

“LONG ESSAY” ON COLD WAR HISTORY

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A Brief Note to Readers:

*When H-Diplo commissioned Lloyd Gardner to write a review of John Lewis Gaddis's book *We Now Know*, the result was this lengthy and wide-ranging essay on Cold War history. Professor Gardner's "Long Essay" originally appeared in five parts on the H-Diplo list.*

John Lewis Gaddis. *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. x, 425. \$30.00 ISBN 0-19-878070-2.

Reviewed for H-Diplo by **Lloyd Gardner**, October 1997.

Perhaps I should begin by advising subscribers that what follows is not really a book review in the usual sense; it is more of a meditation on the issues raised and arguments put forward in John Gaddis' new book. I assume the editors had something like this in mind when they invited me to contribute. And I also assume, perhaps unfairly, that H-Diplo faithful have already read several reviews of *We Now Know*, if not the book itself. Those preliminaries out of the way, we may turn to the central proposition.

Imagine how the history of World War II would have looked, John Gaddis asks readers, had historians been forced to stop writing in 1942? But that was the case with historians of the Cold War, many of whom, it is suggested here (and in Gaddis' other writings), ventured too far out on shaky revisionist limbs. Everyone must now recognize, he points out, that previous efforts (orthodox and revisionist alike) to come to grips with the origins and progress of the Cold War were deeply flawed because we didn't know what secrets the Soviet archives contained. Only now--after the Cold War has actually become "history"--can we proceed to assess the motivations of the participants properly.

This is a thought-provoking assertion. How broad and exclusive is it meant to be? Still more challenging is the matter of whether it is access to archives or how the Cold War "came out" that permits us to evaluate evidence of motivations. Let us leave the second for later consideration. There were actually a number of books on the background to World War II written without archival access that still repay attentive reading. John Wheeler-Bennett's *Munich* comes to mind, as does a very different sort of book, Franz Neumann's *Behemoth*. They are useful examples, dealing, of course, in the former instance with the climactic months before the outbreak of war, and in the latter with an interpretation of the Nazi system itself. And there are

others, for example, Paul Schroeder's study, *The Axis Alliance and Japanese-American Relations, 1941*, an exceptionally acute evaluation of policymakers' thinking that relied on analysis of the Magic intercepts and the Pearl Harbor Hearings. Later this month, Richard Overy's *Russia's War: Blood Upon the Snow*, based almost entirely on print sources (including document collections and memoirs), will be published, giving us a challengingly new interpretation of Stalin's personality and its role in shaping Soviet foreign policies. Are these outdated by new finds in the archives? Yes, surely, especially in the first three examples, but historians usually work at their craft by a layering process. As a rule, we are skeptical of notions that something like a cache of letters in a French monastery will overturn our general understanding of the nature of feudalism. Perhaps it is this quality that accounts for the rather later maturation of historians as compared to our brethren in the "hard sciences."

In that vein, what are we to conclude about even a tentative claim that the volume and value of the archival materials recently extracted from the iceberg-like Russian archives are such as to reconfigure the American side of the Cold War as well? Or, even more ambitiously, a conclusion that there was only one side to the Cold War? While the outpouring of documents from Russia and China supporting the "new" Cold War history, as Gaddis describes his and other recent writings, may now have reached "if not a flood, at least a substantial inundation," we might pause just a moment at the outset to consider the numbers involved and the provenance or context of many of these materials, especially in the light of such strong claims. The numbers, we can probably agree,--as compared to the limited number of sources for students of ancient history say--are quite large, but compared to what remains unearthed--are minuscule, far less, certainly, than what is open at a single presidential library in the United States, or, indeed, than what has been printed in just a few volumes in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. This is not to minimize the importance of the new documentation. But history, it bears repeating, is a layering process. Discovery of new sources leads us like painstaking cartographers to construct more accurate perceptions of global complexity.

