campaign against the Left. After the elections of March 1946 the British had shown no desire to relax their hold on Greece and had sought to isolate the KKE through a Liberal-Populist coalition. The US government shared Britain's goal and, especially after the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, insisted that no Greek government could make any concessions to the KKE. In May 1947 Secretary of State George Marshall sent a confidential telegram to the US embassy in Athens calling for "a more patriotic ideal of national unity" and warning that Washington "cannot look with favor on excesses of either extreme whether represented in the government or not."⁴⁶ Sofulis's ambivalence and his refusal to participate in the government prompted the US State Department to send Loy Henderson, the head of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, to Athens in late August 1947 to convey Washington's "annoyance at Sofulis's unwillingness to cooperate in a broad coalition government."⁴⁷ Upon arriving Henderson warned the Greek politicians that their political behavior "may create difficulties for American assistance."⁴⁸

In the face of this pressure, Sofulis and Tsaldaris agreed on 4 September 1947 to form a coalition government that even the British Foreign Office viewed with suspicion.⁴⁹ Within a few days the US authorities welcomed the new government's "dual approach," which consisted of a "generous amnesty" and "necessary military operations."⁵⁰ To ensure the durability of the new political configuration in Athens, the US State Department insisted that "on no account" should the governmental parties provoke a governmental crisis: If Sofulis and Tsaldaris had difficulties with one another, they should seek the mediation of Karl Rankin, the US chargé d'affaires in Athens.⁵¹

The influence of the British and Americans was magnified by the Soviet Union's relative passivity. In July 1944 the Soviet government had indicated to Britain that it would not object to British control of Greek affairs if Britain would allow the Soviet Union a free hand in Romania and Bulgaria – a deal that was confirmed in a face-to-face meeting between Josif Stalin and Winston Churchill at the Kremlin on 9 October 1944.⁵² The available evidence, or the lack of it, suggests that Stalin kept the KKE in the dark on this issue.⁵³ On the other hand, the officers of the small Soviet military delegation that arrived at the ELAS headquarters in late July 1944 offered no direct encouragement when the KKE leadership mentioned the possibility of a clash with the British.⁵⁴ In December 1944, shortly after the outbreak of fighting in Athens, British and Greek officials asked the head of the Soviet delegation, Lieutenant-Colonel Grigorii Popov, what he thought of the KKE's actions. He shrugged his shoulders and replied that the Greek Communists had neither requested nor listened to Soviet advice.⁵⁵

The KKE disregarded Moscow's warnings and demonstrated a considerable degree of autonomy by pressing ahead with a vigorous struggle against British influence in Greece. As always, Stalin was displeased when a foreign Communist party tried to act autonomously, and in January 1945 he told Dimitrov that the Greek Communists' military confrontation with the British in December 1944 had been "a foolish thing."⁵⁶ In early February 1946, as noted above, Molotov had advised the KKE to avoid armed conflict and to direct its energies instead to self-defense and political mobilization of the masses.⁵⁷ In September 1946, in a meeting with Dimitrov, Molotov, Zhdanov, and others in the Kremlin, Stalin further criticized the KKE, claiming that the party's abstention from the elections of March 1946 had been "an error" and "an ill-considered act" that had not resulted in the "failure" (presumably meaning the postponement) of the elections.⁵⁸

In May 1947, when Zachariadis visited Moscow to obtain Soviet backing and assistance for the realization of the new KKE plans, Zhdanov listened carefully, without expressing his own views or committing the Soviet Union.⁵⁹ According to Greek Communist records, Zachariadis then met with Stalin himself, who apparently raised no objections to the KKE's plans and may well have indicated to Zachariadis that Soviet assistance would be forthcoming. Without offering any details, the KKE Politburo claimed in early June that "we are entirely satisfied with the results of these talks."⁶⁰

Yet in the second half of 1947 the Soviet Union was faced with challenges that militated against providing wholesale assistance to the embattled KKE and risking a confrontation with the United States and Britain over Greece. In February 1948, during a meeting with Yugoslav and Bulgarian Communists at the Kremlin, Stalin even expressed doubts about the prospects of the KKE and wondered whether it might be wiser for the Greek guerrilla movement to "shrink." When his Bulgarian and Yugoslav guests pleaded with him to wait "a few months" until the chances of the Greek Communists became clear, Stalin replied: "Fine, then wait. You may be right." But, even though he did not oppose the struggle of the KKE in early 1948, he called for caution. On the question of the KKE's Provisional Democratic Government, which had been formed in late December 1947, Stalin told his guests that "the neighboring countries must be the last to recognize [it]. Let it be recognized first by the others that are further away."⁶¹

On 14 February 1948, British and US officials in Athens told the Greek government that if Greece were to survive, the DSE guerrillas "must be crushed in a decisive manner within the next six or seven months."⁶² The Greek government agreed with this view, but the following month it also considered a compromise, probably because of a lack of confidence in the ability of its army to defeat the DSE. Tsaldaris again stated that the Greek question could be solved only by direct agreement at the highest international level, as he had suggested to the foreign ministers of the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union in New York in December 1946. On 22 March 1948 the Greek

deputy prime minister and foreign minister proposed to make a direct appeal to the Soviet government, the UN Security Council, and the foreign ministers of the four great powers for a sweeping solution to the Greek crisis. Tsaldaris proposed the surrender of DSE arms "to a neutral force of American, British, French, and Russian soldiers." According to the plan, the guerrillas who surrendered could choose between emigrating, remaining in Greece "under guaranteed police protection," or settling "in other Greek towns where they are not personally known." A "wide and liberal amnesty" would be granted to all guerrillas and political prisoners, and three months after the surrender of arms there would be elections under international supervision. "Then," Tsaldaris added, "if by regular democratic methods and arguments the Greek people want to elect Communists to the majority or [give them] strong representation in the National Assembly . . . the Communists are welcome to it." Finally, the Greek deputy prime minister and foreign minister offered to grant Yugoslavia and Bulgaria – two countries that were assisting the KKE – free customs zones in the port of Thessaloniki under new treaties that would allow them access to the Aegean Sea.⁶³

In the summer of 1948, however, the Greek government returned with a less generous plan, which envisaged an official statement by the KKE and the DSE headquarters that they would halt the insurgency and surrender DSE arms to a special subcommittee of the UN Special Committee on the Balkans. This would be reciprocated by a suspension of deportations, "an amnesty of a broad scope," and protection of those who surrendered. Then, within six months of the termination of military operations, the Greek government would hold elections for a new parliament. The sticking point, however, was that a general amnesty covering the members of the KKE's Provisional Democratic Government, the members of the KKE Central Committee, and the commanders of the DSE would have to be decided by the parliament that would emerge from the elections. The Communists would be barred from participating in the election process, because the question of the legalization of the KKE would have to await action by the new government.⁶⁴

Although the March 1948 plan might have served as the basis for discussion, the subsequent proposal was clearly unacceptable to the KKE. It would have prevented the party from participating in the elections and would have left the Communists without a leader during the crucial period in the run-up to the elections. In any case, there is no evidence that either of these two plans ever reached the KKE. From Soviet sources it is known that in the summer of 1948 Tsaldaris was discussing the possibility of a compromise with the Soviet embassy in Athens. These contacts were abruptly terminated for unknown reasons, but there is no doubt that the United States and Britain had made it abundantly clear to Tsaldaris that they were opposed to any contacts between the Greek government and the Soviet Union.⁶⁵

In addition, the Greek government seemed to have greater confidence about its own prospects. Whereas the government doubted its military capacity in March 1948, its less generous proposals of the summer may have been

prompted by rumors in Athens that the KKE would be willing to lay down its arms if it could be legalized under a different leadership and if some five hundred “protagonists of the current rebellion and their families would be allowed to go abroad.”⁶⁶ In reality, the KKE, far from being ready to compromise, was prepared to continue the fighting. In June 1948 Zachariadis told Georgi Dimitrov that “there are [auspicious] conditions for the continuation of the [armed] struggle,” and the two men “agreed on the essentials” of the assistance needed by the KKE.⁶⁷ The momentum toward all-out war increased the following month when the Greek Army General Staff claimed that unless urgent measures were taken, it would be impossible to halt the war and defeat the DSE.⁶⁸

Two months later, when it had become clear that the government had failed to destroy the DSE in the north, the war minister demanded that troops be deployed to wipe out resistance in government-held territory in order to destroy the “myth” that this was a “civil” war and to avoid handing Greece over to the guerrillas for a third successive winter.⁶⁹ The situation was perilous enough to warrant a three-day visit to Athens by US Secretary of State George Marshall in mid-October 1948. Initially the visit “strengthened the morale of the people and heartened the army,” but within days of Marshall’s departure the DSE stepped up its activity in southern Greece and dealt “a serious psychological blow” to public opinion, causing alarm within the government.⁷⁰ This setback helped spark a major government crisis, which was eventually resolved in late November with the reconstitution of a coalition government that survived in parliament by a single vote.⁷¹

The fragility of the political set-up in Athens gave the Greek Communists further encouragement. In December 1948, in a meeting between a KKE envoy and leading Bulgarian Communists, the prospects of the KKE were judged to be “favorable,” and agreement was reached “on [the] specific assistance we must give in the future, too.”⁷² The following month, Zachariadis himself “gave [Dimitrov] information on the situation in Greece.” In contrast to the upbeat assessment of the previous month, the “prospects [in January 1949 were deemed to be] not bad.”⁷³ Although there is no direct evidence that this change of tone reflected Communist anxiety about the government’s success in launching a major offensive against DSE forces in southern Greece in December 1948, the connection seems plausible. Apart from the military implications of the campaign, the KKE by the beginning of 1949 was left with a stark choice between unconditional surrender and the continuation of the war under increasingly adverse circumstances. The Greek Communists were eventually defeated in August 1949, but even in retrospect their defeat appeared to be increasingly likely only after the winter of 1948.

In assessing the conception and evolution of KKE strategy, it is crucial to take account of the motives and actions of the party’s opponents. It is also crucial to distinguish between the phases of the Greek Civil War. The choices facing the Communists changed substantially even within the narrow confines of

1945–1949. Later on, Zachariadis claimed that in the early stages of the conflict the KKE was hoping to “persuade” the Center that the Communist cause was just.⁷⁴ Contemporaneous evidence lends weight to this assertion. In 1945–1947 the KKE tried to keep its options open and appeared to place some hope, if only tentatively, on the mediation of the old republican center under Sofulis. From the KKE’s perspective, the Liberals’ fluctuations and “democratic inconsistency” in 1946–1947 meant that they were not a trustworthy alternative to the Populists. The KKE’s growing disillusionment with the Liberals was one of the reasons that the Communists decided to escalate the conflict in February 1947.

The strategy of the KKE during the civil war, and arguably throughout the 1940s, revolved around the competing concepts of war and peace. War was waged after 1946 to restore the party to the position it had enjoyed before December 1944. Until early 1947 the KKE emphasized the pursuit of a compromise, and it used the threat of insurrection to bring additional pressure to bear on the government. But even when the Communists sought a compromise, they were haunted by the ghost of the Varkiza Agreement, which had been aimed at their capitulation. The KKE was determined to ensure that new negotiations and peace proposals would not end in capitulation. Thus, in 1947 the party stepped up its war effort in order to force a settlement. The alternative to war was a capitulation under conditions and terms infinitely worse than those of February 1945.

The unwillingness of the Soviet Union to furnish large-scale assistance, and the support provided to the anti-Communist forces by Britain and the United States, created extremely unfavorable conditions for the KKE. The party understood that guerrilla warfare rarely wins wars in a military sense, and it therefore switched to positional warfare after late 1947. The implications of this pivotal decision are difficult to pinpoint in the absence of a full-scale military analysis of the Greek Civil War, but there is little doubt that the prolongation of the war beyond 1949 would have rendered even more precarious the position of the KKE’s domestic rivals. In fact, the relevant evidence suggests that until the autumn of 1948 the possibility of a compromise could not be wholly ruled out. That option, however, was not entirely in the hands of the Greeks.

Notes

- 1 Indicatively only, see George Alexander, *Prelude to the Truman Doctrine: British Polity in Greece 1944–1947* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1982). See also A. I. Korantis, *Politiki kai Diplomatiki Istoría tis Ellados 1941–1945*, Vols. 1–2 (Athens: Estia, 1987).
- 2 Again, indicatively only, see Heinz Richter, *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946* (London: Merlin Press, 1986); Giorgis Katsoulis, *Istoría tou Kommounistikou Kommatos Elladas*, Vol. 6: 1946–1949 (Athens: Nea Synora, 1977); and Pavlos Nefeloudis, *Stis Piges tis Kakodaimonias: Ta Vathytera Aitia tis Diaspasis tou KKE, 1918–1968*, 6th ed. (Athens: Gutenberg, 1974).

- 3 Greek Communist Party (KKE), *Dokimio Istorias tou KKE*, Vol. 1: 1918–1949, 2nd ed. (Athens: Synchroni Epochi, 1996), pp. 621–622; and KKE, *I Trichroni Epopoia tou Dimokratikou Stratou Elladas, 1946–1949* (Athens: Rizospastis – Synchroni Epochi, 1998).
- 4 One notable exception is Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism 1944–1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 5 Prokopis Papastratis, *British Foreign Policy Towards Greece During the Second World War, 1941–1944* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Thanasis D. Sfikas, *The British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War: The Imperialism of “Non-intervention”* (Keele, UK: Keele University Press, 1994), pp. 15–42; Thanasis D. Sfikas, “‘The People at the Top Can Do These Things Which Others Can’t Do’: Winston Churchill and the Greeks, 1940–1945,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (April 1991), pp. 307–332; and Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler’s Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941–44* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
- 6 Yiannis Ioannidis, *Anamniseis: Provilimata tis Politikis tou KKE stin Ethniki Antistasi, 1940–1945* (Athens: Themelio, 1979), p. 371.
- 7 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 44, 63, 70–71.
- 8 Interview with Nikos Zachariadis, *Rizospastis*, 2 June 1945, p. 1, *Rizospastis* was (and still is) the Greek Communist Party’s daily newspaper.
- 9 “To Programma tis Laikis Dimokratias,” 23 July 1945, in KKE, *Episima Keimena* (hereinafter referred to as *EK*), Vol. 6 (Athens: Synchroni Epochi, 1987), No. 704 and Appendix, pp. 388–395; see also Public Record Office, London (hereinafter referred to as PRO), Foreign Office Files (FO) 371/48271 R9722: Leeper to Foreign Office, 5 June 1945; and John O. Iatrides, ed., *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933–1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 680–681; Nikos Zachariadis, “Oi dyo poloi kai o ellinikos aksonas,” *Rizospastis*, 5 June 1945, p. 1.
- 10 Ioanna Papathanasiou, “Pros ti Moscha me Syntrofikous Hairetismous,” *O Politis*, No. 29 (13 December 1996), p. 32. See also Report of the KKE Central Committee, “On the Situation in Greece,” sent by Georgi Dimitrov to the Soviet Union on 5 February 1946, in Kondis and Sfetas, eds., *Emfylios Polemos*, No. 72, pp. 172–175.
- 11 “Ellinosovietikes Scheseis tin periodo 1946–1949,” [n.d., after November 1949], in Petros Antaios, *Nikos Zachariadis: Thytis kai Thyma*, 2nd ed. (Athens: Fytrakis, 1991), p. 451; Georgi Dimitrov, diary entry for 9 February 1946, in Spyros Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo to Aporrito Imerologio* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1999), p. 173; and Note by Lavrishev, 23 January 1946, in Kondis and Sfetas, eds., *Emfylios Polemos*, No. 122, pp. 235–236.
- 12 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 85–87.
- 13 Statement by Nikos Zachariadis, *Rizospastis*, 7 March 1946, p. 1; and Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, p. 87.
- 14 Dimitrov, diary entry for 2 April 1946, in Kouzinopoulos ed., *Selides Apo*, p. 173.
- 15 Papathanasiou “Pros i Moscha,” p. 34.
- 16 Note of a conversation between Rodionov and Zachariadis, 4 May 1946, in Kondis and Sfetas, eds., *Emfylios Polemos*, No. 123, p. 237.
- 17 Report by Ioannidis on the guerrilla movement in Greece, 25 August 1946, in Kondis and Sfetas, eds., *Emfylios Polemos*, No. 5, p. 50.
- 18 Report by Ioannidis to the fraternal parties, 12 September 1946, in *I Trichroni Epopoia*, pp. 585–597.
- 19 Statement by Nikos Zachariadis, *Rizospastis*, 6 February 1947, p. 1; Kyrkos’s speech to the UN Commission, 17 February 1947, Archives of Contemporary Social History, Athens (hereinafter referred to as ASKI): Michalis Kyrkos Papers, TK 3.
- 20 Zachariadis’s memorandum to the CPSU leadership, 13 May 1947, in *I Trichroni Epopoia*, pp. 608–615.
- 21 Zachariadis and Ioannidis’s secret directive to Markos, 17 April 1947, ASKI, KKE Archives, TK 147, F=7/34/35.

- 22 "Simeioma tis syzitisis tou s. Zhdanov me ton s. Nikolai [Zachariadis], [Moscow], 22/5/1947," edited by I. Papathanasiou, in *Prosopa, 21 os Aionas*, No. 11, supplement to the Athens daily newspaper *Ta Nea*, 22 May 1999, pp. 12–13.
- 23 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 71–88.
- 24 Parliamentary session, 17 May 1946, in *Episima Praktika ton Synedriaseon tis Voulis ton Ellinon* (hereinafter referred to as *EPSVE*), 13 May–20 June 1946 (Athens: Ethniko Typografeio, 1946), pp. 12–16, quotation on p. 14.
- 25 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 43–50. The best discussion of Communist "enthusiasm, freedom and coercion" during the occupation is Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, pp. 265–339.
- 26 Parliamentary session of 18 May 1946, *EPSVE*, 13 May–20 June 1946, pp. 17–19.
- 27 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 111, 114–115.
- 28 Parliamentary session of 20 June 1946, in *EPSVE*, 13 May–20 June 1946, pp. 270–271.
- 29 News Report, *Rizospastis*, 25 July 1946, p. 1.
- 30 Statement by Konstantinos Tsaldaris, *Estia*, 27 July 1946, p. 1.
- 31 Parliamentary session of 29 January 1947, in *EPSVE*, 1 October 1946–27 February 1947, pp. 952, 956.
- 32 Parliamentary sessions of 24 and 29 April, in *EPSVE*, 21 April 1947–13 September 1947 (Athens: Ethniko Typografeio, 1947), pp. 1102–1104, 1134, 1138–1141.
- 33 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 168, 169.
- 34 KKE Report to CPSU, 17 July 1947, in *I Trichroni Epopoia*, pp. 621–632, quotations on pp. 622, 624.
- 35 Personal letter by Georgios N. Drosos, Assistant Minister for Press and Information, to Tsaldaris, 5 August 1947, Konstantinos Tsaldaris Papers, Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Foundation, Athens, F 23A.
- 36 Greek Government, Office of Information, New York, Press Release, 3 August 1947, Tsaldaris Papers, F 23A.
- 37 Note by Sofulis to EAM, 2 August 1947, Tsaldaris Papers, F 23A.
- 38 Note by EAM to Sofulis, 6 August 1947, Tsaldaris Papers, F 24/3.
- 39 Letter from the Athens Section of Politburo to Politburo, 10 August 1947, ASKI, KKE Archives, TK 117, F=7/14/16.
- 40 Zachariadis's Memorandum to the CPSU leadership, 13 May 1947, in *I Trichroni Epopoia*, p. 613.
- 41 Kostas Karagiorgis, "I gennisi enos teratos," *Rizospastis*, 7 September 1947, p. 1; and Kostas Karagiorgis, "Yperdynamikos Katevnasmos," *Rizospastis*, 9 September 1947, p. 1. See also the statements of the KKE Central Committee in *Rizospastis*, 10, 11, 12, 13 September 1947, all on p. 1; and Resolution of the EAM Central Committee, *Eleftheri Ellada* [daily EAM newspaper], 12 September 1947, p. 1.
- 42 "Meros apo to logo tou Nikou Zachriadi sti syskepsi ton kommatikon, politikon kai stratiotikon stehelon tou DSE," *Dimokratikos Stratos*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1948), pp. 26–32; "Laikos Epanastatikos Stratos," *Dimokratikos Stratos*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 1948), pp. 107–112; "Brosta se mia apofasistiki kambi," *Dimokratikos Stratos*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (August 1948), pp. 270–276; "Pou vriskomaste kai ti prepei na katnoume," *Dimokratikos Stratos*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (October 1948), pp. 374–376; "Ta aposynthetika phenomena mesa sto monarchofasismo kai to diko mas kahikon," *Dimokratikos Stratos*, Vol. 1, No. 11 (November 1948), pp. 431–440; and "Ta provlimata tis stratigikis kai technikis mas ston chronon pou mas perase," *Dimokratikos Stratos*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (April 1949), pp. 207–216.
- 43 Markos Vafiadis's letter to the Yugoslav leadership on the tactics of the DSE, 4 August 1948, in Kondis and Sfetis, eds., *Emfylios Polemos*, No. 16, p. 72.
- 44 Protocol of a conversation between Tito, Kardelj, Zachariadis, and Ioannidis, 21 February 1948, in Kondis and Sfetis, eds., *Emfylios Polemos*, No. 36, p. 121.
- 45 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 185–186.

- 46 Marshall to US Embassy (Athens), confidential telegram, 28 May 1947, Tsaldaris Papers, File 23A; and Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 71–88, 133–135, 158, 167–168.
- 47 Telegram from Dendramis (Washington) to Foreign Ministry, 28 August 1947, No. 543, Archives of the Greek Foreign Ministry, Athens (hereinafter referred to as AGFM), File 134 (2).
- 48 Telegram from Rodopoulos (Thessaloniki) to Tsaldaris and Pipinellis, 1 September 1947, No. 1395, AGFM, File 134 (2).
- 49 Chronological Table of the Principal Events, 25 January–7 September 1947, Tsaldaris Papers, File 28A/1, pp. 18–22; and Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 185–187. The coalition government consisted often Liberals and fourteen Populists, with Sofulis as prime minister and Tsaldaris as deputy prime minister and foreign minister.
- 50 Dwight Griswold, Head of the American Mission for Aid to Greece to Sofulis, 19 September 1947, AGFM, File 134 (2).
- 51 Dendramis (Washington) to Tsaldaris, 24 December 1947, No. 120, AGFM, File 134 (2); and Dendramis to Tsaldaris, 15 December 1947, No. 108, AGFM, File 134 (2).
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- 53 Kondis and Sfetis, eds., *Emfyllos Polemos*, Introduction, p. 20; and Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism*, pp. 35–42.
- 54 Ioannidis, *Anamniseis*, pp. 248–259.
- 55 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, p. 35.
- 56 Dimitrov, diary entry for 10 January 1945, in Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo*, p. 153.
- 57 Dimitrov, diary entry for 9 February 1946, in Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo*, p. 173.
- 58 Dimitrov, diary entry for 2 September 1946, in Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo*, p. 178.
- 59 See above, n. 22. A different account of this meeting is given in Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 127–128. According to the authors, “Zhdanov’s response was a firm ‘no.’ See p. 127.
- 60 Sfikas, *The British Labour Government and the Greek Civil War*, pp. 166–167. No documentary record of this second meeting has emerged so far; see also Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p. 128.
- 61 Dimitrov, diary entry for 10 February 1948, in Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo*, pp. 201–205. The Bulgarian account of that meeting contradicts the substantially exaggerated version of Stalin’s view given by the Yugoslav delegate Milovan Djilas in his *Conversations with Stalin* (London: Penguin, 1962), pp. 181–182. According to Djilas, Stalin believed that “the uprising in Greece has to fold up [and] must be stopped, and as quickly as possible.” For a detailed discussion, see Leonid Gibianskii, “The Soviet Bloc and the Initial Stage of the Cold War: Archival Documents on Stalin’s Meetings with Communist Leaders of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, 1946–1948,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, No. 10 (March 1998), pp. 112–134.
- 62 Translation of a Memorandum, Top Secret, 14 February 1948, Tsaldaris Papers, F 31.
- 63 Draft telegram by P. Leacacos, staff correspondent, Athens, 22 March 1948, Tsaldaris Papers, F 31.
- 64 Unsigned, undated hand-written peace plan, [summer] 1948, Tsaldaris Papers, F 31.
- 65 Sfikas, *British Labour Government*, pp. 223–225.
- 66 Telegram by Drosos to Tsaldaris, 5 July 1948, No. 4064, Tsaldaris Papers, F 32/1.
- 67 Dimitrov, diary entry for 11 June 1948, in Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo*, p. 208.

- 68 "Evaluation of the Military Situation in mid-July 1948," by Lt.-General St. Kitrilakis, deputy chief of operations of the Greek General Staff, n.d., Tsaldaris Papers, F 32/1.
- 69 War minister to Sofulis and Tsaldaris, 13 September 1948, No. 809675, Tsaldaris Papers, F 32/1
- 70 Telegrams by Stefanopoulos to Tsaldaris, 19 and 27 October 1948, Nos. 54262 and 54957, Tsaldaris Papers, F 32/1.
- 71 Telegrams by Stefanopoulos to Tsaldaris, 29 and 30 October 1948, Nos. 9074, 55166, 55481, Tsaldaris Papers, F 32/1; Telegram by Sofulis to Tsaldaris, 11 November 1948, No. 57082, Tsaldaris Papers, F 32/1; Telegram by Mavromichalis and Londos to Tsaldaris, 12 November 1948, No. 57087, Tsaldaris Papers, F 32/1; and Telegram by Tsaldaris to Permanent Deputy Foreign Minister, 21 November 1948, No. 58301, Tsaldaris Papers, F 32.
- 72 Dimitrov, diary entry for 30 December 1948, in Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo*, p. 218.
- 73 Dimitrov, diary entry for 19 January 1949, in Kouzinopoulos, ed., *Selides Apo*, p. 219.
- 74 Nikos Zachariadis, *Provlimata tis Krisis tou KKE* (1962), republished as *I Paranomi Brosoura tou Nikou Zachariadi* (Athens: Glaros, 1987), p. 33.

Part III

EUROPE AND THE
COLD WAR

BRITISH POLICY AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

John Kent

Historians have found British records to be an invaluable source for understanding the origins of the Cold War. According to some scholars these records demonstrate that the Cold War was not a bipolar affair. They show that British officials shared the fears and concerns of Americans about the potential of a Soviet threat. Indeed some analysts believe that the British alerted and prodded the Americans to assume a bolder posture against Soviet/Communist expansionism. But at the same time the British were also aware that their interests did not always coincide with those of the United States and that it was important to try to maintain a degree of autonomy if they were to preserve their great power status.

British historians have done a wonderful job illuminating and debating the degree of continuity between the foreign policies of the Conservative government of Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden and those of the Labour Party headed by Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin. Although tactics changed after Churchill lost the election in July 1945 and although parts of the empire won their independence, there probably was more continuity than one would have expected. But this is a complex problem because recent research has shown that notwithstanding Churchill's inveterate anti-Communism, he, too, pondered means of accommodating the Kremlin and working out a cooperative relationship. Of course, from his perspective, and from that of his successors, the cooperative relationship had to be on terms that comported with British conceptions of their own vital security interests. At what point this orientation dictated a break with the Kremlin is open to controversy. And so is the degree of Britain's own responsibility for bringing on the Cold War.

Rather than attributing blame or praise for the actions that led to the breakdown of the great wartime allied coalition, some historians are more interested in examining the motivations and goals of the various participants. In this provocative essay John Kent shows that British concerns with their strategic presence in the eastern Mediterranean and Bevin's hopes for maximizing the economic advantages of Britain's African possessions prompted the Foreign Office to take a defiant stand against concessions to the Kremlin.

Readers should compare British thinking about their security requirements with that of the Americans and the Soviets. What factors influenced British thinking? Were there divisions within the British government? If so, what caused them?

To what extent were they related to differences over assessments of Soviet intentions and capabilities? To what extent were they related to different views of British interests, British capabilities, and British economic and military requirements? To what extent were they prompted by hopes of retaining some autonomy vis-à-vis the United States? Why were the British so concerned about holding on to their possessions or maintaining their influence in Africa and the Middle East?

* * *

Standard accounts of postwar foreign and colonial policy assume that Britain's imperial role had to be adapted to the increased international tensions resulting from the breakup of the wartime alliance. The failure of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's attempts to overcome Soviet intransigence and hostility allegedly produced the Brussels Treaty and the securing of an American military commitment to Western Europe. The Cold War therefore encouraged policies geared to the acceptance of a subordinate, if special, position in an American-dominated alliance.

In this essay the links between Britain's imperial policy and the Cold War will be interpreted rather differently. Rather than suggesting that the Cold War simply prompted new Foreign Office initiatives, it will be argued first that attempts to redefine Britain's global role were a prime cause of growing tension in 1945, and therefore an important element in the origins of the Cold War; and second that perceptions of Africa's imperial value influenced overall foreign policy objectives as Cold War tensions increased in 1947 and 1948.

It is first necessary to define the central aims, as opposed to the final results, of British foreign policy between 1944 and 1949; these aims are often mentioned in the historiography of the period but seldom given the emphasis they require if perceptions of British policymakers are to be accurately represented.¹ The overriding aim until 1949 was the reestablishment of Britain as a world power equal to and independent of both the United States and the Soviet Union²; an aspiration which reflected the Foreign Office view that British weakness was a temporary rather than a permanent phenomenon.³ In order to achieve this it was believed that the preservation of imperial influence was vital in both economic and power-political terms; use of strategic bases and imperial resources would be supplemented by close political ties with the colonies and Dominions. But the Foreign Office also saw the need to enroll France and the lesser western European powers as "collaborators" with the British empire.⁴

This could obviously not be achieved overnight, and in the intervening period it was deemed necessary to avoid any weakening of Britain's imperial position. It was Bevin's and the Foreign Office's determination to prevent this that was to influence attitudes to Anglo-Soviet cooperation in 1945. These attitudes were based not on fears that cooperation with the Soviet Union would be difficult or impossible, but on fears that cooperation would compromise

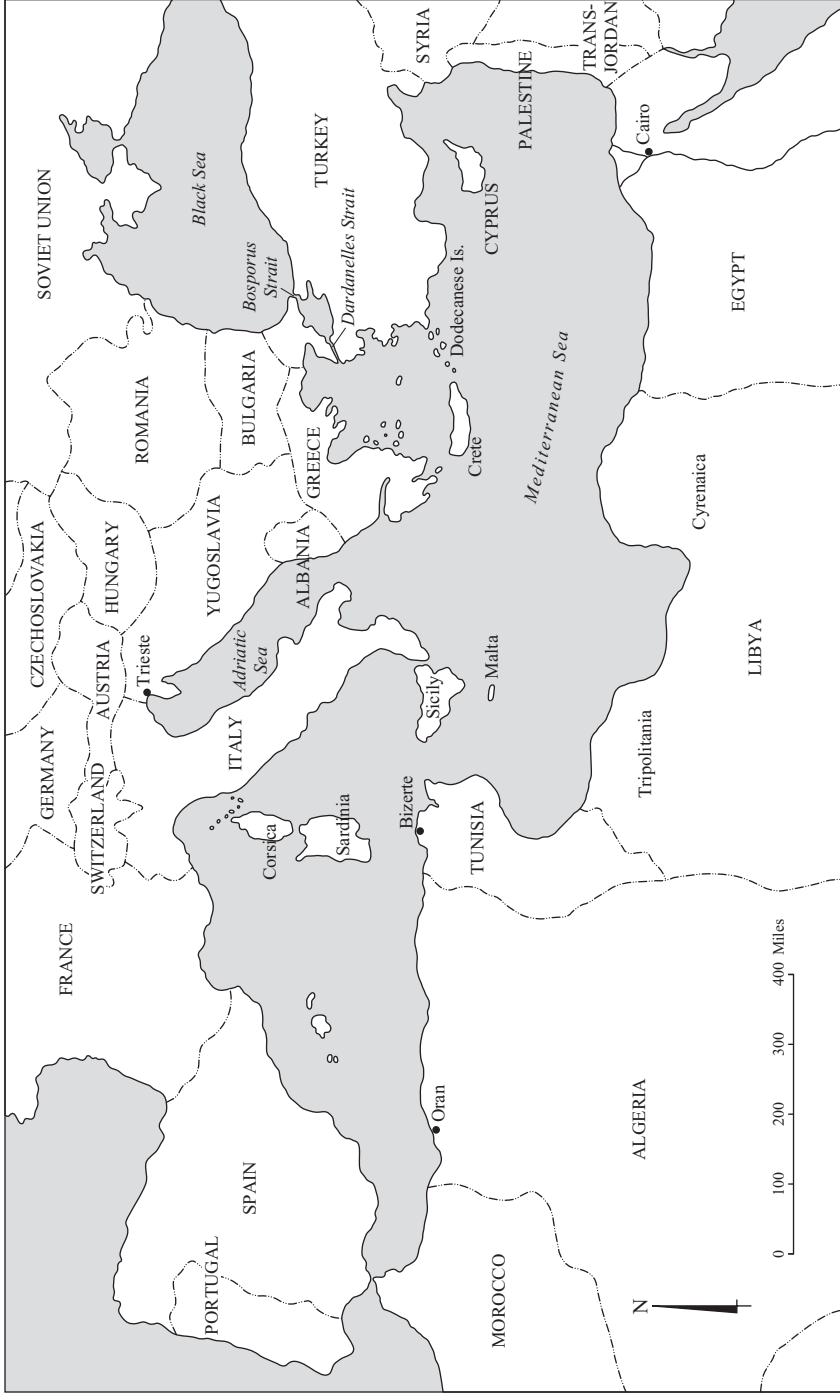
Britain's position in the Middle East and Africa. As a result Anglo-Soviet cooperation was regarded, at least in the short term, as undesirable.

The area initially most affected by the rival claims of British and Soviet imperialism was the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. Russian expansion in the Balkans and the Turkish Straits had always threatened what was a predominantly British sphere of influence in the Mediterranean. But in 1944 the Foreign Office was committed to a policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union, although this commitment was to change by the summer of 1945. In the meantime its advocates were faced with two possible options: the negotiation of power-political agreements or the establishment of international arrangements, each of which could prevent Anglo-Soviet rivalries developing into hostile confrontations. But when it was realized that either option would compromise Britain's position in the eastern Mediterranean, and therefore its status as one of the Big Three powers, Anglo-Soviet cooperation was deemed undesirable.

The spheres-of-influence approach was epitomized by the infamous October 1944 percentages deal in which Stalin and Churchill agreed on a 50–50 division in Yugoslavia and a 90–10 arrangement in Britain's favor for Greece;⁵ as Churchill explained, the latter was necessary because Britain "must be the leading Mediterranean power." Churchill, however, believed Britain had nothing to fear from the movement of a Russian fleet through the Straits because of Britain's greater naval strength, and told Stalin he was "in favour of Russia's having free access to the Mediterranean for her merchant ships and ships of war."⁶ As he noted at the time, "it is like breeding pestilence to try to keep a nation like Russia from free access to the broad waters."⁷ In 1945, the key "breeder of pestilence" who was determined to defend Britain's exclusive Mediterranean position was Ernest Bevin. His main opponent was the new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee.

In the summer of 1945, the Foreign Office thought Britain's position in the region was being increasingly challenged by the Soviet Union and this perception was crucial to the formulation of British ideas on future allied cooperation. In June, the Turks approached the Russians about a Turkish-Soviet treaty guaranteeing the joint frontier, and the Turkish ambassador mentioned granting bases in the Straits to the Soviets in certain wartime conditions.⁸ Molotov responded by emphasizing the Soviet desire for bases, and explaining that the disputed frontier in the eastern provinces of Turkey could first require revision. In the week before the Potsdam Conference the British ambassador therefore reported that the "most disquieting feature of Soviet policy" was not their activities in eastern Europe, but their attitude to Greece and Turkey which suggested "a threat to our position in the Middle East."⁹

The underlying assumption among strategic planners was that the Soviet Union presented a potential threat to British interests and could not therefore be accepted as a friendly power.¹⁰ This also became the prevalent attitude within the Foreign Office, not because of events in eastern Europe, but because



Map 4 The Mediterranean area, 1945-1946

of Soviet desires for greater influence in the eastern Mediterranean. In the summer of 1945, these attitudes produced a policy of no deals or concessions of any kind to the Soviet Union.

The first indication of a shift in Foreign Office thinking came in the spring of 1945 when Deputy Under-Secretary Sir Orme Sargent changed his views on the best means of dealing with the Soviets. Sargent, later to become Bevin's Permanent Under-Secretary, was not favorably disposed to the Russians.¹¹ In July, the Deputy Under-Secretary's position changed again when he explicitly called for a diplomatic offensive to challenge the Soviet Union in Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria; but in the two countries in southeastern Europe furthest away from the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East – Hungary and Romania – Sargent considered Britain might have to acquiesce in Russian domination.¹² "Our strategic position in Greece and the Middle East," stated the Foreign Office, "makes it particularly important to us that Bulgaria should not act simply as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy."¹³ The fact that Russian domination in Hungary was acceptable to the Foreign Office if it prevented Soviet control over Bulgarian foreign policy, indicates the lack of importance attached to democratic principles in comparison with Britain's strategic interests.

As has been suggested earlier, the preservation of Britain's Middle Eastern position was deemed essential to the long-term goal of regaining equality with the United States and the Soviet Union. Another threat to this goal was Soviet-American cooperation, based on an assumption that Britain was now very much a junior partner in the alliance, and in July 1945 British representatives in both Moscow and Washington voiced their fears of this. An official of the North American Department reported some feeling in Washington that Britain and the empire were so weakened they could safely be overlooked by the Americans and Russians.¹⁴ In Moscow, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr drew attention to an event which illustrated just such a policy – the bilateral discussions between Truman's emissary, Harry Hopkins, and Stalin on the Polish problem. "This renewed Soviet-American flirtation," he recorded, "of course means more than a mere attempt to break a temporary deadlock. The Americans and the Russians alike are probably hoping to establish a direct relationship with one another." If Britain was not careful, he warned, it would find itself playing a more modest role in allied exchanges.¹⁵

It was against this background that in July and August 1945 British discussions took place on Anglo-Soviet cooperation and the protection of British interests in the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. The new Prime Minister continued to advocate internationalist ideas as the best means of preserving world peace and maintaining Britain's global influence. Attlee believed that key strategic areas, particularly in the Middle East, should be placed under the control of the United Nations and that Britain should confront the Russians with the requirements of a world organization for peace and not with the defense needs of the British empire. Even before the discussions at Potsdam were over, Attlee believed there was a danger of getting

into a position where Britain and the Soviet Union would confront each other as rival Great Powers at a number of points of strategic importance.¹⁶

Bevin was determined to support the Foreign Office view rather than his Prime Minister's. In 1944, as a member of the coalition government, Bevin had expected the Balkans would probably demand British leadership.¹⁷ At the Labour Party Conference of that year he had defended the government's Greek policy on the grounds that it was a necessary part of maintaining Britain's position in the Mediterranean.¹⁸ These imperial instincts were reinforced by a deep dislike of Communism developed during his trade union days and by his private secretary, Pierson Dixon, who worked in the notoriously Russophobic Southern Department from 1941 to 1943. Bevin was keen to resist the extension of Soviet influence in the eastern Mediterranean, and in July 1945 believed that Britain's survival as a Great Power required the reinforcement of its military and economic role in the Middle East, from the Persian Gulf to Cyrenaica.¹⁹

As a basis for reconciling Anglo-Soviet imperialist ambitions this left some form of power-political agreement on the acceptance of Russian domination in certain areas in return for the assertion of exclusive British rights in others. As noted, these ideas were increasingly geared to keeping the Soviets away from the Turkish Straits and the eastern Mediterranean. One possible option for the British was to agree to Soviet bases in the Straits in return for an acceptance of British bases at Suez and the maintenance of Britain's predominant position in the eastern Mediterranean; another was to satisfy Soviet ambitions in eastern Europe in return for a guarantee of the Middle Eastern status quo. There were two specific difficulties in the way of such policies. In the former case, the British military were convinced of the serious consequences for Britain's strategic interests if such a course was followed. In the latter case the acquiescence of the Americans was unlikely to be secured.

The Foreign Office also considered more general difficulties arising from the need to prevent damage to Britain's imperial credibility. Counsellor Gladwyn Jebb considered the possibility of a deal with the Russians in the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. But he argued that for Britain "to yield to ANY Russian demand would clearly mean that we were not prepared to play the part of a Great Power."²⁰

Here was the link between the maintenance of British imperial influence in the Middle East and the preservation of Britain's Great Power status. In both general and specific terms the future of the British empire depended on a policy of no concessions to the Soviet Union. Yet if Britain continued to reject Soviet demands for bases in the Straits its position in Suez was clearly illogical. British withdrawal from the Canal Zone appeared necessary unless the Americans were to side with the British and make it clear they were prepared to oppose Russian claims for bases in the Straits by force.²¹ The defense of the British empire in its most vital yet vulnerable area required not only a policy of non-cooperation with the Russians, but an Anglo-

American anti-Soviet front until British postwar recovery was assured and the reattainment of a position of equality secured.

This policy was clearly evident within the Foreign Office even before the Potsdam summit was over. It was not conceived in response to oppressive Soviet actions in Europe nor to the difficulties over Poland and Germany. Perceptions of the importance of the empire to Britain's future global role and the preservation of Britain's Mediterranean position as a link between the mother country and the Dominions were much more important. This was to prove a key factor in the breakdown of the first Council of Foreign Ministers in London, which, under the terms of the Potsdam agreement, was to be primarily concerned with the Italian peace treaty. An important Italian issue was the disposal of Italy's colonies; and the future of Libya, divided into its eastern and western parts of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, had implications for Great Power rivalries in the Mediterranean. The Chiefs of Staff emphasized that in strategically important areas, notably Cyrenaica, Britain would require the use of military facilities, but there would be no objection to sharing these under the aegis of the United Nations provided they were controlled by Britain or a state on whose friendship the British could rely.²²

At the London Council Byrnes proposed a ten-year allied trusteeship over the whole of Libya. Bevin's response was to support Byrnes's proposal on condition that certain modifications were made; Britain's priority was to prevent the Soviets getting a foothold in North Africa and then work for arrangements which would meet British needs in Cyrenaica. Molotov argued that Britain was trying to create a monopoly in the Mediterranean because of French and Italian weakness in the region. But if Russia was granted Tripolitania and Britain Cyrenaica, he felt the whole question of the Italian colonies could be settled very quickly. Bevin, true to the policy of no concessions, stood firm, and replied that the Soviet Union had not met him in anything and that Britain did not want an inch of territory.²³ In these circumstances the Conference of Foreign Ministers ended, apparently in deadlock over a procedural point. But, as Pierson Dixon noted in his diary, the real reason was "our refusal to meet Russian ambitions in the Mediterranean."²⁴

This was not the policy of the Prime Minister who, unlike Bevin and the Chiefs of Staff, no longer believed in the strategic importance of the Mediterranean because of the advent of air power; and, unlike Bevin and the Foreign Office, Attlee had not ruled out a policy of compromise and cooperation with the Soviet Union.²⁵ In an attempt to defuse the growing Anglo-Soviet conflict, the Prime Minister suggested disengaging from the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East where there was a risk of clashing with the Soviet Union. As part of an attempt to reconcile the British empire with a commitment to internationalism, Attlee proposed a British withdrawal from Greece and Egypt in order to form a new line of defense across Africa from Lagos to Kenya.²⁶ The establishment of a neutral zone in the Middle East, subject to international supervision, where there would be no exclusive spheres of influence or bases could defuse the Anglo-Soviet conflict and provide an

unprovocative shield for Britain's African empire. This was the first indication that Africa was being drawn into the Cold War conflict being waged within the government; it was also the first indication of a British interest in the continent, an interest that was soon to grow and to result in colonial Africa assuming much greater importance in Bevin's overall global strategy.

Meanwhile the future of the Italian colonies was to continue to reveal the attitudes of the Foreign Secretary to Britain's imperial role in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. On May 10, the Russians made a significant concession and renounced all claims to any trusteeship of Tripolitania; the Soviet position was now that all the Italian colonies should be given in trust to Italy for ten years. Bevin's response was to increase British demands in order to secure an exclusive position in Cyrenaica,²⁷ a shift, as he acknowledged, made on his own responsibility and without cabinet approval. British communications through the Mediterranean, Bevin explained, were necessary for the defense of the Dominions. Cyrenaica was "vital from the point of view of the British Empire."²⁸

This was a vital question in terms of the breakdown of allied cooperation and the origins of the Cold War; it was also relevant to the debate between the imperialists and the internationalists which was under way at the highest levels of the British government. Bevin's views on how best to safeguard the empire were directly opposed to Attlee's, who was convinced the empire could only be defended by its membership in the United Nations. Britain had therefore to try to make international arrangements effective and "not at the same time act on outworn conceptions" based on the need to preserve exclusive maritime control of imperial communications in the Mediterranean.²⁹

By the end of 1946, the debate was influenced by perceptions of the increased importance of Africa for Britain's economic recovery. Bevin's interest in colonial development went back to 1929 and his work in the Colonial Development Advisory Committee established by the then Labour government. In 1946, Bevin was particularly interested in a trans-African trunk road which was rejected by an interdepartmental committee on grounds of cost.³⁰ But with attention being given to the economic and strategic importance of Africa, it could be argued that Britain's position in the Mediterranean and the Middle East was necessary for the defense of the continent. In other words a neutral zone in the Middle East would be infiltrated by the Russians who would then be in a position to threaten Africa. Pierson Dixon accepted that the Middle East was no longer vital for British communications, but believed a strong British presence was necessary to prevent the Russians taking over North and Black Africa; without it, he feared, the Soviets would become established on the Congo and at the Victoria Falls.³¹

At a meeting in January 1947 senior Russophobe officials concluded that any attempt to reach agreement with the Soviet Union was out of the question until Britain's weakness had been overcome; to ignore this "would be to

repeat on a larger scale the errors made at Munich" and enable the Russians to threaten South Africa. Then, once the Soviet Union was established on the shores of the Indian Ocean in East Africa, India would gravitate to the Soviet bloc.³²

This African domino theory was designed to justify Britain's imperial position in the Middle East. But the continent was also important to the reattainment of Great Power status and to the regaining of economic independence from the Americans. The economic crises of 1947 increasingly convinced Bevin and other leading policymakers, notably Sir Stafford Cripps, that colonial development would provide the answer to Britain's dollar difficulties; what Europe was unable to deliver the colonial territories of Africa would eventually provide. Bevin explained his ideas to Attlee in September: "I am sure we must free ourselves of financial dependence on the United States as soon as possible. We shall never be able to pull our weight in foreign affairs until we do so."³³ Moreover, if the development of Africa's resources could be carried out in conjunction with the three other African colonial powers this would provide a means of enrolling western European nations as collaborators with the British empire. For Bevin maintained "it was essential that Western Europe should attain some measure of economic unity if it was to maintain its independence as against Russia and the United States."³⁴

In the wake of the convertibility crisis of July and August 1947, Bevin and Cripps discussed the possibility of developing an area in western Europe and Africa which would allow Britain to become self-supporting, overcome the dollar problem, and thereby regain economic independence. Once Britain had examined the prospects of developing colonial resources, the French and Belgian colonies could be brought in to make a similar contribution to improving the dollar position. This formed an increasingly important element in the original 1945 plan of enrolling the western European nations as collaborators with the British empire; it was more attractive to imperialists like Bevin than a British imperial trading bloc, because of the perceived necessity to build strong economic links with Europe. France and Belgium would be the initial collaborators in Africa, although Bevin soon expected to involve both the Portuguese and the Italians.³⁵

The French and British Colonial Offices were already involved in a low-profile scheme of technical cooperation in Africa; but in September 1947, Bevin and Bidault agreed this should be extended to economic and commercial matters and dealt with by ministers.³⁶ In December, an interdepartmental working party was set up to investigate colonial economic cooperation, and the breakdown of the Council of Foreign Ministers in the same month prompted Bevin to make public his ideas on a third world force led by Britain. Linked economically by what Bevin had earlier termed "vested interests," there would be no formal political ties, but a "spiritual union" in which, as leader of western Europe and the Commonwealth, Britain could develop its "own power and influence to equal that of the United States." Mobilizing the resources of Africa in support of West European Union would ensure that

the British-led grouping equalled the western hemisphere and Soviet blocs in terms of productive capacity and manpower.³⁷

In 1948, the Foreign Secretary was not seeking a special position in an American-dominated Atlantic Alliance created to defend Western civilization; his goal was a special role for the British empire, in conjunction with western Europe, which would enable it to gain economic independence from the United States and achieve equality of status and influence within a tripartite world order. As late as March 1948, the Cabinet was still being told "we should use US aid to gain time, but our ultimate aim should be to attain a position in which the countries of western Europe would be independent both of the US and the Soviet Union." Bevin was hoping "to organize the middle of the planet – W. Europe, the Middle East, the Commonwealth," and if Britain "only pushed on and developed Africa, we could have US dependent on us and eating out of our hand in four or five years . . . US is very barren of essential minerals and in Africa we have them all."³⁸

Between 1945 and 1947, Bevin and his officials aimed to preserve and strengthen British influence in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East; they then sought to develop European and African resources in an attempt to regain Britain's economic independence and reestablish a position of global power and influence equal to that of the Americans and Russians. Historians who interpret Bevin's policy in terms of the contemporary issues of the Soviet threat, western European defense and the Atlantic Alliance fail to reflect Bevin's Churchillian imperialism and the fact that his policy in terms of its own stated aims was a failure. What was central to Bevin's policy was the role of the empire and its relation to western Europe and the middle of the planet; his aim was to create a third world force independent of the United States and the Soviet Union, not to provide a link between the United States and western Europe. The Atlantic Alliance was not therefore Bevin's overriding aim in 1945 nor indeed in 1948.

In the short term, American backing for British schemes was deemed necessary in order to support the empire during Britain's period of recovery, and also to support Britain's commitment to western Europe when the latter appeared threatened by Communist coups. The fact that American backing for the empire was sought in the summer of 1945 before the Conference at Potsdam is crucial to an understanding of British policy toward the Russians; it was perceptions of Britain's imperial role, together with a refusal to accept the Soviet Union as a friendly power, which produced a Foreign Office view that any cooperation with the Soviets was undesirable.

Central to this view was the determination to preserve Britain's exclusive position in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, and it was the Mediterranean issue which produced the first formal breakdown of allied cooperation. Attlee's internationalism and Molotov's power-political bargaining both proved irreconcilable with Bevin's and the Foreign Office's ideas on the future of the British empire. This is not to affirm that British actions were

solely responsible for the breakdown of allied cooperation, or that they were a major influence on American policy; but a study of Bevin's imperialism does suggest that his policies could only lead to Cold War confrontation and were therefore more a cause of allied disagreements than a response to them.

Notes

- 1 See especially Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary, 1945–1951* (New York, 1983); R. Ovendale, *The English-Speaking Alliance* (London, 1985); David Dilks, *Retreat From Power* (London, 1981).
- 2 This idea was frequently expounded by both Bevin and his Permanent Under-Secretary from early 1946, Sir Orme Sargent. See, for example, Sargent memo, July 11, 1945, Foreign Office [hereafter FO] 371/50912; Bevin to Attlee, September 16, 1947, FO 800/444; Cabinet papers [hereafter CAB] 129/23 C.P.(48)6, January 4, 1948, CAB 129/23; CAB/128 C.M.(48)2, January 8, 1948, CAB 128; Public Record Office [hereafter PRO], London.
- 3 A. Adamthwaite, "Britain and the World 1945–49," *International Affairs*, 61(2) (1985): 223–35.
- 4 Sargent memo, "Stocktaking after VE Day," July 11, 1945, FO 371/50912, PRO.
- 5 The initial agreement was Russian influence in Romania 90 percent; British influence in Greece 90 percent; Russian influence in Bulgaria 75 percent; British and Russian influence in Hungary and Yugoslavia 50 percent each.
- 6 Folios 227–35. Record of meeting at the Kremlin, October 9, 1944, FO 800/302, PRO; cited by M. Gilbert, *Road to Victory: Winston S. Churchill 1941–1945* (London, 1986), 993.
- 7 Churchill Papers 20/153 Prime Minister's Personal Minute M(Tol) 6/4, October 12, 1944; cited by Gilbert, *Road to Victory*, 1003.
- 8 FO to Washington, July 5, 1945 (copy of telegram to Istanbul), CAB 119/126, PRO.
- 9 *Documents on British Policy Overseas* [hereafter DBPO], Series I, Vol. I, 1945, Clark Kerr to Eden, July 10, 1945.
- 10 P.H.P(45)9(0) Final, March 30, 1945, JP(45)170(Final), July 11, 1945, CAB 119/126, PRO.
- 11 For Sargent's views in the interwar years see J. Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe 1933–39* (London, 1984), 99, 228.
- 12 Sargent memo, "Stocktaking after VE Day," July 11, 1945, FO 371/50912, PRO.
- 13 DBPO, Series I, Vol. II: 699.
- 14 DBPO, Series I, Vol. I: 793–5.
- 15 *ibid.*, 145–6.
- 16 DBPO, Series I, Vol. I: 364.
- 17 Bevin Papers 3/1, Bevin to Cranborne, February 1, 1944; cited in V. Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War, 1941–1947* (London, 1982), 224.
- 18 43rd Annual Conference Report of December 11–15, 1944; cited in P. Addison, *The Road to 1945* (London, 1975), 254.
- 19 K. Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945–1951* (Oxford, 1984), 193.
- 20 DBPO, Series I, Vol. I: 992–4; original emphasis.
- 21 *ibid.*
- 22 Comments by the Chiefs of Staff, January 1, 1945, FO 371/50787, PRO.
- 23 Note of conversation between Bevin and Molotov, October 1, 1945, FO 371/50920, PRO. Bevin's last point was of course incorrect and was not what he was preparing to tell the Americans, because Britain wanted Cyrenaica.
- 24 Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War*, 239, citing Pierson Dixon's diary.
- 25 For an analysis of Attlee's and Bevin's disagreements: R. Smith and J. Zametica, "The Cold Warrior: Clement Attlee Reconsidered, 1945–1947," *International Affairs*, 61(2) (1985): 237–52.

- 26 K. Harris, *Attlee* (London, 1982), 299.
- 27 Ironically this tactic of increasing one's demands when others made concessions was precisely what Bevin ascribed to Communist negotiators. See Dalton Diary, September 10, 1946; cited in Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, MA, 1977), 258.
- 28 Record of 3rd informal meeting of Foreign Ministers, Paris, May 10, 1946, FO 371/57278, PRO.
- 29 DBPO, Series I, Vol. II, Memo by Attlee, "Future of the Italian Colonies," September 1, 1945.
- 30 DO(46) Minutes of 10th Meeting of the Defence Committee, April 5, 1946, CAB 131/1, PRO; P. S. Gupta, "Imperialism and the Labour Government," in J. Winter (ed.), *The Working Class in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 1983), 101.
- 31 Dixon memo, December 9, 1946, FO 800/475, PRO.
- 32 Foreign Secretary minute for PM, January 9, 1947, FO 800/476, PRO.
- 33 Bevin to Attlee, September 16, 1947, FO 800/444, PRO.
- 34 Record of Meeting of Cabinet Economic Policy Committee, November 7, 1947, FO 371/62740, PRO; cited in W. Lipgens, *A History of European Integration: The Formation of the European Unity Movement 1945-47* (Oxford, 1982), 557.
- 35 Note of a conversation between Bevin and J. Chauvel, October 20, 1947, FO 800/465, PRO; Troutbeck minute, October 20, 1947, FO 371/67673, PRO.
- 36 *ibid.* Note of discussions between Bevin, Bidault, Creech Jones, Chauvel, Couve de Murville, Harvey and Dixon, October 19-22, 1947.
- 37 CP(48), January 4, 1948, CAB 129/23, PRO; CM(48), January 28, 1948, CAB 128/12, PRO.
- 38 B. Pimlott (ed.), *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-1940* (London, 1986), 443.

THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE COLD WAR

David Reynolds

In their analyses of the Cold War, historians are increasingly showing how indigenous developments, regional rivalries, and traditional ethnic animosities affected the relationships among the Great Powers. These considerations inspired fears in Moscow and Washington and imposed constraints on what Soviet and American policymakers could do. They also established opportunities for transnational linkages.

David Reynolds is one of Britain's best historians of Anglo-American diplomacy and international relations before and after the Second World War. In this article he reviews some of the literature on the origins of the Cold War and shows how circumstances within Europe shaped postwar events. The presence of large Communist parties worried officials in Washington; yet, surprisingly, they were not always a source of consolation in Moscow. Communist Party identification did not obliterate the strong ethnic and nationalist sensibilities that existed. Stalin, for example, could not control Yugoslav Communist leader Tito. Nor could his loyal followers easily consolidate their power in countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary. For two or three years after the war there was great fluidity within European countries as various parties and factions struggled for domestic power. Their struggles affected the options and tactics available to officials in Moscow and Washington. In turn, Soviet and American actions helped determine the outcome of these internal struggles.

