

extent also fell short of the goal's monumental requirements. There were tactical successes and benefits, but the United States never attained the ideal world order it confidently anticipated during World War II.

America's leaders never fully realized the limits of American power in the world, and the use of foreign policy to express and solve the specific needs of American capitalism continued during the first postwar decade and thereafter, circumscribing the nature of American society and the process of social change throughout the globe. This interaction between a nation with universal objectives but finite power and the remainder of mankind is critical in modern history and the essence of the American experience.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY, STALINIST TOTALITARIANISM, AND AMERICAN UNIVERSALISM

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in a 1967 essay designed to refute revisionism and to defend the basic tenets of the traditionalist case, discovers the root causes of the Cold War in the Soviets' adherence to an uncompromising Leninist ideology, Moscow's totalitarianism, and Joseph Stalin's madness. The United States could have done little to change the course of events. Schlesinger concedes that Soviet Russia had significant economic recovery problems and security fears and that American policy was sometimes rigid, but he argues that Moscow caused the Cold War. To emphasize his points, he contrasts the American "universalist" view of world order with the Soviet "sphere of influence" approach.

For many years at Harvard University, and now a professor of history at the City University of New York, Schlesinger has also been an active politician in the Democratic party. He has served as an adviser to President John F. Kennedy and has written two books in praise of the Kennedys: *A Thousand Days* (1965) and *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (1978). A prolific

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historian, Schlesinger has also written biographies of Andrew Jackson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, as well as *The Imperial Presidency* (1973) and *The Cycles of American History* (1986).

The Cold War in its original form was a presumably mortal antagonism, arising in the wake of the Second World War, between two rigidly hostile blocs, one led by the Soviet Union, the other by the United States. For nearly two somber and dangerous decades this antagonism dominated the fears of mankind; it may even, on occasion, have come close to blowing up the planet. In recent years, however, the once implacable struggle has lost its familiar clarity of outline. With the passing of old issues and the emergence of new conflicts and contestants, there is a natural tendency, especially on the part of the generation which grew up during the Cold War, to take a fresh look at the causes of the great contention between Russia and America.

Some exercises in reappraisal have merely elaborated the orthodoxies promulgated in Washington or Moscow during the boom years of the Cold War. But others, especially in the United States (there are no signs, alas, of this in the Soviet Union), represent what American historians call "revisionism"—that is, a readiness to challenge official explanations. No one should be surprised by this phenomenon. Every war in American history has been followed in due course by skeptical reassessments of supposedly sacred assumptions. So the War of 1812, fought at the time for the freedom of the seas, was in later years ascribed to the expansionist ambitions of congressional war hawks; so the Mexican War became a slaveholders' conspiracy. So the Civil War has been pronounced a "needless war," and Lincoln has even been accused of maneuvering the rebel attack on Fort Sumter. So too the Spanish-American War and the First and Second World Wars have, each in its turn, undergone revisionist critiques. It is not to be supposed that the Cold War would remain exempt.

In the case of the Cold War, special factors reinforce the predictable historiographical rhythm. The outburst of polycentrism in the Communist empire has made people wonder whether communism was ever so monolithic as official theories of the Cold War supposed. A generation with no vivid memories of Stalinism may see the Russia of the forties in the image of the relatively mild, steady and irresolute Russia of the sixties. And for this same generation the American course of widening the war in Vietnam—which even nonrevisionists can easily regard as folly—has unquestionably stirred doubts about the wisdom of

American foreign policy in the sixties which younger historians may have begun to read back into the forties.

It is useful to remember that, on the whole, past exercises in revisionism have failed to stick. Few historians today believe that the war hawks caused the War of 1812 or the slaveholders the Mexican War, or that the Civil War was needless, or that the House of Morgan brought America into the First World War or that Franklin Roosevelt schemed to produce the attack on Pearl Harbor. But this does not mean that one should deplore the rise of Cold War revisionism. For revisionism is an essential part of the process by which history, through the posing of new problems and the investigation of new possibilities, enlarges its perspectives and enriches its insights.

More than this, in the present context, revisionism expresses a deep, legitimate and tragic apprehension. As the Cold War has begun to lose its purity of definition, as the moral absolutes of the fifties become the moralistic clichés of the sixties, some have begun to ask whether the appalling risks which humanity ran during the Cold War were, after all, necessary and inevitable; whether more restrained and rational policies might not have guided the energies of man from the perils of conflict into the potentialities of collaboration. The fact that such questions are in their nature unanswerable does not mean that it is not right and useful to raise them. Nor does it mean that our sons and daughters are not entitled to an accounting from the generation of Russians and Americans who produced the Cold War.

The orthodox American view, as originally set forth by the American government and as reaffirmed until recently by most American scholars, has been that the Cold War was the brave and essential response of free men to Communist aggression. Some have gone back well before the Second World War to lay open the sources of Russian expansionism. Geopoliticians traced the Cold War to imperial Russian strategic ambitions which in the nineteenth century led to the Crimean War, to Russian penetration of the Balkans and the Middle East and to Russian pressure on Britain's "lifeline" to India. Ideologists traced it to the Communist Manifesto of 1848 ("the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat"). Thoughtful observers (a phrase meant to exclude those who speak in Dulles about the unlimited evil of godless, atheistic, militant communism) concluded that classical Russian Imperialism and Pan-Slavism, compounded after 1917 by Leninist messianism, confronted the West

at the end of the Second World War with an inexorable drive for domination.

The revisionist thesis is very different. In its extreme form, it is that, after the death of Franklin Roosevelt and the end of the Second World War, the United States deliberately abandoned the wartime policy of collaboration and, exhilarated by the possession of the atomic bomb, undertook a course of aggression of its own designed to expel all Russian influence from Eastern Europe and to establish democratic-capitalist states on the very border of the Soviet Union. As the revisionists see it, this radically new American policy—or rather this resumption by Truman of the pre-Roosevelt policy of insensate anticommunism—left Moscow no alternative but to take measures in defense of its own borders. The result was the Cold War.

Peacemaking after the Second World War was not so much a tapestry as it was a hopelessly raveled and knotted mess of yarn. Yet, for purposes of clarity, it is essential to follow certain threads. One theme indispensable to an understanding of the Cold War is the contrast between two clashing views of world order: the "universalist" view, by which all nations shared a common interest in all the affairs of the world, and the "sphere-of-influence" view, by which each great power would be assured by the other great powers of an acknowledged predominance in its own area of special interest. The universalist view assumed that national security would be guaranteed by an international organization. The sphere-of-interest view assumed that national security would be guaranteed by the balance of power. While in practice these views have by no means been incompatible (indeed, our shaky peace has been based on a combination of the two), in the abstract they involved sharp contradictions.

