THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR IN EUROPE

International perspectives

Edited by
DAVID REYNOLDS

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PART ONE

THE BIG TWO

1 *The United States*

ANDERS STEPHANSON

It was the appearance in fall 1947 of a slim but powerful book by the columnist Walter Lippmann that popularized the 'Cold War' as a term. Lippmann's work was a critique of George F. Kennan's anonymous 'X-Article' of that same year, an article whose theme of containment had been taken by the informed public to articulate Washington's new policy toward the Soviet Union. Kennan had assumed that expansionism was inherent in the very nature of the Soviet regime, and containment thus signalled, among other things, a general intention to do whatever was necessary to stop the Russians from expanding in places of vital importance to the west. Since the Russians were thought to be fanatics, alien to western traditions, they were impossible to talk with; doing whatever was necessary therefore meant a period of *no real diplomacy*, in effect a period of deep freeze coupled with tit-for-tat moves until frustration, presumably, had either broken the Soviet regime or mellowed it to the point where it could be made to see Western reason.[1]

Lippmann took Kennan severely to task for this, most saliently for not understanding that diplomacy – the negotiated resolution of issues of mutual concern – does not require 'intimacy' and common views among the parties concerned. Containment, in other words, seemed to Lippmann a negative concept, strategically leaving the crucial aspect of the postwar situation undealt with: namely the presence of the Red Army in the middle of Europe. Clearly, said Lippmann, we should try to get these troops out of Europe by means of negotiation. Since the Russians had agreed to talk about it, the West should undertake to find out what the price was and whether it could be paid. By mid-1948, Kennan had swung around towards this view, and, in sharp contrast to the Administration he was serving, began to argue for a diplomatic resolution of the pivotal German problem.

The Eastern European events of 1989–91 lend to this debate a certain contemporary resonance. For the question immediately arises whether containment has been instrumental in bringing about the collapse of the Soviet empire and the transformation of the regime itself, or if it has merely served to maintain existing conditions far longer than might otherwise have been the case. Arguably, a more Lippmannesque policy might have facilitated these astonishing changes much earlier. Whatever one's view, there is now room for renewed debate on the origins of the Cold War, whereas a decade ago historians were wont to talk about it as a largely settled issue.

Although Lippmann's critique was entitled *The Cold War*, he never actually explicated the phrase itself, which seems to have been added as an afterthought. It is a peculiarity of almost all American historiography on the subject (including my own) that it shares this missing feature with Lippmann: to a remarkable degree there is a failure to specify what it is one wants to explain, if indeed explanation is the desired end. The concept is used promiscuously, designating a whole host of possible periods, events and relationships.[2] At present, public and cognoscenti alike appear convinced that the Cold War has just ended, a view which would seem to equate the term with the entire post-war, possibly even post-1917, relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. Let us recall, however, the sentiment of the early 1970s, especially after President Richard M. Nixon's trips to Moscow and Beijing, that the Cold War was over; and similar talk during the thaw that followed the Cuban missile crisis in the 1960s.

For the sake of clarity, it may be useful therefore to begin these reflections with an outline of my own (unoriginal) conception and periodization.[3] I consider the Cold War, largely in effect as a system by the end of 1947, to have been marked by these characteristics:

(a) warlike hostility, carried on by means short of war;

(b) diplomacy, consequently, being turned into militarized thinking and a kind of warfare itself;

(c) denial of the opponent's legitimacy as a regime, resulting in intense propaganda attacks;

(d) an increasingly bipolar structure of international politics through the superimposition of the conflict on the rest of the world;

(e) intense military build-up in the arms race;

(f) suppression of internal dissidents.

The Cold War thus differed in important ways from the classical balance of power structure of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was bipolar and static rather than multipolar and shifting. It had no place for any 'balancer' to 'equilibrate' the balance, such as Great Britain had traditionally done. It also tended, by being ideologically charged, to deny the other party's right to exist and participate in the comity of nations. In that sense it was a return to the absolute enmity and hatred, the manicheism, typical of the religious wars before the European state system evolved in the seventeenth century.[4] Along Clausewitzian lines, it became an extreme polarity in which victory meant total annihilation of the opponent. The conflictual element inscribed in the very separation between states hence assumed the *antagonistic* nature traditionally reserved for moments of war, as distinct from 'peace'.

This is why it makes sense to call the period in question a Cold *War*. This is also why it makes much less sense to use it, in the now commonly accepted manner, as a description of the whole post-war era. Soviet-American relations were generally strained after 1917, but in very different ways and with different effect. The Cold War, as conceived here, actually underwent in the 1950s a series of changes that turned it into something else after 1962; and we need a way to describe this

without diluting the usefulness of the cold war as a concept, without losing its specificity.

What were these changes? The Cuban missile crisis in 1962 was, apart from Berlin Blockade of 1948, perhaps the single most dangerous moment in the entire post-war era, but in its aftermath was ushered in a new stage in the superpower relationship. The features of this phase have been described by many and are not in themselves very controversial. Among them are:

(a) de facto recognition of the other's legitimacy and consequently de-emphasis of the irreconcilable ideological differences;

(b) mutually, if tacitly, agreed spheres of influence, the American sphere being both far looser and far larger;

(c) no direct military conflict between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in Europe or elsewhere, so that the major wars involving the two (Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan), were fought indirectly or by means of proxies;

(d) agreement, again tacit, not to use nuclear weapons except as ultimate resort on the vital assumption of MAD (mutually assured destruction).[5]

Elements of this rapprochement had been present ever since Stalin's death, in some instances even before, but had not dominated the relationship. It took the (apparently) final division of Germany in 1961 and the near hit of the missile crisis of 1962 to achieve that. The new situation then found very clear expression the following year in the limited Nuclear Test Ban treaty. The dialectic had been transformed into a non-antagonistic one, a mutually profitable system, to put it bluntly, of hegemonic control over the two halves of Europe, competition narrowed down to the arms race and manoeuvres in the third world. The Cold War proper was thus over in its European context, though it experienced a phantasmagorical and brief return during the late 1970s and early 1980s. What has come to an end now, according to this periodization, is *the whole post-war order itself*, an international order dominated in the last instance by the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union but not to be conflated with any Cold War.

Diplomatic history in the American academy

I must now also make some 'sociological' remarks about American historiography which is incomparable in size and production, particularly in the field under consideration here. This is partly a consequence of the sheer size of the country; but it is also a result of the university system, which combines college education as a direct extension of high school with the advanced research customary for seats of higher learning. The institutional result is a mass of historians working in considerable social autonomy. The Society for the Historians of American Foreign Relations, as the sub-discipline cumbersomely calls its organization, has by itself more than a thousand members, most of them working on the twentieth century.[6] Their outpourings on the 1943–50 period have been particularly massive, since that moment has rightly been seen as a watershed and, more prosaically, the relevant archives were opened fairly early.

Two other institutional oddities should be mentioned. First, history departments tend to be rigidly separated into various sub-fields, and here the historians of foreign relations have come to fall under *American* history. There is consequently no 'international history' in its own right. This is to some extent the effect of parochialism, a certain reluctance, for example, to learn foreign languages.[7] A British historian has described the end product uncharitably as a 'paradigm which places the United States at the centre and draws out from there simply a series of bilateral links, like the spokes of a rimless wheel'.[8] The image is not wholly inaccurate. Relatedly, as Charles Maier has underlined, the Americanist preponderance has forced historians of other areas to stick more to the company of foreign colleagues.[9]

The second oddity is the additional separation from the discipline of 'international relations', which in the United States became a sub-field of political science and thus pre-eminently concerned with theoretical model-building or providing policy advice to various administrations.[10] This demarcation between history and international relations has been quite sharp in the case of the Americanists, much less so for, say historians of East Asia, the Middle East, the Soviet Union, or any other field that falls within what is known as 'area studies'. It was in fact the Cold War and the global commitments it entailed that gave rise in the 1950s and 1960s to the huge growth in such policy-oriented and partly interdisciplinary institutions within the university. Sovietology, for obvious reasons, became especially tightly tied to the state and its need for knowledge and intelligence.

From that angle, the Americanist tilt among historians has not been an unmitigated ill. For it freed the profession from any too onerous imperative to serve the powers that be and allowed, in the 1960s and 1970s, a critical edge seldom found in international relations. However, the trend towards the right in the 1980s has signalled a move away from this will to dissent. In recent years diplomatic history has also opened up a bit towards international relations, though this development has been marked by a simple importation of neo-realist and geopolitical theories, which in the 1980s have actually been subjected to sharp critiques within their own discipline of origin.[11] International relations is itself largely parasitical on outside theory and experiences periodic moments of identity crisis; but it is ultimately too connected to the functionality of policymaking to cultivate quite the same penchant for self-flagellation as diplomatic history, acutely aware as the latter is of its provincialism, conceptual backwardness, and obvious limitations as a discipline apparently devoted to the study of something that is becoming historically less and less important. Recent moments of introspection indicate nevertheless the possibility of a qualitative leap in sophistication, and towards something wider than merely diplomacy as traditionally conceived.[12]

A final note is necessary about political commitment. American history is a politicized field and nowhere more so than in the subfield of foreign relations and the Cold War. Writing history has often been both a conscious intervention and a way of coming to terms with one's place in American society and the world. This is true not only for leftist historiography. Indeed, numerous of the earlier, mainstream historians participated in the events they described and thus had an irreducible existential stake in their histories. Virtually all the present generation of

active historians, from left to right, have in some way been deeply marked by the experience of Vietnam. From that traumatic, extended and divisive war there was no personal escape, and though it now seems as distant as the 1960s, its shadows are still inescapable. Sovietology, meanwhile, included on its side a good number of emigrés, with all the passions and interests attached to that difficult position. This political 'presentism' has, again, been both good and bad: good in the sense that it sometimes acknowledges the uses to which history is put, bad in the sense that it can, or at least did, sometimes degenerate into pure polemic.

A note on Hegel

The story of cold-war historiography is often told in the form of a Hegelian triptych. First there were the traditionalist or orthodox accounts of the 1950s and 1960s which on the whole supported the official American position: the totalitarian Soviet Union started the Cold War by its expansionism while the democratic United States, initially reactive, eventually moved to stop this and so defended the free world. Then, antithetically, came along the revisionists of the 1960s and 1970s, for whom the all-powerful United States initiated the Cold War for ideological and economic reasons, and the Soviet Union was cautious, reactive and nationalistic, restrictive in its security claims rather than messianically ideological and expansionist. Finally, the disciplinary resolution arrived with the post-revisionists of the 1970s and 1980s, emerging from the preceding confrontation to create a superior synthesis by choosing the best elements of both schools: a transcending *Aufhebung* in other words.

This caricature is not without heuristic value. The labels it employs cannot of course be created except ex post facto. The traditionalists did not know that they were writing traditionalist work; only when the revisionists appeared was this slightly derogatory term invented. And the post-revisionist imprint is in some ways a self-serving construct by post-revisionists themselves; they might just as well be dubbed anti-revisionist or neo-realist. Finally, the whole picture was complicated by the emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s of a seemingly rival school of 'corporatism'. For this new antithesis cast itself in the form of a critique of the new post-revisionist orthodoxy and considered the Cold-War problematic of the preceding schools, if not a dead end, at least something whose terms should be sharply revised. Consequently, it had very little to say about the origins of the Cold War as such. With the passing of the passion there has indeed been a diffusion of perspectives, such that one can no longer distinguish schools with the same clarity as a decade ago. Nonetheless, with all due misgivings about excessive crudity, my analysis here will follow, critically, the general contours of the Hegelian story, with suitable additions. The emphasis will be on interpretation and explanation, not on empirical detail and exhaustive lists of names.

Traditionalism

The traditionalist historians of the 1950s and 1960s actually ranged from straightforward apologists to critical realists.[13] Most of them agreed, however, that the

Stalinist regime was exceptional and not just an ordinary Great Power. Co-operation (a supposedly neutral concept seldom investigated) was therefore doomed. The genesis of, and hence blame for, the cold war lay in the unilateral moves of the Soviet Union, initiated even before the end of the Second World War, to impose its rule on the areas of Eastern Europe liberated from Nazi occupation: 'Thus the cold war grew out of the interactions between traditional power politics and the nature of the Soviet regime. The power vacuum created by Germany's defeat provided the opening for Soviet power to fill, and Communist ideology made a clash inevitable.'[14]

Traditionalists disagreed over how important communist ideology was in Moscow's expansionism, but not about the moves of the Kremlin blatantly to disregard the established consensus of the wartime coalition. The Polish question is often brought forth as an egregious example: Stalin broke the Yalta accords on free elections, ruthlessly rolling on to centre stage his stooges, the Lublin regime, to the exclusion of other forces. By the fall of 1945, continues the argument, it was abundantly clear that Moscow would allow no democratic, free states in Eastern Europe, as had been implied in the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and agreed upon at Yalta in the Declaration of Liberated Europe.

The United States, according to this account, played a comparatively passive role, preoccupied during the war with military affairs and assuming post-war cooperation with the Soviet Union within the future United Nations. Still, in the months immediately before the German collapse in May 1945, events in Eastern Europe were beginning to cause serious alarm. Washington, having expected to play the modest role of mediating between the imperial Britain and the radical Soviet Union, found the former tottering and the latter hostile. The Russians proved intransigent in the Council of Foreign Ministers, the periodically convened forum for negotiations about the post-war order. There followed, even more ominously, Soviet thrusts in 1945–6 into the Near East: the resurgence of communist-instigated civil war in Greece, imperious demands on Turkey, and the refusal to leave northern Iran as previously agreed. The appearance, meanwhile, of illegitimate communist regimes in Eastern Europe continued apace, a progression reaching its brutal end with the Prague Coup of February 1948 which eliminated the last non-communist vestiges in Czechoslovakia.

Under the impact of these ever-more evident Soviet transgressions, the Americans finally began vigorous counteraction. Eastern Europe was more or less lost, but Washington was able to shore up the threatened Iran in 1946, to shoulder Britain's responsibilities in the eastern Mediterranean through the Truman Doctrine in the spring of 1947 (offering primarily military assistance to Greece and Turkey on grounds of universal defence of freedom), and, most important, to prop up the vital Western European area by economic assistance (the Marshall Plan, announced in summer 1947), supplanted by military ties through the establishment of NATO in 1949. In occupied Germany, where co-operation had broken down as a result of Moscow's obstinacy, the United States found it necessary in 1946 to cease the eastward flow of reparations from its occupation zone and to merge it with the British zone into the so-called Bizonia. In the absence of agreement with the Russians, the Western powers announced plans in June 1948 for a new Western German state

and an immediate currency reform. The Soviet Union responded with an illegal blockade of divided Berlin but was thwarted by an immense Western air lift; and in 1949 a democratic West Germany came into being that would serve as an engine for European recovery. Thus Western Europe was saved from Soviet expansionism and domestic communism. A somewhat similar turn took place in Japan.

These, then, were the chief ingredients in the traditionalist histories. The predominant theme is an ideological one: the democratic, hitherto isolationist United States reluctantly assumes its objective responsibilities as leader of the free world and major opponent of the totalitarian and ruthless Soviet Union. Traditionalists of a more realist bent, however, typically made much less of a morality tale out of it. For the realists (as distinct, in their own eyes, from idealists), the world of international relations is a Hobbesian jungle, a space unlike the domestic one in featuring few common norms and no ultimate sanction of force for those that do exist, a field in which every state does whatever it can to keep up with the competition for power, a world defined by the might-makes-right logic of Thrasymachus. Accordingly, it may well prove a fatal mistake to project one's own standards of morality on the outside. On the contrary, argues the realist, one will have to violate those internal standards when engaged with the outside world. The role of ideology/morality is thus characteristically given short shrift in realist explanations of international events. In our context, Louis Halle is exemplary of this tendency. In a now famous formulation he compared (1967) the Cold War to putting a 'scorpion and a tarantula together in a bottle'.[15]

For the realists, in short, the question was chiefly one of re-establishing a workable balance of power: a naive and inexperienced American regime comes to understand the realities of power and act with suitable acumen. At this point, however, the realists began to differ. Some considered the increasing ideological fervour that accompanied the new activism as necessary to break the isolationism once and for all; they also defended much of the expanded American role. Others, notably Kennan, thought the universalist discourse disastrous in the long run because it confused the issues, thus clearing the way for the limitless and ultimately impossible American commitments that were to follow. Indeed, for Kennan the realistic period lasted only until 1948, after which the rhetoric took over and there was a growing gap between means and ends.[16]

The ideologically charged apologia is of mostly archeological interest now, but the realist narrative survives in pristine form in various post-revisionist accounts. This future connection is already evident in what is often taken to be a quintessentially traditionalist piece, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr's 'Origins of the Cold War' (1967). To the extent that it is the first serious attempt to rethink the traditionalist position after the revisionist onslaught, it is in fact a precursor of post-revisionism. Schlesinger seems willing at the outset to do away with orthodox villainy: what is crucial for him is instead the conflict over spheres of influence. Whereas the Soviet Union doggedly pursued an exclusive sphere in the East, the United States was committed to one-world universalism. Both misunderstood the other's moves as an offensive against vital interests, the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, the United States in the Western parts. A clash was inevitable, for 'each side believed with a passion that future international stability depended on the success of its

own conception of world order.' However, Schlesinger then reverts in the final part of his article to the ideological explanation: the Soviet Union was not a normal nation-state but a totalitarian one, run by an intermittently paranoid dictator. The American reaction was consequently legitimate and understandable.[17] The contours of this analysis were to reappear in post-revisionism.