Historical observation also asks us, like geographers, to contextualize. We now have one or two reasonable dates for ending the Cold War. Do we have similar agreement about when it began? Gaddis finds, for example, that Stalin's "propensity for cold wars" was firmly rooted long before he met, or even heard of, Harry Truman. (*We Now Know*, p. 294.) Propensity, one supposes he means but without opportunity until the end of World War II removed the obstacles to opportunity. But even that contention brings with it the question of when the Cold War started, if not why. And the opening of Russian archives for the early post-revolutionary years has enabled other historians to posit the Cold War's origins in a mutual antagonism between Lenin's debt-repudiating (in the broadest sense) regime and a fearful West that sometimes turned to fascism (however fearfully or distastefully) as a buffer against the twin dangers of war and social upheaval. It is asserted, indeed, that a better way of understanding the sequence of tragic events than arguing the results of the Second World War produced the Cold War, would be to put it the other way around: The "early" Cold War produced World War II, not all by itself, of course, but in conjunction with the related forces of depression and paralyzing internal division.

David S. Foglesong, who used both new Russian documents gleaned from Moscow archives, as well as manuscript material from neglected repositories in this country, makes a powerful case that America's role in the "intervention" was not restricted to several thousand troops in Siberia,

nor to the purposes declared, but involved using secret agents as well in schemes to bring down the regime. When the intervention failed, the early Cold War began. To reformulate Gaddis' conclusion, a Western propensity for Cold Wars was there before Herbert Hoover or Charles Evans Hughes had ever heard of Joseph Stalin. (David S. Foglesong, *America's Secret War Against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917-1920*, Chapel Hill, 1995.)

The West's attitude toward the heretics more than fulfilled the predictions Bolshevik leaders endlessly propagandized about inevitable responses to their revolution. In this sense, Stalin came to power *in medias res*, and used that evidence of animosity to further his own personal ambitions--but the record also reveals his determination to dominate the Comintern to prevent its firebrands from getting in the way of Russian recovery. In this he was going at least part way towards meeting Western concerns. His key decisions were thus hardly the products of solipsist illusions denying reality. Even more than the military intervention against the Bolsheviks, it was the aftermath at the 1922 Genoa Conference that set the agenda for East-West "relations" in the interwar period. It was at that conference, which the United States refused even to attend, that the Soviet delegates were presented with a list of demands that they re-do the revolution to put back in place the "rules" of capitalist behavior, and then—perhaps—recognition and aid would be forthcoming. The West even had additional demands for repayment of war loans that would have put Russia into a receivership not unlike (in some ways more stringent than) the prewar Bankers' Consortium program for containing the end of the classical Prime Minister David cajolery skills failed him Washington stood aloof-- Russians bolted the rowed across the lake to meeting with other pariah state,

the Chinese Revolution at age of imperialism. As Lloyd George--whose this time when feared would happen, the Genoa Conference and Rapallo—to a fateful representatives of the Germany. Perhaps it was not a missed opportunity, but more than anything else Genoa revealed that the West was bitterly divided internally, and had no policy towards the revolution except fear and outdated assumptions. Inside Russia, Genoa aided those who argued for isolation and forced industrialization. (For elaboration, see Lloyd C. Gardner, *Safe for Democracy: The Anglo-American Response to Revolution, 1913-1923*, New York, 1984, pp. 340-44.)

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Little changed over the next twenty years. Munich and the Nazi-Soviet pact were confirmations of earlier maneuvers begun at Genoa. In a spate of recent articles, Michael Jabara Carley carries the argument from the 1920s into the "low, dishonest" decade of appeasement. Like Foglesong, Carley has already spent a good deal of time in various Moscow archives. He never excuses the Soviet Union, nor does he attempt a moral equivalency argument, but he does use new archival materials from Moscow (and Paris and London) to bolster the case that Stalin's foreign policies were essentially pragmatic responses to a world riven by ideological confrontation. The experiences of those years were not washed away by a war that began, in Soviet eyes, after a failed effort to "appease" Germany in the West. Chamberlain and Stalin both fell for "peace in our time." Anglo-French policymakers were obsessed with the thought that Moscow wanted to lure the West into a war with the purpose of spreading Communism across Europe. It may be remembered as well that Washington's undiplomatic first ambassador to the Soviet Union,