The tradition of American thought in these matters was universalist—i.e., Wilsonian. Roosevelt had been a member of Wilson's subcabinet; in 1920, as candidate for vice-president, he had campaigned for the League of Nations. It is true that, within Roosevelt's infinitely complex mind, Wilsonianism warred with the perception of vital strategic interests he had imbibed from [Alfred Thayer] Mahan. Moreover, his temperamental inclination to settle things with fellow princes around the conference table led him to regard the Big Three—or Four—as trustees for the rest of the world. On occasion, as this narrative will show, he was beguiled into flirtation with the sphere-of-influence heresy. But in principle he believed in joint action and remained a Wilsonian. His hope for Yalta, as he told the Congress on his return,

was that it would "spell the end of the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence, the balances of power, and all the other expedients that have been tried for centuries—and have always failed." . . .

It is true that critics, and even friends, of the United States sometimes noted a discrepancy between the American passion for universalism when it applied to territory far from American shores and the pre-eminence the United States accorded its own interests nearer home. Churchill, seeking Washington's blessing for a sphere-of-influence initiative in Eastern Europe, could not forbear reminding the Americans, "We follow the lead of the United States in South America"; nor did any universalist of record propose the abolition of the Monroe Doctrine. But a convenient myopia prevented such inconsistencies from qualifying the ardency of the universalist faith.

There seem only to have been three officials in the United States government who dissented. One was the secretary of war, Henry L. Stimson, a classical balance-of-power man, who in 1944 opposed the creation of a vacuum in Central Europe by the pastoralization of Germany and in 1945 urged "the settlement of all territorial acquisitions in the shape of defense posts which each of these four powers may deem to be necessary for their own safety" in advance of any effort to establish a peacetime United Nations. Stimson considered the claim of Russia to a preferred position in Eastern Europe as not unreasonable: As he told President Truman, "he thought the Russians perhaps were being more realistic than we were in regard to their own security." Such a position for Russia seemed to him comparable to the preferred American position in Latin America; he even spoke of "our respective orbits." Stimson was therefore skeptical of what he regarded as the prevailing tendency "to hang on to exaggerated views of the Monroe Doctrine and at the same time butt into every question that comes up in Central Europe." Acceptance of spheres of influence seemed to him the way to avoid "a head-on collision."

A second official opponent of universalism was George Kennan, an eloquent advocate from the American Embassy in Moscow of "a prompt and clear recognition of the division of Europe into spheres of influence and of a policy based on the fact of such division." Kennan argued that nothing we could do would possibly alter the course of events in Eastern Europe; that we were deceiving ourselves by supposing that these countries had any future but Russian domination; that we should therefore relinquish Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union and

avoid anything which would make things easier for the Russians by giving them economic assistance or by sharing moral responsibility for their actions.

A third voice within the government against universalism was (at least after the war) Henry A. Wallace. As secretary of commerce, he stated the sphere-of-influence case with trenchancy in the famous Madison Square Garden speech of September 1946 which led to his dismissal by President Truman:

On our part, we should recognize that we have no more business in the *political* affairs of Eastern Europe than Russia has in the *political* affairs of Latin America, Western Europe, and the United States. . . . Whether we like it or not, the Russians will try to socialize their sphere of influence just as we try to democratize our sphere of influence. . . . The Russians have no more business stirring up native Communists to political activity in Western Europe, Latin America, and the United States than we have in interfering with the politics of Eastern Europe and Russia.

Stimson, Kennan and Wallace seem to have been alone in the government, however, in taking these views. They were very much minority voices. Meanwhile universalism, rooted in the American legal and moral tradition, overwhelmingly backed by contemporary opinion, received successive enshrinements in the Atlantic Charter of 1941, in the Declaration of the United Nations in 1942 and in the Moscow Declaration of 1943.

The Kremlin, on the other hand, thought *only* of spheres of interest; above all, the Russians were determined to protect their frontiers, and especially their border to the west, crossed so often and so bloodily in the dark course of their history. These western frontiers lacked natural means of defense—no great oceans, rugged mountains, steaming swamps or impenetrable jungles. The history of Russia had been the history of invasion, the last of which was by now horribly killing up to 20 million of its people. The protocol of Russia therefore meant the enlargement of the area of Russian influence. Kennan himself wrote (in May 1944), "Behind Russia's stubborn expansion lies only the age-old sense of insecurity of a sedentary people reared on an exposed plain in the neighborhood of fierce nomadic peoples," and he called this "urge" a "permanent feature of Russian psychology . . ."

The unconditional surrender of Italy in July 1943 created the first major test of the Western devotion to universalism. America and

Britain, having won the Italian war, handled the capitulation, keeping Moscow informed at a distance. Stalin complained:

The United States and Great Britain made agreements but the Soviet Union received information about the results . . . just as a passive third observer I have to tell you that it is impossible to tolerate the situation any longer. I propose that the [tripartite military-political commission] be established and that Sicily be assigned . . . as its place of residence.

Roosevelt, who had no intention of sharing the control of Italy with the Russians, suavely replied with the suggestion that Stalin send an officer "to General Eisenhower's headquarters in connection with the commission." Unimpressed, Stalin continued to press for a tripartite body; but his Western allies were adamant in keeping the Soviet Union off the Control Commission for Italy, and the Russians in the end had to be satisfied with a seat, along with minor Allied states, on a meaningless Inter-Allied Advisory Council. Their acquiescence in this was doubtless not unconnected with a desire to establish precedents for Eastern Europe.

Teheran in December 1943 marked the high point of three-power collaboration. Still, when Churchill asked about Russian territorial interests, Stalin replied a little ominously, "There is no need to speak at the present time about any Soviet desires, but when the time comes we will speak." In the next weeks, there were increasing indications of a Soviet determination to deal unilaterally with Eastern Europe—so much so that in early February 1944 Hull cabled Harriman in Moscow:

Matters are rapidly approaching the point where the Soviet government will have to choose between the development and extension of the foundation of international cooperation as the guiding principle of the postwar world as against the continuance of a unilateral and arbitrary method of dealing with its special problems even though these problems are admittedly of more direct interest to the Soviet Union than to other great powers.

As against this approach, however, Churchill, more tolerant of sphere-of-influence deviations, soon proposed that, with the impending liberation of the Balkans, Russia should run things in Rumania and Britain in Greece. Hull strongly opposed this suggestion but made the mistake of leaving Washington for a few days; and Roosevelt, momentarily free from his Wilsonian conscience, yielded to Churchill's pleas for a three-months' trial. Hull resumed the fight on his return, and Churchill postponed the matter.