Hovering over much of the internal and external maneuvering was the question of Germany. Uncertainty about Germany's future inspired fears throughout Europe and across the Atlantic. For the time being Germany was occupied, divided, conquered, and devastated. All of Germany's neighbors from Paris to Warsaw to Moscow wanted to use the opportunity to grab part of its territory or its coal or its industrial infrastructure in order to abet the reconstruction processes within their own nations and to weaken permanently their traditional foe. But they all suspected that Germany would rise again and they worried about how it would configure itself internally and how it would align itself externally. Reynolds highlights the importance of the German issue, and readers might compare some of his views to the points raised in the preceding essays by Leffler and Holloway about threat perception.

But Reynolds does more than outline the European dimensions of the Soviet-American rivalry. He underscores the importance of ideology in shaping the way

American and Soviet officials interpreted threats and defined opportunities. Readers need to grapple with the importance of ideology in precipitating the Cold War and they need to analyze precisely how it might have influenced developments. Reynolds seems to be assigning it a degree of importance that is different from Leffler and Kent. What do you think?

* * *

Conventionally US historiography has focused on the two superpowers. According to Hans Morgenthau in 1954, "the international situation is reduced to the primitive spectacle of two giants eyeing each other with watchful suspicion." In Europe in 1945 there were "two superpowers separated only by a power vacuum," stated John Gaddis in 1978.¹ In recent years, however, various European scholars have stressed that European problems and forces played a decisive part in shaping the US-Soviet confrontation.²

One distinctive feature of the European scene after the war was the swing to the left politically. If interwar politics were dominated by fascism and the conservative right, the immediate postwar years saw the triumph of socialism in Britain and Scandinavia. Even more significant was the growth of Communist parties, benefiting from their role in leading the resistance movements in many of the occupied countries. In France CP membership reached over 1 million in 1946; in Italy 1.7 million by the end of 1945. In both these countries the Communists were in coalition governments in 1945–7. Eastern Europe saw even more spectacular increases, from a few hundred CP members to half a million in Hungary in 1945 and from 28,000 to 1.2 million in Czechoslovakia in the year from May 1945. In neither of these two cases can Soviet pressure be considered an all-sufficient explanation: the Hungarians were largely Catholic and historically anti-Slav, while the Red Army pulled out from Czechoslovakia in agreement with the Western allies in November 1945.

This swing to the left posed a real dilemma for the US and Great Britain, who had little doubt that, whatever the immediate coalitionist tactics of the Communists, their gains would ultimately redound to Stalin's benefit. But the Communist expansion also posed problems for Stalin. After the oppressions of fascist and Nazi rule, the demand for revolution was strong in many of these Communist parties and Moscow's coalitionist line proved unpalatable. Although Stalin was able, in the interests of maintaining the grand alliance, to restrain the Communists in western states like France and Italy, there was enough deviation to imperil his overall policy. China was to be a particular problem later, but in the mid-1940s it was Tito's Yugoslavia (the scene of an indigenous revolution largely unassisted by the Red Army) which did him the most damage. Tito's demands for Trieste, his funneling of support to the Greek Communists, and his shooting down of two US transport planes in August 1946 were among the actions that the western powers readily but erroneously assumed were orchestrated by Stalin.

In 1945–7 neither so-called superpower could therefore control Europe's postwar swing to the left. Nor, secondly, could they order eastern Europe in a mutually acceptable form. In some Slavic areas, such as Bulgaria and the Serbian parts of Yugoslavia, the Russians were not unwelcome, but in much of eastern Europe, such as Romania, Hungary, and Poland, it was a different story. Historic antagonisms, dating back over many centuries, were exacerbated by ethnic rivalries and territorial disputes. In much of eastern Europe an "open sphere" would simply not produce governments and policies sympathetic to Soviet interests.³ Yet the alternative – exclusive Soviet control – was unacceptable to US political and public opinion. There is no doubt that in 1945–6 Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and even the Soviet zone of Germany were following their own distinctive paths leftward,⁴ but, even if superpower relations had not deteriorated as badly as they did in 1947, Stalin (given his attitude to political pluralism at home) would probably have consolidated his hold eventually.

A third semi-autonomous European problem was Germany – in fact the key issue in the emerging Cold War. At stake for the US and the USSR was control of the country that had started two world wars and might, it was feared, start a third if the victors did not make the right decisions this time. In principle both superpowers inclined to a unified German state, under satisfactory guarantees. It was the French who wanted, as after the First World War, to amputate Germany's economic vital parts, particularly the Ruhr and the Saar, and place them under French or else international control. For the Russians the crucial issue was the settlement of Germany's reparations payments, including substantial amounts from the industrialized western zones controlled by the allies. In reacting to this stalemate, Washington was initially divided in 1945–6. The State Department's European desk, anxious to restore French power, was sympathetic to their arguments, but the War Department and the occupation authorities under General Lucius Clay wanted to get Germany back on its feet economically and end the military regime. Clay's decision to stop reparations payments from the US zone to the USSR (May 1946) was not aimed exclusively at the Soviet Union but was also intended to force the German deadlock to a head in the allied counsels.⁵

Behind American disputes with France and the USSR was mounting domestic pressure to get back to normal. Dean Acheson, Under-Secretary of State, declared in November 1945: "I can state in three sentences what the 'popular' attitude is toward foreign policy today. 1. Bring the boys home. 2. Don't be a Santa Claus. 3. Don't be pushed around."⁶

The implications of American resistance to European commitments bring us naturally to a fourth facet of the European dimension – the place of Britain. Although it is easy to neglect British importance today, Britain in the late 1940s was unquestionably the strongest western European state, economically and militarily, retaining worldwide commitments and interests. Despite the loss of a quarter of its national wealth in the war, Britain's Labour leaders, no less than Churchill and Eden, were determined to maintain its position

as a world power. Their view of the United States was ambivalent: the Americans, by language and culture, were seen as natural allies, but they were also rivals for Britain's trade and critics of the British empire. More to the point in 1945, although the British would have liked to have seen firm American commitments to Europe, they recognized that this was unlikely. Consequently it was important to maintain the best possible relationship with the Soviet Union, because together they would have to keep the European peace against a revived Germany.⁷

Despite his reputation as a notorious anti-Communist, Churchill shared these convictions. Like Roosevelt, he acknowledged privately the inevitability of a Soviet sphere of influence in eastern Europe, but wanted to prevent it becoming a closed Stalinist bloc. Similar views were also held by the new Labour government headed by Clement Attlee, with Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary. Bevin, like Churchill, was ready to "talk tough" to Molotov, but in 1945-6 he still had not abandoned the attempt to reach negotiated agreements. As late as December 1947 he could still observe in private that he "doubted whether Russia was as great a danger as a resurgent Germany might become."⁸

Beneath this official policy, however, Whitehall, like Washington, was uncertain about Soviet intentions. The leading hardliners were the Chiefs of Staff, particularly in the form of their post-hostilities planners, who by 1944 were already talking of the USSR as the only likely enemy for Britain in the future. The chiefs and the Foreign Office were particularly disturbed about the eastern Mediterranean – a major area of British interest and historically a center of Anglo-Russian rivalry. In 1945-6 the Soviet Union's pressure on Turkey, its slowness to withdraw from northern Iran and the Communist insurgency in Greece all took on sinister significance for many in Whitehall. Despite the growing doubts, however, the British political leadership in 1945-6 remained anxious for agreement.⁹

The nearest Bevin came to an overt breach with the USSR was the decision in July 1946 to fuse the British and US zones of occupation in Germany. Without economic recovery, Bevin feared disaster. Not only would Communism increase its appeal among discontented and impoverished people, but the burden of running the zone would become unbearable for Britain's weakened economy. With British and US perceptions in line on the issue, the two governments agreed to fuse their zones to reduce costs. This came into operation in January 1947.¹⁰

But although the "Bizone" proved a significant development, it did not make inevitable the crisis events of 1947. To understand their full significance, we need to look now at the underlying perceptions of the three allies. For the Cold War developed not so much from the actions of the three powers as from the way these actions were interpreted, or misinterpreted.¹¹

One fundamental problem was the "universalist" ideologies publicly espoused by the United States and the Soviet Union. In practice, as we have

seen, both countries may well have been adopting a sphere of influence policy, which on eastern and western Europe (if not on Germany) involved some acknowledgement of the other's interests and sensitivities. But that is not what they said in public. Privately Roosevelt spoke the language of spheres of influence,¹² but official US foreign policy was couched in terms of one world, open to democratic values, in which, to quote Secretary of State Cordell Hull, "there will no longer be need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any other of the special arrangements through which, in the unhappy past, the nations strove to safeguard their security or to promote their interests."¹³ Roosevelt and Truman believed that the US public would not tolerate the language of the old diplomacy, but by encouraging misleading, even utopian, expectations they paved the way for growing US disenchantment with what the Soviet Union was doing, as well as intensifying Moscow's suspicions. Conversely, the renewed rhetoric of Marxism-Leninism had its effect in the US. Whether Stalin sincerely supported it or merely utilized this attack on "cosmopolitanism" as part of his domestic battles, it had a deeply unsettling effect in Britain and the US. Particularly perplexing in Washington was Stalin's election speech of February 9, 1946, which began with a Leninist interpretation of the origins of the Second World War. To many in the West it seemed to confirm that ideology was back in favour in the Kremlin.

Readings of recent history also played their part. In the United States Soviet actions were fitted into an image of totalitarian regimes. Repression at home implied aggression abroad – from the Kaiser, through Hitler, to Stalin. As Truman observed in May 1947: "There isn't any difference in totalitarian states . . . Nazi, Communist or Fascist, or Franco, or anything else – they are all alike."¹⁴ Equally important were the "lessons" of appeasement. Both in Washington and London there was sensitivity about the western failure to react quickly and effectively against Hitler's buildup in the 1930s. Thus, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal in September 1945 dismissed the idea "that we should endeavor to buy their [Soviet] understanding and sympathy. We tried that once with Hitler. There are no returns on appeasement."¹⁵ Given these views of totalitarianism and of appeasement, there was a tendency for western observers to focus on those aspects of Soviet conduct in 1945–6 that fitted the paradigm – Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, for instance, rather than Finland, Czechoslovakia, or Greece. They saw these as the first steps, 1930s style, to expansion over all of Europe. Though perhaps imperceptive, such an appraisal was understandable if one remembers their view of Stalin as, above all, the architect of the great purges of 1936–9 when perhaps 4 to 5 million were eliminated, half a million of them summarily shot, and in which an apparently paranoid dictator disposed of half his own officer corps including his best commanders, thus laying his country open to the disasters of 1941.¹⁶

If western leaders may have been ill-tuned to possible nuances in Stalin's policy, the Soviet leadership seems fatally to have misread the relationship

between the other two members of the Big Three. If the British were too prone to assume underlying Anglo-American harmony, the Soviet Union, guided by Leninism, was too ready to assume inevitable Anglo-American discord. Britain and the United States were in certain respects economic and power-political rivals, but they also shared common liberal values and common interests in the stability of Europe. When those values and interests were threatened in 1940, cooperation overrode competition.¹⁷ When a similar threat seemed to emerge in 1946–7 another rapprochement occurred. Stalin and Molotov had pushed them too far.

It is possible, then, that a spheres of influence arrangement might have worked for eastern and western Europe, if both sides had not been (often willing) prisoners of their ideologies and had they not been heavily influenced by their reading of recent history. On Germany, however, the issues were almost intractable. The Soviet Union had suffered too much in two wars to be able to compromise readily on this matter, and the French, also a continental state easily threatened by Germany, had similar fears. Britain and the United States simply could not comprehend the visceral fears of Germany that gnawed at Soviet leaders – the importance of a secure eastern European buffer and a reliable German settlement to guard against repetition of the traumatic “surprise” attack of 1941. Nor could they fully grasp how their efforts to rehabilitate Germany, made necessary in their view by Soviet intransigence, fed Moscow’s anxieties. This was particularly true in 1948 when Stalin blockaded Berlin in a counterproductive effort to head off the creation of a West German state.

But why was the US so concerned about events in Europe? That, after all, was the big contrast with earlier American foreign policy, when US security was not deemed to be inextricably linked to that of Europe. The 1940s saw a greatly expanded definition of US interests, drawing on two main lines of thought. First, Hitler’s victories seemed to show that Americans could not allow a potential foe to control western Europe – the leading economic center outside the US. If that happened the Americas might be forced into economic isolation and their security eventually eroded by enemy control of Europe’s industrial resources. “The greatest danger to the security of the United States,” warned the CIA in 1947, “is the possibility of economic collapse in western Europe and the consequent accession to power of communist elements.”¹⁸ Linked to this new concern for the European balance was the conviction that air power had revolutionized security. The long-range bomber had “shrunk” the world, the atomic bomb heralded undreamt-of destructive force, and exponents of air power such as Generals “Hap” Arnold and Carl Spaatz argued that the US now needed an extended defense perimeter with bases across the Atlantic and in Germany and Britain.

These claims had only limited support in 1945–6, even within the Pentagon, and they were partly advanced for bureaucratic reasons, to strengthen the case for a US air force independent of the army. The direct threat to the security of the United States remained extremely remote, particularly before

the Soviet atomic bomb (1949) and intercontinental missile (1957). It was ideology as much as interests that underpinned America's new "gospel of national security" – the Wilsonian conviction that the US could and should use its enhanced power to export liberal, capitalist, democratic, and anti-colonial values for the benefit of a European-dominated world that had torn itself to pieces once again. Harry Hopkins remarked in 1945:

I have often been asked what interests we have in Poland, Greece, Iran, or Korea. Well, I think we have the most important business in the world – and indeed, the only business worthy of our traditions. And that is this – to do everything within our diplomatic power to foster and encourage democratic government throughout the world. We should not be timid about blazoning to the world our desire for the right of all peoples to have a genuine civil liberty. We believe our dynamic democracy is the best in the world.¹⁹

Bearing in mind what we have just examined – the deteriorating US-Soviet relationship in 1945–6, the European dimension, and the Big Three's underlying perceptions – we are now better able to understand the decisive crisis of 1947. It was a process of action and reaction in which the catalysts came from within Europe. Of particular importance was the abrupt British collapse amid economic crisis in February 1947. Unable to sustain the foreign exchange costs of Britain's overseas commitments, the Treasury, supported by Attlee, forced Bevin and the Chiefs of Staff to abandon the Palestine mandate, pull out of India quickly, and end financial aid to Greece and Turkey. Bevin used the last decision to put the ball firmly in the American court, asking them to assume responsibility for the eastern Mediterranean.²⁰

The State Department, guided particularly by Under-Secretary Dean Acheson, was already coming round to this view, but the urgency of the British request posed a major political problem for Truman. The 80th Congress was controlled by the Republicans, whose anti-Communist election rhetoric was balanced by an intense concern to reduce government spending. Sounding out Congressmen, Acheson found them unsympathetic to "pulling British chestnuts out of the fire" but shocked by warnings that Greece was like a "rotten apple in the barrel" from which decay would soon spread through southern Europe. Also effective were presentations of the Greek-Turkish issue in terms of a broader struggle between the democratic and totalitarian ways of life, reminiscent of the Second World War. It was therefore in this universalist language that Truman appealed to Congress on March 12, 1947 for money for Greece and Turkey – "at the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one."²¹

The ideological rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine, though exaggerated for political reasons, provided a new statement of policy which then helped shape the US outlook. The strategy of "containment" gradually evolved.²² At the

same time the economic crisis had brought the German problem to a head. Unable to reach agreement at the Moscow Foreign Ministers conference, the US Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, guided by Acheson and Kennan, offered American aid for a joint European recovery programme in his speech on June 5.²³ The central object was the revival of Germany, but the Europe-wide package was intended to make it more palatable to the French and to the Soviet Union, even though the US and Britain were determined not to let the USSR frustrate further progress. Although Soviet rejection was likely, the attitude of the east European governments was less predictable. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania were among those interested in participating, but Stalin, after some indecision, warned them off.²⁴ Stalin undoubtedly regarded eastern European interest as a further threat to his security zone, but the result of the American offer and the Soviet response was the economic polarization of Europe.

Soviet reaction to the Truman Doctrine had been restrained, but the Szklarska Poreba Conference of Communist parties in September 1947, at which Cominform was created, saw a firm response to American actions and rhetoric. Zhdanov's "two camps" statement and the encouragement of the French and Italian Communist parties to repent their coalitionist past and mount a programme of industrial and political challenge to the bourgeois order represented significant shifts of policy. In eastern Europe Stalin's overreaction to the Marshall Plan helped precipitate the shift from coalitionist tactics to the tried and tested techniques of Stalinization. From late 1947 the popular front governments in eastern Europe were quickly replaced by Communist rule. Independent-minded Communist leaders who had espoused the earlier doctrine of non-revolutionary roads to socialism, such as Gomulka in Poland, were replaced by Stalinists of unquestioned loyalty, and the collectivization of the economy proceeded apace. It was at this point, *pace* Churchill's Fulton speech of March 1946, that the "Iron Curtain" truly came down.

The breakup of the grand alliance in Europe did not occur immediately in 1945, but developed gradually up to the turning point of 1947. "Policymakers" were not following confrontational blueprints from an early stage; they gradually lost faith in the strategy of collaboration without having anything clear to put in its place. In the process of breakdown it is perhaps helpful to distinguish *assumptions, perceptions, actions, and policies*.²⁵

In all three major protagonists the underlying assumptions were skeptical. The Soviet Union assumed fundamental capitalist antipathy; the United States and Britain assumed that Soviet intentions were ultimately revolutionary. At root neither side found it easy to accept that peaceful coexistence was possible or even desirable, with so much of the world apparently at stake in the turbulent aftermath of the Second World War.

In both the US and Britain perceptions of the Soviet Union were changing in 1945-6, but, although sections of both bureaucracies urged a shift of policy

from negotiation to confrontation, the political leaderships were unready to go that far, particularly in public. It was the force of events as much as changing perceptions that drove the British and US governments into action – especially over the problem of Communism in their sphere of influence and over the deadlock in Germany.

At what point Stalin moved from changed perceptions to changed policies is hard to say. Scholars still lack access to the Soviet archives, and Stalin's own public statements, in marked contrast to the prewar period, were few and far between. But as the Marshall Plan took off in the summer and autumn of 1947 he clearly felt obliged to act, for fear that his whole security program was in danger, and it may be that the Cominform statement represented policy catching up with perceptions and actions.

At the end of the war it would seem that the "Big Three" had hoped for some kind of loose spheres of influence arrangement in Europe – but only up to a point. The British still treated much of the Balkans and Middle East as a vital interest, despite dissenting noises from Attlee, and were anxious to contain the expansion of Soviet and Communist influence there. American tolerance for spheres was compromised by a universalist ideology and by their newly extended definition of US security to include the stability of Eurasia. The USSR, in its turn, unsettled the British and Americans by its revival of the universalist language of Marxist-Leninist revolution. An even graver problem was Stalinism itself. Given their recent experiences with "totalitarian" regimes, Britain and the US feared the worst from a leader for whom security was always closely linked to repression – at home or in eastern Europe.

Even if the wartime allies had been willing to limit their geopolitical and ideological aspirations, however, the problems of Germany made a secure sphere of influence agreement – mutual tolerance of Eastern and Western blocs – an unlikely eventuality. The aftermath of Hitler's war was too profound, too unsettling. For the western powers the economic dislocation of Germany and the emergence of Communism, whatever Stalin's immediate policy, were unacceptable. For the Soviet Union, any attempt to rehabilitate its mortal enemy, Germany, without security and reparations was equally intolerable. The struggle for mastery of Germany lay at the heart of the grand alliance and also of the Cold War.

Notes

- 1 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (2nd edn, New York, 1954), 339; John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretive History* (New York, 1978), 180.
- 2 See Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation: The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952," *Journal of Peace Research*, 23 (1986): 263–77; also David Reynolds, "The Origins of the Cold War: The European Dimension, 1944–51," *The Historical Journal*, 28 (1985): 497–515. The policies of the leading Western European powers are conveniently summarized in the essays in Josef Becker and Franz Knipping (eds), *Power in Europe?: Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a Postwar World, 1945–1950* (Berlin, 1986).

- 3 The main exception was Czechoslovakia where Benes tried to maintain democracy and independence while conciliating Moscow, which was a major reason why the Communist takeover there in February 1948 was regarded as so significant by the West.
- 4 See N. G. Papp, "The Democratic Struggle for Power in Hungary: Party Strategies, 1945–46," *East Central Europe*, 6 (1979): 1–19; Martin R. Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1948* (Cambridge, 1981); Gregory W. Sandford, *From Hitler to Ulbricht: The Communist Reconstruction of East Germany, 1945–1946* (Princeton, NJ, 1983).
- 5 The French dimension of America's German policy is emphasized (and probably exaggerated) in John Gimbel, *The Origins of the Marshall Plan* (Stanford, CA, 1976). On Germany in general there are useful essays in Roland G. Foerster et al., *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik, 1945–1956*, Vol. 1: *Von der Kapitulation bis zum Pleven-Plan* (Munich, 1982); Josef Foschepoth (ed.), *Kalter Krieg und Deutsche Frage: Deutschland im Widerstreit der Mächte, 1945–1952* (Göttingen, 1985).
- 6 Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*. Acheson, Bohlen, Harriman, Kennan, Lovett, McCloy (New York, 1986), 338.
- 7 For background see Graham Ross (ed.), *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1941–1945* (Cambridge, 1985), which includes a useful introduction; Martin Kitchen, *British Policy towards the Soviet Union during the Second World War* (London, 1986).
- 8 Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary, 1945–1951* (London, 1983), 269. On Churchill see Elisabeth Barker, *Churchill and Eden at War* (London, 1978).
- 9 Victor Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War, 1941–1947* (London, 1982) – a digest of Foreign Office opinion; John W. Young, *Britain, France and the Unity of Europe, 1945–1951* (Leicester, 1984); the important article by Raymond Smith and John Zametica, "The Cold Warrior: Clement Attlee Reconsidered, 1945–1947," *International Affairs*, 61(2) (1985): 237–52; and Ray Merrick, "The Russia Committee of the British Foreign Office and the Cold War, 1946–1947," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20 (1985): 453–68.
- 10 For a recent argument that Britain forced the pace over Germany, see Anne Deighton, "The 'Frozen Front': The Labour Government, the Division of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945–1947," *International Affairs*, 63 (1987): 449–65.
- 11 A useful recent German textbook on the Cold War that embodies this approach is Wilfried Loth, *The Division of the World, 1941–1955* (London, 1988).
- 12 For instance, he told US Senators in January 1945 "that the Russians had the power in eastern Europe, that it was obviously impossible to have a break with them and that, therefore, the only practicable course was to use what influence we had to ameliorate the situation." Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (New York, 1979), 507–8.
- 13 Address to Joint Session of Congress, November 18, 1943, in *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, 2 Vols (New York, 1948), Vol. 2: 1314–15.
- 14 John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York, 1987), 36.
- 15 Ernest R. May, "Lessons" of the Past: *The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1973), 33.
- 16 See Roy A. Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (London, 1972), Chap. 6.
- 17 See David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937–1941: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (London, 1981). For recent scholarship on the war, see David Reynolds, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Wartime Anglo-American Alliance, 1939–1945: Towards a New Synthesis," in Wm Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (eds), *The "Special Relationship": Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (Oxford, 1986), 17–41.

- 18 CIA review of world situation, September 1947, quoted in Melvyn P. Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945–48," *American Historical Review*, 84 (1984): 364. See also Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, MA, 1977), Chap. 8; Richard Best, "Cooperation with Like-Minded Peoples": *British Influences on American Security Policy, 1945–1949* (Westport, CT, 1986), Chaps 2–3; Gregg Herken, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb and the Cold War, 1945–1950* (New York, 1982), Chap. 10.
- 19 Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War* (New York, 1979), 72–3.
- 20 For British influences on US policy see Terry H. Anderson, *The United States, Great Britain, and the Cold War, 1944–1947* (Columbia, MO, 1981); Robin Edmonds, *Setting the Mould: The United States and Britain, 1945–1950* (Oxford, 1986).
- 21 *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S Truman, 1947* (Washington, 1963), 176–80.
- 22 See John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York, 1982).
- 23 For useful overviews see Scott Jackson, "Prologue to the Marshall Plan: The Origins of the American Commitment for a European Recovery Program," *Journal of American History*, 65 (1979): 1043–68; Melvyn P. Leffler, "The United States and the Strategic Dimensions of the Marshall Plan," *Diplomatic History*, 12 (1988): 277–306. Two important recent monographs are Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945–1951* (London, 1984), and Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947–1952* (New York, 1987).
- 24 Joseph L. Noguee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy since World War II* (New York, 1981), 65–6. See William Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy: From Entente to Détente to Cold War* (New York, 1982), 172–3.
- 25 I am developing here the suggestive approach in Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton, NJ, 1985), where the last three concepts are articulated and deployed.

THE RUSSIANS IN GERMANY

Norman Naimark

Whereas David Reynolds in the preceding excerpt concludes his article with suggestive comments about the importance of Germany in postwar diplomacy, Norman Naimark, a professor at Stanford University, has written a riveting book describing Soviet occupation policy between 1945 and 1949 in the zone of Germany occupied by Russian forces. Naimark uses a vast array of Russian and German documents to illuminate Soviet economic and military policies as well as social and economic conditions. He portrays the growth of police forces, details the complex and competing administrative organs, and illustrates the interactions between Soviet officials and German communist leaders. Overall, the book is widely regarded as a tour de force, one of the first and one of the most outstanding monographs utilizing new sources (as well as older ones) from the former Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic for an understanding of the origins of the Cold War.

The part of Naimark's book that has attracted the most attention is the chapter on 'Russian Soldiers, German Women, and the Problem of Rape.' Rape occurred on a massive scale and shaped everyday life of millions of German women and men. Indifferent Soviet commanders allowed rapacious soldiers to satisfy their yearning for revenge. They felt a primordial need to humiliate the hated enemy, the Germans, who had despoiled their country, killed their comrades, and violated their own wives, daughters, and mothers. Rape was not merely a physical act; it had deeply psychological and political meanings. Russian soldiers, as Naimark shows, often had German husbands and fathers watch the rape of beloved family members. The victors sought to demonstrate the impotence of the vanquished.

With painstaking care and elaborate documentation, Naimark then explains how rape affected the politics of the zone. Russian actions destroyed their ability to mobilize popular support for German communists. The latter pled for more discipline among Soviet soldiers, but with little effect. Thereafter, the Kremlin would have little prospect of luring the peoples of the western zones into a Soviet orbit. Stalin knew what was happening. Nonetheless, he trivialized the problem of rape and did little, at least initially, to stop it. Rape poisoned the atmosphere of the zone and helped to shape enduring images. Not only in the minds of Germans, but also in the minds of many westerners, rape conveyed indelible images of Soviet culture and Russian rule. It explained to many contemporaries why the Soviets needed to be contained and why a cold war needed to be waged.

Naimark deftly integrates social and economic conditions with administrative and political history. He illuminates the interplay between the dynamics of domestic everyday life and larger external policies set in Moscow by people ensnared in the routines of their own bureaucratic life. From books like Naimark's, students and scholars can start to think about writing social histories of the Cold War. But they can also begin to pose even larger moral questions.

At the end of his book, We Now Know, John Lewis Gaddis, one of the most renowned historians of the Cold War, uses Naimark's chapter on rape to inquire whether the Cold War should be seen, as some Western statesmen presented it at the time, as a struggle between good and evil. Readers might ponder whether Naimark would want his work used in this way. How should one view the rapacious behavior of Soviet troops at the end of the Second World War? Did it reflect larger truths about Soviet culture? Did it mean that the Cold War was a just war?*

* * *

[. . .] The serious problem of rape by Soviet soldiers in Eastern Europe turned out to be a pale foreshadowing of what was to face the German population when Soviet armies initially marched into Germany territory. Reading the Soviet hate propaganda could lead one to believe that it was as important for the Soviets to humiliate the German population for what had been done to the Soviet Union as it was to defeat the German army. Front newspapers encouraged soldiers to recite the harm done to themselves and their families and to keep "a book of revenge" that would remind them of the need to repay the Germans for their evil.¹ Ilya Ehrenburg's chants of ritual hatred for the Germans were so often printed and repeated that they became national slogans. "We shall not speak any more. We shall not get excited. We shall kill. If you have not killed at least one German a day, you have wasted that day . . . If you kill one German, kill another – there is nothing funnier for us than a pile of German corpses." Hang them and watch them struggle in their nooses. Burn their homes to the ground and enjoy the flames. These were the messages that permeated the last years of the war.² Marshal Zhukov's orders to the First Belorussian Front on the eve of the January 1945 offensive into Poland did little to dampen the Soviet soldier's lust for revenge: "Woe to the land of the murderers," the orders stated. "We will get our terrible revenge for everything."³ A veteran of the East Prussian campaign described the national hatred that fed the Soviet march. "As the front drew closer to the borders of Germany, the propaganda of hate not only of the German army, not only of the German people, but even of the German land itself took on a more and more monstrous character." The final directive from the Main Political Administration of the Army on the eve of crossing the borders of East Prussia said that "on German soil there is only one master – the Soviet

* John L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 286–287.

soldier, that he is both the judge and the punisher for the torments of his fathers and mothers, for the destroyed cities and villages . . . 'Remember your friends are not there, there is the next of kin of the killers and oppressors.'"⁴

There is little evidence that Soviet commanders purposely used violence in East Prussia as an example for the rest of Germany, in the hope of inducing an early German surrender. They surely would have been aware that the Wehrmacht could use the East Prussian case to bolster the determination of its own troops. In fact, there seems to be good reason to believe that Soviet officers were surprised by the intensity of the terror that followed the invasion. Despite Nazi propaganda, the German population was also caught unaware.⁵ It was not untypical for Soviet troops to rape every female over the age of twelve or thirteen in a village, killing many in the process; to pillage the homes for food, alcohol, and loot; and to leave the village in flames. The reports of women subjected to gang rapes and ghastly nightly rapes are far too numerous to be considered isolated incidents.⁶ [. . .]

Continued rape and plunder drove the Germans to desperate actions. As a state security officer in East Prussia coolly reported back to Moscow: "The suicides of Germans, especially women, have become more and more common."⁷ Even after German troops were thoroughly defeated and East Prussia was under occupation, the threat of rape continued to plague German women. Hermann Matzkowski, a veteran German communist and a newly appointed local mayor of a district of Königsberg, reported that one of the only sources of food in town after its fall in early April 1945 was horsemeat from the veterinary hospital on the outskirts of the city. Of those women who went to fetch the meat, barely one-half returned unscathed. Many were raped; some did not return home at all. The only Germans in Königsberg who were well fed, Mayor Matzkowski continued, "are women who have become pregnant by Russian soldiers." On November 6 and 7, 1945, Red Army Day, the mayor wrote, Russian soldiers actually seemed to have permission for every kind of transgression against the Germans. "Men were beaten, most women were raped, including my seventy-one-year-old mother, who died by Christmas."⁸

The dreadful disorder resulting from the East Prussian campaign did not make enough of an impact on the Red Army hierarchy to institute the kinds of punishment that might have prevented further rape as Soviet armies pushed beyond the Vistula into Silesia and Pomerania, what was to become western Poland. Once again, the road signs urged Soviet soldiers to hurt the Germans: "Soldier: you are in Germany, take revenge on the Hitlerites."⁹ The German social democrat August Sander collected eyewitness accounts of the Soviet takeover of this region that document the fate of countless German women.¹⁰ Soviet soldiers again took out their revenge on helpless women and girls, often – as in East Prussia – while under the influence of alcohol. One German village captured on February 26, 1945, was systematically plundered, and virtually all of the women were raped. "The screams of help from the tortured could be heard day and night." Twenty-five to thirty

were left pregnant; some one hundred females contracted some form of sexual disease.¹¹ Polish women were not spared the horrors of the Silesian campaign either. Sometimes Soviet soldiers did not believe their protestations that they were Poles and not Germans; sometimes it didn't matter to the rampaging soldiers.¹² [..]

Hatred of the Germans was fed by anger and resentment about their wealth. One Russian sentry told the American journalist Alexander Werth in Berlin, "They lived well, the parasites. Great big farms in East Prussia, and pretty posh houses in the towns that hadn't been burned out or bombed to hell. And look at these datchas here! Why did these people who were living so well have to invade us?"¹³ This anger about German wealth is reflected as well in the diaries of Dmitrii Shchegolev, an officer and Military Council representative of the First Belorussian Front:

April 28, 1945 [in the village of Jansfeld, outside of Berlin]. We are now billeted in a small block of flats previously occupied by railway clerks. Each small flat is comfortably furnished. The larders are stocked with home-cured meat, preserved fruit, strawberry jam. The deeper we penetrate into Germany the more we are disgusted by the plenty we find everywhere . . . I'd just love to smash my fist into all those neat rows of tins and bottles.¹⁴

[..]

The taking of Berlin was accompanied by an unrestrained explosion of sexual violence by Soviet soldiers. Ambassador Robert Murphy concluded in a memorandum of July 19, 1945, that "according to trustworthy estimates . . . the majority of the eligible female population" was reported to have been violated.¹⁵ Murphy's estimate is probably exaggerated; some intelligence reports indicated, for example, that although rape was quite common in those days, "it was not as widespread as some sources would have made it."¹⁶ In any case, there are so many reports that indicate a systematic carrying out of violence against Berlin's women that it is hard to dismiss the seriousness of the problem. Even as they entered bunkers and cellars where Germans hid from the fierce fighting, Soviet soldiers brandished weapons and raped women in the presence of children and men. In some cases, soldiers divided up women according to their tastes. In others, women were gang-raped.¹⁷ Generally, the soldiers raped indiscriminately, not excluding old women in their seventies or young girls. The first antifascist mayor of Charlottenburg wrote: "In the beginning, the Russians looted on a grand scale; they stole from individuals, warehouses, stores, homes. Innumerable cases of rape occurred daily. A woman could not escape being raped unless she kept in hiding . . . It is difficult to grasp the full extent to which rape is practiced."¹⁸

Rape in the bunkers was followed by restless pillaging and rape in apartments and homes throughout Berlin. Countless reports were filed by Germans complaining to their local government. Typical was the following police

report sent to Rathaus Spandau and passed on to the Soviet commandant of Spandau. (The names are blacked out in the archive files.)

On the night of May 6, 1945, at 2:30 in the morning, three Russian soldiers broke through the window in the hallway. A tenant was hauled out to open the door. At this point, all of the apartments of the house were to be searched by soldiers, supposedly on the orders of the kommandantura, and the three soldiers searched the house. They got as far as the second floor when they returned to where two young women were sleeping with a baby. The two soldiers then sat down on the bed with Frau [A] and Frau [B], both twenty-four years old, with a child of six months on the bed, smoking cigarettes and demanding then that they should sleep with them. At the moment the two women wanted to scream [the soldiers] threatened them with a pistol. Frau [A] called her mother, and the third soldier stood guard when she came and forced her into another room where he held her back with a machine gun. There he went through all the suitcases, from which he took just a pen holder. In the meanwhile, the other two soldiers raped the two young women. Shortly after a quarter to four in the morning, they left the apartment. In addition they took an accordion from the apartment of family [C]. (Signed by the petitioner and four witnesses.)¹⁹

Sometimes, the cases were more violent, as in a June 28, 1945, petition from Berlin-Reinickendorf.

In the night of the 4th to 5th of May of this year, the married couple [A] and Frau [B] were attacked by two drunken Russians in our apartment. During this [attack], I – a 62-year-old wife – was violated by both [soldiers] and my husband, 66 years old, was shot [to death] without reason. Then in a half an hour a third Russian also came, after the others were gone, and I was abused again, and this act in the apartment of a renter who had in the meantime taken me in . . . As a note: my husband belonged to no Nazi organizations and I ask the Herr Commandant for a hearing. (Signed by petitioner and four witnesses.)²⁰

[. . .]

The attempt by Soviet authorities to push along the social revolution in the zone was also accompanied by rape and pillage. Junkers and large-scale farmers, especially, became the objects of retribution for Soviet soldiers, partly in response to the ideological presuppositions and campaigns about the role of the Junkers (portrayed as *pomeshchiki*, or noble landowners, and kulaks) in Nazism, partly as a result of the intense land reform program carried out by the Soviet Military Administration and its German allies. The process of dispossessing large landowners was not infrequently accompanied by

rampages by Soviet soldiers, first when they entered the local agricultural regions in April and May 1945 and then again in September 1945, when the Soviets took the initiative – along with the German authorities – in carrying out far-reaching land reforms. More than 8,000 families were affected by the expropriation of landholdings of more than 100 hectares. In addition, approximately 4,000 other farms were expropriated as part of the campaign against alleged former Nazis and war criminals.

In Vorpommern, Brandenburg, and Mecklenburg, areas of larger landholding, German Junkers and farmers sometimes fled for their lives to the West. Those unlucky enough to be caught on their estates during the initial Soviet advance received some of the harshest treatment from the invading soldiers. Rape, death, destruction, and pillage were characteristic of the fate of German “Junkertum.” Suicides were also not uncommon when families faced the invading army and the threat of rape and humiliation. But even after “order” was established, the families of large landowners had little or no protection from German or Soviet authorities against the whims of local soldiers.²¹

[. . .]

Why did Soviet soldiers commit rape against German women in such large numbers? (There are remarkably few instances reported of the rape of men and boys.)²² The reasons are many and complex, even reaching beyond the eternal patriarchal threat of rape that recent studies claim is an integral part of men’s domination of women.²³ Nonetheless this recent work is correct to emphasize the idea that rape is not fundamentally motivated by sexual needs, as some studies suggest, but rather that it is a crime of violence.²⁴ The literature on rape is dominated by examinations of the legal ramifications of rape that provide little help here, given the extralegal nature of war and occupation, at least in its initial stages. But it is not enough to say that war breeds rape. Of course, war does artificially separate the sexes. It also has “an uprooting character,” disturbing as it does the normal social and communal instruments of control. J. Glenn Gray makes the important observation that “the impersonal violence of war” that comes from routinely killing strangers carries with it the ability to make “copulation . . . an act of aggression.” In Gray’s scheme, “The girl is the victim and her conquest the victor’s triumph.”²⁵ Susan Brownmiller, who wrote a pioneering study of rape and provided an overview of the problem of rape by Soviet soldiers in eastern Germany, notes that armies of liberation tend to have a different attitude and subsequently demonstrate more respect for local women than armies of conquest and subjugation.²⁶ This observation helps us understand why, for example, Soviet soldiers only sporadically engaged in rape against Polish women, while German women were prime targets. In general, it is also the case that Slavic women (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Serbs) were not subject to the same depredations by Soviets as non-Slavs – Germans and Hungarians.

Brownmiller also aptly notes that as the Allies drove deeper into Germany, “retaliation and revenge” increasingly motivated their soldiers, and rape

became a convenient outlet for those emotions. Indeed, the reprehensible behavior of Nazi troops on Soviet soil – including extensive rape and pillage – was often used to explain the behavior of Soviet troops. The famous Soviet commandant of Berlin in the first days after the fall of the German capital, General N. E. Berzarin, indirectly excused the “excesses” of Soviet troops in the following fashion: “During my whole life I have seen nothing like the bestial way German officers and soldiers pursued the peaceful population [of Russia]. All of the destruction you have here in Germany is nothing in comparison.”²⁷

The Soviets attempted (and in personal interviews *still* attempt) to explain the extent and intensity of their rape incidents compared with the other zones by the straightforward fact that they had a great deal more to retaliate for and more reason for revenge. The journalist Iurii Zhukov writes, for example, that the celebrated Soviet war correspondents Konstantin Simonov (in *Krasnaia zvezda*) and Boris Gorbатов (in *Pravda*) purposely used the graphic horrors of Majdanek near Lublin to motivate Soviet soldiers once they were out of Soviet territory. Gory pictures of Nazi atrocities accompanied the Soviet armies into Poland and across the Oder. Zhukov writes: “Who could have doubted at that time that the people who were responsible for these grisly deeds would soon pay.”²⁸

The images of German women conveyed in the Soviet media certainly did not hinder notions that they should be the objects of Soviet revenge. The caricaturists in the humor magazine *Krokodil* quite justifiably portrayed German women as equally avid supporters of Nazism as the men. But they tended to misrepresent reality by showing fat and spoiled German wives living the good life behind the front. In fact, the war had already taken a severe toll on German women even before the occupation by the Soviets. In one caricature, a prosperous-looking woman, her daughter, and her maid, surrounded by all manner of goods stolen from the Russians, desperately look for material to hang out the window as a white flag.²⁹ In another cartoon, a plump bourgeois German Hausfrau is confronted by a strong, lean Russian woman who had worked for her as forced labor. “Now you’ll see, Frau,” she says sternly, “I’ve come to collect.”³⁰ Throughout the Soviet press, the idea was widespread that the Germans – women on the homefront included – would have to “pay” for their evil deeds. When the occupation took place, German women were shown as having changed colors too quickly. For example, Leonid Leonov wrote, “Our patrols now stride through Berlin, and German ladies gaze in their eyes invitingly, ready to begin payment of ‘reparations’ at once. It won’t work!”³¹

With the combination of hate propaganda, personal experiences of suffering at home, and a fully demeaning picture of German women in the press, not to mention among the soldiers themselves, Soviet officers and men easily turned on the “Frau” as their victim. The anger of Soviet soldiers seemed to grow as German resistance became more fierce, first in the campaign to reach the Oder, and then in the door-to-door battle to take Berlin.³² The huge casualties taken by the Soviets in the Battle for Berlin added more fuel to their desire

for retribution. But it is apparent that even the seizure of Berlin and the defeat of Nazi Germany did not carry with it a cathartic sense of revenge exacted. It was hard to rejoice over the victory, recalled the journalist and writer Vsevolod Vishnevskii in his diary: "How simple it all is . . . Such a strange feeling that the war is all over and done with. There is *none* of that special atmosphere of triumph that we expected from the capture of Berlin, from victory. The war was too long and hard."³³

Psychologically, the Soviet occupation of Germany was a continuation of the war. Colonel Sergei Tiul'panov remembered that many officers simply hated the Germans too much to carry out the regular duties of occupation officers. These officers were relieved of duty, he added, and the staff "granted their wishes to return home."³⁴ Colonel General V. I. Chuikov, one of the great heroes of the final drive into Germany, also wrote about the deep hatred for the Germans, though, like Tiul'panov, he denied any wrongdoing by Soviet soldiers. At the opening of Jena University, Chuikov – then commander of Soviet troops in Thüringen – gave the welcoming address: "I should admit, ladies and gentlemen, that back then at Stalingrad I had such a strong antipathy toward Germany and the German people precisely because the German army carried on its banner only contempt, hatred, and barbarism. After the winning of victory . . . our hatred evaporated . . . One does not beat the vanquished."³⁵

Clearly not all the Soviet soldiers who bitterly hated the Germans were sent home or – like Chuikov – changed their minds. Many took out their hatred on innocent German women and girls. Indeed, to borrow from Chuikov's phrase (and the Russian proverb) the vanquished were beaten and beaten again. German police reports from the zone document an atmosphere of violence only barely distinguishable from war itself.³⁶ The important liberal politician Ernst Lemmer, who otherwise tried to play down the importance of rape in his memoirs, reported a horrible scene during the occupation in the house of the famous actor Friedrich Kayssler. The actor himself was shot and killed, while two young actresses were raped and slit open by Russian marauders.³⁷ The hatred that produced such crimes was ubiquitous, not just of Germans by Russians, but of Russians by Germans. Soviet soldiers could read the hatred and fear in the faces of their victims, and that probably made it easier for them to attack.

[. . .]

The problem of rape in the Soviet zone, then, was influenced by a series of factors unique to the Russian occupation of German territory. The way Russians drink was significant for the problem of rape, as was the widespread Soviet desire for revenge and their hatred of Germans. The fears and prejudices of the German population did not help the situation, nor did the fierce anti-German propaganda that accompanied the Soviet counter-offensive, which drove the Nazis out of the Soviet Union and back into German territory. At the same time, it should be clear that we are also dealing with a form of violence intimately connected with the soldier's psychology

in war and occupation. Moreover, as a social act, rape in the Soviet zone had a meaning particular to the nature of the Russian and German societies as they experienced World War II in relation to each other. Gerda Lerner aids the understanding of this phenomenon in a general way by insisting that in traditional society, rape is directed against the men of a society as much as against the women: "The impact on the conquered of the rape of conquered women was two-fold: it dishonored the women and by implication served as a symbolic castration of their men. Men in patriarchal societies who cannot protect the purity of their wives, sisters, and children are truly impotent and dishonored."³⁸

Russian culture – and many of the Asian ones associated with it in the Soviet Union – still carries with it many of the characteristics of patriarchal society characterized by Lerner. Rape, especially, has played an important role in the concepts of honor and dishonor that permeate Russian culture. Eve Levin writes, for example, that it was customary in medieval Russia to carry out "vengeance against an enemy by raping his womenfolk." Secular society, Levin adds, understood rape as a crime of violence, "the ultimate insult against a woman and her family in a society which valued honor highly."³⁹ In her studies of legal penalties for sexual crimes in late Imperial Russia, Laura Engelstein notes that in nineteenth-century Russian legal codes, rape was included in a special section on "crimes against female honor and chastity." It was the men's obligation to defend the chastity of their women; rape, then, constituted a personal insult to the man, as well as violence against the woman.⁴⁰

Combining the ideas of Lerner, Levin, and Engelstein with the vast array of data available on the rape of German women by Soviet soldiers, it is not unreasonable to suggest that rape in the Soviet zone became the final repayment for the German invasion and mauling of the Soviet Union. Russians themselves had been dishonored by a nation so arrogant that it not only invaded, occupied, and destroyed the land and defiled its inhabitants, but it also relegated to itself superior racial attributes. Soviets – the alleged *Untermenschen* – were humiliated by their defeat and retreat, and even more so by the Germans' exploitation and rape. The Germans had turned their attack on the Soviet Union into a race war as well as a war between rival nations. The defeat of Nazi Germany by the Soviet Union did not restore the honor of Soviet men. Only by the total humiliation of the enemy, one might hypothesize – in this case, by completely dishonoring him with the rape of his women – could the deeply dishonored Russian nation win the war, with what Lerner calls "the final act of male domination."⁴¹

German claims of superiority during the war drove the Russians to rape, but their continued arrogance – despite their fear of the occupiers – made the Soviets' need to dishonor Germans all the greater. Numerous commentators noted the persistent arrogance of the Germans in face of "the backward Russian, whose cultural level was supposed to be so much lower."⁴² In some sense, the superior attitude of Germans was less important than the realities of German life. As so many interviewed Soviet deserters after the war made

clear, Russian soldiers were stunned by the wealth and prosperity of the Germans. Germans were well dressed and lived in well-built homes and apartments. Everything was clean and orderly. They had running water and indoor toilets. Despite the destruction in German cities, few victorious Soviet soldiers could compare their own hometowns or villages favorably with the Germans', even those that might have survived Wehrmacht shelling or the Nazi torch.⁴³ The German occupation of the Soviet Union may well have contributed to a national inferiority complex among Russians, and – *Krasnaia zvezda* wrote in its famous September 9, 1945 piece – the men of the Red Army were not “above the blind emotion of revenge.”⁴⁴ The resulting combination of an inferiority complex, a desire for revenge, and the occupation of Germany was humiliating if not deadly for German women. The Russian soldier's desire for revenge was fed by his desire to restore his honor and manhood, to erase doubts about inferiority that were exacerbated by German wellbeing and self-satisfaction. Perhaps this is the reason there were so many cases in which a German woman was purposely raped in front of her husband, after which both husband and wife were killed.⁴⁵ This may also account for the unusually high number of complaints by Germans that the rapes were carried out in public.⁴⁶

[. . .]

The German women's fear of Russians and the association of Soviet troops with rape and looting became the central German argument against closer ties with the Soviet Union. In the West, it became a topos for propaganda against making concessions to the Russians. In the Soviet zone itself, it became a severe handicap for the KPD and SED leadership's efforts to build support for a communist future. The handicap was all the more severe because the issue of rape could not be discussed in public without offending the sensibilities of the Soviet authorities (and therefore of their closest German communist “friends”). Equally important were the social taboos on the subject of rape. The defensiveness of German men on the one hand, and the sometimes repressed, though unjustifiable, sense of guilt among German women on the other, magnified the social-psychological dimensions of rape – that is, the ways it affected the masses of people in their dealings with the Soviets and with each other.

[. . .]

Despite the initial leftist upsurge at the end of the war in Germany, the events of the Soviet occupation – not least because of the problems of rape – undermined the efforts of German communists. No amount of positive propaganda about the Soviet Union and Soviet accomplishments seemed to be able to dent the deep, if sometimes inchoate and unarticulated, hatred and fear of the Russians. In fact, many German communists began to complain more strenuously about the negative impact of the Soviet occupation on the development of German socialism.

[. . .]

Notes

- 1 See, for example, *Za chest' rodiny*, January 3, January 4, January 7, January 8, and January 18, 1945; *Krasnaia armia*, April 1 and April 15, 1945.
- 2 See, for example, Ilya Ehrenburg, *The War: 1941–1945*, trans. Tatiana Shebunina (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 26–32. The Ehrenburg passage is cited in Nikolai Tolstoy, *Stalin's Secret War* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1981), pp. 267–268.
- 3 Alfred de Zayas, *Zeugnisse der Vertreibung* (Krefeld, Germany: Sinus Verlag, 1983), pp. 64–67.
- 4 P. A. Pirogov, "Vospominanii o sluzhbe v armii i o begstve . . ." manuscript, p. 9, Hoover Institution Archives (HIA), Boris Nicolaevsky, box 249–9, Series 93.
- 5 See Tolstoy, *Stalin's Secret War*, p. 269. See also Lew Kopelew, *Aufbewahren für alle Zeit! (Khranit vechno!)* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1976), p. 125.
- 6 See de Zayas, *Zeugnisse der Vertreibung*, pp. 74–78, especially the testimony of Marie Neumann. See also Kopelew, *Aufbewahren für alle Zeit*, pp. 90–91.
- 7 Tkachenko to Beria, March 17, 1945, Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatskii (GARF) (State Archives of the Russian Federation), Secretariat of the NKVD/MVD, F.9401, op. 2, d. 94, ll. 86–87.
- 8 "Bericht über die Zustände und Vorkommnisse in Königsberg/Pr. seit der Einnahme durch die Sowjet-Russen in April 1945," HIA, William Sander, box 1, folder 2.
- 9 *Ogonek*, February 28, 1945, p. 8.
- 10 See especially HIA, Sander, box 1, folder 3.
- 11 "Letters from Dresden," Abschrift: Bericht 1, p. 2, HIA, Sander.
- 12 See the extraordinary "Polish Women Appeal to the World" in HIA, Poland, Ambasada US, no. 82, folder 1.
- 13 See Alexander Werth, *Russia at War* (New York: Dutton, 1964), p. 983.
- 14 Dmitrii Shchegolev, "Military Council Representative (An Officer's Notes)," in *How Wars End: Eyewitness Accounts of the Fall of Berlin*, comp. V. Sevruck (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 299.
- 15 Berlin Report, July 19, 1945, National Archives (NA), Record Group (RG) 84, CGC, box 1.
- 16 "Notes on General Situation in Berlin," HIA, Daniel Lerner, box 70, folder 13.
- 17 HIA, Lerner, box 70, folder 13, 6871st District, Information Services Control Command, US Army, 13 July 1945 ("Interview with a man from Berlin").
- 18 "Digest of interview with a German (Walter Killian) who had acted as Burgomeister [sic] of Charlottenburg," NA, RG 59, 740.00119 Control (Germany), 7–1445.
- 19 "Rathaus Spandau, May 6, 1945," Landesarchiv Berlin (Berlin State Archive) (LAB), Zeitg. Sammlung, 2819. At the bottom of the document it is noted that the case was discussed with the commandant and that he promised to help.
- 20 "Abschrift. Berlin-Reinickendorf," June 28, 1945, LAB, Zeitg. Sammlung, 2015.
- 21 See *Weissbuch über die "Demokratische Bodenreform" in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands: Dokumente und Berichte* (Munich: E. Vogel, 1988). The cases of rape in Brandenburg and Vorpommern alone include: no. 6, p. 25; no. 15, p. 29; no. 18, p. 30; no. 19, p. 31; no. 20, p. 31; no. 21, p. 32, no. 23, p. 33; no. 30, p. 37; no. 31, p. 38; no. 34, p. 39; no. 37, p. 41; no. 40, p. 42; no. 41, p. 43.
- 22 The case of the rape of a nine-year-old boy by a Russian soldier is reported in Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik ("Gauck Behörde"), Ministerium für Staatssicherheit Zentralarchiv (Central Archives of the Ministry for State Security (BStU MfSZ)), 400/66, b. 24
- 23 See the studies by Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), especially pp. 115–117, and Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam, 1975).

- 24 On the refutation of rape as a product of pent-up sexuality, see Sylvania Tomaselli and Roy Porter, eds., *Rape: An Historical and Social Enquiry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 11, 229–230. For a discussion of rape as a crime of violence, see Anna Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence: Sexual Assault in England 1770–1845* (London: Pandora, 1987), p. 6.
- 25 J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 62, 66.
- 26 Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*, p. 64.
- 27 *Tägliche Rundschau*, May 22, 1945.
- 28 Iu. Zhukov, *Liudi 40-kh godov: Zapiski voennogo korrespondenta* (Moscow: Sov. Rossiia, 1969), p. 554.
- 29 *Krokodil*, no. 8, 1945.
- 30 *Krokodil*, no. 9, 1945.
- 31 *Pravda*, May 7, 1945.
- 32 Marshal V. I. Kazakov, *Artilleriia, Ogon'!* (Moscow: DOSAAF, 1972), p. 212.
- 33 Vsevolod Vishnevskii, "Berlin Surrenders (From a Wartime Diary)," in *How Wars End*, p. 193.
- 34 S. I. Tulpanov, "Befreiung des Menschen," *Sonntag (Wochenzeitung)*, no. 19 (1965), cited in Artur Kleine, "Die Hilfe der Sowjetunion für die demokratische Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone von 1945–1949," Ph.D. diss., Martin-Luther University (Halle-Wittenberg), 1969, vol. 1, p. 73.
- 35 See Chuikov's speech in *Za antifashistskuiu demokraticeskuiu Germaniiu*, pp. 169–170. See also V. I. Chuikov, *Konets tret'ego reikha* (Moscow: Sov. Rossiia, 1973), pp. 143–144.
- 36 BStU MfSZ, 238/66, 229/66. See also the report of Pätznik, July 21, 1945, in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (Foundation for the Archives of the GDR's Parties and Mass Organizations in the Bundesarchiv), ZPA, NL/157/10 (Fritz Gabler), b. 1.
- 37 Ernst Lemmer, *Manches war doch anders: Erinnerungen eines deutschen Demokraten* (Frankfurt am Main: H. Scheffler, 1968), p. 226.
- 38 Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 450.
- 39 Eve Levin, *Sex and Society in the World of Orthodox Slavs* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 227, 245.
- 40 Laura Engelstein, "Gender and the Juridical Subject: Prostitution and Rape in Nineteenth-Century Russian Criminal Codes," *Journal of Modern History*, no. 60 (September 1988): 469, 471–473.
- 41 Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 78.
- 42 SAPMO-BA, ZPA, NL 17/7 (Martha Arendsee), l. 102.
- 43 See among the many examples in the Department of State Interview Project, HIA: Department of State Interview Report no. 4, box 1 (August 1, 1952), pp. 6–7; Department of State Interview Report no. 5, box 1 (September 2, 1952), pp. 1–11; Department of State Interview Report no. 12 (June 1955), p. 1. See also the many examples in the Harvard Interview Project: for example, nos. 517, p. 6; 521, pp. 70–74; 532, pp. 94–95; and 536, pp. 17–19.
- 44 *Krasnaia zvezda*, September 9, 1945
- 45 One village outside of Lübben suffered serial rapes and murders of this sort. P. A. Pirogov, "Vospominaniia o sluzhbe v armii i o begstve . . .," HIA, Nicolaevsky. In one of many similar cases in the police archives, three soldiers forcibly entered an Erfurt apartment in February of 1946 and raped a woman, Ida "M." According to the police report, "The husband, who was in the apartment, was forced under armed threats to stay very quiet and to watch the act of rape." BStU MfSZ, 400/66, bb. 7–8.
- 46 See the criminal police files in BStU MfSZ, 400/66.

COMMUNISM IN BULGARIA

Vesselin Dimitrov

As a result of the dissolution of Soviet power and the fall of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, historians have been able to gain access to archival materials they never imagined seeing during the Cold War itself. They are writing much more nuanced and complex histories of the societies and economies of the countries ensconced within the former Eastern bloc. We are beginning to have a grimmer and grimmer picture of the texture of everyday life, including agricultural decay, industrial stagnation, and environmental degradation.

But we are also learning a great deal more about the complex interactions between officials in the Kremlin and communist leaders throughout Eastern Europe. The picture that is emerging is far more variegated than most scholars thought. Communist leaders throughout the lands occupied by the troops of the Soviet Union sought to exercise more agency than historians thought. Local communists craved power. They viewed the defeat of the fascists and nazis as a unique opportunity to transform their countries. Revolutionary fervor, they believed, was pulsating through their societies. The presence of Soviet armies afforded them an opportunity to shape events. They did not want to let history pass them by.