William C. Bullitt, fully shared in that belief, moved to Paris by Roosevelt, spent most of his time discouraging and dispelling French belief in any American support for a stand against Germany, and then urging Roosevelt at the time of Munich to get in touch with the British and German ambassadors to convince them that the world of Shakespeare and Beethoven had nothing in common with the inhabitants of lands east of the Polish marshes. (Among Carley's many articles, several are directly on this subject, see, for example, "The Early Cold War, 1917-1939," *Relevance*, Fall, 1996, pp. 6-11; and, "End of the 'Low, Dishonest Decade': Failure of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet Alliance in 1939," *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 45, 1993, pp. 303-41.)

During the war the Russians were excluded from any meaningful role in the precedent-setting Italian surrender and its aftermath. Churchill and Stalin then agreed at the Tolstoy Conference that they would respect a dividing line across Europe, Russia to protect its expanded security zone in Eastern Europe, Churchill to secure breathing space for the reconstruction of war-ravaged political institutions. It was a deeply flawed arrangement, as was its successor Yalta. The nonsense of sharing out spheres of influence on some spur of the moment ratios had little rationale beyond exigency, but there was plenty of that. There were, to start with, many asymmetries between the countries to the East and West of the Tolstoy/Yalta lines. By and large the nations with democratic traditions were in the West, those lacking such an advantage were in the East. Western Europe was industrial; Eastern Europe agricultural. And so on. But both sides of Europe had experienced years of internal political conflict between left and right. And that conflict was what Stalin and Churchill were trying to bring under control, by shielding their spheres of influence from external agitation, lest the forces of nationalism join with ideology to produce chaos.

All very well, Gaddis might argue (or might not), but one needs to confront the Stalin problem. A second major contention of *We Now Know* is that historians cannot escape this towering figure of evil. But what was the true nature of this evil? Unfortunately, for revisionist interpretations that posit a ruthless, but essentially cautious Stalin, it is multiplex—with as many theaters as a modern Loews or UA. In one we see Stalin the heir to Ivan the Terrible, in another Marx's disciple plots the world revolution, in a third a Freudian Stalin nurses his grievances against the capitalist world, in a fourth Stalin . . . well, you get the idea. "If one could have eliminated Stalin," Gaddis muses at the end of his book, "alternative paths become quite conceivable." But then he reconsiders. We must also account for Mao, he reminds himself and his readers, a kindred megalomaniac who also imprinted himself on his country with similar lasting effect. (*We Now Know*, p. 294.) Perhaps there is a wedge here, a slight indication that there are also problems with Stalin-centered Cold War history. The great advantage of Stalin-centered history is that we need only visit the adjoining multiplex theater whenever what is happening on the screen fails to convince. Are there serious shortcomings?

Unlike the domestic experiences of political leaders in the West, there were no checks or balances on Stalin to prepare him for the tasks of successful empire management, it is pointed out. No one dared to educate him about the process of compromise in diplomacy, nor about minimal respect for the human dignity of the subjects in the ancient lands under his control. This asymmetrical division of the world, it thus appears, gives us a serviceable explanation for the Western "empire by invitation," and the Eastern "empire by imposition." And here is where the history of the purges and terror become important for understanding the Cold War, not in the