Meanwhile Eastern Europe presented the Alliance with still another crisis that same September. Bulgaria, which was not at war with Russia, decided to surrender to the Western Allies while it still could; and the English and Americans at Cairo began to discuss armistice terms with Bulgarian envoys. Moscow, challenged by what it plainly saw as a Western intrusion into its own zone of vital interest, promptly declared war on Bulgaria, took over the surrender negotiation and, invoking the Italian precedent, denied its Western Allies any role in the Bulgarian Control Commission. In a long and thoughtful cable, Ambassador Harriman meditated on the problems of communication with the Soviet Union. "Words," he reflected, "have a different connotation to the Soviets than they have to us. When they speak of insisting on friendly governments' in their neighboring countries, they have in mind something quite different from what we would mean." The Russians, he surmised, really believed that Washington accepted "their position that although they would keep us informed they had the right to settle their problems with their western neighbors unilaterally." But the Soviet position was still in flux: "the Soviet government is not one mind." The problem, as Harriman had earlier told Harry Hopkins, was "to strengthen the hands of those around Stalin who want to play the game along our lines." The way to do this, he now told Hull, was to

be understanding of their sensitivity, meet them much more than half way, encourage them and support them wherever we can, and yet oppose them promptly with the greatest firmness where we see them going wrong. . . . The only way we can eventually come to an understanding with the Soviet Union on the question of noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries is for us to take a definite interest in the solution of the problems of each individual country as they arise.

As against Harriman's sophisticated universalist strategy, however, Churchill, increasingly fearful of the consequences of unrestrained competition in Eastern Europe, decided in early October to carry his sphere-of-influence proposal directly to Moscow. Roosevelt was at first content to have Churchill speak for him too and even prepared a cable to that effect. But Hopkins, a more rigorous universalist, took it upon himself to stop the cable and warn Roosevelt of its possible implications. Eventually Roosevelt sent a message to Harriman in Moscow emphasizing that he expected to "retain complete freedom of action after this conference is over." It was now that Churchill quickly proposed—and Stalin as quickly accepted—the celebrated division of southeastern Europe: ending (after further haggling between [Sir

Anthony] Eden and [V. M.] Molotov) with 90 percent Soviet predominance in Rumania, 80 percent in Bulgaria and Hungary, 50-50 in Yugoslavia, 90 percent British predominance in Greece.

Churchill in discussing this with Harriman used the phrase "spheres of influence." But he insisted that these were only "immediate wartime arrangements" and received a highly general blessing from Roosevelt. Yet, whatever Churchill intended, there is reason to believe that Stalin construed the percentages as an agreement, not a declaration; as practical arithmetic, not algebra. For Stalin, it should be understood, the sphere-of-influence idea did not mean that he would abandon all efforts to spread communism in some other nation's sphere; it did mean that, if he tried this and the other side cracked down, he could not feel he had serious cause for complaint. . . .

Yalta remains something of an historical perplexity—less, from the perspective of 1967, because of a mythical American deference to the sphere-of-influence thesis than because of the documentable Russian deference to the universalist thesis. Why should Stalin in 1945 have accepted the Declaration on Liberated Europe and an agreement on Poland pledging that "the three governments will jointly" act to assure "free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people"? There are several probable answers: that the war was not over and the Russians still wanted the Americans to intensify their military effort in the West; that one clause in the Declaration premised action on "the opinion of the three governments" and thus implied a Soviet veto, though the Polish agreement was more definite; most of all that the universalist algebra of the Declaration was plenty in Stalin's mind to be construed in terms of the practical arithmetic of his sphere-of-influence agreement with Churchill the previous October. Stalin's assurance to Churchill at Yalta that a proposed Russian amendment to the Declaration would not apply to Greece makes it clear that Roosevelt's pieties did not, in Stalin's mind, nullify Churchill's percentages. He could well have been strengthened in this supposition by the fact that *after* Yalta, Churchill himself repeatedly reasserted the terms of the October agreement as if he regarded it, despite Yalta, as controlling.

Harriman still had the feeling before Yalta that the Kremlin had "two approaches to their postwar policies" and that Stalin himself was "of two minds." One approach emphasized the internal reconstruction and development of Russia; the other its external expansion. But in the meantime the fact which dominated all political decisions—that is, the war against Germany—was moving into its final phase. In the weeks

after Yalta, the military situation changed with great rapidity. As the Nazi threat declined, so too did the need for cooperation. The Soviet Union, feeling itself menaced by the American idea of self-determination and the borderlands diplomacy to which it was leading, skeptical whether the United Nations would protect its frontiers as reliably as its own domination in Eastern Europe, began to fulfill its security requirements unilaterally. . . .

The Cold War had now begun. It was the product not of a decision but of a dilemma. Each side felt compelled to adopt policies which the other could not but regard as a threat to the principles of the peace. Each then felt compelled to undertake defensive measures. Thus the Russians saw no choice but to consolidate their security in Eastern Europe. The Americans, regarding Eastern Europe as the first step toward Western Europe, responded by asserting their interest in the zone the Russians deemed vital to their security. The Russians concluded that the West was resuming its old course of capitalist encirclement; that it was purposefully laying the foundation for anti-Soviet regimes in the area defined by the blood of centuries as crucial to Russian survival. Each side believed with passion that future international stability depended on the success of its own conception of world order. Each side, in pursuing its own clearly indicated and deeply cherished principles, was only confirming the fear of the other that it was bent on aggression.

Very soon the process began to acquire a cumulative momentum. The impending collapse of Germany thus provoked new troubles: the Russians, for example, sincerely feared that the West was planning a separate surrender of the German armies in Italy in a way which would release troops for Hitler's eastern front, as they subsequently feared that the Nazis might succeed in surrendering Berlin to the West. This was the context in which the atomic bomb now appeared. Though the revisionist argument that Truman dropped the bomb less to defeat Japan than to intimidate Russia is not convincing, this thought unquestionably appealed to some in Washington as at least an advantageous side-effect of Hiroshima.

So the machinery of suspicion and countersuspicion, action and counteraction, was set in motion. But, given relations among traditional national states, there was still no reason, even with all the postwar jostling, why this should not have remained a manageable situation. What made it unmanageable, what caused the rapid escalation of the

Cold War and in another two years completed the division of Europe, was a set of considerations which this account has thus far excluded.

Up to this point, the discussion has considered the schism within the wartime coalition as if it were entirely the result of disagreements among national states. Assuming this framework, there was unquestionably a failure of communication between America and Russia, a misperception of signals and, as time went on, a mounting tendency to ascribe ominous motives to the other side. It seems hard, for example, to deny that American postwar policy created genuine difficulties for the Russians and even assumed a threatening aspect for them. All this the revisionists have rightly and usefully emphasized.

But the great omission of the revisionists—and also the fundamental explanation of the speed with which the Cold War escalated—lies precisely in the fact that the Soviet Union was *not* a traditional national state. This is where the “mirror image,” invoked by some psychologists, falls down. For the Soviet Union was a phenomenon very different from America or Britain: it was a totalitarian state, endowed with an all-explanatory, all-consuming ideology, committed to the infallibility of government and party, still in a somewhat messianic mood, equating dissent with treason, and ruled by a dictator who, for all his quite extraordinary abilities, had his paranoid moments.

Marxism-Leninism gave the Russian leaders a view of the world according to which all societies were inexorably destined to proceed along appointed roads by appointed stages until they achieved the classless nirvana. Moreover, given the resistance of the capitalists to this development, the existence of any non-Communist state was *by definition* a threat to the Soviet Union. “As long as capitalism and socialism exist,” Lenin wrote, “we cannot live in peace: in the end, one or the other will triumph—a funeral dirge will be sung either over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism.”