In the excerpt that follows, the Bulgarian historian Vesselin Dimitrov presents a surprising account of the interactions between the Bulgarian Workers' Party and the leadership of the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War. He details the extent to which Bulgarian communist partisans sought to determine their own future. They did not expect the Soviet Union to occupy their country. But the Communists participated in the coup by the Patriotic Front that overthrew the wartime government in September 1944, and they demanded and received key positions in the new government. They then activated their partisan forces, purged the old officer corps, and killed thousands of the traditional political elite. They wanted to make a revolution and they were not inclined to share power with other democratic groups and parties. Almost instantly, they catalyzed mass support beyond anything previously experienced in their country's history.

But the Bulgarian Workers' Party, says Dimitrov, had not reckoned with Stalin's caution. The Soviet dictator tried to circumscribe and temper the revolutionary fervor of local partisans. According to Dimitrov, Stalin did not want indigenous forces to jeopardize Soviet relations with the Americans and the British. He told the Bulgarian communists to work with other democratic forces, something they did not want to

do. Leaders of the Workers' Party tried to manipulate Stalin and gain leeway for their own autonomous action. For a while, they were successful, at least, partially. Stalin appeared uncertain, vacillating back and forth, until he moved to a much more confrontational stand in the spring and summer of 1947. Like many other scholars studying the origins of the Cold War, Dimitrov sees these months as critical to understanding the breakdown of the wartime allied coalition and the onset of the Cold War. And like other scholars, he suggests that Stalin was responding, at least in part, to the initiatives of the Americans. But Dimitrov also insists that the Bulgarian Workers' Party was eager to exploit propitious circumstances and to eradicate opponents.

This essay should trigger many interesting questions about the relationships between core and periphery within the emerging Soviet bloc, between clients and patron. Who was manipulating whom? Did the Workers' Party have significant indigenous support? Was it able to push Stalin in directions he did not want to go? Or was the Party's realm of autonomous behavior carefully circumscribed? Were Stalin's goals really as inchoate as the author suggests? Does Dimitrov's portrayal of the Soviet leader comport with the analysis of Geoffrey Roberts in the second chapter of this book? Are there similarities or differences in the way Dimitrov depicts Stalin in this account compared to the way David Holloway describes Stalin in Chapter 4? And how would you contrast the dynamics of occupation policy in Bulgaria with what was occurring in the eastern zone of Germany?

* * *

The relationship between the great powers and the Eastern European countries has usually been perceived as a one-way flow; the latter have been portrayed, and have portrayed themselves, as hapless victims of great power politics. Thus, historians have concentrated on events such as Yalta and Potsdam, which were seen as predetermining the future of the region and leaving little room for manoeuvre to domestic political forces. The Soviet Union, in particular, has been presented as manipulating local politics through obedient Communist Parties.

The top-down institutional view is usually matched by a similarly one-dimensional view on the flow of policies. The Soviet Union has been seen as a fixed factor pushing towards 'Communization'; wherever moderation and ambiguity have been perceived, they have been attributed to the Eastern Europeans. In this view, the establishment of the Cominform in September 1947 marked the final triumph of the rigid Soviet view over the more flexible Eastern European ideas of 'people's democracy'. In essence, the establishment of closer Soviet control and the intensification of revolution have been regarded as two facets of the same process.

At least in the case of Bulgaria, both the institutional and policy relationships were far more complex; more often than not, the domestic political forces enjoyed independence from, and indeed sometimes managed to manipulate, their great power patrons. Rather than creating and directing the

internal political conflict, the great powers were sucked into it. Furthermore, the intransigence of the locals (including the local representatives of the great powers) often undermined the attempts of the Governments to resolve their differences amicably.

My focus will be on the relationship between the BRP(k), the Bulgarian Workers' Party, and the Soviet leadership (which, given the autocratic nature of Soviet decision making, usually meant Stalin). My analysis is based on newly available documents from the Bulgarian and Soviet archives, which make it possible to investigate empirically what could previously be only enlightened guesswork. I will demonstrate that the flow of people's democracy ideas proceeded from Stalin, and their realization was blocked by BRP(k)'s narrow-minded drive for maximum power. The Soviet failure to maintain control over the BRP(k), and the ability of the latter to manipulate Soviet policy can be explained by the fact that there was no unified Soviet policy-making process, either institutionally or conceptually. Institutionally, there were a number of different agencies working independently of each other, and often at cross purposes. Conceptually, Soviet policy tried to meet simultaneously several objectives, which were difficult to achieve within one framework. The BRP(k) was able to exploit these differences to further its own aims.

The BRP(k)'s first attempt to construct a popular front came in the mid-1930s, after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. The new line promoted by Georgi Dimitrov, the Comintern's General Secretary, met with virtually insurmountable obstacles. It was obstinately resisted by both the leadership and the rank-and-file of the BRP(k), as it went against the grain of the Party's radical and doctrinaire heritage. It took a number of years, and the destruction of several hundred 'left-sectarians' in the great purges, to break down the resistance.¹ On the other hand, it was proving hard to find allies for the popular front. Most Agrarian and 'bourgeois' democratic politicians preferred to rely on the perceived sagacity of King Boris rather than pursue active confrontationalist policies. The efforts that did emerge were stifled quite effortlessly by the authoritarian regime. In 1939–41, under the influence of the Nazi–Soviet Pact, the links between the BRP(k) and the politicians whose sympathies lay with the Western democracies were all but broken.

The German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 and the emergence of a world anti-Nazi coalition brought the popular front back on the agenda. The Comintern urged its member Parties to undertake an armed struggle against the Germans and their local collaborators, and to form broad anti-Fascist fronts with all patriotic elements.

In Bulgaria, a relatively leniently treated German satellite, the two strands of Comintern's policy worked at cross-purposes. Since the German contingent in Bulgaria was quite small, the armed struggle could only be conducted against the Bulgarian Government which not only had all its machinery intact but also enjoyed the support of the majority of the population due to its

success in achieving the country's traditional revisionist aspirations while sparing it the ordeals of war. It is a reflection of the radicalism of the BRP(k)'s leadership that, in the face of all these obstacles, they contemplated organizing an armed uprising in 1941. Stalin promptly put an end to their daydreams and instructed them to postpone the uprising until the moment when it would be possible to combine 'action from within and without'.² The party's efforts to organize sabotage and later to develop a partisan movement did not attain the success of their Yugoslav comrades and never seriously threatened the Government's control of the country. Nevertheless, by September 1944 the Party had under its command several thousand armed partisans who were to prove an explosive element after the seizure of power.³ Politically, the BRP(k) was able to establish links with some leftist Agrarians, Social Democrats and members of *Zveno* (a group of anti-monarchical officers) on the basis of a programme for a 'Patriotic Front' worked out by Dimitrov and Kolarov in Moscow. The programme contained demands for a break with the Germans, the restoration of democratic rights and measures to promote economic welfare. From BRP(k)'s point of view, the Front was only a limited success: some prominent democratic politicians steadfastly refused to join it, and even those who were already members quite often acted outside its framework. The Patriotic Front did not coalesce into a coherent organization until the beginning of September 1944 when the Soviet Army reached Bulgaria's borders.⁴

Soviet policy towards Bulgaria, hitherto confined to a barrage of diplomatic notes, began to take a more active turn in early September. It was too much to expect Stalin not to take advantage of the opportunities opened by Romania's unexpectedly rapid collapse to assert his presence in Bulgaria. In this he was encouraged and abetted by a steady stream of letters from Dimitrov.⁵ On 5 September, with barely half-an-hour prior notice to the American and British ambassadors in Moscow, the Soviets declared war on Bulgaria, and three days later their troops entered the country.

The Bulgarian Government was mesmerized by the Soviet declaration of war, and complete paralysis ensued. The Patriotic Front was thus able to organize a bloodless *coup d'état* in the early hours of 9 September 1944. The coup was carried out by military units loyal to *Zveno*; the partisans came into the city only subsequently. The BRP(k)'s position as the initiator of the Patriotic Front and the fact that only it had been engaged in an armed struggle allowed it to claim, over the objections of its partners, the key post of Interior Minister. *Zveno's* links with the army secured for it the next strongest position, with the posts of Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Defence Minister. The numerical distribution of posts in the cabinet was quite equitable, with the Communists, *Zveno* and the Agrarians gaining four ministries each, and the Social Democrats and independents two each.

Although it was not responsible for bringing down Bulgaria's last 'bourgeois' Government, the BRP(k) was not slow to take advantage of the resulting

political vacuum. In the next few months, the BRP(k)'s long-dwarfed revolution finally seemed to be taking place. Partisans, rebellious soldiers and newly minted 'Communists' went on the rampage throughout the country, killing an estimated 10,000 to 30,000 people.⁶ Although the party leadership sought to put an end to the uncoordinated killings, it was not averse to using the purge, this time in the form of organized 'people's trials', to destroy the country's political elite which had survived largely intact during the war. This probably accounts for the particular ferocity of the 'people's trials', the most far-reaching in Eastern Europe: 11,122 people passed through the courts, with 2,730 sentenced to death. This included all the ministers of Bulgaria's wartime Governments, the Regents, the late King's advisers and most of the members of Parliament.⁷ Some of the local Soviet representatives were all too eager to promote the purges; indeed, one of them complained that they had not gone far enough.⁸ The Soviet high command initially attempted to put a limit to the purges of the officer corps in order to preserve the fighting capability of the Bulgarian Army; Molotov said as much to the Bulgarian Foreign Minister in October 1944.⁹ The Communists, however, were able to persuade General Biriuzov, the commander of the Soviet occupying forces and the effective head of the Allied Control Commission, that an attempt by the *Zveno* Minister of War, Damian Velchev, to save persecuted officers by sending them to the front and empowering them to defend themselves against unauthorized arrest, amounted to protecting the 'Fascists'. Biriuzov faced down Velchev and threatened that all Bulgarian troops would be thrown out of the capital.¹⁰ The Communists proceeded to take advantage of Velchev's climb-down by purging 1,100 officers, 30 per cent of the officer corps, appointing Deputy Commanders on the model of Soviet commissars at all levels and commissioning 700 reliable Party members.¹¹

By December 1944, 54 per cent of the members of the Patriotic Front committees, a network which encompassed almost all localities and places of work, were Communists.¹² The BRP(k)'s control of the Interior Ministry allowed it to carry out a complete overhaul of the local administration. At the end of 1944, 63 out of 84 cities had Communist mayors, as did 879 out of 1,165 villages.¹³ The old police was disbanded on 10 September 1944 and replaced by a 'people's militia', packed with former partisans and Party members. The militia was used to intimidate political opponents, often at the discretion of the local BRP(k) committees.¹⁴ One other aspect of the BRP(k)'s build up was its enormous numerical expansion. On 20 October 1944 the Politburo decided 'to create a mass party which would include all the healthy and militant elements from the working class, the toiling peasantry and the people's intelligentsia'.¹⁵ By January 1945 the Party had mushroomed to over 250,000 – a 30-fold increase in comparison with 9 September 1944.¹⁶ The Communist Youth League attracted more than 400,000 members while the General Workers' Professional Union, which the Communists helped to set up in March 1945, had around 300,000.¹⁷ Through these colossal organizations – in a population of barely seven million people – the Communists were able

to introduce an unprecedented level of political activism in a country which had barely known mass politics before.

It was not part of Stalin's plans, however, to allow a Communist revolution to be carried out in Bulgaria. While accepting that the Communist Party would be in control, he insisted that the other political parties participating in the Patriotic Front should also be given a degree of influence. This two-fold strategy would create a hegemonial rather than a monolithic system; in the Communist jargon, a 'people's democracy' rather than a 'Soviet' system. In February 1945 he told the Bulgarians that 'your Patriotic Front Government has turned out to be quite a good thing. It should be strengthened and possibly broadened a bit. Do not reject any people who could be used in the struggle against Fascism.'¹⁸ Earlier he had noted that 'perhaps we are making a mistake when we consider Soviet power as the only road to Socialism. Perhaps some other forms – a democratic republic or in certain cases even a constitutional monarchy – might lead to it.'¹⁹

Stalin's foreign policy also tried to reconcile two elements. On one hand, he was clearly determined to safeguard Soviet control of Bulgaria. In the long and tortuous negotiations on the Bulgarian armistice in September–October 1944 he insisted on and finally obtained a recognition of the leading role of the Soviet chairman in the Allied Control Commission for Bulgaria. With the British, that was backed up by the infamous 'percentages' agreement, allocating the Soviet Union 75 per cent influence in Bulgaria. Stalin did not see the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences as in any way affecting the *status quo* in Bulgaria. As Molotov assured Dimitrov with regard to the Potsdam Conference: 'In general these decisions are favourable to us. In practice our sphere of influence there has been recognized.'²⁰ On the other hand, Stalin was anxious not to antagonize his Western Allies and thus endanger the all-important common struggle against Nazi Germany. In October 1944, when the Bulgarians speculated that the Western powers might try to undermine Soviet interests, Molotov firmly emphasized that the three great powers were united in a common cause and would be able to resolve all their differences amicably. It seems that Stalin envisaged that the relationship would continue even after the removal of the common danger, on the basis of the West recognizing his sphere of influence while he undertook not to provoke Western public opinion by strong-arm methods.

Stalin's plans for compromise settlements, both internally and externally, demanded very fine balancing and a high degree of control. Unfortunately, they were not forthcoming. First, he was not able to control the activities of the BRP(k). The steady stream of moderating directives from Moscow, usually passed through Dimitrov, produced nothing more than lip-service to Patriotic Front co-operation; the party was either unable or unwilling to restrict its drive for power and its determination to carry out a revolutionary overhaul of the country. Even if the leadership was willing to compromise, the message coming from the middle-ranking activists was overwhelmingly radical. As

Kostov reported to Dimitrov: 'it is a fact that at our conferences the militant speeches calling for decisive action are met with storms of applause, while the calls for order and discipline are received with coldness and reserve.'²¹

Secondly, the Communist drive for power and the excesses of the purges naturally brought about a negative reaction in the other Patriotic Front Parties. The conflict centred on the Agrarian Union, a Party which saw itself as the rightful representative of the Bulgarian village. The Agrarians had long traditions and had ruled the country almost single-handedly in 1919–23 and as part of a coalition in 1931–4. The Agrarian Union's development in late 1944 was directed by Dr G.M. Dimitrov (often called the 'G.M.', to distinguish him from his Communist namesake) who aimed to restore the organization of the Union and to make it ready for independent power. By the end of 1944 the Union had over 100,000 members, with a growth rate almost as rapid as that of the BRP(k). The Communists were naturally alarmed by the emergence of a rival for power and used G.M. Dimitrov's unenthusiastic attitude towards the use of the Bulgarian Army against Germany and his alleged links with the British intelligence (he had spent the war years in Cairo) to organize a smear campaign against him. They were able to gain Biriuzov's co-operation, and the Soviet general allegedly threatened the Agrarian leader with the dissolution of his entire organization if he did not resign. In January 1945 G.M. Dimitrov bowed to the pressure and was replaced by Nikola Petkov.²²

The new Agrarian leader disappointed the hopes placed on him and soon began distancing himself from the Communists. The conferences of the Agrarian Youth League and the regional Agrarian organizations in the spring of 1945 showed the survival of what the Communists called 'G.M.-ism', that is the propensity to see the Agrarian Union as an independent force outside the framework of the Patriotic Front.

The Communist reaction was to organize an internal coup against the 'reactionary' elements. The process took place at all levels. Locally, the Communists identified collaborationist elements in the Agrarian organizations and endeavoured to place them into the leadership. The campaign was quite extensive and totally cynical, as the reports of the regional Communist organizers indicate; all methods were used, including blackmail, militia intimidation and the ambitions of unscrupulous upstarts.²³ Once enough local organizations had been captured and forced to declare themselves against 'G.M.-ism', the Communists proceeded to organize a 'national' conference of left-wing Agrarians in May 1945. As the top Agrarian leadership remained loyal to Petkov, the Communists were hard pressed to find anyone of prominence to head the conference. The only one who proved susceptible was Alexander Obbov, a man whose personal weaknesses were despised by the Bulgarian Communists and the Soviets alike, and were probably used to blackmail him.²⁴ The Conference condemned 'G.M.-ism', elected an entirely new leadership and called for a purge of doubtful elements. Petkov refused to associate himself with the Conference and by July 1945 was organizing a separate

Agrarian Party and was on the point of leaving the Government. The Social Democratic Party also split into pro- and anti-collaborationist wings.

By the summer of 1945 the combination of BRP(k)'s high-handed tactics and the other Parties' reassertion of their interests had thus brought the Patriotic Front system to the brink of collapse. At this point Stalin decided to intervene personally.

On 11 July Dimitrov wrote to Kostov:

Our Big Friend [Stalin] . . . considers the removal of Petkov and his friends from the cabinet to be premature . . . He points out that not enough has been done, either at home or abroad, to unmask them on the basis of concrete facts . . . He stressed that our party should . . . not be afraid of differences of opinion and criticism in the Government and the Patriotic Front because it is impossible to have total unanimity on all questions in a government composed of several parties.²⁵

Stalin's advice fell on deaf ears. Indeed, some members of the Politburo initially suggested that Dimitrov's telegram be concealed from the Party!²⁶ Although the Party leadership later paid lip-service to the instructions in their internal discussions, they found it impossible to resist the momentum of their own maximalism. They refused to grant Petkov the right to publish an independent newspaper and on 19 July decided to break off the talks. The crisis continued to intensify. The Western representatives in Bulgaria, in a mirror-process, had been increasingly associated with the emerging opposition. This was especially true of Maynard Barnes, the American political representative. His personal involvement grew with the sheltering of G.M. Dimitrov, who was threatened by the Communist militia and sought refuge in the American mission. By July, Barnes had regular meetings with Petkov as well, and reported his pleas for help to the State Department.²⁷

On 26 July 1945 Petkov appealed to the Western Governments for an international supervision of the elections due to be held in a month's time. In August the American and the British Governments sent notes declaring that no government resulting from the elections would be recognized. Although the notes were intended as a statement of intent rather than to make any specific request, the Western representatives in Sofia took matters into their own hands and in a series of meetings of the Allied Control Commission pressed the Soviet chairman for a postponement.²⁸ At the crucial point Petko Stainov, the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, a member of *Zveno*, stated at a press conference that it was the Commission, and by implication the Russians, who had the power to settle the issue, and not the Bulgarian Government.

Presented with the insistent demands of the Western representatives in Bulgaria (and evidently not realizing that their post-war Governments were preparing to repudiate their hasty actions), taken together with Stainov's statement, Stalin decided to give way and postpone the elections.

Kostov's telegrams to Dimitrov hours before the postponement on 24 August indicate that the Bulgarian Communists were not consulted about the move.²⁹ The next day the shocked Bulgarians flew to Moscow. There they listened to a lecture by Stalin stressing the need of maintaining good relations with Britain and America: 'You must never ignore England and America. You must have normal relations with them – I am absolutely serious about that. You must not shout too much about your eternal friendship with the USSR.' The Soviet dictator helpfully provided a theoretical justification of the change of course towards the opposition:

An opposition is unavoidable in a society consisting of antagonistic classes . . . You might even find it profitable to have an opposition of 50–60 men: you can then say to Bevin that you too have an opposition. The opposition will act as a whip and would not allow you to slacken and take things easy . . . You can allow some parties to exist outside the Patriotic Front.³⁰

The Patriotic Front system was thus unable to survive the crisis occasioned by the August 1945 elections. At this point of time, perhaps under the influence of a moderating 'Potsdam' spirit, Stalin decided to resolve the crisis by partially opening the political system and allowing the existence of an opposition. The Soviet dictator seems to have perceived the opposition in an essentially 'decorative' or at most a consultative function, not challenging the Government's control of the country in any practical way. On their return to Sofia, the Bulgarian Communists implemented the changes suggested by Stalin.

The opposition saw the concessions it had obtained as evidence that the tide had turned against the Communists and as an opportunity to rout them out of the 'commanding heights'. Petkov's conditions for re-entering the Government amounted to, among other things, the post of a Prime Minister, the transfer of the Ministries of the Interior and Justice to non-Communists and free elections. Since he had been a consistent fighter against the former authoritarian regimes, and had tried sincerely to co-operate with the Communists, Petkov was impervious to accusations of 'reaction' with which many prominent politicians had been silenced. His father and brother had fallen victims to political assassins, and this had given him a virtual immunity from fear.

Despite the fact that there were now no formal obstacles to its taking part in the elections scheduled for 18 November 1945, the opposition refused to oblige and announced that it would be boycotting them. Its newspapers violently denounced the Government, and soon surpassed the circulation of their official counterparts.³¹

The local Western representatives continued to articulate the opposition sentiments, and at first it seemed that their Governments would follow suit.

Faced with the Soviets' unyielding position at the London Foreign Ministers' Conference, however, the American Secretary of State James Byrnes began to search for a compromise. His efforts to resolve the conflict through sending an 'impartial' observer to Bulgaria (the liberal journalist Mark Ethridge) brought little result. The Soviets' attitude towards Ethridge's meddling in their zone of influence was reflected in Dimitrov's spiteful comment that the journalist was behaving as 'some sort of a messiah'.³² At the Moscow Conference in December 1945, Byrnes tried another approach, securing from Stalin an undertaking to 'advise' the Bulgarian Government to take in two members of the opposition.

Petkov regarded the terms as a whitewash, and showing his usual intransigence, refused to enter the Government unless his conditions were satisfied. Stalin reflected that 'perhaps it was a mistake to leave the conduct of the negotiations to the Bulgarian Government' and decided to make his own wishes known to the opposition directly. Deputy Foreign Minister Vyshinsky was sent to Sofia to impress on the opposition that all they had to do was to join the Government without setting any conditions.³³ The former public prosecutor flew to Sofia on 9 January, fresh from his success in Bucharest where he had accomplished a similar mission the day before, and raised the leaders of the opposition from their beds at 2 a.m. Petkov and Lulchev, the leader of the opposition Social Democrats, refused to budge and the talks broke down. A second attempt three months later to bring the opposition into the Government also ended in failure. Stalin was beginning to find the opposition's obstinacy quite irritating and advised the Bulgarian Communists to 'take a series of thought-out and well-organized measures to smother the opposition'.³⁴

Stalin's hopes of an understanding with the West were also wearing thin. The Soviets considered that the Americans were going back on their own word and were destroying the compromise they themselves had agreed to in Moscow. From March 1946 onward, the Soviets made no further concessions to the Americans, but were not yet ready to provoke them as long as the peace treaty with Bulgaria had not been signed.

The BRP(k) in the meantime was doing all it could to convince the Soviets that no compromise with the opposition was possible. Despite Stalin's 'theoretical' justification, the Communists never accepted the legitimacy of the opposition's existence. The opposition was depicted, even in discussions at the highest level, as a collection of Fascists and reactionaries who had only two possible options, either to go back to the Patriotic Front and co-operate loyally within its framework, or turn to conspiracy. The local Soviet diplomats shared this opinion.³⁵

In November 1945, after repeated pleas from the comrades at home, Dimitrov was finally able to persuade Stalin to allow him to go home. Previously, Stalin had refused that on the ground that it would give rise to rumours of 'Sovietization'. On his arrival, Dimitrov made it clear in two virulent speeches that there would not be a second postponement of the elections now

scheduled for 18 November. On 12 November, in a telephone conversation with Lavrishev, the head of the Balkan Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Dimitrov urged the Soviet Government to realize that another postponement would be a 'disaster' for the Patriotic Front.³⁶ When in March 1946 it appeared that the *Zveno* members of Government were wavering in their determination and might concede important positions to the opposition, the BRP(k) sought and received Soviet support for its hard line.³⁷

Against *Zveno*, the BRP(k) was able to secure more active Soviet support. After August 1945, an active right wing had formed within the Party, which the left-wing leadership was barely able to contain. The Soviet representatives' reports alleged that Stainov was turning the Foreign Ministry into a reactionary fortress while Velchev was promoting his own people into positions of power and looking for a pretext to remove the Communist officers.³⁸ Stalin was not prepared to tolerate such an exposed position, especially where the instruments of power were concerned. During the March 1946 reorganization of the Government, he insisted in a series of telegrams to Dimitrov that the *Zveno* 'double-dealers' be dismissed from their posts. When the Bulgarian Communists for once proved hesitant, Stalin acidly remarked that 'We are surprised at your modesty and lack of initiative in this matter. The Yugoslav Communists are acting far better and more militantly than you are.'³⁹

The Yugoslav factor evidently had a growing appeal to Stalin. Possibly it was not a coincidence that it was during a joint visit of Bulgarian and Yugoslav delegations to Moscow in June 1946 that he authorized the Bulgarians to take on *Zveno* and even criticized them for 'insufficiently decisive measures'.⁴⁰

Stalin's criticism was probably undeserved. Dimitrov's call at the central committee meeting in August 1946 for a general political offensive against the reactionary elements in the Patriotic Front was met with enthusiasm by the Party grassroots, indeed excessively so.⁴¹ Dimitrov was forced to speak at length against the orgy of beatings and imprisonments and stress that the offensive was to be accomplished by means of agitation and propaganda.⁴² In a more organized way, the Communists were able to oust Velchev from his position and carry out a thorough purge of the army dismissing nearly 2,000 officers.⁴³

Stalin, however, evidently was still under the sway of contradictory emotions, and on a number of occasions spoke of the need for moderation and new ways. In September 1946 he advised the Bulgarians to form a 'Labour' Party:

You have to unite the working class with the other toiling masses on the basis of a minimalist programme; the time for a maximalist programme has yet to come ... In essence, the party would be Communist, but you would have a broader base and a better mask for the present period. This would help you to achieve Socialism in a different way – without the dictatorship of the proletariat. The situation has changed radically in comparison with our revolution,

it is necessary to apply different methods and forms . . . You should not be afraid of accusations of opportunism. This is not opportunism but an application of Marxism to the present situation.⁴⁴

That Stalin's ideas were more than a mere freak is indicated by the fact that he developed similar ideas to Tito and the German Communists, as well as to Morgan Phillips of the British Labour Party.⁴⁵ To the Bulgarian Communists, however, Stalin's ideas appeared somewhat idiosyncratic. At the central committee meeting in September 1946, Dimitrov mentioned them only as proposals which might be implemented in the distant future after careful consideration and evaluation of their merits.⁴⁶

The increasing polarization of society led to a showdown between the Communists and the opposition. At the October 1946 elections to a Grand National Assembly which were conducted with different coloured ballots thus allowing each Party's strength to be judged, BRP(k) gained 54 per cent of the vote while its Patriotic Front partners managed only 17 per cent. The opposition gained 1,250,000 votes, a third of the total. According to Rothschild, 'this was the largest proportion recorded for any real opposition in any post-war East-Central European election'.⁴⁷ As Soviet intelligence reports make it clear, the opposition perceived its performance as victory.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the non-Communist Front Parties, disappointed by their results and fearful of open Communist domination, began to draw closer to the opposition. This process was especially marked in the Agrarian Union, where Obbov embarked on a full-scale revision of his collaborationist policies and began to work towards a *rapprochement* and eventual union with Petkov.⁴⁹

The failure of the attempt to isolate the opposition by political means prompted the Bulgarian Communists to look at more forceful methods. The international situation was no longer a significant obstacle. The Western Governments' main concern now was to conclude the peace-making process as soon as possible so that Soviet troops would leave Bulgaria and pose no further threat to Greece and Turkey. The peace treaty was signed on 10 February 1947, and recognition of the Government followed inevitably. The British recognition came immediately after the signature; the United States decided to delay theirs until after the treaty came into force.⁵⁰

Stalin's policies were similarly shifting. Although it is difficult to follow the exact stages, or outline the relative weight of the different factors in the process, there can be little doubt that in the spring and summer of 1947 Stalin was moving towards retrenchment. In the Balkans, the increasing American involvement in the Greek civil war made Bulgaria a front line of defence and the Bulgarian Communists could no longer be restrained in their drive against 'the enemies within'. Nor were the Bulgarian Communists slow to link the opposition with external reaction; on a number of occasions Dimitrov claimed that the opposition's boldness was only due to their hopes of an American offensive in the Balkans. Dimitrov might have half-believed that himself: in

a letter to Stalin of 31 May 1947 he expressed his fears of an intensified Western pressure; given the fact that the Soviet troops were due to withdraw from Bulgaria by the end of the year, it was all the more imperative to secure the Communists' undivided control over the country. Faced with such assessments, Stalin not surprisingly gave his approval for the liquidation of the opposition.⁵¹

No longer feeling Moscow's restraining hand, the Communists could hardly wait to deal with their opponents. Petkov was arrested in parliament the very day the United States Senate ratified the peace treaty. The possibility of retaining some sort of 'loyal' opposition was initially considered, and the BRP(k) engaged in talks with the remnants of the Agrarian leadership. It proved impossible to arrive at a common basis and by August 1947 it had been decided to disband Petkov's organization entirely.⁵² A similar development could be observed with respect to the fate of the arrested opposition leader. The initial plan was to sentence him to death and then commute the sentence to life imprisonment. Petkov's valiant conduct at the trial combined with the Western Governments' public pressure on his behalf, led to a hardening of attitudes and Petkov was duly executed on 23 September 1947.⁵³

The Communists also dealt with the doubtful elements in the Patriotic Front Parties. A comprehensive campaign was organized against Obbov, with the Communist regional secretaries bringing pressure on their Agrarian counterparts to declare themselves against their leader.⁵⁴ The right-wing leaders of Zveno were neutralized by despatching them as ambassadors to various European capitals, while the local organizations began to die out.⁵⁵ Thus the political system allowing the existence of a 'decorative' opposition had also proved untenable by the summer of 1947. With the liquidation of the opposition, and the emasculation of the Patriotic Front, the Communists were substantially able to complete their revolution.

Many Bulgarian historians have argued that it was the formation of the Cominform in September 1947 that caused the BRP(k) to abandon its 'people's democracy' ideas.⁵⁶ The facts do not bear out that contention: although there had been a lot of rhetoric about Patriotic Front co-operation, especially at leadership level, a clear drive for monopoly power could be perceived ever since 9 September 1944. There is little evidence that the need for genuine compromises which even a hegemonial system would have implied was ever understood or accepted. Furthermore, the Bulgarian report at the Cominform foundation meeting, prepared by the Party ideologist Chervenkov in consultation with Dimitrov, already contained most of the measures which are claimed to have originated as a result of that meeting, such as the nationalization of 'big industry' and the 'consolidation' of the Patriotic Front.⁵⁷ The role of the Cominform meeting was thus to authorize as well as to provide a theoretical framework for the Bulgarian Communists' 'revolutionary offensive'.

While not denying the fact that the USSR, the USA and Britain were the major protagonists on the post-war European scene, the chapter has sought to highlight the importance of local factors. Although both the Communists

and the opposition managed to attract support from abroad, the former's manipulation of their great power patron was much more extensive and effective. In 1944–7, Stalin's wish for a non-antagonistic relationship with his wartime allies placed a check on the ambitions of the unruly local radicals; by the summer of 1947 he was no longer willing to restrain them. The formation of the Cominform rather than initiating revolutionary transformations was, in many ways, merely a formalization of a *fait accompli*.

Notes

- 1 N. Oren, *Bulgarian Communism: The Road to Power, 1934–1944* (New York: 1971) pp. 64–100.
- 2 D. Daskalov, *Zhan Suobshtava* (Sofia: 1991) p. 36.
- 3 Oren, *Bulgarian Communism*, pp. 169–87, 200–20.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 220–58.
- 5 Tsentralen partien arkhiv Sofia (TsPA), f. 146, op. 2, a.e. 1965, l. 54, 86.
- 6 L. Ognianov, *Durzhavno-Politicheskata Sistema na Bulgariia, 1944–48* (Sofia: 1993) p. 27.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 8 Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow (AVP RF), f. 074, op. 34, p. 114, d. 6, l. 185–6.
- 9 AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, p. 34, d. 404, l. 7–8.
- 10 TsPA, f. 1, op. 7, a.e. 140.
- 11 TsPA, f. 1, op. 5, a.e. 2, l. 237–8.
- 12 M. Isusov, *Politicheskite Partii v Bulgaria, 1944–1948* (Sofia: 1978) p. 24.
- 13 P. Ostoich, *BKP i Izgrazhdaneto na Narodnodemokraticheskata Durzhava, 9 Septemvri 1944–Dekemvri 1947* (Sofia: 1967) pp. 76–7.
- 14 TsPA, f. 1, op. 5, a.e. 2, l. 241.
- 15 TsPA, l. 1, op. 6, a.e. 2, l. 2.
- 16 TsPA, f. 1, op. 5, a.e. 2, l. 6.
- 17 Ognianov, *Durzhavno-Politicheskata*, p. 54.
- 18 TsPA, f. 1, op. 9, a.e. 12, l. 11–12.
- 19 TsPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.e. l. 15, l. 18, quoted in M. Isusov, *Stalin i Bulgariia* (Sofia: 1991) p. 161.
- 20 TsPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.e. 15, l. 87, quoted in Isusov, *Stalin*, p. 87.
- 21 Quoted in M. Isusov, *Komunisticheskata Partiia i Revoliutsionnii Ptrotses v Bulgariia* (Sofia: 1983) p. 53.
- 22 C.A. Moser, *Dimitrov of Bulgaria: A Political Biography of Dr. Georgi M Dimitrov* (Ottawa, Il.: 1979) is a detailed account, partly based on Dr G.M. Dimitrov's personal papers, of the long and stormy career of the Agrarian leader.
- 23 TsPA, f. 146, op. 5, a.e. 217.
- 24 AVP RF, f. 074, op. 35, p. 125, d. 8, l. 37.
- 25 TsPA, f. 1, op. 7, a.e. 398, l. 1.
- 26 *Ibid.*, l. 5.
- 27 Barnes to Acting Secretary of State, 30 July 1945, in US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1945*, Vol. 2, p. 728; Barnes to Secretary of State, 28 February 1945, in *FRUS, 1945*, Vol. 4, p. 272.
- 28 M. Boll, *Cold War in the Balkans: American Foreign Policy and the Emergence of Communist Bulgaria, 1943–1947* (Lexington, Ky.: 1984) pp. 134–55, reviews the events from the point of view of the Western representatives and their Governments.
- 29 Even Kostov's last telegram before the announcement of the postponement, sent at 4.45 p.m. on 24 August 1945, reveals no knowledge of what was to take place within the next few hours, TsPA, f. 1, op. 7, a.e. 464, l. 1–2.

- 30 TsPA, f. 146, op. 4, a.e. 639, l. 26–8.
- 31 Rossiiskii Tsentri Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii, Moscow (RTsKhIDNI), f. 17, op. 128, d. 759, l. 221.
- 32 TsPA, f. 1, op. 7, a.e. 539, l. 2.
- 33 TsPA, f. 1, op. 7, a.e. 675, l. 7.
- 34 TsPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.e. 16, l. 54; quoted in Isusov, *Stalin*, p. 46.
- 35 AVP RF, f. 074, op. 34, p. 115, d. 10, l. 88.
- 36 AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 28, d. 350, l. 18.
- 37 TsPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.e. 16, l. 54; quoted in Isusov, *Stalin*, p. 45.
- 38 TsPA, f. 146, op. 4, a.e. 420, l. 26.
- 39 TsPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.e. 16, l. 53; quoted in Isusov, *Stalin*, pp. 43–5.
- 40 TsPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.e. 16, l. 63–4; quoted in Isusov, *Stalin*, p. 46.
- 41 TsPA, f. 1, op. 5, a.e. 7, l. 12.
- 42 *Ibid.*, l. 16.
- 43 *Ibid.*, l. 64.
- 44 TsPA, f. 1, op. 2, a.e. 16, l. 78–9; quoted in Isusov, *Stalin*, pp. 49–50.
- 45 See G. Swain, 'The Cominform: Tito's International?', *Historical Journal*, 3 (1992); W. Loth, 'Stalin's Plans For Post-War Germany', in Francesca Gouri and Silvio Pons, eds. *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1943–1953* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1996) pp. 23–36.
- 46 TsPA, f. 1, op. 5, a.e. 9, l. 86.
- 47 J. Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East-Central Europe Since World War II* (Oxford: 1989) p. 118.
- 48 TsPA, f. 146, op. 5, a.e. 1224, l. 12.
- 49 I. Zarchev, *BZNS i Izgrahdaneto na Sotsializma v Bulgariia, 1944–1962* (Sofia: 1984) pp. 177–90.
- 50 Boll, *Cold War in the Balkans*, pp. 182–8.
- 51 TsPA, f. 1, op. 7, a.e. 902, l. 2.
- 52 TsPA, f. 1., op. 5, a.e. 15, l. 8.
- 53 TsPA, f. 146, op. 2, a.e. 17, l. 51; quoted in Isusov, *Stalin*, pp. 190–1.
- 54 TsPA, f. 1, op. 7, a.e. 1157, l. 2.
- 55 I. Dimitrov, 'Naroden Suiuz Zveno (1 Oktomvri 1944–19 Fevruari 1949g.)', in *Bulgariia na Balkanite i v Evropa* (Sofia: 1983) pp. 301–3.
- 56 Originally expressed by Isusov, this view has become standard in Bulgarian historiography; see: Isusov, *Stalin*; Id., *Politicheskite Partii*; Id., *Komunisticheskata Partia*.
- 57 RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3s.

STALIN AND THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS

Silvio Pons

In contrast to Bulgaria, most of Italy was liberated and occupied by the Americans and the British in 1943 and 1944. They immediately sought to control the administration of Italian territory and to exclude local Communists and the Kremlin from exercising any significant influence. Their actions set an example that the Soviets could emulate easily in Eastern Europe. But in Italy there was a large and powerful Italian Communist Party (PCI). In March 1944, Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the PCI, traveled home from Moscow. Many observers, aware of the popularity of the communists, their leadership role in the resistance, and their fervor for revolutionary change, anticipated a civil war. But this conflict did not occur. Togliatti called for moderation. He sought collaboration with the military government headed by Marshal Pietro Badoglio. His actions disappointed many of his followers and aroused great controversy. Ever since, historians have argued about his motives, his relationship with Stalin, and the degree of autonomy that the PCI possessed.

Silvio Pons is one of Italy's foremost historians of Soviet diplomacy and Stalinist policies. In this article, he uses newly available materials from Soviet archives as well as documentation from the PCI to illuminate the relations between the PCI and the Kremlin. He says the Party did not have much room for autonomous action; that Stalin expected the Party to serve the interests of the Soviet Union and to defer to its priorities. But Pons also argues that Stalin's priorities were often vague and hard to discern. There was no ongoing daily collaboration between PCI leaders in Italy and their patron in the Kremlin. The Soviet dictator did not possess a master plan for the Bolshevization of Europe. In fact, he seemed to champion moderation. Sounding quite a bit like Vesselin Dimitrov in the preceding essay, Pons argues that Stalin placed a high value on the preservation of the wartime coalition. But his preferences and desires were often hard for his followers to discern, and there remained a great deal of ambiguity about his ultimate intentions. Pons believes that the new evidence suggests that Stalin was not seeking to expand his geopolitical influence beyond those parts of Europe occupied by Soviet armies. Russian soldiers might be raping German women and Bulgarian communists might be murdering their opponents, but until the middle of 1947 Stalin still placed a high premium on sustaining the wartime coalition and did not want communists to take actions that might precipitate the formation of a Western bloc. Togliatti worked within these constraints, able

to exercise some autonomy, but ultimately triggering the wrath of the Kremlin for the Party's failure to coordinate its actions more closely with Moscow.

Like many of the other essays in this volume, Pons's analysis raises fascinating questions about Stalin as a policymaker. What did he want? What was the role of ideology in his policymaking? Did he have a strategy, or was he mostly postponing key decisions and improvising? If his strategy initially was one of moderation, why did this strategy collapse in 1947 and 1948? What was the role of local actors like the Italian Communist Party? And how did the erosion of the strategy of moderation and cooperation shape the future course of Italian domestic life and international diplomacy?

* * *

After World War II Italy was included in the Western "sphere of influence." There is no evidence that the Soviet Union tried to forestall this outcome. In the postwar peace process Moscow attached much lower priority to Italy than to the East European countries that had been occupied by Nazi Germany. Italy was of limited significance for Soviet foreign policy, and political and economic relations between the two countries never fully developed. Nonetheless, at certain crucial junctures, Italy played a key role in the growing East–West conflict over Europe.

Several factors contributed to Italy's importance in the nascent Cold War. It was the first European country to be reoccupied by the Allied armies, and it was therefore seen as an initial test of peacemaking and cooperation among the Allies. Soon after the coup d'état by King Vittorio Emanuele III against Mussolini on 25 July 1943 and the installation of a military government headed by Marshal Pietro Badoglio, a secret armistice was concluded between Italy and the Allies on 3 September 1943. The public announcement of the armistice five days later immediately divided the country into two parts: Northern Italy controlled by the Nazi German forces, which were supporting Mussolini in his attempt to establish a fascist republic, and Southern Italy controlled by British and American forces, which were supporting the monarchy and Badoglio after their escape from Rome. At the Moscow Conference of October 1943, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union agreed on a political and military framework for an armistice regime in Italy. The Soviet Union was not given a role in the main administrative bodies in Italy, and the British and Americans maintained tight control of the country. This arrangement displeased Soviet leaders, who decided to counter what they saw as one-sided actions on the part of the Western governments. The Soviet Union unilaterally reestablished diplomatic relations with Italy in March 1944, a step that produced serious tension in Soviet relations with both Britain and the United States.

A second factor that contributed to Italy's importance in the Cold War was the rapidly growing authority of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). In the final year of the war, Communist influence spread throughout the country.

When the PCI leader, Palmiro Togliatti, returned from Moscow in March 1944, he abruptly changed the course of the PCI with his so-called "Svolta di Salerno," which called for cooperation with Badoglio to pursue a policy of "national unity." This new approach fit with Stalin's decision to recognize the Badoglio government. During the fall and winter of 1943–1944, serious conflict had emerged between the anti-fascist parties (which banded together into the National Liberation Committee, or CLN, created in Rome on 9 September 1943) and the post-fascist institutions represented by the monarchy and the Badoglio government. The CLN had adopted a firm anti-fascist position (espoused by the Communists), opposing any collaboration with Badoglio and the king. With the "Svolta di Salerno" Togliatti defused this conflict by suggesting that Italy's institutional future should be settled only after the Germans and the Fascists had been defeated. His stance initially came as a shock to the Communists and anti-fascists, but by May 1944 all of the parties in the CLN (with the exception of Partito d'Azione) had entered the Badoglio government. In the meantime, at the beginning of 1944, the basis for a mass anti-fascist resistance movement in Northern Italy was laid by the founding of the Northern CLN in Milan. Through the resistance movement the PCI became a mass party set to expand in postwar Italian society.

Another factor that bolstered Italy's role in Soviet calculations was the widespread belief that Italy would dissolve into civil war as a consequence of the postwar turmoil and economic crisis and that this would lead to a series of unpredictable events involving the major powers. Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union's most prominent ally in Europe, was pressing its geopolitical and revolutionary objectives in northeastern Italy at the end of the war and in the immediate postwar period. The first crucial moment came in the winter and spring of 1945, when the CLN launched a final "insurrection" against fascism to maintain the resistance movement's independence from British and US control. The insurgents, however, refrained from using revolutionary rhetoric, since revolution seemed undesirable not only for the United States and Britain, but also for Stalin (despite the ambitions of Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito). The second crucial moment came in the winter and early spring of 1948, when the tense atmosphere before the April 1948 elections threatened to end in violent conflict between the forces of the Popular Front (the coalition between Socialists and Communists) and the forces joined around the Christian Democratic Party. The fierce clash between the opposing sides in the electoral campaign generated uncertainty and apprehension in the international community. Only the landslide victory of the Christian Democratic Party, achieved with the crucial support of the Catholic Church and financial aid from the United States, stabilized the Italian situation.

If Italy was not a primary concern for Soviet foreign policy, it still could not be ignored entirely. For this reason, relations between the Soviet Union and the PCI can be seen as a case study of Soviet foreign policy and the origins of the Cold War.¹ Newly available archival material demonstrates that the tight link between Moscow and the West European Communist parties

required the parties to subordinate their interests to those of the Soviet Union. This does not mean that historians are correct either to assume a uniform Soviet approach to West European Communism or to present Soviet policy at the end of the Second World War as a compact strategy aimed at the revolutionary conquest and Bolshevization of Europe.² In the Italian case, many scholars have depicted Soviet-PCI relations as a one-way command structure, in which the Soviet Union made all the decisions and the PCI implemented them.³ This ignores substantial evidence of the complexity of Soviet strategy toward Europe. Stalin's postwar policy never seemed directed at installing Communist regimes in Western Europe. As some historians have observed, he preferred a "divided and docile Europe, rather than a Communist one."⁴ For these reasons, the relationship between the Soviet Union and the European Communist parties was often contradictory and ambiguous.

Soviet leaders began to formulate their policy toward Italy during the Moscow Conference of October 1943, when the great powers had to arrive at a common position on the Italian question. The conference was held only a few weeks after the Badoglio government signed a truce. For Soviet officials, a tradeoff emerged between their desire to offset Western influence and their hesitation about working with the institutions that emerged in Italy after the downfall of the Fascists. Documentary sources reveal that different views existed in Moscow about how to deal with this tradeoff. In a letter written a short while before the Moscow Conference to Georgi Dimitrov, the official responsible for Soviet ties with foreign Communist parties, Togliatti identified isolation as the main danger facing Communists and did not mention the problem of the king's abdication, thus suggesting the adoption of a moderate approach toward the Badoglio government.⁵ Togliatti's proposal was not reflected in the initial stance of the Soviet People's Commissariat on Foreign Affairs (Narkomindel). On 18 October 1943 the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, sent Stalin a memorandum rejecting Britain's suggestion to link the recognition of the Badoglio government with the application of the "co-belligerent nation" formula to Italy.⁶ During the Conference, however, Soviet leaders suggested only "re-organizing" – not liquidating – the Badoglio government.⁷ Despite these differing views on policy toward Italy, Soviet strategy seemed to be leaning toward flexible diplomacy that would verify the effectiveness of the Advisory Council on Italy, which had been established at the Moscow Conference. Togliatti also seemed to favor this approach, which would have steered the PCI toward collaboration with the ruling classes. However, archival documents show that in the months following the Conference, Soviet and Communist policy makers continued to waver between different alternatives.

The Soviet strategy formulated at the Moscow Conference was mostly abandoned in the wake of Andrei Vyshinskii's frustrating experience as the Soviet representative in the Italian Advisory Council. Vyshinskii's mission revealed the Soviet Union's discontent with the institutionalization of the Allied regime

in Italy, and it also demonstrated the Italian Communists' intransigence toward Badoglio and the monarchy. In a memorandum to Molotov on recent negotiations with members of the Italian government and representatives of the PCI in January 1944, Vyshinskii expressed concern that Britain was seeking to play a dominant role in Italian affairs, and he suggested that the Soviet Union try to use Communist influence as a wedge within the CLN.⁸ Vyshinskii's memorandum spurred Dimitrov and Togliatti to prepare a much more hardline political program. On 24 January Dimitrov sent to Molotov a "planned response to our Italian comrades," to be forwarded to Vyshinskii. This "planned response" forbade Communists from taking part in the Badoglio government.⁹

Soon, however, Soviet leaders abandoned the hardline approach and returned to the moderate strategy adopted in the aftermath of the Moscow Conference. The Soviet Union suddenly decided to reestablish diplomatic relations with Italy without consulting the allied governments (a possibility that Vyshinskii himself had foreseen during contacts with Badoglio). Stalin made this decision during a crucial meeting with Togliatti in Moscow on the night of 3–4 March 1944 on the very eve of Togliatti's scheduled departure from the Soviet Union.¹⁰ The radical position previously formulated by Togliatti and Dimitrov was completely abandoned.¹¹ This conclusively shows that the PCI was in no way "independent" from Moscow. The party's lack of independence can be inferred even without new archival documentation, given the indisputable connection between the Soviet decision to establish diplomatic relations with Italy and the PCI's decision to refrain from any conflict with the king during the war.¹²

More interesting, however, is the new evidence on Stalin's thinking and on Soviet decision making. As we have seen, the meeting between Stalin and Togliatti was actually the final point in the contradictory and uncertain process that gave shape to Moscow's political strategy: Stalin had to choose among the policy options presented to him by Togliatti, Dimitrov, and Soviet diplomats. It would be too simplistic to argue that the entire process consisted solely of Stalin's imposition of his will on Togliatti.¹³ The decision-making process was to a considerable extent vague and improvised.¹⁴

Dimitrov's diary provides considerable evidence of the strategy that emerged in the meeting between Stalin and Togliatti. The two men agreed that civil war and social revolution were not inevitable in Italy. They also agreed that the "two camps" dividing Italy (traditional post-fascist institutions vs. anti-fascist forces) were weakening the country and facilitating British expansion in the Mediterranean. A policy of "national unity" would thus implicitly counter British influence and avoid the risk of a civil war. This suggests that Stalin's view of Italy was driven largely by power politics. A moderate approach by the Italian Communist Party was seen as the best way to preserve a balance of power between the Soviet Union and Great Britain. Stalin adhered to this same moderate stance vis-à-vis the French Communist Party (PCF) in November 1944, developing, in effect, a European

Communist strategy.¹⁵ The strategy was aimed at maintaining Soviet influence in countries that, for the time being, were firmly within the Western sphere of influence. Rather than emphasizing radical goals, the Soviet Union would rely on normal diplomatic channels and encourage the involvement of left-wing parties in coalition governments. This strategy maintained a distinction between the arrangements for military occupation regimes, on the one hand, and future political developments, on the other.

The Stalin-Togliatti meeting of March 1944 was thus a paradigm of Communist policy making in the postwar years. Communist moderation in coalition building was in keeping with the joint Soviet goals of maintaining relations with the Western powers while simultaneously keeping a check on their conduct in the West's own sphere of influence. This strategy was evident in Litvinov's secret correspondence with Molotov and Stalin in 1944, but it was not always consistently applied, given the persistence of the traditional isolationist strain in Soviet attitudes toward security.¹⁶ Moreover, Stalin avoided offering a detailed vision of Soviet foreign policy, leaving himself free to interpret each situation according to the latest international context.

In the final phase of World War II the strategy agreed upon by Stalin and Togliatti, and implemented by the Italian Communist leader after his return to Italy, seemed to be firmly in place. But conflicts appeared more frequently than historians have previously assumed. In fact, by September 1944, Togliatti was harshly criticized by Aleksandr Bogomolov, the Soviet representative in the Advisory Council on Italy, who played a significant role in Soviet diplomacy. In memoranda to the Narkomindel after the Soviet Union recognized Italy, Bogomolov repeatedly insisted that social revolution in Italy was inevitable, and he initially depicted Togliatti's actions as preparations toward this eventuality.¹⁷ After the Red Army's entry into Eastern Europe in the summer of 1944 Bogomolov explicitly attacked the moderate tactics of Italian Communists.¹⁸ Even if Bogomolov was not openly calling for insurrection, his stance clearly was compatible with the intransigence of some leaders of the PCI who most likely were also influenced by extremist suggestions from Yugoslav Communists. The evidence suggests that Bogomolov's hardline attitude reflected a policy orientation shared by some Soviet foreign commissariat officials, especially S. A. Lozovskii and Dmitrii Manuilskii, who had been arguing that conflict with Britain and the United States over Europe was inevitable.¹⁹ Bogomolov was not an isolated voice.

Despite bitter criticism, Togliatti held fast to his leadership position in the PCI, and in late 1944 he defeated his opponents with an explicitly anti-insurrectionist line and a moderate interpretation of anti-fascism.²⁰ Togliatti was determined to avoid the type of bloody conflict that had overwhelmed Greece, despite pressure from Yugoslav leaders, who were exhorting the West European Communists to take a more uncompromising line. The moderate approach of the majority of the PCI may help explain the words of assurance offered by Stalin on 9 October 1944 to Churchill after the latter requested that Stalin restrain the Italian Communists. Stalin pretended that he could scarcely

exercise influence on the Italian Communists, since he did not know “the national situation in Italy” and was unable to give directives by means of the “Soviet armed forces,” as he could in Bulgaria. In a theatrical flourish Stalin expressed concern that if he tried to order the PCI to do something, Togliatti might simply “tell him to go to hell.” But Stalin noted that Togliatti was an intelligent person and that he would refrain from any “adventure.”²¹

Nevertheless, shifts in the balance of power affected Stalin’s calculations. His earlier distinction between the immediate arrangements for military occupation and the longer-term political future of an occupied country steadily faded. Thus, the consolidation of US and Soviet spheres of influence left the West European Communist parties without significant support from the Soviet Union. Soviet officials began to use Italy as an example of how the Western allies should view Soviet involvement in countries such as Bulgaria and Romania.²² Soviet leaders were cool toward Italy after the summer of 1944 and maintained this attitude at the Potsdam Conference.

Meanwhile, the dispute over the city of Trieste, which was inhabited mainly by Italians but was forcefully claimed by Yugoslavia, became one of the most difficult questions for the PCI.²³ During the first several months of 1945, Togliatti asked Soviet leaders to intercede in the dispute. Togliatti called for direct negotiations between Italy and Yugoslavia, and he argued that the best solution was to internationalize the city.²⁴ Having been urged to play a fundamental role in an issue that was crucial not only for relations within the Communist movement but also for relations between the Soviet Union and the Western allies, Soviet leaders adopted a wait-and-see attitude.²⁵ They refused to intervene until a crisis erupted in May 1945, when Yugoslav troops occupied the city, thereby placing the Italian Communists into an extremely uncomfortable position and escalating the tensions between Togliatti and Tito.²⁶ Only in late May did Stalin and Dimitrov initially inform Togliatti that Trieste would have to be ceded to Yugoslavia.²⁷ Then, a few days later, faced with the possibility of a serious conflict with the Western powers, Stalin reversed himself and ordered Tito to back down. The Soviet leader justified this decision on the grounds that another war had to be avoided.²⁸ The Trieste affair of May–June 1945 therefore exposed an erratic trend in Stalin’s foreign policy.²⁹ Stalin not only revealed an inclination to defer important decisions, but also proved ready to go back on choices already made.

Soviet behavior during the Trieste crisis in May 1945 suggested that Stalin was not actively seeking to expand the geopolitical area under Soviet control. On the contrary, his reaction signaled a much more pragmatic approach. Stalin did not yet have any clear sense of how to foster the development of Communist parties in Western Europe and to prevent the formation of a Western bloc. Togliatti was doing his best to maintain Communist influence in Italy under the illusory expectation that Europe would not be divided into two blocs, but the steady emergence of spheres of influence on the continent deflated his hopes that the increasing power of leftist forces would gradually push Italy into the “socialist camp.”³⁰

From mid-1945 to early 1947 Stalin's policy toward Italy and the PCI changed very little, and coordination between Soviet and PCI strategies remained haphazard. Although the relationship between Togliatti and Stalin showed no signs of unraveling toward the end of the war, the PCI's attempts to reconcile the contradictory goals of obedience to Soviet dictates and the quest for political legitimacy began to cause serious internal strain. A crisis in the party arose in 1947.

In 1946 the latent tensions among Italian Communists, Yugoslav Communists, and the Soviet Union with regard to the Trieste problem came to the surface. Pressure from the West helped keep Stalin from fully supporting Yugoslav claims, perhaps affording him a means of escape from an uncomfortably intransigent position. Soviet officials, however, did not understand the urgency of the matter for the Italian Communists.³¹ Even so, harmony between Togliatti and Stalin remained intact as late as the second half of 1946. In a speech to the PCI Central Committee on 18 September 1946, Togliatti confirmed the party's position against the formation of blocs in Europe, and he rejected all pessimistic assessments of the international situation.³² These statements were generally consonant with those publicly expressed by Stalin in an interview with the French journalist Aleksander Werth.³³ They also were largely in accord with the summary of Stalin's thinking that Andrei Zhdanov, a high-ranking Soviet Communist official responsible for international affairs, had confidentially provided to Dimitrov a few days before Togliatti's speech.³⁴

Later that month, however, the Soviet Union began to shift its approach to the Cold War, a shift that was heralded by a confidential report from the Soviet Ambassador to Washington, Nikolai Novikov, on US foreign policy trends.³⁵ According to Novikov's memoirs, this report mostly reflected Molotov's views.³⁶ PCI leaders quickly detected this shift in Soviet policy, particularly after it was reflected in speeches by Molotov and Zhdanov at the beginning of November (which, as we now know, were personally revised by Stalin).³⁷ This shift in Soviet policy would reasonably explain the abrupt change of tone in Togliatti's speech to the PCI Central Committee in November 1946, when he not only denounced "Anglo-American imperialism," but also stressed that the previous policy of moderation had to be abandoned.³⁸ This reversal, however, had few concrete effects in the near term.³⁹ Not until the founding of the Cominform a year later was the party's strategy more clearly delineated.