Revisionism

The 1950s had been placidly quietist. A high degree of agreement had reigned between historian and officialdom; historiographical debate on foreign policy was correspondingly narrow.[18] A measure of this is what happened to Kennan in 1957–8 when he ventured forth to argue for American-Soviet disengagement in Europe and the neutralization of Germany. He was vilified by the very establishment of which he himself was a member (though admittedly a marginalized one). Revisionism, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, would blast this serried conformism apart.

Several moments in American historiography have earned the label revisionist: the debunking attacks after each of the World Wars on the official accounts of the American entry are two instances.[19] In the 1950s, very much in the spirit of the times, there was something called 'business revisionism', whose basic claim was that the robber barons of the late nineteenth century, in their exemplary capitalist greed, had been essential producers of the material wealth which now enabled the United States to lead and fund the free world against the totalitarian danger; thus they were not robber barons at all.[20] By revisionism today, however, we usually mean that extraordinary reversal of conventional cold-war wisdom that took place in the 1960s and 70s.

This reversal should not be considered simply a result of the 'new left' of that period. The inestimable importance of Vietnam has already been alluded to. Yet, reinforced as they were in their views by the burgeoning anti-war (and civil rights) movements, most revisionist historians were products of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the first new left by contrast to the second, counter-cultural left that followed. The historians of the latter generation, though also mainly Americanists, inclined towards social rather than diplomatic history, towards E.P. Thompson rather than William Appleman Williams.[21]

It is indeed with Williams and his Wisconsin group that any delineation of revisionism must begin.[22] The prevalent interpretation of American history in the 1950s was the so-called consensus school. Against the older 'Progressive' thematic of clashing interests and upheaval, these historians emphasized basic pragmatic continuity and integration: conflict there was, but chiefly over status, not economic interest. The United States was portrayed as one big middle-class society with a minimum of ideological dissension; the very term ideology became itself badly tainted.[23] Progressive history survived chiefly at the University of Wisconsin under the auspices of Merle Curti, Fred Harvey Harrington and others. Williams, who had done his graduate work at Wisconsin, returned there in the fall of 1957 to teach. Several eminent revisionists would come out of Williams's circle. His first teaching assistants, Lloyd Gardner, Walter LaFeber and Thomas McCormick, are all now among the leading diplomatic historians in the United States.

Williams was actually a deeply patriotic man, a Navy graduate outraged late in life by the misdeeds of his fellow midshipmen North, McFarlane and Poindexter. He possessed a midwesterner's suspicion of the eastern elite but combined this populist sensibility with wide-ranging intellectual pursuits outside his field. He was anything but parochial theoretically.[24] Unlike his followers, he never wrote a monograph on the Cold War; his forte was the extended interpretative essay, a narrative framework in which the Cold War typically became a phase of a longer trend.[25] Here, effectively, Williams tried to wed the insights of the consensus analysis to the older Progressive emphasis on economic interests. Thus he saw consensual continuity, but a consensual continuity of economic expansionism: there had always been a constructed identity between expansion and well-being in American history, first in the form of the westward-moving frontier, then, after 1900, through the increasing globalism of corporate capitalism, resolving internal problems by means of external expansion. It was this general interpretation that came to be known as the Open Door thesis.

Launched in his now classic but then largely ignored *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959), the Open Door thesis essentially maintained that Americans had replaced territorial notions of national interest with a market conception, propagating unfettered international competition, an Open Door for capitalist penetration. In theory this would then be beneficial to all but in fact it would reward the economically strong, in this case the United States. Such a self-interested approach, or *Weltanschauung* as Williams preferred to think of it, was not a product of ruling-class manipulation but expressed honestly felt views. The tragedy, then, lay in the fundamental divergence between ideal and reality, or rather in the dialectical irony that realizing the ideal subverted the ideal. Pragmatic and tolerant encouragement of self-determination everywhere, for instance, was in reality an attempt to impose the American system and ideology on others:

> The tragedy of American diplomacy is not that it is evil, but that it denies and subverts American ideas and ideals. The result is a most realistic failure, as well as an ideological and a moral one; for in being unable to make the American system function satisfactorily without recourse to open-door expansion (and by no means perfectly, even then), American diplomacy suffers by comparison with its own claims and ideals, as well as with other approaches.[26]

This was an immanent critique, a critique from the inside, using the given ideals to show that reality did not live up to them. The Cold War, specifically, was seen as a result of the American move after 1944 to replace co-operation with the basically defensive Soviet Union with an imperial Open Door system. The frost that followed was, so to speak, the icy condensation of this move. The original utopian ideal of American democracy had mutated into global counter-revolution.

Williams's account suffered, as many observers have noted, from a basic indistinction between system and ideology.[27] It was not clear if American corporate capitalism actually needed economic expansion for its survival as a system (which, at any rate, was hard to demonstrate historically), or if it merely *tended* to expand, or if expansionism was an ideological misconception, false consciousness, on the part of its representatives. To a degree this confusion had to do with Williams's

reliance on the concept of *Weltanschauung*, which he appropriated from Wilhelm Dilthey and German idealism. There is on the whole more of the latter than of Marxist materialism in Williams. A world-view, a *Weltanschauung*, forms a totality in which any given part expresses the truth of the totality, and vice versa. The *Weltanschauung* of the Open Door expresses such a total truth in the sense that, in Williams's words, '[it] integrates economic theory and practice, abstract ideas, past, present, and future politics, anticipations of utopia, messianic idealism, social-psychological imperatives, historical consciousness, and military strategy'.[28] In short, everything.

This epistemological manoeuvre made possible a characteristic tendency to concentrate, not on actual economic systems and processes, but on economic ideology (as a partial yet simultaneously total truth). The field thereby opened up for his followers to move into ideological research. The result could be outstanding, as for instance Lloyd Gardner's symptomatically entitled *Architects of Illusion* (1970). In this collective biography of early-Cold-War figures, Gardner argued that the American disagreement with Moscow over Eastern Europe was the result of an Open-Door-inspired opposition to exclusive spheres and blocs:

> Against the fear of revolution, the United States erected a barricade built upon the Bretton Woods system and anchored by the British loan. Economic opportunity in Eastern Europe was not essential to American capitalists, but an open world was – especially after twelve years of depression and war. The world could not be divided without being closed to someone, so it had better not be divided.[29]

The USA, then, was held more responsible than the Soviet Union for the manner in which the Cold War developed. There had been alternatives. Washington could have avoided playing politics with economic aid; it could have offered Moscow an agreement in 1945 on German disarmament and a security treaty; and it could have tried to approach Moscow directly on the control of atomic energy instead of pushing through an unworkable plan in the UN. This, argues Gardner, might not have eliminated the conflict itself but its 'worst moments'.[30]

If the systemic problem was partly evaded by the 'Wisconsin school', the other major vein of revisionism, Gabriel Kolko's, dealt with it simply by postulating a direct causal link between economic interest and policy. The Wisconsin school had revised traditionalism chiefly by focusing on the United States and its early activism: instead of naive but decent Americans operating on the assumption of co-operation, there were self-conscious capitalist expansionists meddling with cautiously formulated and on the whole understandable Soviet security concerns. In believing this sort of Open-Door expansionism necessary these capitalist ideologues may or may not have been mistaken; but expansionism was nevertheless a fact. For Gabriel Kolko and his sometime collaborator Joyce Kolko, however, capitalism as a whole had been not only counter-revolutionary ever since the Bolshevik Revolution but also systemically rapacious and expansionist. By the Second World War, the United States was the leading power within this constellation. Afterwards, having suffered no devastation, it was ready to impose its will 'to restructure the world so that American business could trade, operate, and profit without restrictions everywhere'.

Yet Washington was clearer on its economic goals than on how to achieve them politically. And, here, in addition to the problems of the Soviet Union and Britain, the United States found itself confronted by a more serious threat in the form of the left, emerging out of 'the disintegration of the prewar social systems and the growth of revolutionary movements and potential upheaval everywhere in the world'. This had nothing to do with Moscow which 'had long since abandoned revolution elsewhere in Europe on behalf of national security, and had embarked on a policy of minimizing political risks'. In Eastern Europe, for example, the Russians followed a 'conservative and cautious line wherever they could find local non-Communist groups willing to abjure the traditional diplomacy of the cordon sanitaire and anti-Bolshevism'. Far from simply Sovietizing the region, Moscow's order reflected to no little degree existing social forces, though none of the three Great Powers would generally allow 'democracy to run its course anywhere in Europe at the cost of damaging their vital strategic and economic interests'. In Western Europe, Moscow gave 'capitalism the critical breathing spell' by making the communist parties follow a policy of class collaboration. For Kolko, on the contrary, the Left denotes a radicalized European working class distinct from both communists and social democrats, as well as the rising anticolonial movement. The Second World War, in short, had unleashed a crisis of the old order and the emergence of powerfully anti-systemic forces. The reaction came in the form of American-led global counter-revolution, 'vast quantities of violence' as Kolko puts it.[31]

In light of his concern with the third world and the forces outside the basically conservative framework of Great Power politics, it is logical for Kolko to refuse the whole Cold-War problematic as too centred on the bipolar conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. For him and Joyce Kolko, the term is actually 'egregious' because

> that static concept conditions us not to probe further the real character of the forces of intervention and expansion – therefore violence – in our times. It minimizes the nature and causes of mankind's fate today, leading us to believe that conflict and violence are accidental rather than inevitable consequences of the objectives of American foreign policy and the imperatives it has imposed on movements of social transformation throughout the world.[32]

We have come a very long way from traditionalism here. It is almost a case of incommensurability: events are analysed in radically different frameworks which allow no empirical adjudication between rival claims. The Marshall Plan, in the orthodox view the saviour of Western European democracy, becomes for the Kolkos a tactical American move to subordinate European capitalism and destroy any tendency towards autarky. What seemed good turns out, on closer inspection, to have been bad. But the Kolkos also deviate from other revisionists in finding the determinant factors of the post-war epoch to have little to do with the emerging Cold War, which is nothing but a side issue, an obfuscation. They face a problem, nevertheless, in explaining it. For if the Soviet Union was in reality a conservative and appeasing (if not outright counter-revolutionary) power, the American-induced freeze would seem incomprehensible or at least illogical, except possibly as a kind of shield for the overall US drive towards open markets. And the Kolkos do

indeed tend to resort to the quasi-conspiratorial notion of the cold war as *expedience*: the usefulness of crisis diplomacy would thus explain why the Soviet Union was not allowed its security zone.

In the new remarks that frame his republished *The Politics of War* (1968, 1990), Gabriel Kolko tones down his views considerably, now claiming that the United States 'missed comprehending the richly textured, infinitely complicated web of factors that had gone into producing the postwar international order' and, in the ensuing frustration, mistakenly blamed Moscow: hence the confrontation. But then we seem to back in the realm of false consciousness, the distance to the Wisconsin school correspondingly reduced.[33]

The notion of a systemic conflict between revolution and counter-revolution after the Bolshevik revolution is also problematic in that it is never clarified when and why the Soviet Union ceased to be part of the anti-systemic left, an abstraction which functions symbolically in Kolko's narrative as a concept of moral foundation and means of regeneration. The threat posed by the left is also considerably exaggerated, at least in the European context.[34] However, it is almost too easy to be critical of Kolko: the apocalyptic tone, the absolute certitude, the often crude determinism are immediately suspect, while the claims are often empirically questionable or one-sided. Yet he and Joyce Kolko attempted something highly unusual. Much of the preceding historiography, traditionalist or revisionist, had been locked into a bilateral fixation, centred affirmatively or negatively on American policy. Other actors often seemed to be plastic matter or did not exist, except of course the Soviet Union in the early parts of traditionalist histories. There was very little context. The Kolkos transcended this and actually dealt with the local circumstances, the constraints, in which intervention and policy took place. The attempt was in that respect far more dialectical and complete than any other. Few have tried to emulate its scope.[35]

There were other early revisionist works, of which should be mentioned D.F. Fleming's *The Cold War and Its Origins* (1961). This pioneering narrative focused on 'crisis-events' as told by an old Wilsonian internationalist for whom Truman represented a sharply negative break with Roosevelt's co-operative policies.[36] Fleming thereby encouraged interest in what has proved an endless question: was there in fact a basic change between the two presidents and would things have been different if Roosevelt had lived? This question is not without interest. In its simple form, however, it is unanswerable. The material precondition for it is of course the accidental fact of history that Roosevelt's death virtually coincided with the end of the war, with the end of an obvious 'period'. There could, accordingly, be both a traditionalist and a revisionist case for either side. Both could take the position that (a) there was no fundamental change (Roosevelt and Truman were of the same cloth, the differences being only tactical shifts depending on the demands of moment) or (b) there was such a change (Roosevelt was naive and Truman realistic, alternatively Roosevelt was far-sighted and Truman was the cold warrior incarnate).

A later and more scholarly work which in some ways extended Fleming's thread (without its Wilsonian streak) is Daniel Yergin's *Shattered Peace* (1977, 1990). Also featuring events and personalities, it elaborates the thesis of a qualitative break by

delineating two sets of competing American axioms about the Soviet Union: a co-operative one dominant during Roosevelt and a non-co-operative one during Truman, resulting during the latter's reign in the 'national security state'. This has rightly been criticized as altogether too neat and symmetrical an account. The most recent authoritative treatment of Roosevelt, Warren Kimball's, argues that his style and substance differed essentially from that of such close advisers as Averell Harriman, advisers who would later not only advise Truman but *make his policies*. Roosevelt's non-confrontational style might, in Kimball's view, have led to a less acute kind of conflict with the Soviet Union.[37]

The revisionist critique, then, did not suggest a single argument, except insofar as it saw the general causes of the cold war in American actions.[38] The internal diversity can best be seen in the reception of what became perhaps the most notorious revisionist work, *Atomic Diplomacy* (1965), written by a former undergraduate from Wisconsin, Gar Alperovitz. The standard traditionalist on the subject, Herbert Feis, had argued that the atomic bomb had been deployed, justifiably, at the end of the war in August 1945 because it saved lives, though he acknowledged that Japan probably would have surrendered anyway shortly thereafter. Alperovitz put forth, by contrast, the scandalous view that the bomb had been dropped to impress the Russians. Truman, knowing that the bomb would be militarily unnecessary, had reversed Roosevelt's co-operative policy but delayed confrontation with Moscow until the bomb had been tested, thus making possible a tougher line against the Russians in Eastern Europe and conceivably an end of the war against Japan before Stalin could enter it as agreed. This tactic also rendered existing alternatives to deploying the bomb meaningless. After Potsdam, then, the atomic monopoly became the foundation for a harsh posture versus Moscow. The bomb, in short, was central to American manoeuvres in 1945, ipso facto also in the emergence of the Cold War.[39]

Alperovitz's view was contested not only by traditionalists but also by some revisionists. Thus Kolko, agreeing here with the traditionalists, argued that the tactical changes on the American side could not be tied directly to the bomb and that the atmosphere was simply not conducive to restraint. Hence he minimized the political aspect of the question. Gardner also criticized Alperovitz, on somewhat similar grounds. The historiographical debate since then has been intermittently vigorous and the issue refuses to die, for the bomb is a fascinating subject and the available empirical evidence is open to speculation. In an excellent overview, J. Samuel Walker summarizes the present consensus as follows: 'the bomb was used primarily for military reasons and secondarily for diplomatic ones'. This is obviously not Alperovitz's argument but it concedes an important part of it, above all the very posing of the question.[40]

Post-revisionism

As the archives progressively opened and the political atmosphere cooled, there was a clearing for a new historiographical moment – an empirical reconsideration of the whole Cold-War problematic in light of revisionism but without its political commitment. This has been labelled post-revisionism. It is not an altogether happy

choice of term. Strictly speaking, it merely implies that one is writing *after* the revisionists, a purely temporal as opposed to substantial designation. Some historians included in this category would perhaps have difficulty recognizing what precisely it is that has earned them their membership. The concept owes its strength chiefly to John Lewis Gaddis, its most eminent exponent and the most visible American historian of the cold war. Post-revisionism is for this and other reasons now an accepted concept. What does it entail?

In its early stages post-revisionism can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with revisionism while remaining within the political mainstream. Hence its deliberately neutral tone and apparent impartiality. It tries to determine the validity of traditionalist and revisionist claims by empirical means, while preserving a pro-Western realist version of the traditionalist narrative. The best taxonomy of post-revisionism has been made by one of its most solid proponents, Geir Lundestad.[41]

Post-revisionism, for him, is first of all not interested in the question of war guilt which so exercised both traditionalists and revisionists. If anything, Americans and Russians were both to blame. Post-revisionism agrees with revisionism that the United States had an active policy much earlier than 1947 and indeed showed hostility towards the Soviet Union as early as 1944. Nevertheless, the revisionist picture of compact anti-Sovietism is considered overdrawn. As Lundestad's own research reveals, Washington had no coherent policy in Eastern Europe. The United States worked here with inconsistent energy for democracy and free trade, in effect to gain power in the region at the expense of the Soviet Union, but without ever resolving how much to sacrifice for these aims. Eventually the Soviet-controlled regimes were recognized: Poland in June 1945, Romania and Bulgaria the following December. Contradictory impulses and policies thus render any single model along the lines of the Open Door inadequate as an explanation for the American posture.