first instance because of the horrendous impact on Stalin's victims (living as well as dead)--a subject all its own--but because the blood drenched system he created destroyed independence of thought among Soviet leaders, and made it virtually impossible for those answering to Stalin, directly or indirectly, to take into account the views of foreign leaders of whatever persuasion, "capitalist" or "communist." "What he wanted," wrote Andrei Gromyko years afterwards, "was his own gallery of monochromatic, even cemetery-dull, minions, who would belong to him and him alone, to Stalin, the man with the iron fist and the iron will." (*Memoirs*, trans. By Harold Shukman, New York, 1989, p. 373.) In the end this was a tremendous handicap for the Soviets in the Cold War, because even after Stalin's death the cult of personality exercised a withering influence on the collective that succeeded him. Seeking to protect themselves against a new despot, they recoiled from innovation, inevitably degenerating into an aging oligarchy shielded by their own dictate from an understanding of the outside world-- and, perhaps even worse, shut off from their own citizens by Marxist slogans as opaque as the shades on their Zil limousines speeding back and forth across protected Kremlin routes. No one could cope with such an abnormal being, nor expect anything to work except containment. Once the Soviets had the bomb, the life of Stalin's ill begotten changeling empire was prolonged. The bomb kept it going. And so the West choose to meet the challenge by accepting its duration over forcing its destruction with nuclear holocaust.

Gaddis elaborates the argument well.

Still, Stalin-centered history presents a set of problems that make it difficult if one is thus to account for the Cold War in terms of the politics of personality. What sort of regimes would have been tolerated in Eastern Europe after World War II had Stalin lost the crucial vote in the wake of Lenin's death? Conversely, would different decisions about reparations or the Russian role in Italy and Japan have made any difference to Stalin? Stalin told Yugoslav leaders (when he was still speaking to them before the split) that this war was different: the victors imposed their social system as far as their armies reached. The Russian delegates may not have been very sophisticated economists at the Bretton Woods Conference, but they could see that the United States was aiming at an integrated world market, and the British were only hoping, as Harold MacMillan put it, to play the role of Greek wisemen in this new Roman Empire. Imperially-minded leaders and societies have usually find a reason for intervention—only the methods change. The notion of empire by invitation would have appealed certainly to apologists for the British raj in India, or the French civilizing mission in Indochina, or to Henry Cabot Lodge describing America's duty to the Philippines. But more than that, those who invite the foreigner's aid in local struggles, soon find they have assumed obligations more binding than bargained for. But this is true of both the object and subject of the imperial relationship.

Part II

I wish at this point to engage three prominent specific issues discussed in *We Now Know*. These are: the Russians in Germany, atomic diplomacy, and Korea. In each, Gaddis has posited the changing position of the Soviets as largely the product of Stalin's remarkably shaky equilibrium, tenuously balanced as it was between realism and revolution.

When Russian forces fought their way into Germany, we are reminded, Stalin had already thought ahead to Germany as a "Cold War problem," not a postwar problem. There is ample evidence that American policymakers also were not lackadaisical in regarding Germany as a prewar-postwar continuum to be resolved somewhere in the ideological territory between New Deal stylish decartelization policies and concern for rapid recovery. (See, Regina Gramer, "The Second New Deal and the Americanization of 'West' Germany from 1938 through 1953: A Study in Trans-National Conflict Resolution," Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1996). In a sense, American planning actually went back to policy debates that began in the Progressive Era. So if Soviet planners had to deal with competing forces of revenge and socialist integration, so American policymakers pondered how to rehabilitate Germany as a contributor to the world economy in ways that would forever remove the National Socialist poison from the world's blood stream. Stalin apparently set the Soviet goal as socialist integration. All of Germany would have to be incorporated into the Russian sphere—where it would replicate the Soviet political system. At one point he assured Yugoslav Communists that all of Germany "must be ours." On another occasion, however, he told the same parties that controlling Germany was not an easy matter. "Give them twelve to fifteen years and they'll be on their feet again . . . and then we'll have another go at it."