Stalin and his associates, whatever Roosevelt or Truman did or failed to do, were bound to regard the United States as the enemy, not because of this deed or that, but because of the primordial fact that America was the leading capitalist power and thus, by Leninist syllogism, unappeasably hostile, driven by the logic of its system to oppose, encircle and destroy Soviet Russia. Nothing the United States could have done in 1944–45 would have abolished this mistrust, required and sanctified as it was by Marxist gospel—nothing short of the conversion of the United States into a Stalinist despotism; and even this would not have sufficed, as the experience of Yugoslavia and China soon showed,

unless it were accompanied by total subservience to Moscow. So long as the United States remained a capitalist democracy, no American policy, given Moscow's theology, could hope to win basic Soviet confidence, and every American action was poisoned from the source. So long as the Soviet Union remained a messianic state, ideology compelled a steady expansion of communist power. . . .

A temporary recession of ideology was already taking place during the Second World War when Stalin, to rally his people against the invader, had to replace the appeal of Marxism by that of nationalism. (“We are under no illusions that they are fighting for us,” Stalin once said to Harriman. “They are fighting for Mother Russia.”) But this was still taking place within the strictest limitations. The Soviet Union remained as much a police state as ever; the regime was as infallible as ever; foreigners and their ideas were as suspect as ever. “Never, except possibly during my later experience as ambassador in Moscow,” Kennan has written, “did the insistence of the Soviet authorities on isolation of the diplomatic corps weigh more heavily on me . . . than in these first weeks following my return to Russia in the final months of the war. . . . [We were] treated as though we were the bearers of some species of the plague”—which, of course, from the Soviet viewpoint, they were: the plague of skepticism.

Paradoxically, of the forces capable of bringing about a modification of ideology, the most practical and effective was the Soviet dictatorship itself. If Stalin was an ideologist, he was also a pragmatist. If he saw everything through the lenses of Marxism-Leninism, he also, as the infallible expositor of the faith, could reinterpret Marxism-Leninism to justify anything he wanted to do at any given moment. No doubt Roosevelt's ignorance of Marxism-Leninism was inexcusable and led to grievous miscalculations. But Roosevelt's efforts to work on and through Stalin were not so hopelessly naive as it used to be fashionable to think. With the extraordinary instinct of a great political leader, Roosevelt intuitively understood that Stalin was the *only* lever available to the West against the Leninist ideology and the Soviet system. If Stalin could be reached, then alone was there a chance of getting the Russians to act contrary to the prescriptions of their faith. The best evidence is that Roosevelt retained a certain capacity to influence Stalin to the end; the nominal Soviet acquiescence in American universalism as late as Yalta was perhaps an indication of that. It is in this way that the death of Roosevelt was crucial—not in the vulgar sense that his policy was then reversed by his successor, which did not happen, but in the

sense that no other American could hope to have the restraining impact on Stalin which Roosevelt might for a while have had.

Stalin alone could have made any difference. Yet Stalin, in spite of the impression of sobriety and realism he made on Westerners who saw him during the Second World War, was plainly a man of deep and morbid obsessions and compulsions. When he was still a young man, Lenin had criticized his rude and arbitrary ways. A reasonably authoritative observer (N. S. Khrushchev) later commented, "These negative characteristics of his developed steadily and during the last years acquired an absolutely insufferable character." His paranoia, probably set off by the suicide of his wife in 1932, led to the terrible purges of the mid-thirties and the wanton murder of thousands of his Bolshevik comrades. "Everywhere and in everything," Khrushchev says of this period, "he saw 'enemies,' 'double-dealers' and 'spies.'" The crisis of war evidently steadied him in some way, though Khrushchev speaks of his "nervousness and hysteria . . . even after the war began." The madness, so rigidly controlled for a time, burst out with new and shocking intensity in the postwar years. "After the war," Khrushchev testifies,

the situation became even more complicated. Stalin became even more capricious, irritable and brutal; in particular, his suspicion grew. His persecution mania reached unbelievable dimensions. . . . He decided everything, without any consideration for anyone or anything.

Stalin's willfulness showed itself . . . also in the international relations of the Soviet Union. . . . He had completely lost a sense of reality; he demonstrated his suspicion and haughtiness not only in relation to individuals in the USSR, but in relation to whole parties and nations.

A revisionist fallacy has been to treat Stalin as just another Realpolitik statesman, as Second World War revisionists see Hitler as just another [Gustav] Stresemann or [Otto von] Bismarck. But the record makes it clear that in the end nothing could satisfy Stalin's paranoia. His own associates failed. Why does anyone suppose that any conceivable American policy would have succeeded?

An analysis of the origins of the Cold War which leaves out these factors—the intransigence of Leninist ideology, the sinister dynamics of a totalitarian society and the madness of Stalin—is obviously incomplete. It was these factors which made it hard for the West to accept the thesis that Russia was moved only by a desire to protect its security and would be satisfied by the control of Eastern Europe; it was these factors which charged the debate between universalism and spheres of influence with apocalyptic potentiality.

Leninism and totalitarianism created a structure of thought and behavior which made postwar collaboration between Russia and America—in any normal sense of civilized intercourse between national states—inherently impossible. The Soviet dictatorship of 1945 simply could not have survived such a collaboration. Indeed, nearly a quarter-century later, the Soviet regime, though it has meanwhile moved a good distance, could still hardly survive it without risking the release inside Russia of energies profoundly opposed to Communist despotism. As for Stalin, he may have represented the only force in 1945 capable of overcoming Stalinism, but the very traits which enabled him to win absolute power expressed terrifying instabilities of mind and temperament and hardly offered a solid foundation for a peaceful world.

Daniel Yergin

AMERICAN IDEOLOGY: THE RIGA AND YALTA AXIOMS

In his *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (1977), Daniel Yergin, like Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., before him, explores the long-standing debate over whether Soviet foreign policy is driven by messianic Marxist-Leninist ideology, brutal totalitarianism, or Soviet Russia's security interests. Was the Soviet Union a world revolutionary nation with which compromise was impossible? Or was it a traditional nation-state with which negotiations were possible? Yergin identifies two sets of American assumptions that clashed in the early Cold War period. The Riga axioms, named for the Latvian city where many American diplomats had studied Soviet affairs before 1933, emphasized the intractability of the ideologically bound, authoritarian Soviets. The Yalta axioms, named for the Black Sea resort where Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin met in 1945, posited that Soviet-American cooperation in the postwar era could be realized through agreements that respected each side's interests. After Roosevelt's death, advisers who endorsed the Riga axioms gained influence with the new president, Harry S. Truman, who in early 1946 repudiated the Yalta axioms.

From Daniel Yergin *Shattered Peace*, pp. 10–11, 18–20, 29–30, 32, 35–36, 37–38, 38–39, 41–43, 55–56, 61–65, 65–66, 82–83 (no footnotes). Copyright © 1977, 1990 by Daniel Yergin. Reprinted by permission of Helen Brann Agency, Inc.