There is further agreement with revisionists that there was a hostile element in the abrupt stop in Lend-Lease aid at the end of the War, but post-revisionists also emphasize the constraints of congressional law and domestic politics. Gaddis, in particular, is wont to criticize revisionists for having a reductionist view of domestic politics and not understanding the internal limitations. Post-revisionists concede, however, that the Truman Administration sometimes consciously exaggerated the Soviet threat to get certain legislation through Congress. The contours of the Marshall Plan, moreover, had been visible for a while and this famous move was therefore not the sharp break postulated in orthodox accounts. And, as the revisionists had argued, the United States did establish a kind of sphere of influence of its own by excluding the Soviet Union (and Britain) from the occupation of Japan and the Philippines. Finally, there were also early plans for a global chain of overseas military bases. In short, the United States was not innocently naive; it moved to defend its own interests and it did so long before 1947.[42]

On the other hand, revisionism was found to have exaggerated the uniformity and universality of American expansionism. Some areas were more important than others. Washington refused, for example, to offer massive support to the Nationalist regime in China, and interests in Eastern Europe were given up de facto in exchange for a free hand elsewhere. The Soviet actions in its zone were therefore

not the result of any American meddling. Stalin acted unilaterally, not on account of any messianic ideology but chiefly for security reasons. Nevertheless, these moves were expansionist when measured against the status quo ante 1941 and certainly cause for legitimate western concern. Nor, continue the post-revisionists, can capitalism be the privileged explanatory device, as revisionists believed; economics was merely one factor among many. For one thing, the United States did not depend on external trade. In explaining American policy, much more emphasis should instead be put on geopolitical concerns of security. Post-revisionists underline, therefore, that the United States frequently acted with the complicity and encouragement of the various overseas regimes with which it dealt. Thus, in Lundestad's now celebrated phrase, the 'empire by invitation'.[43]

Many of these arguments, sustained by extensive archival research, represented decisive advances. Epistemologically, however, the post-revisionist theme of a bundle of complex circumstances and motivations lent itself to accusations of eclecticism: presenting simple aggregations of factors without any explanatory power. Over time, partly as a response, there has been less eclecticism and more of a reversion to traditionalism in its realist form. This has been particularly discernible in the trajectory of John Lewis Gaddis. His early, much acclaimed work *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (1972) had concluded that the Cold War was unavoidable because domestic political constraints would not allow deals with such dictators as Stalin. This was rather a lame ending to an otherwise nuanced book which had paid proper attention to revisionist arguments. During the following decade, Gaddis was to develop a more sophisticated neo-realist understanding of the issue and rework the traditionalist standpoint into a plausible geopolitical narrative centred on the concept of security.[44]

Relying mainly on Vojtech Mastny's work *Russia's Road to the Cold War* (1979), he began to argue that Stalin was never actually interested in basic co-operation with the west, at least not co-operation on grounds acceptable to any reasonable westerner (which had been the unspoken revisionist assumption). Roosevelt had pursued a kind of 'containment of integration', an attempt to bring the Soviet regime by means of sticks and carrots into the American project for a new international order. The attempt failed because of 'the Soviet Union's imperviousness to external influences'. When in doubt, Moscow always relied for its security on unilateral action.[45] Truman understood this:

> Repeated demonstrations of Moscow's callousness to the priorities and sensibilities of its former allies had by this time virtually drained the reservoir of good will towards the Russians that had built up during the war. American leaders had been inclined, for many months, to give the Kremlin the benefit of the doubt: to assume, despite accumulating evidence to the contrary, that difficulties with Moscow had arisen out of misunderstandings rather than fundamental conflicts of interest. But such charitableness could not continue indefinitely . . .[46]

So the United States got going after the strategic uncertainty that had originated in the novel sense of vulnerability induced by Pearl Harbor. The old continentalist sense of security had given way to a more expansive view according to which the chief objective now was the 'preservation of a global balance of power'. However,

this notion emerged before any identifiable 'challenges to that balance had manifested themselves'. It remained an abstraction in search of concretion: the Russians were not yet there to fill the role of an enemy. But 'Soviet unilateralism, together with the conclusions about the roots of Soviet behavior that unilateralism provoked, had by 1947 created a credible source of danger, with the result that American strategy now took on a clearer and more purposeful aspect.'[47] The structural void had been filled.

Gaddis's functionalism here is peculiarly reminiscent of Kolko's notion of the Cold War as an instrumental invention; though for the former Washington was really right anyway about not wanting co-operation on Stalin's conditions. More elementarily, however, Gaddis is proposing a geopolitical reading. He envisions the genesis of the Cold War in terms of improperly scaled and executed security moves by the Soviet Union, the mammoth 'heartland' power, against the European 'rimland' powers. The logic of Soviet expansionism was neither ideological nor totalitarian but imperial. Nevertheless, Moscow's security needs were expansive and ill-defined and the manner in which it tried to satisfy them was nasty. This impropriety caused alarm in the west and eventually vigorous counter-moves ensued, quite rightly, in the form of containment. If anything, the implementation of containment had been rather late. The object was not American hegemony but resurrection of Western Europe as one of a series of 'independent centres of power'. Indeed the Europeans themselves were desperately eager to prevent the United States from leaving the region to its fate. The means to achieve Western aims were in 1947 economic as opposed to military, but economics was precisely a means to a geopolitical end, not the other way around. Capitalism was secondary and strategy primary.[48] Propriety, it seems, had been restored by a new version of the old balance-of-power system, the difference being that the United States replaced Britain not as balancer but as permanent supporter of one side.

To reinstate the geopolitical in this manner is a healthy corrective both to ideologically primitive forms of traditionalism and to the economic determinism of some revisionism. It is to insist that geopolitics is a discrete sphere with its own logic. But to identify American policy-making in the early Cold War with strict balance-of-power thinking is in my view to superimpose an altogether too clear vision on the events, in some ways as reductionist an operation as the systemic capitalist expansionism in Kolko's account. Like all realist stories it tends to downplay ideology, for example the visceral anti-communism that permeated much of the American policy-making elite. Like all realist stories it tends to subordinate objective economic processes to voluntarist moves of more or less deft strategists. Ideology (anti-Sovietism, Wilsonianism) is for Gaddis something that serves chiefly as an ex-post-facto rationalization and legitimation for geopolitical directions already in place. Soviet ideology is similarly displaced by the reference to the imperial.

There is in fact a basic tension here in Gaddis's causal reasoning. The geopolitical is a realm which takes as its premise unified states and polities, territorialized entities inherently in more or less overt conflict: the system determines. Yet Gaddis, following Kennan, has also been apt to underline the constraints of domestic politics, the seemingly unending difficulties of the American polity in getting

things across at home; in brief, the impossibility of letting the geopolitical logic run its course. Thus, at the very end of his fine survey of post-war American *Strategies of Containment* (1982), Gaddis suddenly reintroduces, much along the lines of his 1972 work, the 'remarkable degree' to which 'containment has been the product, not so much of what the Russians have done, or of what has happened elsewhere in the world, but of internal forces operating within the United States'. And he is further surprised by how much strategy has been determined by domestic considerations of economy (problems, to be sure, of a fiscal nature and not the revisionist economics of surplus capital and markets).[49] Whither then the causal effectivity of the international system? It has to be specified.

Gaddis's narrative is also less critical than Kennan's original, its source of inspiration. In Kennan's periodization there is a golden moment between the twin errors of naiveté and anti-communist crusades, a period between 1946 and 1948 when Washington actually manages to conduct policy intelligently and in the national interest. Ideological fog and Cold-War fixation then take over. In point of fact, Kennan had had a deeply disheartening experience with the limits of clever American policy-making precisely when he had tried in 1948 to implement the idea of 'independent balancing centres' in Germany and Japan. He found that by then the world was supposed to be manichean, black or white. It was actually the American refusal to construct a decentred balance of power system that made Kennan by 1949 an alienated and marginalized presence in the Administration. For Gaddis, on the contrary, the defensive strategy of containment was outstandingly successful in Europe and Japan, and vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. That no third force actually developed was really a good thing: the Europeans did not want it, and the system that evolved proved remarkably stable. The period might then better be understood as a long peace than a Cold War. On the negative side, there was in the fullness of time a tendency, as in other imperial systems, to lose the critical distinction between vital and peripheral areas. The result was over-commitment and serious setbacks, exemplified most graphically by the Vietnamese debacle.[50]

It is characteristic that Gaddis should think of this loss of discrimination as a product of some transhistorical imperial tendency and not, in Kennan's terms, as the result of American universalism. At this stage one might enquire, as Gaddis rhetorically does himself,

> just how postrevisionism differs from traditional accounts of the origins of the Cold War written before New Left revisionism came into fashion. What is new, after all, about the view that American officials worried more about the Soviet Union than about the fate of capitalism in designing the policy of containment, about the assertion that Soviet expansionism was the primary cause of the Cold War, about the argument the American allies welcomed the expansion of U.S. influence as a counterweight to the Russians, about the charge that the government responded to as well as manipulated public opinion?[51]

In responding he points principally to the recognition of an American empire as the distinguishing mark. But it is of course an empire by invitation and so implicitly benevolent.[52] And the kinds of Europeans that actually do the inviting are rarely subjected to systematic scrutiny. When all is said and done, we are essentially back to blaming Stalin, not necessarily for being an evil totalitarian but for lacking

imperial competence. Gaddis's post-revisionist synthesis can thus itself be grasped as a kind of strategy of containment: it contained the revisionist critique within the overall boundaries of a realist form of traditionalism.

This, as such, does not diminish its validity or interest, and it remains a powerful analysis. Yet it is worth pointing out that Gaddis has increasingly been writing history inside the operative sphere of policy-making, writing history for the purpose of providing guidelines for American officialdom by answering relevant questions about 'what is to be done?' Here, since the Cold War for Gaddis turned out in the end to have been a long peace in the European theatre, the question naturally arises what could possibly follow – except something worse. From there it is but a short step to look back on the Cold War as rather a good thing.[53]

In view of the sharp rightwards trend of the 1980s, it is not surprising that some postrevisionists would reinvert the revisionist inversions of the 1960s. In no case is this as evident as in Robert Pollard's *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War, 1945–1950* (1985). Revisionism had confronted traditionalism head-on, setting out methodically to revise ('invert') what was perceived as an omnipresent, asphyxiating mythology. The scope of their findings was therefore shaped by the nature of the target. Still, revisionism had given an economic flavour to the proceedings that was distinctly it own. Pollard approprated this element straightforwardly and turned it around.

Calling his book the 'first synthetic, "post-revisionist" interpretation of Truman's foreign economic and security policies', Pollard essentially accepts the Open Door argument and adds a strategic twist. The difference is that he thinks the resultant policy 'one of the great success stories of the twentieth century, not just for the United States but for the Western world as a whole'. The basic American goal, long before the Cold War, had been an 'interdependent economic system'. Then, after the War, bearing 'the long-term need of American business for an open worldwide economic environment' clearly in mind, the United States 'captured, for itself and its allies, control over the most important sources of strategic minerals in the non-Communist world'. Particularly helpful here in sustaining the West was 'the vast expansion of cheap overseas oil supplies'. The policy pursued was good since the alternative was protectionism and the system served the West as a whole (if not the third world) exceedingly well for a long time. Hence we are not dealing with any 'imperialist elite bent upon aggrandizing power in the service of world capitalism or narrow U.S. interests', but with a 'largely enlightened and responsible' polity, 'willing to sacrifice short-term national advantage to long-term gains in Western stability and security'.[54]

Yet Pollard refuses to link this US quest for multilateralism causally to the Cold War. The Truman Doctrine was certainly meant 'to reduce American inhibitions about establishing a sphere of influence in Western Europe to counterbalance the Red Army's presence in Eastern Europe'. But multilateralism had not been incompatible with Soviet security earlier on: 'agreements with Moscow, a reconstruction loan, and Lend-Lease were all possible before the Soviet crackdown in Poland'. Alas, Moscow refused to play along, opting instead for 'extreme hardship'. The Cold War, then, was a conflict over Europe and geopolitical security, induced by the Soviet actions.[55]

The disagreement with revisionism here seems mainly of a normative kind. The facts, aside from the strategic aspect, are not so much in dispute as is the way of approaching them. Williams might have found much to agree with empirically in this quite illuminating work. If strategy is seen as part of a *Weltanschauung*, he might even have concurred in privileging that as a more comprehensive totality than economics. In a certain sense Pollard's work represents the highest stage of post-revisionism, the point indeed at which the whole concept of post-revisionism ceases to be meaningful.[56]

Corporatism

At the very moment that the new synthesis was being celebrated in the early 1980s, it was challenged by a school or approach called corporatism. This set itself consciously apart from the state-centric neorealism of post-revisionism by arguing for a socio-economic or decentred approach. A central theme in the corporatist manifestos was the need for a truly new synthesis, by which was meant, of course, not the kind of simple aggregations that post-revisionism put forth but a genuinely synoptic way of looking at the periodization of American foreign policy, beyond the limits of the immediate post-war moment. Talk of the need for 'synthesis', for some all-embracing agreement on interpretation, fact and method, is strangely popular in Amerian diplomatic history. What is really needed instead is more and sharper competition between *different*, explicitly theorized syntheses, or frameworks of explanation.[57]

Corporatism, in a historiographical context, has two separate but partly overlapping origins. On the one hand, it comes out of the work of a series of economic historians with a particular interest in organization and modernization. They are politically, if not always conservative, at least far from radical. On the other hand, it has roots in Williams's Wisconsin seminar, in his own periodization of American history on the basis of the emergence of corporate capitaliam, as well as in his student Martin Sklar's analysis of Wilsonian Progressivism (1960). This odd genealogy is in fact not so odd: behind each will eventually be found the imposing figure of Max Weber and the problematic of rationalization, stability and order.[58]

In social theory, corporatism has been a conceptual rival to 'pluralism' as a way of describing capitalist societies. Rather than a plurality of individual actors competing on the neutral arena of the state, there is a determinate set of embodied interests, associations or 'corporations'. These seek representation before and within the state, a state that is consequently an actor in its own right. This development is generally seen as the result of the transition from competitive, pre-industrial capitalism to the corporate age, usually dated to around the turn of this century. To bring order and regulation into these new conditions, liberalism thus responded in the American case by trying to find a golden mean between the alternatives of laissez-faire and welfare statism. One paradigmatic solution here was the voluntarism of the associative state attempted by Herbert Hoover in the 1920s, bringing interests 'voluntarily' together in co-operation for the elimination of waste and inefficiency. In the realm of foreign relations, this period was not as commonly

believed one of isolationism; instead it featured an activist, corporatist policy aimed at an international order in the American image.[59]

This American image is then said to have pivoted increasingly around the concept of 'productionism': escaping the traditional nature of politics as necessity/scarcity by means of constant growth. The originator of this notion of productionism was Charles Maier, also the first to rethink the two post-war epochs within a single conceptual framework. As a Europeanist, however, his work was situated at a certain remove from the internal debates on corporatism, a concept he did not in fact feature. For Maier, productionism was the essential element in American post-war strategy to eliminate ideology from politics, since it turned the latter into a question of economic growth. In short, politics was reduced to a problem of output and efficiency. It is in this light, he argues, that one must understand the American restoration of Germany and Japan as geo-economic rather than geopolitical powerhouses, a transformation facilitated to no little degree in the German case by the pre-war fascist destruction of working-class organization.

The Cold War fits into Maier's scheme only in a secondary manner. While it 'had a decided influence on internal outcomes' and 'imposed a framework on international politics', it 'did not exhaust the issues'. On the contrary, 'viewed over the whole half century, the US international economic effort of the era of stabilization centred on overcoming British, Japanese, and especially German alternatives to a pluralist, market-economy liberalism'. The state of Soviet-American relations, in short, is not the best place to find out what the post-war era was chiefly about.[60]

This perspective has been highly influential; parts of it, for example, appear in more celebratory form in Pollard. To understand its implications for corporatism, however, we must turn to the most consistent member of that tendency, Michael Hogan. Like most historians of this persuasion, he began by doing work on the 1920s, but it is his magnum opus, *The Marshall Plan* (1987), that is of interest to us. Here he seeks 'to cast the Marshall Plan in the context of America's twentieth-century search for a new economic order at home and abroad'; and, 'viewed from this perspective rather than in the context of the Cold War, the Marshall Plan can be seen as a logical extension of domestic- and foreign-policy developments going back to the first-American effort to reconstruct war-torn Europe'. The domestic origin, according to Hogan, lay in the 'New Deal coalition' and its combination of 'the technocorporative formulations of the 1920s with the ideological adaptations of the 1930s in a policy synthesis that envisioned a neo-capitalist reorganization of the American and world systems'. Marshall Aid, then, aimed at 'economic growth, modest social programs, and a more equitable distribution of production' which 'would immunize participating countries against Communist subversion while generating the resources and mobilizing the public support necessary to sustain a major rearmament program'.