East German guides in the 1970s and 1980s were eager to point out to English-speaking visitors to Potsdam that only Stalin among the Big Three had steadfastly opposed the partition of Germany. Pointing to illustrative maps on the wall of the room where the wartime allies met for the last time, the guide "revealed" yet once more the designs the West had on Germany, and Stalin's resistance to their nefarious plans. A recent study of Russian policy makes the effective point that the Russian dictator's policies assured instead that the German people would never be reconciled to Soviet control. Witnessing Soviet pillage and rape, a political commissar told a horrified associate. "This will cost us a million roubles a day. Political roubles." (Ann Tusa, *The Last Division*, New York, 1997, p. 13.) Another frequently cited work on Russian treatment of the East Germans cites notes of conversations with Stalin as early as June, 1945, insisting that the reinstalled KPD (German Communist Party) should dedicate itself to the "unity of Germany." But subsequent KPD statements left open the form of government, "neither Soviet nor capitalist" that was expected to emerge after the ashes cooled. And it concludes that throughout the occupation period Moscow never was able to reconcile its conflicting attitudes toward Germany's future, whether Sovietization of the Eastern zone, the creation of a unified Germany run by the Socialist Unity Party (SED), or a neutralized Germany. "Soviets' actions in their zone of occupation were simultaneously the causes and results of deteriorating Allied relations." (Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949*, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 258, 465-6, 468.)

But what about the Communists still waiting in the wings in the rest of Europe, waiting, supposedly for the summons from Moscow to rise up against their masters? Was there even any attempt to coordinate policies over Germany? Gaddis argues that the Soviet dictator expected a swing to the left in Europe that would weaken the West, allowing a shift in the correlation of forces. And other historians have suggested that his mawkish behavior when Charles de Gaulle came to Moscow in 1944 indicated that he somehow imagined Western Communists would come into their own after the war, and do his revolutionary work for him. Washington policymakers were obsessed with the threat. But what were the actual signals from the Kremlin

towers? Between de Gaulle and Stalin a bargain was worked out, which both saw as advantageous, for Communist leader Maurice Thorez to return to France—as part of the united front. After the war, no signal came from Moscow to change that stance. Stalin and Molotov are frequently quoted in recent studies asserting that the First World War brought about a major defection from the capitalist world order, Russia, the Second brought in its wake the Chinese Revolution, and the third would vanquish capitalism from the earth. Stalin's attitude (and actions!) towards Western Communists, argues Gabriel Kolko, secured exactly the opposite result: "It probably remains the greatest irony of this century that the principal political outcome of the First World War in the form of the USSR led to the neutralization of the potentially far more drastic political consequences that were likely to have resulted from the much more destructive conflagration that followed it." (*Century of War: Politics, Conflict, and Society Since 1914*, New York, 1996, p. 308.)

Defiant Stalinist to the end, the dark Methuselah of the Bolsheviks, V.M. Molotov cleared up a related point that had troubled historians. Moscow demanded a "Second Front" in 1942 when the Kremlin knew full well the West could not mount it in 1942, he told an interviewer, and did not mount it in 1943 when they could have. But these "broken promises" served the Soviet Union well. We had the last laugh, he said, because their behavior served the interests of socialism by undermining "faith in the imperialists." "They weren't Marxists, and we were." Western cleverness backfired when they did not open a second front. "They woke up only when half of Europe had passed from them." (*Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics, Conversations with Felix Chuev*, ed. by Albert Resis, Chicago, 1993, pp. 46-7.) Molotov's argument that Stalin was fighting for "socialism" certainly underscores the assertion that, given the opportunity to outwit his adversaries, the Russian dictator would wield the sword of Marxism to advance his interests.

On a different day, in a different mood, Molotov took up the issue of the Cold War. Whose responsibility was it, he asked himself for the interviewer's benefit? And he answered: They hardened their line, and we consolidated "our conquests." "This was the cold war. Of course, you had to know when and where to stop. I believe in this respect Stalin kept well within the limits." (*Ibid.*, 59.) So did the West, in the sense that it did not take advantage of Soviet follies in Eastern Europe during the Berlin crisis of 1953 or the 1956 abortive Hungarian Revolution to launch an open attack on the satellites. But what of contested terrain? Did Stalin's supposed "salami" strategy, his ability to establish one tier of states, mean he was waiting to advance to the next--and the next?