Until the early summer of 1947 the Italian Communists evidently suspected that Moscow's new uncompromising position was only temporary. In the meantime, however, the increasing tensions between East and West were beginning to affect Italy more directly. The PCI altered its policy after the party was dropped from the coalition government in May 1947, immediately after the PCF had been removed from the French government. On 16 June 1947 Togliatti told a Soviet diplomat, Arkadii Shevlyagin, that the PCI would forge a more appropriate link between foreign policy and domestic politics, and he decided to convene a PCI Central Committee plenum dedicated to

international issues.⁴⁰ In a report to the Central Committee on 1 July, Togliatti left no doubt about his acceptance of the Cold War bipolar system and of Italy's dependent position.⁴¹

Throughout this time the Soviet Union's attitude toward the West European Communist parties was conditioned by the fear that Moscow was losing control of events in the region. As international tensions increased and the French and Italian Communist parties were removed from the governments in their countries, Soviet leaders sought to establish a tighter hold over the parties by effecting a mass mobilization that would provoke acute social conflict. During the government crisis in France in mid-1947, Soviet officials made no attempt to conceal their serious discontent with the PCF. In a letter to French Communist leader Maurice Thorez in early June, Zhdanov expressed surprise and concern over the events that had forced the French Communists out of the government.⁴² This document underscores how precarious Soviet control over the West European Communists had been up to this point.⁴³ Zhdanov's criticisms were most likely directed at the Italian Communists as well.

The announcement of the US Marshall Plan for Europe in June 1947 therefore merely added to the tensions that already existed between Moscow and the West European Communist parties. The Soviet decision to abandon the Paris Conference was announced while the PCI Central Committee was still in session. On 3 July, Umberto Terracini, the chairman of the Italian Constituent Assembly and one of the main leaders of the PCI, warned [Soviet Ambassador Mikhail] Kostylev that Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan might be used by the West to harm the interests of the Soviet Union and Italy alike.⁴⁴ Clearly, Terracini was concerned about the position Moscow wanted the PCI to take on the Marshall Plan. The Italian Communists initially hoped to remain cautiously positive about the plan in order to avoid alienating Italian public opinion.⁴⁵ Despite these entreaties, the Soviet position remained firm, and the West European parties were forced to reconfigure their policies and to contemplate the prospect of instigating political violence in their countries.

In a meeting with Dimitrov on 8 August 1947, Stalin confirmed his displeasure with the behavior of the French Communists, criticizing their policies as "absolutely mistaken." He was also critical of the Italian Communists.⁴⁶ Stalin's bluntness during this meeting suggests that he was already set to denounce the line pursued earlier by the PCI and the PCF. The meeting was a prelude to Zhdanov's notorious attack on the Italian and French Communists at the Cominform's founding conference in September 1947.⁴⁷

The decision to move openly against the Western Communists was made in late August 1947, in accordance with a memorandum submitted by Zhdanov to Stalin.⁴⁸ Until the first conference of the Cominform actually opened, however, Soviet preparations were shrouded in secrecy. On the very eve of the conference Communist parties outside the Soviet Union still knew very little.⁴⁹ Togliatti could do no more than guess, based on his general sense

of the deteriorating political climate, what the conference would entail. It turned out that his forebodings were amply justified. The Italian delegates, Luigi Longo and Eugenio Reale, recorded Togliatti's parting words to them:

If you are reproached that we were unable to take power, or that we let ourselves be driven from the government, tell them that we could not turn Italy into another Greece. And this was not only in our interest, but in the Soviet Union's interest as well.⁵⁰

Togliatti stressed his own interpretation of the USSR's interests rather than seeking clarification from Moscow.

In truth, the "Greek model" of civil war was promoted by the Yugoslavs, not by the Soviet Union. Unlike the Yugoslav delegate, Edvard Kardelj, Zhdanov focused his criticism on the PCI's alleged failure to mobilize widespread opposition to the Marshall Plan, and he did not explicitly call for civil war or disavow the moderation that the Italian Communists had shown since the end of the war.⁵¹ The Soviet approach left various options open for the extra-parliamentary reorientation of the West European parties. This ambiguity had a dual effect. It allowed Italian leaders to adopt a defensive strategy that was intransigent but stayed within constitutional constraints.⁵² Although the PCI had to align itself with the foreign policy theses propounded by Zhdanov, notably the "two camps" doctrine, this did not necessarily imply any need to resort to violence. On the other hand, Soviet ambiguity created substantial uncertainty about the objectives and goals of the Cominform, which helped precipitate a split within the Italian Communist Party between a moderate majority and a strong radical minority. The minority wanted to steer the PCI into a potentially catastrophic civil conflict, a stance that increasingly consigned the PCI to the margins of society, despite its considerable popular base.

The French and Italian Communists sought clarification from Stalin. Thorez's mission to Moscow in November 1947 and Secchia's trip a month later were both geared toward this objective.⁵³ In neither case, however, did the Soviet Union eliminate the ambiguity. Stalin authorized the West European Communists to distance themselves from the more extreme Yugoslav position, but he was still vague about the future prospects for civil war. Secchia, for his part, seemed to hedge his bets when he met with Stalin. Secchia reported to Zhdanov that Togliatti did not deem it appropriate to embark on civil war, but Secchia also informed the Soviet leadership that an armed conflict with the forces of the right was widely expected within the party.⁵⁴ His comments reflected the promulgation of the "two camps" doctrine as well as the growth within the PCI of radical forces that had been strengthened by the founding of the Cominform. Stalin started the meeting with Secchia by emphasizing this crucial point. He supported Togliatti's view but warned that the party must be prepared for any contingency: "We maintain that an insurrection should not be put on the agenda, but one must be ready,

in case of an attack by the enemy."⁵⁵ Stalin merely asserted this point without offering further explanation. The conversation then shifted to such topics as the creation of a secret intelligence service by the PCI, Moscow's financial support for the PCI during the elections, and Togliatti's health.

The result was continued ambiguity: Stalin did not legitimize the more radical tendencies in the PCI, but neither did he supply precise political directives.⁵⁶

Two further points must be stressed here, however. First, the Cominform conference had not given a clear indication to the West European Communists of whether they should maintain their "parliamentary way." Second, even the conversations with Stalin did not resolve the question of future strategy. The Stalin-Secchia meeting was marked by ambivalence that was even stronger than in 1944. Stalin gave Secchia ample reason to believe that civil war was not on the agenda, but he left plenty of room for various interpretations to develop within the West European Communist parties, including the views espoused by forces that wanted to provoke civil war (as Stalin himself knew). The Soviet leader allowed this ambiguity to persist in part because he wanted to avoid tying his own hands, and in part because of uncertainty in the Soviet decision-making process. The records of the meetings between Secchia, Zhdanov, and Stalin and other archival documents on the Cominform reveal these conflicting aspects of the Soviet Union's reaction to the launching of the Marshall Plan.⁵⁷

The evolution of Soviet policy toward the PCI and the Italian question in late 1947 and early 1948 did not seem fully adequate to cope with the challenge initiated by the Cominform. In vain, the Italian Communists urged the Soviet Union to make an official pledge of economic and food aid in the event of a leftist victory in national elections. Stalin claimed that this request was dangerous and that any such move would be interpreted as a violation of Italian national sovereignty.⁵⁸ The Soviet Union thus adhered firmly to the rule of avoiding interference outside its own sphere of influence – interference that might prove costly in Eastern Europe. This stance implied the need for a degree of passivity vis-à-vis Western Europe.

The mixed signals conveyed by Moscow to the PCI reemerged at a secret meeting between Togliatti and Soviet Ambassador Kostylev on 23 March 1948. Togliatti asked about the Soviet leadership's view of the possibility of armed insurrection. Togliatti did not exclude serious provocations against the Popular Front before and after the elections, and he reaffirmed that the PCI must be prepared for any possibility; including that of an armed insurrection in northern Italy. Molotov's response was quick: On 26 March he sent a telegram to Kostylev ordering him to inform Togliatti that the Soviet leadership believed that armed conflict would be appropriate only if the "reactionary forces" launched a military attack. At present, he added, a Communist insurrection would be a dangerous misadventure. Molotov warned the Italian Communists not to listen to Yugoslav advice.⁵⁹

It is unclear whether Moscow knew of the scenarios for intervention in Italy that the United States had developed in early 1948.⁶⁰ More likely, Soviet

circumspection resulted from a broader set of concerns. Soviet policy makers were focusing their attention on Germany, on consolidating the Eastern bloc, and on the potential for serious conflict with Yugoslavia. Stalin had concluded that any significant involvement by either the Soviet Union or the newly solidified “socialist camp” in a conflict in a Western country would be a grave mistake. The paradoxical consequence was that the PCI’s electoral defeat had no appreciable effect on Soviet-PCI relations, though it would have been easy for Stalin to claim that the outcome was further proof of the hazards of “parliamentary illusions” and of the party’s belated or inadequate compliance with Cominform directives. In private, however, the Soviet leader must have seen the Italian elections of April 1948 as a turning point – just as the United States had.⁶¹ The results not only confirmed the failure of the strategy adopted by West European Communist parties after the establishment of the Cominform, but also demonstrated the tenacity of the forces of the enemy “camp.” As a result, the Soviet Union deemed it even more appropriate to define its security concerns within the narrow limits of the Eastern bloc. From this point on, the policy of attempting to prevent the formation of a cohesive Western bloc was largely abandoned.

The interaction between Moscow and the West European Communist parties in 1943–1947 is best understood in the context of the struggle between moderate and radical forces within the Communist movement as a whole. The Soviet Union exercised its influence in favor of moderate tendencies, particularly in France and Italy, because it wished to avoid international conflicts and overexposure. The stress on moderation meant that West European Communist parties were to pursue political alliances, prevent civil war, and put forth platforms of national unity in the domestic arena and keep Europe from dividing into blocs in the international arena. But this policy was not equivalent to a consistent strategy.

Stalin’s policy toward the PCI and other West European Communist parties was not part of a grand strategy to spread Communism in Europe. Instead, it was formulated entirely in response to narrow Soviet interests. The Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan pushed the West European Communists into political isolation, which weakened their credentials as national forces and compromised their chances for governing. These shortcomings practically guaranteed the PCI’s electoral defeat in April 1948. Opposition to the Marshall Plan proved to be an insurmountable disadvantage for the West European Communist parties, and it was compounded by the psychological impact on the West of the founding of the Cominform and the coup in Czechoslovakia. Although more radical options were set aside, the mass mobilization promoted by the Italian Communists produced the opposite of the desired effect. Rather than being seen as an indispensable part of the government, the PCI increasingly found itself with little more than a propagandistic role, as in the futile campaign against Italy’s membership in the Atlantic Pact. The

Italian Communists proclaimed that they wanted to defend Italy's "national sovereignty" against US hegemony at the very time that the East European Communists had been forced to yield their sovereignty to the Soviet bloc. To ensure the cohesion of Communist identity the PCI kept up the myth surrounding the Soviet Union, but this very myth prevented the party from expanding its influence in Italian society. Despite the mass character and social base of the PCI, it gained only a peripheral role in Italian politics during the early Cold War and after. In this manner the policies of Stalin and Togliatti from 1944 to 1948 defined the limits of Communist activity for decades to come.

Notes

- 1 For a detailed analysis of the years 1943 to 1948, see Silvio Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia. L'Urss, il Pci e le origini della guerra fredda (1943-1948)* (Rome: Carocci, 1999).
- 2 See R. C. Raack, *Stalin's Drive to the West 1938-1945: The Origins of the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995). See also Douglas J. Macdonald, "Communist Bloc Expansion in the Early Cold War: Challenging Realism, Refuting Revisionism," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 152-188.
- 3 Elena Aga-Rossi and Victor Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin. Il Pci e la politica estera staliniana negli archivi di Mosca* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997).
- 4 Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 21.
- 5 Letter from Togliatti to Dimitrov, 14 October 1943, Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsialno-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI), Fond (F.) 495, Opis' (Op.) 74, Delo (D.) 256, Listy (Ll.) 45-47. See also Francesca Gori and Silvio Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca. L'Urss, il Cominform e il Pci*, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, *Annali*, Vol. 7 (Rome: Carocci, 1998), doc. 4. As early as a few months before, immediately after the fall of Fascism in Italy in July 1943, Togliatti had sent Dimitrov two letters that advanced moderate proposals. The letters had supported the formation of a government of broad alliances and a future convocation of a Constituent Assembly, but they required the king to abdicate. Letters from Togliatti to Dimitrov, 27 July, 30 July, and 14 October 1943, RGASPI, F. 495, Op. 74, D. 256, Ll. 35, 35 ob., 39-40. See also Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, docs. 1, 2, 4.
- 6 Memorandum, Molotov to Stalin, 18 October 1943, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AVPRF), F. 06, Op. 5b, Papka (Pap.) 39, D. 6, L. 22.
- 7 Memorandum from Molotov to Stalin, 18 October 1943, AVPRF F. 07, Op. 4, Pap. 30, D. 37, Ll. 12-16.
- 8 Letter from Vyshinskii to Molotov, [January 1944], AVPRF, F. 07, Op. 5, Pap. 53, D. 230a, Ll. 1-2.
- 9 Letter from Dimitrov to Molotov, 24 January 1944, RGASPI, F. 495, Op. 74, D. 259, L. 3-4; and Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, doc. 8.
- 10 "Posetiteli kremlevskogo kabineta I. V. Stalina," *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, No. 4 (1998), p. 199.
- 11 Georgi Dimitrov, *Dnevnik 9 mart 1933-6 februari 1945* (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Ohridski," 1977), pp. 409-10. See also Letter from Dimitrov to Molotov, 1 March 1944, RGASPI, F. 495, Op. 74, D. 259, L. 8.
- 12 See Ennio Di Nolfo, "La svolta di Salerno come problema internazionale," in Antonio Varsori, ed., *La politica estera italiana nel secondo dopoguerra (1943-1957)* (Milano: LED, 1993), pp. 117-139.
- 13 For such interpretation, see Elena Aga-Rossi and Victor Zaslavsky, "The Soviet Union and the Italian Communist Party, 1944-8," in Francesca Gori and Silvio Pons, eds.,

- The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War 1943–53* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 161–184; and Aga-Rossi and Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin*. For a criticism of these authors' inclination to disregard the role of the Badoglio government and of Togliatti, see Ennio Di Nolfo, "I vincoli internazionali di una democrazia incompiuta," in Agostino Giovagnoli, ed., *Interpretazioni della repubblica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), p. 123.
- 14 It should be noted that at the beginning of March 1944 it was Togliatti, not Stalin or Molotov, who requested a meeting before leaving the USSR. Letter from Dimitrov to Molotov, 1 March 1944, RGASPI, F. 495, Op. 74, D. 259, L. 7.
 - 15 "Anglichanie i Amerikantsy khotyat vezde sozdat' reaktivnyye pravitel'stva," *Istochnik*, No. 4 (1995), pp. 152–158. See Mikhail Narinskii, "Stalin, Togliatti e Thorez (1944–48)," in Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, pp. 71–84.
 - 16 See Silvio Pons, "In the Aftermath of the Age of Wars: The Impact of World War Two on Soviet Security Policy," in Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano, eds., *Russia in the Age of Wars 1914–1945*, Fondazione Feltrinelli, *Annali*, Vol. 34 (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 2000), pp. 277–307.
 - 17 Letters from Bogomolov to Vyshinskii, 9 March, 6 April, and [June 1944], AVPRF F. 098, Op. 27, Pap. 159, D. 11, Ll. 2–17, 9–32, 70–86; and Letter from Bogomolov to Molotov, [June 1944], AVPRF, F. 07, Op. 5, Pap. 44, D. 104, L. 10–15.
 - 18 Bogomolov, Memorandum, [September 1944], AVPRF, F. 098, Op. 27, Pap. 159, D. 11, Ll. 103–108.
 - 19 Pons, "In the Aftermath of the Age of Wars," pp. 283 ff.
 - 20 Direzione, Verbali, 16–18 December 1944, Archivio del partito comunista italiano, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome (hereinafter referred to as APC), Mf. 272.
 - 21 Record of the meeting between Stalin and Churchill, 9 October 1944, RGASPI, F. 558, Op. 11, D. 283, Ll. 12–13.
 - 22 Bruno Arcidiacono, *Le "précédent italien" et les origines de la guerre froide. Les alliés et l'occupation de l'Italie 1943–44* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 1984).
 - 23 On the question of Trieste, see Giampaolo Valdevit, "The Search for Symmetry: A Tentative View of Trieste, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War," in Gori and Pons, eds., *Soviet Union and Europe*, pp. 395–411; and Leonid Gibianskii, "Mosca, il PCI e la questione di Trieste," in Gori and Pons, *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, pp. 85–133.
 - 24 Dimitrov, *Dnevnik*, p. 465; Record of the meeting between Kostylev and Togliatti, 19 February 1945, AVPRF, F. 098, Op. 26, P. 152, D. 8, L. 65; Record of the meeting between Michail Kostylev and Togliatti, 1 April 1945, AVPRF F. 098, Op. 26, P. 152, D. 8, L. 182; and Letter from V. Dekanozov to A. Paniushkin, 20 April 1945, RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 42, L. 10.
 - 25 Dimitrov to Molotov, 6 March 1945, RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 799, Ll. 2–3; Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, doc. 10.
 - 26 Togliatti's notes in APC, Direzioni, Verbali 13 May 1945, Mf. 272. Record of the meeting between Kostylev and Reale, 23 May 1945, AVPRF F. 098, Op. 26, Pap. 152, D. 8, Ll. 383–384. Togliatti sharply criticized Tito's conduct in a letter to Dimitrov around mid-May 1945. Dimitrov to Stalin, 18 May 1945, RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 716, Ll. 45–47; and Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, doc. 11.
 - 27 Dimitrov, *Dnevnik*, p. 480.
 - 28 Milovan Gilas, *Se la memoria non m'inganna. Ricordi di un uomo scomodo 1943–1962* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1987), p. 106. The English version is entitled Milovan Djilas, *Rise and Fall* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1985).
 - 29 Vojtech Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare, and the Politics of Communism, 1941–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 261.
 - 30 Togliatti believed that this approach would also, indirectly, solve the problem of Trieste. Conversation between Togliatti and Pierro Sraffa, n.d., Pierro Sraffa papers, Trinity College, Diaries, E 53, September–October 1945, 20bis–21. I am grateful to

Dr. Chiara Daniele of the Gramsci Foundation for the record of this conversation between Togliatti and Sraffa.

- 31 Palmiro Togliatti, Carte della scrivania, 19 June 1946, APC.
- 32 Comitato centrale, Verbali, 18 September 1946, APC.
- 33 Interview republished in *Bol'shevik* (Moscow), No. 17–18 (September 1946), p. 3.
- 34 Dimitrov, *Dnevnik*, p. 535.
- 35 "Pervye pisma s kholodnoi voyny," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, No. 11 (1990), pp. 138–154.
- 36 Nikolai V. Novikov, *Vospominaniya diplomata: Zapiski 1938–1947* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1989), pp. 352–353.
- 37 Vladimir O. Pechatnov, "'Strel'ba kholostymi': sovetskaya propaganda na Zapad v nachale kholodnoi voyny, 1945–1947," in Il'ia V. Gaiduk, Natalia I. Egorova, and Aleksandr O. Chubar'ian, eds., *Stalin i kholodnaya voina* (Moscow: IVI RAN, 1998), p. 192.
- 38 Togliatti's speech to the Central Committee, Comitato Centrale, Verbali, 19–21 November 1946, APC.
- 39 R. Gualtieri, *Togliatti e la politica estera italiana. Dalla Resistenza al trattato di pace 1943–1947* (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1995), pp. 199 ff.
- 40 Shevlyagin to Suslov, [June 1947], RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 1101, L. 142; and Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, doc. 17.
- 41 Comitato Centrale, Verbali, 1–4 July 1947, APC.
- 42 Letter from Zhdanov to Thorez, 2 June 1947, RGASPI, F. 77, Op. 3, D. 89, L. 7.
- 43 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Krushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 129. It should be noted that, as far as we know, the content of Zhdanov's letter to Thorez was made known by the Soviet Union to East European Communist leaders and to Harry Pollitt, but not to Togliatti. See Draft letters from Molotov to Dimitrov, Rakosi, Gheorghiu-Dej, Pollitt, Gottwald, and Tito, RGASPI, F. 77, Op. 3, D. 89.
- 44 Record of the meeting between Kostylev and Terracini, 3 July 1947, AVPRF, F. 098, Op. 30, Pap. 170, D. 13, L. 7.
- 45 Renzo Martinelli and Maria Luisa Righi, eds., *La politica del partito comunista italiano nel periodo costituente. I verbali della direzione tra il V e il VI Congresso, 1946–1948*, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, *Annali*, Vol. 2 (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1992), pp. 431–432 and 450.
- 46 Dimitrov, *Dnevnik*, p. 556.
- 47 For a more detailed analysis of the Cominform's impact on the PCI, see Silvio Pons, "A Challenge Let Drop: Soviet Foreign Policy, the Cominform, and the PCI, 1947–8," in Gori and Pons, eds., *Soviet Union and Europe*, pp. 246–263. For the Cominform papers, see Giuliano Procacci et al., *The Cominform. Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947/1948/1949*, Fondazione Feltrinelli, *Annali*, Vol. 30 (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1994).
- 48 Memorandum, Zhdanov to Stalin, [end of August 1947], RGASPI, F. 77, Op. 3, D. 90, L. 14.
- 49 E. Collotti, ed., *Archivio Pietro Secchia 1945–1973*, Fondazione Feltrinelli, *Annali*, Vol. 19 (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1979), p. 208; Leonid Gibianskii, "Kak voznik Kominform. Po novym arkhivnym materialam," *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 4 (1993), pp. 131–152.
- 50 Eugenio Reale, *Nascita del Cominform* (Milan: Mondadori, 1958), p. 17. The basic reliability of Reale's memoirs, written after his abandonment of the party, has been largely confirmed by the new archival documentation.
- 51 *Soveshchaniya Kominforma. 1947, 1948, 1949. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1998).
- 52 Martinelli and Righi, eds., *La politica del partito comunista italiano*, pp. 498–500, 526; and Comitato Centrale, Verbali, 11–13 November 1947, APC.

- 53 Josif V. Stalin and Maurice Thorez, "Zapis' besedy v Kremle. 1947 g.," *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, No. 1 (1996), pp. 4–26; and Collotti, *Archivio Secchia*, pp. 211, 422–426.
- 54 "Zapis' besedy Zhdanova s sekretarem TsK kompartii Italii tov. Sekkia, sostoyavshcheisya 12 dekabrya 1947 goda," RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 1101, L. 184; Zhdanov's handwritten notes, RGASPI, F. 77, Op. 3, D. 90, Ll. 86–90. "O taktike italyanskoi kompartii v nastoyashee vremia," [December 1947], RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 1101, Ll. 6–14; "Stenogramma vystupleniya TsK kompartii Italii t. Sekkia Pietro," 16 December 1947, RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 1074, Ll. 240–260; and Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, docs. 18, 19, and 21.
- 55 I. Stalin, "Mozhem dat' dva meshka deneg," *Istochnik*, No. 5–6 (1993), pp. 124–126; and Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, doc. 20.
- 56 "Zapis' besedy Zhdanova," RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 128, D. 1101, L. 185.
- 57 See the essays of Giuliano Procacci, Anna Di Biagio, and Silvio Pons in Giuliano Procacci *et al.*, eds., *The Cominform*.
- 58 Gori and Pons, eds., *Dagli archivi di Mosca*, doc. 22.
- 59 The report on the secret conversation between Kostylev and Togliatti on 23 March 1948 and Molotov's subsequent telegram of 26 March 1948 are kept in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation. I would like to thank Mikhail M. Narinskii for allowing me to cite these documents. On Yugoslav pressure exerted on the PCI at the beginning of 1948, see Gilas, *Se la memoria non m'inganna*, p. 154.
- 60 See J. E. Miller, "Taking the Gloves Off: The United States and the Italian Elections of 1948," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter 1983), pp. 34–55.
- 61 Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 214.

HEGEMONY AND AUTONOMY WITHIN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

Charles S. Maier

Within Western Europe and Eastern Europe, parties, groups, and classes within nations pursued their own interests and ideals. They set constraints upon what the Great Powers could do or they helped shape the interaction of the US and USSR with one another. In turn, the United States and the Soviet Union devised policies that accommodated, modified, or crushed these longings for autonomy and self-expression.

The United States had immense power at the end of the Second World War, but it could not and did not simply impose its will on its partners in the Western alliance. According to the Norwegian historian Geir Lundestad the American empire was an 'empire by invitation,' an empire beckoned by others as well as designed to further US interests. Historians like John Gaddis and Charles Maier have adopted this model of analysis and have used it to differentiate the 'Pax Americana' in Western Europe from the Soviet empire that emerged in Eastern Europe.*

In this essay Maier seeks to assess the structure of coordination in the Atlantic alliance. Shared values among elites were critical to the success of US policy, and Maier shows that American officials worked hard to cultivate an ideological consensus around the theme of productivity, that is, around the notion that economic gains would allay class conflict and minimize redistributive struggles. But US officials had to do more than forge an ideological consensus. They had to grapple with the unique problems within various European nations, and they had to accommodate national aspirations such as France's insistence on controlling German power and Britain's determination to sustain a global presence.

So fearful were US policymakers of Communist gains and Soviet machinations that European statesmen often manipulated American apprehensions to serve their own national advantage. Maier describes here how this was done, how European officials often transformed their weakness into strength. This was a laborious and time-consuming process that often exposed dissension and vulnerability in the Western camp. Yet in the long run the give and take infused the Western alliance

* Geir Lundestad, 'Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952,' *Journal of Peace Research*, 23 (September 1986): 263–277.

with a sense of shared purpose and mutual interdependence that was far more durable than anything the Soviet Union could establish in Eastern Europe. Readers should explore why this type of 'consensual hegemony' could be brought about in one part of Europe but not in the other.

* * *

"Pax Americana" is a resonant term that conceals a crucial question: How much power and control did the United States exert in postwar Europe? US policy involved organizing a coalition of nations, encouraging European leaders who shared the political objectives of the United States, and seeking to isolate those who did not. It meant using economic assistance as well as the appeal of a liberal ideology to reinforce centrist political preferences among European voting publics and working-class movements. At the same time Washington policymakers were supposedly committed to encouraging European autonomy. How did alliance and autonomy mesh?

The premise of this essay is that, given the basic inequality of resources after the Second World War, it would have been very difficult for any system of economic linkages or military alliance not to have generated an international structure analogous to empire. Hegemony was in the cards, which is not to say that Americans did not enjoy exercising it (once they resolved to pay for it). To state this, however, is to explain little. The more intriguing issue remains the degree to which the US ascendancy allowed scope for European autonomy. The relationship worked out between Washington and the European centers during the formative Truman years provided cohesive political purpose but simultaneously allowed significant national independence. To explain that dual result is the purpose of this essay.

From Washington's viewpoint as of 1950, US policy might have been described as a process of growing coherence and resolution. From a confused postwar period in which most Americans thought primarily of winding down their wartime commitments, the Truman administration recognized the threat of Soviet Communist expansionism, provided economic and military reassurances that the United States would not simply abandon those who wished to resist Soviet encroachment, launched a major coordinated plan for economic recovery, and then served as architect for a military alliance and tentative political cooperation. Under the aegis of containment and the leadership of Truman, Americans committed themselves to a continuing role in West European affairs. Whether one admires the process of leadership or deplors it as provocative, certainly the policy of the Truman years – carried through by a remarkable phalanx of internationalists such as Robert Lovett, Averell Harriman, George Marshall, and Dean Acheson, all trained to influence and command, and convinced that Washington must in fact exert influence and command – is one of remarkable purposefulness.

To be sure, this policy could not have enjoyed success had there been no West European interlocutors, a team of partners who quickly became

convinced that their own countries' interests, and perhaps their own personal political fortunes, were best served by alignment in the new field of US strength. As noted, such a transnational elite forms the backbone of any imperial system. Nevertheless, Europeans had their own problems and their own priorities. These did not always coincide with American preoccupations, even when common interests prescribed the same overall policies. Moreover, Europeans from the different countries understood how to pursue their own independent agendas under the US umbrella. This freedom of action did not weaken Washington's policies. On the contrary, it allowed US actions to seem less dominating and less constraining and thus probably helped make for a more broadly accepted policy. Precisely this possibility for national divergence made American policies more supple and more attractive than they might otherwise have been. John Gaddis has used the term "empire by consent," and I have used "consensual hegemony." But how was that consent achieved? And how could there be national differentiation within an overarching US-sponsored Atlantic structure?

The major slogan invented to describe US policies was "containment." In some ways containment remained an American concept. It defined policy as seen from the Great Power center. Europeans accepted the notion, but it did not motivate them in the same integrating and substantive way. They remained concerned about economic recovery, economic integration, and national autonomy as much within blocs as between them. Here we will attempt to see the interlocking of the US agenda and the Washington conceptualization of foreign policy with some of the European agendas and their respective notions of foreign policy objectives. There was much shared purpose to be sure, perhaps more than in any earlier or subsequent period. But even with the extraordinary consensus of the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, different national objectives did not cease to exist.

US policy obviously had a political and an economic aspect. I have described the economic aspect in an earlier paper as "the politics of productivity."¹ Unlike "containment," this was not a term applied by policymakers at the time. None the less, the watchword of productivity became important in 1947 as the Marshall Plan (substantial aid to an integrated West European region) emerged out of the ad hoc aid characteristic of immediate postwar efforts.

Aid through early 1947 was keyed to relief. But by the spring of that year, Washington planners, cold war politics aside, believed that that approach would remain insufficient. In effect, foreign assistance would have to recapitulate the earlier progress of the New Deal, going from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to the Public Works Administration and Work Projects Administration – that is, from relief to job creation and to investment in infrastructure. To be sure, the proximate impulse in the spring of 1947 for Marshall's initiative arose from a balance of payments crisis. Europe simply lacked the dollars to import agricultural goods, coal, and other basic necessities. The severe winter of 1947 had choked off the initial recovery of 1946.

European workers were losing patience with counsels of restraint; strikes broke out and political conflict flared. Fuel was catastrophically scarce because coal barges could not move on the frozen northern rivers and German miners were weakened by hunger. Factories had to be cut back to partial work weeks. With massive discontent among labor, all efforts appeared blighted. The need was to rebuild the European economy so it would not be in a state of perpetual dollar hemorrhage. The moment had come for a concept of far more integrated West European assistance, if only to persuade Congress that relief would not be poured perpetually down a rathole.²

As the European Recovery Program [ERP] was established over the course of the following year, with its country missions and Washington Economic Cooperation Administration [ECA] headquarters, the rationale of enhancing "productivity" was increasingly developed. Productivity was the allegedly apolitical criterion that motivated recovery assistance. Just as the idea of "totalitarianism" offered an explanatory construct that could account for Soviet behavior, so "productivity" could serve to sum up American economic aspirations. Productivity was an index of efficiency: it implied clearing away bottlenecks to production and getting the highest output from labor and capital, just as the United States had so obviously accomplished. Productivity supposedly dictated no political interference; for what groups could object to such a neutral measure of economic achievement?

Productivity suggested that class conflict was not inevitable and that management and labor did not have to quarrel over the shares of wages and profits. If they only cooperated, the dividend of economic growth might reward them both. Thus, economic growth in a sense promised the adjournment of political and social conflict; it would transform basic struggles into cooperative searches for optimal economic solutions, "the one best way."

Of course, there was an implicit politics in productivity. It effectively declared out of bounds any Marxist or left-wing notion that capitalism itself might be inequitable. Only self-serving parties interested in their own selfish power could object to economic growth. Acceptance of productivity as a goal effectively froze the division of income and managerial power in a society, promising proportional increments of growth to everyone but keeping the basic distributions of authority and wealth the same. Americans were willing to accept this bargain, as agreement on productivity-keyed wages indicated. The United States was a society whose immigrant base in effect wagered on growth alone for prosperity.

But applied to Europe, such a policy meant by 1947-8 that Communist spokesmen must be viewed as obstructionist, especially after the Soviet Union decided that it could not participate in the Marshall Plan and in the fall of 1947 urged Communist party leaders in the West to enter a new phase of long-term obstruction.³ Instead, productivity served to rally social democratic labor groups. French and Italian social democrats were dissatisfied with galloping inflation in their countries and wanted the restoration of wage differentials, which Communists opposed. Leaders of the Force Ouvrière in France, the

non-Communist trade unionists in Italy, and the anti-Communist Trades Union Congress in Britain looked to US government assistance or sympathetic American Federation of Labor emissaries with well-upholstered checkbooks to help them resist Communist politicization and subversion of their own unions.⁴ Productivity thus came to Europe as the ideological watchword of a coalition that would unite progressive management and collaborative labor.

In the United States the idea of productivity was complemented by the theme of sustained economic growth; the first reference to this – outside academic journals – that I am aware of was in the speeches of the New Dealish chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Leon Keyserling.⁵ Growth and productivity were to remain underlying guidelines for foreign policy. Even as they were being crowded out after Korea by more purely military and security-oriented concepts, Atlantic leaders invoked their efficacy. “The improvement of productivity, in its widest sense, remains the fundamental problem of Western Europe,” spokesmen of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] wrote in 1952. And Thomas Cabot, the director of international security affairs in the State Department, insisted as he turned over the Mutual Security Program to its incoming director, Averell Harriman, “In my view we have been remiss in not giving productivity greater emphasis . . . If we can sell Europe on the fundamental advantages of a *competitive* and reasonably free system of enterprise, I have no doubt the standard of living there will advance soon to a level where there is no danger whatever of its being subverted.”⁶

The politics of productivity, however, formed only one key concept underlying US policy in the years after 1947. The other was the more geopolitical notion of containment and national security. Productivity and containment were the twin themes of postwar US foreign policy: the one upbeat, can-do, confident that with the removal of bottlenecks, abundance could reconcile all political differences; the other somber, minor-key, predicting twilight struggles and the need for untiring resistance until rivulets of reform might eventually thaw the frozen Soviet political system. The simultaneous pursuit of both ideas allowed the bipartisan foreign policy coalition enough unity at home to overcome isolationism, rallying former New Dealers and interventionist strategic thinkers.

The objectives of containment and productivity characterized policy in general, but they also suggested different needs for different European societies. Washington policymakers worked to encourage an integrated Western Europe, but they also understood that each country had particular vulnerability and potential resources. A common urgency underlay the crisis of 1947 – the conviction that Western Europe was an entity that in effect had to be created to be preserved. But there was no undifferentiated bloc; there were specific problems, opportunities, and missions.

The European countries seemed to pose three sorts of challenge for US policy during the Truman period. The most urgent and brutal was that of

direct Communist takeover. The image of countries slipping behind the Iron Curtain, of being “lost” to Communism, prompted the articulation of containment. Communist takeover could result from armed subversion, as the Truman administration beheld it in Turkey and Greece. But Communist takeover need not be military. The Italian government in 1947 and early 1948 seemed almost as precarious. Italy’s Communist Party appeared to have the power to paralyze economic reform – to be sure, reform carried out along classical deflationary lines that restored management’s power to lay off workers, which had been effectively suspended at liberation. Even sober American observers believed that the April 1948 elections might return the Communists to a dominant government role.⁷

Direct Communist takeover was not the only danger, however. More threatening was the danger of political and economic paralysis. Institutional crises would continue to affect Italy even after the peril of outright takeover seemed to pass, and they threatened French governments as well. Although Americans worried briefly in 1947 that Gaullist electoral gains might prompt Communist counteraction, they became more concerned that the government’s inability to master inflation might force the centrist parties to readmit the Communist Party to the ruling coalition of Catholics, socialists, and center parties. The outcome that was dreaded was less direct takeover than an inability to generate productivity and recovery – a vicious circle of inflationary wage settlements and continuing state deficits, growing alienation of labor, and eventually a debilitating neutralism.

These dangers overcome, a third order of difficulty still threatened Washington’s overall design. By 1949, “integration” had become a major theme of economic and political aspirations.⁸ Although some degree of integration had stamped the Marshall Plan from its inception, Paul Hoffman and other administrators pressed the idea vigorously as the European Recovery Program went into its postcrisis phase. Integration had traditionally implied working toward a common market, but in 1948–9, it referred specifically to achieving monetary convertibility. Without multilateral clearances, US subsidies could not generate their most efficient stimulus.

Communist takeover, economic paralysis, and resistance to integration thus emerged as successive perils to US policy for Europe. The countries most worrisome in 1947 were the least-so later. The societies least vulnerable at first were to become more problematic when integration was at stake. But US policymakers also understood that the European countries brought different assets as well as difficulties. The European nations would make diverse contributions to the common effort.

West Germany clearly had an economic vocation. Even as food shortages provoked demonstrations and coal output fell in the spring of 1947, Americans sought to draw on German mining and industrial potential. American businessmen, trade unionists, and political leaders alike believed that German resources could serve Western Europe as a whole. “The best reparations our Western Allies can obtain is the prompt recovery of Germany,” Secretary of

Commerce Harriman reported to Truman after his investigations of the summer of 1947. "We cannot revive a self-supporting Western European economy without a healthy Germany playing its part as a producing and consuming unit."⁹

Assigning West Germany a role as an eventual economic "locomotive" was possible because politically the country remained under effective control. In light of developments in East Germany, Communism exercised no mass appeal in the West. Socialism was also an excluded alternative. Once the United States took a leading role within the British and American zones, British sympathizers had to defer their plans for the socialization of coal and steel industries in North Rhine-Westphalia, and the Social Democratic Party [SPD] itself retreated into an opposition stance. The possibilities of socialism had been minimal. SPD enthusiasm had been overrated, and the British had never really pressed for it; there was little Labour Party involvement in occupation affairs.¹⁰

West Germany had an economic mission; France, Britain, and the small countries of Western Europe had political roles to play in the new Western Europe. Administration policymakers believed that these countries were needed to generate stability and Western cooperation. The initial response of both Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault to Marshall's speech promised that both countries would take the lead in the new Europe. But France's cooperation was proffered precisely to head off too quick a rehabilitation of Germany. French leaders had to be persuaded to come to terms with the economic role that West Germany must logically play, just as two years later they would have to be pressed into accepting a German military role. "The goal of the European Recovery Program is fundamentally political," said Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett in December 1948, "and France is the keystone of continental Western Europe."¹¹

If France was to be the political keystone, stability had to be ensured inside the country. This meant creating the conditions for a non-Communist coalition to prosper. As early as October 1947, in a striking application of the politics of productivity, Under-Secretary Lovett urged working-class schism: "Politically speaking the break must come to the left of or at the very least in the middle of the French Socialist Party. Translated into labor terms, the healthy elements of organized labor must be kept in the non-Communist camp. Otherwise the tiny production margin of the fragile French economy would vanish and the ensuing civil disturbances would take on the aspects of civil war."¹²

Once the schism did materialize, the task was to brake inflation and restrain wages. Emphasizing that Americans "did not want to take sides in internal French politics," Lovett said that it would be hard to continue aid unless "a strong, unified and cooperative non-Communist government . . . put the French house in order."¹³ Such a "nonpolitical" agenda included balancing the budget and ending inflation.

American Treasury officials were pleased with the anti-inflationary policies of René Mayer and Maurice Petsche. Acheson could turn to Paris again to

work for European integration: "France and France alone can take the decisive leadership in integrating Western Germany into Western Europe."¹⁴

Britain also had a political vocation in American eyes. Over the long term, European recovery required meshing resources and production, thus freeing trade and payments from early postwar restrictions. Britain had the least scarred economy and the closest cultural links to the Americans, hence it appeared as a natural leader. But the British devoted their cooperative efforts largely to military matters. With great fanfare Bevin called for a "consolidation of Western Europe" in January 1948, but he proposed building on the Treaty of Dunkirk directed against Germany and helped produce the West European Union, a rather empty institutional vessel designed to encourage Washington to enter a defense commitment.¹⁵ Emphasizing a military role would give Britain more parity with the United States, whereas economic integration would undermine the Commonwealth resources. By 1949 Americans were chafing at London's unwillingness to upgrade the political status of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation [OEEC] and at British resistance to monetary convertibility.¹⁶ British assistance in Korea and the post-1950 emphasis on military cooperation compensated for foot-dragging on economic integration. None the less, London's reluctance to strengthen European institutions remained a disappointment.

Washington policymakers thus dealt with a complex European agenda. They sought to overcome the dangers of Communist paralysis in Italy and France, to mobilize the economic potential of West Germany, to press France as continental "keystone" to allow German integration, and to move Britain toward more far-ranging economic cooperation. They also relied on the small countries to provide a basis for Europe's new supranational agencies, the staffs of NATO, the Coal-Steel Authority, and the OEEC. This very differentiation of tasks, however, provided special political leverage for the European countries. Precisely because US policymakers envisaged a differentiated set of national problems and contributions, scope was provided for each country's political strategies. It is these very strategies that make European history during the Cold War more than just a mere shadow of US power and motivation. European statesmen understood what Washington needed from them and could extract concessions in return. De Gasperi in Italy, the leaders of the French "third force" (from Bidault to Mayer to Monnet and Schuman), Konrad Adenauer in West Germany, and finally the British leadership (a combination of Labour ministers and persuasive Treasury and Foreign Office officials) used the new Atlantic Community for national as well as cold war ends.

For Italy, weakness was itself a strategy. By the spring of 1947, de Gasperi sought to reconstruct his government without the Communists. Throughout 1946 the Christian Democrats had built up their machine in Italy but economic difficulties mounted. When the economic officer of the American embassy, Henry Tasca, returned to Washington in May 1947, he reported a "lack of confidence on the part of the strategic economic groups in the ability of the

government to direct and control the country." The Communists were benefiting from the very fear that they might come to power.¹⁷ At the same time Italian Ambassador Alberto Tarchiani sought guarantees from Secretary of State Marshall: if de Gasperi reconstructed his government without the Communists, would he be assured of the economic aid needed to counter the obstruction that was feared? No specific promises could be brought back from Washington, although the crisis lingered even as Marshall made his celebrated Harvard commencement address.

This implicit dependence continued through the 1948 elections. Italy sought aid from the United States by constantly stressing the precariousness of non-Communist democracy. De Gasperi received fewer promises of special assistance than he desired, but he could work within the overall context of the emerging Marshall Plan. When Washington sought to press large amounts of military aid on Italy in early 1948, however, he was shrewd enough to understand that the Americans' fear of a military coup was exaggerated and that such an arsenal could only discredit him if it became public knowledge.

The Italian premier understood how to exploit the politics of dependence. More than elsewhere the fate of the Christian Democrats depended on American intervention; hence it was in de Gasperi's interest to insist on his country's political and economic fragility. He stressed his difficulties in seeking a favorable decision on Trieste and, less successfully, on the Italian colonies. By 1948–9, the Italian authorities' emphasis on deflationary stabilization, even at the cost of rising unemployment, dismayed ECA supervisors, while the State Department similarly resented subordinating Italian defense expenditures to the stability of the lira. But it was hard to exert too much pressure. Even when the Christian Democrats enjoyed a majority after April 1948, the internal party balance was precarious.

Washington sought to encourage the more cooperative and less right-wing and deflation-minded currents. It was also essential in Washington's eyes to keep the Saragat wing of the Social Democrats within the coalition so as to prevent the Italian working class from falling completely under Communist domination.¹⁸ Thus Italy's plea to be included in NATO had to be honored despite the extended defense commitment this entailed and the negligible military assistance the nation might provide. To keep Rome out would have signaled a continuing stigma and undermined the Italian government. Domestic stability was more at stake than military defense. In short, Italy was included in NATO not because of its strength but because of its weakness.¹⁹

Throughout 1947, French governments were constrained to pursue a tactic similar to that of de Gasperi. Until the winter of 1947–8, Bidault still entertained aspirations that France might retain control of the German Rhineland, the French zone of occupation, and a share in administering the Ruhr. The French minister repeatedly importuned the Americans and the British that unless they heeded French wishes toward Germany the fragile centrist government that had expelled the Communists might collapse. Ambassador

Caffery faithfully conveyed a sense of the Ramadier government's standing at the political brink: aid or Armageddon.²⁰

Such pleading might win US willingness to provide more coal and financial aid, but it could not do more than slow down Anglo-American insistence that Germany must be made a more paying concern. After long internal debate, in early 1948 the French openly came round, and accepted that their older ideas of a hold on the Rhineland were unrealistic and that they had to endorse West German institutions. French political strategy became less supplicating, more autonomous. By 1948 it was hard to play the menace of the Communists so convincingly. If Caffery could always signal alarms, Tomlinson and other US economic officials wanted action to raise taxes and curb expenditures. Efforts to curb inflation won recognition from Washington.

But firming up policy at home was only part of the French response. The other was to carve out some limited scope for foreign policy autonomy. While British statesmen aspired to be the experienced, senior counselors in an Anglo-American military-political framework, the French in effect sought a secondary, subhegemony within NATO. Abandoning their early effort to retain control over a segment of West Germany, the French sought to satisfy US demands that they take the lead in "integrating" West Germany back into the West. The political genius of the Schuman Plan lay in the fact that it could please Washington, even as it capitalized on the fact that Bonn was momentarily weak but would soon be industrially and perhaps politically resurgent. In effect, Monnet and Schuman offered to serve as Bonn's patrons at a point when Adenauer could not really carry out an independent foreign policy.

Paris also insisted on Italian membership in NATO over British and even American skepticism.²¹ The theoretical reason was that France must otherwise defend its long Italian frontier; but the French also wished to become Rome's patron as well as Bonn's. To Rome, France offered military collegue-ship; to Bonn, economic partnership. Thus France became the architect of an alignment within Western Europe that seemed advantageous to the United States while it also enhanced France's own role. The French were not able to achieve the tripartite OEEC or NATO directorates they periodically proposed; nevertheless, France, perhaps more than Britain, created a real European role that could serve national interests.

France retained political assets throughout the period; State Department spokesmen always recognized how crucial France was. But what about West Germany: a divided country, burdened by its recent history, distrusted by its neighbors, and, until 1955, limited in its sovereignty? Even when its cities were in ruins, Germany always retained industrial potential. Typecast as the animator of West European recovery, Germany could continually emphasize its economic vocation. German industrialists and labor leaders joined forces in petitioning for an end to dismantling and to corporate deconcentration. They found sympathetic responses from Lucius Clay's assistant, General William Draper, and later High Commissioner McCloy. German firms pressed their plans for reconstruction and expansion by citing their fervent desire to

serve as good Europeans: Thyssen would get its new rolling mills by proposing steel for the Marshall Plan.²² When France held out the Schuman Plan, Adenauer set aside any opposition on details from his own industrialists. The crucial aspect, he understood, was not whether Germany might or might not extract a few more concessions; it was the political opportunity to achieve partnership with France.

After the outbreak of the Korean War the potential of the German economy became even more prized. Emphasizing economic potential also accorded with the political tasks within West Germany. The constant appeal was for working-class loyalty; labor had to be harnessed for production. In return for codetermination, the union federation effectively accepted wage restraint until the 1960s. Pay claims were subordinated for the evident need to reconstruct the country. Workers remained suspicious of ideology after the experience of the Third Reich and in light of the unwelcome totalitarian development of East Germany. Economics was a surrogate for politics for two decades after 1947, but it was also a way of conducting politics. Reconstruction provided a sense of national purpose at home, and under Adenauer's canny supervision, coal, steel, and skilled labor were bargaining chips for recovering international autonomy. The resources of the Ruhr, reconciliation with France, reparation for Israel, and rearmament for the West became the pillars of German policy.

Within the framework of the new Western Europe, the smaller countries and Britain chose opposite courses. The Dutch and the Belgians provided the leadership and enthusiasm for the supranational agencies Americans sought to strengthen. In part their ministers may have found this new scope of activity personally rewarding. Dirk Stikker and Paul Henri Spaak were the preeminent Europeanists, although Americans had to balance Spaak's utility to the OEEC with his importance in holding together Belgium's unraveling political coalitions. In addition, Spaak (like Gunnar Myrdal, chairman of the Economic Commission for Europe in 1947-8) was distrusted by London.²³ But beyond Spaak's personal contribution, Belgium was pivotal in US calculations because of its international financial strength. US Treasury advocates of multilateralism approved of Belgium's early postwar policies, and they found Camille Gutt, who went on to chair the International Monetary Fund after presiding over Brussels's successful currency reform in 1944-5, a congenial defender of hard-currency convertibility.

In contrast to Belgium, Britain resisted multilateralism and convertibility. Within the American "hegemony" British leaders chose what a classical historian might call the Polybian strategy – that is, attempting to become the Greeks in America's Roman empire, wagering on the "special relationship" to prolong their influence and status. They brought to this role a certain historical mystique, the experience of managing an empire, the willingness to shoulder heavy defense commitments (which the Pentagon especially appreciated), memories of the wartime alliance, and the considerable resources of a common language and a prestigious culture. State Department officials

recognized that the United States was often partial to London and that British leaders "are not on occasion averse to letting their continental colleagues know they are favored above others by us."²⁴

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s US policymakers struggled against their own partiality as they criticized Britain for its retention of expensive military forces (at least before Korea), its reluctance to accept the Coal-Steel Community, and its resistance to a European Payments Union. But the web of informal associations, probably accentuated by the Anglo-Saxon descent of US foreign service officers, tempered a more ruthless approach. The British sometimes overestimated the deference that their wisdom should command and assumed that they retained the brains even if Washington commanded the money. None the less, Bevin, Sir Stafford Cripps, and civil servants such as Sir Edwin Plowden understood how to create a sympathetic mood in high-level negotiations. (Congress proved more resistant to US concessions than executive-branch officials did.) And although Britain continued to insist on the special needs of the Commonwealth, Bevin's early anti-Communism and Cripps's continuing "austerity" dissipated American charges of self-indulgence.

None the less, the Marshall Plan presented occasions for disagreement. For Washington, the greater the degree to which Europeans could diminish their balance of payments constraints by multilateral clearance of payments among themselves, the greater could be the effect of scarce dollars for Europe as a whole and the less Europe's overall dollar dependency would cost the American taxpayer. But Britain resisted moves towards free convertibility. To enter a multilateral clearing scheme threatened to require deflationary measures at home that would preclude Labour Party commitments to full employment and generous social welfare. What is more, Britain wanted to pass along Marshall Plan dollars in 1948 to its former Asian dependencies so that they would not liquidate their sterling reserves kept in London. (Much of these reserves, in effect, represented wartime loans from the colonies for the British costs incurred in their defense. They provided London with the same credit facilities that dollar convertibility gave the United States until 1973.)

US ECA and Treasury officials felt that the British were stinting on their own domestic investment for the sake of imperial grandeur, and they argued that Washington could not afford to subsidize the dollar shortages of the Third World. As with other similar issues, compromise solutions were negotiated, which is why the European Recovery Program remained workable, even if it moved less decisively toward the integration that Washington desired.²⁵

By and large throughout such negotiations US Treasury spokesmen looked to restoration of currency convertibility, which meant establishing the dollar as a universal medium of exchange. ECA planners in Washington and Paris stressed the recovery of production and consumption. Their activist economists contemplated increasing intervention into European investment plans, and they asked that Marshall Plan aid be evaluated not in monetary aggregates or financial terms but in the "real" categories of national income.²⁶

It was not surprising that expansionist concepts of domestic investment and international trade took root in the ECA, for the new agency recruited the young economists being trained in the "Keynesian revolution." But the division between ECA Keynesians and the more orthodox Treasury-IMF spokesmen testified to the ambiguities of the Truman administration, poised between New Deal legacies and a revival of more traditional economic concerns. The two major ECA officials had unconventional business backgrounds: Harriman had joined the New Deal after administering railroads, shipping, and banking; Paul Hoffman had been an organizer of the activist Committee on Economic Development, a business coalition that welcomed demand management and macroeconomic intervention. In contrast, Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder was a midwestern banker.

The ambiguities in America's foreign economic policy reflected the spectrum of approaches within the Truman administration more generally. These conflicting tendencies meant that different European countries might appeal to different sources of American authority. The deflationary leaders of Italy or of Belgium implicitly aligned with the US Treasury to resist ECA prodding; the British relied first on Marshall Plan leaders to compromise, and then on US military and political concerns to buffer Washington's would-be financial disciplinarians.

The result of these and many other bargains in the administration's European policy was to allow significant flexibility for national objectives. Washington policymakers could not smash Britain's residual imperial position, which London relied on in part to finance its welfare state. Nor could Washington push de Gasperi's Italy toward the thoroughgoing political and social modernization the Americans would doubtless have preferred. Rather, the Italian Christian Democrats knew how to use American assistance as part of their own resources for domestic patronage and political networks. The need for industrial revival in Europe provided the West Germans with their opportunity to recover political independence as well, as did the felt need for rearmament after 1950. The overarching Soviet-American bipolarity concealed how much scope there was for customized national policies and strategies to flourish. As Bevin had done in early 1948, Europeans talked boldly of integration and unity. But the policies they pursued looked toward cherished national and particularist objectives as well. US policy offered many footholds precisely because with all its stress on Western Europe as a region, it had to confront individual national needs, weaknesses, and potential resources. The Europeans responded reciprocally. On the one level, integration and unity flagged; the opportunity that the European federalists sought was not fully seized, although this slowing of impetus was more apparent in later years than during the Truman period. But the historical result of the period was truly remarkable. The scope for national political alternatives distinguished Western from Eastern Europe; it followed not from blueprints but from the compromises that policy pluralism required. In an era when Europe seemed initially demoralized as well as devastated, the

groundwork was laid not just for an imperial subordination to Washington but for a genuine revival of national traditions and of autonomous historical possibilities for Europeans.

Notes

- 1 Charles S. Maier, "The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II," in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *Between Power and Plenty: The Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 23–49.
- 2 See Michael J. Hogan, "The Search for a 'Creative Peace': The United States, European Unity, and the Origins of the Marshall Plan," *Diplomatic History*, 6(3) (Summer 1982): 267–85.
- 3 Communist policy has been interpreted differently. See Alfred Rieber, *Stalin and the French Communist Party, 1941–1947* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Wilfried Loth, "Frankreichs Kommunisten und der Beginn des kalten Krieges: Die Entlassung der Kommunistischen Minister im Mai 1947," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 26 (1978): 9–65; J. P. Hirsch, "'La seule voie possible': Remarques sur les communistes du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais de la Libération aux grèves de novembre 1947," *Actes du Colloque de l'Université de Lille III*, 2–3 novembre 1974, in *Revue du Nord*, 57 (1975): 563–78. Up to winter 1947 Communists themselves followed a politics of productionism, seeking to establish their coalition bona fides in Western Europe by getting their unions to work hard and pursue wage restraint. That policy threatened to fragment their own ranks during the hard winter of 1947, and they were compelled to a more militant stance: precisely the demands that let the French and Belgian socialists argue for their exclusion from "Tripartite" coalitions in early 1947. Only in the fall of 1947 did the "orders" from Moscow seem to arrive, that henceforth they must remain non-cooperative. Even then, however, the objective of the mass Communist strikes of 1947–8 seems less to have been to seize power (they knew this was impossible) than to show the centrist parties, including the socialists, that their countries could not be governed without their cooperation. Here, too, they miscalculated. In effect, US capital replaced Communist labor.
- 4 For the European labor movement, from viewpoints critical of US policy, see Peter Weiler, "The United States, International Labor, and the Cold War: The Breakup of the World Federation of Trade Unions," *Diplomatic History*, 5(1) (Winter 1981): 1–22; Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and US Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1969). For more sympathetic accounts, André Barjonet, *La C.G.T.* (Paris, 1968); Daniel L. Horowitz, *The Italian Labor Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963); also Irving Brown's detailed if partisan reports in the American Federation of Labor [AFL] papers, Florence Thorne collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.
- 5 Keyserling, "Prospects for American Economic Growth," address in San Francisco, September 18, 1949, in the Harry S Truman Presidential Library [hereafter HSTL], Independence, MO, President's Secretary's Files [hereafter PSF], 143: "Agencies: Council of Economic Advisers."
- 6 Organization for European Economic Cooperation [OEEC], *Europe: The Way Ahead*, 4th Annual Report (Paris, 1952), 195; Cabot to Harriman, October 25, 1951, in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1951* [hereafter FRUS] (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1979), Vol. 1: 440.
- 7 For an example, see the views of George F. Kennan; Kennan to Secretary of State, March 15, 1948, *FRUS, 1948* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1974), Vol. 3: 848–9.