In this project the United States was enormously successful. Though clearly a vast self-interested expansion of power into Western Europe, the Marshall Plan was also 'far less heavy-handed than the concurrent interventions in Greece or the subsequent interventions in Central America, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the globe'. It was 'a reasonable defense of American interests, one in which the means used were largely positive, largely scaled to the interests involved, and largely applied in collaboration with reliable local elites'. Foreign policy, then, was brought into line with the systemic shifts of the preceding decades in the United States.[61]

Hogan's massive study has been criticized empirically by the British historian Alan Milward, whose earlier, equally massive study had maintained that the Marshall Plan was never the critical intervention it is almost always considered to have been. In his later critique of Hogan, Milward argued that the models for the Marshall Plan did not originate so much in the inter-war period as in the wartime system, and that the expansive policies pursued by the European governments were in large measure a product of political expectations from below. Western Europe, as William Diebold had pointed out, also had closer traditional ties between state, capital and class than the United States, which renders dubious the notion that the neo-corporatist solution was simply an export item.[62]

The debate is of the greatest factual interest; and it may be said in passing that Roosevelt always enthused about schemes to internationalize the New Deal. What is important to note, however, is that the Cold War is virtually non-existent as a problem in Hogan's account. This is what separates him from Gaddis and post-revisionism. For there is nothing, surely, in the analysis of the Marshall Plan itself that Gaddis would seriously disagree with; the disagreement concerns mostly the corporatist tendency to disregard geopolitics (i.e. the international system) in favor of domestic derivation of policy.[63] For corporatism, as a scholarly inquiry, is typically more interested in the complexities of economy and society than in geopolitics.

Despite high early hopes, the corporatist thrust has fizzled out as a coherent methodological movement, although not in terms of individual research. In part this has to do with the extravagant claims that were made for the concept at the outset. The desire to establish an explicit approach of some sort was laudable. The extent to which it led to enquiries into the social origins of policy, investigations of clashes and compromises of interests inside and outside the state was also laudable. The danger was a certain lack of demarcation and a subsequent open-endedness in potential research topics, detrimental to the conceptual rigour of the problematic. More seriously, corporatism was taken to be an explanatory category. In fact, it is merely descriptive, on par, say, with expansionism. As description it is not without its uses, though the United States strikes me as singularly devoid of corporatist elements in any traditional sense: disorganized and heterogeneous, a porous state machinery marked historically by complete domination of various sections of capital, lacking the strong working-class organizations that are a precondition for a truly reformist (as opposed to fascist) corporatism, the state is therefore not at all the relatively autonomous entity implied by the concept. Moments of corporatist class strategies, notably in the New Deal, do not to my mind outweigh the overpowering mastery historically of the bourgeoisie and its entirely rational way of treating the state as its possession, as an administrative shell to be populated and put to good uses.[64]

These problems can be followed in Thomas McCormick's work of the 1980s. McCormick welcomed corporatism enthusiastically as a way of rejuvenating revisionism, assuming that it would allow a kind of social history of foreign relations,

a move away from narratives of crisis-events towards questions of power and domination over the *longue durée*. He stressed the ecumenical virtues of corporatism, but his agenda, as befitted a veteran of the Wisconsin school, was unapologetically left-wing. What he wanted to analyze under the umbrella of this new synthesis was really corporatism as an American form of hegemony and social imperialism. By the mid-1980s, however, McCormick was already having difficulties in defending the concept against an attack from another leftist, John Rossi, who argued that corporatism covered up the dominance of capital over labor and was confused with ordinary state/capital interaction. And in *America's Half-Century* (1989), McCormick's recent survey of the post-war epoch, he has completely abandoned corporatism in favour of a more congenial world-systems model, inspired by Braudel and Wallerstein.[65]

This work tells, with regard to the Cold War, a familiar story in somewhat new language. The United States, notes McCormick, finished the Second World War determined to accomplish the 'hegemonic goals, awesomely global and omnipresent in nature' of integrating the periphery (the Pacific rim, the Mediterranean and Latin America) into an American-led global market economy and to prevent any other core power form dominating 'the Eurasian heartland'. The Cold War (left undefined) was caused by the Soviet refusal to go along with the implementation of these goals, though there were also great problems with the Europeans right after the war. Eventually, there was 'bipolarization between Russia and America' over the future of Europe and Middle Eastern periphery. Stalin, more of a Peter the Great than a Marx, had been faced with the choice of integration into the world system or isolation and had not surprisingly chosen the latter. The Iron Curtain then closed off Poland, Bulgaria and Romania, but the domination was one of expediency rather than doctrine, much in the manner of the United States in the Caribbean. The ensuing American offensive McCormick sees, ingeniously, in three stages: the short-, medium- and long-term moves of, respectively, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and NATO. The fundamental link, however, in his causal chain is constituted by the particularist class interests of a domestic elite orientated towards 'long-term globalism', an elite apart in this regard from congressional opinion as well as from large sections of the business community.[66]

This causal aspect is the corporatist residue, an attempt to retain some notion of policy as a mediation between the inside and the outside. For McCormick seems otherwise to be joining what I think is the dominant trend of the 1980s, the shift towards geopolitics (in his case with a geo-economic emphasis) as *the* explanatory category. This shift was by no means unique for diplomatic history. Between 1945 and 1975, there appeared not a single work with the word geopolitics in the title; since then they have been numerous. There was thus widespread renewal of interest in geopolitical discourse, especially on the new right.[67] Corporatism, by contrast, was largely alien to geopolitical notions of territorialized balances since these presuppose the very unified state actors that it wanted conceptually to discard.[68]

McCormick's slide towards strategy was in part influenced by Melvyn Leffler, a historian sometimes also billed a corporatist but actually more interested in geopolitics. When the postrevisionist synthesis was being declared, he too was in the process of challenging it.

Reaching for Security

In 1984, Leffler originated an intensely polemical exchange with Gaddis and Bruce Kuniholm. At stake was Leffler's unequivocal claim that 'the American conception of national security' involved a unilateral desire already in 1943–4 to establish a globalist system of defence; and that that move had little to do with any projected Soviet actions. Pearl Harbor, new air technology, and the rising popularity of geopolitical commonplaces about the Eurasian landmass and its importance combined to create a sense of vulnerability, which eventually would express itself in a grandiose strategic vision:

> 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.[69]

Meanwhile, the American assessment of Soviet strategy underwent a basic change in 1945–6. Initially, security as opposed to ideology was presumed the central concern. Soviet expansionism was noted but so were the difficulties it faced and the potential for agreement. These notions then altered so that, while immediate aggression was still ruled out, the long-term Soviet goal was now assumed to be a communist world. But the cluster of American moves initiated in late 1946 had less to do with this change of perception than with 'appraisals of economic and political conditions throughout Europe and Asia', more specifically the 'prospects of famine, disease, anarchy, and revolution'. The possibility seemed great that the Soviet Union might come to dominate vital areas without having to do very much. Hence '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'.[70]

The Marshall Plan, as Leffler argues in a later piece, was the decisive factor 'that brought about the final division of Germany and Europe and institutionalized a stable balance of power in the Old World'. It also extended American interests to the periphery, since these areas were deeemed crucial to the European core powers and therefore

> encouraged American officials to look beyond Europe to safeguard markets, raw materials, and investment earnings in the Third World. Revolutionary nationalism had to be thwarted outside Europe, just as the fight against indigenous communism had to be sustained inside Europe. In this interconnected attempt to grapple with the forces of the left and the potential power of the Kremlin resides much of the international history, strategy, and geopolitics of the Cold War era.[71]

This was not, Leffler argues against Gaddis, an initially sensible effort to bring about an end to the Cold War that eventually lost sight of its objective; on the contrary, it was intended to accomplish the goals of national security unilaterally, 'regardless of the impact on the Cold War or on the Soviet Union'. Indeed, one was aware at the time that these initiatives would increase Soviet insecurity and thereby

hence also the risk of war.[72] As he puts it in his *magnum opus* on the Turman Administration, 'the cold war and division of Europe were regrettable prospects but not nearly so ominous as the dangers that inhered in economic contraction, autarkical trends, Communist gains, and the prospective erosion of American influence throughout the industrial core of Western Eurasia'. It would have been better, concludes the Leffler of 1984, to have raised the question if there were other ways of defending one's interests that diminished 'Soviet perception of threat, aligned the United States with popular nationalist movements, curtailed the dependency on nuclear weapons and air power, and circumscribed American commitments'.[73]

Leffler was criticized by Gaddis and Kuniholm – by the former for confusing hypothetical military contingency plans with real national policy, by the latter for underestimating the initial Soviet thrust into the Near East and hence not giving proper credit to the Truman Administration for its judicious response of containment. For Kuniholm, the aims of the Soviet Union in the Near East, though in the tradition of Russian geopolitics, were 'far in excess of its reasonable security requirements'. To have caved in to Stalin's intimidation might have put the area within his sphere, and the American response was consequently a legitimate restoration of the balance of power. Because 'the mood of the American public was uncertain', continues Kuniholm, it may indeed have been necessary to couch containment in the admittedly less than perfect form of the Truman Doctrine.[74]

The disagreement between Leffler and Kuniholm hinges largely on the empirical question of Soviet behaviour in the Near East (especially towards Turkey) and the related problem of what in fact constitutes legitimate security concerns. Leffler maintains forcefully that Soviet pressure on Turkey was negligible, to the point where it was eminently difficult for American officialdom to find any justification at all for aid; and, consequently, that it was the far-reaching strategic interests of the United States rather than Moscow's moves that put bombers in Turkey. The issues of this most interesting exchange remain open.[75]

In 1984, Leffler, as Gaddis rightly pointed out, was rather circumspect about the Soviet side of things.[76] To remedy this Leffler later (1992) offered what is effectively a geopolitical reading of the Kremlin. Co-operation in the manner that was offered by the West would have run counter to the most crucial security needs of the Soviet Union. Moscow could not 'accept popular elections, self-determination, open trade, and the free flow of capital in the countries on their immediate periphery' or 'defer payments and provide raw materials and foodstuffs to the western zones of Germany'. Hence 'it was unreasonable to expect any Russian leaders to comply with such priorities'.[77]

Soviet actions during 1945–6 did not fit into a uniform picture, but in Leffler's judgement of 1992 the moderate element was not sufficient to quell American apprehension. For at the same time there was serious erosion in the western position: the strong position of communist parties in France and Italy, the civil wars in Greece and China, economic distress in Western Europe, and surging third-world nationalism. While the Kremlin was not responsible for these developments, the United States felt obliged to act. There followed the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and the decision to divide Germany. The Kremlin, broadly speaking, was on the receiving end. The central question for Leffler is therefore

'not whether American actions exacerbated Soviet-US relations, but whether they were intelligent responses to real and perceived dangers'. Here, on balance, he now thinks Washington could not have avoided 'provoking the Soviets' in 1946–7 if a 'tolerable configuration of power' was to be achieved. The risks were too great. Hence, 'prudently conceived and skilfully implemented', American initiatives 'were of decisive importance in fueling the cold war'. Still, the Soviet response to these was not such as to warrant the enormous follow-on in the form of rapidly expanding arsenals and perpetual interventionism in the third world.[78]

This, then, is Leffler's general answer to the query he posed so powerfully in 1984: was there an alternative? Apparently not in the first phases, he seems now to be saying. Only after the initial successes do things get out of hand. There is nothing fundamental here that deviates from Gaddis's standard account. The convergence between the two was indeed facilitated by the similarity of perspective that, polemics notwithstanding, pertained from the beginning: both views are geopolitical in nature, with emphasis on security as a total concept. Leffler, like Gaddis, is also writing from the subject-position of an ersatz policy-maker. The question is the instrumental one: what the United States should and should not do. His actual viewpoints, however, especially in 1984, are more critical of the American side. Gaddis is not particularly interested in counter-revolution; Leffler is quite explicit about it.[79] For Leffler, who has looked beyond the State Department, especially beyond Kennan, the case is closed: the United States initiated the Cold War, the Soviet Union did not. This is what makes his account something other than 'Gaddis plus archives': his is not a story about restoration of any independent centres. It is largely about an American game. The question, then, is whether the game was a good thing.

Brief note on other contributions

To speak of schools and tendencies, as I have, marginalizes a whole host of significant contributions and developments which do not quite fit. One thinks, for example, of Ronald Steel's work in the 1960s: deeply critical of Wilsonian internationalism and American globalism, unmistakably isolationist in tone, yet influenced not by Wisconsin revisionism but by the appearance of Gaullism and, later, the folly in Vietnam. One thinks, too, of Thomas Paterson's contributions, from the early revisionist works to the centrist ones of late. His and Les Adler's essay (1970) on the American conflation of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union under the sign of totalitarianism was especially influential.[80]

With the exception of a few remarks on Vojtech Mastny, I have also ignored Sovietology. Something more must now be said of it. As a subfield it was marked by its many emigré scholars, its role as a virtual service organ to the state, and the paucity of archival sources for the Soviet side. These were not propitious conditions for wide-ranging debate. Stephen Cohen's verdict is telling: 'the profession lost the purpose, vigor, and scope' because of 'scholarly consensus on virtually all major questions of interpretation'. More precisely, the totalitarianism school became totally dominant. A revisionism of sorts began to appear in the late 1960s that challenged notions of an unchanging monolithic essence marching through history; but this concerned mainly the nature of the domestic Soviet system and the

discipline seems to have remained largely untouched by the continuing revisionist controversy in American historiography on the cold war itself.[81]

The result earlier, however, was not always American apologia. Marshall Shulman's work in the 1960s, for example, was in certain respects *compatible* with erstwhile revisionist notions of Soviet defensiveness and caution. Adam Ulam, in the same period, while sharply critical (as Mastny would be in the 1970s) of revisionism as well as of the ineptitude of American policy-making in 1944–5, also underscored how the emerging conflict gave rise to such simplistic and unfruitful questions as 'Was Soviet Russia out to conquer the world or was Stalin going to abide faithfully by the charter and spirit of the United Nations?' The ensuing 'grandiose rhetoric' would, in Ulam's realist view, form the background both for 'would-be magic solutions' (massive retaliation) and for revisionist evocations of American guilt.[82]

A more recent feature of Cold-War historiography, hitherto also neglected, must now be acknowledged. For in recent years there have been several excellent studies which transcend the bipolar fixation on American-Soviet relations, studies of areas and countries not as mere objects of action but, so to speak, as live matter. Thus there is now a better picture of the concrete context and effects of the cold war in such diverse places as Latin America, Italy, Scandinavia, Britain, the Near and Middle East, and East Asia (a particularly vibrant area of scholarly inquiry).[83] A central theme in the literature has indeed been the extent to which local forces (classes, elites, parties and individuals) played an active and in some cases crucial role in the unfolding events. As a result, the Western European part in NATO's genesis is now much better understood – as can be seen in chapters three to eight of this volume. Fraser Harbutt, in the same vein, has quite properly restored the trilateral aspect, Britain's position as a Great Power in the wartime coalition and immediately after. In emphasizing this he has corrected distorted back projections of exclusive bipolarity (a motif also explored in David Reynolds' essay in this work), though Harbutt then goes on to exaggerate the importance of Britain and especially Churchill in the immediate post-war period.[84]

Conclusion: The ends of geopolitics

If there has been a geopolitical turn in recent historiography, it is only proper to conclude with a (speculative) elaboration of my earlier remarks. I have suggested, in brief, that the Cold War and its origins are not reducible to geopolitics, much less to questions of security. Geopolitics can give an account of the military-political but has little or nothing to say about the ideologico-cultural and socio-economic spheres, which typically become auxiliary functions of strategy, or generalship. The totalizing nature of the Cold War, however, is inexplicable without elucidation of the other two domains. This is not to say that geopolitics was irrelevant, so let us determine what such a framework can and cannot explain.

Social theory (and this is true both of marxism and liberalism) tends to centre on time and society, internally conceived, rather than on space and societies.[85] Yet states and the polities that govern them function in a geopolitical realm and employ the tactical and strategic technologies appropriate to it. The privileged domain of

interstate conflict has in fact been the military-political: states historically have been organizations of war and the preparation for war, though perhaps less for negative reasons of security than for profitable aggrandizement of one kind or another.[86] Seen from that angle, the initial postwar confrontation was clearly *played out* on geopolitical terrain. That there would be antagonism of this spatial, potentially violent kind between the United States and the Soviet Union after the war is hardly startling. Two huge and hitherto peripheral powers took centre stage and, finding themselves on unfamiliar ground, failed to establish a modus vivendi, each probing for security in its own decisive manner. Acute conflict ensued, creating a situation short of war and more reminiscent of a truce than peace: the Cold War, in other words.