We can never be sure what Stalin would have done had the United States pulled out of Europe within two years, as Roosevelt seemed to imply would be the case at wartime conferences. No number of new documents will help us to resolve that question. Stalin's desire to force the East German Social Democratic Party (SPD) into a coalition with the KPD, called the SED, was born of many considerations, not least the disastrous split on the left during the Great Depression that had allowed Hitler to come to power. But now, of course, he wanted to use that coalition to block off the Social Democrats from linking up across Berlin and spreading Western influence into his "reserved" territory. In the West, an apposite fear arose that the Social Democrats in Germany might be too influenced by British Labour's left wing. American strategy at the outset of the Cold War was to work with parties of the moderate left in Europe, so long as the

international environment remained congenial to a liberal capitalist order. In 1945, Major Denis Healey had urged a Labour Party conference to "assist the socialist revolution wherever it appears," without taking too fastidious an attitude when comrades on the continent used their police to punish the "depraved, dissolute and decadent upper classes." (Noel Annan, *Changing Enemies: The Defeat and Regeneration of Germany*, New York, 1997, p. 183.) Ernest Bevin thus had his hands full with his party's left wing, and it had quite a bit to do with his anxious wooing of his American counterpart, George C. Marshall, to persuade him to act on both economic and political problems. "This really is the birth of the western bloc," the British foreign secretary whispered congratulations at a conference table to decide how Marshall Plan aid was to be deployed. (Tusa, p. 22.)

Resolving the Healey "provocation"—if one could offer a label for the danger of international action on the left—was very likely more important than, or, at least as important as Marshall Plan dollars or NATO flags all in a circle at Brussels. Indeed, Bevin himself pleaded for a union of democracies, a "spiritual federation of the west" that became the military alliance. Patriotism as an antidote to a leftist

term, except for Tories, so with an admonition that it "counter attraction" to the volume of economic Europe's safe recovery, post-New Deal order, wrote Charles but rather the willingness

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challenge was too strong a Bevin skirted around it was necessary to create a Communism. It was not aid itself that insured and the triumph of the international capitalist Maier a few years ago, of the United States to

underwrite the project--it was that assurance which calmed the political scene. "Stabilization meant an end to the German problem. It likewise meant winning the adherence of a large enough segment of the working classes to preserve the scope for private economic power and hierarchy that defined liberal capitalism."

In this sense, it seems reasonable to agree with those historians who have long posited that the problem to overcome was Europeans' lack of clarity about the American commitment the need to relieve the concern Roosevelt left behind with offhand (and some not-so-offhand) statements that American troops would be out of Europe in two years. Writing on this subject in recent memoir, Ambassador George McGhee notes that the ambiguity was finally cleared up at the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference in March, 1947. "The United States" McGhee quotes Marshall, "recognizes that its responsibilities in Europe will continue." At the conclusion of the conference, McGhee then notes, no date was set for a future consultation. "By the end of the meeting, the cooperative 'Spirit of Yalta,' when real progress seemed possible, was a distant memory." (*On the Frontline in the Cold War: An Ambassador Reports*, Westport, 1997, p. 7.) Given recent denunciations of Yalta in the aftermath of the Cold War (which seem to pick up where John Foster Dulles left off so many years ago), McGhee's statement is intriguingly Delphic, but a more interesting speculation has to do with Stalin's assessment of what the German problem would look like "without" an American presence. Can we explain his uncertain moves and political maneuvers with the East Germans as either a prelude to a drive for reunification under Soviet auspices, or simply opportunistic probes, or, yet again, did a concern similar to British worries that the German question required superpower commitment hover in

the background? It may be worth noting that the "official" history of Soviet foreign policy presents a "new" find from Foreign Ministry Archives regarding a proposal in October 1945 by U.S. Commander in Berlin, Lucius Clay, that if the French continued their obstruction of four-power controls, "he would recommend agreement between his government and the government of the USSR on the creation of such departments for two zones, the US and Soviet, and then the others would willy-nilly have to comply." (A.V. Gorev, et al., *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-1980*, vol. 2, Moscow, 1981, p. 76.)