- 8 On Washington's hopes for European integration in 1947–8, see Hogan, "Search for a Creative Peace"; also Armin Rappaport, "The United States and European Integration: The First Phase," *Diplomatic History*, 5(2) (Spring 1981): 121–49.
- 9 W. Averell Harriman to Truman, August 12, 1947, in Harriman papers: Commerce File; Folder: "Germany," Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
- 10 See, for example, the statements by Franz Neumann in Council on Foreign Relations Archives, Records of Groups, Vol. 19, 1949/50: Study Group on the Problem of Germany, meetings of October 13 and November 9, 1949.
- 11 Lovett to Harriman, December 3, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 3: 301–3.
- 12 National Archives [hereafter NA] Washington: RG 59, 851.00/10-2447.
- 13 *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 3:307.
- 14 Acheson to US embassy, Paris, October 19, 1949, *FRUS*, 1949 (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1975), Vol. 4: 469–72.
- 15 See Rappaport, "The United States and European Integration," 129–31. Bevin followed up his cabinet paper and speech in Parliament with queries to Washington on US readiness to help in the defense of Western Europe. See Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary 1945–1951* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), 518–22.
- 16 Meeting of ambassadors at Paris, October 21–2, 1949; *FRUS*, 1949, Vol. 4: 492; and Bruce to State Department, June 4, 1950, *FRUS*, 1950 (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1977), Vol. 3: 716.
- 17 Tasca statement in part in *FRUS*, 1947 (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1972), Vol. 3: 898–901, and in part in NA, Washington: RG 59, 865.51/5-747.
- 18 For the poormouthing of 1947, see Ambassador Dunn to Secretary of State, May 3, 6, and 28, also memorandum of conversation, May 16, and memoranda of conversation by the director of the Office of European Affairs, May 20 and June 4, 1947; also Marshall to US embassy, Rome, May 20, 1947, in *FRUS*, 1947, Vol. 3: 889–919. For later criticism of Italian policies but unwillingness to press too hard, see the ECA Country Report on Italy (1950) and Acheson to US embassy in London on Italian politics, January 18, 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, Vol. 3: 1984–5, and Acheson to US embassy in Rome, December 2, 1950, *ibid.*, 1501–2.
- 19 See E. Timothy Smith, "The Fear of Subversion: The United States and the Inclusion of Italy in the North Atlantic Treaty," *Diplomatic History* 7(2) (Spring 1983): 139–55.
- 20 Caffery cables to State Department, February 19, 1947, and May 12, 1947, in *FRUS*, 1947, Vol. 3: 690–2; also memorandum of conversation, Moscow, April 20, 1947, and Bidault to Secretary of State, July 17, 1947, and Caffery to State Department, July 18, 1947, all in *FRUS*, 1947 (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1972), Vol. 2: 367–71, 991–2, 996.
- 21 For the internal French reassessment of their German policy, see Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris: Série Y: 55, dossier 1: Massigli (ambassador in London) to Bidault, November 22, 1947; and Série Y: 45, dossier 9: Ministère des Aff. Etr. à M. le Commissaire Général du Plan, août 9, 1948 (provisional classifications). For a jaundiced French view of the origins of the Schuman Plan by an adherent of an English orientation, see René Massigli, *Une Comédie des Erreurs 1943–1956* (Paris, 1978), Ch. 5; and on the question of Italian membership in NATO, see minutes of the tenth meeting of the Washington Exploratory Talks, December 22, 1948, in *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 3: 324–32.
- 22 See the Thyssen plea for expansion in Duisburg-Hamborn, in Bundesarchiv, Koblenz: Z 41/23 Verwaltungsamt für Eisen und Stahl.
- 23 See Kirk to State Department, October 11, 1948, and Lovett to Kirk, October 13, 1948, in *FRUS*, 1948, Vol. 3: 489–92; memorandum by Perkins for Secretary of State, September 9, 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, Vol. 4: 421–2, and related material following.
- 24 Ambassador Bruce to Secretary of State, April 25, 1950, in *FRUS*, 1950, Vol. 3: 63–5; also the meeting of ambassadors, October 21–2, 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, Vol. 4: 490–4; and

the minutes of the seventh meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, January 24, 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, Vol. 3: 617–22.

- 25 See “Extract of Current Economic Developments,” May 24, 1948; Ambassador Lewis Douglas to State Department, June 11, 1948; Richard M. Bissell, Jr, “Memorandum,” September 22, 1948, all in *FRUS, 1948*, Vol. 3: 442–3, 450–2, 486–9; and Philip S. Brown to Bissell, September 23, 1948, in RG 59: 840.50 Recovery/10–148. Background of the earlier issues in Richard Gardner, *Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy* (rev. edn, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969).
- 26 On Treasury views, see Acheson’s summary of the views of Frank A. Southard, Jr (US executive director of the IMF), April 12, 1949, in *FRUS, 1949*, Vol. 4: 382; also Southard to Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder, September 29, 1949 and January 16, 1950, in HSTL, John W. Snyder Papers, box 34, F, “UK Loan, 1946–48, Alphabetical File,” and box 11, F, “ECA and International Trade Organization, 1950.” On the activism of the ECA, see Hoffman to Harriman, October 6, 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, Vol. 4: 426–9; and on end-use accounting see Richard M. Bissell, Jr, “Statement on the Long-Term Programme,” to the Long-Term Working Group of the OEEC, October 26, 1948, in HSTL, Charles P. Kindleberger papers, box 2, F, “General Correspondence.” Admittedly, ECA administrators in the respective countries were often businessmen who held views less Keynesian than those of the young academic economists at headquarters.

Part IV

THE COLD WAR IN ASIA,
AFRICA, AND LATIN
AMERICA

FROM THE MARSHALL PLAN TO THE THIRD WORLD

Robert E. Wood

Most historians view the Marshall Plan as one of the decisive turning points in the early Cold War. After deliberating briefly on whether or not the Soviet Union should participate in the plan, Stalin quickly decided against it. He feared that the United States would use it to lure Eastern Europe from the Soviet orbit and to build up a powerful Germany. The Soviet leader then moved decisively to crush all opposition within Eastern Europe and to bring down the iron curtain as it would exist for the next four decades.

US officials were relieved that the Kremlin rebuffed their overture to participate in the European Recovery Program. They feared that the Kremlin might sabotage the program from within, or that Congress might not finance an assistance package that included Communist lands. Using the specter of Soviet domination, Truman administration officials won congressional support. In 1948 the program got under way and it helped to restore hope and provide the marginal assistance that expedited reconstruction in Western Europe.

Economic historians now hotly debate the extent to which the Marshall Plan was responsible for European recovery. What is incontestable is that industrial growth did not quickly eliminate the dollar gap problem, that is, the shortage of dollars available to European governments. They needed dollars to procure raw materials, foodstuffs, and machine tools. In other words European countries continued to import more from the United States than they exported to it. They had to design ways to overcome this problem. Otherwise when the Marshall Plan ended they would find themselves in a terrible predicament. They might have to control trade, subsidize exports, or discriminate against American imports. They might have to look to the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe, now under the Kremlin's control, for markets. They might have to resort to exchange controls, bilateral trade agreements, quotas, and other mechanisms. Or, given the shortage of dollars, they might have to establish domestic controls and set industrial and agricultural priorities. Should any or all of these things occur, the open, multilateral world economic system that the United States wanted might be jeopardized.*

* Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945–1951* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984).

In this chapter, Robert Wood shows how the European Recovery Program accentuated US concerns with the Third World. European recipients of Marshall Plan aid sought to use their former colonies to generate the dollars they themselves needed to overcome their dollar shortages. The colonies of Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Portugal sold raw materials to the United States and earned dollars which, in turn, flowed back to London, Paris, and other European commercial and financial centers. Hence retaining the ties, even informal ties, between colony and metropole assumed more importance than ever before.

Wood and some other historians believe that understanding the requirements of the world capitalist system is a key to grasping the developments that led to the Cold War. In their view the Cold War spread to the Third World because US officials and many of their partners in Western Europe and Japan believed they needed to maintain links with the underdeveloped periphery in order to earn dollars, sustain their economic growth, preserve their strength, and maintain open markets and free governments. They feared that revolutionary nationalist movements might sever ties with their former colonial masters and establish links with Moscow or its allies, thereby sapping the strength of Western democracies, undermining their reconstruction efforts, and jeopardizing multilateralism and liberal capitalism. In this respect the reader might turn back to the essay by John Kent and note his portrayal of Bevin's desire to retain Britain's position in Africa in order to help allay Britain's own dollar shortages.

Whether or not one agrees with these challenging and thought-provoking arguments, readers should take note of the importance of the interrelationships between economic and geopolitical developments in the international system. They should discuss how the configuration of power in the international system can shape the ways in which officials think they can arrange their domestic economic and political systems.

* * *

The Marshall Plan has exercised a tenacious grip on the consciousness of US policymakers. It has come to symbolize boldness and success, and virtually whenever new directions in US foreign aid programs have been proposed, the theme of "a new Marshall Plan" has been pressed into service.

Officially known as the European Recovery Program [ERP], the Marshall Plan dispensed over \$13 billion between 1948 and 1952 to Western European countries constituted as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation [OEEC]. Over 90 percent of this aid was in the form of grants. The program was administered by a relatively independent agency, the European Cooperation Administration [ECA]. It was formally concluded ahead of schedule at the beginning of 1952, when it was merged into the worldwide Mutual Security Program [MSP].

The European Recovery Program was not simply about either Europe or recovery; it was much more ambitious than that. In reality, the Marshall Plan's uniqueness was that it addressed the breakdown of the prewar economic order with a vision – backed up by a wide range of programs around the

world – of a reconstructed set of economic relations binding Europe, North America, and the Third World. The boldness – and real success – of the Marshall Plan lay in its contribution to the construction of a new international order, not in the quantity of capital and raw materials it provided for Western European industries.

The international order constructed during the Marshall Plan period had profound implications for the Third World. The Marshall Plan linked both European reconstruction and the US campaign for multilateralism to a particular model of development in the underdeveloped world.

Five sets of changes in the world economy set the stage for the Marshall Plan. Together these changes created the dollar shortage that was the basis of the worldwide economic crisis in the postwar period. First, there was the breakdown of trade between Eastern and Western Europe. As the “first Third World,” Eastern European countries had maintained a semicolonial relationship with Western Europe, exchanging food and raw materials for manufactured goods.¹ In 1948, however, Western European exports to Eastern Europe were less than half of the prewar level, and imports from Eastern Europe were only one-third.² Instead of recovering, this trade declined over the next five years.³ This decline meant that European countries had to rely on dollar imports from the United States to fulfill needs formerly met by trade with Eastern Europe.⁴

Second, there was the loss – or threatened loss – of important colonial sources of dollars. France’s major colonial dollar earner, Vietnam, was in rebellion. So was the Netherlands’ major dollar earner, Indonesia. Guerrilla insurgency was increasing in Britain’s most profitable colony, Malaya, although the rebellion never cut off Malaya’s dollar exports. In addition to the loss of colonial dollar earnings, the European powers bore the substantial costs of fighting the liberation movements. France had 110,000 troops in Indochina, and the Netherlands had 130,000 in Indonesia.⁵

Third, there was Europe’s loss of earnings on foreign investments, particularly in Latin America, brought about by the liquidation of overseas investments to finance the war effort. For both France and Britain, overseas investment earnings and other associated “invisible” payments had long helped offset trade deficits. Net earnings on foreign investment alone had paid for 20 percent of Western Europe’s imports in 1938 – \$3 billion at postwar prices.⁶

Fourth, many of the European countries and their overseas territories were hit with declining terms of trade. According to one ECA analysis of the sterling area’s two most important dollar exports, gold and rubber: “Had the prices of these two commodities gone up as the others did, the same exports to the United States during the five years following the war would have earned an additional \$3.5 billion for the sterling area.”⁷ Total Marshall Plan aid to Great Britain came to \$2.7 billion. Without such declining terms of trade, some countries would not have had a dollar deficit at all.

Finally, the European countries found themselves dependent on the US economy in a way they never had been before. This left them susceptible to small fluctuations in the US economy. The UN calculated that a 4 percent fall in employment in the United States would cost the rest of the world \$10 billion in dollar earnings.⁸

These international consequences of the Second World War were only dimly perceived in the United States before the end of the war. Although the strategic brilliance of the Marshall Plan was that it responded to the breakdown of the old economic order in Europe, the original impetus and rationale for it came from the United States, not from Europe. The case for large-scale grant assistance was made long before the particular consequences of the war were known and also long before the beginnings of the Cold War. It was made in terms of a theory of the Second World War's causes and of perceptions of the US economy's structural needs.

From the onset of the war, US policymakers linked the war to a need for a new international order afterwards. Under the leadership of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the State Department developed a frankly economic interpretation of the causes of the war. This analysis became the basis of US economic policy and was stated as early as 1940 by President Roosevelt. The emergence of a multilateral world economy based on the unobstructed movement of capital and labor became a major wartime goal.⁹

Americans believed that their prosperity was due to rearmament and war and feared a postwar depression. A 1941 survey of the American Economic Association found 80 percent of its members predicting a postwar depression.¹⁰ A January 1945 public opinion survey found 68 percent viewing unemployment as the single most important postwar issue.¹¹ A major effort to deal with these concerns was mounted during the war. "By 1943, the government had become convinced that the greatest obstacle to the success of a postwar multilateral system and increased American exports was the 'dollar shortage.'"¹² During the rest of the war and the immediate postwar period, US government officials reiterated the theme of finding a way to maintain a high level of US exports as the key to avoiding a postwar depression.¹³

Some observers dispute the importance of these concerns by pointing to the problem of the inflation that occurred immediately after the war, caused by pent-up consumer demand.¹⁴ Proponents of the export-dependency argument always recognized, however, that the necessity of overseas markets would not impress itself immediately upon demobilization, but only after backed-up consumer demand had been satisfied. This position was explicitly put forth both by government officials and in corporate-sponsored studies.¹⁵ Whether or not this position was correct, what mattered was that US policymakers believed it.

Domestic economic justifications of aid remained dominant in the business press as late as mid-1948. In February 1948, *US News and World Report* carefully listed the advantages and disadvantages of domestic versus foreign "pump priming," concluding that the latter was superior:

Some advantages over domestic pump priming are seen in the world program that is about to begin. Effects of spending will not be so visible inside the United States. American taxpayers will not have WPA [Work Projects Administration] leaf-raking projects before their eyes. They won't see courthouses being built, sidewalks laid or murals painted with federal money. The result is that there may be less criticism.

The foreign aid program also may promise an easier way of keeping US business active and of getting rid of surpluses. Most industrial orders will be for heavy goods – machinery, trucks, tractors, electrical equipment – a sector of industry that the New Deal never could revive until the war. Foreign outlets for surplus grains and fruit and cotton may prove more effective than relief stamp programs at home.¹⁶

Important as US concern over exports was, it does not explain the particular form the Marshall Plan took or its timing. A common assumption is that the Marshall Plan was aimed at the European left. Yet while State Department spokesmen and ECA figures like Paul Hoffman later credited the Marshall Plan with preventing the victory of the left in Europe – an assessment many historians have accepted – there is reason to believe that the European left had already been defeated as a result of its own internal weaknesses, the Great Power conservatism of Soviet foreign policy, and the policies of American and British occupation forces.¹⁷ More recent historical scholarship has clarified that the major target of the Marshall Plan was not socialism but capitalism – or rather the national brand of capitalism that US leaders saw emerging in Europe.¹⁸

Fred Block has argued that “national capitalism,” based on extensive state intervention and planning to ensure full employment, was the dominant trend in Western Europe at the end of the war:

Although little was actually done before World War II to implement national capitalism, there is good reason to believe that after the war, there might have been substantial experiments with national capitalism among the developed capitalist countries. In fact, in the immediate postwar years, most of the countries of Western Europe resorted to the whole range of control devices associated with national capitalism – exchange controls, capital controls, bilateral and state trading arrangements. The reason these controls were not elaborated into full-scale experiments with national capitalism was that it became a central aim of United States foreign policy to prevent the emergence of national capitalist experiments and to gain widespread cooperation in the restoration of an open world economy.¹⁹

In the struggle to mobilize the US public in support of massive aid programs, US leaders again and again stressed the danger European economic

policies represented. In his speech at Baylor University in March 1947, President Truman publicly sounded the tocsin about the danger of European reconstruction policies, attacking government intervention in trade, even if the actual activities (and profits) were left in private hands. He urged that “the whole world should adopt the American system” and, pointing to the dangers of autarkic capitalism, warned: “Unless we act, and act decisively, it will be the pattern for the next century.”²⁰

The commitment to fighting autarky and national economic planning took many forms. It guided occupation authorities. It led to the long and often bitter bargaining with the British over the British loan in 1945. It was at the basis of US leaders’ vision of the new international institutions they sought: the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Trade Organization. And it accounts for the unique focus of the Marshall Plan on building and consolidating a new international economic order. Through the Marshall Plan, the United States sought an antidote to national capitalism through new sets of international arrangements. These were to have profound implications for the underdeveloped world.

From the very beginning, the struggle against national capitalism in Europe led US policymakers to look to Africa and Asia to close the dollar gap. US imports from Europe constituted only 0.33 percent of US gross national product. Politically untouchable tariff walls made increasing most European imports impossible. US investors, despite the existence of convertibility guarantees, expressed little interest in investing in Western Europe – an alternative source of dollars that Congress and the ECA had originally counted on.²¹ US policymakers looked instead to the overseas territories of European countries to bail out their colonial masters. As John Orchard, a special representative and consultant for the ECA, concluded: “Indeed, the overseas territories hold more promise of contributions to the closing of the dollar gap than the countries of metropolitan Europe.”²²

The overseas territories were expected to contribute to the success of the Marshall Plan in two major ways. First, they would provide the market for European goods that had formerly existed in Eastern Europe and that the United States was not able to provide.²³ Second, the overseas territories were expected to be dollar earners through their raw materials exports to the United States. US demand for these raw materials was expected to draw US private investment in these territories, constituting, in the words of ECA Special Representative Averell Harriman, “one of the most promising ways to assist in reaching a balance of payments.”²⁴

These two roles of the overseas territories were linked in a triangular trade model, in which dollars would flow into European hands indirectly through their colonies. As one economist put it: “Such a pattern of trade, to be self-sustaining, would mean a surplus of (European) exports to the nondollar world, a surplus of exports by the latter to this country, and a European surplus of imports from us, to be financed in this manner.”²⁵ Although this

description does not accurately portray the way the colonial powers actually acquired the dollars their colonies earned, the model was politically attractive because it allowed for the continuation or even the increase of European trade deficits with the United States, as long as the overseas territories ran up trade surpluses with the United States.²⁶

The raw material exports of the overseas territories were seen as critical both to the success of the Marshall Plan in Europe and to US prosperity. An important selling point of the plan in the United States was that it would provide access to raw materials and primary products in the underdeveloped world. This goal was to be achieved in three main ways. First, various mechanisms for US stockpiling of raw materials were built into the operating structure of the ERP. For example, the United States could use up to 5 percent of the counterpart funds its aid generated to purchase "strategic" materials. Second, the aid treaties that were negotiated with each metropolitan country guaranteed potential US investors access "to the development of raw materials within participating countries on terms of treatment equivalent to those afforded to the nationals of the participating country concerned."²⁷ Third, a special fund was established for investments in increased production of strategic materials.

In 1951 congressional hearings on the foreign aid program, Nelson Rockefeller testified that 73 percent of US strategic materials imports came from the underdeveloped areas.²⁸ In an article titled "Widening Boundaries of National Interest," Rockefeller concluded: "Clearly, the success of the industrial mobilization plans of the North Atlantic Treaty countries is contingent upon the continued and increasing supply from underdeveloped areas of such strategic materials as bauxite, chrome, copper, lead, manganese, tin, uranium, and zinc," and he called for a 50 percent increase in raw materials exports from the underdeveloped areas.²⁹

Coincidentally, the three colonies with the greatest raw materials exports – Malaya, Netherlands East Indies, and Indochina – were all areas where significant anti-colonial insurgency had taken place right after the war. The military efforts of Britain, the Netherlands, and France to repress these movements provided an additional link between the overseas territories and the European Recovery Plan. Resolution of colonial wars came to be seen as necessary for fulfilling US political and military aims in Europe. As the US Secretary of Defense testified in the foreign aid hearings in 1951: "The sooner Indochina can be stabilized, the sooner those French divisions, which are the backbone of European land defense, can be brought to full effectiveness by the return of sorely needed professional officers, noncommissioned officers, and technicians."³⁰

The role that the ECA envisioned for the underdeveloped areas – particularly the overseas territories – reinforced the type of export-oriented development that had always been the basis of European colonial policy. The difference was that the overseas territories were to be opened more to US investment and their exports directed more to the United States and other "hard currency" areas.

Measuring the significance of the Marshall Plan for the overseas territories is not an easy task. Not all aid directed toward the overseas territories was labeled as such. In the cases of France and the Netherlands (until Indonesia gained its independence), substantial dollar aid to the metropolises was officially earmarked for their colonies. For France and the Netherlands, this came to \$388.3 million; unfortunately, the ECA provided no comparable cumulative figures for the other European metropolises. The ECA Special Reserve Fund, later renamed the Overseas Development Fund, made \$63.8 million of investments, mostly in Africa. These included \$32.1 million in French Africa, \$17.3 million in the Belgian Congo, \$11.5 million in British Africa, and \$663,000 in Portuguese Africa.³¹ Another \$47 million was invested directly in the production of strategic materials. If we assume that the dollar forms of aid generated counterpart that was spent in the overseas territories, the overall total would surpass \$1 billion.

The Marshall Plan's relationship to colonialism in Asia, where the postwar reimposition of colonial authority was resisted by significant popular movements, was more varied and complex than it was in Africa. Within their staunchly anti-Communist and counterrevolutionary framework, US policymakers were flexible in their responses, depending on their assessment of the nature of the popular forces and the options open to the colonial powers. One extreme is represented by British Malaya, where British counterinsurgency efforts seem to have enjoyed full US support. Subsequently, a National Planning Association report concluded: "The United Kingdom effort to suppress guerrilla warfare in Malaya would seem to have been indirectly financed out of aid that ostensibly was going to Europe."³²

Indochina represents an intermediate case. State Department documents in 1948-9 reflect considerable US frustration with French intransigence toward nationalists of all political stripes. However, recognizing the popularity of Ho Chi Minh and his forces, US policymakers were forced to admit that they could offer no alternative course of action.³³ During this period, they sought to maintain some pressure on the French by refusing to fund projects directly for Indochina, but at the same time, they took account of the dollar cost of France's war in calculating French aid requirements. The Griffin Mission, sent to Indochina and elsewhere in Southeast Asia in early 1950 to expand the US aid presence, noted:

In the last analysis, of course, the French financial contribution to the area has been made possible by ECA aid to France, and the balance-of-payments deficit of the area has been taken into account in calculating France's need for ECA aid. The United States is therefore already indirectly aiding Indochina.³⁴

Indonesia represents the other extreme, where the United States was prepared to use Marshall Plan aid to pressure the Netherlands to relinquish control. After authorizing over \$100 million of aid to the Netherlands for use

in Indonesia, the State Department desperately sought to convince the Dutch that the way to prevent revolution in Indonesia was to come to terms with anti-Communist nationalists. Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett urged Dutch acceptance of a US plan to strengthen "Mr Hatta [one of the leaders of the Indonesian Republic] and his government sufficiently to enable him successfully to liquidate Communists within the Republic."³⁵ After the fledgling republic violently suppressed a military revolt in Madiun that drew Communist backing, the United States secretly informed the Dutch that any military action against the republic would result in the cessation of US aid. When the Dutch proceeded to take such action in December, all US aid earmarked for Indonesia was suspended. In 1950, ECA aid was resumed to the now independent Republic of Indonesia.

Between 1948 and 1952, the ECA gradually became involved in aid programs to other underdeveloped areas besides the overseas territories. The original Marshall Plan legislation included an authorization of \$463 million for China, which was to be administered by the ECA. In January 1949, Truman transferred the administration of economic aid in South Korea from the army to the ECA. In the following year, after the Chinese Revolution ended ECA activities on the mainland, Congress authorized the use of the leftover Chinese funds in the neighboring areas of Southeast Asia; this became the basis of programs in Taiwan, Indochina, Thailand, Indonesia, and Burma. A substantial aid program was initiated by the ECA in the Philippines in 1951, and the ECA financed a large shipment of grain to India in the same year. Outside of East Asia, most economic aid was administered by the Technical Cooperation Administration, formed in 1951.

Between 1948 and 1952, the great bulk of aid to the Third World was administered by the ECA and represented an attempt to intervene in civil and revolutionary struggles in Asia. Sixty-four percent of the total went to Taiwan, Korea, and the Philippines, and a \$248.7 million loan to India made to avert famine was credited with "preventing the establishment of a new Communist bridgehead in Asia."³⁶

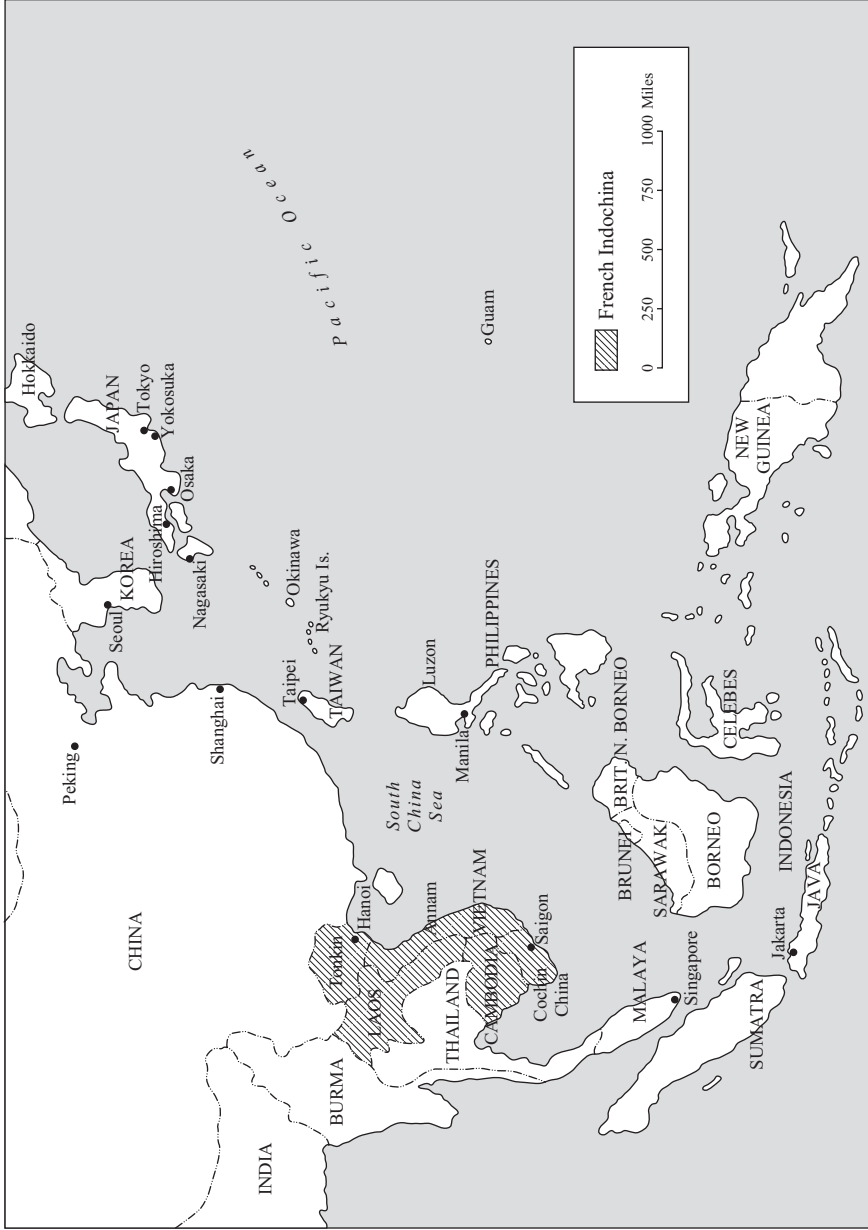
Notes

- 1 For analyses of the emergence of Eastern Europe as a peripheral area and as the first "Third World," see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), Chap. 2; and L. S. Stavrianos, *Global Rift: The Third World Comes of Age* (New York: William Morrow, 1981), Chap. 3.
- 2 United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, *Economic Bulletin for Europe*, second quarter, 1949, 1(2) (Geneva, October 1949): 27.
- 3 United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, *Economic Bulletin for Europe*, second quarter, 1952, 4(3) (Geneva, November 1952): 35.
- 4 Organization for European Economic Cooperation, *European Recovery Programme: Second Report of the O.E.E.C.* (Paris, 1950), 140.
- 5 *US News and World Report* (August 13, 1948): 32; *ibid.* (September 17, 1948): 26.
- 6 Organization for European Economic Cooperation, *European Recovery Programme*, 140.

- 7 Economic Cooperation Administration, *Special Mission to the United Kingdom, The Sterling Area: An American Analysis* (London: Economic Cooperation Administration, 1951), 68.
- 8 Organization for European Economic Cooperation, *European Recovery Programme*, 149.
- 9 Warren Leroy Hickman, *Genesis of the European Recovery Program: A Study of the Trend of American Economic Policies* (Geneva: Imprimeries Populaires, 1949), 26–7. This book, published in 1949, foreshadows much of the contemporary “revisionist” historiography of this period.
- 10 Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941–1949* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), 22.
- 11 *ibid.*, 57.
- 12 Hickman, *Genesis*, 79.
- 13 William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Delta, 1962), 236–7. Williams has explored the long-term social roots of the belief in the necessity of export markets in *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: A Study of the Growth and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Society* (New York: Vintage, 1969). For a variety of other statements by US officials linking reliance on exports to avoiding a postwar depression, see J. Fred Rippy, “Historical Perspective,” in James Wiggins and Helmut Schoeck (eds), *Foreign Aid Reexamined* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1958), 1–24.
- 14 For example, see Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 309.
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- 20 James P. Warburg, *Put Yourself in Marshall's Place* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1948), 46.
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- 31 Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and Its Meaning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955), 151.
- 32 National Planning Association, "The Foreign Aid Programs and the United States Economy," in Special Senate Committee to Study the Foreign Aid Program, *Foreign Aid Program: Compilation of Studies and Surveys* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1957), 935.
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- 34 Samuel P. Hayes (ed.), *The Beginning of American Aid to Southeast Asia: The Griffin Mission of 1950* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1971), 98.
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Map 5 East and Southeast Asia, 1948

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN ASIA AND THE COLD WAR

Michael H. Hunt and Steven I. Levine

China and Vietnam played critical roles in the Cold War. In these countries revolutionary movements triumphed, consolidated power, and challenged American hegemony. In the Philippines another revolutionary movement, the Huks, sought power and lost. Traditionally, the rise and fall of revolutionary movements have been interpreted in light of Soviet inspiration and US counteraction.

In this important essay Michael H. Hunt and Steven I. Levine emphasize that revolutionary movements must be grasped on their own terms. Their roots were indigenous and their success or failure depended more on their leaders' organizational skills and ideological coherence than on external encouragement or repression. Revolutionary nationalist leaders in Third World countries looked on all foreigners with suspicion. To grasp their aims and aspirations, Hunt and Levine stress that one needs to study the domestic history of Asian nations, their social structure, and their land patterns as well as the sociology and psychology of revolutionary movements and their leaders.

The Americans and Russians were looking for docile allies who would be amenable to their wishes, but in the Third World they often encountered determined and resourceful leaders who rejected a subordinate and dependent status. Readers should discuss the internal social, economic, and political conditions that catalyzed revolutionary movements as well as the international systemic circumstances that nourished or constrained them. They should ponder the roles played by the United States and the Soviet Union. They should examine why it was so difficult for US officials to establish positive relationships with revolutionary nationalist leaders in China and Vietnam whereas they were able to forge a mutually beneficial partnership with a counterrevolutionary elite in the Philippines.

* * *

Asia after the Second World War was a region in which "regime collapse" was nearly ubiquitous. From India to Japan political structures and elites, some colonial and others indigenous, were under siege. The rise of elite nationalism, the turmoil associated with Japanese victory and occupation, the surge of American power into the region, and the postwar return of colonial

authorities combined to create a fluid political situation. The nature of the ensuing political change varied widely.

In India, Burma, and Indonesia, new regimes emerged with relative ease as former colonial masters began to decamp. In the southern half of Korea and in Japan elements of the old political elites, with the cooperation or acquiescence of American proconsuls, established regimes that were fundamentally conservative in orientation even when, as in the case of Japan, a democratic political system was established.¹ Elsewhere, particularly in China, Vietnam, and the Philippines, revolutionary forces grew apace.

The history of modern Asia and the sociology of revolution suggest some pertinent questions. What manner of men embarked on revolutions? How did they build a base of popular support sufficiently strong to bid for power and challenge the American presence? What conditions favored the emergence of revolutionary nationalism? What was the Soviet relationship to Asian revolutionary movements and regimes? How did this relationship change when revolutionary movements came to power?

Twentieth-century Asian revolutions have passed through two fundamentally different stages. They have begun as *revolutionary movements*, mobilizing resources and people in the process of struggling for power and legitimacy. If and when they succeeded, then as *revolutionary states* they have devoted themselves to realizing the economic and social transformations that had animated them from the beginning.

The revolutions in Pacific Asia were in transition from the first to the second stage in 1953 as Harry Truman yielded the White House to Dwight Eisenhower. The Communist revolution in China had triumphed in 1949, and the new state was in the process of consolidating its political control and pursuing its socioeconomic goals. In French Indochina a second revolution, displaying considerable political strength and military tenacity, was preparing for the battle at Dienbienphu that would soon deal the *coup de grâce* to an overextended and war-weary colonial power. In the Philippines a third revolutionary movement, the Huks, had gained momentum in 1950, creating panic in the Filipino government and sudden alarm in Washington.

Revolution in these three countries arose out of long-brewing indigenous political crises that can be understood only by taking a broad and long-term perspective.² Revolution was initially an elite enterprise that developed through several difficult stages and, where successful, commanded a widening circle of supporters and a growing base of resources. We will gain a better grasp of the revolutionary challenge if we look at the three phases through which a successful revolution had to pass before culminating in victory.

First, the initial impetus to revolution arose from a quiet crisis of confidence that took shape in the minds of politically engaged intellectuals. Concern about the traditional states' diminished capacity to meet foreign and domestic responsibilities goaded these leading players in the drama of revolution into undertaking political activity. In China, the crisis of state and

society underlying the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911 stimulated a search for alternative political forms that might restore China's strength and glory. By the 1920s some leading intellectuals had begun to find in Marxism-Leninism an attractive idiom for expressing their concerns and a vehicle for political organization.³ In Vietnam the state crisis was even more profound. There a well-entrenched colonial power loomed over the patriotic intellectuals who wished to restore indigenous political authority. Vietnamese intellectuals followed the pattern established by their Chinese counterparts. By the 1920s patriotic and social concerns – couched often in Marxist concepts and categories – gripped a younger generation of intellectuals and political activists.⁴

Second, the fortunes of revolution depended heavily on the ability of nascent revolutionary elites to construct a shared ideology and forge an effective party organization. They had to translate the esoteric language of an elite ideology into a popular vision of a new order accessible to the masses. Equally important was the creation of a unified, disciplined party capable of challenging both local power-holders and the central government.

By the 1920s activists in both China and Vietnam had discovered in the concept of a Leninist party a powerful tool for achieving revolutionary success and in the Soviet experience a model to emulate. The Communist International (Comintern), established in 1919 by the youthful Soviet regime as an instrument of world revolution, recognized a historic opportunity and stepped in to supply nascent Communist parties with funds, schooling, literature, and advisers. The Chinese Communist Party [CCP] took shape in 1920–1 with a mere fifty members.⁵ Its Vietnamese counterpart, the Indochina Communist Party, began in 1925 as a nine-man cell and was formally organized in Hong Kong in 1930, when Ho Chi Minh, already an experienced Comintern operative, brought together rival Communist groups.⁶

Third, ultimate victory turned on the successful application of party ideology and organization to the task of mobilizing the resources – manpower, taxes, labor, and intelligence – that revolutionary organization required. Initially, activity began in the cities with an attempt to forge a proletarian spearhead for the revolutionary movement. When the cities proved inhospitable and dangerous, the urban intellectuals qua early revolutionary leaders took refuge in the countryside where four-fifths of their countrymen lived. The CCP took advantage of the rugged Jinggang mountains in the south and then the primitive Yan'an area in the north, while the Viet Minh established a secure base in the inaccessible mountains of North Vietnam from whence they penetrated the populous Red River delta.

Perhaps the most difficult as well as the most important task required to make revolution self-sustaining was that of mobilizing peasant support. Translating revolutionary abstractions into political practice in rural areas was a fragile and contingent operation that put a premium on an experimental outlook. Success demanded extraordinary sensitivity to the great variety of conditions existing both within and between different regions. The political

consciousness of peasants and, in turn, the degree of peasant activism depended on the nature of those conditions. Only by constructing a revolutionary program flexible and ample enough to accommodate the diversity of peasant experience and needs could the revolution make headway.

Revolutionaries struggling to build a base of support within secure zones of operation faced a formidable and changing set of foes. Local power-holders and the central government, sometimes separately and sometimes in combination, exploited the vulnerability of the peasantry to the assertion of state power or, where the revolutionaries had dug themselves in, to the exercise of counterrevolutionary terror. At times the intrusion of foreign powers dramatically redefined the nature of the conflict. The CCP faced first the Nationalists, then the Japanese, and finally the Nationalists again, this time backed, however ineffectively, by the United States. For the Vietnamese Communists the first foe was the French, then briefly the Japanese, and once more the French, now bolstered by increasing levels of American support.

By the late 1930s the CCP had worked out a viable strategy.⁷ The Viet Minh for its part solved the riddle of rural mobilization in the course of the early 1940s while organizing resistance to Japan and battling famine.⁸ The mark of success in both cases was the establishment of relatively secure rural base areas that gradually evolved into embryonic states containing the seeds of a new social and political order. By 1945, after two decades of struggle against long odds, both the CCP and the Viet Minh had created conditions of "multiple sovereignty" (to use Charles Tilly's phrase),⁹ raising hopes for an imminent victory.

The ultimate challenge for revolutionary leaders was to identify the moment for decisive action when sufficient resources had been aggregated to meet and master a vulnerable enemy. In China and Vietnam no less than in the Philippines (to be discussed below) the Second World War set the stage by discrediting the old regime and by weakening its hold on the countryside. During wartime, revolutionary parties firmly seized the chance to extend territorial control and to promote a patriotic united front that appealed to previously uncommitted groups. In 1946 the Chinese Communists drew on the strength accumulated during the anti-Japanese War in meeting the military challenge of their Nationalist foes and then fought their way to victory in a three-year civil war. For the Viet Minh the opportune moment had come in 1945. A policy of revolutionary expansion took advantage of French weakness, the impending defeat of the Japanese, and socially disruptive famine in the north. The Viet Minh offensive culminated in August in the seizure of Hanoi and the creation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [DRV]. This gave the Viet Minh at least a tenuous hold on power in the north.

The revolutionary crisis that erupted in the Philippines in the late 1940s and then subsided in the early 1950s departed significantly from the Chinese and Vietnamese patterns. Fundamental to the failure of revolution in the Philippines was the absence of a crisis of the state comparable to that which

had proved so troubling to intellectuals in China and Vietnam. Filipinos had known only weak government in Manila. After the ouster of the Spanish in 1898, leading Filipino provincial families ruled in league with American proconsuls. The elite comprised of those families not only lacked a tradition or model of a strong state but was also compromised by a habit of collaboration with foreign masters on a scale unmatched in either China or Vietnam. After briefly resisting the American takeover, the elite had settled into a collaborative relationship with the United States that safeguarded its domestic privileges while promising ultimate political independence. When the Japanese conquered the islands during the Second World War, the elite again accommodated to foreign rule. Finally, when the Americans returned, the Philippines resumed a dependent relationship with the United States, which continued even after the attainment of formal independence in 1946. Rather than forcefully rejecting external domination, the dependent Filipino elite developed at best a kind of submissive nationalism.

The type of collaboration prevailing in the Philippines served as a model for US policymakers with regard to other Asian countries. Local elites that deviated from this norm were at the very least viewed with suspicion by Americans who preferred and expected complaisance from their Asian partners. By explicitly and often passionately rejecting the subordinate and dependent position such a model entailed, revolutionary elites directly challenged American political values and presumptions. This conflict was one of the core elements in the confrontation between the United States and Asian revolutionary movements.

In the case of the Philippines, it appears that the Huk crisis arose not from elite disaffection but rather from peasant discontent, which became pronounced in the interwar period. The deterioration of patron-client ties left peasants without economic security. Landlords with whom peasants had once enjoyed a mutually supportive relationship increasingly embraced commercialized agriculture and "rationalized" their use of peasant labor so as to eliminate traditional but costly welfare practices. The catalyst for peasant resistance was a rural order characterized by increasingly high rates of landlessness and tenant debt. In the 1920s sporadic, isolated acts of collective peasant protest threatened the local elites and attracted the attention of the Socialist Party, which helped organize peasant unions. The Philippine Communist Party, established in 1930, also embraced the cause of the peasant, perhaps even before it merged with the Socialists in 1938.

The Japanese occupation of the Philippines in 1941 set the stage for the creation of the People's Anti-Japanese Army, popularly known as the Huks.¹⁰ In March 1942 prominent Socialists and Communists met to organize a united-front, peasant-based force. They put at its head Luis Taruc, a charismatic Socialist from a poor, rural background. The Huks resisted the invaders and punished Filipino collaborators, many of them landlords. But Huk leaders failed to undertake the ideological and organizational work that was in the long run essential if the movement were to be sustained and made cohesive.

In this critical respect, the practice of the Huks differed from that of the CCP and the Viet Minh.

As in China and Vietnam, the end of the war brought only a hiatus in the gathering rural crisis. The Huks disbanded, and the initiative in the countryside passed to local forces sponsored by landlords, who were in turn supported by the Roxas government of the newly independent Philippines. As the futility of peaceful peasant organization and protest became apparent between 1946 and 1948 and as wartime gains evaporated, armed Huk units sprang back to life, reestablishing themselves in their stronghold in central Luzon.¹¹

In January 1950 the Huk leadership, dominated by the Communist Party, decided to gamble on an all-out offensive to seize power.¹² That decision was prompted in part by Manila's ineffectual response to the Huk challenge and in part by the Communist leaders' conviction that the United States was on the defensive in the Cold War and would not be able to save its Filipino allies. However, the general offensive failed and the Huk cause suffered a crushing defeat. Under a series of heavy blows the Huks rapidly declined. At its peak the Huks had boasted 12,000 to 15,000 combatants and 1.5 to 2 million followers, but by the mid-1950s the Huks had disappeared as an organized force.¹³

The defeat had several sources. Among them was a wrong assessment of how the United States would react to a revolutionary upsurge, and a serious misreading of the mood of the peasantry. Once the gravity of the Huk threat became clear during the first half of 1950, Washington had rushed assistance to Manila. Communist leaders also erred by stressing the threat of American imperialism but failing to link it to the local grievances and personal aspirations of the peasantry.

In Ramon Magsaysay, moreover, the United States had found an effective Filipino partner in turning back the revolutionary challenge. As the Huks scented victory over the Quirino government in September 1950, Magsaysay was made Secretary of Defense at the urging of the Americans. Bolstered by various kinds of American assistance, he transformed the army into an effective instrument of rural pacification, while himself promising land reform. His success at capturing Huk leaders and at sowing dissension within the movement further blunted the revolutionary thrust.¹⁴

The failure of the Huks may be interpreted in several ways. The United States had found that it could indeed neutralize rural-based revolutionaries by combining the effective application of force with a program of political inducements and promises of reform. From this experience was born the notion of counterinsurgent warfare. An alternative reading of this experience was that in the Philippines the ingredients for a successful social revolution – a disciplined party able to translate elite discontent into a program that could mobilize and sustain peasant support – had not yet appeared. The Huks arose on the basis of strong peasant grievances, but they never acquired an elite leadership armed with the ideological and organizational tools to harness the peasantry to revolutionary goals. The leadership of the Huks, a

heterogeneous lot, lacked a common program, and some among them were still psychologically oriented to the cities and not attuned to rural conditions and the military potential of armed Huk units. These leaders were responsible for the ill-advised and disastrous all-out offensive of 1950.¹⁵

Before considering the transformations undertaken by revolutionary Asian states, let us briefly sum up the implications for the United States of our three cases of Asian revolutionary movements. First, at a time when American power was still very much in the ascendant, the successes of Communist revolutionaries in China and Vietnam already foreshadowed the limits of American influence in postwar Asia. The Chinese revolution in particular forced Washington to abandon the idea that China could be a reliable bulwark against a perceived Soviet threat to the stability of postwar Asia. Second, the United States, which prided itself on being different from and better than the European colonial powers, was reviled by the revolutionaries as merely the latest of the Western imperialist powers to seek domination in Asia. Although American leaders naturally denied the charge, it stung none the less. Third, the coming to power of revolutionary counter-elites who rejected American guidance in no uncertain terms directly challenged the tutelary model of external patron–domestic client relations that Washington favored. This model, first evident in the Philippines' case, was seen by Washington as the way to accelerate political and economic development while blocking Soviet penetration. The successful suppression of the Huk uprising may have strengthened the confidence of policymakers that they could cope with rural-based insurgencies elsewhere.

Revolution in Asia entered a new era as triumphant revolutionary movements in China and Vietnam assumed state power. Revolutionary leaders left behind them the heroic and perilous age of the struggle for survival and confronted a new period filled with formidable policy challenges and fresh perplexities. Among their core tasks was that of creating an efficient state apparatus and tackling the yet unrealized goals of the revolution – social transformation, long-term economic development, and strategic security. Here, as in the earlier phase, the United States discerned danger in the ways that revolutionary leaders pursued these goals.

The transition from revolutionary movement to revolutionary state produced considerable tension in the revolution as some leaders adjusted more easily than others to the new tasks at hand. That tension arose out of a basic dilemma: how to build a strong administrative structure and promote development without losing touch with the revolutionary ethos or abandoning the political style promoted over several decades of intense political and military activity. Those gripped primarily by the statist concerns that had initially driven the elite toward revolution placed priority on building up a strong party and government bureaucracy governed by expertise and regulations. While they wanted to preserve and promote the myths of the revolution, which provided legitimacy and fostered national unity, they deemed the

improvisational and voluntaristic practices of the movement days unsuitable to the new age. Those of a more populist persuasion, however, saw in the program of the statebuilders a threat to the vision of national unity and popular mobilization that had shaped revolutionary strategy and produced victory.

In China this statist-populist tension is evident in the domestic policy pursued during the first decade of the People's Republic. Most of the leadership, including Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping, generally favored a prolonged period of domestic stability conducive to state-building and laying the foundation for the later development of an advanced socialist economy. On the other side, Mao Tse-tung embodied a populist commitment to maintaining revolutionary consciousness and egalitarian values long central to the struggle that he had led. Development would come not through deadening, routinized work but through "storming," directing a burst of energy from the Chinese people against economic obstacles. A period of rest and consolidation would follow, setting the stage for attempting new breakthroughs.¹⁶

The divergent goals and styles evident in domestic affairs also supply a clue to the tensions at work in the foreign policy realm. Statist concerns made foreign policy an instrument to serve China's concrete development needs once the essential security of the revolution had been attended to. Links to the Soviet Union were important, both in deterring any American-sponsored attack and in guaranteeing economic aid and technological transfers. But links to other states, regardless of their social system, were also valuable for the economic opportunities they might open up and for the diplomatic opportunities and international status such contacts might bestow on China. By contrast, foreign policy initiatives that threatened to embroil China in conflict were unwelcome. China needed to direct its resources into development at home, and it needed a calm and stable international environment to pursue its domestic agenda.

From the populist perspective, most forcefully articulated by Mao, foreign policy was to serve the same essentially revolutionary goals that defined domestic policy. Only an assertive and principled foreign policy could shape a popular revolutionary consciousness, align China with the world's struggling peoples, and isolate ideological backsliders from potential foreign support. Such a foreign policy entailed a vigorous defense against the predictable imperialist attempts to disrupt the revolution and divide the Chinese people against itself. It also meant promoting unity among China's natural allies – the Soviet Union and the weak and oppressed peoples of the world – as a counterpoint to the popular unity Mao sought to promote domestically.

The revolutionary movement in Vietnam did not enjoy a moment of decisive revolutionary triumph such as the Chinese had savored in 1949. Thus the tension between revolutionary and state-building goals was even sharper there.

A crossroads was reached following the August 1945 revolution. On that occasion Ho Chi Minh, convinced that the newly established DRV was too

weak to confront the returning French, adopted a policy of moderation that gave priority to building a Vietnamese state. Ho sought to strengthen domestic support by continuing the wartime united-front strategy. The Indochinese Communist Party was (at least on paper) dissolved in November, and the new government promoted domestic policies calculated to appeal to non-Communist patriots. At the same time Ho sought to shield the DRV behind an international united front. He pointedly appealed to the victorious allies for support, expressed goodwill toward his Chinese Nationalist neighbor whose forces occupied the north, and called for French and American support on the basis of a presumed common commitment to the principles of liberty and self-determination. Having set the stage with these domestic and international appeals, Ho tried to convince the French that it was in their own best interests to withdraw gradually from Vietnam.

Ho's "soft" policy, especially his handling of the French, appears to have aroused resistance and criticism from some of his compatriots, if not from party comrades. The French, they suggested, were unlikely to offer acceptable terms, and Ho's effort to avoid a showdown was thus foredoomed and humiliating. Indeed, by the summer of 1946 Ho's negotiations with the French had proven fruitless, as the skeptics had all along predicted. In December the Vietnamese-French conflict began in earnest, pointing the way to the realization of long-term revolutionary goals at the short-term cost of sacrificing Hanoi and the trappings of statehood.¹⁷

In both China and Vietnam, US intervention disrupted the transition from the movement phase to the state-building phase of the revolution. Beginning in the Truman administration, Washington promoted Taiwan ("Free China") as an anti-Communist alternative to the People's Republic. The Eisenhower administration made a similar attempt to nurture an anti-Communist South Vietnam. These actions in turn justified the arguments of Chinese and Vietnamese Communist leaders who resisted the routinization and bureaucratization of their revolutions. Until American imperialism was defeated, they argued, the unfinished tasks of national unification and the defense of the revolution required popular mobilization and unremitting struggle. Washington for its part interpreted the pursuit of these tasks by Beijing and Hanoi as evidence of Communist bellicosity and aggressiveness that threatened stability and order in Asia. Thus, American actions provoked the behavior that US leaders then condemned and intensified their efforts to oppose.

If the United States abhorred the advent to power of revolutionaries in China and Vietnam, it was no less hostile to their attempts to build socialism once in power. The expropriation of private property, the widespread violence unleashed during land reform, the attacks against religion, "brain-washing" techniques and recurrent campaigns directed against intellectuals, and similar features of revolutionary transformation induced revulsion on the part of most Americans. Moreover, the strident anti-American rhetoric of triumphant Communist revolutionaries and their adherence to the Soviet side in an

era of cold war confrontation further strengthened American antipathy and served to justify Washington's efforts to isolate, harass, and destabilize the revolutionary regimes. If pragmatic considerations ultimately suggested the wisdom of dealing with such regimes in the diplomatic arena, this was considered a distasteful and unfortunate necessity. Quite unlike the compliant Filipino elite, which followed America's lead and gratefully hosted American military bases and corporations, revolutionary elites in Beijing and Hanoi were seen as emulating Soviet socialism at home while joining their countries' fortunes to America's cold war adversary in Moscow.

In Asia, as elsewhere, wherever revolutionary movements threatened the status quo, the United States was inclined to see the hand of the Kremlin. There can be no doubt that in the broadest terms the Soviet Union supported revolutionary change in postwar Asia, but this simple truth masks a complex reality. Indeed, from the very beginning of its involvement in Asia following the October Revolution of 1917, Soviet policy had reflected its own often conflicting revolutionary and statist imperatives. On the one hand, it pursued the traditional statist goal of survival within a hostile international environment. At the same time, as the bearer of the Bolshevik revolutionary tradition, the Soviet state promoted revolutionary change abroad that looked toward the transformation of the international system.

The revolutionary imperative derived initially from Moscow's status as the self-proclaimed center of the "world revolution," the command headquarters of the Comintern. The Comintern assisted in the establishment of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist parties throughout the world and sought to coordinate and direct their strategies for taking power. Moscow recognized in nationalism a revolutionary force with the potential to undermine colonialism and imperialism in Asia. Unfortunately, the leaders of nationalist movements frequently perceived communism as an alien force that fostered class divisiveness instead of national unity and Communist parties as threats to their own power. When Moscow tried to ride the twin tigers of Communism and nationalism simultaneously, as it attempted to in China in the 1920s, the results were disastrous both for the local Communist Party and for Soviet diplomacy. The CCP, which Moscow had forced into a shotgun wedding with the Chinese Nationalists, had been virtually annihilated in 1927, when Chiang Kai-shek turned on his partners in the united front. For good measure, Chiang sent all of his Soviet advisers packing and broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

In the late 1920s, concomitant with the onset of the world depression, the Comintern asserted that the new crisis of capitalism was creating the conditions for another revolutionary upsurge. It was in the grip of this apocalyptic mood that the Communist movement in Indochina was consolidated and the Communist Party of the Philippines established. By the 1930s, as Moscow witnessed the rise of fascism in Europe and Japanese militarism in Asia, it directed Communist parties in the service of Soviet foreign policy objectives

to enter broad national coalitions of a popular-front type in which Communist revolutionary goals were subordinated to the quest for national unity. National resistance based on national unity took priority over a peasant-worker revolution with its divisive emphasis on class conflict. The Chinese Communists moved toward a second round of cooperation with their Nationalist foes. The Communists' united-front strategy in Vietnam echoed that of the Popular Front government in France and temporarily ceded the class-based revolutionary ground to unreconstructed revolutionaries such as the Trotskyists. As noted above, the formation of the Huks in 1942 expressed the same strategy in the context of a Japanese-occupied Philippines.

Although a post-Second World War Asia in turmoil was rife with revolutionary opportunities, the Soviet Union acted with considerable circumspection. While Western leaders anxiously scrutinized Soviet behavior in the region for symptoms of rabid Leninism, Stalin accepted the limits that superior American power imposed on the Soviet Union. Thus, even though he got back southern Sakhalin and the Kuriles at Yalta, he had to abandon his demand for a zone of occupation in Japan. In China, Stalin initially expressed skepticism toward the Communist bid for power and counseled caution. Soviet aid was extended to Chinese Communist forces during the Chinese civil war (in northern Manchuria), but it was carefully shielded from prying Western eyes. In Southeast Asia, Moscow scarcely took notice of the Viet Minh and the Huk struggles for power.¹⁸

If the Bolshevik Revolution still inspired Asian revolutionaries in the 1940s, it was because of what Lenin had written concerning the need for organizational efficiency and ideological coherence and what he had actually accomplished in 1917, not because of what Stalin was doing after the Second World War. Yet foreign Communists persisted in viewing Stalin as the pre-eminent leader of world revolutionary forces, and Moscow said nothing to disabuse them of this notion. (The Red Army's "liberation" of Eastern Europe was hardly a model for Asian revolutionaries – with the exception of Kim Il Sung in North Korea, who came to power via essentially this same route.)¹⁹

During the Eisenhower era, American understanding of Soviet policy in postwar Asia lagged considerably behind the evolution of that policy itself. Washington remained fixated with the Kremlin as some sort of corporate headquarters of franchised revolutionaries, actively seeking opportunities to extend its operations. In fact, the Soviet role was actually quite different and far more modest. Soviet policy toward the revolutionary states established in China after 1949 and Vietnam after 1954 clearly demonstrates this point.

In both cases, the post-Stalin leadership escalated the level of Soviet interest in and commitment to the Communist regimes in power. It did so, however, not to nurture Mao's revolutionary romanticism or to encourage the territorial irredentism of Ho's colleagues, but rather to support their statist aspirations for political consolidation and economic development.²⁰ Moscow regarded the dour party bureaucrats and budding Communist technocrats as its natural partners in the 1950s. The Soviets promoted programs of industrialization via

loans and the provision of technical assistance. The growth of these allies' state-run economies would contribute to the overall strengthening of the socialist bloc vis-à-vis the capitalist world while the success of a socialist development model would contribute to the prestige of the Soviet Union, facilitate its entrée into newly independent, nonaligned states, and in general put behind the era of Stalinist isolation in international affairs.

Following Stalin's death in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev brought Moscow's Asian policy full circle, back to its Leninist origins in the early 1920s. This earlier Leninist experience supplied a useful point of reference for Soviet leaders as well as the ideological formulas and the tactical tools to respond creatively to the fluid character of international relations in the 1950s and 1960s. Khrushchev recognized that a historic shift was underway; the accelerating decline of the Western imperium in Asia and Africa was opening the way for some new, yet still undefined, international system. The Soviets believed that what they called the governments of "national democracy" – i.e. the radical nationalist regimes of Fidel Castro in Cuba, Sekou Toure in Guinea, and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana – were headed toward socialism and that the most radical of these nationalist regimes were worthy of Soviet encouragement and support. By supporting these regimes rather than by instigating revolution, the socialist world could strengthen its "natural alliance" with Third World nationalism and more effectively undermine American power and influence. Such support, of course, fed American suspicions of radical nationalism and pushed the Third World further into an arena of superpower competition.