The 'radical' Soviet Union was indeed far more traditional in that regard than the United States, a fact often noted but with considerable puzzlement: was this *Realpolitik* as opposed to marxism? The either/or form of the question is misconceived, for the Leninist tradition sees no contradiction. Politics here has always been conceived in military-strategic terms, leading one's forces from territory won against the opposition by means of tactical and strategic moves. With the Bolshevik Revolution, this class perspective necessarily became a state logic which was to reach its apotheosis under Stalin. For Stalin combined an internal concept of progressive time and transformation ('stages') with an external sense of spatial control ('geopolitics'). It is another matter that by 1935 (certainly by 1945), his class and state logic had become prudently non-revolutionary, while remaining marxist (of a sort) and military-strategic. The object was to secure what had been won, not to jeopardize it with any adventurism.

The United States, meanwhile, vastly better off, vastly better positioned, enjoyed the peculiar privilege of the dominant of being able to follow its inclinations without any too precise calculation of interest.[87] *In pure form*, the American conception of the national interest, couched in universal terms, was heavily suffused with Wilsonian notions that open markets and self-determination should replace the shady balance-of-power politics of archaic Europe and thus ensure peace and prosperity throughout. It was a market as opposed to a territorial conception of interest, positing not a strong state acting forcefully in the geopolitical arena but a weak, negative state. This amounted to an impossible strategy of depoliticization, a way of evading political antagonism by means of models of economic competition and law.[88] And ultimately, of course, the whole project was laced with a subterranean streak of Rooseveltian power politics.

When Moscow declined this opening gambit as too unpredictable and risky, Washington did two things. It escalated already existing efforts to open up a capitalist world system outside the boundaries of Soviet control, and it broke with tradition in moving vigorously to secure this system geopolitically by asserting its military-strategic presence wherever possible (an embryonic project already during the war). Against that offensive Moscow had very few options except fortress vigilance, coupled with mostly empty 'peace' alliances of the most diluted kind. Eventually the Soviet position did improve as a result of independently anti-Western movements in the third world and herculean internal efforts to achieve military parity with the United States. Not coincidentally, that is also the moment,

roughly speaking, when the relationship with Washington was transformed. The world, geopolitically, turned into two superstates with sharply diverging internal systems and a third heterogeneous area in which contradictions could be played out in the extreme direct form that was otherwise impossible.

So far, geopolitical categories are of explanatory value, but they are not altogether sufficient. Neither the American nor the Soviet position of 1945 can be understood, for instance, without reference to ideology and class. Neither strategy can be grasped outside the discursive framework within which it was formulated. More basically, however, what must be explained here is not just an ordinary state conflict, however globalized, but the anomaly of annihilation of the Other in a period of ostensible peace. That there would be antagonism between the US and the USSR in a geopolitical sense after the War is scarcely surprising. What must be explained is why it took the extraordinarily nasty form it did, why it became a Cold War, why indeed it came to transcend the geopolitical.

An obvious initial answer would be to refer to the systemic aspect, for the cold war was at once a socio-economic, ideological-cultural and military-political conflict. Neither side, one might then argue, could tolerate the other because its very existence meant the inversion of one's own system. This, if my original periodization is correct, is mistaken: the two systems continued to exist after the end of the Cold War in the early 1960s. They could do this because they were not locked into any vertical master/slave or capital/labour dialectic. Their relationship, on the contrary, was a *horizontal* one across space. From a functional viewpoint, neither side needed for its own survival the destruction of the other. Each could, in theory, have gone on indefinitely without having to change its system as a result of the other's existence.[89] The fact that the Soviet side has now actually disappeared on what amounts to Western conditions has less to do with any systemic conflict and more to do with its internal dynamic. In particular, it has to do with the historical limits of the model of accumulation that Stalin introduced in the 1930s and with the ruling technocracy he thereby created; the descendants of that system would eventually, amidst stagnation, look across the border for more advanced models of efficiency and so, more or less unwittingly, destroy the system itself. Marx would have appreciated the historical irony, if not the actual result.

Yet if the Cold War was not systemic in this sense, it was clearly so in another. For it remains that it was launched in fiercely ideological terms as an invasion or delegitimization of the Other's social order, a demonology combined of course with a mythology of the everlasting virtues of one's own domain. This is not surprising, considering the universalism of the respective ideologies. Ideology, once unleashed, allowed little leeway. The rigid territorialization of ideology and economy catapulted to the forefront the only thing that could move, namely the mutually exclusive ideological aspect. *Everything* was thereby put on the table. Henceforth, the domestic social order could not be taken for granted as an unproblematic spatial whole. One could no longer view international politics simply as a function of some spatially set and largely atemporal realities (e.g. the size and location of states, their resources and organization), supposedly outside ideology and discourse.[90] From the moment that it was obvious that the two powers would not be able to work out a bargain in areas of common interest, the geopolitical boundaries had automatically been transgressed. The unique systemic aspects of each side to be given free play.

I think this occurred symbolically around 1947–8, when the Munich analogy became the prevalent model of abuse on both sides. From then on, there were no intrinsic limit to the proceedings except that imposed by the other's military threat.

What ensued was not a normal diplomatic dialogue but the simultaneous declamation of two monologues, separated in space. This dominance of the ideological was possible – indeed necessary – precisely because of the project of securing, in different ways, one's own socio-economic systems in the two halves of Europe and anchoring the whole thing in a military deadlock. Elsewhere, the effects were lethal. The Cold War was a conflict of total symbolic annihilation, its millions of casualties primarily suffered by the third would.[91]

To raise the matter in such a way is to raise questions of class, culture and ideology. It is also to transcend the absolute border between the inside and outside, to hold together in tension the domestic and the foreign. Meanwhile, the collapse of the Second World in 1989–91 has dislodged us from our received wisdom and turned what used to be obvious, normal and necessary into something that need not have been so. Any rigid focus on national security seems, for one thing, decidedly passé. All kinds of new histories should thus be possible. Ideology will no doubt reappear. But will this return of the repressed be nothing more than a reinvention of full-blown traditionalism?

Bibliographical note

American works on the early Cold War are staggeringly numerous and the following suggestions are only a minimal starting point. References mentioned in the notes are generally excluded.

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For a handy collection of primary materials, see Thomas H. Etzold & John Lewis Gaddis, *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945–1950* (New York, 1978). Otherwise the fundamental source of primary sources is U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*.

Few traditionalist accounts can still be read for their intrinsic value. An early work of considerable nuance is William H. McNeill's *America, Britain and Russia* (New York, 1953). The rhetorical style of Herbert Feis's oeuvre has, on the whole, not aged well, but he can still be read for the empirical detail and as an archetype. A latish example of traditionalism is Lynn Etheridge Davis, *The Cold War Begins: Soviet-American Conflict over Eastern Europe* (Princeton, 1974).

I mention George Kennan, Walter Lippmann, Louis Halle and Norman Graebner among the critical realists. One should also have a look at the realists outside the profession, such as Hans Morgenthau: see his *In Defense of the National Interest* (New York, 1951).

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2 *The Soviet Union*

VLADISLAV ZUBOK AND CONSTANTINE PLESHAKOV

Historiography: new sources, new questions

There is no proper historiography of the Cold War in Russia and today historians and political scientists, working on the subject, draw little on research under the ancien regime. An absolute control over intellectual life in the Soviet Union guaranteed that all writings on the origins and phases of the Cold War had to reflect official legend. The latter, however, was not merely a propaganda myth designed to present Soviet foreign policy in the best possible light. It inherited, to a large degree, some original assessments that the Soviet leadership made about the causes and nature of the Cold War, the motives and plans of their opponents, the dynamics of arms race, and so on. In other words, the official version was not intentionally invented by the propaganda masters of the Kremlin, but grew from the process of estimates and policy-making. Diplomats at the Soviet embassy in Washington were among the first historians of the subject, when they wrote in September 1948:

> A frustration of the designs of American reactionaries aimed at weakening the Soviet state, a successful recovery and further development of economic and military power of the USSR after the war, achievements by the countries of the new democracy [in Eastern Europe] and the continuing struggle of colonized and dependent countries [together] brought about a situation, in which . . . the American reactionaries set out on the path of open support for and imposition of reactionary regimes in Europe, Asia and Latin America, . . . of aggravating relations with the Soviet Union and countries of the new democracy. This policy, by the logic of things, is pushing the USA toward an adventurist road of preparation for a new world war.[1]

That was exactly what Stalin wanted to hear in the Kremlin. Dogmatic and completely self-serving, this explanation became the rationale for assessments and activities of Soviet diplomacy for several decades. By laying all the blame on the imperialists, it discouraged any discussion of Soviet foreign policy, since the latter was supposed to remain perennially good and peace-loving. Once the ground was laid and the façade erected, the task of later writers – some of them former diplomatic officials and government experts – remained to embellish it with details, to paper over most embarrassing failures and put a touch of formal logic on this

edifice. The official history of diplomacy was edited by Valerian Zorin, Molotov's deputy, in the Foreign Ministry, and then by Andrei Gromyko.[2] It used some Soviet archival materials (without citing them) and classified histories; other writings referred to selected Western historiography, and were sometimes based on exclusive access to selected documents or personal experience in government.[3] Two momentous developments – a rise of 'revisionism' and 'post-revisionism' in the United States, and declassification of some Western archives – evoked a response among the Soviets, but did not change their schemes and conclusions. Soviet historians of the Cold War were allowed to glean new archival findings only to prove the official viewpoint.[4] Soviet authors never mentioned actions by the USSR that had triggered tension and Western response; nor did they refer to Soviet archives, which remained completely closed to researchers.[5]

What were the main arguments of official mythology of the Cold War? First, as we already mentioned, it was unleashed by the 'imperialist circles', which, according to Lenin's 'theory of imperialism' included groups with dominant positions in society, primarily financiers and industrialists, who – in pursuit of their class interests – promoted an aggressive and world-wide expansion of American influence. Lenin had borrowed much of his theory of imperialism from the concepts of Austrian Marxists. Soviet writers kept borrowing most of their arguments from American revisionist historians and social scientists, in pursuit of more sophisticated approaches than just Wall Street conspiracy.[6]

Second, at the core of the cold war lay the class concept of the two camps, democratic and imperialist. This concept was enunciated by Andrei Zhdanov in September 1947 at the founding meeting of the international Communist Information Bureau (Cominform). It presented the Soviet Union as a major, democratic, peaceful power and, until its renunciation in 1988, exonerated the Soviet Union from all blame for the Cold War and justified its role in arms race, wars by proxy, and so on.

The Soviet myth, while stressing the 'logic of things' in history, still left much room for certain missed opportunities and for the personal factor (*lychnostni faktor*). It implied that a group of leaders or a leader in the United States and other Western countries might accept a peaceful coexistence, that is to say, a balance of power between the two camps. Eventually the Soviet military-industrial mobilization and the growing nuclear force had to persuade even the most arrogant hard-liners in the United States, revanchists in West Germany and other 'evil forces' to become realists. The gallery of realists included Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and sometimes Richard M. Nixon.

In the years of glasnost, this myth was first challenged and then swept away by a series of pamphlets and articles. In a famous split in the Politburo on the basics of foreign policy, Edward Shevardnadze and Alexander Yakovlev, both Mikhail Gorbachev's comrades-in-arms, repudiated the concept of the two camps and acknowledged partial responsibility of the Soviet Union for the Cold War and the arms race.[7] Yet a new crop of revisionists, using mass media, went beyond 'equal responsibility': they blamed the Cold War unequivocally and solely on the Stalin's totalitarian regime. Not unlike the Vietnam-era revisionism in the United States, the Soviet revisionism was deeply rooted in domestic soul-searching. However, the

Soviet revisionists were not original: in their conclusions they referred not to Soviet archives, but to Western historians – curiously enough, those who stood at the opposite pole from the American revisionism – the admirers of American containment of Soviet expansion and militarism.[8] This explained why, for all its democratic merits, Soviet revisionism could not become a foundation of Cold-War historiography in the new Russia. Its iconoclastic fervour could not substitute for new issues and questions, which required the injection of materials from the classified archives of the Soviet party and the state. Thus, unwittingly, revisionists discouraged historiographic discussion, since they eliminated both the issue of blame for the origins of the Cold War (Stalin and the communist regime were obvious culprits), as well as that of missed opportunities in terminating it (coexistence with the totalitarian regime was impossible).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union came a gradual opening of the Soviet archives[9] and, potentially, the emergence of a Cold-War history with a genuine Russian imprint. Will the influx of new data give rise to a post-revisionism? It is likely that a new set of issues will come to the forefront, issues overlooked by revisionists but which are strongly suggested by the newly available sources on the Soviet part of the Cold War. It is also likely that Russian Cold-War historians will be influenced by Western methodological diversity, including studies on interaction among great powers and between domestic and foreign interests; the microanalysis of leadership and bureaucratic factors, involving the role of strategic planning, intelligence, spiral of misperceptions, collective learning, and so on.[10]

Future debates among historians will be above all determined by available sources. These present an ambiguous landscape, alternatively frustrating or promising for researchers. Soviet memoirs are notably fewer and scantier than Western recollections. Some authors, like Gromyko, simply restate the old mythology.[11] Others, like those by Sergei Khrushchev, Fyodor Burlatsky and Georgy Arbatov, are full of insight; but their authors were not part of decision-making.[12] Nobody among Stalin's successors did any writing, except Nikita S. Khrushchev, whose memoirs remain an unrivalled source.[13] Recently Felix Chuyev published his interviews with V.M. Molotov, containing valuable information on the mentality and motives, if not the decisions, of the Soviet leadership in the early the cold war years.[14] As to specific events of the Cold War, the best witness accounts are available on the Cuban missile crisis,[15] but various morsels have appeared in periodicals.[16] Also memoirs of Soviet defectors give more controversial, but still useful insights.[17] Some titbits can be culled from oral history interviews with living participants. Such personal reminiscences still can give many clues to Soviet perceptions, motives and decisions and they often make sense of what can be found in the now-opening archives.

Together, the archives, memoirs and oral history help understand the Party-State system of decision-making, information and implementation that constituted a backbone for Soviet cold war behaviour. In the Russian archives researchers are finding new evidence on interaction between the Foreign Ministry and the Party's international departments, on the role Soviet embassies played and particularly channels to the communist and other 'progressive' networks in Eastern and Western Europe, as well as in the United States.[18] However, declassified docu-

mentation still does not provide detailed description of the process of decision-making. Typical files contain memoranda to the Foreign Ministry, Party Secretariat and the Politburo from diplomatic sources: records of conversations, quarterly and annual reports from embassies and consulates and initiative reports from embassy officials. There are some files on negotiations, including atomic energy, disarmament, test bans, and the like. Many decisions on personnel, intelligence operations, secret communications and financial aid are kept closed in the top-secret, very sensitive special files (*osobyie papki*) of the Central Committee.[19] And much of the day-to-day communication (encoded cables), with few exceptions, are still not available.[20] There is almost no access to transcripts of Stalin's and Khrushchev's conversations, Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Politburo and Plenary meetings on foreign policy, or the personal archives of leaders. These materials are in the Kremlin archives, tightly controlled by the office of the President.[21] Another huge collection of files on Cold-War decision-making still lies unclaimed in the Central State Archives of Russia (former TsGAOR). It includes the archives of state ministries and committees and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers (more important than the Politburo in 1945–53). The KGB files, too, may soon be found there in the near future.

On the basis of these limited new sources, however, one can return to some old issues of the Cold War, long explored by Western historians and political scientists. First, what was in the minds of Stalin and his closest subordinates in 1945–6 and later, when confrontation became more and more likely? How did they understand Western conduct and motives, and which Western reactions did they miscalculate? Among the cases often mentioned in this regard are the Baruch plan on atomic energy, Churchill's Iron Curtain speech, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Berlin blockade.

Second, were there missed opportunities for accommodation with Stalin and his successors? Did the West over-react – or under-react – to Soviet attempts to consolidate their war gains? Several episodes come to mind here: Soviet policies in Iran and Manchuria (1946), Stalin's plans for Eastern Europe (1945–6), the Moscow meeting of foreign ministers (March 1947), Stalin's proposals to reunify Germany (spring 1952) and the Malenkov-Beria peace initiative (spring–summer 1953).

Third, was Soviet conduct in the Cold War a result of the monolithic totalitarian drive, involving ideology and the leader's whims, or was it shaped by diverse forces and interests, for instance party ideologues vs. technocrats, security vs. army, and the like? Some authors believed Stalin chose the wrong policy in 1945–6; others argue that he, and Khrushchev in the years of crises, reacted to domestic challenges.[22]

Besides, new sources suggest a set of new issues, that had not attracted enough attention from Western historiography, mostly for lack of evidence. Among these issues are:

1. The effectiveness of US and Western actions in the early Cold War. Did they help to curb Soviet expansion, or did they rather contribute to siege mentality, in other words helping to prolong the totalitarian regime and the cold war? How exactly did American policies (containment, psychological warfare, 'secret wars' in the third world) affect the Kremlin's conduct?