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... Underlying the debate [within the American elite over how to evaluate Soviet intentions and capabilities] were two related questions that have always confronted those in the West who have to shape policies toward the Soviet Union. They are the same two questions we face today.

The first was raised by the October 1917 Revolution itself. What is the connection between Marxist-Leninist ideology and Soviet foreign policy? The ideology proclaims that communism will inevitably inherit the entire world from capitalism, and calls upon Marxist-Leninists to be the conscious agents of the revolution. But the men who have ruled the Soviet Union were not and are not merely ideologues with many idle hours to dream about tomorrow's utopia. For the most part, they must concern themselves with today, with governing a powerful state that has pressing interests to protect, dangers to avoid, tasks to accomplish, and problems to solve. "There is no revolutionary movement in the West," said Stalin during the debates over the Brest-Litovsk treaty in 1918. "There are no facts; there is only a possibility, and with possibilities we cannot reckon."

The second question was brutally posed by the horrors of Stalinism, in particular by collectivization and the Great Terror of the 1930s. Does a totalitarian practice at home necessarily produce a foreign policy that is totalitarian in intent, committed to overturning the international system and to endless expansion in pursuit of world dominance? The policies of Adolf Hitler seemed to confirm that a powerful relationship did exist between such domestic practice and international behavior.

The changes wrought by the Second World War gave urgent and highest priority to these questions. What was the American response to be? Within the ensuing debate, there were two sets of generalizations, two interpretations that competed for hegemony in the American policy elite in the middle 1940s. At the heart of the first set was an image of the Soviet Union as a world revolutionary state, denying the possibilities of coexistence, committed to unrelenting ideological warfare, powered by a messianic drive for world mastery. The second set downplayed the role of ideology and the foreign policy consequences of authoritarian domestic practices, and instead saw the Soviet Union

behaving like a traditional Great Power within the international system, rather than trying to overthrow it. The first set I call, for shorthand, the Riga axioms; the second, the Yalta axioms.

The Riga axioms triumphed in American policy circles in the postwar years and provided a foundation for the anticommunist consensus. Charles Bohlen summarized this outlook when he wrote to former Secretary of State Edward Stettinius in 1949. "I am quite convinced myself, and I think all of those who have been working specifically on the problems of relations with the Soviet Union are in agreement," said Bohlen, "that the reasons for the state of tension that exists in the world today between the Soviet Union and the non-Soviet world are to be found in the character and nature of the Soviet state, the doctrines to which it faithfully adheres, and not in such matters as the shutting off of Lend-Lease and the question of a loan."

With a view of this sort, the effort to make a diplomatic settlement became irrelevant, even dangerous, for the Cold War confrontation was thought to be almost genetically preordained in the revolutionary, messianic, predatory character of the Soviet Union. . . .

During the 1920s a new "Soviet Service" developed in the State Department; it was anti-Bolshevik and opposed to diplomatic recognition of the USSR. Cohesive, with a strongly articulated sense of identity, this group advocated a policy of sophisticated anticommunism in an axiomatic form. Its outlook was based on personal experience, assessment, study, and pessimism. As U.S. leaders attempted, after World War II, to analyze Soviet policy and select an appropriate American course, this group's position provided one end of the spectrum of the debate. Eventually its axioms triumphed. Or, rather, they triumphed again, for they had held sway during most of the interwar years, when they had little competition, and before the problem of the Soviet Union had moved to the fore.

Initially, American officials saw the Bolshevik Revolution as a double betrayal. The revolutionaries made peace with the Germans at Brest-Litovsk early in 1918 and withdrew from the war, hurting the Allied cause. The Bolsheviks had also destroyed the hopes for the budding Russian democracy by overturning the liberal regime, which in its few months of existence had at last removed the Czarist stigma from the coalition meant to make the world safe for democracy. There was even the possibility of a third betrayal—that Lenin was a German agent.

American policymakers refused to recognize the new regime, in part because they hoped that it would be short-lived. The idea was

shared by "practically all of us," recalled DeWitt Clinton Poole, who worked on Russian affairs in the State Department after World War I, "that the cure for Bolshevism was prosperity and good order and that Bolshevism would disappear under those conditions." There was, in Poole's words, a "breach between the Bolsheviks and the rest of the world." In an important memorandum addressed to his superiors in the State Department, in August 1919, Poole marshaled the arguments against giving diplomatic recognition to this "unconstitutional" regime: "Their aim is world-wide revolution . . . Their doctrines aim at the destruction of all governments as now constituted."

This outlook was widely accepted in the government and, instead of recognizing the Bolsheviks, the State Department set up a Division of Russian Affairs, with a mandate unusual for its time: to study and interpret the great mass of often contradictory information that made its way across the breach from this new Russia. It called upon the services of professors like Samuel Harper, of the University of Chicago, one of the first academic experts on Soviet Russia.

The U.S. maintained an observation post in the American mission in the Baltic port city of Riga, which was, through the interwar years, the capital of the independent republic of Latvia. Founded in 1201 by German merchants, tucked into a gulf at the very eastern end of the Baltic Sea, Riga still resembled a city of northern Germany, with narrow cobbled streets, gabled towers, and tiny squares. It was in this mission during the 1920s that much of the research on the Soviet Union was conducted, personnel trained, and fundamental attitudes formed and nurtured; and it was from the mission that there issued constant warnings against the international menace. For these reasons, I have associated place with ideas and linked Riga to the axiomatic outlook of the Soviet Service in the State department, although the ideas would receive further elaboration and gain new intensity in the latter half of the 1930s. . . .

The effects of the purges, with their great trials and sudden disappearances, on the image of the Soviet Union held by the American diplomats cannot be exaggerated. The assassination of [Sergei] Kirov inaugurated a second phase of Stalinism—the orgy of terror, now directed against the apparatus of state and party. The unprecedented and spectacular show trials—conducted not only in the major cities but in almost every *oblast*—delivered their requisite output, an endless series of perfectly outlandish confessions, which "proved" that Trotskyites and foreign agents honeycombed Soviet society with their conspiracies.

Millions suffered directly in this holocaust. In the simple words of Roy Medvedev, "Between 1936 and 1938 Stalin broke all records for political terror." Dread became a basic ingredient of Soviet life. By 1939 the purges had helped to establish firmly a highly centralized, bureaucratic, terror-driven totalitarian state, and the entire nation had become the servant of the state and of its ruler. . . .

Leninism had posed the first of the crucial questions about the Soviet Union—what was the relationship between its ideology and its behavior in the international system? Now Stalinism underlined in a stark fashion the second of the two questions—what was the connection between domestic totalitarianism and Soviet foreign policy? As with the first, there was no easy answer. Certainly, the American diplomats were correct in their judgment about the corruption of the Stalinist system. Indeed, if anything they were restrained, for they were able to see only the surface of the terror, for it has taken many years since for Westerners to begin to learn the full extent of Stalin's tyranny. Still, those diplomats concluded that the connection between the character of the state and its foreign policy was necessary and complete, that a totalitarian system at home meant a totalitarian foreign policy. If their answer was too categoric, even mistaken, one can understand—seeing what they did of collectivization, of the purges, of the daily life of terror and hypocrisy—why they came to it. . . .