Notes

- 1 For treatment of some of these "nonrevolutionary" postwar transfers of power, see Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); J. W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878–1954* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); and Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and the Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945–1949* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).
- 2 For an introduction to the Chinese revolution, see Lucien Bianco, *The Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915–1949*, tr. Muriel Bell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971); James P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power: A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921–1972* (New York Praeger, 1972). Good starting points for Vietnam are William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1981); James P. Harrison, *The Endless War: Fifty Years of Struggle in Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 1982); Alexander Woodside, *Community and Revolution in Modern Vietnam* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1976); and Huynh Kim Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism, 1925–1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982). For the Philippines, the best brief introduction is by Peter Stanley in James C. Thomson, Jr et al., *Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), Chaps 8 and 19.
- 3 For the rise of what might be called "radical statism" in China between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Jane L. Price, *Cadres, Commanders, and Commissars: The Training of the Chinese Communist Leadership, 1920–1945* (Boulder, CO:

- Westview, 1976), Chaps 1–2; Maurice Meisner, *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Lee Feigon, *Chen Duxiu: Founder of the Chinese Communist Party* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Richard C. Kagan, “Ch’ en Tu-hsiu’s Unfinished Autobiography,” *China Quarterly*, no. 50 (April–June 1972): 301–14; and Stuart Schram, “Mao Tse-tung’s Thought to 1949,” in *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 13: 789–818.
- 4 On these developments in Vietnam, see David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Anticolonialism, 1885–1925* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971); Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981); and Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism*.
 - 5 CCP membership did not exceed 1,000 for its first several years. Between 1925 and spring of 1927 it grew to 57,000. Its ranks were thinned by reverses in the late 1920s and early 1930s, but swelled again during the Sino-Japanese War. By 1945 it counted 1.2 million members.
 - 6 The Indochinese Communist Party was submerged in the Viet Minh from 1941 until the fall of 1945, when it was nominally disbanded. It was formally revived and renamed the Vietnamese Workers’ Party in 1951 to allow room for the development of separate Cambodian and Laotian Communist parties. As late as 1946 the party could claim no more than 20,000 members (though they were to increase to 700,000 by 1950).
 - 7 For an overview, see Benjamin Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951). For a general discussion of peasant politics in China, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr, “Rebellion and Revolution: The Study of Popular Movements in Chinese History,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 36 (February 1977): 201–37, now somewhat overtaken by new studies; and G. William Skinner, “Chinese Peasants and the Closed Community: An Open and Shut Case,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13 (July 1971): 270–81.
 Particularly important local studies are Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980); Yung-fa Chen, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937–1945* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986); Steven I. Levine, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Donald G. Gillin, “‘Peasant Nationalism’ in the History of Chinese Communism,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 23 (February 1964): 269–89; and Carl E. Dorris, “Peasant Mobilization in North China and the Origins of Yen’an Communism,” *China Quarterly*, no. 68 (December 1976): 697–719.
 - 8 For an overview, see John T. McAlister, Jr, *Viet Nam: The Origins of Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1969). For peasant politics in Vietnam, see James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976) and Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979); Pham Cao Duong, *Vietnamese Peasants under French Domination, 1861–1945* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985); Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972); and James W. Trullinger, Jr, *Village at War: An Account of Revolution in Vietnam* (New York: Longman, 1980).
 - 9 Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978), 190–2.
 - 10 This wartime designation was short for “Hukbalahap,” itself an abbreviation for “Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon.”
 - 11 The postwar Huks operated under the abbreviation HMB, short for “Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan.”
 - 12 The precise role of the party is a matter of some dispute. Compare Benedict J. Kerkvliet’s classic *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines*

- (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977) against the responses to it by William J. Pomeroy in "The Philippine Peasantry and the Huk Revolt," *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 5 (July 1978): 497–517, and by Jim Richardson in "The Huk Rebellion," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 8 (2) (1978): 231–7.
- 13 The unraveling of the Huk leadership is described from the perspective of the influential non-Communist Luis Taruc in *He Who Rides the Tiger: The Story of an Asian Guerilla Leader* (New York: Praeger, 1967).
 - 14 Stephen R. Shalom, *The United States and the Philippines: A Study in Neo-colonialism* (Philadelphia, PA: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1981), 68–93; and D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of US Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), Chap. 8. Magsaysay's election to the presidency in 1953 carried the promise of long-term stability in the Philippines. His death in an airplane crash in 1957 cut down those hopes.
 - 15 It remains an open question whether the Huk defeat marks the end of a revolutionary attempt (or even an unsuccessful rebellion, as Kerkvliet describes it), or whether it was merely the first stage in a struggle now being continued by the New People's Army.
 - 16 There is today a consensus among China scholars on the existence of this tension in domestic affairs, though they differ on the precise labels to apply. See Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of The People's Republic* (2nd edn, New York: Free Press, 1986); Lowell Dittmer, *China's Continuous Revolution: The Post-Liberation Epoch, 1949–1981* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); and Carl Riskin, *China's Political Economy: The Quest for Development since 1949* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1987). The origins of this consensus can be found in Stuart Schram's *Mao Tse-tung* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), Chap. 10, with its stress on Mao's special and debilitating "military romanticism" (p. 293) derived from his pre-1949 experience.
 - 17 Stein Tønnesson, *The Outbreak of War in Indochina, 1946* (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1984), makes clear Ho's forbearance in the face of a provocative forward policy pursued by French colonial authorities and, as a result, his public vulnerability to nationalist attacks.
 - 18 See Yano Toru, "Who Set the Stage for the Cold War in Southeast Asia?" and Tanigawa Yoshihiko, "The Cominform and Southeast Asia," in Yōnosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye (eds), *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), esp. 333–6 and 362–77.
 - 19 See Robert A. Scalapino and Chong Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972); Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
 - 20 On this point, see Steven I. Levine, "Breakthrough to the East: Perspectives on Soviet Asian Policy in the 1950s," in Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye (eds), *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

STALIN AND THE KOREAN WAR

Kathryn Weathersby

The Korean War was a pivotal event in the evolution of the Cold War. In June 1950 hostilities erupted when North Korean troops crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, the 'temporary' line dividing North and South Korea that had been selected by the Americans and the Soviets at the end of the Second World War. In 1945, the Soviets and Americans had occupied the northern and southern zones and had arranged for the surrender and repatriation of Japanese troops. Moscow and Washington then established regimes that suited their own interests and reflected their respective ideological inclinations. In 1948, the Soviets ended their occupation, leaving Kim Il Sung in control of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north. The Americans withdrew their troops the following year, leaving Syngman Rhee in charge of the Republic of Korea in the south. Both men claimed authority over all of Korea, and both longed to reunite Korea.

Kim's invasion of the south precipitated a wider war. Unexpectedly, the Americans intervened. The United Nations voted to support the American effort to thwart aggression. After stopping the North Korean offensive, Washington decided in September 1950 to cross the thirty-eighth parallel and liberate the north. The Chinese Communists then intervened, driving the Americans back to the thirty-eighth parallel. Truman and his advisors carefully considered bombing China, but feared it might trigger global war with the Soviet Union if the Soviets honored their treaty commitments with the People's Republic of China. Rather than risk such a conflict, the Americans built up their overall military capabilities and strengthened their worldwide presence. During the Korean War, the United States transformed the North Atlantic Treaty into a viable Western alliance. The United States stationed troops permanently in Europe, rearmed Germany, and put NATO forces under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Second World War hero who had not yet declared his intent to run for the presidency. During the Korean War, the United States also signed a peace treaty with Japan and got rights to keep troops and air bases in northeast Asia. In 1951, Greece and Turkey also were brought into the NATO alliance, providing the United States with an even stronger presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. At the end of the Korean War, the Soviet Union was in a far more inferior position militarily and strategically than before the war began. By then, Stalin was dead. But the ramifications of the Korean War would cast shadows across the globe throughout the Cold War and beyond.

For decades, scholars have argued about the causes of the Korean War. During the 1980s and early 1990s, scholars like Michael Hunt and Steven Levine (in the preceding chapter) argued that revolutionary nationalism and communism must be understood in terms of local conditions, indigenous circumstances, and regional history. Bruce Cumings, a scholar at the University of Chicago, wrote a massive and brilliant account of the origins of the Korean War, explaining that conflict in these terms.* These scholars challenged the traditional view that the Korean War was orchestrated in Moscow as a test of American will and as part of a communist plan to gain world hegemony. Whether this new approach was adequate to explain the origins of the Korean War was, however, dependent on accessibility to documents in Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, and Seoul that most historians did not expect to see for decades.

Following the astonishing events that led to the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, scholars slowly began gaining access to primary documents, especially in Moscow and Beijing. In fact, some of the most fascinating and provocative new studies of international history during the Cold War focus on the beginnings of the Korean War. Kathryn Weathersby, an independent scholar, has been one of the leaders in exploring the new evidence, especially from Russian archival materials. In the selection that follows, excerpted from two of her essays, she revises yet again what we know about the origins of the Korean War. Notwithstanding indigenous circumstances and notwithstanding the powerful wills of Kim and Rhee, Weathersby argues that without Stalin's approval, Kim would not, indeed could not, have invaded the south.

Readers should ponder the meaning and significance of Weathersby's argument. What does she say about Stalin's motives? Was he acting defensively or offensively, or do such words have little meaning in terms of the conflicting crosscurrents in the international system? How important was ideology in the decisionmaking of Stalin and of Mao? How important was security? How important were the revolutionary culture and historical experiences linking Stalin, Mao, and Kim? American officials saw the North Korean invasion as a test case of American will, and responded by sending US forces to defend the south, and then to roll back Communist control of the north. How accurate was their understanding of the Korean situation and what was the impact of their actions?

* * *

The new documentary evidence on the Korean War from the communist side illuminates many longstanding questions about the war and raises new ones, ranging from the causes of the war to the nature of the alliance on the communist side, the complex dynamics of the armistice negotiations, and the effect of the war on postwar Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean foreign relations.¹ This chapter will examine the central, long-contentious question of the cause of the outbreak of war in Korea.

* Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1: *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); vol. 2: *The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947–1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Since the early 1980s much of the debate over the Korean War has focused on the argument that the conflict was a civil war mistakenly viewed by the Western allies as a manifestation of the superpower struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union.² On most counts, the Russian documentary sources contradict the civil war thesis quite sharply. They reveal that the outbreak of full-scale fighting along the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950, was not simply an escalation of the border skirmishes that had been occurring along the 38th parallel since the summer of 1949, but was instead a conventional offensive campaign prepared by North Korea and the Soviet Union over a period of several months. Most importantly, though Kim Il Sung pressed Stalin for permission to attack South Korea, the decision to undertake the campaign to seize control over southern Korea was made by Joseph Stalin, not by the North Korean leadership.

It is important to emphasize that Russian archival records also reveal that it would have been completely impossible for the North Korean leadership to act alone on a matter of such seriousness. As the hundreds of files on Korea in the Central Committee and Foreign Ministry archives reveal in exhaustive detail, on matters of concern to Moscow, the Soviet Union maintained tight control over its client state in Korea.³ The extent and nature of Soviet control over North Korea (officially known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or DPRK) was not noticeably altered by the withdrawal of Soviet troops in late 1948. The pattern of supervision in 1949 and 1950 was essentially the same as it had been during the occupation period. The files on Korea in the Soviet Foreign Ministry archive reveal that North Korea was heavily dependent on the Soviet Union for the material resources and expertise needed to construct the new socialist state. Due to Soviet occupation policy and the civil war in China, from 1945 to 1949 North Korea was cut off from its former economic ties with southern Korea, Japan, and Manchuria. Except for very limited trade with Hong Kong and two Manchurian ports, the Soviet Union was the only source of manufactured goods and raw materials not produced internally and the only market for North Korean goods. The DPRK also apparently did not have its own supplies of hard currency, and therefore could not conduct foreign trade on anything other than a barter basis. In 1949 when North Korean delegations attended a youth festival in Budapest, a peace conference in Paris, and a trade union congress in Milan, the DPRK had to appeal to the Soviet Union to provide the delegations with the necessary foreign currency.⁴ Furthermore, to an unusual degree, North Korea was dependent on the Soviet Union for technical expertise.⁵ Japanese colonial policy had permitted only a small number of Koreans to gain higher education or management experience, and the politics of the Soviet/American occupation prompted most northerners who possessed such skills to flee to the South. Because of these economic and demographic circumstances, the DPRK was much more fully subordinate to the Soviet Union than were the East European states that came under Soviet control.

The North Korean leadership was also subordinate to Moscow for political reasons. According to Soviet Ambassador T. F. Shtykov, Kim Il Sung stated in his final appeal for approval to attack South Korea that “he himself cannot begin an attack, because he is a communist, a disciplined person and for him the order of Comrade Stalin is law.”⁶ In Comintern circles Korean communists had long been infamous for their nationalism, factionalism, and general willfulness,⁷ but the Korean communists who rose to power under the Soviet occupation had primary allegiance to the Soviet Communist Party, rather than to the Chinese party or to domestic leaders who had remained in Korea. Pyongyang’s deference to Moscow was strengthened even further by the circumstances in which the North Korean communists found themselves. Like their rightist counterparts in South Korea, they had been placed in power by the occupation force controlling their half of Korea; they had not, like the Yugoslav or Chinese party, risen to power on their own. Although they seem to have faced little opposition from the population that remained in the North, they nonetheless faced the implacable hostility of the rightist government in Seoul that was backed by American money and expertise.

Furthermore, the North Korean communists were experienced only in guerrilla fighting and underground resistance. As they undertook the massive task of constructing a new socialist state, the only model to which they could turn was the Soviet Union.⁸ Not only did they need assistance in running factories, railroads, banks, and so forth, but they also needed to learn how to organize their matters in a proper socialist way. Prior to 1950, the only place to learn socialist state-building was Moscow. The North Korean communists therefore had their own reasons for subordinating themselves to Moscow’s superior knowledge and power. After Stalin’s death and the weakening of Soviet prestige that followed Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign of the late fifties Kim Il Sung was able to develop a distinctly Korean ideology and to maintain a remarkable level of national autonomy within the communist world. In 1949 and 1950, however, his circumstances were sharply different. At the time of the outbreak of the Korean War, the Korean communists were in no position to act independently of Moscow.

To summarize, the role North Koreans played in the decision to launch a war against South Korea was to raise the issue. They presented the Soviet leader with the basic ingredients – an army and government willing and eager to seize control of South Korea – and pressed the option. The “civil war” interpretation is thus correct in emphasizing that the leadership of both North and South Korea fervently wished to end the division of their country and to extend their own authority over the other half.⁹ Stalin did not devise this plan out of whole cloth and then order North Koreans to attack South Korea. However, while both Korean governments were willing to use military force to bring about reunification, neither was able to do so on its own. Because of the political, economic, and military dependence of both North and South, the decision to wage war for reunification lay not with the Koreans themselves but with their great-power patrons. The war came about because the

Soviet Union eventually approved the request of its Korean client while the United States did not.

Having established the relative roles of hegemon and small state in the outbreak of war in Korea, we must now turn to the question of why Stalin decided in early 1950 to allow North Korea to launch a military campaign against South Korea. The large collection of Korean War documents from the Presidential Archive in Moscow shed considerable light on this formerly obscure decision-making process.¹⁰ Nonetheless, important questions remained unanswered. In particular, that collection provided no explanation of what constituted the "changed international situation" that, according to Stalin's explanation to Mao Zedong in May 1950, made it possible for the Soviet Union to support the Korean campaign.¹¹ Additional documents subsequently released from the Presidential Archive and quoted at length by Russian scholars Evgenii P. Bajanov and Natalia Bajanova¹² fill in some of the most important gaps, illuminating Stalin's reasoning in approving the attack and providing critical details about Soviet planning for the campaign.

Because Stalin assumed that Japan would rearm and again threaten the Soviet Far East, using Korea as its bridgehead to the Asian mainland, he regarded the political settlement for the former Japanese colony as an important issue for Soviet security. From 1945 onward, he closely monitored US policies in the southern half of the country for signs that the Americans might be reestablishing a Japanese presence in their zone. These preoccupations were similar to those he had in Europe, where he focused on the danger of renewed German militarism and assumed that the United States would act in concert with its former enemy to threaten the Soviet Union. What was distinctive in the case of Korea, however, was that the situation there presented Stalin with a more immediate danger of war. As a liberated country, Korea had not been subject to the demilitarization undertaken in former enemy states and its division into two occupation zones geographically polarized the sharp political divide within the country. By 1950 both of the governments that had been established on the peninsula, in the wake of the failure of the occupying powers to agree on the composition of a unified government, were discussing the possibility of ending the division of the country by subduing the other half. Given the security concerns of the former occupiers, now patrons of their respective client states, the intra-Korean struggle had the potential to drag the Soviet Union and the United States into direct conflict.

This danger was foremost in Stalin's mind when Kim Il Sung first requested permission to attack the South, during the March 1949 visit to Moscow of the first official delegation from the newly established Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The new sources reveal that Stalin turned down Kim's request on the grounds that the US would regard an attack on the South as a violation of its 1945 agreement with the USSR about the division of the country at the 38th parallel and would consequently be likely to

intervene. Moreover, the Soviet leader regarded the question as not yet topical since American troops were still in Korea and the DPRK's armed forces were not yet superior to those of the South. He did not object to the proposal in principle, however, nor did he seem surprised by it. Apparently sharing Kim's assumption that such an operation was necessary, he regarded the issue as one of waiting for favorable circumstances. Their conversation on the subject was recorded as follows:

Kim Il Sung: Comrade Stalin, we believe that the situation makes it necessary and possible to liberate the whole country through military means. The reactionary forces of the South will never agree on a peaceful unification and will perpetuate the division of the country until they feel themselves strong enough to attack the North.

Now is the best opportunity for us to take the initiative into our own hands. Our armed forces are stronger, and in addition we have the support of a powerful guerrilla movement in the South. The population of the South, which despises the pro-American regime, will certainly help us as well.

Stalin: You should not advance to the South. First of all, the Korean People's Army does not have an overwhelming superiority over the troops of the South. Numerically, as I understand, you are even behind them. Second, there are still American troops in the South that will interfere in case of hostilities. Third, one should not forget that the agreement on the 38th parallel is in effect between the USSR and the United States. If the agreement is broken by our side, it is more of a reason to believe that Americans will interfere.

Kim Il Sung: Does it mean that there is no chance to reunify Korea in the near future? Our people are very anxious to be together again to cast off the yoke of the reactionary regime and their American masters.

Stalin: If the adversary has aggressive intentions, then sooner or later it will start the aggression. In response to the attack you will have a good opportunity to launch a counterattack. Then your move will be understood and supported by everyone.¹³

The question of favorable timing for an attack on the South soon became topical, however, as reports reached Moscow of South Korean forays into DPRK territory. Erroneously assuming that the South Korean actions reflected American intentions, Stalin reached the false conclusion that the imminent withdrawal of US forces from Korea was designed to free the Southerners to invade the North – perhaps mirroring his own rationale for withdrawing Soviet troops in late 1948. In April he instructed his ambassador in Pyongyang, Terentii F. Shtykov, to assess the accuracy of intelligence reports that the Americans would soon move their troops out of South Korea to nearby Japanese islands. “The purpose of the withdrawal,” Stalin explained,

“is to give freedom of action to the South Korean Army. By that time the UN Commission will also leave Korea. In April–May the Southerners will concentrate their troops near the 38th parallel. In June the Southerners will start a sudden attack on the North in order to finish the total destruction of the Northern army by August.”¹⁴

In reality, both patron and client in Seoul feared that the withdrawal of US forces would lead to the collapse of the newly established Republic of Korea, either through internal subversion or an attack from the North. It was this fear that led the US repeatedly to delay the withdrawal – from August to December 1948, then to March, May, and finally June 1949. Moreover, while individuals within the South Korean government hoped to provoke an incident with the North in order to force the US to leave its troops in Korea, Washington was determined to avoid such an entanglement. As General W.L. Roberts, commander of the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), bluntly put it during the border fighting in August, “the South Koreans wish to invade the North. We tell them that if such [an invasion] occurs, all [US] advisers will pull out and the ECA [Economic Cooperation Administration] spigot will be turned off.”¹⁵ American determination to avoid becoming embroiled in the intra-Korean conflict was clear enough to the Koreans that, as US Ambassador in Seoul John Muccio reported, they “contemplated the withdrawal of the US task force with genuine fear – even jitteriness in certain circles. They moved heaven and earth to have withdrawal deferred.”¹⁶

Despite having an extensive intelligence network in Seoul that would have known of the sharp divergence between American and South Korean intentions, Shtykov did nothing to correct his boss’s misperceptions. In his report of May 2 the ambassador noted accurately that ROK forces were being expanded with US assistance and that the government of President Syngman Rhee was taking steps to increase the combat readiness of its army, but he failed entirely to note the disparity in aims between patron and client. Instead – perhaps out of an understandable impulse toward self-protection – he merely repeated Stalin’s own conclusions, adding supporting detail.¹⁷

Shtykov repeated his exaggerated estimate of the danger of an invasion of the North in other reports to Moscow throughout the spring and summer of 1949,¹⁸ further alarming the ever-suspicious Stalin. While the Soviet leader was determined to avoid being drawn into a conflict with the United States – apparently for fear he was not yet able to win it – he was also determined to retain the security buffer he had established against a future attack on the Soviet Union through Korea, goals that now appeared difficult to reconcile. His solution was to buy time by forestalling the intra-Korean conflict until a more favorable time to resolve it. He instructed Shtykov and Kim strictly to avoid provoking an assault from the South and ordered the dismantling of the Soviet naval base in Chongjin and the air force liaison offices in Pyongyang and Kanggye, in order “to demonstrate to the world our intentions, psychologically disarm the adversaries, and prevent our participation in the possible war against Southern aggression.”¹⁹

After American forces withdrew from Korea in June and no invasion of the North ensued, Stalin was willing to consider a more forward strategy. In early September, after receiving a report that the South intended to occupy a portion of the Ongjin peninsula north of the 38th parallel, as well as to shell a cement plant in the northern city of Haeju, he decided to entertain Kim Il Sung's request to mount a limited campaign to pre-empt the Southern attack and improve the DPRK's defensive position. Kim's plan was to launch an operation to seize the Ongjin peninsula as well as some adjacent South Korean territory, approximately up to Kaesong, thus shortening the DPRK's line of defense.²⁰

Stalin's decision to consider mounting this limited offensive followed a recommendation from Shtykov a week earlier that such action was militarily advisable.²¹ The ambassador noted, however, that "the Southerners may have enough strength to counterattack, and then the fighting can take on a prolonged character." He recommended against a general offensive, citing four reasons:

- 1 At the present moment there are two states on the Korean peninsula, and South Korea has been recognized by the USA and other countries. In case of the beginning of military activities initiated by the North, Americans may interfere, not only by supplying the South with weapons and ammunition, but also by sending Japanese troops to its support.
- 2 An invasion of the South can be used by the USA for launching a wide hostile campaign against the USSR.
- 3 In the political sense an advance to the South can be supported by a majority of the population in both Korean states, but in a purely military sense the Korean People's Army (KPA) does not have as yet overwhelming superiority over the Southern army.
- 4 South Korea has already created a rather strong army and police.²²

Stalin apparently accepted Shtykov's recommendation that an Ongjin campaign was worth considering, despite the inadvisability of a general offensive, for on September 11 he instructed the embassy to gather the information needed to make a decision. After receiving the subsequent report from Pyongyang, he decided against the campaign, on the grounds that "it is impossible to view this operation other than as the beginning of a war between North and South Korea, for which North Korea is not prepared either militarily or politically." Neither the DPRK's armed forces nor the partisan movement in the South was strong enough to ensure a quick victory, and a prolonged war would "create significant political and economic difficulties for North Korea" and give the Americans cause for interference.²³

Earlier drafts of the Politburo resolution drawn up to implement Stalin's decision provide a fuller picture of the considerations that entered into it. In the pre-final draft, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and Defense Minister Nikolai Bulganin set forth the arguments against an invasion in

greater detail. With regard to the political costs of military aggression, they wrote that “such an offensive initiated by the DPRK can be used by the reactionary circles to denounce the Northern government in the eyes of public opinion for aggressive intentions and a desire to drag the country into a civil war.” Moreover, they presciently noted that “an advance to the South by the People’s Army can give the Americans a pretext to raise this issue at the UN session, to blame the government of the DPRK for aggression and get the consent of the General Assembly for the introduction into South Korea of American troops. As to the introduction of American troops into the territory of South Korea, it can bring about a long-term occupation of the Southern part of the country and can consequently postpone unification.”²⁴

In an earlier draft, Gromyko and Bulganin stated more bluntly that “the Americans will certainly move their troops into South Korea, and you [Kim Il Sung] cannot stop this, you cannot even defeat the South Korean army.” In accordance with Stalin’s instruction to Kim in March that his troops could cross the 38th parallel only in case of an attack from the South, Gromyko and Bulganin concluded by acknowledging that “to be sure, you must always be ready, in case the South starts an offensive against the North, to defeat the Southern army and unite the country under the leadership of your government.” Stalin toned down this wording to a less encouraging instruction that “in case the South starts an offensive against the North you must be ready and then act according to the situation.”²⁵ Throughout the fall, Stalin continued to attempt to forestall the outbreak of full-scale war in Korea. In October he rebuked Shtykov for allowing the DPRK to attack ROK positions along the border. “Such provocations,” he declared, “are very dangerous for our interests and can induce the adversary to launch a big war.”²⁶

The first collection of Presidential Archive documents established that in January 1950 Stalin decided that circumstances had become favorable for mounting an offensive in Korea. In response to yet another request from Kim Il Sung for permission to attack the South, on 30 January the Soviet leader informed Kim that he was “ready to help him in this matter” and that he would receive him in Moscow to discuss it.²⁷ He still regarded the operation as highly risky, however. The new sources reveal that he sent additional instructions to Shtykov two days later reflecting his concern over the dangers involved in such action. He ordered the ambassador to “explain to Comrade Kim Il Sung that at this point the question he wants to discuss with me must be completely confidential. It should not be shared with anyone even in the North Korean leadership, as well as with the Chinese comrades. This is dictated by the preoccupation with keeping the topic unknown to the adversary.”²⁸

On 30 March Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong traveled to Moscow for discussions with Stalin, remaining there until 25 April. In the absence of any records of these meetings, until now we have only been able to speculate about what constituted the “changed international situation” that Stalin

believed made it possible to undertake the invasion and about why he insisted that the Koreans must secure Mao Zedong's approval before the operation could proceed. The new sources illuminate these two important questions, in a report prepared by the Central Committee's International Department summarizing the conversations Stalin had with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong during their April meetings. This summary deserves to be quoted in full:

Comrade Stalin confirmed to Kim Il Sung that the international environment has sufficiently changed to permit a more active stance on the unification of Korea.

Internationally, the Chinese Communist Party's victory over the Guomindang has improved the environment for actions in Korea. China is no longer busy with internal fighting and can devote its attention and energy to the assistance of Korea. If necessary, China has at its disposal troops which can be utilized in Korea without any harm to the other needs of China. The Chinese victory is also important psychologically. It has proved the strength of Asian revolutionaries, and shown the weakness of Asian reactionaries and their mentors in the West, in America. Americans left China and did not dare to challenge the new Chinese authorities militarily.

Now that China has signed a treaty of alliance with the USSR, Americans will be even more hesitant to challenge the Communists in Asia. According to information coming from the United States, it is really so. The prevailing mood is not to interfere. Such a mood is reinforced by the fact that the USSR now has the atomic bomb and that our positions are solidified in Pyongyang.

However, we have to weigh once again all the "pros" and "cons" of the liberation. First of all, will Americans interfere or not? Second, the liberation can be started only if the Chinese leadership endorses it.

Kim Il Sung expressed his opinion that Americans won't interfere. Now that they know that the USSR and China are behind Korea and are able to help it, Americans will not risk a big war. As for Comrade Mao Zedong, he always supported our desire to liberate the whole country. Comrade Mao Zedong said on a number of occasions that after the Chinese revolution is completed, China will help us, if necessary, it will provide troops. However, we want to rely on our own forces to unify Korea. We believe that we can do it.

Comrade Stalin emphasized that a thorough preparation for war was a must. First of all, armed forces have to be elevated to an upper level of preparedness. You have to form elite attack divisions as well as create additional units. Divisions have to have more weapons, more mechanized means of movement and combat. Your request in this respect will be fully satisfied.

Then a detailed plan of the offensive must be drawn. Basically it has to have three stages. 1. Troops are concentrated in the designated areas, close to the 38th parallel. 2. The highest bodies of power in North Korea make fresh proposals for peaceful unification. These will certainly be rejected by the other side. Then, after they are rejected, a counterattack must take place. I agree with your idea to engage the adversary in the Ongjin peninsula as it will help to disguise who initiated the combat activities. After you attack and the South counterattacks it would give you a chance to enlarge the front. The war should be quick and speedy. Southerners and Americans should not have time to come to their senses. They won't have time to put up a strong resistance and to mobilize international support.

Comrade Stalin added that Koreans should not count on direct Soviet participation in the war because the USSR had serious challenges elsewhere to cope with, especially in the West. He again urged Kim Il Sung to consult with Mao Zedong and mentioned that the Chinese leader had a good understanding of Oriental matters. Stalin repeated that the USSR was not ready to get involved in Korean affairs directly, especially if Americans did venture to send troops to Korea.

Kim Il Sung gave a more detailed analysis of why Americans would not interfere. The attack will be swift and the war will be won in three days; the guerilla movement in the South has grown stronger and a major uprising can be expected. Americans won't have time to prepare and by the time they come to their senses, all the Korean people will be enthusiastically supporting the new government.

Pak Hon-yong elaborated on the thesis of a strong guerilla movement in South Korea. He predicted that 200,000 party members will participate as leaders of the mass uprising.

It was agreed that the North Korean army would be fully mobilized by the summer of 1950 and by that time the Korean General Staff, with the assistance of Soviet advisers, will draw the concrete plan for the offensive.²⁹

Nowhere has Stalin's reasoning about the war been expressed more clearly. The key factor continued to be whether the attack would prompt the United States to intervene and thus possibly drag the USSR into direct conflict with its far more powerful adversary. That the Americans had not used force to prevent a communist victory in China suggested to Stalin that they would not intervene to forestall a similar outcome in Korea, as did Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons. Most important, however, was the "information coming from the United States" indicating that "the prevailing mood is not to interfere." While we cannot be certain what information Stalin was referring to, the reference appears to have been to the strategic policy for the Far East adopted in late December 1949, titled NSC-48, which drew the US defense perimeter to the west of Japan and the Philippines, excluding the

Asian mainland. The timing of the adoption of this new policy suggests that knowledge of NSC-48, which Stalin was in a position to obtain through his British spy in Washington, Donald Mclean, convinced the Soviet leader that it was now possible to support a North Korean attack on South Korea. In mid-December he had refused Mao Zedong's request to conclude a treaty with the PRC to replace the 1945 treaty with Nationalist China, on the grounds that doing so would be a violation of the Yalta agreement and would therefore give the Americans a pretext for attempting to alter other aspects of that favorable treaty. On 6 January 1950, however, Stalin sent word to Mao that he was now ready to conclude a new treaty.³⁰ He also instructed the Japanese communist party to move to a forward strategy, and recognized Ho Chi Minh's government in Vietnam. The decision on Korea was thus part of a new forward policy for East Asia as a whole, designed to fill the vacuum left by the American retreat from the mainland.

Despite the new American strategic policy, Stalin nonetheless remained worried that military action on the Korean peninsula might prompt the US to intervene. He therefore made it clear to Kim Il Sung that the Soviet Union would under no circumstances send its troops to his assistance. If he needed reinforcements, he would have to rely on China to supply them. It was therefore only logical that he insist that Kim Il Sung travel to Beijing to secure Chinese approval before the campaign could begin.

The new sources indicate that Mao Zedong agreed to provide such assistance, despite some concerns about possible Japanese or American intervention. According to the report by Soviet ambassador to Beijing N.V. Roshchin, who was briefed by both the Chinese and the Koreans after Kim's discussions with Mao on 15 May, the Chinese leader approved the three-stage plan outlined by Stalin and recommended that the Koreans follow the strategy that had proved successful for the PLA. Mao argued that the KPA "must act swiftly, go around big cities not wasting time on their takeover, concentrating their efforts on destroying the armed forces of the adversary."

The Chinese leader nonetheless expressed his concern that Japanese troops might intervene in the conflict. Kim replied that this was "not very probable" but speculated that "the Americans might decide to send to Korea 20,000–30,000 Japanese soldiers." He added, however, befitting a proud veteran of the anti-Japanese guerilla struggle, that this prospect "could hardly change the situation in a serious way, because Koreans would be fighting in such a case even tougher."³¹ Mao then warned his eager Korean ally that the presence of Japanese troops might prolong the war, and that it was, in any case, "not so much the Japanese, as the Americans themselves who could interfere in the war [*sic*]."³² Kim deflected this implied criticism by repeating Stalin's judgment that the Americans do not show any inclination to engage themselves militarily in the Far East. They left China without fighting; the same approach can be expected in Korea.³³

In the more encouraging version of the conversation that the Koreans recounted to Roshchin, "Mao Zedong said that the Japanese can hardly

interfere in the war now. And if Americans take part in the combat activities, then China will help North Korea with its troops. According to Mao Zedong, it is not convenient for the Soviet Union to participate in combat activities because it is tied by the agreement with America on the demarcation line along the 38th parallel. China is not tied by similar obligations and therefore can easily extend assistance to the North."³⁴

Regardless of which account of these conversations is closest to the truth, it is important to keep in mind that Mao Zedong had little room to voice objections to the *fait accompli* presented by the Koreans. Having just concluded an alliance with the Soviet Union that was essential for the PRC's economic development and national security, Mao was not in a position to refuse to grant the assistance that Stalin counted on him to provide. As if to underscore the role he expected the Chinese to play in Korea, Stalin cabled Mao after he received Roshchin's reports that he approved of the proposed Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance to be concluded between China and North Korea. ". . .As soon as the big cause of the liberation and unification of Korea has been completed, the treaty should be signed. It will solidify the successes of the Korean comrades and prevent foreign interference in Korean affairs."³⁵

Meanwhile, throughout the spring of 1950, signs multiplied indicating increasing American commitment to South Korea and to resisting communist expansion worldwide – NSC-68, a \$100 million economic and military aid package for South Korea approved by Congress in March, and visits by high-ranking American officials to Seoul.³⁶ Nonetheless, despite Stalin's continued nervousness about the risks involved, preparations for the campaign against South Korea proceeded rapidly after Kim's and Pak's return from Beijing.³⁷

The movement of KPA troops to their positions 10–15 kilometers from the 38th parallel began on June 12. Shtykov reported to Stalin the following day that "a special meeting was held for commanders of divisions, chiefs of staff and chiefs of artillery of the divisions and of the first echelon. At this meeting specific and concrete assignments were given to each formation. Special stress was put on keeping total secrecy of the preliminary arrangements. The adversary's intelligence must not learn anything through ground operations or from the air."³⁸

The operational plan for the offensive was ready by 15 June. As Shtykov reported to Stalin the next day, the advance would start in the early morning of 25 June.

At the first stage, formations and units of the KPA will begin action on the Ongjin peninsula like a local operation and then deliver the main strike along the western coast of Korea to the South. At the second stage, Seoul must be taken and the Han River put under control. At the same time, on the eastern front, North Korean troops will liberate the cities of Chunchon and Kangnung. As a result, the main forces of the South Korean army have to be encircled around

Seoul and eliminated. The third stage, the final one, will be devoted to the liberation of the rest of Korea by destroying the remaining enemy forces and seizing major population centers and ports.³⁹

As the invasion date drew near, Stalin continued to be concerned about the possibility of American intervention. Although he approved Shtykov's request on June 20 to allow the KPA to use Soviet ships – presumably from Vladivostok or Port Arthur – for amphibious landings, he refused to allow Soviet personnel on the ships “because it may give the adversary a pretext for interference by the USA.”⁴⁰ At the same time, however, the Soviet leader made a decision that greatly increased the likelihood of such interference. On 21 June he received a report from Shtykov relaying Kim Il Sung's important message that the DPRK's radio broadcast interception and intelligence sources had reported that “the Southerners have learned the details of the forthcoming advance of the KPA. As a result, they are taking measures to strengthen the combat capacity of their troops. Defense lines are reinforced and additional units are concentrated in the Ongjin direction.” As a result of these developments, Kim urged that the original plan of the offensive be modified. “Instead of a local operation at Ongjin peninsula as a prelude to the general offensive, Kim Il Sung suggests an overall attack on 25 June along the whole front line.”⁴¹

Stalin replied the same day that he agreed “with Kim Il Sung's idea for an immediate advance along the whole front line.”⁴² While this decision may have been sensible from a strictly military point of view, it reflected a disastrous misapprehension of how a World War II-style invasion across the South Korean border would be perceived in the West. Since Stalin had shared with his Western counterparts the trauma of a sudden, massive German attack, his failure to foresee the forebodings such an attack in Korea would immediately evoke in the minds of many of the world's political leaders is all the more striking.

The documentary record of the Korean War available thus far from the communist side reveals that this war, like most, was the result of the convergence of several circumstances, none of which was sufficient alone to bring about the war. Most fundamental was the strong desire of the North Korean leadership to mount a conventional military invasion of the South in order to reunify the country under their control, a desire echoed by the leadership in South Korea. Kim Il Sung and his close associates provided the impetus for the war, but whether or not their desire would be realized depended on the decision of Kim's patron in Moscow, and to a lesser extent his senior comrade in Beijing.

For Soviet leader Joseph Stalin the issue was not whether military action against South Korea was desirable; in his view installing a friendly government in Seoul would better protect the Soviet Union against the inevitable eventual attack from Japan. Instead, the decision hinged on his assessment

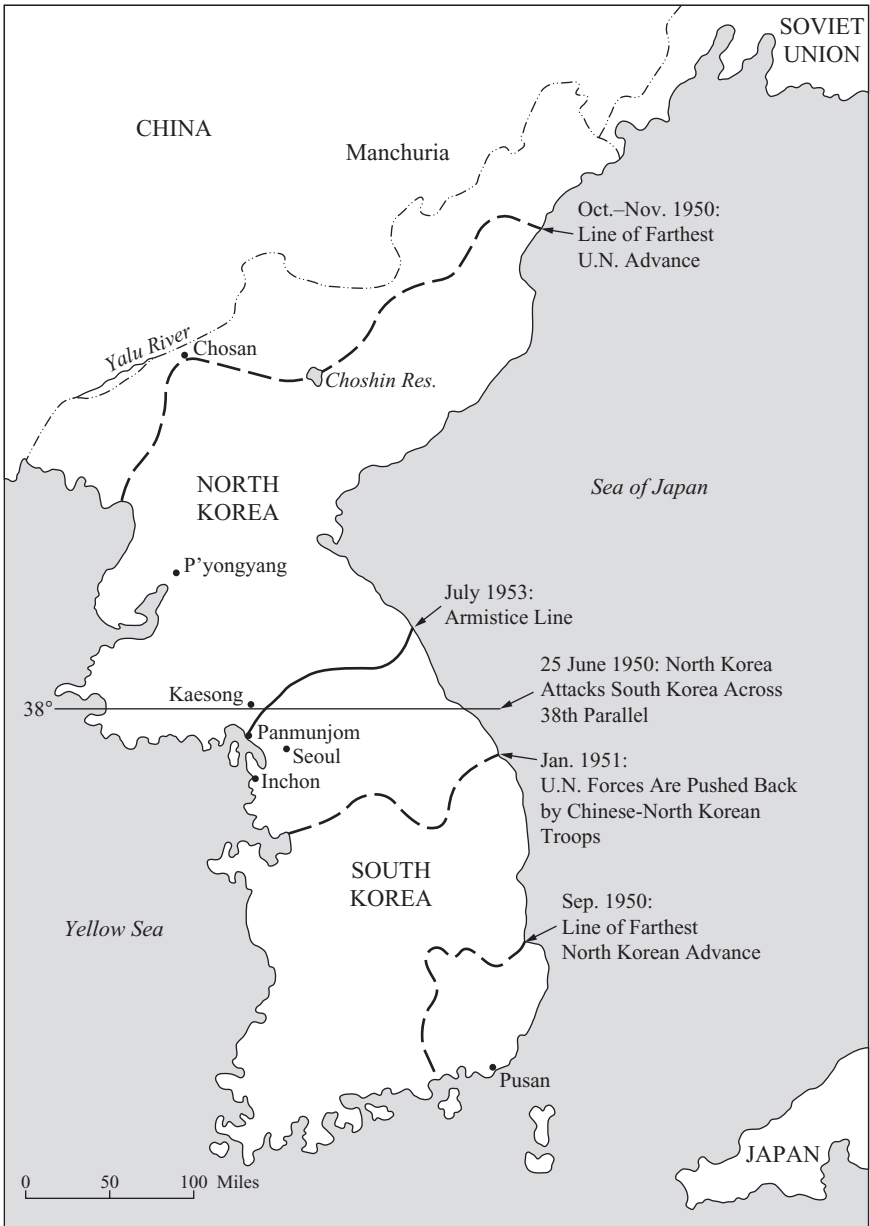
of whether South Korea could be taken without provoking war with the United States – a conflict Stalin knew the Soviet Union was not yet capable of winning. The second factor in Stalin's decision for war was whether China would assist North Korea, if necessary. By early January 1950 Stalin concluded on the basis of intelligence from Washington and the recent victory of the Chinese Communist Party that these two conditions were met. If his information had suggested otherwise, the documentary evidence indicates, the Soviet leader would not have approved the risky venture in Korea.

Notes

- 1 For detailed examinations of the Chinese role in the Korean War based on recently released documentary material from China see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); and Zhang Shu-Guang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War 1950–1953* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995). Since 1991, the archives of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union have gradually made a large portion of their holdings on Korea accessible to scholars. In addition, in 1995 the Presidential Archive (the Kremlin repository that holds documents of the greatest sensitivity) released 1,200 pages of high-level documents on the Korean War. For discussion of the new Russian sources see articles by this author in the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), and Issue 6/7 (Winter 1995/96).
- 2 For the most substantial argument that the war should be classified as a civil war, see Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), and *Origins of the Korea War II: The Roaring of the Cataract* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
- 3 See Kathryn Weathersby, "Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945–1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 8* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1993).
- 4 Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), Fond 0102, Opis 5, Delo 20, Papka 12, Listy 1–5; Delo 21, Listy 2, 4; and Delo 22, Listy 1. It seems likely that Soviet occupation authorities shipped to the Soviet Union any supply of hard currency found in North Korean banks or enterprises.
- 5 A major portion of the records on Korea in the Foreign Ministry archive in Moscow are requests from North Korea for assistance in training workers in virtually every branch of economic and cultural activity and Soviet arrangements for fulfilling these requests. The level of technological dependency of North Korea is one of the most significant ways in which DPRK relations with Moscow differed from Soviet relations with its satellite states in Eastern Europe.
- 6 Ciphred telegram from Ambassador T.F. Shtyhov to Foreign Minister Andrei Vyshinsky, January 19, 1950 (AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, Listy 87–91).
- 7 The most influential criticism of the Korean communists came in an article published in *Revoliutsionnii vostok* (Revolutionary East) in 1931 by Otto Kuusinen, a member of the Comintern Executive Committee with a special interest in the Korean movement. Kuusinen excoriated the Koreans for ideological deviationism and factionalism. Dae-Sook Suh, ed., *Documents of Korean Communism, 1918–1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 257–282.

- 8 The Foreign Ministry and Central Committee archives include numerous records of visits to Soviet ministries by official delegations from the DPRK, who always brought with them long lists of practical questions about how to organize and manage schools, hospitals, youth organizations, industrial enterprises, parks, and so forth.
- 9 For an account of initiatives for war from the southern leadership, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2.
- 10 The documents were obtained in 1995 by the Cold War International History Project in collaboration with the Korean Research Center of Columbia University and the Institute for Contemporary International Problems of the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Ministry. A substantial portion were translated and analyzed in *The Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995) and Issue 6/7 (Winter 1995/96).
- 11 See exchange of telegrams between Stalin and Mao Zedong on 13–14 May 1950, published in *The Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 4 (Fall 1994), pp. 60–61.
- 12 Evgenii P. Bajanov and Natalia Bajanova, “The Korean Conflict, 1950–1953: The Most Mysterious War of the 20th Century,” *Cold War International History Project Working Paper*, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, forthcoming).
- 13 Conversation between Stalin and the governmental delegation of the DPRK headed by the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the DPRK Kim Il Sung, March 1949. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, “The Korean Conflict, 1950–1953”.
- 14 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 17 April 1949. Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), Perechen 3, List 25. Also found in the AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 4, Papka 11, List 80.
- 15 Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, p. 388.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 379–384.
- 17 Report from Sytykov to Stalin, 2 May 1949, APRF, List III, pp. 41–44.
- 18 See Shtykov’s cables on 28 May, 2 June, 18 June, 22 June, 13 July, cited in Bajanov and Bajanova.
- 19 Recommendations on Korea, 2 August 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 11.
- 20 Telegram from [Grigorii Ivanovich] Tunkin, [Chargé d’Affaires of the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang] to the Kremlin, 3 September 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 18–19.
- 21 Memorandum of Conversation of Ambassador Shtykov with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong, 14 August 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 16. The recommendations were attached to memoranda of Shtykov’s conversations with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong on 12 and 14 August during which the Koreans “again raised the issue of attacking the South, claiming that there was no choice but to solve the Korean issue through this method.”
- 22 Report from Shtykov to Stalin, 27 August 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 16–17.
- 23 See Kathryn Weathersby, “To Attack or Not to Attack?: Stalin, Kim Il Sung and the Prelude to War,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 1–9.
- 24 Draft Politburo decision dated 23 September, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 32–33.
- 25 Draft Politburo decision dated 21 September, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 32–33.
- 26 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 30 October 1949, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 11–12.
- 27 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, with message for Kim Il Sung, 30 January 1950, APRF. Also found in AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, List 92. For the full text see *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5 (Spring 1995), p. 9.

- 28 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 2 February 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 37.
- 29 Report on Kim Il Sung's visit to the USSR, March 30–April 25, 1950. Prepared by the International Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 40–42.
- 30 For records of Stalin's conversations with Mao Zedong about a new treaty, see "Stalin's Conversations with Chinese Leaders," *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issues 6–7 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 4–27.
- 31 Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 15 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 51–52.
- 32 Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 16 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 52.
- 33 Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 2 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 52. Bajanov notes that Zhou Enlai repeated a similar version of the discussion on American participation in the war in Korea during a meeting with the Soviet ambassador on 2 July 1950.
- 34 Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 16 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 52–53.
- 35 Telegram from Stalin to Roshchin, with message for Mao Zedong, 16 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 53.
- 36 See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, pp. 466–478.
- 37 Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 29 May 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 57.
- 38 Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 13 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 58.
- 39 Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 16 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 58–59.
- 40 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 21 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 60.
- 41 Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 21 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 59–60.
- 42 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 21 June 1950, APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, p. 60.



Map 6 The Korean War, 1950–1953. Adapted from Richard Dean Burns, ed., *Guide to American Foreign Relations Since 1700* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1983), p. 818.

MAO AND SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Chen Jian

Whereas Weathersby focused most of her attention on the relationship between Stalin and Kim Il Sung, Chen Jian, in the excerpt that follows, examines the thinking and strategy of the Chinese Communist leader, Mao Zedong. Chen, a professor of history at the University of Virginia, is one of the world's foremost experts on the history of Chinese communist foreign policy. Using the limited archival materials that have become available in addition to memoirs and printed sources, Chen has reoriented our interpretations of Mao's motives and goals.

Like so many recent students of the international history of the Cold War, Chen emphasizes the importance of ideology, history, and culture. Foreign and domestic policy, Chen insists, are inseparable. Mao's actions must be understood in terms of his commitment to national liberation, his desire to restore Chinese grandeur, and his admiration of Chinese culture. Mao's decision to enter the Korean War in the autumn of 1950, therefore, was not only a reaction to General Douglas MacArthur's military offensive that brought American power to the shores of the Yalu River and to the borders of China. Mao, argues Chen, was not merely reacting defensively and strategically. Rather, Mao was also exploiting Korean developments to sustain and deepen his internal revolution. Fighting the Americans provided an opportunity to take the revolution to a new stage, to eradicate domestic foes, and to catalyze internal support for societal transformations of an unprecedented nature. Anti-American discourse could be used to harness the sentiment of the Chinese people in favor of thoroughgoing changes that would make China 'into a land of universal justice and equality.'

Chen reconfigures categories of analysis. Like revisionist scholars, Chen is very sympathetic to looking within nations to understand the dynamics of revolutionary change. Stalin was not responsible for Chinese policy. Mao himself was an agent of history, with aspirations of his own. His ideas not only encapsulated elements of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, but also incorporated key ingredients of traditional Chinese culture and national identity. Yet Chen, like generations of traditional scholars, also shows that Mao, of his own volition, initially did look to Stalin for guidance and inspiration and did want to support revolutionary forces throughout Asia. Mao, says Chen, was not merely reacting to American hostility, but to the internal logic of his revolutionary project. During the Korean War, his differences with Stalin grew, but his determination to defeat imperialism and assert Chinese

greatness did not wane. Chinese-American enmity would be an enduring legacy of the Korean War.

Readers will have much to ponder in Chen's account of Mao and the Korean War. Does Chen underestimate the role of American actions in shaping Mao's thinking and Mao's policies? Does he exaggerate the bonds that linked Mao to Stalin and to Kim and other Asian revolutionaries? Or does he properly illuminate the extent to which the foreign policies of revolutionary regimes are the inevitable consequence of their yearning for radical transformation at home, agendas that cannot be controlled by foreign powers, even those as powerful as the United States? How well did US officials understand the factors motivating Mao and Chinese foreign policy? What was the impact of US actions on Chinese attitudes and policies?

* * *

Did there exist any chance in 1949–50 for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the United States to reach an accommodation or, at least, to avoid a confrontation? Scholars who believe that Washington “lost a chance” to pursue a nonconfrontational relationship with the CCP generally base their argument on two assumptions – that the Chinese Communists earnestly sought US recognition to expedite their country’s postwar economic reconstruction, and that the relationship between the CCP and the Soviet Union was vulnerable because of Moscow’s failure to offer sufficient support to the Communists during the Chinese civil war. These scholars thus claim that it was Washington’s anti-Communist and pro-Guomindang policy that forced the CCP to treat the United States as an enemy.¹ This claim, though ostensibly critical of Washington’s management of relations with China, is ironically American-centered on the methodological level, implying that the Chinese Communist policy toward the United States was simply passive reaction to Washington’s policy toward China.

This chapter, with insights gained from newly accessible Chinese and, in some places, Russian materials, argues that the CCP’s confrontation with the United States reflected the revolutionary essence of the party’s perception and management of China’s external relations, and that the CCP’s alliance with the Soviet Union and confrontation with the United States must be understood in relation to the party’s need to enhance the inner dynamics of the Chinese revolution after its nationwide victory. In the environment in which the Chinese Communists and the Americans found themselves in 1948–49, it was next to impossible for the two sides to establish a normal working relationship, let alone for them to reach an accommodation.

There is no doubt that Washington’s continuous support of the Guomindang (GMD) during China’s civil war played an important role in the CCP’s adoption of an anti-American policy. But America’s pro-Jiang policy alone does not offer a comprehensive explanation of the origins of the CCP-American crisis. In order to comprehend the CCP’s policy toward the United States, we

must explore the historical-cultural environment in which it emerged, thus revealing the dynamics and logic underlying it.

The Chinese Communist revolution emerged in a land that was historically known as the Central Kingdom.² The Chinese during traditional times viewed China as civilization in toto. In modern times, this worldview had been severely challenged when China had to face the cruel reality that its door was opened by the superior forces of Western powers, and that the very survival of the Chinese nation was at stake. Mao's and his comrades' generation became indignant when they saw the West, including the United States, treat the "old," declining China with arrogance and a strong sense of superiority. They also despised the Chinese governments from the Manchu dynasty to the regimes of the warlords, which had failed to protect China's national integrity and sovereignty. An emotional commitment to national liberation provided the crucial momentum in Mao's and his comrades' choice of a Marxist-Leninist-style revolution.³ For Mao and his comrades, the final goal of their revolution was not only the total transformation of the old Chinese state and society they saw as corrupt and unjust; they also wanted to change China's weak power status, proving to the world the strength and influence of Chinese culture. In the process, they would redefine the values and rules underlying the international system. In short, they wanted to restore China's *central* position in the international community.

Mao and his comrades never regarded the Communist seizure of power in China in 1949 as the revolution's conclusion. Rather, Mao was very much concerned about how to maintain and enhance the revolution's momentum after its nationwide victory. Indeed, this concern dominated Mao's thinking during the formation of the People's Republic and would be a preoccupation during the latter half of his life. Consequently, Mao's approach toward China's external relations in general and his policy toward the United States in particular became heavily influenced by this primary concern. Throughout 1949–50, the Maoist political discourse challenged the values and codes of behavior attached to "US imperialism," pointing out that they belonged to the "old world," which the CCP was determined to destroy. While defining the "American threat," Mao and his fellow CCP leaders never limited their vision merely to the possibility of direct American military intervention in China; they emphasized long-range American hostility toward the victorious Chinese revolution, especially the US imperialist attempt to isolate the revolution from without and sabotage it from within.⁴ Indeed, when Mao justified the CCP's decision not to pursue relations with the United States, his most consistent and powerful argument was that the decision would deprive the Americans of a means of sabotaging the Chinese revolution.⁵

It is also important to point out that while Washington's hostility toward the Chinese revolution offended Mao and his comrades, the perceived American disdain for China as weak and the Chinese as inferior made them angry. In the anti-American propaganda campaign following the publication of the *China White Paper*, Mao sought to expose the "reactionary" and

“vulnerable” nature of US imperialism and to encourage ordinary Chinese people’s national self-respect. In other words, Mao used anti-American discourse as a means of mobilizing the masses for his continuous revolution, a practice that would reach its first peak in 1950–53, during the “Great War of Resisting America and Assisting Korea” (the Chinese name for China’s participation in the Korean War).

The CCP’s adoption of an anti-American policy in 1949–50 had deep roots in both China’s history and its modern experiences. Sharp divergences in political ideology (communism versus capitalism) and perceived national interests contributed to the shaping of the Sino-American confrontation; and suspicion and hostility were further crystallized as the result of Washington’s continuous support to the GMD. But, from a Chinese perspective, the most profound reason underlying the CCP’s anti-American policy was Mao’s grand plans for transforming China’s state, society, and international outlook. Even though it might have been possible for Washington to change the concrete course of its China policy (which was highly unlikely given the policy’s complicated background), it would have been impossible for the United States to alter the course and goals of the Chinese revolution, let alone the historical-cultural environment that gave birth to the event.

New Chinese and Russian evidence reveals that the relationship between the CCP and Moscow in 1949 was much more intimate and substantial than many Western scholars previously realized. While it is true that problems and disagreements (sometimes even serious ones) existed between the Chinese and Soviet Communists, as well as between Mao Zedong and Stalin (as in any partnership), the new evidence clearly points out that cooperation, or the willingness to cooperate, was the dominant aspect of CCP-Soviet relations in 1949.

During China’s civil war in 1946–49, the CCP’s relations with Moscow were close but not harmonious.⁶ When it became clear that the Chinese Communists were going to win the civil war, both the CCP and the Soviet Union felt the need to strengthen their relationship. From late 1947, Mao actively prepared to visit the Soviet Union to “discuss important domestic and international issues” with Stalin.⁷ The extensive telegraphic exchanges between Mao and Stalin culminated in two important secret missions in 1949. From 31 January to 7 February, Anastas Mikoyan, a politburo member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, visited Xibaipo, the CCP headquarters at that time. Mao and other CCP leaders had extensive discussions with him, introducing to him the CCP’s strategies and policies. In particular, Mao explained to Mikoyan the CCP’s foreign policy of “making a fresh start” and “cleaning the house before entertaining guests.”⁸ From late June to mid-August, Liu Shaoqi, the CCP’s second in command, visited Moscow. During the visit, Stalin apologized for failing to give sufficient assistance to the CCP during the civil war and promised that the Soviet Union would give the Chinese Communists political support and substantial assistance

in military and other areas. Moreover, the Soviets and the Chinese discussed a "division of labor" to promote the world revolution, and they reached a general consensus: the Soviet Union would remain the center of the international proletarian revolution, and promoting revolution in the East would become primarily China's duty. Liu left Moscow accompanied by ninety-six Russian experts who were to assist China's military buildup and economic reconstruction.⁹

On 30 June 1949, Mao Zedong issued his famous "lean-to-one-side" statement. In a long article titled "On People's Democratic Dictatorship," he announced Communist China's special relationship with the Soviet Union. He said that revolutionary China must "unite in a common struggle with those nations of the world that treat us as equal and unite with the peoples of all countries – that is, ally ourselves with the Soviet Union, with the People's Democratic Countries, and with the proletariat and the broad masses of the people in all other countries, and form an international united front . . . We must lean to one side."¹⁰

Why did Mao choose these extraordinary terms? The statement was obviously linked to the longtime revolutionary policy of the Chinese Communist Party of attaching itself to the international "progressive forces" led by the Soviet Union. By the late 1940s, CCP leaders clearly perceived the postwar world as divided into two camps, one headed by the Soviet Union and the other by the United States, and regarded their revolution as a part of the Soviet-led international proletarian movement.¹¹

The lean-to-one-side approach also grew out of the CCP's assessment of the serious nature of the threat from Western imperialist countries, especially from the United States, to the completion of the Chinese revolution. As the CCP neared final victory in China's civil war in 1949, Mao and his fellow Chinese Communist leaders became very much concerned about the prospect of direct US intervention in China.¹² Although the American military did not intervene directly during the latter phase of the civil war, the CCP chairman and his comrades, given their belief in the aggressive and evil nature of Western imperialism, continued to view the Western capitalist countries in general and the United States in particular as dangerous enemies.¹³ In the eyes of Mao and his comrades, "it was the possibility of military intervention from imperialist countries that made it necessary for China to ally itself with other socialist countries."¹⁴

Mao's lean-to-one-side decision cannot be viewed in terms of these ideological commitments and security concerns only, though. It also must be understood in the context of his determination to maintain and enhance the inner dynamics of the Chinese Communist revolution at the time of its nationwide victory.