2. The consequences of the Soviet Union's dual communist/imperial commitments. To what extent were Soviet policies in the Cold War a product of the Kremlin's hegemony in the communist movement? Or were they a reflection of the tyranny of the weak, that is pressures from near-to-collapse satellites like East Germany?[23]

3. The totalitarian state and its policies in the Cold War. Were the Soviets inefficient in the cold war, as in the economy, or had they certain advantages (such as 'party', as well as 'state', means of foreign policy, superior intelligence and total secrecy, ruthless military administration in satellite countries), that helped them wage it for so long? How comparable were the Cold-War structures in Western democracies and the totalitarian Soviet state?

Before we begin our analysis, however, a few words of definition are required. The Cold War was unique as an international confrontation that was not merely bipolar but also global, in which nuclear weapons played a distinctive role as both the potentially explosive and ultimately stabilizing force. The *Cold War* should be distinguished from the *Cold-War Era*. The former lasted roughly from 1948 to 1962 and was characterized by its intense military fever, culminating in the Cuban missile crisis. What ensued was a prolonged armistice in which, at the same time, both sides extended their tentacles, particularly into Latin America and Africa. But neither Vietnam nor Afghanistan provoked a military stand-off on the scale of Cuba. As for *the roots of the Cold War*: ideologically it stemmed from the 1917 revolution in Russia, geopolitically from the Second World War, which left the USA and USSR in positions of dominance, and technologically from the atomic revolution of 1945.

This triad – Bolshevik revolution, the Second World War, and the nuclear era – was absolutely central for the genesis of the Cold War as the main structural phenomenon in international relations since 1945. Yet structure is not everything: history is about people. And no one was more important in the origins of the Cold War than Josef Vissarionovich Dzugashvili – known to history by his revolutionary pseudonym of 'Stalin', man of steel.

The enigma of Stalin

Stalin's mind is a riddle. All men are divided by psychology into extroverts and introverts. Extroverts enjoy talking before the crowds; they are the darlings of newspapermen; they leave diaries; they write outspoken books like *Mein Kampf*; never afraid of revealing their real self, they insist on stenographers being present; they freely develop their ideas even before strangers. Introverts are different: they try to destroy every evidence of their earthly ways; their speeches, talks and books are carefully formulated; they always want to sound nice, always in accordance with the norms of morality of a certain group. When they reveal their real self they are like snails, ready any time to withdraw into the shell. They are simultaneously shy and fierce about their ego: shy to reveal it, fierce to protect.

That is why we should not expect too much from the Soviet sources concerning Stalin, the supreme introvert. Could there possibly be solid evidence on the state of Stalin's mind? So, when one comes to the task of analyzing Stalin's mentality, one has no other way but to collect the pieces of evidence from all sides, disbelieving most of them, some of Stalin's remarks included.

Some leaders devote their career to one major axis of ideas. However complicated their life pattern is, it develops around this particular axis. But other leaders are different; they move along several axes. To be more precise by changing the metaphor: some planets in the universe rotate around more than one sun. Stalin's planet was exactly of that kind. It had two suns: the sun of revolution and the sun of empire.

The two ideas – world revolution and empire – did not contradict each other at all. What, after all, was the ideal of communists? A universal state with total domination over the globe, a world without borders; in short, an unprecedented empire. Marxism was imperial by its nature. A true Marxist state must long for an imperial status, otherwise it does not have a *raison d'être*, it is doomed to be a satellite, and its government will be hated by the people. Only the idea of building the empire can arouse people's enthusiasm and provide revolutionaries with a decent task. Numerous apostles of world revolution would become lieutenants of the empire, its backbone. That is why Stalin was so successful in bringing the ideas of revolutionary eschatology (death of the old world and birth of the new one) and imperial glory together. Stalin viewed himself not only as a founder of a new – Soviet – empire, but also as an heir of the empire which had seemingly collapsed – the Russian empire.

Self-identification with the great heroes of the past was crucial for Stalin. The heroes he had subconsciously chosen were Lenin and Russian tsars. Self-identification with Lenin was first studied by Robert C. Tucker, who described it as a heroic self-image. Tucker was also the first to identify Stalin as a neurotic.[24] This Lenin fixation demanded acts of revolution, surpassing those of Lenin himself. Karen Horney in her fundamental book wrote: 'The neurotic's self-idealization is an attempt to remedy the damage done by lifting himself in his mind above the crude reality of himself and others.'[25] The deeds of self-heroization were enacted in the international arena, where Stalin at last put the theory of world revolution into practice, as well as inside the country.

There was one very important component in Stalin's mind: aversion to everything foreign. His brief stay in Vienna in 1913 (unlike other Bolshevik leaders he never spent much time abroad) became a trauma for him: lonely, isolated, surrounded by a hostile world. Of course Vienna was not the cause; the cause lay in Stalin's soul, because interaction with the outside world demanded a certain openness, a relaxed nature – qualities unknown to Stalin. The trauma of Vienna was very strong. Together with envy towards others (like Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin), who felt themselves equally free in the tsar's gaol or in a Geneva café, it gave birth to a pronounced inferiority complex. That inferiority should have been displaced; the easiest way was clear – xenophobia. But the xenophobia of Stalin was not that of a prudent tyrant; it was the xenophobia of a neurotic. Stalin was therefore displacing a deep inferiority complex in a primitive and not very effective

way. Such displacement only made the inferiority complex deeper and more painful. Only later, on becoming a member of a narrow circle of world leaders, did Stalin succeed in getting rid of it, and then only for a short period of time.

Every person has his own reference group, people whose opinion is important for him. A person usually does not care about everybody ('How can they understand me?'), but there are people whose respect he seeks. For Stalin petty apparatchiks like Molotov and Kaganovitch did not count; inferior in all senses, they were just puppets in his hands. He looked for his reference group abroad. Only important leaders like Hitler, Roosevelt and Churchill mattered. Of course, Hitler must have intrigued Stalin most of all; he must have felt that they shared a good deal. Who else but Hitler could understand a leader like Stalin? But interaction with Hitler was brief and never personal, notwithstanding the fact that in 1939–40 it had brought the best fruits of expansion one could ever wish for. That said, co-operation with the leaders of Britain and the United States proved to be very satisfactory in the psychological sense. The atmosphere was relatively relaxed; the Big Three behaved as a group with specific relations between the members, with common memories, even with jokes that only they could understand. At last Stalin had found the company of equals. It was an extremely important motive that pushed him towards post-war co-operation. In some sense this motive was the summing up of his 'human evolution', with all its complexes. As Karen Horney wrote of the neurotic personality: 'Nobody can function, or even live, under such conditions. The individual must make, and does make, automatic attempts at solving these problems, attempts at removing conflicts, allaying tensions, and preventing terrors.'[26]

The hypothesis that Stalin was displacing certain complexes, looking for a specific comradeship among the Big Three, does not mean that the relationship among them was ideal. Stalin had his doubts about his partners. In 1944 he told Milovan Djilas, pointing at the map of the Soviet Union: 'They will never accept the idea that so great a space should be red, never, never!'[27] Nevertheless Stalin enjoyed redistributing spheres of influence, with Churchill in particular in October 1944, when they were deciding the exact percentage of Moscow's and London's influence in post-war Eastern Europe.

So this psychological motive was pushing Stalin towards accommodation with the West. There were also more practical considerations. After all, the Big Three were engaged in a large-scale redistribution of spheres of influence during the War and afterwards. The process did not go all that smoothly, but in general one is struck by a spirit of mutual understanding in this imperialist circle: liberal Roosevelt, venerable anti-communist Churchill, communist Stalin. An imperialist fraternity was uniting them all, and the West was acknowledging Soviet predominance in Poland, the Baltics, Eastern Europe in general. Was it only the result of the Red Army's strength? No, because the allies had effectively recognized the Soviet conquests of 1940 long before Soviet victory in the War became a certainty.

Stalin knew it and he was prepared to co-operate with the West after the War. Taking into consideration Stalin's dependence upon archetypes, one can suggest that he was influenced by the archetype of the Vienna Congress of 1815, with himself as Alexander I (1801–25) and perhaps Churchill as Metternich? There is at least one piece of evidence that his self-identification with Alexander I as archetype

was clear to Stalin himself. When he was asked by Harriman whether it felt good that he was dividing Berlin only several years after Germans had been standing at the walls of Moscow, Stalin replied that 'Tsar Alexander had reached Paris.'[28]

In the speech that is usually regarded in the West as the proclamation of the Cold War on 9 February 1946, Stalin actually proposed a specific model of peaceful coexistence. He said: 'It might be possible to avoid military catastrophes, if there were a way of periodically reapportioning raw materials and markets among the countries according to their economic weight – taking concerted and peaceful decisions.' He added: 'But this is impossible to fulfil in contemporary capitalist conditions of world economic development.'[29] This was an awkward reference to Western values, as he understood them. But the American embassy in Moscow overlooked this point. When he spoke about raw materials and markets, he must have meant reapportionment of spheres of influence; but many in Washington regarded his speech as a declaration of Cold War.

Stalin's rape of Eastern Europe preceded the Cold War and, as many argue, triggered it. Stalin did not understand the difference between the swallowing of eastern Poland, the Baltics, and eastern Prussia, on the one hand, and the construction of 'friendly' regimes in Poland and Czechoslovakia, on the other. And in terms of moral and international law there really was not any difference. What moral or legal argument underpinned the decision to give eastern Prussia to Stalin? Presumably, to punish Germany and to deprive it of a bridgehead in Eastern Europe. As a result, to Stalin, Western protests against changes in Eastern Europe and other regions seemed just a political game; by approving the earlier Stalin gains, the West lost the moral ground to protest against further expansion of the Soviet empire.

Today most historians speak about lost opportunities in the Cold War. But when one thinks about the real lost opportunities in 1945–8, the probable hypothesis is – the West was not firm enough, it did not check Stalin's imperial expansion.

In categories of 'good guys' and 'bad guys' Stalin was indisputably a bad guy in the Cold War. But he was also a bad guy during the Second World War and before it – and the good guys had actually encouraged him to go on being bad, for they needed his strength and also found themselves under the evil spell of totalitarianism. Stalin was allowed to feel that he was good when he was occupying eastern Prussia and preserving the lands conquered before the War. Then, suddenly, he became bad, without obvious reasons. He felt betrayed by former allies. But he was not prepared to wage the Cold War (that is, open confrontation without much diplomatic coverage) until 1948. Probably the coup d'état in Czechoslovakia in February of 1948 and the Berlin crisis that began four months later were the first battles of the real Cold War, when no compromise was hoped for, and when Stalin was waiting only for the contradictions in the Western camp to ripen and lead to another war in which, he hoped, imperialism would be buried. According to Molotov, Stalin had constructed a strict logical chain: 'The First World War had pulled one country out of the capitalist slavery. The Second World War has created a socialist system, and the Third will terminate imperialism once and for all.'[30]

His policies in the East displayed the same evolution – from cautious waiting to the promotion of expansion. In 1945–7 Stalin was not in a hurry to support Mao

Zedong, the leader of a relatively independent and undoubtedly strong revolutionary communist movement. As long as there was a possibility of coming to terms with the Americans, he was not going to ruin the fragile balance between the Nationalist Guomindang and the Chinese communists. He still preferred official relations with the Guomindang government of Chiang Kai-shek, though by revolutionary logic he should have denounced Chiang as a puppet of the imperialists. Even Chiang's pro-Western policies, of which Stalin was being constantly reminded by his agents in China, did not change his mind. After Stalin's death Mao complained to Pavel Yudin, Soviet Ambassador in Beijing:

> In the last period . . . Stalin also made wrong estimates of the situation in China and of the possibilities of revolutionary development. He continued to believe more in the Guomindang's strength than in the Communist Party [of China]. In 1945 he insisted on peace with Chiang, on the common front with the Guomindang and the creation of a 'democratic republic' in China. . . . In 1947 . . . when our troops were winning victories, Stalin insisted on striking a peace with Chiang, because he doubted the strength of the Chinese revolution.[31]

Only in 1948, anticipating trouble in future, did Stalin reluctantly gave a firm handshake to Mao Zedong.[32]

Here we must ask ourselves a question: how was the Eastern front of the Cold War connected with the Western, in Stalin's eyes? Stalin, as well as most other Soviet leaders, was Eurocentric and, more precisely, German-oriented. His major ambitions and challenges lay westward. In part, this was because his psychological archetypes of glory and national interest were linked with Europe (the Middle East was one notable exception). Just like the Russian empire before, he had not regarded his vast provinces in Siberia and in the Far East as of extraordinary value. The geopolitical utility of the Far East seemed to Stalin of minor importance. Even if he was eager to take part in Japan's defeat and conquest, he readily relinquished his 'right' to occupation in exchange for Western acceptance of Soviet dominance in Romania and Hungary.

Stalin was developing expansion in Europe and adjoining regions with vigour and persistence, unlike in the Far East. Yet, ironically, he had a much more powerful natural ally in China than in Iran or even Greece. Had Stalin's imperialist aspirations been not much influenced by psychological archetypes, he would have used the opportunity to project his influence in the Far East, not in 1948–9 but at least three years earlier. Instead he was prepared to give China, Korea and Japan to the Americans as their share in the post-war division of the world, whereas in Europe he longed to take as much as he could.

It is not true, of course, that geopolitical considerations in the Far East were a matter of total indifference for Stalin in 1945–7. He was influenced by the same imperialist dreams that had pushed Russian tsars; he desired to re-establish spheres of influence lost by Russia under Nicholas II (1894–1917). There were other historical parallels. The Russian empire had turned its attention to the Far East only when the European powers made further expansion in Europe totally impossible. Similarly, Stalin switched his attention and his efforts to the Far East only when American power had stopped his expansion in Europe. Even when the Cold War

developed into a global confrontation and then erupted into an open conflagration in Korea, its core, from Stalin's viewpoint, always remained in Europe, not in Asia.

The period from the fall of 1947 to the spring of 1948 was a kind of turning point for Stalin. The sun of world revolution seemed to rise again – as was reflected in the last works of Stalin. There he tried to present a concept of a post-war world. Churchill, wrote Stalin, became a warmonger. He and his friends exhibited 'a striking resemblance to Hitler and his friends'.[33] Billionaires and millionaires regarded war as a source of profits. 'They, these aggressive forces, hold in their hands reactionary governments and guide them.'[34]

Stalin expatiated again and again on the general crisis of capitalism. He insisted on the collapse of the world economy: 'One should regard the disinte-gration of the single integral world market as the most important economic result of the Second World War and its economic consequences.'[35] He admitted that after the War two prophecies had proved invalid: his own, on a 'relative stability of markets during the general crisis of capitalism', and Lenin's conclusion that, despite the crisis, 'capitalism in general is growing faster than before'.[36]

Stalin seemed not to understand the nature of the epoch in which he was living, especially its major characteristic – bipolarity. He still thought in routine categories of the pre-Cold-War history and was sure that the new war was inevitable. Stalin did not see a future war as a conflict between socialism and capitalism: a repetition of the scenario of 1937–9 seemed more probable in his eyes. He wrote:

> Some comrades make a mistake when they say that 'contradictions between the socialist camp and capitalist camp are stronger than contradictions between capitalist countries, that the United States of America has subjugated other capitalist countries enough, stopping them waging wars with each other and weakening each other. . . .'[37] Wouldn't it be wiser to say that capitalist England, and then capitalist France will in the end have to break away from the USA, embrace and venture a conflict with it in order to secure independent policy and of course high profits? . . . To think that . . . [West Germany and Japan] would not try to become independent, to break away from the U.S. 'regime' and rush to the road of independent development – means believing in miracles.[38]

He believed Germany would be again a major European power, with Great Britain and France as a poor match.[39] Even earlier, in 1945, he warned Yugoslav communists that the Germans were not 'finished':

> No, they will recover, and very quickly. That is a highly developed industrial country with an extremely qualified and numerous working class and technical intelligensia. Give them twelve to fifteen years and they'll be on their feet again. And this is why the unity of the Slavs is important.[40]

He regarded the Cold War as something really emanating from the West, which had ignored his good will; one of a series of confrontations with imperialism which was to be resolved one day in conflict.