The notion that an American-Russian "Bizonia" might have emerged first, instead of what happened, is a bizarre scenario to be sure. Presented in the official history of Soviet foreign policy, it nevertheless has a ring of something a bit more than a shrug. The commitment Marshall projected after the 1947 Moscow Conference was quite different, of course, but it resolved the matter of whether Germany was to be let loose by an untimely American withdrawal. That Stalin disliked the terms particularly the integration of Germany into the "Marshall Plan" without his reparations claims settled (an increasingly symbolic question of Russian pride after the removals from the East), and while the Soviet economy struggled to recover from the Wehrmacht's cruel depredations upon the homeland—is obvious. Add to this also that neither side knew exactly what the other planned, or where it would stop. Clay famously worried that Moscow intended war. But his chief political adviser, Robert Murphy, was quick to understand that Marshall's program led logically to the integration of a West German "state" into the European economy, and would ease French objections to the resurrection of the industrial megalopolis that had cast a long shadow both east and west. West German recovery would spark a general economic recovery, and exercise a "magnetic" attraction on Eastern Germany and thus "make even more difficult Soviet control of that area." Eventually that would allow the United States to offer the Russians a four-power meeting whose only purpose would be to arrange the integration of the Soviet zone into Western Germany! (See, Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany*, Cambridge, Mass., 1991, p. 36.)

Surely the threat of losing East Germany was the worst of all Soviet nightmares. And when American planners brought out their powerful magnet, the introduction of currency reforms, the Berlin Blockade was, like the Berlin Wall in 1961, a crude and cruel attempt to shut out the danger. And so began a year of heightened tensions. Moscow had to accept the onus for dividing German in an inhumane fashion. Like its other policy decisions in East Germany, such as forcing the regime to accept the re-drawn border with Poland, the Russians faced a Hobson's choice. Hints from Moscow that it would like to end the blockade and accept a *modus vivendi* on American terms went unexamined until after the NATO pact was ratified. That accomplished, Secretary of State Acheson agreed to a new Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Paris in May, 1949. At that conference it quickly became apparent that both sides would table pro forma proposals for reunification, while dedicating themselves to exploring the parameters of the new situation. Acheson asked if the Soviets were prepared, as Murphy had predicted he would, to see the Bonn system extended to the Eastern zone. But he was really interested in finding out if the Russians wished to talk about exploring ways of increasing intra-German trade in exchange for a Western-controlled access corridor to Berlin. They did so wish. Acheson explained that they could treat this not as a formal proposal made by either side, but rather as something that had somehow spontaneously emerged during the discussions. And so the final communique read that the

occupation authorities would "recommend" to German economic organizations in all four zones that they seek to "facilitate the establishment of closer economic ties between the zones and more effective implementation of trade and other economic agreements." The American counter-blockade of East Germany had already had a noticeable effect on Moscow's ability to sustain its viability—but here was an American secretary of state seeking ways to maintain that viability! Washington's willingness to call a halt to its half of the blockade was the best deal Moscow could get—and it lasted for four decades. (For elaboration, see Lloyd Gardner, "From Liberation to Containment, 1945-1953," in William Appleman Williams, ed., *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, New York, 1972, pp. 360-62.)

Part III

Atomic diplomacy figured in the German question in an interesting way. Both the American and the Russian successes in developing nuclear weapons helped to stabilize the situation in Central Europe, and permit the creation of "trip-wire" military pacts. Gaddis readily concedes that there was much opportunism, and sudden shifts in Stalin's attitudes toward just about everything although there were certain constants, such as his "belief in the eventual inevitability of war through the final weird months of his life." (*We Now Know*, p. 112.) The process by which the war would start, however, is somewhat less certain both in the authority he cites, David Holloway's, *Stalin and the Bomb*, and in the dictator's speeches themselves. Holloway points out that in his last months--when he was suffering from hypertension and arteriosclerosis--evident in both his writings and speeches, Stalin sought to refute the view that wars between capitalist countries had become obsolete. Reiterating his 1946 views in the famous "Election Speech," Stalin insisted, writes Holloway, that "a new world war might well engulf the Soviet Union again." (*Stalin and the Bomb*, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1994, p. 291.) And again, quoting one present at a meeting of the Central Committee, Holloway points out that Stalin declared "a difficult struggle with the capitalist camp lay ahead. . . ." (*Ibid.*)