It was primarily for the purpose of creating new momentum for the Chinese revolution that the CCP leadership made three fundamental decisions on Communist China's external relations, what Zhou Enlai referred to as "making a fresh start," "cleaning the house before entertaining guests," and

“leaning to one side.”¹⁵ These three decisions were closely interconnected. While the first two represented CCP leaders’ determination not to be influenced by the legacy of “old” China’s diplomatic practice, the last one reflected their conviction that an alliance with the Soviet Union would help destroy any remaining illusions among the Chinese people, especially the intellectuals, of the utility of assistance from Western capitalist countries. Because the Soviet Union had been the first socialist country in the world and had established the only example for building a socialist state and society, Mao’s continuous revolution had to follow the example of the Soviet experience. In this regard, the argument of Zhang Baijia, a leading Chinese scholar in Chinese diplomatic history, certainly makes good sense: “Contrary to the prevalent view, Mao treated the ‘lean-to-one-side’ concept as a grand strategy to influence the party’s foreign *and* domestic policies. The key question Mao tried to answer by introducing the lean-to-one-side approach was how to define the *general* direction of New China’s development.”¹⁶

The Chinese Communist efforts to achieve a strategic alliance with the Soviet Union culminated in December 1949–February 1950 when Mao personally visited the Soviet Union. The CCP chairman’s experience during the visit, however, was uneasy. During his first meeting with Stalin on 16 December, the Soviet leader asked him what he hoped to achieve from the visit. The CCP chairman, according to his interpreter’s recollections, first replied that he wanted to “bring about something that not only looked nice but also tasted delicious” – a reference to his wish to sign a new Sino-Soviet treaty.¹⁷ However, Stalin greatly disappointed Mao by initially emphasizing that it was neither in Moscow’s nor in Beijing’s interest to abolish the 1945 Sino-Soviet treaty the Soviet Union had signed with the GMD.¹⁸ Mao’s visit then hit a deadlock for almost three weeks before the Soviets relented.¹⁹ Chinese premier Zhou Enlai arrived in Moscow on 20 January to negotiate the details of the new alliance treaty, which was signed finally on 14 February 1950. The Chinese, however, had to agree to allow the Soviets to maintain their privileges in China’s Northeast and Xinjiang²⁰; in exchange, the Soviets agreed to increase military and other material support to China, including providing air-defense installations in coastal areas of the People’s Republic.²¹

The Sino-Soviet alliance treaty would greatly enhance the PRC’s security, and, more important, it would expand the CCP’s capacity to promote the post-victory revolution at home. With the backing of the Soviet Union, Mao and his comrades would occupy a more powerful position to wipe out the political, economic, social, and cultural legacies of the “old” China and carry out “new” China’s state-building and societal transformation on the CCP’s terms. It was not just rhetoric when the CCP chairman, after returning to Beijing, told his comrades that the Sino-Soviet alliance would help the party cope with both domestic and international threats to the Chinese revolution.²²

On the other hand, however, Mao could clearly sense that divergences persisted between Stalin and himself. Stalin’s raw use of the language of power put off Mao. Mao’s wish to discuss revolutionary ideals and the

Communists' historical responsibilities came to nothing. The CCP chairman never enjoyed meeting Stalin face to face, and he was extremely sensitive to the way Stalin treated him, the revolutionary leader from the Central Kingdom, as the inferior "younger brother."²³

The first major test for the Sino-Soviet alliance came just eight months after it had been established, when, in October 1950, the CCP leadership decided to dispatch Chinese troops to enter the Korean War. From Beijing's perspective, such a test not only allowed Mao and his comrades to define more specifically the alliance's utility for China's national security; it also provided them with a valuable opportunity to achieve a better understanding of how the alliance would serve Mao's revolutionary projects. China's Korean War experience, consequently, would profoundly influence both Mao's concerns about the prospect of the Chinese revolution and the future development of the Sino-Soviet alliance.

Mao and the CCP leadership faced a dilemma on the Korean issue. Mao and his comrades were reluctant to see a war break out in Korea because they worried that that might complicate the situation in East Asia and jeopardize the CCP's effort to liberate Taiwan, which was still occupied by Nationalist forces.²⁴ Yet, because Mao and his comrades were eager to revive China's central position on the international scene through supporting revolutionary movements in other countries (especially in East Asia), and because profound historical connections existed between the Chinese and North Korean Communists, it would have been inconceivable for Mao to veto Kim's plans to unify his country through a revolutionary war.²⁵ From 1949 to 1950, in meetings with North Korean leaders (including Kim Il Sung in mid-May 1950), Mao made it clear that the CCP supported the Korean revolution but hoped that the Koreans would not initiate the invasion of the South until the PLA had seized Taiwan.²⁶ In the meantime, during Mao's 1949–50 visit to the Soviet Union, the CCP chairman shared with Stalin his belief that it was unlikely for the United States to involve itself in a revolutionary civil war in East Asia, thus enhancing Stalin's determination to back Kim's plans to attack the South.²⁷ Furthermore, from summer 1949 to spring 1950, the Chinese sent 50,000 to 70,000 ethnic Korean PLA soldiers (with weapons) back to Korea.²⁸ As a result, Mao virtually gave Kim's plan a green light.

The Korean War erupted on 25 June 1950, and US president Harry Truman promptly decided to come to the rescue of Syngman Rhee's South Korean regime and to dispatch the Seventh Fleet to "neutralize" the Taiwan Strait, a decision that turned the Korean War into an international crisis. Chinese leaders quickly decided to postpone the invasion of Taiwan and to focus on dealing with the crisis in Korea.²⁹ On 13 July the CCP leadership formally established the Northeast Border Defense Army (NEBDA), assigning it with the task of preparing for military intervention in Korea in the event that the war turned against North Korea.³⁰ On 18 August, after over a quarter million Chinese troops had taken up positions along the Chinese-Korean

border, Mao set the end of September as the deadline for these troops to complete preparations for military operations in Korea.³¹

Beijing based its handling of the Korean crisis on the assumption that if China entered the Korean War, the Soviet Union would honor its obligations in accordance with the Sino-Soviet alliance treaty and provide China with all kinds of support, including supplies of ammunition, military equipment, and air cover for Chinese land forces. Early in July, when the Chinese leaders informed Stalin of the decision to establish the NEBDA, Stalin supported the plan and promised that if the Chinese troops were to fight in Korea, the Soviet Union would "try to provide air cover for these units."³² In the following weeks the Soviets accelerated military deliveries to China, and a Soviet air force division, with 122 MiG-15 fighters, entered China's Northeast to help with air defense there.³³

When the course of the war reversed after US troops landed at Inchon on 15 September, however, Stalin's attitude regarding Soviet military assistance changed. He became more determined than ever to avoid a direct military confrontation with the United States. In a telegram to Chinese leaders dated 1 October, Stalin pointed out that the situation in Korea was grave and that without outside support, the Korean Communist regime would collapse. He then asked the Chinese to dispatch their troops to Korea. He did not mention what support the Soviet Union would offer China, let alone touch on the key question of Soviet air support.³⁴

At this moment, serious differences in opinions already existed among top Chinese leaders on whether or not China should enter the war. Mao favored dispatching troops to Korea, and on 2 October he personally drafted a long telegram to respond to Stalin's request, informing Stalin that the Chinese leadership had decided "to send a portion of our troops, under the name of [Chinese People's] Volunteers, to Korea, assisting the Korean comrades to fight the troops of the United States and its running dog Syngman Rhee." Mao summarized the reasons for this decision, emphasizing that even though China's intervention might cause a war between China and the United States, it was necessary for the sake of the Korean and Eastern revolutions. Mao also made it clear that in order to defeat the American troops in Korea, China needed substantial Soviet military support.³⁵ He used plain language to ask Stalin to clarify "whether or not the Soviet Union can provide us with assistance in supplying weapons, can dispatch a volunteer air force into Korea, and can deploy large numbers of air force units to assist us in strengthening our air defense in Beijing, Tianjin, Shenyang, Shanghai, and Nanjing if the United States uses its air force to bombard these places."³⁶

Mao, however, apparently did not dispatch this telegram, probably because the opinions among top CCP leaders were yet to be unified and he also realized the need to bargain with Stalin on the Soviet air support issue.³⁷ According to Russian sources, Mao met with Nikolai Rochshin, the Soviet ambassador to China, later on 2 October, informing him that because dispatching Chinese troops to Korea "may entail extremely serious consequences," including

“provoking an open conflict between the United States and China,” many leaders in Beijing believed that China should “show caution” in entering the Korean War. Mao told Stalin that the Chinese leadership had not decided whether to send troops to Korea.³⁸

Over the ensuing two weeks, the Sino-Soviet alliance underwent a major test. Before October (when Stalin informed Kim of Mao’s communication), the Soviet leader cabled the Chinese leadership, advising Beijing that for the sake of China’s security interests as well as the interests of the world proletarian revolution, it was necessary for China to send troops to Korea. Stalin warned Mao and his comrades that Beijing’s failure to intervene could result in grave consequences first for China’s Northeast, then for all China, and then for the entire world revolution. Stalin again failed to mention how the Soviet Union would support China if Chinese troops did enter operations in Korea.³⁹

From 3 to 6 October the CCP leadership held a series of strictly secret meetings to discuss the Korean issue. Although most CCP leaders had opposed, or at least had reservations about, entering the war in Korea, Mao used both his authority and his political insights to secure the support of his colleagues for the decision to go to war.⁴⁰ On 8 October Mao Zedong formally issued the order to establish the Chinese People’s Volunteers (CPV), with Peng Dehuai as the commander,⁴¹ and informed Kim Il Sung of the decision the same evening.⁴²

In order to strengthen China’s bargaining position in pursuing Soviet military support, Mao found it necessary to “play tough with” Stalin.⁴³ On 10–11 October, Zhou Enlai met with Stalin at the latter’s villa on the Black Sea. Zhou, according to Shi Zhe, Mao’s and Zhou’s Russian-language interpreter, did not tell Stalin that China had decided to send troops to Korea but persistently brought the discussion around to Soviet military aid, especially air support, for China. Stalin finally agreed to provide China with substantial military support but explained that it was impossible for the Soviet air force to engage in fighting over Korea until two to two and a half months after Chinese land forces entered operations there.⁴⁴

Stalin’s ambiguous attitude forced Mao again to order Chinese troops to halt preparations for entering operations in Korea on 12 October.⁴⁵ The next day the CCP politburo met again to discuss China’s entry into the Korean War. Pushed by Mao, the politburo confirmed that entering the war was in the fundamental interests of the Chinese revolution as well as the Eastern revolution.⁴⁶ Mao then authorized Zhou Enlai, who was still in Moscow, to inform Stalin of the decision. At the same time, Mao instructed Zhou to continue to “consult with” the Soviet leaders, to clarify whether they would ask China to lease or to purchase the military equipment that Stalin agreed to provide, and whether the Soviet air force would enter operations in Korea at all.⁴⁷

On 17 October, the day Zhou returned to Beijing, Mao again ordered the troops on the Chinese-Korean border to halt their movements to give him time to learn from Zhou about Stalin’s exact position.⁴⁸ The next day, when

Mao was convinced that the Soviet Union would provide China with all kinds of military support, including air defense for major Chinese cities and air cover for Chinese troops fighting in Korea in a later stage of the war, he finally ordered Chinese troops to enter the Korean War.⁴⁹

The concerns over China's physical security certainly played an important role in convincing Beijing's leaders to enter the war. Yet factors more complicated than these narrowly defined "security concerns" dominated Mao's conceptual world. When Chinese troops entered the Korean War, Mao meant to pursue a glorious victory over the American-led United Nations (UN) forces. The triumph, he hoped, would transform the challenge and threat posed by the Korean crisis into added political energy for securing Communist control of China's state and society as well as promote the international prestige and influence of the People's Republic.

These plans explain why, at the same time Mao and his comrades were considering entering the Korean War, the CCP leadership started the "Great Movement to Resist America and Assist Korea," with "beating American arrogance" as its central slogan. The party used every means available to stir the "hatred of the US imperialists" among common Chinese, emphasizing that the United States had long engaged in political and economic aggression against China, that the declining capitalist America was not as powerful as it seemed, and that a confrontation between China and the United States was inevitable.⁵⁰ When the Chinese troops were crossing the Yalu River to Korea late in October 1950, a nationwide campaign aimed at suppressing "reactionaries and reactionary activities" emerged in China's cities and countryside.⁵¹

Stalin's behavior of always putting Moscow's own interests ahead of anything else demonstrated to Mao the limits of the Soviet leader's proletarian internationalism. Meanwhile, Mao's decision to rescue the Korean and Eastern revolution at a time of real difficulties inevitably heightened the CCP chairman's sense of moral superiority – he was able to help others out, even if the Soviet "elder brother" could not. As a result, in conceptual and psychological terms, the seed for the future Sino-Soviet split was sown.

During the three years of China's intervention in Korea, Mao consulted with Stalin on almost all important decisions. In December 1950 and January 1951, when Mao and his comrades were deciding to order Chinese troops to cross the 38th parallel, Beijing maintained daily communication with Moscow and received Stalin's unfailing support.⁵² In May–June 1951, when Beijing's leaders were considering shifting their policy emphasis from fighting to negotiation to end the war, they had extensive exchanges of opinions with Stalin and did not make the decision until Moscow fully backed the new strategy.⁵³ After 1952, when the armistice negotiations at Panmunjom hit a deadlock on the prisoner-of-war issue, Beijing consulted with Moscow and concluded that the Chinese/North Korean side would not compromise on this issue until its political and military position had improved.⁵⁴

Mao's decision to send Chinese troops to Korea seemed to have boosted Stalin's confidence in his comrades in Beijing as genuine proletarian

internationalists. During the war years, the Soviet Union provided China with large amounts of ammunition and military equipment. Units of the Soviet air force, based in Manchuria, began to defend the transportation lines across the Chinese-Korean border as early as November 1950 and entered operations over the northern part of North Korea in January 1951.⁵⁵ In the meantime, Stalin became more willing to commit Soviet financial and technological resources to China's economic reconstruction – during the war years, as a consequence, the Soviet Union's share in China's foreign trade increased from 30 percent (in 1950) to 56 percent (in 1953).⁵⁶ In retrospect it would have been virtually impossible for China to have fought the Korean War without the strategic alliance with the Soviet Union.

Soviet support also played a crucial role in bolstering Mao's plans for continuing the revolution at home. Indeed, China's involvement in the Korean War stimulated a series of political and social transformations in the country that would have been inconceivable during the early stage of the new republic. In the wake of China's entrance into the war, the Communist regime found itself in a powerful position to penetrate almost every area of Chinese society through intensive mass mobilization under the banner of "Resisting America and Assisting Korea."⁵⁷ During the three years of war, three nationwide campaigns swept through China's countryside and cities: the movement to suppress counterrevolutionaries, the land reform movement, and the "Three Antis" and "Five Antis" movements.⁵⁸ When the war ended in July 1953, China's society and political landscape had been altered: organized resistance to the new regime had been destroyed; land in the countryside had been redistributed and the landlord class had been eliminated; many of the Communist cadres whom Mao believed had lost the revolutionary momentum had been either "reeducated" or removed from leading positions; and the national bourgeoisie was under the tight control of the Communist state and the "petit-bourgeoisie" intellectuals had experienced the first round of Communist reeducation. Consequently, the CCP effectively extended and deepened its organizational control of Chinese society and dramatically promoted its authority and legitimacy in the minds of the Chinese people.

These domestic changes were further facilitated by the fact that during the war, Chinese troops successfully forced the US/UN forces to retreat from the Chinese-Korean border to the 38th parallel, a development that allowed Beijing to call its intervention in Korea a great victory. Mao and his comrades believed that they had won a powerful position from which to claim that international society – friends and foes alike – had to accept China as a Great Power.⁵⁹ This position, in turn, would allow Mao, as the mastermind of the war decision, to enjoy political power inside China with far fewer checks and balances than before.

Yet, on another level, the Chinese experience during the Korean War also ground away at some of the cement that kept the Sino-Soviet alliance together. The extreme pragmatism Stalin had demonstrated in his management of the Korean crisis, especially in his failure to commit Soviet air support to China

during the key weeks of October 1950, revealed the superficial nature of the Soviet dictator's proletarian internationalism. What really offended Mao and his comrades, however, was the Soviet request that China pay for much of the military support Beijing had received during the war, which added to China's long-term economic challenges.⁶⁰ To the Chinese, Stalin's stinginess made the Soviets seem more like arms merchants than genuine Communist internationalists.

Consequently, although China's Korean War experience made Beijing more dependent on Moscow, psychologically Stalin's attitude bolstered Mao's and his fellow Chinese leaders' sense of moral superiority in relation to their Soviet comrades. Stalin's death in March 1953 further hardened this feeling. This subtle change in Mao's and his comrades' perception of themselves and their comrades in Moscow would leave a critical stamp upon the fate of the Sino-Soviet alliance.

Abbreviations

CCFP	Zhang Shuguang and Chen Jian, eds., <i>Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary Evidence, 1944–1950</i> (Chigago: Imprint Publication, 1996)
CWIHPB	Cold War International History Project Bulletin
DZJJG	Han Huaizhi et al., <i>Dangdai Zhongguo jundui de junshi gongzuo</i> (The Military Affairs of the Contemporary Chinese Army), 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1989)
JMZW	<i>Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao</i> (Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China), 13 vols. (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1987–97)
MZN	<i>Mao Zedong nianpu</i> (A Chronological Record of Mao Zedong), 3 vols. (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian and Renmin, 1993)
MZW	<i>Mao Zedong wenji</i> (A Collection of Mao Zedong's Works), 8 vols. (Beijing: Renmin, 1993–97)
MZX	<i>Mao Zedong xuanji</i> (Selected Works of Mao Zedong), 5 vols. (Beijing: Renmin, 1965 and 1977)
ZEWW	<i>Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxian</i> (Selected Diplomatic Papers of Zhou Enlai) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1990)

Notes

- 1 For a recent symposium focusing on reconsidering the "lost chance" issue, see John Garver, Michael M. Sheng, Odd Arne Westad, and Chen Jian, "Rethinking the Lost Chance in China," with an introduction by Warren I. Cohen, *Diplomatic History* 21 (Winter 1997): 71–115.
- 2 I believe that "Central Kingdom" is a more accurate translation for "Zhong Guo" (China) than "Middle Kingdom." The term "Middle Kingdom" does not imply that China is superior to other peoples and nations around it – China just happens to be located in the middle geographically; the term "Central Kingdom," however, implies that China is superior to any other people and nation "under the heaven" and that it thus occupies a "central" position in the known universe.
- 3 For Mao's own statement on this issue, see Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (New York: Random House, 1938), 118–19; for a good discussion about how Mao adopted the restoration of China's historical glory as one of the top goals of the Chinese

- Communist revolution, see Mark Mancall, *China at the Center: 300 Years of Foreign Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1984), ch. 9.
- 4 In actuality, after the People's Liberation Army occupied Shanghai, Qingdao, and China's other major coastal cities in the summer of 1949, Mao and the CCP leadership no longer regarded direct American military intervention as a real danger, although in open propaganda, the CCP would continue to call the Chinese people's attention to it.
 - 5 Mao Zedong, "Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee," *MZX*, 4:1425–26, 1428; *MZN*, 3:410–11.
 - 6 For a more detailed discussion, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 65–69; see also Niu Jun, "The Origins of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945–1963*, ed. Odd Arne Westad (Washington, D.C., and Stanford, Calif.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 1998), 47–89, esp. 61–69.
 - 7 Andrei Ledovsky, "Mikoyan's Secret Mission to China in January and February 1949," *Far Eastern Affairs*, no. 2 (1995): 72–94, esp. 75–77; Westad, *Brothers in Arms*, 298–300; Shi Zhe, *Zai lishi juren shenbian: Shi Zhe huiyilu* (At the Side of Historical Giants: Shi Zhe's Memoirs), rev. edn (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao, 1998), 326–27.
 - 8 See Shi Zhe, "With Mao and Stalin: The Reminiscences of a Chinese Interpreter, Part I," trans. Chen Jian, *Chinese Historians* 5 (Spring 1992): 45–56. For a Russian account of the visit, see Ledovsky, "Mikoyan's Secret Mission to China," 72–94. Chinese and Russian accounts of this visit are highly compatible.
 - 9 For a detailed account of Liu's visit to Moscow, see Shi Zhe, "With Mao and Stalin: The Reminiscences of Mao's Interpreter, Part II: Liu Shaoqi in Moscow," trans. Chen Jian, *Chinese Historians* 6 (Spring 1993): 67–90; Zhu Yuanshi, "Liu Shaoqi's Secret Visit to the Soviet Union in 1949," *Dangde wenxian*, no. 3 (1991): 74–81; and Jin Chongji et al., *Liu Shaoqi zhuan* (A Biography of Liu Shaoqi) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 646–54; see also Sergei Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 61–75.
 - 10 Mao Zedong, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship," *MZX*, 4:1477.
 - 11 See, for example, Lu Dingyi, "Explanations of Several Basic Problems Concerning the Postwar International Situation," *Jiefang ribao* (Liberation Daily), 4 January 1947; Liu Shaoqi, "On Internationalism and Nationalism," *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), 7 November 1948; and Mao Zedong, "Concluding Remarks at the Second Plenary Session of the CCP's Seventh Central Committee," 13 March 1949, *MZW*, 5:261–62.
 - 12 Mao Zedong, "The Current Situation and the Party's Tasks in 1949," 8 January 1949, and "Plans for Advancing on the Whole Country," 23 May 1949, *Mao Zedong junshi wenxuan* (Selected Military Papers of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Zhanshi, 1981), 328, 338.
 - 13 See, for example, Mao Zedong, "Casting Away Illusion, Preparing for Struggle" and "Friendship or Aggression," *MZX*, 4:1487–94, 1509–12.
 - 14 Xue Mouhong et al., *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao* (Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1989), 4.
 - 15 Zhou Enlai, "Our Diplomatic Policies and Tasks," *ZEW*, 48–51; see also Xue Mouhong et al., *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao*, 4–5; and Pei Jianzhang, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiao shi, 1949–1956* (A Diplomatic History of the People's Republic of China, 1949–1956) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi, 1994), 2–4.
 - 16 Zhang Baijia, "The Shaping of New China's Diplomacy," *Chinese Historians* 7 (1994): 62.
 - 17 Shi Zhe, *Zai lishi juren shenbian: Shi Zhe huiyilu* (At the Side of Historical Giants: Shi Zhe's Memoirs), rev. ed. (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao, 1998), 389. In the Russian minutes of this conversation, this statement was not included (see "Conversation between Stalin and Mao, Moscow, December 16, 1949," *CWIHPB*, nos.

- 6–7 [Winter 1995–96], 5–7). I believe that a possible reason for this discrepancy lies in the cultural differences between Chinese and Soviet interpreters. For a discussion, see Chen Jian, “Comparing Russian and Chinese Sources: A New Point of Departure for Cold War History,” *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 21.
- 18 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Liu Shaoqi, 18 December 1949, *CCFP*, 128, and “Conversation between Stalin and Mao, Moscow, December 16, 1949,” *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 5–7.
 - 19 Telegrams, Mao Zedong to the CCP Central Committee, 2, 3, and 5 January 1950, *CCFP*, 131–34. See also “More on Mao in Moscow,” *CWIHPB*, nos. 8–9 (Winter 1996–97): 223–36.
 - 20 Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Liu Shaoqi and the CCP politburo, 8 February 1950, in Jin Chongji, ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949–1976* (A Biography of Zhou Enlai, 1949–1976) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 1:35–39. For plausible discussions of the signing of the Sino-Soviet alliance, see Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners*, ch. 4; see also *Pei Jianzhang, Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiao shi, 1949–1956*, 16–27.
 - 21 During Mao’s visit to the Soviet Union, China ordered 586 planes from the Soviet Union, including 280 fighters, 198 bombers, and 108 trainers. From 16 February to 5 March 1950, a mixed Soviet air-defense division, following the request of the PRC government, moved into Shanghai, Nanjing, and Xuzhou to take responsibility for the defense of these areas. From 13 March to 11 May, this Soviet division shot down five GMD planes in the Shanghai area, greatly strengthening Shanghai’s air-defense system (*DZJJG*, 2: 161; Wang Dinglie, *Dangdai zhongguo kongjun* (Contemporary Chinese Air Force) (Beijing: Jiefangjun, 1989), 78–79, 110.
 - 22 Mao Zedong’s address at the Sixth Session of the Central People’s Government Council, 11 April 1950, *JMZW*, 1:291.
 - 23 Mao later recalled that during his meetings with Stalin from December 1949 to February 1950, Stalin did not trust him and failed to treat him equally. See, for example, his statements to the Soviet ambassador in Beijing in 1956 and 1958, in *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96), esp. 155–56, 165–66.
 - 24 Mao Zedong, however, did not believe that the Americans would directly intervene in a revolutionary civil war in Korea. For a more detailed discussion, see Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War*, 88–90.
 - 25 For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between Chinese and North Korean Communists prior to the Korean War, see *ibid.*, 106–13.
 - 26 For discussions, see Shen Zhihua, *Zhongsu tongmeng yu chaoxian zhanzheng yanjiu* (Studies on the Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Korean War) (Guilin: Guangxi shida, 1999), 238–42.
 - 27 For a more detailed discussion, see Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War*, 87–88.
 - 28 See *ibid.*, 110–11; see also Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 2:363.
 - 29 He Di, “The Last Campaign to Unify China: The CCP’s Unmaterialized Plan to Liberate Taiwan, 1949–1950,” *Chinese Historians* 5 (Spring 1992): 12–16; Xiao Jinguang, *Xiao Jinguang huiyilu* (Xiao Jinguang’s Memoirs) (Beijing: Jiefangjun, 1990), 2:8, 26.
 - 30 Letter, Mao Zedong to Nie Rongzhen, 7 July 1950, *JMZW*, 1:428; *DZJJG*, 1:449–50.
 - 31 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Gao Gang, 18 August 1950, *JMZW*, 1:469; see also telegram, Mao Zedong to Gao Gang, 5 August 1950, *ibid.*, 454.
 - 32 Telegram, Stalin to Soviet ambassador in Beijing (N. V. Rochshin) with message for Zhou Enlai, July 1950, *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 43.
 - 33 See Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korea War*, 156; see also telegram, Filippov [Stalin] to Zhou Enlai, 27 August 1950, *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 45.
 - 34 Telegram, Stalin to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, 1 October 1950, *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 114. Stalin dispatched this telegram after UN forces crossed the 38th parallel and Kim Il Sung requested direct Soviet and Chinese intervention in the war.

- 35 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Stalin, 2 October 1950, *JMZW*, 1:539–40. The text of the telegram published in this volume is an abridged version.
- 36 The quotations in this paragraph, which are not included in the telegram's published text in *JMZW*, are from Mao's original text.
- 37 Since the Chiense Central Archives, Beijing has provided me with a xerox copy of the telegram's original text in Mao's own handwriting, there is no doubt that this is a genuine document, and that its contents reflected Mao's thinking. But the fact that this telegram is not found in Russian archives and that another version of Mao's message to Stalin does exist points to the possibility that although Mao had drafted the telegram, he may not have dispatched it. Also, most of Mao's telegrams carry Mao's office staff's signature indicating the time when the telegram was dispatched, but this telegram does not. For a discussion, see Shen Zhihua, "The Discrepancy between the Russian and Chinese Versions of Mao's 2 October 1950 Message to Stalin on Chinese Entry into the Korean War: A Chinese Scholar's Reply," trans. Chen Jian, *CWIHPB*, nos. 8–9 (Winter 1996–97): 237–42.
- 38 Telegram, Nikolai Rochshin in Beijing to Stalin, October 1950, conveying 2 October 1950 message from Mao to Stalin, *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 114–15.
- 39 Letter, Fyn Si [Stalin] to Kim Il Sung [via Shtykov], 8 [7] October 1950, *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 116. Stalin cited the text of his message to Beijing in this telegram.
- 40 For a detailed discussion of these meetings, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*; ch. 5; see also Zhang Xi, "Peng Dehuai and China's Entry into the Korean War," trans. Chen Jian, *Chinese Historians* 6 (Spring 1993): 8–16.
- 41 "Mao Zedong's Order to Establish the Chinese People's Volunteers," 8 October 1950, *JMZW*, 1:543–44.
- 42 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Kim Il Sung, 8 October 1950, *ibid.*, 545; see also Chai Chengwen and Zhao Yongtian, *Banmendian tanpan* (The Panmunjom Negotiations) (Beijing: Jiefangjun, 1989), 84.
- 43 This is the phrase Shi Zhe, Mao Zedong's and Zhou Enlai's Russian-language interpreter, used in describing how Mao was dealing with Stalin in October 1950 (author's interviews with Shi Zhe, August 1992).
- 44 For a more detailed discussion based on Shi Zhe's recollections, the validity of which were checked against other Chinese sources, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, 197–200.
- 45 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Peng Dehuai and others, 12 October 1950, *JMZW*, 1:552.
- 46 For a more detailed discussion, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War* 200–202.
- 47 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Zhou Enlai, 13 October 1950, *JMZW*, 1:556. The telegram published in *JMZW* is abridged. The citation here is based on the original of the telegram, kept at CCP Central Archives in Beijing.
- 48 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Peng Dehuai and Gao Gang, 17 October 1950, *JMZW*, 1:567.
- 49 Telegram, Mao Zedong to Peng Dehuai, Gao Gang, and others, 17 October 1950, and telegram, Mao Zedong to Deng Hua, Hong Xuezhi, Han Xianchu, and Xie Fang, 18 October 1950, *JMZW*, 1:567–8.
- 50 General Chinese Association of Resisting America and Assisting Korea, comp., *Weida de kangmei yuanchao yundong* (The Great Movement to Resist America and Assist Korea) (Beijing: Renmin, 1954), 7–8.
- 51 See State Council and Supreme People's Court, "Instructions on Suppressing Reactionary Activities," issued on July 23, 1950, in CCP Central Institute of Historical Documents, comp., *Jianguo yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* (A Selection of Important Documents since the Founding of the People's Republic) (Beijing: Zhongyao wenxian, 1992–98), 1:358–60; and "Fifteen Telegrams and Documents on Suppressing Reactionary Activities during the Early Stage of the People's Republic," and Zhang Min, "A Survey of the Struggle to Suppress Reactionaries in the Early Years of the PRC," *Dangde wenxian* (Party History Documents, Beijing), no. 2 (1988): 31–41.

- 52 For documentary evidence on this issue, see “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 47–53.
- 53 Stalin approved Beijing’s decision to come to the negotiation table at a meeting with Gao Gang and Kim Il Sung in June 1951. For a more detailed discussion, see Shi Zhe, *Zai lishi juren shenbian*, 451–54; Nie Rongzhen, *Nie Rongzhen huiyilu* (Nie Rongzhen’s memoirs) (Beijing: Jiefangjun, 1984), 742–43; and “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 59–66.
- 54 For examples of these communications, see “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” *CWIHPB*, nos. 6–7 (Winter 1995–96): 66–84.
- 55 See Tan Jinqiao et al., *Kangmei yuanchao zhanzheng* (The War to Resist America and Assist Korea) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1990), 201.
- 56 Xue Mouhong et al., *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao*, 28–30; Pei Jianzhang, *Zhong-hua renmin gongheguo waijiao shi*, 40–41.
- 57 Zhou Enlai, “The Enemy’s Defeat and Our Victory,” 11 December 1952, *ZEJW*, 4:297–98.
- 58 The Three Antis movement was designed to oppose corrupt Communist cadres; the Five Antis movement was aimed at the national bourgeoisie class “who should not be destroyed at this stage but who needed to be tightly controlled by the power of the people’s state.” For discussions of these movements, see Frederick C. Teiwes, “Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 14:88–91.
- 59 See Mao Zedong, “The Great Victory of Resisting America and Assisting Korea,” 12 September 1953, *MZX*, 5:101–6, esp. 103–4, and Zhou Enlai, “The Enemy’s Defeat and Our Victory,” 292–307.
- 60 During the war years, the Soviet Union provided China with military equipment for sixty-four army divisions and twenty-two air force divisions, which placed China 3 billion old rubles (about US \$60 million) in debt. China did not pay off this debt (plus interest) until 1965. See Xu Yan, *Diyici jiaoliang* (The First Test of Strength) (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi, 1990), 31–32.

THE IMPACT OF THE COLD WAR ON LATIN AMERICA

Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough

In this suggestive article, Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough sketch the confluence of internal and external factors on postwar social, economic, and political developments in Latin America. The Second World War spurred the economic growth and political mobilization of Latin American societies. However indirectly associated to the allied war effort, large numbers of people especially among the lower and middle classes were affected by the democratic discourse and ideological fervor that inspired the struggle against fascism. Miners, factory workers, and some rural laborers organized, joined unions, supported new democratic parties, and injected strength into Communist movements. Entrenched elites and traditional authorities, including the Church, felt threatened. They looked for outside assistance to thwart the left, preserve stability, and spur economic growth. They used the Cold War to consolidate their power and perpetuate their rule. The United States, Bethell and Roxborough argue, was their accomplice.*

This article resonates with many of the themes that have appeared in previous selections. In Latin America, as in Europe and Asia, the war politicized the masses, inspired the disenfranchised, and generated a new democratic discourse. There was great turmoil within nations as groups, classes, and factions struggled for power and sought allies both inside and outside their borders. The United States and the Soviet Union sought to exploit the opportunities presented to them and hoped to capitalize on their own respective ideological appeal. They also forged their own distinctive transnational linkages among labor unions, business associations, and political parties. In the worldwide competition for influence and power, the Kremlin had its ideology and Communist affiliates, but the United States possessed the advantages of its hegemonic position in the world economic system. Local actors were buffeted by these international systemic conditions, but they also tried to manipulate them in their own behalf.

In discussing this article readers should ponder how the Cold War affected indigenous trends. What factors led to the rise of the left in Latin America during the

* These ideas are elaborated upon in their book, Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough (eds), *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Second World War? Where, why, and how was the left rolled back in 1946, 1947, and 1948? What were the sources and instruments of US and Soviet influence in Latin America?

* * *

The importance of the years of political and social upheaval immediately following the end of the Second World War and coinciding with the beginnings of the Cold War, that is to say, the period from 1944 or 1945 to 1948 or 1949, for the history of Europe (East and West), the Near and Middle East, Asia (Japan, China, South and East Asia), even Africa (certainly South Africa) in the second half of the twentieth century has long been generally recognized. In recent years historians of the United States, which had not, of course, been a theater of war and which alone among the major belligerents emerged from the Second World War stronger and more prosperous, have begun to focus attention on the political, social, and ideological conflict there in the postwar period – and the long-term significance for the United States of the basis on which it was resolved. In contrast, except for Argentina, where Perón's rise to power has always attracted the interest of historians, the immediate postwar years in Latin America, which had been relatively untouched by, and had played a relatively minor role in, the Second World War, remain to a large extent neglected. It is our view that these years constituted a critical conjuncture in the political and social history of Latin America just as they did for much of the rest of the world.

Each Latin American country has its own history in the immediate postwar years. Nevertheless, there are striking similarities in the experience of the majority of at least the major republics, despite differences of political regime, different levels of economic and social development, differences in the strength and composition of both the dominant groups and popular forces, and different relations with the United States, the region's hegemonic power. Broadly speaking, for most of Latin America the postwar period can be divided into two phases. The first phase, beginning in 1944, 1945, or 1946 (depending on the country concerned), and often tantalizingly brief, was characterized on the political front by democratic openings, political mobilization, and participation, and the relatively successful articulation of popular demands by both movements and parties of the "democratic" or "nationalist-populist" reformist left (many newly formed) and the orthodox Marxist left (hitherto with few exceptions largely ineffective). Even more important perhaps, this phase witnessed unprecedented militancy within organized labor: the end of the Second World War saw strike waves throughout the region (in, for example, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, and Chile) and a bid for greater union independence in those countries (for example, Mexico and Brazil) where the labor movement was closely controlled by the state. In the second phase, beginning in 1946 or 1947 (in some cases as early as 1945) and completed almost everywhere by 1948, the democratic advance

was for the most part contained, and in some cases reversed; the left in general lost ground and the Communist parties in particular almost everywhere suffered proscription and severe repression; most importantly, labor was disciplined and brought under closer control by the state. In other words the popular forces, in particular the organized urban working class but also in some cases the urban middle class, and the left, most decisively the Communist left, suffered a historic defeat in Latin America during the immediate postwar period. As a result an opportunity, however slight, for far-reaching social and political change was lost. This would have involved an expansion of democracy, the incorporation of organized labor into the political system as an autonomous actor, and not simply as a power base for a sector of the elite, and some sort of commitment to greater social justice and a distribution of wealth. The result would have been a decisive shift in the balance of power toward the urban working class (though not yet the rural population) and a concomitant weakening of elite control over politics and society. The failure to follow this path toward an alternative future, which seemed plausible to many actors at the end of the war, had in our view far-reaching consequences for Latin American development in the postwar world.

How is this outcome of the postwar conjuncture in Latin America to be explained? It is necessary in the first place to examine the shifting balance of domestic forces at the time. It is also essential to explore the complex interplay between the rapidly changing domestic scene in each Latin American country and the no less rapidly changing international scene as a new political and economic international order was created in the aftermath of the Second World War and as the Cold War began. Here the role played in Latin American affairs, directly and indirectly, by the United States needs to be examined with particular care.

The final year of the war (1944–5) and the first year after the war (1945–6) saw at least a partial extension of democracy in those Latin American countries which already had some claim to call themselves democratic in the sense that their governments were elected (however severely limited the suffrage and however restricted the political participation), political competition of some kind was permitted (however weak the party system) and basic civil liberties were at least formally honored (however precariously at times). This was true in Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia where Jorge Eliécer Gaitán mounted his ultimately unsuccessful campaign against the oligarchy, both Liberal and Conservative, and even Peru where the candidate of the recently formed Frente Democrático Nacional, José Luis Bustamante y Rivero, with Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana [APRA] support, won the elections of June 1945 and displaced the traditional oligarchy. Elsewhere there were a number of important transitions from military or military-backed dictatorships of various kinds to democracy broadly defined. In Ecuador in May 1944 a popular rebellion led by the Alianza Democrática Ecuatoriana against Carlos Arroyo del Río led to the military coup which brought José

Maria Velasco Ibarra to power. In Cuba the elections of June 1944 witnessed the triumph of the reformist Ramón Grau San Martín over the *continuiste* candidate favored by Fulgencio Batista, who had dominated Cuban politics since 1934 and served as president since 1940. In Guatemala after a dictatorship lasting thirteen years, Jorge Ubico was overthrown in July 1944 and Juan José Arévalo was elected in December of the same year. In Brazil Getúlio Vargas, after fifteen years in power, was overthrown by the military in October 1945, and direct presidential and congressional elections were held in December. In Venezuela a process of political liberalization, begun by the dictator, Isaías Medina Angarita, was accelerated by a military coup backed by Rómulo Betancourt and Acción Democrática [AD] in October 1945 which led to the establishment of an open, democratic system. In Argentina, where the coup of June 1943 had brought to power a nationalist military junta, political liberalization begun in 1945 would lead to free elections in February 1946. The coup by young officers backed by the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionaria [MNR] in December 1943 in Bolivia also eventually produced a political opening as the oligarchy, the MNR, and the Marxist Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionaria [PIR] struggled for the support of the miners and the peasants. In Mexico the election of 1946 was seriously contested, saw considerable citizen mobilization, and produced the first authentically civilian presidency, that of Miguel Alemán, since the revolution. On the other hand massive fraud and the final imposition of the governmental candidate indicated that Mexican democracy was still largely rhetorical.

Thus, almost all the countries of the region moved in the direction of political liberalization and partial democratization. No Latin American country moved in the opposite direction. By 1946 apart possibly from Paraguay and a handful of the smaller republics in Central America and the Caribbean (El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic), all the Latin American states could claim to be in some sense democratic. At least they were not dictatorships.

The principal factor behind the political climate of 1944–6 in Latin America was the victory of the allies (and of democracy over fascism) in the Second World War. Despite the strength of Axis interests and indeed widespread pro-Axis sympathies throughout Latin America during the 1930s, in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor (December 1941) all the Latin American states (except Chile, temporarily, and Argentina) lined up with the United States and severed relations with the Axis powers; eventually most, although until 1945 by no means all, declared war. Formally at least, and in some cases with varying degrees of cynicism and *realpolitik*, they had chosen the side of Freedom and Democracy, although only Brazil sent combat troops to the European theater. The war strengthened existing ties – military, economic, political, ideological – between Latin America (except Argentina and, to some extent, Bolivia) and the United States. As the nature of the postwar international order and the hegemonic position of the US within it became clear, the dominant groups in Latin America, including the military (and by this time, in some countries,

industrialists), recognized the need to make some necessary political adjustments. There was at the same time considerable popular pressure from below, especially from the urban middle class, intellectuals, and students but also from the urban working class, for a more open political future. War and postwar demands for democracy drew upon a strong liberal tradition in Latin American political ideas and culture going back at least as far as the period of independence in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. But they were also the product of wartime propaganda in favor of US democracy and the American way of life directed at Latin America, and orchestrated above all by Nelson Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs [OCIAA]. By the end of the war, it should be remembered, the press and radio throughout Latin America had been heavily penetrated by US capital.

Direct US pressure in favor of democratization was not perhaps a decisive factor but it undoubtedly played its part. At the outset of the war the United States had cooperated with *all* anti-Axis regimes in Latin America, both dictatorships and democracies. But as early as April 1943 Roosevelt made it clear to Getúlio Vargas, his closest ally in Latin America, that the Estado Novo would be expected to liberalize itself at the end of the war, especially if Brazil aspired to play a more important role in international affairs in the postwar world. (And throughout 1945 the US ambassador Adolf Berle quietly encouraged the dismantling of the old regime.) There was some US involvement in the downfall of some of the tyrants of the Caribbean and Central America in 1944. In November 1944 Berle, Assistant Secretary of State at the time, in a circular to US embassies in Latin America made it known that the United States felt a greater affinity with and would be more favorably disposed toward "governments established on the periodically and freely expressed consent of the governed."¹ And as the war ended and the opening shots in the Cold War were fired, it became even more imperative that the allies of the United States in Latin America were seen to be democratic. The most sustained US efforts in favor of democracy were directed at the two countries still regarded as "fascist": Bolivia and, more particularly, Argentina. Ambassador Spruille Braden arrived in Buenos Aires in May 1945 with the "fixed idea" according to Sir David Kelly, the British ambassador, of establishing democracy in Argentina. He became virtually the leader of opposition to the military regime and especially to Perón. A timetable for democracy was eventually established and elections were held in February 1946, although faced with the choice of "Braden or Perón" the Argentine people chose Perón.

With limited democratization at the end of the Second World War a number of political parties which sought to extend participation and promote economic and social reform – all of them formed since the 1920s, many of them strongly personalist and populist – came to power or at least to a share of power for the first time. We refer to the Auténticos [PRC-A] in Cuba, Acción Democrática in Venezuela and APRA in Peru among others. In Brazil the popular movement of Queremismo in favour of Vargas and the formation by Vargas of the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro provided an organizational

expression for such reformist aspirations. In Argentina this role was played by the short-lived Partido Laborista, and eventually by Perón's Partido Justicialista. In Mexico the official party of the revolution, renamed the PRI in 1946, remained the principal umbrella under which reformist currents sheltered, though recent changes in the party had done much to shift it to the right. Emerging belatedly (and as a result, abortively) in 1948 as a mass reformist party of the Left was Lombardo Toledano's Partido Popular. Of course, not all of these parties were thoroughly committed to formal democracy, and with the passage of time, even their commitment to social and economic reform was significantly reduced.

Also notable were the gains, albeit more limited, made at this time by the Latin American Communist parties. (Only Chile, and to a lesser extent Argentina, had a significant Socialist party.) After years of weakness, isolation, and for the most part illegality, many Communist parties reached the peak of their power and influence in this period – power and influence never to be repeated except in Cuba after 1959 and (briefly) in Chile in the early 1970s. They were legalized or at least tolerated in virtually every country. Total membership, less than 100,000 in 1939, had reached half a million by 1947.² In competition with, at times cooperating with, their traditional rivals, the parties of the non-Communist, nationalist left, they had considerable success in both congressional and local elections all over Latin America but especially in Chile (where in 1946 the Cabinet had three Communist members), Cuba, and Brazil. And as we shall see, they made important advances within the labor unions throughout Latin America.

The explanation for these Communist gains is again to be found in the war. After the German invasion of Russia and the breakup of the short-lived Nazi-Soviet pact wartime imperatives brought a return to the tactics of class collaboration and popular-frontism laid down by the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern (1935). Communists, even where they had no legal status, generally supported national unity and the allied cause; they were part of the anti-fascist, democratic front (in wartime government coalitions in Cuba, Costa Rica, and Chile) and therefore beneficiaries of the democratic advance – together with the temporary but enormous prestige of the Soviet Union – at the end of the war. Meanwhile, the Comintern (which had “discovered” Latin America only in 1928) had effectively ceased to function after 1935 and had finally been dissolved in 1943. During the war and its immediate aftermath the Latin American Communist parties were largely neglected by Moscow and experienced a growing, though relative, independence of action. What became known as Browderism, the belief that Communists should increasingly act as an integral part of nationally oriented, broad popular movements, even to the extent of voluntary dissolution, made headway in several Latin American countries (Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, for example) during these final years of the war. Nor was there, at least throughout most of 1945, any significant hostility to Communist parties from Washington. On the contrary, in Brazil Berle was unconcerned about Communist support for

Vargas, in Argentina Braden accepted Communist support against Perón, and in Bolivia the PIR was encouraged to join the anti-Villaruel campaign.

An independent feature of the postwar years was the emergence of organized labor as a major social and political actor in Latin America. By the late 1930s the export sectors had largely recovered from the world depression and import substitution industrialization had accelerated in the more economically developed countries of the region. The Second World War gave a further impetus to industrial development. Combined with population growth and rural-urban migration the size of the working class had expanded considerably. And its character was being rapidly transformed: besides the already important nuclei of workers in the agricultural and mining export sectors, and workers in transportation and public utilities, white-collar workers, many of them state employees, and industrial workers were increasingly important. In Mexico the number of workers in manufacturing had risen from 568,000 in 1940 to 938,000 in 1945, in Argentina from 633,000 in 1941 to 938,000 in 1946. In Brazil, over the decade between 1940 and 1950, the number of manufacturing workers rose from 995,000 to 1,608,000.³ While rises of this order of magnitude were not experienced by all countries, the rate of growth of the urban working class, and especially workers in industry, in Latin America as a whole during the war years was impressive. This growth in the size of the working class was accompanied by a widespread expansion of union membership. In Argentina the number of workers enrolled in unions rose from 448,000 in 1941 to 532,000 in 1946 (and then shot up to 2.5 or 3 million by the end of Perón's first term in office). In Brazil, some 351,000 workers were unionized in 1940; by 1947 this had more than doubled to 798,000. Even in Colombia union membership doubled between 1940 and 1947 (from 84,000 to 166,000). By 1946 between 3.5 and 4 million workers were unionized in Latin America as a whole.⁴ Even more important perhaps was the trend to more centralized organization, the search for greater autonomy from the state, and militancy over wages. Real standards of living had generally declined toward the end of the war as wages were held down by social pacts and no-strike pledges in the interests of the allied war effort and the battle for production – while inflation rose. The war in any case increased expectations and the new liberal political atmosphere provided the space in which pent-up demands could be released.

The last year of the war (1944–5) and the first year after the war (1945–6) therefore witnessed not only political openings but a marked increase in the number of labor disputes and strikes in, for example, Mexico, Brazil, and Chile. Major concessions were wrung from employers and the state by workers in the export agriculture sector (Argentine meat packers), mining and oil (Chilean coal and copper workers, Mexican and Venezuelan oil workers), transport (Mexican and Argentine rail workers, Brazilian port workers), urban services (Brazilian bank employees and tramway workers), and some sections of industry (Brazilian and Peruvian textile workers, for example). Much of this insurgency in the ranks of labor sprang from the

combination of specific grievances, falling real wages, and an increasingly tight labor market (which improved union bargaining power). A number of political parties were able to capitalize on this and expand their influence in the labor movement. In this situation the Communist parties were often in an ambiguous position. On the one hand, their reputation as advocates of broad reforms and their (at least verbal) defence of working-class interests attracted considerable support. On the other hand, their encouragement of the no-strike pledges in support of the allied war effort frequently led to rank-and-file movements by-passing the Communists. To a great extent the eventual outcome depended on the nature of the Communists' rivals in the labor movement. In those countries (such as Chile) where there was a well-established non-Communist left (the Socialist party), it was these forces which often prospered at the expense of the Communists. In other countries relatively new parties like *Acción Democrática* in Venezuela or personalistic movements of the kind led by Vargas and Perón emerged as serious (and often successful) rivals to the Communist parties. Whatever the outcome, the working class was now being incorporated into democratic politics and was courted by a variety of political leaders, movements, and parties.

Behind all this political effervescence at the end of the Second World War were some profound, if dimly perceived, shifts in the nature of political discourse and ideology. The emergence of "democracy" as a central symbol with almost universal resonance was specific to this period. Of course, the term was used by different actors to mean quite distinct things. For some it meant little more than the façade of formal elections; for others it meant simply a commitment to the allied camp. Nevertheless, for many people in Latin America the meaning of the term underwent a considerable expansion. Democracy was now seen to imply a commitment to wider participation, and had its economic and social dimensions. It came increasingly to be identified with a positive redistribution of wealth and income to benefit the lower income groups, and increasing levels of urban working-class participation in politics.

At the same time, perceptions of the developmental options open to Latin American countries (particularly in those countries which had already experienced significant industrial growth) underwent a fundamental shift. The pursuit of industrialization now became a realistic and widely held policy option. Despite widespread controversy around this issue the body of thought which later came to be known as *cepalismo* or structuralist economics soon emerged as the dominant intellectual paradigm in the region. State intervention in a mixed economy, planning, support for the developing national bourgeoisie, deliberate attention to social and welfare goals, together with the (regulated) entry of foreign capital came to characterize this newly emerging body of thought. The parallels with the development of social democratic welfare ideology in Western Europe, and that region's commitment to an increasingly interventionist state are worth highlighting. Unlike the situation in Western Europe, however, *cepalista* developmental prescriptions came

increasingly to be associated with authoritarian statism as the links between economic development, social reform, and democracy became ever more tenuous.

Did these various, mutually reinforcing tendencies in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War add up to an opportunity for significant political and social reform, a potentially decisive step toward a new order in Latin America? Or were they “premature” and destined to fail because of Latin America’s continuing economic, social, and political “backwardness” (despite the changes of the 1930s and the war years), the balance of domestic class forces in Latin America at the end of the war, and the impact of the changing international climate marked by the beginning of the Cold War? Certainly a challenge to the established order in Latin America was perceived at the time, and in every country except Guatemala (where the “revolution” survived until the United States-backed invasion of 1954) steps were quickly and successfully taken during the years 1946–8 to neutralize it.

Only in Peru (October 1948) and Venezuela (November 1948) were democratic regimes actually overthrown and replaced by military dictatorships during these years, although reactionary military coups followed in Cuba (1952) as well as ultimately, of course, in Guatemala (1954). Almost everywhere, however, there was a marked shift to the right within democratic or semi-democratic regimes – in Brazil, Chile, Colombia (where the *bogotazo*, the predominantly urban insurrection which was triggered off by the assassination of Gaitán in April 1948, was quickly and effectively quelled), Cuba, Ecuador (where Velasco Ibarra, who had himself suspended the constitution in March 1946, was overthrown in August 1947 in a conservative coup), Mexico, even Costa Rica (despite the apparent victory for democracy in the civil war of 1948) – and within reformist parties which had formerly had democratic pretensions (AD in Venezuela, APRA in Peru, the Auténticos in Cuba). And in country after country popular mobilization was repressed and participation restricted or curtailed. As early as September 1946 in Brazil the constitution which launched the country’s twenty-year “experiment with democracy” denied the vote to illiterates (more than half the population) and distributed seats in Congress in such a way as seriously to underrepresent the more densely populated, urban, and developed regions of the country.

In this new political atmosphere – very different from that at the end of the war – Communist parties were no longer legitimate, not least because of their newly discovered “anti-democratic” natures, and were once again excluded from political life. In one country after another – notably in Brazil (May 1947), Chile (September 1948), and Costa Rica (July 1948) – they were declared illegal. (And many Latin American governments took the opportunity to break often recently established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.) Party members experienced repression, and in Cuba, for example, from April 1947 physical violence. Communist members were forced out of the Cabinet and Congress in Chile in August 1947 and Congress (as well as

state and municipal assemblies) in Brazil in January 1948. Everywhere Communist labor leaders found themselves purged from the major unions, even though they had been elected and in many cases were notable for the relatively moderate positions they had adopted on strikes.⁵ The result was a dramatic increase in the strength of some of the Communists' rivals in the labor movement: for example, in Peru APRA, in Colombia the Catholic unions, in Mexico the pro-governmental clique around Fidel Velázquez, and in Brazil the *trabalhistas*.

The purge of Communist labor leaders was, however, part of a more general crackdown on labor aiming at greater institutional and ideological control by the state. In Latin America, as throughout the West (including the United States), national trade union confederations were deliberately split, the state intervened to purge militant leaderships, a tough stand was taken against strikes, and anti-strike legislation was revived and reinforced. Apart from Guatemala under the reformist presidencies of Arévalo and Arbenz, Argentina provided the only exception to this anti-labor trend in Latin America in the late 1940s.

The outcome of the postwar conjuncture in Latin America can, in part, be explained in terms of the relative strength of the dominant classes, rural and urban, civil and military, and their determination to restore political and social control in so far as they perceived it to be threatened by popular political mobilization and especially labor militancy. The commitment of Latin American elites to formal, liberal democracy of the kind espoused by the United States, in so far as it existed in other than a purely rhetorical form, by no means implied an acceptance of wide-ranging social reform and the recognition of organized labor as a major political actor. (The strength of the authoritarian, as well as the liberal tradition in Latin American political culture should never be forgotten.) In contrast, Latin American labor unions, despite their impressive growth and the burst of militancy at the end of the war, were still relatively weak and inexperienced (and they still organized only a very small part of the total working population); and the parties of the left for the most part lacked deep roots in society and were often divided and in conflict. Moreover, both parties and labor unions no doubt made strategic mistakes. Here the weakness of the commitment to political democracy and democratic rights on the left, non-Communist as well as, more obviously, Communist, and among some sectors of organized labor should be noted. Similarly, the reluctance of the left, both Communist and non-Communist, to offer "appropriate" political leadership to the working class, and their conciliatory, and at times conservative, policies, have attracted considerable criticism.

At the same time, domestic class conflicts – different in each country – were undoubtedly influenced by the Cold War and the fact that Latin America at the end of the Second World War was even more firmly situated inside the United States' sphere of influence. At one level the Cold War merely reinforced domestic attitudes and tendencies, providing an ideological justification for

the counter-offensive against labor and the political left which had already begun. Popular political mobilization and strike activity now became Communist-inspired, Moscow-dictated, "subversive," potentially revolutionary and in the last analysis anti-democratic. Significantly, the Chilean Communist Party was outlawed in September 1948 by a "Law for the Permanent Defence of Democracy." (Here it is important to remember, however, that the Cold War did not introduce anti-Communism into Latin America; it had been an element in the political culture of the Latin American elites since the Russian Revolution and the creation of the Comintern. And the Catholic Church, itself a not unimportant actor in the events of 1945–8, was, of course, a bastion of anti-Communism.) At the same time the Cold War – and United States policy – had an independent role to play. It is easy to exaggerate its significance: Latin America was hardly a central issue in the early years of the Cold War and the United States, as we shall see, did not give Latin America a high priority in the immediate postwar period. But it would equally be a mistake to underestimate its importance.