It would be a simplification to say that the Cold War was Stalin's choice or his child. He did not want it. He regarded it not as a logical consequence of his policies, but as a deliberate Western policy. He did not consider swallowing one country after another as something really capable of causing the crisis; he took it as

his legal share. This process is known in psychology as externalization: 'I am not hostile to others; they are doing things to me.'[41]

For all its historical roots, then, Stalin's imperialism was not a simple continuation of the Russian imperial tradition. It represented an externalization of his power-hungry ego. Examining a post-war map, Stalin revelled in the new borders of the Soviet Union. 'Let's have a look at what has turned out. . . . In the North everything is all right. In the West everything is all right. . . . But here I don't like our borders!' – and Stalin pointed to the region to the south from the Caucasus.[42] In fact, the borders of the tsarist empire and its spheres of influence had been completely restored. The vassal states formed a huge Eurasian belt of which the tsars could not even have dreamt – Eastern Europe and Eastern Asia. It was too much even for Molotov. Although he said in 1975: 'It is good that the Russian tsars gained so much land for us. Now it is easier for us to fight capitalism,'[43] he regretted Stalin's claims to Turkey; his imperialism was of more down-to-earth, that of a bookkeeper, not a semi-deity. He admitted: 'In the last years Stalin began to get a swelled head.'[44]

Stalin's hyper-inflated ego might help explain why sometimes he tried to transgress all the traditional limits of Russian imperialism. Molotov recalled with a certain bewilderment:

> Libya turned out to be necessary for us. Stalin says: 'Go ahead, push!' . . . At one of the meetings of the foreign ministers I declared that the national-liberation movement had appeared in Libya. But it is pretty weak, we want to support it and to build our military base there.[45]

Stalin even played with idea of regaining Alaska from the United States.[46]

In 1950 the Korean war broke out. Several sources today back up Khrushchev's version that Kim Il Sung came to Moscow at the end of 1949 and after long talks and consultations persuaded Stalin to support the war against the South. 'The North Koreans wanted to prod South Korea with the point of a bayonet,' Khrushchev recalled. He also remembered that Stalin had had doubts, afraid lest the Americans jump in.[47] According to Khrushchev, in the fall of 1950, when the American forces counter-attacked and marched to the Chinese border, Stalin was prepared to abandon North Korea rather than risk direct confrontation with the Americans.[48] That was a clear example of where American containment worked – after all, Stalin did not send Soviet troops en masse to fight for Kim Il Sung. Even the Chinese who sent their army to save the poor adventurist did not risk trying to liberate Taiwan.

Indirect participation in the Korean war was Stalin's last offensive in the Cold War. American intervention was like a cold shower. The hermit of the Kremlin retreated once again into his shell, a besieged tyrant in his lonely autumn.

To a far greater degree than in any other state discussed in this book, the foreign policy of the Soviet Union was the creation of its leader. Central though Stalin's mentality is to our understanding of the Cold War, however, we cannot stop there. In its external policy after 1945 the USSR was acting simultaneously as a 'normal' state playing international politics, as the centre of a revolutionary international party, and as an occupying power administering vast new territories. It is the

interplay of Stalin's mind with these three sets of systemic imperatives which takes us to the heart of the Soviet Cold War.

The Soviets and Cold War dynamics

There was a popular story among the veterans of the Second World War: when the Red Army met the American forces at the Elbe river, Marshal Zhukov insisted that the Soviets should continue the victorious march further to the West. But Stalin objected. Had he agreed, the Red Army allegedly would have reached the Channel in two weeks.

Stalin had a better chance of achieving predominance in Europe without war, using the multi-tiered foreign policy of a totalitarian great power. On the level of 'state' foreign policy, that is relations with the Allies, he made certain commitments at Yalta and Potsdam.[49] He came all the way to please the Americans on the United Nations: the UN Statute, written with direct Soviet participation, was a direct precursor of Gorbachev's new thinking in international relations. With an obvious Stalin nod, Maxim Litvinov, Molotov's rival and architect of 'collective security' in the 1930s, turned out many position papers aimed at the revival of his old designs of collective security.

The 'party' level became less prominent in Kremlin foreign policy with Stalin's dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. The Comintern's staff, however, stayed in the International Department of the Central Committee and its branches: the Sovinformburo, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, and a number of secret institutes.[50] This department, together with the department of Agitation and Propaganda, continued to collect information form communist and 'progressive' network abroad. The network's low profile concealed high expectations Stalin had in 1945–6 about communist politics in Western Europe, especially in Italy and France. In a triumphant mood, Stalin told German communists that 'there would be two Germanies, despite all the unity of the Allies'. In a struggle for his Germany he planned to act through the unified KPD or Communist Party of Germany.[51]

There was a third level of Stalin's foreign policy, dealing with the countries and territories liberated, defeated and/or occupied by the Red Army. Some Politburo members were appointed by Stalin to supervise the countries of the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe – from Finland (Zhdanov) to Romania (Vyshinsky).[52] From the start a Soviet style of consolidation of new regimes in Eastern Europe implied a special role for native communists: most of them had lived in Moscow since the 1930s and returned in the rearguard of the Red Army under Soviet instructions. Among them were members of the Lublin Polish government, Walter Ulbricht in East Germany, Matyas Rakosi in Hungary, Anna Pauker and Georgiu Dej in Romania, Georgy Dimitrov in Bulgaria, and so on. Stalin, in conversation with Milovan Djilas, a Yugoslav communist, suggested that these countries must be up for socialization, with the help of the Soviet military administration. In fact, this approach was adopted by Soviet military administrators not only in Eastern Europe, but in northern Iran and North Korea. Yet in 1945 Moscow hoped to bring communists to power by parliamentary intrigues: either in alliance with agrarian parties against social democrats, or together with social democrats against the peasant parties. The directives to expel the non-communists and to eliminate the rudiments of parliamentary democracy came two years later.

The relationship between these three levels of Soviet foreign policy depended, largely, on how Stalin assessed the changing international situation. When his regular state diplomacy did not satisfy him, he turned to a party level, increasingly associated with his subordinate Andrei Zhdanov, Secretary and Politburo member. The underlying goals, though, were always unmistakably imperial. Molotov, a chief engineer of Stalin's foreign policy, put it in historical perspective:

> Stalin used to say that [tsarist] Russia won wars, but could not enjoy the fruits of its victories. Russians are remarkable warriors, but they do not know how to make peace; they are duped, fobbed off. So I think, after this war, we scored a success, we built up the Soviet state. It was my major task . . . so that nobody would dupe us. Here we tried hard and, I believe, results were not bad.[53]

In 1945 and later all three levels were used to create the most favourable correlation of forces, which Stalin judged was crucial for the consolidation of his post-war empire. Initially the interstate, ally-to-ally relations were considered as important as the overtly imperial policies. Stalin agreed to sign the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe only because 'it was to our advantage to keep intact an alliance with America'.[54]

In early 1945 Stalin had a number of reasons to think that the correlation of forces was changing in his favour:

1. American foreign policy was determined by Franklin Roosevelt, who hated British imperialism. He was also prepared to withdraw American forces from Europe in two years and wanted to co-operate with Stalin as one of 'global policemen' under the aegis of the United Nations;
2. he believed that the United States could not defeat Japan without the Red Army;
3. Eastern Europe and East Germany were safely locked in the Soviet sphere;
4. in Italy and France communists had marvellous chances to come to power; in the rest of Western Europe the popularity of the Soviet Union was at its peak;
5. many believed that the world role of the United States would be crippled by a serious economic crisis and that America would seek an escape in isolationism;
6. Stalin had the world's best intelligence service and could look at opponents' cards while keeping his hidden.

By early 1947 Stalin was obliged to correct these assessments. The United States did not intend to resume its pre-war role in the world. Roosevelt was replaced by Truman. Imperialist contradictions between America and Britain were buried in an Anglo-Saxon alliance, increasingly dominated by the United States. Roosevelt's line was defeated in domestic politics by what one Soviet diplomat called the 'bloc of reactionary Southern Democrats and the old guard of the Republicans'.[55] Stalin helped the polarization a great deal by his insistence on bigger reparations from Germany and the dismantling of the Ruhr coal and steel industries, by his claim to have a role in Japan's occupation, by miscellaneous probes around the Soviet periphery (Turkey and the Straits, Iran, Manchuria) and even *démarches* outside the traditional Russian sphere of influence such as in Libya. Litvinov, frustrated

and isolated, suggested that the West should be tougher with Stalin and Molotov. His complaints were overheard by the secret police, and must have triggered Stalin's anger and Litvinov's later assassination.[56]

In late 1945 and during 1946 Stalin clearly overplayed his hand. Military triumphs by the Red Army boosted his hubris to classical dimensions. It was at this stage, as Molotov admitted, years later, that Stalin toyed with plans to retrieve Alaska and get control over the Turkish straits – the dreams of Great Russian imperialists.[57] Most of those plans were clearly not feasible and were not pursued. But they characterized the state of mind and mood in the Kremlin at that time; and they scared many in the West.

Several factors contributed to Stalin's intransigence and arrogance. The atomic bomb placed in doubt the Soviet military role in the defeat of Japan and raised Truman's morale. In Stalin's eyes, it shattered the correlation of forces. This conclusion was borne out by the awkward attempts of Secretary of State James Byrnes to practise, momentarily, atomic diplomacy. Stalin instructed Molotov to undercut Byrnes's policy and personal credentials during the Allied negotiations. Consequently, the Soviets behaved as if the atomic bomb had not existed.

The striking contrast between the Soviet economy and the economic might of the United States also, ironically, made Stalin more, not less, arrogant. He refused to negotiate any American credits with strings attached. Participation of the Soviet Union in international economic cooperation and rehabilitation of Europe could reveal Soviet weakness or allow America to put its foot into the Soviet door. The Soviets waited for the world economic crisis to extract from the capitalists what they wanted, on their own terms.[58]

American pragmatic disengagement in Eastern Europe, manifested in the Harriman-Stalin deal in October 1945,[59] along with unexpected American pressure on the Soviets in Iran, must have confirmed Moscow's belief that American foreign policy was dictated by mercenary, traditionally imperialist interests such as Arab oil. This also contributed to Molotov's horse-trading and to the diplomatic impasse.

Finally, the Soviets initially had a clear edge over the Western powers in filling an enormous political vacuum inside the former Third Reich. The Soviet military administration in Germany (SVAG) launched a client party of Socialist Unity (SED), uniting communists with some social-democrats. In 1946, while the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Christian Democratic Union (CDU) were still weak, SED and its trade unions attempted to win political control over the whole of Berlin and to make inroads into Western zones. The economic situation, especially food, in the Soviet zone was better than in the West. Efficient combination of party and occupation means seemed to guarantee an edge to the Soviets in Germany and could have encouraged Stalin to be self-confident in his conversation with U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall in Moscow in April 1947. 'When the partners exhaust each other,' he argued, 'a moment will come for possible compromises.'[60]

The Soviet boycott of the Marshall plan was a turning point towards the Cold War: state diplomacy was virtually buried; not only ideas of co-operation, but even a traditional diplomacy of balancing among powers were all abandoned in favor of bipolar confrontation ('two camps').[61] Party foreign policy triumphed for a while in

Soviet relations with both Western and Eastern Europe. With regard to the latter it dominated even over the common-sense needs of occupation policies. This led to the rise of Andrei Zhdanov and Nikolai Voznesensky and to the eclipse of Molotov, Lavrenti Beria, Georgi Malenkov and Anastas Mikoyan, who had run foreign affairs on a routine basis in 1945–6. Molotov, along with most state agencies that were interested in foreign credits, initially planned to join the European recovery program. Only after he sensed Stalin's mood did he make a U-turn and oppose the participation in the Marshall plan.[62]

Most historians now agree that Stalin miscalculated. Did he expect that both Western and Eastern Europe would knuckle under to his bull-like pressure? Zhdanov and later Molotov presented the Soviet reaction as a great counter-offensive and, in general, a great success. But Khrushchev recalled that after the war the leaders in Moscow had expected that economic chaos in Western Europe would reach 'the point of a revolutionary explosion'. Intervention by the powerful economy of the United States came as a great evil from two angles: it led to defeats for Western communists and it cushioned a future (and inevitable) economic crisis overseas. The next fear was a reunification of Germany under American hegemony.[63]

Using the Cominform (September 1947) as a tool, Stalin and Zhdanov sent foreign communists to snatch the chestnuts out of the fire for the Soviet Union. They egged on these collaborators ('you underestimate your strength') to frustrate the Marshall plan by fomenting strikes, nationalism and anti-Americanism. The party foreign policy helped the Soviet Union to gain time, amid the post-war demobilization, for the modernization of its armed forces. At the same time Stalin, in a year of hunger and want, widely used 'bread-and-butter diplomacy' to win the Polish, German, Czech and even Italian publics over to the communist side.

All the time the Soviet leadership was confident there was no immediate war threat from the United States, as long as Western Europe was in political turmoil. 'America may pull on our leg,' explained Malenkov to Italian communists, 'but war is out of the question now.' Zhdanov agreed that 'elements of blackmail prevail over the real war preparations'.[64] Even though some in the leadership talked about strangulation of the Soviet Union, the war scare came much later, in 1950–1.

The renaissance of Zhdanov was facilitated, in part, by growing crises in state and occupation policies, particularly in Germany. Throughout 1945–6 the negotiations on German government and Germany unity were deadlocked, and a struggle for the German soul was on. Before long the Soviet military administration and various state agencies ran rough-shod over traditional socio-economic structures in the Eastern zone; by February 1947 all military plants were transferred to the Soviet Union; various 'techno-science bureaux' pipelined German technology to the East.[65] In March, however, Stalin decided to step up a campaign for restoration of a unified German state: not only to be in better position to press for reparations without Allied interference, but also aiming at German nationalism.

One option was to transform SVAG (Soviet military administration in Germany), 'with its orders and peremptory commands, into a more flexible system, closer to civilian government'.[66] Another was to introduce a combination of party and occupation means to create a satellite East German regime. During 1947 the

entrenched interests of the military and the East German communists coincided with Stalin's growing belief in the latter option. Gradually the military administration, with Stalin's approval, began to increase control over communications between the Eastern and Western zones – a process that eventually escalated into the Berlin blockade in June 1948.

From this time on Stalin over-reacted to Western hostile designs as he perceived them. He did not regard an Anglo-American bloc or American military expansion as immediate threats. But the addition of Western Germany to the bloc changed calculations drastically: it was seen as a force aimed at the re-acquisition of East Germany, in other words against Soviet imperial interests. Probably nothing could have shaken Stalin out of these convictions, especially since all intelligence after the fall of 1947 reported to him tailored conclusions in a single, centralized voice.[67] According to one authoritative source, Stalin received a pre-packaged cream of information, and precious little of it. Molotov, who was much more informed, often stood up against Stalin, but never on issues of strategic importance.[68]

Stalin did not unleash the Cold War to crush domestic dissent and impose his absolute control. Yet he had to deal with the fact that 'Ivan had seen Europe', first, when the Red Army captured European capitals, and second, when the thousands of Soviet military, managers, engineers and technicians who implemented the *Pax Sovietica* in Eastern Europe dismantled German industry. Also there were five million Soviet prisoners of war and forced labourers in the West, of whom two million were repatriated. The Soviet presence in countries far more advanced socially and technologically opened the dangerous possibility that some segments of the Soviet elite would be gradually Westernized. So there were plenty of reasons, even without the Cold War, for a crack-down on intellectual life in the Soviet Union, for the hardening of East European regimes and for an Iron Curtain keeping the West out of Soviet sphere of influence altogether.[69] But the Marshall plan and the economic division of Germany became a signal for weeding out *all* 'unreliable' elements; the West became an official enemy, and all foreigners in the Soviet sphere were to be isolated and closely watched. In 1947 Stalin passed a law that regarded marriage of a Soviet citizen with a foreigner as state treason.

Was the Cold War, then, the result of the spiral of misperceptions or was it a conflict of vital interests? On the Soviet side it was both. Stalin's misperceptions played a vastly greater role in world politics than anti-Soviet moods in London and Washington, because Stalin's control over Soviet foreign policy was total. His conclusion in 1947 that a global bipolar struggle now existed between Moscow and the Anglo-Saxon bloc made the Cold War inevitable. At the same time the Soviet system's vital interests were at stake in Germany and elsewhere: the system could not afford to reveal its weaknesses and could not modify its operational modes, even when this was dictated by common sense. In a way this systemic interest prevailed over the pragmatic side of Stalin's self – first in Germany, where the Soviets threw their support behind a rootless marionette government instead of building long-term Soviet-German friendship; second, in Korea, by supporting Kim Il Sung's *reconquista* of the South.

All missed opportunites, if they existed at all, had to be located in the period from late 1945 to early 1947. Conventional Soviet interpretations of the Cold War claim that the biggest misfortune, after Stalin's 'mistakes', was the death of Franklin Roosevelt. Under Truman no reliable state-to-state relations were possible, Stalin's suspicions were set in motion, and so on.[70] New evidence from the Soviet archives does not resolve this debate, but raises new questions. How did Stalin's absolute control relate to the plurality of foreign policies in Moscow and to the group interests that represented them? To what extent did the tail wag the dog, that is to say, how far did party and occupation policies, loaded intelligence, and other systemic factors, convert Stalin's misperceptions into disastrous policies? Could anybody, even Stalin, stem the rising tide of the Cold War? Some light on these questions can be obtained by comparing the 'Stalin phase' of the cold war with the period after Stalin's death.