By the end of the 1930s, the image of the revolutionary state and the ideas associated with it had become firmly fixed in the minds of the Soviet specialists and in those of people, like [Ambassador William] Bullitt, who had "learned" with them. "I am inclined to believe that all of us who have been in close contact with the thing itself gradually come to a common point of view," [Loy] Henderson observed in 1940. "There are a few exceptions among the chaps who are emotional and likely to become prejudiced." So codified had these beliefs become that we can now lay them out as axioms—though we must be careful not to confuse axioms with blinding dogma.

Doctrine and ideology and a spirit of innate aggressiveness shaped Soviet policy, the specialists believed. Thus, the USSR was committed to world revolution and unlimited expansion. In consequence, the United States, not just the countries around the Russian rim, was under siege and had to be continually vigilant. The "breach" of 1919 was still very real, to be bridged only by a major transformation.

Curiously, however, for all their fanatical devotion to ideology, the Soviet leaders were cool thinkers, much cooler than their Western

counterparts. "They are realists, if ever there are any realists in this world," wrote Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt, [Joseph E.] Davies' successor, in 1940. The Soviet leaders always set their goals with supreme clarity. To an extent greater than that of most countries, Henderson wrote in 1936, Russian policy "has before it a series of definite objectives." Soviet officials are judged by "the progress" they can make "in the direction of those objectives." The Russians were always surefooted, and were masters of strategy and tactics.

The historian must here observe that the axiomatic notion that the Soviets worked by a foreign affairs plan, derived from ideology and with definite objectives, not only gave them more credit than they deserved, but also proved to be a central weakness in the assessments of Soviet policy after the war. For it led U.S. officials to exaggerate the policy coherence of the Kremlin—the role of ideology and conscious intentions. At the same time they understated the role played by accident, confusion, and uncertainty in Russian policy and also mistook mere reaction for planned action. A similar pattern, no doubt, would exist on the other side; what Americans would regard as their efforts to muddle through, in response to this or that problem, would be seen by the Soviets as part of a larger calculated policy. Indeed, one might even go further and hypothesize that there is a general tendency in international relations to exaggerate the policy coherence of an adversary. . . .

Confronted by such a potential adversary, the United States needed to adopt a stance of wariness and constant vigilance. Great patience and a counterassertiveness, an explicit "toughness," were required to cope with the Russian "personality." Steinhardt wrote to [Loy] Henderson in October 1940: "Approaches by Britain or the United States must be interpreted here as signs of weakness and the best policy to pursue is one of aloofness, indicating strength . . . As you know from your own experiences, the moment these people here get it into their heads that we are 'appeasing' them, making up to them or need them, they immediately stop being cooperative . . . My experience has been that they respond only to force and if force cannot be applied, then to straight oriental bartering or trading methods . . . That, in my opinion, is the only language they understand and the only language productive of results." The conclusion, therefore, was that diplomacy with the Soviet Union was not merely a questionable venture, but downright dangerous. . . .

The events that followed the 1939 pact—the Soviet role in the partition of Poland, the winter war in Finland, the annexation of the

Balkan states and Bessarabia—all of these steps involving deportations and further extension of the terror—confirmed the Riga viewpoint, and gave its advocates the confidence to speak even more categorically. The war with Finland, in general, mobilized anti-Soviet sentiment in the United States and chilled Russo-American relations. The abhorrence that had fed DeWitt Clinton Poole's strictures two decades before returned, and with greater force.

Even at the highest levels the Riga image regained acceptance. In the middle of 1940 Loy Henderson challenged his superiors: "Is the Government of the United States to apply certain standards of judgment and conduct to aggression by Germany and Japan, and not to Soviet aggression?" The answer came now: Germany and Russia were two of a kind; they were totalitarian dictatorships. Cordell Hull, on the eve of the German invasion of Russia, summarized the knowledge gleaned in the 1930s: "Basing ourselves upon our own experiences and upon observations of the experiences of other governments," U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union called for making "no approaches to the Soviet Government," treating any Soviet approaches with reserve, and rendering "no sacrifices in principle in order to improve relations."

These axioms seemed to explain satisfactorily Russia's role in world politics and to delineate an appropriate course for the United States to follow. They dominated interpretations of events until the German invasion of Russia in the night of June 21–22, 1941. With that, the Riga axioms suffered a startling loss of relevance. A new phase began in Soviet-American relations, which led to an experience radically different from that of the Soviet Service during the interwar years. A fresh image, based upon other assumptions, came to the fore. In addition, procedures were established for handling political problems that bypassed the State Department. . . .

United States policy toward the Soviet Union was now out of the hands of the State Department. In an environment sharply transformed from that of the interwar years, the Riga School was being made obsolete by the bold new span [Franklin D.] Roosevelt was constructing to bridge the breach between America and Russia in the postwar era.

One evening in March of 1943, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden dined privately at the White House with President Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins. The three fell into a long, ruminating conversation that continued late into the night. With an ease available only to men who number themselves among the handful of arbiters over the world's destiny, they surveyed the outstanding political questions of the

entire planet, playing with borders, shifting governments like so many chess pieces, guessing at the political shadings that would color the postwar map. "A conjuror, skillfully juggling with balls of dynamite," was the way Eden remembered Roosevelt from that night. "The big question which rightly dominated Roosevelt's mind was whether it was possible to work with Russia now and after the war," he recalled.

Roosevelt asked Eden what he thought of the "Bullitt Thesis," referring to a lengthy memorandum, based upon the Riga axioms, that Bullitt had sent to the White House several weeks earlier. Bullitt, whose enthusiasms of ten years before had long since soured into fear and alarm, predicted that the Russians would succeed in communizing the Continent—unless the United States and Britain blocked "the flow of the Red amoeba into Europe."

Eden replied that a definite answer to this question was impossible. But "even if these fears were to prove correct," he continued, "we should make the position no worse by trying to work with Russia and by assuming that Stalin meant what he said." Eden agreed with Roosevelt that it would be better to proceed on a premise contrary to Bullitt's—that it would be possible to find some system of working *with*, rather than *against*, the Soviet Union. Roosevelt also did not think that a categorical answer existed. He believed Soviet goals and methods would be partly determined by Stalin's own estimate of American and British intentions and capabilities.

Certainly the most important goal of Roosevelt's wartime diplomacy was the establishment of a basis for postwar cooperation with the Soviet Union. He had a clear conception of the postwar settlement he wanted and how it might be achieved. This conception was also governed by a number of axioms, some of which had predated the war, some of which had emerged in the course of the war. Roosevelt's axioms were always more tentative than those of Riga, but at their center point, there also lay an image—derived from experience, assessment, and optimism—of Soviet Russia. . . .