Historically, US interests in Latin America were strategic – the defence of the western hemisphere against external attack or internal subversion by a foreign enemy of the United States (and therefore, it was assumed, of the Latin American states) – and economic – the promotion of US trade with, and investment in, Latin America. After decades of conflict and increasing animosity the Good Neighbor Policy introduced by Roosevelt in 1933 and, more particularly, the growing dangers of war during the late 1930s, brought the United States and the Latin American states closer together. The Second World War, as we have seen, represented the inter-American system's finest hour. Against the Axis threat, both external and internal, the United States and Latin America (except Argentina) extended their military ties – bases, technical cooperation, lend-lease (although 70 percent of military aid went to one country, Brazil) – and economic links – the supply of strategic materials from Latin America to the United States, technical and financial assistance by the United States to Latin America, including a limited amount of cooperation in Latin America's industrial development. Although the allied occupation of North Africa in 1942 (and steady American advances in the Pacific) largely eliminated the external Axis threat to the security of the western hemisphere relatively early in the war, the United States continued to plan for the preservation and strengthening of hemispheric solidarity after the war.⁶

At the same time it was clear even before the end of the war that the United States had become for the first time a world power in military, economic, and ideological terms, with different concerns – global in scope – than in the past and able to fashion a new, more open, postwar international order in its own interests. The primacy of US relations with Latin America was no longer unquestioned. This was evident as early as February–March 1945 at the Conference on Problems of War and Peace (the Chapultepec Conference) in Mexico City, where concessions were made to Latin American opinion but

where Assistant Secretary of State William Clayton issued the first warning that Latin America should not count on postwar economic aid. That the United States was now to play a world – not just a hemispheric – role was even more apparent at the United Nations Conference in San Francisco in April 1945 where growing signs of US distrust of the Soviet Union, the United States' only rival at the end of the war, emerged. (Many historians would date the beginnings of the Cold War here, if not earlier.) Anti-Communism would soon replace anti-fascism as the dominant feature of American foreign policy. It is important, however, to stress the degree to which US foreign policy at the end of the war was marked by hesitancy, confusion, and division. It took some time for a unified and coherent approach to develop.

Nelson Rockefeller, Assistant Secretary of State for the American Republics since December 1944, took the view at San Francisco that “we couldn't do what we wanted on the world front” unless western hemispheric solidarity were guaranteed. (Not insignificant was the fact that at the outset Latin America represented two-fifths of the votes at the United Nations.) This view of the fundamental importance of Latin America to the United States was never seriously questioned. But it is interesting to note that almost without exception the key policymakers in Washington in the immediate postwar years showed little interest in, were largely ignorant of, and indeed had a certain contempt for, Latin America. Compare Truman, James F. Byrnes, George C. Marshall, Dean Acheson, and George F. Kennan with Cordell Hull, Sumner Welles, Berle, Rockefeller (who was in fact fired in August 1945), and for that matter Roosevelt himself. (“Give them [the Latin Americans] a share,” Roosevelt had told a meeting of business editors in January 1940 in a famous remark. “They think they are just as good as we are and many of them are.”)

A conference of American states in Rio de Janeiro to formulate a regional collective security pact against external attack under article 51 of the UN Charter was planned for October 1945. But this was never given top priority and in any case continuing problems between the United States and Perón's Argentina were permitted to delay it. The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Rio treaty) was not signed until August 1947. In the meantime, no significant military assistance was offered to Latin America. An Inter-American Military Cooperation bill was drafted in May 1946 but failed to make progress in Congress and was finally abandoned in June 1948. There was in fact no Soviet threat to Latin America. The Russians had no atomic bomb, no long-range strategic air force, and an ineffective navy. From the US point of view Latin America was safe, whereas the Eurasian land mass – western Europe and the Near East – was in great danger: the Truman Doctrine (March 1947) – the doctrine of containment – was a result of the perceived Soviet threat in Turkey and Greece. In any case there were limits even to American resources. Latin America therefore was given low strategic priority and remained firmly at the periphery of United States strategic concerns. The Mutual Defence Assistance Act (1949) allowed for the expenditure of \$1.3 billion; not a cent went to Latin America.⁷

Latin America was secure from external aggression and to some extent it was safe for the United States to neglect it in global terms. This is not to say, however, that the United States was unconcerned at the possibilities for *internal* subversion (from Communists rather than fascists now, of course). The Soviet Union had neither the military means (except perhaps in Europe and the Near East) nor the economic means seriously to challenge the United States. But it did retain enormous political and ideological influence throughout the world. In the domestic conflicts of Latin America immediately after the war, just as in the final years of the war itself, the United States played a role – official and unofficial, direct and indirect – in determining their outcome that, while not perhaps decisive, was certainly important.

Communist activities in Latin America in the immediate postwar period were carefully monitored by legal attachés (almost always FBI agents), military and naval attachés, and labor attachés in the United States embassies, and by CIA agents. The intelligence apparatus set up during the war for dealing with Nazi subversion was given a new lease of life in the struggle against Communism. Behind-the-scenes pressure was a factor in moves against Communist parties, certainly in Chile, possibly in Brazil, Cuba, Bolivia, and elsewhere. Although a CIA review of Soviet aims in Latin America in November 1947 contended there was no possibility of a Communist takeover anywhere in the region, United States anti-Communism in Latin America was made explicit in State Department Policy Planning Staff document PPS 26 (March 22) and National Security Council document NSC 7 (March 30), on the eve of the ninth International Conference of American States meeting in Bogotá (March–April 1948), a conference which had been called for the express purpose of establishing a new institutional framework for the inter-American system in the postwar world. Resolution XXXII of the Final Act concerned the Preservation and Defence of Democracy in America and asserted that the continuing legality of Communist parties in Latin America was a direct threat to the security of the western hemisphere.⁸

The United States approved of, where it was not actively involved in, the more general shift to the right which we have already noted in postwar Latin American politics – in Brazil as early as 1945, Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador in 1946–7, Cuba in 1947–8, Venezuela and Peru in 1948 (where the military coups which established the dictatorships of Pérez Jiménez and Odría were a strong signal to reactionaries throughout the region). The United States certainly preferred and favored *constitutional* democracy, but this did not mean a commitment to wider participation and broad-ranging social reforms and certainly not to an enhanced role for labor and the left (particularly the Communists): all this, it was feared, could only prove antagonistic to the United States' strategic and economic interests. What might have been acceptable in 1944 or 1945 or even 1946, when ambiguous and occasionally contradictory signals were emanating from Washington, was no longer so in 1947 or 1948. As George F. Kennan stated during a visit to Rio de Janeiro

in 1950: "it is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by Communists."⁹

The United States was especially concerned about Communist penetration of the Latin American labor unions. As in Western Europe (especially France and Italy), and for that matter in the United States itself, organized labor was the major battleground of the Cold War. The struggle to defeat or contain labor insurgency was a global one, and concerted efforts were made to reverse the gains which had been made by the left during and immediately after the Second World War. In the United States the passage of the Taft-Hartley legislation in June 1947 imposed considerable restrictions on strike activity and collective bargaining and made it illegal for Communists to hold union office. Outside the United States the international trade union movement now became the site for bitter ideological rivalry. A campaign was undertaken by conservative forces, operating largely through the American Federation of Labor [AFL], to drive the Communists in particular out of the ranks of international labor. With State Department "informal assistance," roving labor "ambassadors" like Irving Brown in Europe and Serafino Romualdi in Latin America were sent out to organize support for pro-American unionism. The upshot was a series of splits in the international trade union movement.

In Latin America a major offensive was launched against the Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina [CTAL]. The CTAL had been established by Vicente Lombardo Toledano in 1938; by 1944 it claimed to represent some 3.3 million members in sixteen countries. It controlled several unions in strategic industries (many of the dock workers' unions in the Caribbean region were affiliated with the CTAL, for example) and was well known for its nationalist, leftist, and pro-Communist positions. At the end of the war it affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions [WFTU]. By 1947 or 1948 the conservatives or moderates had won the internal struggles in Latin American unionism, and the major national union confederations disaffiliated from the CTAL, often after bitter internal conflicts and splits. In January 1948 the Confederación Interamericana de Trabajadores [CIT, later to become ORIT] was established in Lima. And in December 1949 the non-Communist unions also left the WFTU and formed the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions [ICFTU].

The drive behind this shake-up of the international trade union movement was, of course, largely ideological. As the Cold War hardened, Communism became increasingly unacceptable and had to be defeated on its own preferred terrain: within the labor movement. There was also, however, strategic thinking behind this attack. The end of the Second World War and the emergence of the Cold War produced considerable uncertainty about the future of the world. In the late 1940s it was far from clear to all participants that a long period of mutual stand-off and relatively peaceful coexistence was on the horizon. Certain policymakers, at least, expressed fears of an impending third world war. (That this was not entirely unrealistic may be seen from the dangers of escalation inherent in the Korean War.) Were a third world war to

break out, independent, militant unions, whether Communist-controlled or not, might pose a threat to the United States, especially in strategically important industries like petroleum in Mexico, Venezuela, and Peru (almost all US petroleum imports at the end of the war came from Latin America), copper in Chile and Peru, even sugar in Cuba, and also in transport and in industry generally. Moreover, as in the United States itself, militant unions were a potentially destabilizing force hostile to postwar capitalist development – exerting direct economic and political pressure through strikes and demonstrations and forming a base for both the parties of the democratic left and the Communist parties.

This leads us to a wider aspect of the interaction of domestic and international trends in the resolution of the postwar conjuncture in Latin America: the perception the ruling groups had of the new international economic order, and its consequences, short- and long-term, for Latin American economic development. At the end of the war the more economically advanced Latin American nations looked to promote further development through industrialization. Economic policymakers did, however, face some dilemmas and uncertainties. The end of the First World War had seen an international recession, and there was every reason to expect something similar at the end of the Second World War. There were considerable doubts about the likely performance of Latin America's exports: it was unclear what sort of demand there would be in the devastated postwar world, and the prices for Latin America's principal commodities were unpredictable. On the other hand, as a result of the accumulation of substantial gold and foreign reserves during the war, most Latin American economies were in a relatively favorable position. Even this advantage, however, was less than it appeared on the surface: reserves held in sterling continued to be blocked, and the world inflation of the dollar was steadily eroding the real value of reserves held in that currency. Clearly, if industrialization was to proceed, considerable transfers of capital and technology would be required. It was by no means clear that these would be forthcoming, or on what terms they could be attracted.

During the war the United States had provided financial and technical assistance to Latin America, mainly for the increased production of strategic raw materials but also in some cases (in Brazil and Mexico in particular) for the promotion of industry. At the end of the war many Latin American governments had expectations – or hopes – that the United States would continue and indeed expand this role, providing them with long-term development capital. The United States, however, repeatedly headed off an inter-American conference on the economic problems of Latin America and at this stage refused to support the creation of an Inter-American Development Bank. The United States focused its attention instead on the security and economic rehabilitation of Western Europe (and the link between the two was clearly recognized). The result was the Economic Recovery Program (the Marshall Plan) of June 1947. One consequence was that in 1950 Latin America was the only area of the world without a US aid program, apart from the meagerly

funded Point Four technical assistance program established in 1949. Compared with \$19 billion in US foreign aid to Western Europe in the period 1945–50 only \$400 million (less than 2 percent of total US aid) went to Latin America. Belgium and Luxembourg alone received more than the whole of Latin America.¹⁰

Although there was some modest increase in lending by the Export-Import Bank, Latin America, it was made clear, should look to *private* capital, domestic and foreign. In fact, there was very little new US investment in Latin America in the immediate postwar period; and most of it went into Venezuelan oil. If more US capital were to be attracted the right climate had to be created: political stability (not necessarily by means of democratic institutions), a commitment to liberal, capitalist development and to an “ideology of production,” nationalism curbed (no more “Mexican stunts” – Bernard Baruch’s reference to the Mexican nationalization of oil in 1938), the left marginalized, the working class firmly under control, unions not necessarily weaker but bureaucratized.

Here was a clear point of coincidence of different imperatives. Domestically, militant unions and an increasingly mobilized working class threatened dominant classes and elites with moves in the direction of social reform and an expanded democracy which they found unacceptable. At the same time, in terms of the links between the domestic economies of Latin America and the US-dominated world economy, economic policymakers in Latin America had cogent reasons for taming labor and the left. If foreign capital was to be attracted to Latin America, various guarantees and assurances, both symbolic and real, had to be given. And all this is quite apart from cold war pressures and the revival of the barely latent anti-Communism of large sections of the elites and indeed the middle classes. The attack on labor and the left, especially the Communist left, was, in this sense, clearly overdetermined.

Whether the *defeat* of labor and the left was equally overdetermined must remain largely a matter of speculation. The odds were clearly weighted in favor of a conservative victory. In this article we have indicated the variety of factors, both domestic and international, many of them very powerful, which worked to bring about the defeat of the reformist aspirations of the immediate postwar period. Nevertheless, it does seem that, however limited the prospects of the left, if there was a favorable moment for consolidating democracy and moving ahead or a broad reforming front, this was it. The survival, however tenuous, of the reformist regimes, however timid, of Arévalo and Arbenz in Guatemala seems to indicate that defeat was by no means absolutely certain in the late 1940s. Moreover, Argentina under Perón (the candidate who had won against the explicit opposition of the US ambassador in 1946) with its pro-working class, albeit authoritarian, regime may perhaps suggest that some move toward a more egalitarian developmental path was not entirely a matter of wishful thinking. Both Guatemala and Argentina serve to illustrate the limits and constraints of the processes we

have identified; equally, they indicate the possible historical alternatives which were open to Latin America at the end of the Second World War.

In the end, of course, at least in the West, the forces of conservatism, both domestic and international, won out. By 1948 or 1949 (and in some countries even earlier) the postwar crisis or, more correctly, the set of overlapping and interacting crises which had their origins in the depression years of the 1930s and their more immediate origins in the Second World War, had been resolved. In Western Europe the resolution of the crisis led to the implantation of an enduring social democracy constructed around the key institutions of a mixed economy, planning, a welfare state and a major consultative role for organized labor. The resolution of the crisis in the United States took a different form. There, the last years of the 1940s led to the complete abandonment of any reformist project: the New Deal and progressive coalitions were now a thing of the past, the age of mass consumption had arrived, the "end of ideology" was proclaimed, and a conservative, and at times reactionary, consensus came to dominate domestic politics until it began to be eroded by a variety of challenges in the 1960s. As Michael Harrington has said, "1948 was the last year of the 1930s."

In Latin America, where the hegemony of the United States had been expanded and consolidated in the course of the war and during the postwar years, the resolution of the immediate postwar crisis also took the form, as we have argued, of a conservative victory. And this victory was a necessary precondition for the region's successful participation in the unprecedented expansion of the international economy, in which the United States played the dominant role, during the thirty years following the Second World War. With the decisive defeat of labor and the left a "favorable climate for investment" had been created. Foreign capital and technology had always been important in Latin America but had previously been largely confined to export enclaves and public utilities. Now, by means of transnational corporations, it would invade all sectors of the economy, not least manufacturing industry which was to become the principal engine of growth in the major Latin American countries. The postwar economic "model" would be one which put growth ahead of employment, distribution, and welfare. And the developmental strategy adopted would have political as well as social consequences. While in many countries a competitive electoral system was maintained, Latin American democracies would be increasingly restricted and authoritarian. Marxism, in the form of the Communist parties, had been almost eliminated as a viable political force in Latin America, but the democratic left had also suffered a decisive setback, and the democratic middle class parties of the centre were also to a large extent on the defensive. Even more important, democracy was widely seen as dispensable if it stood in the way of sustained economic growth. A democratic government in Latin America would more often than not live in the shadow of a vigilant and increasingly ideologically motivated military, and if it moved too far toward labor or the left it could be overthrown.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in D. M. Dozer, *Are We Good Neighbors? Three Decades of Inter-American Relations, 1930–60* (Gainesville, FL, 1959), 213.
- 2 Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement. From Comintern to Cominform* (London 1975), 309. Compared to the absolute size of the French and Italian parties, of course, even the largest of the Latin American parties (the Brazilian, the Cuban, and the Chilean) were still quite small.
- 3 J. Fuchs, *Argentina, su desarrollo capitalista* (Buenos Aires, 1966), 260, 268; B. Torres Ramírez, *México en la Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Mexico, D. F., 1979), 299; T. Merrick and D. Graham, *Population and Economic Development in Brazil* (Baltimore, MD, 1979), 158.
- 4 L. Doyon, "Conflictos Obreros Durante el Régimen Peronista (1946–55)," *Desarrollo Económico* (1977): 440; L. Martins, "Sindicalismo e classe operária," in B. Fausto (ed.), *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, Vol. 10 (São Paulo, 1981), 535; M. Urrutia Montoya, *The Development of the Colombian Labor Movement* (New Haven, CT, 1969), 183; S. Baily, *Labor, Nationalism and Politics in Argentina* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1967), 101; V. Alba, *Politics and the Labor Movement in Latin America* (Stanford, CA, 1968), 211, 258.
- 5 Edward J. Rowell, labor attaché at the United States embassy in Rio de Janeiro from 1944 to 1948, commented ironically in February 1947 on how confusing this could be for the independent observer of the labor scene in Brazil: there was to be sure on the one hand "the unquestioned participation and influence of Communist leaders" but on the other "a trade union program which is sympathetic to trade union status and activities as recognized by Western democracies." Rowell, Monthly Labor Report no. 25 (February 1947), April 8, 1947, RG59 State Department, 850.4, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 6 See David Green, *The Containment of Latin America. A History of the Myths and Realities of the Good Neighbor Policy* (Chicago, 1971), 343; Chester J. Pach, Jr, "The Containment of United States Military Aid to Latin America, 1944–1949," *Diplomatic History*, 6 (1982): 226.
- 7 Pach, "Containment," 242. See also Stephen G. Rabe, "Inter-American Military Cooperation 1944–51," *World Affairs*, 137 (1974): 132–49.
- 8 See Robert A. Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945–1950* (New York, 1985), 201; Roger R. Trask, "The Impact of the Cold War on United States–Latin American Relations, 1945–1949," *Diplomatic History*, 1 (1977): 279–80.
- 9 Quoted in Pollard, *Economic Security*, 212.
- 10 Pollard, *Economic Security*, 213; see also Stephen G. Rabe, "The Elusive Conference. US Economic Relations with Latin America, 1945–52," *Diplomatic History*, 2 (1978): 293.

THE UNITED STATES, THE COLD WAR, AND THE COLOR LINE

Thomas Borstelmann

In the initial years of the Cold War, the United States faced formidable obstacles in mobilizing popular support in its worldwide struggle against the Soviet Union. As Ian Roxborough and Leslie Bethell show in the previous selection, the Americans often wound up on the side of conservative or even reactionary forces in many parts of the Third World, as in Latin America. The reasons for this were varied, but one of the most important was the racist attitudes and segregationist institutions embedded in American society and culture. Although the Atlantic Charter proclaimed that the Second World War was waged on behalf of 'the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live,' American officials and the American people had deep reservations about the ability, capacity, and wisdom of non-white peoples to rule themselves and choose the right side in the Cold War. Meanwhile, the Kremlin championed the liberation of oppressed peoples in colonial lands and the Soviet model of development offered hope that backward economies could modernize rapidly through methods of a command economy. The United States, therefore, seemed to be operating from a position of weakness throughout much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

During the last decade, historians have focused much attention on matters of race and culture. One of the leaders has been Thomas Borstelmann, a historian at the University of Nebraska, who has written widely on American policy in Africa during the Cold War. In the selection that follows, Borstelmann shows how racist attitudes affected the diplomacy of the Truman administration. Truman's advisers wanted orderly decolonization, but they doubted the capacity of non-white peoples to act responsibly and rule themselves. Key officials, like Secretaries of State James F. Byrnes and Dean G. Acheson, worried that immature peoples and irresponsible leaders in Africa and Asia would fall prey to communist ideology and Soviet intrigue. US officials, therefore, were inclined to side with white rulers in London, Paris, and The Hague rather than with the black and yellow peoples in their colonies who were yearning for self-rule and independence. The gap between the rhetoric of American leaders and their actions, says Borstelmann, was most glaring in South Africa where the United States chose to align itself with the racist totalitarianism of the apartheid regime. Racism, argues Borstelmann, was rooted in the institutions and structures of American society and was reinforced by the exigencies of partisan politics during

the early years of the Cold War. Racism handicapped American efforts to compete with the Soviet Union and sullied its reputation for decades.

Readers will want to ponder the role of race and culture in the shaping of diplomacy and the evolution of international politics. In most traditional accounts of the Cold War, scholars focused on geopolitics, economics, and strategy. In writing about US decisionmaking, domestic politics often received considerable attention. But many scholars like Borstelmann now suggest that officials approach decisions with cognitive biases and mental maps deeply rooted in cultural traditions and racist attitudes. How convincing are these interpretations? In our larger interpretation of the Cold War, how much importance should we assign to these variables? Or should we content ourselves with knowing that all these factors played some role, and that the important challenge is to understand their interconnectedness rather than to assign primacy to any single factor?

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The Cold War developed after 1945 as a state of heightened tensions between the two great powers that emerged from World War II, the United States and the USSR. The ideological origins of the conflict dated from the Communist revolution in Russia in 1917, which most Americans abhorred for its rejection of private property, religious worship, and multiple-party political liberty. Such differences in values took on greater political and military significance at the end of World War II, as the two victorious nations found themselves face-to-face in Central Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East. Their visions of the world order that should be reconstructed after the war were largely incompatible: command economies run by Communist parties versus global capitalism free from most state interference. US policymakers were deeply concerned about Communist influences in the anticolonial nationalist movements in Asia and Africa. In Western Europe, home to America's most important allies, the Truman administration feared that growing Communist parties in Italy, France, and Belgium might use public dismay at grim postwar economic conditions to win popular elections and seize control of those governments.¹

The major American Cold War initiatives of the late 1940s and early 1950s – the Truman Doctrine, the European Recovery Plan (Marshall Plan), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and National Security Council document 68 (NSC 68) – emerged against a background of mounting demands for racial equality and national autonomy. People of color at home and abroad were particularly sensitive to these policies' racial meanings. Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain speech of February 1946 represented a declaration of Cold War, but it also called for Anglo-American racial and cultural unity. The Truman Doctrine of March 1947 opposed potential "armed minorities" of the left but not those of the right, who actually ruled much of the world: European colonialists. The Marshall Plan (1948) and NATO (1949) bolstered

anti-Communist governments west of the Elbe River, but they also indirectly funded those governments' efforts to preserve white rule against indigenous independence movements in Asia and Africa. NSC 68 (1950) laid out an offensive strategy for diminishing Soviet influence abroad, but it also revealed American anxieties about a broader "absence of order among nations" that was "becoming less and less tolerable," when the largest change in the international system was coming not from Communist revolutions but from the decolonization of nonwhite peoples.² This concern about disorder abroad paralleled the Truman administration's unhappiness with the volatility of race relations at home after World War II.

In designing his big house of anti-Communist democracy, Harry Truman faced the same fundamental challenge at home and abroad. He had to build it large enough to include people of all colors, while preserving his relationships with the British and French colonialists who ruled so much of the world beyond Europe, and with the Southern segregationists who through their seniority dominated much of the US Congress. In an era of decolonization and rapid change toward greater racial equality, the president and his advisers needed to demonstrate that traditional white racism would not be a central element in the domestic and international anti-Communist coalitions they were constructing. In its quest for nonwhite loyalties, the Truman administration was confronted by a more racially inclusive vision deriving from the radical Left. The Soviet Union played on Third World experiences of European colonialism and Western racism, while Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party appealed to African Americans against the intransigence of white Southern authorities.³ Both were external sources of pressure that encouraged the administration to take a more racially liberal stance within the limits imposed by its higher priority of containing the expansion of Soviet power. Racial issues and the management of racial change were central to the American experience of the early Cold War, and the nation's borders proved quite porous in this regard.

The relationship between race and US foreign policy in the Truman years was grounded in the segregated culture in which the most influential members of the administration had lived before 1945. The president's family connections to the South are well known: his upbringing in the former slave-owning state of Missouri, at a time of fierce Jim Crow discrimination and violence; his slave-owning grandparents; and his mother's traumatic experiences as a child with Union Army raiders and subsequent lifelong hatred of blue uniforms and Abraham Lincoln. Historian David McCullough has pointed out how Truman's hometown of Independence was "really more southern than midwestern," especially in its racial practices. The attitudes about people of color that the future president imbibed from these sources were not surprising. His conversation and letters were littered with racial and ethnic epithets for Asians, Jews, southern Europeans, and African Americans, among others.⁴

People do not choose the circumstances into which they are born, but what they make of those in later life provides a measure of their character. In contrast to his siblings, Harry Truman chose to move away from the explicit racism of his childhood as his political career developed and his contacts in the world widened. He successfully courted black voters by treating them as a legitimate political interest group and following a fairly progressive path on civil rights issues. As a US senator from Missouri from 1935 to 1944, he consistently supported antilynching legislation and the abolition of poll taxes. By the standards of later generations and of more liberated contemporaries, Truman remained a racist in his personal attitudes: he opposed what he called social equality of the races and continued privately to disparage nonwhite peoples on occasion, as he would to the end of his life. But for a man of his place and time, the Missourian made impressive strides on matters of race.⁵

Truman's ascension to the White House resulted to a significant degree from his record on racial issues. His selection as vice president in Franklin Roosevelt's last campaign of 1944 represented a compromise at the Democratic Party convention. The real struggle was between supporters of the incumbent vice president, Henry Wallace of Iowa, and of the former Supreme Court justice and close wartime associate of Roosevelt, James Byrnes of South Carolina. Wallace headed the reform forces of the New Deal and was strongly supported by African American voters and unions; Byrnes, a devoted segregationist and union opponent, was the candidate of the party's powerful white Southern wing. Truman proved acceptable to both sides, a border-state figure strong enough on labor and civil rights without being a complete racial egalitarian. The vice presidential contest thus previewed the struggle that would unfold four years later in the 1948 presidential campaign, with Truman's *bona fides* on civil rights again being tested by Wallace's stronger opposition to racial discrimination.⁶

In contrast to Wallace, Truman's primary foreign policy advisers all stood to his right on racial issues. There was no equivalent on the international side of the administration to political aide Clark Clifford's encouragement to promote civil rights more forcefully.⁷ The elite white men who ran the State and Defense Departments and the intelligence agencies were comfortable with the world they had grown up and succeeded in, a world marked by European power, Third World weakness, and nearly ubiquitous racial segregation. To varying extents, assumptions of white racial superiority underlay their interpretations of the postwar situation facing Washington. Even George Kennan, the author of the containment doctrine underpinning the administration's entire foreign policy and an intellectual widely admired for sophisticated strategic thought, made no secret of his distrust of people of racial and ethnic descents different from his own. He saw African Americans and Jews in the United States as potentially subversive "maladjusted" groups.⁸ As late as 1938, Kennan had written privately that the US government should be transformed into a "benevolent despotism" of elite white males, with women, immigrants, and blacks excluded from the franchise.⁹

Kennan, like his colleagues in the Truman administration, was a man of the north. A Soviet specialist with a Scandinavian spouse, he later observed that his "entire diplomatic experience took place in rather high northern latitudes."¹⁰ His occasional contact with the world beyond Europe gave him the opportunity to indicate personal dislike and even loathing for peoples of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. He tended to lump them together as impulsive, fanatical, ignorant, lazy, unhappy, and prone to mental disorders and other biological deficiencies.¹¹ In the case of Latin America, Kennan specifically singled out generations of racial intermingling as a primary source of that region's supposed neuroses and delusions.¹² Third World neutralism angered him. Nonwhite leaders needed to be seized "by the scruff of the neck" and made to defend their newly independent nations from potential Soviet incursions, he told American officers at the National War College in 1952.¹³

Perhaps most revealing in Kennan's thought about race and international relations was the unself-conscious fashion in which he, like many of his colleagues in the US government, attributed ideological and diplomatic failings to racial identity. He located a major – if not the major – root of Soviet despotism and tyranny in the Soviet Union's partly Asian identity. He considered the suspiciousness and inscrutability of Soviet diplomats and leaders "the results of century-long contact with Asiatic hordes."¹⁴ The "Long Telegram" that he sent to the State Department from the US embassy in Moscow in February 1946, which first put him on the upward path from obscure diplomat to major policymaker, attributed much of the Soviet government's behavior to its "attitude of Oriental secretiveness and conspiracy."¹⁵ The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had stripped away "the westernized upper crust" of the old czarist elite, revealing Russians in their true form as "a 17th century semi-Asiatic people."¹⁶ It was Asia and "Asian-ness" that had done so much to corrupt the healthier, "European" elements of Russian life and character, according to Kennan, and that now made it imperative to contain the USSR within its own boundaries.

What is important about Kennan's perspective on race is not its singularity but its commonness within American policymaking circles. He was no fool and could be, in many ways, a strategist of great subtlety and even humility; he was quite critical, for example, of what he saw as the material corruptions of modern American and European life.¹⁷ But if the most reflective of Truman's diplomatic elite – the one specifically assigned the task of long-range thinking, as the head of the State Department's new Policy Planning Staff, and a non-Southerner to boot – could be so traditional in his assumptions of white superiority, his colleagues were unlikely to do much better. In fact, they did not. State Department adviser John Foster Dulles plumbed the depths of official racial insensitivity by making his famous 1951 comment that "the Oriental mind, particularly that of the Japanese, was always more devious than the Occidental mind" to Ambassador Wellington Koo of Taiwan.¹⁸

Truman demonstrated just how little the opinions of African Americans counted in American public life in 1945, and how much influence white Southerners had, by making James Byrnes his first appointed secretary of state. The South Carolinian's "cool formality of a sophisticated diplomat" masked the heart and mind of a typically reactionary racist of his time and place: "a chronic, absolute, unquestioning believer in the natural inferiority of the African stock."¹⁹ Many Americans were appalled. W. E. B. Du Bois, the director of special research for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), traveled to the capital of Byrnes's home state in October 1946 to urge the Southern Negro Youth Congress to make the American South "the firing line" for the emancipation of people of color everywhere. Du Bois situated Byrnes in a long line of other prominent white supremacists from the Palmetto state, including slavery proponent John C. Calhoun and rabid segregationist "Pitchfork" Benjamin Tillman, all "men who fought against freedom." The secretary of state instead "must begin to establish in his own South Carolina something of that democracy which he has been so loudly preaching to Russia."²⁰ Byrnes's successor in the State Department, General George Marshall, was no less comfortable with traditional racial hierarchies. A white Virginian whose career in a segregated army inclined him to discount the abilities of African Americans, Marshall in his brief tour as secretary of state touched on the subject of race only to reject accusations of American hypocrisy about democracy.²¹

Truman's final and most influential secretary of state, Dean Acheson, came out of the elite, all-white world of the Groton School, Yale University, Harvard Law School, and corporate Washington. A sophisticated and worldly man of strong convictions, Acheson was a fierce Cold Warrior and a close and loyal adviser to the president. His oft-cited 1946 letter to the Fair Employment Practices Commission emphasizing the damage done to US diplomacy by domestic American racial discrimination seemed to indicate a sensitivity to racial issues.²² In fact, it showed his immensely practical mind. He retained deeply prejudiced attitudes typical of his generation and class. "If you truly had a democracy and did what the people wanted," he argued privately, "you'd go wrong every time."²³ Acheson was a passionate Europhile who disliked and disparaged Asians, Latin Americans, and other people of color. Despite his partial awareness of explicit racism's cost to American diplomacy, he presided over a segregated State Department.²⁴ The son of a British-born clergyman who emigrated to the United States, Acheson did not share the anticolonialism common among many Americans. He supported white minority rule in southern Africa, even sharing anti-Asian sentiments by letter into the 1970s with former Central African Federation leader Roy Welensky.²⁵ One of the most striking aspects of his thinking about race was how it grew less egalitarian through the 1950s and 1960s, when much of the rest of white America was moving in the opposite direction. In his 1969 autobiography, Acheson rued the failure of the United Nations to be housed in a serene European city like Geneva or Copenhagen, regretting that it wound up

instead in New York, "a crowded city of conflicting races and nationalities." The most influential American policymaker "present at the creation" of the Cold War offered little enthusiasm for racial equality or national independence in the colonial world, as he pursued his primary objective of containing Soviet expansionism.²⁶

If Truman's leading foreign policy advisers were ill prepared for a postwar world of growing racial equality, they appeared positively prescient when compared with the predominantly Southern leadership of the Congress, especially the Senate. The judicial branch of the federal government provided crucial support for desegregation after 1945, but much of the nearly all-white legislature set off into the new era of the United Nations ridden with racial attitudes from an earlier time. The late 1940s and early 1950s marked the apex of Southern influence in the Senate, as seniority rules and the one-party character of Southern politics had elevated Dixie Democrats into the chairs of a majority of that chamber's most powerful committees – the pattern in the House of Representatives as well.²⁷ Mississippi's Theodore Bilbo used his position in the Senate to promote violence against African Americans, calling on fellow whites of the Sunflower state in 1946 to "remember the best way to keep the niggers from voting. You do it the night before the election."²⁸ Bilbo represented an extreme position on Capitol Hill regarding methods, but his goal of preserving white supremacy was in no way unusual or disreputable. The majority of his most influential colleagues agreed. Their leader, Richard Russell of Georgia, was the "most powerful man in the Senate," according to the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1951. Southern segregationists stymied the efforts of Northern liberals to pass an antilynching bill or any other piece of what Russell called civil wrongs legislation.²⁹ A few years later William S. White's book on the chamber summarized its character: "So marked and so constant is this high degree of Southern dominion . . . that the Senate might be described as the South's unending revenge upon the North for Gettysburg."³⁰ It is worth remembering how at the onset of the Cold War "democracy" and "freedom" for the majority of human beings were alien concepts to the bulk of the leadership of the United States Congress.

Wars, by their very nature, create social dislocations and tensions, and World War II was no exception. The unprecedented scale of its destructiveness ensured that it would be followed by a contentious period of reconstructing damaged political orders. In many places, like China, Greece, and Korea, this process emerged as civil strife and even civil war. In others, like Eastern Europe, it appeared as an army of liberation transforming itself into an army of occupation. But in much of the world the conflict over postwar reconstruction took the form of anticolonial struggle and metropolitan resistance, with a veneer of racial distinction. Indonesian nationalists fought against Dutch troops; Vietnamese guerillas went to war with a French army; Indians prevailed relatively peacefully over retreating British authorities; and French colonial forces slaughtered tens of thousands of Malagasy insurgents and

civilians in Madagascar.³¹ Strikes and protests in the Gold Coast and Nigeria put British authorities on notice that Africa would be next, and by 1952 Kenyans were at war with white settlers and colonial soldiers. In each of these cases, the experiences of non-Europeans in World War II, especially those who fought in colonial armies, had helped embolden them to challenge white supremacy after 1945.³²

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Western European and North American colonialism had long been charged with racial tensions and meanings, which inevitably complicated the Truman administration's policies toward decolonization. The essential problem for the White House was how to create as large and strong an anti-Communist, "free world" coalition as possible. The alliance had to be not only international but also multiracial, just as did the liberal anti-Communist political coalition Truman was assembling at home. The difficulty came in the conflicting axes of global tension that emerged after World War II: the East-West axis of the Americans and Soviets, and the North-South axis of the European metropolitan powers and their vast colonial territories. To keep both paler North and darker South on the Western side of the horizontal axis represented a major challenge for American foreign policymakers. In a report to the president in September 1948, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) underlined the "serious dilemma" of trying to forge close ties with the anticolonial new nations of the Middle East and Asia, while preserving good relations with European powers eager to retain their last colonial territories in Africa. Over it all hung the issue of color, the agency observed: the "deep-seated racial hostility of native populations toward their colonial overlords," caused by centuries of imperial exploitation.³³

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Truman and his advisers hoped for a gradual but steady process of national independence spreading across the Third World, with power passing peacefully from retreating European colonial officials into the hands of pro-Western, anti-Communist indigenous elites. The ending of colonial rule had created the United States, after all, and anticolonial sentiment and conviction had endured through America's own rise to global power and acquisition of overseas territories. The economic advantages of greater American access to others' colonial territories – that is, free trade – dovetailed with traditional political principle. The Truman administration believed its own grant of independence to the Philippines in 1946 provided a model for the rest of the West.³⁴ The president was especially pleased when Britain arranged to withdraw from India and Pakistan a year later, a momentous step away from the old hierarchical empire and toward a new multiracial commonwealth.³⁵ Many in Britain and in other metropolitan nations resented American pressures for decolonization, particularly in light of Jim Crow's continued existence. Randolph Churchill, for example, asked visiting American journalist Walter Lippmann over lunch, "Why do you always worry about our niggers? We don't worry about yours."³⁶ But the US government recognized the import-

ance of self-rule in the colonial world for the successful waging of the Cold War. The Truman administration even occasionally used serious economic threats to promote that process, as when it forced the Dutch to de-escalate their war against non-Communist nationalist guerrillas in Indonesia.³⁷

Sluggish economic revival in Western Europe and American fears of Communist advances in 1946 and 1947 diminished the Truman administration's concern with decolonization. The consolidation of a robust, integrated, anti-Communist Western Europe soared to the top of Truman's agenda, tightening the American embrace of colonial regimes in London, Paris, Brussels, and Lisbon and deepening Third World skepticism of American motives. The Marshall Plan and NATO aimed to bolster the economies and military forces of the metropolitan governments but also served to strengthen them in their quest to retain control of valuable colonies abroad.³⁸ Critics pointed this out at the time: Senator George Malone of Nevada told his colleagues that "the North Atlantic Pact simply guarantees the integrity of the colonial systems throughout Asia and Africa."³⁹ As the Dutch discovered regarding Indonesia, the results of American aid were not always that straightforward. But it was clear that the president's famous anti-Communist distinction in his Truman Doctrine speech – between a way of life "based upon the will of the majority" and one "based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority" – skipped over the most common form of minority rule in the world: colonialism.⁴⁰

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The racial element in US tolerance of European colonialism showed up most starkly in regard to Africa. The centrality of race in US policy toward that continent was due partly to the European tendency to contrast "black" Africa with "white" Europe, which mirrored the bipolar racial thinking typical in the United States, and partly to Africa's status as the last major area of European overseas control. Rapid postwar decolonization and Communist-led insurgencies in Asia made the Truman administration grateful for an area with little visible anticolonial or anticapitalist organizing. What the senior administration official with responsibility for Africa, Assistant Secretary of State George McGhee, called Africa's "situation of relative stability" preserved both the continent's significant contribution to the economies of Western Europe and American access to certain critical minerals there, particularly the uranium ore of the Belgian Congo and South Africa.⁴¹

With less previous involvement in Africa than on any continent besides Antarctica, American policymakers after World War II relied heavily on the European and white settler authorities of the region in dealing with its problems. This policy resulted partly from traditional diplomatic practice everywhere: governments deal mostly with governments. But it also reflected the political, cultural, and racial ties that American elites felt with their Western European counterparts. American diplomats and visitors had almost no significant contacts with Africans in the late 1940s, admitting privately their nearly total ignorance of what they called "native issues." Sympathetic with the white

officials whose segregated society they shared there, white Americans tended instead to view Africa through European eyes.⁴² Occasional exceptions startled and encouraged African nationalists, while exacerbating the latent fears of Europeans that the United States ultimately planned to replace them as the dominant force on the continent. Journalist William Attwood, later a US ambassador in Guinea and Kenya, recalled the surprise of Guineans when he shook their hands during a 1947 visit. French officials had apparently encouraged Africans to expect no white American to touch a person with dark skin, and the more egalitarian style of some Americans like Attwood complicated the picture of a segregated United States, especially in light of the Truman administration's growing support for desegregation at home.⁴³ But the enduring closeness of white Americans with colonial authorities, along with the disenfranchisement of African Americans at home in the South, left uncertain the answer to the increasingly common African question, paraphrased by the US ambassador to Liberia: "Does the US favor rule 'of' the majority 'by' the majority in Africa as it does in Europe, the US, or Communist areas?"⁴⁴

The Truman administration essentially answered this question, "Eventually, but not yet." That dawning of democracy was closely correlated to the density of white settler populations. Where European settlers were few, as in British West Africa and in North Africa outside Algeria, self-government would come soon. Where they were many – in the temperate areas of eastern and particularly southern Africa – their resistance to majority rule would slow the process of decolonization. In most of Africa, in other words, the presence of white people corresponded directly to the absence of democratic practices. This correlation created a conundrum for white American policymakers, who were accustomed to associating the influence of whites on the continent with Western civilization and material progress.⁴⁵

For the best possible resolution of this dilemma, the United States looked again to Britain to provide a model of progressive, orderly decolonization that would not play into the hands of radicals or Communists. US diplomats in Salisbury cheered the organizing of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland into the Central African Federation in 1953, despite grave African doubts, as giving "the white man . . . a golden opportunity to really make his concept of a Free World work successfully."⁴⁶ That effort failed miserably over the next several years, however, demonstrating the limits of what metropolitan governments could or would do to restrain white settlers.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the extent of African anger at colonial rule and European settlers became clear in British Kenya, where the Mau Mau rebellion broke out in the final months of the Truman administration. The chief American official in Nairobi recognized that a deep "racial division of wealth" lay at the heart of the conflict in Kenya, as whites there understood. But for a US government primarily committed to containing Soviet influence and deep at war in Korea the bottom line on the anticolonial struggle in Kenya was how it worked "to the benefit of International Communism in creating another focus of unrest in the Western sphere."⁴⁸

The most extreme version of the Truman administration's dilemma of how to fit diplomacy and race together unfolded in the Union of South Africa. The electoral victory of the Afrikaner nationalists in 1948 established the system of apartheid, as white South Africans rejected the postwar global trend toward racial equality. It was as though the Dixiecrats had won in the United States: absolute racial segregation and discrimination became the law of the land, and the evangelically racist government of Daniel Malan looked to spread its gospel beyond its borders. As the wealthiest and most powerful state in the region, South Africa became the core of a southern African white redoubt that utterly rejected the principle of human equality. While Communist totalitarianism rolled across eastern Europe, racial totalitarianism seeped into every corner south of the Limpopo River. Indeed, the rule of apartheid seemed a perfect model for how to drive Africans into the arms of the Communist Party, which remained the only political group open to all races and committed to complete racial equality. The injustices of anti-Communist apartheid threatened to legitimate Communism as the only real defender of democracy in the region. Here was a terrible dilemma for American Cold Warriors.⁴⁹

Strong common interests linked Washington and Pretoria. Historic alliances in both world wars and the Korean War, mutual anti-Communism, and growing trade patterns tied them together.⁵⁰ Strategic minerals proved even more important, with South African manganese, chrome, and uranium becoming crucial elements for the postwar American armaments industry.⁵¹ Underlining these tangible concerns, Secretary of State Dean Acheson reminded US officials to avoid "taking hold of glowing principles [of racial equality and majority rule] and dropping these other important considerations."⁵² White Americans were also strongly inclined by tradition to identify culturally with white South Africans, whose European ancestry and frontier past seemed so like their own: bearers of Western civilization and Christianity to a continent inhabited by less technologically sophisticated, non-Christian, darker-skinned peoples. The racial character of this common identity was occasionally made explicit, as when State Department intelligence officers emphasized the importance for US policy of South Africa's "having the largest white population on the African continent."⁵³ George McGhee later recalled his own Texan heritage as a source of the "sympathy" he felt for South Africans "for their extremely difficult racial problem." Which South Africans he was referring to was no mystery: "It was unfortunate that I was not able, during my visit to Africa in 1950, to meet any of the African leaders."⁵⁴ Enduring habits of racial identification limited the understanding of American policymakers – even those of considerable goodwill, like McGhee – about who the vast majority of South Africans actually were.

The contrasting results of the 1948 elections in South Africa and in the United States indicated that the window of opportunity for a rising apartheid and a declining Jim Crow to embrace each other comfortably would not remain open forever. Unlike the Afrikaner nationalists, the Dixiecrats were

resoundingly defeated by both major party candidates, who each supported greater racial equality. In South Africa there was no Supreme Court interpreting the Constitution in increasingly color-blind fashion. Dixie was only part of the United States; South Africa had no equivalent to the American majority beyond the Mason-Dixon line.⁵⁵ The governments of the two countries could still follow mutual interests into the same bed in the late 1940s, but growing tensions between the two over race relations began to point to the parting of the ways that the decline of the Cold War in the 1980s finally brought.⁵⁶

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By destabilizing the social order, wars bring unexpected changes in their wake. The larger the conflict, the more extensive such alterations tend to be. As the greatest conflagration in human history, World War II left a swath of extraordinary destruction across much of the globe, while also creating the conditions for both reform and revolution. After 1945 the US government faced a situation in which traditional hierarchies of power, especially racial ones, had been greatly disturbed in the United States and abroad. How these would be reconstructed was an open question.

Harry Truman presided over an administration riven by the tensions between older traditions and structures of discrimination and newer commitments to equality. On one side stood the segregated backgrounds of US policymakers, the latent racial prejudice of most white Americans, the power of the white South in Congress, the political bent of the FBI and other segregated bureaucracies in Washington, and the colonialism of America's closest allies. On the other side were aligned the decline of scientific racism, the Holocaust's delegitimation of racial discrimination, African American demands for decent treatment, the rising tide of independence in the colonial world, and Soviet ideological and diplomatic competition. The tension between these two conflicting tendencies marked Truman's presidency from its first day to its last.

The gap between official US rhetoric and actual American practices regarding human equality was vast in 1945 and remained marked in 1953. That it shrank in some significant ways between those years is a tribute, above all, to the persistence of people of darker hue who refused to accept discriminatory treatment; their resistance and pressure created the force to drive reforms. Truman himself bears a measure of credit as well for promoting certain changes, for a combination of reasons including political expediency, international pressure, and personal belief. It is perhaps worth remembering that the United States was hardly the only nation not living up to its international agreements regarding human rights after World War II. But because of its extraordinary position of power and its decision to take on the mantle of international leadership, what the United States government said and did mattered enormously for the course of post-1945 world history. [. . .]

Notes

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- 41 Memorandum for the file, "Under Secretary's Meeting of Friday, April 7, 1950," Records of the Office of the Executive Secretariat, box 1, Record Group 59, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (McGhee quotation); I thank Frank Costigliola for bringing this document to my attention; McGregor memorandum, 3 February 1954, *FRUS*, 1952–54, 11:416–417; editorial footnote, *FRUS*, 1952–54, 414; Robert W. Moore, "White Magic in the Belgian Congo," *National Geographic* 101 (March 1952): 321–362. For more extensive discussions of these issues, see Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle*.
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- 52 Memorandum of conversation, 23 October 1952, *ibid.*, 946.
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Epilogue

THE END OF THE COLD WAR

David S. Painter and Melvyn P. Leffler

By focusing on the international system and on events in all parts of the globe, we have tried to illuminate the origins of the Cold War in all its complexity. In this epilogue, rather than chronicle the evolution of events from the 1950s through the 1980s, we seek to outline some of the key changes in geopolitics, technology, ideology, and political economy that help explain the end of the Cold War.

Despite an upsurge of Soviet military power in the 1970s and a relative decline in US economic strength, the global distribution of power remained tilted against the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. If one defines power not merely in terms of troops, tanks, ships, airplanes, bombs, and missiles, but also in terms of industrial infrastructure, raw materials, skilled manpower, and technological prowess, the postwar era was bipolar only in a narrow military sense. By any broad definition of power, the United States was always far ahead of the Soviet Union.

This imbalance was even starker when one measures the strength of the Western alliance against that of the Soviet bloc. Although the wartime defeat of Germany and Japan and the decline of Britain and France initially improved the Soviet Union's relative strategic position, this advantage proved transitory. Subsequently, the successful reconstruction of Western Germany and Japan, the economic recovery of Western Europe and the United Kingdom, and the incorporation of all these countries into a US-led alliance meant that four of the world's five centers of industrial might stayed outside Soviet control. While the United States adroitly practiced double containment, coopting German and Japanese power while limiting Soviet expansion, the Sino-Soviet split greatly complicated Soviet strategic dilemmas.

Even in narrow military terms the Soviet position had as many elements of weakness as strength. The Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies possessed numerical superiority in ground forces along the central front in the heart of Europe, and Soviet and Chinese communist troops outnumbered any possible opponent in northeast Asia in the 1950s. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union also achieved rough parity with the United States in strategic nuclear weapons. But the loyalty of Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies always remained in doubt, and after the Sino-Soviet split in the late 1950s and early 1960s the

Soviets had to deploy almost a third of their ground forces along their extensive border with the People's Republic of China (PRC). In assessing the nuclear balance, the Soviets had to weigh the arsenals of the other nuclear powers – the United Kingdom, France, and the PRC – as well as that of the United States. Although the Soviets were able to gain rough military equivalency, this success came at tremendous cost. Compared to the United States the Soviet Union devoted a much larger share of its much smaller gross national product to defense. Diverting investment from more productive sectors and from consumer goods ultimately undermined the regime's capacity to satisfy its own people and to maintain its empire.

The arms race was one of the most dynamic aspects of the Cold War. At various times, technological advances threatened to give one superpower or the other a dangerous edge over its rival, thereby triggering vigorous countermeasures and increasing the risk of nuclear disaster. This pattern of action and reaction continued throughout the Cold War, resulting in ever higher levels of military spending and expanding nuclear arsenals. Although some scholars argue that nuclear weapons may have prevented a war between the superpowers, they did not prevent dangerous crises or numerous nonnuclear conflicts in the Third World. The superpowers attempted sporadically to control the arms race, but the different structures of the US and Soviet nuclear forces, which in turn led each side to seek different solutions to the objective of deterring a nuclear war, hindered these efforts.

In the mid-1980s, a new generation of Soviet leaders, led by Mikhail Gorbachev, came to power. They recognized that military expenditures were crippling their nation's economy and thwarting their desire to improve the standard of living of Soviet citizens. Among other things, they concluded that fewer nuclear weapons could deter a prospective attack from the United States or from any other potential enemy. Gorbachev and his reformist colleagues sought to relax tensions in order to focus on domestic reform: *glasnost* and *perestroika*. In 1988, they announced that their belief in a common European home and a common humanity would guide their foreign policy rather than their ideological commitment to class conflict. Instead of using force to stymie the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and to thwart German unification, Gorbachev grudgingly acknowledged that coercive control over East European peoples and East Germans was incompatible with democratic and economic reform in the Soviet Union. West Germany's peaceful behavior for almost two generations and its integration into a web of military (NATO) and economic institutions (the European Community) that circumscribed its autonomy allowed Gorbachev and his reformist colleagues to take risks that their predecessors never would have taken.

American leaders could hardly grasp the magnitude of change occurring in the Soviet Union. Ronald Reagan, the conservative leader of the Republican Party, became president of the United States in 1981. He launched an unprecedented peacetime military buildup, and hoped to negotiate nuclear reductions from a position of strength. He championed the superiority of capitalist

enterprise and called the Soviet Union an evil empire. Yet he was willing to meet with Gorbachev at a number of summit conferences, signed a path-breaking agreement on intermediate nuclear forces in 1987, and gradually came to appreciate the Soviet leader's unique qualities.

Many of Reagan's advisers remained suspicious of Gorbachev's intentions. After Reagan left office in January 1989, his successor, George Bush, reassessed the Soviet-American relationship. When the Berlin Wall came down in November 1989, Bush and his colleagues made it clear that American goodwill required Soviet acquiescence to a united Germany inside NATO. Their suspicions might have lingered even longer if not for the Kremlin's repudiation of class conflict as the underlying principle of the Soviet approach to international relations and if not for the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself in December 1991.

The demise of Communism as an appealing ideology was critical to the ending of the Cold War. At the conclusion of the Second World War, the future of capitalism as an organizing principle for society was anything but secure. The Soviet Union enjoyed enormous prestige as a result of its leading role in defeating Nazi Germany. At the same time Socialist parties came to power in Great Britain and Scandinavia, and Communist parties were strong in France and Italy. There was a widespread belief in many European countries that economic planning was necessary to ensure economic growth and social equality. At the same time, for many people in the Third World the managed economy of the Soviet Union seemed to provide a model for rapid modernization and industrial transformation.

Over the years the prestige of the Soviet Union and the appeal of Communism and the Soviet model of development faded. Continued repression at home and oppression abroad (especially the purge trials of the late 1940s and the invasions of Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Afghanistan in 1979) tarnished Communism's image. In the 1960s and 1970s some reform-minded European Communist parties attempted to divorce communism from the harsh reality of Soviet (and Chinese) practice, but these efforts failed to wrest leadership of world communism from the Soviet Union and the PRC. The faltering Soviet economy further lessened communism's appeal, as did growing international awareness of human rights and environmental abuses in the communist world.

The failure of Communism to deliver the goods contrasted sharply with the appeal of Western consumer culture. Younger people in the Soviet bloc and the Third World measured their economic well-being not against the experiences of their parents but against those of their contemporaries in the West. The 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the failed attempt to cover it up delivered another blow to Communist rule, demoralizing the few who still believed the system could be transformed from within.

The reconstruction, reform, and relative resiliency of the world capitalist system contrasted sharply with the failure of Communism. The United States and its allies experienced unprecedented economic growth in the 1950s and

1960s. Playing the role of economic hegemon, the United States aided the reconstruction of Western Europe and Japan, promoted economic integration, supported a stable financial order, and encouraged international trade and investment through the lowering of tariffs and the removal of other impediments to the free flow of goods and capital. These changes, and high levels of military spending, helped fuel an extended period of economic growth. Although the Third World did not share equally in the resulting prosperity, the United States, Western Europe, and Japan flourished.

Prosperity associated with the long boom stretching from the early 1950s to the early 1970s undercut the appeal of leftist and Communist parties, perpetuated the ascendancy of moderate elites who associated their well-being with that of the United States, and sustained the cohesion of the Western alliance. In addition, the defeat of the extreme right in the Second World War reduced divisions among noncommunist elements, facilitating, at least in Western Europe and Japan, the emergence of a consensus supporting some form of welfare-state capitalism and alignment with the United States.

Even though US technological and financial dominance and share of world production decreased over time, the vitality of the West German and Japanese economies and the emergence of such Western-oriented 'newly industrializing countries' as Taiwan and South Korea ensured the West's economic supremacy. While the oil crises of the 1970s caused immense economic difficulties and financial disorder in the West, the Soviets gained no lasting advantages. As an oil exporter, the Soviet Union benefited briefly from higher oil prices, but the windfall distracted attention from the need for structural reforms. In short, the ability of the world capitalist system to avoid another great depression and the inability of the Soviet Union to compete with the West economically were key factors in the end of the Cold War.

The Cold War overlapped the era of decolonization and national liberation in the Third World, and these two momentous processes interacted with each other in complex ways. Although most Third World conflicts were indigenous in origin, and their eventual outcome determined more by their internal histories and characteristics than US and Soviet policies, the Cold War made decolonization more difficult and more violent. In Latin America and other already independent societies, the Cold War polarized efforts at social, economic, and political change. Most of the twenty million people who died in wars between 1945 and 1990 perished in the more than one hundred military conflicts that took place in the Third World. In addition, most of the crises that threatened to escalate into nuclear war occurred in the Third World.

In many respects, the era of decolonization, roughly 1945–75, provided a window of opportunity for the Soviet Union and a window of vulnerability for the United States and its allies. During the course of three decades, scores of former colonies attained their political independence. Many national liberation movements wanted to expropriate foreign-owned properties, overthrow traditional power structures, and challenge the West's cultural hegemony.

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For a time, there seemed to be at least a symbiotic relationship between social transformation in the Third World and the interests of the Soviet state.

The United States was acutely aware of the importance of the Third World from the outset of the Cold War. American officials deployed their superior resources to ensure that the markets, raw materials, and labor forces of the periphery remained accessible to the industrial core of Western Europe and Japan as well as to the United States. In addition, Soviet involvement in the Third World often galvanized Western counteractions including economic and military assistance for pro-Western groups, covert action, and, in Vietnam, massive military intervention.

Although radical movements eventually came to power in some Third World countries, these gains proved to be ephemeral as most national liberation movements resisted outside control. As the Soviet economy declined and experiments with Soviet-style development often failed miserably, less developed countries were left with little choice but to abide by the rules set by the Western-dominated International Monetary Fund and World Bank. They had no choice but to look to the United States and its allies for capital, technology, and markets. Paradoxically, the Cold War began with expectations that the Soviet Union would exploit the breakup of Western colonial regimes, but it closed with the Soviet empire itself collapsing and with the Kremlin's subject nationalities asserting their own autonomy.

Although the Cold War was not the source of all the world's ills, its impact was far-reaching and long-lasting. With its insatiable demand on resources, its magnification of ideological and political intolerance, its emphasis on external threats and its consequent neglect of internal problems, the Cold War deformed many economies and damaged many societies around the world. Often, it distorted their priorities and dissipated their wealth. The Cold War also degraded the environment, complicated religious, racial, and ethnic conflict, and accelerated the spread of weapons around the world. The end of the Cold War provided an opportunity for the peoples of the world to forge a more peaceful, prosperous, and just international order. We can only hope that they will have the imagination, the determination, and the resources to do so.

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