The Cold War after Stalin, 1953–5

Some Cold-War scholars look at the years after Stalin's death as a period of missed opportunities to reduce international tension and to check the arms race. A young American political scientist argued in 1987 that Soviet successors of Stalin pursued a strategy of Graduated Reduction of International Tensions (GRIT), which was unfortunately ignored by the United States.[71] But until now the evidence on the Soviet side did not support this argument. On the contrary, it indicated that the new Soviet leadership remained loyal to the basic guidelines of Stalin's foreign policy. As Khrushchev recalled: 'When Stalin died we went on as before, out of inertia. Our boat just continued to float down the stream, along the same course that had been set by Stalin. . . .'[72]

But some opportunities did exist, arising from the confusion in the Kremlin in the first months after Stalin's death. To hide this from the world, Moscow launched its biggest peace offensive of the Cold War. The new head of government, Georgi Malenkov, and especially secret police chief Lavrenti Beria expected to use this campaign to promote destalinization and their own political fortunes. This explains why, unlike all previous propaganda campaigns, this one included some deeds.[73] Its main elements were:

1. reduction of tensions on the immediate periphery of the Soviet Union, and diplomatic settlement in Korea;
2. redoubled efforts to prevent remilitarization of West Germany;
3. measures to alleviate the war scare at home and improve the image of the Soviet Union abroad (termination of the 'hate-America' campaign, of the 'Kremlin doctors' plot', and of the open hostility towards the diplomatic corps and foreign citizens in Moscow).

In retrospect this Soviet campaign marked a gradual, painful restoration of state foreign policy, relying on negotiations and other diplomatic means. With Stalin's death the party ideological component in Soviet behaviour was considerably weakened. Principal architects of Soviet policies – Beria and Malenkov, marginally Molotov – were mostly interested in consolidating the Stalinist state under con-

ditions they regarded as less than favourable. They faced an immediate threat of vast American nuclear superiority; over-extension of the Soviet empire in the West and East; pressing domestic issues, from the struggle for power in the post-Stalin Presidium (Politburo) to the desperate situation in the agrarian and consumer sectors of the Soviet economy.

The collective leadership, however, was torn by the struggle for power among its members. Foreign policy often was used as one of arenas of conflict between the principal rivals. The German issue remained the cause célèbre, revealing substantial differences. Stalin left German policy in disarray. On 10 March 1952 he had suggested to Western powers the reunification of Germany. But it was not a return to the state diplomacy of 1945–6; too much in Stalin's actions compromised his proposal as a ploy. At the same time Stalin was giving full support to the construction of socialism in the GDR, to help Walter Ulbricht, an Eastern German communist leader, acquire full economic, as well as political, power. He might have hoped to reach a tactical alliance with West German Social-Democratic leader Kurt Schumacher against American influence in Germany (Schumacher died just a few months before Stalin). As a result nobody knew what was on Stalin's mind, but the Ulbricht regime became a burning issue in itself. Its domestic policies were disastrous, and the Soviets had to cover its financial and social losses.

In May 1953 the Presidium (a new name for the ruling party Politburo) saw a clash between two approaches to the German question. Molotov, as foreign minister, argued it was necessary to support the GDR as a socialist state. Beria and Malenkov suggested selling the Ulbricht regime down the river, in order to get a neutral 'democratic and peaceful' Germany. This spectacular proposal was perhaps the most radical detour from previous Soviet conduct in the cold war since 1947. If accepted, it would have meant a victory of *realpolitik* over ideology, and, perhaps, the dismantling of the Cold-War bipolar structures in Europe.

Molotov's approach won, for reasons that would dominate Soviet Cold-War behaviour for decades to come. He defended the same imperial platform as under Stalin: Soviet war gains had to be guaranteed and consolidated; the status quo in Eastern Europe was possible only under socialist regimes; negotiations with the West could be conducted only from the position of strength. The Beria-Malenkov proposal ran counter to all these postulates: it sacrificed a vital part of the Soviet empire and could have meant a spread of Western presence to the Polish border, with an unpredictable impact on all Eastern Europe.

Ironically, the only person capable of changing the doctrinal basis of Soviet foreign policy was the blood-stained security chief Lavrenti Beria. If he had come to power, that would have meant a final triumph of the secret police over the party. Beria's arrest in July 1953 and liquidation in December put an end to this dubious opportunity. Weak Malenkov was gradually losing power to Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the CPSU, who, relying on the military, squashed the autonomy of the security forces.

A reunification of Germany, which was possible only with the revival of the state rationale in Soviet foreign policy, was a dead idea. Politics in the Kremlin brought about the ascendancy of the party and occupation interests in foreign policy. In addition, the uprising of workers in East Berlin in June 1953 pressed on the Soviets

a conclusion, that, without the support of Soviet bayonets, the Ulbricht regime would fall. The Kremlin leadership was convinced that American intelligence was behind the revolt. Imperialism was clearly planning a major counterattack, and the reaction to it was precisely the same as the Stalin-Zhdanov ploy in 1947. The combination of party and occupation policies, meaning unequivocal support of the communist regime and the build-up of Soviet military power, determined Soviet attitudes towards the GDR until 1988.

Another opportunity stemmed from the rivalry between Khrushchev and Molotov for control over Soviet foreign policy. Molotov, despite his support for socialism in East Germany, was always wary of party solidarity with the Soviet satellites, often at the expense of Russia. Nationalist and Bolshevik at the same time,[74] he treated Kim Il Sung, Ulbricht, Rakosi and other communist leaders as clients, who owed everything to Stalin and Russian soldiers. In his mind, 'war was expected to break out at any moment'.[75] So he looked at the satellite countries first and foremost from the military-strategic viewpoint, as a possible front line. For that reason in 1953 he stood as an advocate of the diplomatic settlement in Korea. He believed that the Korean war was the result of Stalin's miscalculations and hubris, exploited by Kim Il Sung.[76] This threat of a second front against the Soviet Union in case of a global war had to be eliminated. For the same reason he was against the neutralization of Germany and Austria: the Soviet Army would have lost important footholds for its offensive, in response to the American atomic strike.

Khrushchev's foreign policy platform, less alarmist and much more activist, had twin tasks: to consolidate the socialist camp and to promote the cause of world communism. This dualism of communist/imperial commitments later left the Soviet leadership torn between its immediate concerns, domestic and foreign, and anxiety about its hegemony over the 'progressive forces', its 'internationalist duty' towards the tottering allies, and so on. Khrushchev, like Stalin before him in Korea, was heading into a dangerous trap for a superpower, by letting commitments produced by the Cold War determine the goals of Soviet conduct.[77] It harboured a danger of over-extension and adventurism.

This, however, did not develop until much later (though as early as 1953 the Soviets greatly increased aid to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and in 1955 they began seeking alliances with 'progressive' Arab regimes in the Middle East). At first this platform made Soviet foreign policy less rigid and militarist. The desire to promote the progressive cause and to present the Soviet Union as a bulwark of peace was behind a number of initiatives:

1. Moscow recognized a diversity of ways to socialism. Khrushchev and prime minister Nikolai Bulganin went to Yugoslavia bearing excuses to Tito for past Soviet behaviour. Across Eastern Europe the state's grip on economic and cultural life slackened.

2. Soviet forces abandoned several bases in Europe and Asia. In May 1955 Molotov had to sign a treaty with Austria, recognizing its neutrality. These steps were not unprecedented: in 1945–7 the Soviet leadership also expected to gain more in Europe by demilitarization and indirect control. Besides, by 1955 it had become clear that the Soviet occupation regime in Austria had failed to

bring communists to power and Soviet holding-companies there had become an economic embarrassment.[78]

3. The Soviets began unilateral reduction of their conventional forces in Europe and came forward with a package of proposals on disarmament (May 1955).

The demilitarization and disarmament measures were clearly designed to embarrass the Eisenhower administration, busy with building strategic bases and all kinds of politico-military alliances around the Soviet bloc. The primary logic behind Soviet retreat had been expressed in 1948 by Zhdanov to the Austrian communists: 'The Soviet Union withdrew its troops everywhere (in Iran, Manchuria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, etc.), so as to deny to our enemies an opportunity to keep their troops in other countries.'[79] These steps reflected a more relaxed view of external threats – a gradual diminishing of the war scare of the early 1950s. But this relaxation did not entail any shift in politico-military doctrine, which, in essence, put a premium on territorial buffers and a pre-emptive offensive with superior conventional forces.

The development of thermonuclear weapons did not immediately revolutionize the mentality of the Soviet leadership. First, only a few people were aware of the Soviet nuclear program. After Stalin's death Beria kept it secret even from Presidium members.[80] Only after Beria had been arrested were Khrushchev and his colleagues briefed about the scope and terrible potential of the nuclear bomb. Second, in the Kremlin the nuclear arms race was still regarded as catch up or die issue. Vast American superiority and the proliferation of their strategic aviation within the reach of Soviet vital centres overshadowed everything else. Third, the leadership, particularly Malenkov, welcomed tests of the first hydrogen bomb in August 1953 as a desirable affirmation of the Soviet position of strength in the international arena.

Still, the testing did have a deep psychological impact on the management of the program. It found its expression in a response to the proposal of Eisenhower in December 1953 to build a 'peaceful atom'. The project's head, Veniamin Malyshev, and a group of nuclear scientists (I. Kurchatov, A. Alikhanov, I. Kikoin and A. Vinogradov) used this opportunity to make a statement about the insanity of nuclear war. A thermonuclear bomb, they wrote, can 'destroy all surface buildings in a city with multimillion population'. Even more dangerous was radioactive contamination and its biological consequences. 'Already in a few years the stockpiles of atomic explosive materials will be enough to create impossible conditions for life all over the globe. . . . So, one cannot deny that the threat of extinction of all life on the Earth has dawned upon mankind.'[81] On 12 March 1954 Malenkov, perhaps under the impact of this memo, publicly stated that a future world war would mean the destruction of world civilization. But at the next plenary meeting Molotov and Khrushchev denounced the speech and Malenkov had to return to traditional line, that a future war would end in destruction of imperialism.[82] In part, this was a result of Kremlin politics: Malenkov's days as a head of state were already numbered. Also, the Stalinist mentality of militarism and the inevitable victory of socialism heavily impregnated the hard core of the party and the armed forces. Several months after Malenkov's speech, Soviet military leaders attended a first military exercise in a radioactive area (a bomb of Hiroshima-type

was detonated), and came to conclusions about a possibility of offensive warfare with atomic weapons in Europe.[83] Later, at the Twentieth Party Congress Khrushchev repudiated Stalin's thesis on the inevitability of world wars, but did not mention the nuclear revolution as a reason.

What role did assessments of Western plans and intentions play in the decision-making in the Kremlin? In these years, as well as under Stalin, the Soviet intelligence and information agencies reported to a large extent what the leadership expected to hear. The biggest blind spot in Soviet assessments was the lack of distinction between a threat of pre-emptive, premeditated war and a danger of accidental conflict. Related to this was confusion between operational planning in the West and actual Western plans for war.[84] The change of administration in Washington in January 1953 added to the uncertainty and fear in Moscow. This period became a moment of maximum danger for the Soviet leadership: the decision to launch a peaceful initiative immediately after Stalin's death was dictated in part by the war scare (although most tangible proofs of this are still classified in the archives).

Yearning to find somebody to deal with, Stalin's successors were looking for powers-that-be in Wall Street, in the Chamber of Commerce and even the Council on Foreign Relations.[85] There was little hope in the Kremlin about any accommodation with Dwight Eisenhower: the new president was considered a weak character, and his foreign policy was supposedly under the complete control of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and other 'resolute enemies of a peaceful settlement of disputed issues'.[86]

The refusal of the United States to have a summit meeting with the new Soviet leaders in 1953 (as proposed by Churchill) was, perhaps, another missed opportunity. When the summit eventually took place in July 1955 in Geneva, Khrushchev had almost consolidated his power and was determined to negotiate with the West from a position of strength. An earlier meeting, at a time when the Soviets were really weak and locked in the crisis of succession, could not perhaps have yielded immediate results, but it might have led to long-term changes of the Soviet mentality – from Stalinist rigidity and militarism towards more advanced concepts of detente, stability and coexistence with the West.

Conclusion

Today, when the Cold War has come to an end through and because of the global retreat and distingegration of the Soviet Union, the question remains – could it have been prevented, stopped at some early stage, or directed into less virulent forms? For those who believe that the biggest victors in the Cold War were Germany and Japan, American strategies in 1945–55 now look short-sighted – 'prudent, but not wise', to quote US historian Melvyn Leffler.[87] Hence the search for missed opportunities to make a post-war peace with Stalin and his regime. Our research, however, has left us in doubt that such opportunities were really present.

Some Western decisions and reactions might have been different, more balanced. But they mattered little to Soviet foreign policy, whose logic and politics (a

political scientist would say 'micro-level') had their own dynamics. Of the three dimensions in Soviet foreign policy (the state, the party and the occupational), the latter two created a powerful momentum towards autarky and aggressive self-isolation.

Stalin's personal impact on Soviet foreign policy was great, his peculiarly dual mind-set as 'a synthesizer . . . of the revolutionary and the traditional'[88] pushed him inexorably up and up in the spiral of confrontation with the West. State relations with the West, despite his early hopes, ground to a halt. American economic might and nuclear monopoly did not make him cautious but, on the contrary, provoked his arrogance and animosity. The interplay between Stalin's personality and imperial politics often produced strange patterns in the Cold-War tapestry. While Stalin was in charge, he certainly could not monitor all dimensions of Soviet foreign policy. When temptations and momentum, generated by party and occupational policies would accumulate, or state policy would reach an obvious deadlock, Stalin would intervene – usually with disastrous consequences.

Typical was his reaction to the Marshall Plan. As the archives indicate, it was not a panicky backlash, spawned by weakness, but the triumph of the party over the state policy in expectation of a shift in the correlation of forces in favour of the Soviet Union. Stalin, who along with Zhdanov expected communist victories in France, Italy and Greece, cast his lot with the Cold War – and failed miserably. The same thing happened in the Far East in 1948–50 when Stalin first underestimated the potential of the Chinese communists, and then attempted to outbid Mao in promoting the 'national liberation' of South Korea, using the proxy of Kim Il Sung.

Stalin's death and the ensuing political crisis in the Soviet Union often looks like a missed opportunity. It was indeed, in a limited sense, as the United States refused to cultivate bilateral relations with those Soviet leaders who, for different reasons, favoured de-Stalinization in domestic and foreign policies. Still, the scope and motives of Soviet foreign policy remained confrontational; the peaceful entreaties of Moscow were designed as only a temporary retreat. The previous years of the Cold War had already imposed on Stalin's successors a whole range of commitments, both imperial and ideological. This was demonstrated by the role of Ulbricht's puppet regime in East Germany. The protection of the socialist GDR, an increasingly dubious asset, became a standing commitment of the Soviet leadership, to an extent that later the tail began to wag the dog. In other words, Soviet geo-strategic concerns were distorted by their imperial/socialist obligations.

All these factors, except for the unique one, Stalin, have surprisingly many parallels in American behaviour during the same and subsequent stages of the Cold War. Although this remarkable parallelism bears only remotely on the causes, meaning and outcome of the Cold War, it might shed some light on its dynamics and exhausting durability.

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Collections of new archival revelations have not yet been published, although appearance of the so-called 'Novikov Telegram' in *Diplomatic History*, 15 (Fall 1991) produced a flurry of comment. Another interesting document is the party discussion in July 1953 of the German question and other diplomatic issues published in D. N. Stickle, ed., *The Beria Affair* (New York, 1992). For archival updates consult the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, from the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, D.C.

PART TWO
THE OTHER TWO

3 *Great Britain*

DAVID REYNOLDS

'The Cold War has dominated American life since 1945', wrote historian Walter LaFeber in 1980.[1] As Anders Stephanson has shown (chapter 1), it also dominated the study of US foreign policy. In Britain, by contrast, it attracted much less attention from historians. D.C. Watt could write in 1978 that 'so far . . . there has been little or no serious writing on the Cold War in Britain'.[2] Instead, the story of post-war attitudes to the USSR and communism in general was usually treated as one facet of a larger problem, the dilemmas of Britain as a world power. Two distinguished overviews of post-war British foreign policy published in the mid-1970s illustrate this point well. For Joseph Frankel, 'Britain's postwar foreign policy is conceived of as the final phase of a long-drawn-out process of adjustment to a position of gradually decreasing power, which, in the main, consisted of the withdrawal from exposed positions in the world and of the acceptance of interdependence with Western Europe.'[3] Likewise, F.S. Northedge in 1974 considered that in the previous thirty years 'the most striking fact is, of course, the decline of British power continuously over that period', leaving Britain ready for 'a new start' within the European Community.[4] The Cold War was therefore seen as only one of the challenges to that crumbling global position, albeit of salient importance. In the words of diplomat Gladwyn Jebb in a lecture in February 1950: 'the phrase "cold war" so far as we are concerned, really involves the whole question of the maintenance of the United Kingdom's position in the world, and can therefore in the long run be equated with our general foreign policy.'[5]

There was, however, one main exception to this lack of attention. The attitude of the Labour party in the 1940s and 1950s towards the Cold War did attract some scholarly scrutiny. Following the election of July 1945, Clement Attlee formed Labour's first-ever majority government. Re-elected with reduced support in February 1950, it soldiered on until October 1951, when Winston Churchill and Conservatives were returned to power. In the inter-war years the two parties had exhibited significant differences in attitude towards the Soviet Union. Under Ramsay MacDonald, Labour extended diplomatic recognition in 1924 and resumed it again in 1929 after the Tories had broken off relations in 1927 over Soviet espionage activities. During the Second World War there had been considerable public sympathy for the Russian war effort and, on the left, suspicion of American capitalism. But the dominant figure in British diplomacy after the war was Ernest