As already noted, Roosevelt believed the peace had to be based upon the realities of power, which meant that it would have to be grounded in a Great Power consortium. The British easily fit into this design. The key question concerned the role of the Soviet Union. Here Roosevelt operated on a series of axioms very different from those of the Soviet specialists in the State Department.

He believed that Russia could no longer be considered an outsider, beyond the pale of morality and international politics. What that

meant in the context of the war was already obvious. The President recognized that the major land war in Europe was taking place on the Eastern Front; it was there that Germany could be defeated, with a consequent reduction in American casualties. A kind of comparative advantage set in. The Russians specialized in men, dead and wounded, while the United States pushed its industrial machine to new limits. A year after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Roosevelt declared that "Russian endurance" was "still the main strength."

The war, which promised to bequeath a great power vacuum in Europe and at the same time erased all doubts about Russia's power and capabilities, made inevitable the emergence of the Soviet Union as a paramount and indispensable factor in the postwar international system, especially in Europe. Thus, the alternative to a broad understanding would be a postwar world of hostile coalitions, an arms race—and another war.

Some such understanding was possible because the breach that had opened at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution had narrowed and could narrow further. Roosevelt thought of the Soviet Union less as a revolutionary vanguard than as a conventional imperialist power, with ambitions rather like those of the Czarist regime. In other words, Roosevelt emphasized the imperatives of statehood in Soviet policy, rather than the role of ideology. In contrast to the Riga axioms, he proceeded on the proposition that a totalitarian domestic system did *not* inevitably and necessarily give rise to a totalitarian foreign policy. As important, he assumed less coherence and purposefulness in the Kremlin's behavior in international politics than did those who operated on the Riga axioms. Since the Soviet Union was not so much a world revolutionary state, Roosevelt believed the Grand Alliance could be continued after the war in the form of "business-like relations." He also knew that the Soviet Union would be preoccupied after the war with its vast task of reconstruction, and would be desperately interested in stability, order, and peace.

Successful collaboration among the Great Powers would necessitate the allaying of many years of Soviet hostility and suspicion. Roosevelt regarded the dissipation of distrust as one of his most important challenges. The United States could prove its good faith by sticking to its agreements. Even if the West could not deliver immediately on its promised Second Front, at least it could provide the aid it had pledged—and, in that way, also do itself a considerable favor. Again and again, Roosevelt ordered that the production and delivery of lend-

lease goods be speeded up, that the quantities be increased. It was a battle down the line. "Frankly," the President sharply reminded a subordinate, "if I were a Russian, I would feel that I had been given the run-around in the United States." . . .

"Roosevelt weather" was the term applied by FDR's political staff to the favorable weather that seemed to signal victory on each of those four November days that he had been elected President. The Russians adopted the same phrase to describe the unseasonably mild climate in the first two weeks of February 1945 over the Crimea, which juts down into the Black Sea from the underside of the Ukraine. At the seaside resort of Yalta, on the southern coast of the Crimea, the last Czar had maintained his summer palace. There the Big Three gathered for their final wartime conference, between February 4 and 11, under bright, clear skies that seemed a harbinger of victory, not only in the war but also over the unfamiliar terrain of postwar international politics. FDR brought his practicality to bear, in an effort to make firm the foundations of his Grand Design. The pleasant days and nights matched the climate of the conference itself—auguring victory for Roosevelt's foreign policy.

Marking the high tide of Allied unity, the Yalta Conference was a point of separation, a time of endings and beginnings. The conclusion of the war was at last in sight; the remaining days of the Third Reich were clearly numbered. Stalin, to the relief of the Joint Chiefs, gave further assurances that Russia would enter the war against Japan some three months after fighting ended in Europe, in exchange for certain territorial concessions in the Far East.

Aside from that central question, the major issues at Yalta concerned the politics of a postwar world. The decisions waited upon the energies of three tired men. "I think Uncle Joe much the most impressive" Alexander Cadogan, permanent undersecretary of the British Foreign Office, wrote to his wife. "The President flapped about and the P.M. boomed, but Joe just sat taking it all in and being rather amused. When he did chip in, he never used a superfluous word, and spoke very much to the point."

By and large, the Russians made more concessions than the West, and when they presented their own proposals, they were, in fact, sometimes simply returning proposals delivered to them at earlier dates by the Western powers.

The Russians, remembering their difficulties in the League of Nations, which culminated in their expulsion, were worried that they

would find themselves isolated in a new international organization controlled by the United States and the United Kingdom through their allies, clients, dominions, and "Good Neighbors." The Russians accepted an American compromise, whereby the Great Powers retained a veto in the Security Council, and the Western leaders agreed to support the admission of two or three constituent Soviet republics. The British won assent to a modified Great Power role for France, including both a zone of occupation in Germany and participation on the German Control Commission.

Roosevelt successfully pushed for a "Declaration on Liberated Europe," an ill-defined lever for Western intervention in Eastern Europe, but which mainly interested Roosevelt as a device to satisfy public opinion at home. He took it up only after he had turned down a more binding State Department proposal for a High Commission on Liberated Areas because "he preferred a more flexible arrangement." Accord also followed on a number of less pressing points.

Two issues proved more difficult: the central question of Germany and the endless Polish imbroglio. Poland, the emblem of the early Cold War, took up more time than any other issue at the conference. The Allies did agree that the Russian-Polish border should be moved westward, to the Curzon Line, and, though not in very precise terms, further consented to compensation for Poland in the form of what had been German territory on its west.

More difficult was the nature of Poland's new government, that is, whether to install the Western-supported London exile government, bitterly anti-Soviet, or the Lublin government, little more than a Soviet puppet.

Britain went to war so "that Poland should be free and sovereign," said Churchill. Britain's only interest, he assured the other leaders, was "one of honor because we drew the sword for Poland against Hitler's brutal attack." Of course, he added, Polish independence could not be a cover for "hostile designs" against the Soviet Union.

Stalin, however, was still interested in practical arithmetic. "For Russia it is not only a question of honor but of security." As to honor—"We shall have to eliminate many things from the books." As to security—"Not only because we are on Poland's frontier but also because throughout history Poland has always been a corridor for attack on Russia." Twice in the last thirty years "our German enemy has passed through this corridor."

Churchill replied that he himself had little fondness for the London Poles, which was one element in the general weakness of the Western position on the Polish question. "Admittedly," a British diplomat commented, "Uncle Joe's masterly exposition of the Russian attitude over Poland sounded sincere, and as always was hyperrealistic."

At last, the Allies agreed to "reorganize" the Lublin government with some men from London and from the Polish underground, but details were left to Molotov and the two Allied ambassadors in Moscow to work out.

For Germany, the Russians pushed for dismemberment; in substance, their proposal was the suggestion Roosevelt had made at Tehran. The two Western governments went along, reluctantly.

The Russians also insisted on receiving reparations from Germany. Postwar planning in the U.S. had generally rejected reparations. America certainly had no need for reparations; and reparations had been in bad repute in both Britain and the United States since J. M. Keynes' *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, published shortly after the First World War. "We are against reparations," Roosevelt had bluntly said before Yalta.

At Yalta, however, the Western countries met a Soviet Union urgently determined to exact reparations. As early as September 1941, in conversations with Averell Harriman and Lord Beaverbrook, Stalin had asked flatly: "What about getting the Germans to pay for the damage?" Stalin's "second revolution" had been an industrial revolution, an upheaval that had cost much in human life and in the manner in which the survivors lived. Stalin's interest in reparations was compensatory as well as punitive; he wanted help in the huge task of reconstruction that lay ahead. By 1945, the Germans had wrought enormous destruction. Twenty million people had been killed—though it was years before the Kremlin revealed the full magnitude. Seven million horses had been lost, as were 20 out of 23 million pigs. Destroyed were 4.7 million houses, 1710 towns, and 70,000 villages. Twenty-five million people were homeless. Sixty-five thousand kilometers of railway tracks had been ruined; 15,800 locomotives and 428,000 freight cars had been either demolished or damaged.

Here, however, the Soviet concern went beyond the simple arithmetic of devastation. Reading through the minutes of meeting upon meeting during the war and after, the historian must conclude that reparations were not only a central issue, but also a highly significant symbol in Moscow's postwar vision—although, always, only of

peripheral interest to the Americans. Perhaps the Russians could never understand the nature of American concern for Eastern Europe; similarly, the Americans could never comprehend the emotional intensity the Russians attached to reparations. Reparations may well have been as much a "test case" for the Russians as Eastern Europe was to become for the Americans.

At Yalta, Churchill adamantly opposed reparations, warning that England "would be chained to a dead body of Germany." Concerned about economic consequences and criticism at home, Roosevelt wavered until Hopkins shoved him a note: "The Russians have given in so much at this conference that I don't think we should let them down." The President finally agreed to set \$20 billion, half for the Russians, as the basis for further discussions, though with the understanding that reparations were to be in goods, production, and equipment, and not in cash. . . .

Roosevelt was a realist; he knew that everything depended upon implementation of the accords, and that, in turn, would depend upon intentions and future alignments. He was gambling. He hinted at this caution in a note he scribbled to his wife the day he left Yalta: "We have wound up the conference—successfully I think."

That said, there can be no question but that Roosevelt departed the Crimea optimistic and satisfied. Basing his conclusions on conversations with Roosevelt, Admiral [William] Leahy decided that Roosevelt had "no regrets about what the Russians were to get. He thought they were valid claims." But FDR's satisfaction extended beyond the agreements themselves. He regarded the conference as a hopeful answer to the question about postwar cooperation with Russia that he had posed to Eden two years earlier, in the course of their after-dinner survey. This summit meeting in the Crimea had been a testing and, more important, a confirmation of what we might thus call Franklin Roosevelt's "Yalta axioms."

Stalin himself had gone out of his way to endorse the premise that underlay FDR's Grand Design. The dictator had pointed to "a more serious question" than an international organization. One should not worry too much about small nations. "The greatest danger was conflict between the three Great Powers." The main task was to prevent their quarreling and "secure their unity for the future."

It is true that Roosevelt, once home, delivered a speech to Congress, pure in its Wilsonianism, in which he declared that Yalta spelled the end of unilateral action, exclusive alliances, spheres of influ-

ence, power blocs, and "all other expedients that had been tried for centuries—and have always failed."

But, out of public earshot, he continued to stress the realities of power and the basic structure of a Great Power consortium. Two days after his speech to Congress, talking privately about Germany, he said, "Obviously the Russians are going to do things their own way in the areas they occupy." But he hoped that a general framework of collaboration would prevent the Soviet sphere of influence from becoming a sphere of control. . . .

[V. M.] Molotov saw the President [Truman] at five-thirty on April 23, [1945]. Struggling to follow Davies' advice in an unexpectedly tense situation, he tried to outline the Russian case, especially on the Polish question.

The President, however, was in no mood for ambiguities. Three days before, having discussed matters with Harriman and Stettinius, he had declared: "We could not, of course, expect to get 100 percent of what we wanted," but he felt that "on important matters . . . we should be able to get 85 percent." Now, bent on obtaining that chunk, Truman brushed over Molotov's statement and instead lectured the Russian in what Leahy described as "plain American language." The Russians had to stick to their agreements, as interpreted in Washington. Relations could no longer be "on the basis of a one-way street."

Molotov turned white at the dressing down. "I have never been talked to like that in my life," he said.

"Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that," Truman replied curtly.

Those who had urged their views on Truman were pleased by his performance. Leahy noted in his diary that the "President's strong American stand" left the Russians only two courses of action: "either to approach closely to our expressed policy in regard to Poland" or to drop out of the new international organization. He went on to add: "The President's attitude was more than pleasing to me, and I believe it will have a beneficial effect on the Soviet attitude toward the rest of the world. They have always known we have the power, and now they should know that we have the determination to insist upon the declared right of all people to choose their own form of government." On the same day, Eden had assured Churchill that "the new President is not to be bullied by the Soviets."

Arnold A. Offner

HARRY S TRUMAN AS PAROCHIAL NATIONALIST

As chief diplomat for the United States at a time of wrenching change and critical decisions, President Harry S Truman commands our attention. Some admiring historians have claimed that he prevented a third world war through courageous, sensible, and necessary policies in the face of aggressive foreign adversaries; others have concluded that he contributed greatly to the onset of a Cold War that might have been tempered through cautious and patient diplomacy. Who was Harry S Truman, what were his assumptions, and did his style of leadership matter? More generally, what weight do we give to a powerful individual in an explanation of postwar world conflict that also includes analysis of competing national interests and ideologies and of international systemic causes? (Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., asks the same questions above about Joseph Stalin). Arnold A. Offner tackles such questions in a critical study of Truman as a parochial nationalist who seemed better suited to Missouri politics than to global politics.

Arnold A. Offner, professor of history at Boston University, is writing a study of Harry S Truman and the transformation of American foreign policy. Among his published works are *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938* (1969), which won the Phi Alpha Theta Book Award for the best first book that year, and *The Origins of the Second World War: American Foreign Policy and World Politics, 1917-1941* (1975).

From the initial American-Soviet confrontations in Europe at the end of the Second World War through the bitter Korean War, President Harry S Truman directed American foreign policy in a manner that profoundly affected the nation's—and the world's—history. In recent years President Truman's public reputation has grown extremely high. During his last year in office, however, pollsters found that his "favorable" rating among the public had plummeted to a mere 25 percent, with about 55 percent rating his performance negatively. So bad was it that Democratic party leaders urged him not to seek reelection in 1952.

"The Truman Myth Revealed: From Parochial Nationalist to Cold Warrior." Revised paper first presented at the Annual Meeting of Organization of American Historians, March 1988. Copyright Arnold Offner. Reprinted with permission of the author.