Several things stand out here. First, neither Gaddis nor Holloway suggest that Stalin was preparing for an offensive war, though the quotation from the former certainly suggests that if the two parts of Stalin's character—revolutionary romanticism and hard-headed nationalism—ever came together in a critical mass with opportunity, World War III would happen. "We will never know for certain what Stalin or Mao might have done with a nuclear monopoly....," Gaddis writes a few sentences after his notation on Stalin's belief in the inevitability of war. But "it seems reasonable to assume" that they would have brushed aside considerations that placed limits on Truman and Eisenhower. "Authoritarians tend to wield power authoritatively." (*We Now Know*, p. 111.) Given the atmosphere of the Korean War, noted above, it may appear to readers that the leap from one point to readers that the leap from one point to the other is a rather long vault into speculation. According to Gaddis, Stalin's devotion to Marxism led him to believe that war would erupt first, between the United States and England, or, later, when the surviving capitalist hegemon, the United States, could not control the resurgence of Germany and Japan. He believed that the United States was planning its own funeral in building up West Germany, yet another indicator that it was the chaos principle that worried world leaders most. Since Stalin did not get the bomb first, nevertheless, we can rejoice with Churchill at Fulton, Missouri, that God had ordained the Anglo-Americans to receive this weapon rather than their enemies. Stalin was an uncontrolled authoritarian, and a sick one at that fearing his own

mortality. A very dangerous combination. Or is that necessarily the case? Richard Overy's new book, cited above, makes an argument that the very determination Stalin had to remove all his enemies also made him fear greatly the danger of hastening his personal end by provoking a war with the West. Yet he constantly stirred the war pot during his last years. "Did Stalin seek a final apocalyptic conflict to stamp his mark on Russian history forever?" Overy thinks not, and reminds readers of his efforts to avoid war in 1941, and that here was a very sick man attempting to use a war psychosis in a paranoid fashion to "give the new purge its shallow justification." (*Russia's War*, pp. 333-7.)

Leave psychiatry to the psychiatrists for a moment. Suppose, indeed, that the situation had been otherwise. He gets the bomb first. Stalin would have lacked an effective delivery system in the monopoly years since he was without the advanced bases America enjoyed around the world; then, when he had an adequate long range capacity, the monopoly would have disappeared. The question of how an authoritarian would have behaved thus becomes largely irrelevant in real time. But asking it is to raise the political issue: can we imagine how someone wielding the power he enjoyed would have used atomic diplomacy to intimidate the world into world revolution? Related fears were the basis for the American decision to build the hydrogen bomb, after all, a concern that morale in the West would be so weakened if the Soviets achieved parity in nuclear weaponry that negotiations on crucial issues—not atomic war—would become inevitable. Not only would they use their superiority and successful test of an atomic bomb to demand negotiations, voter, Dean Acheson, to "for their own objectives since they could also the West's diplomatic weakened. With scrambling to make dream of an integrated world political economy would go the way of all past attempts to patch together a new system. The answer was to build the "super." (See, McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years*, New York, 1988, p. 219.)

[*"Leave psychiatry to the psychiatrists for a moment."*]

insisted the crucial swing exploit outstanding issues of world domination," but build the hydrogen bomb, position might be fatally European nations independent deals, the

The first use of atomic diplomacy after Hiroshima, it ought to be remembered, was President Truman's assertion to a visiting Charles de Gaulle that bilateral treaties no longer mattered—a reference both to France's treaty with Russia, and any appeal he might make for a Franco-American pact—because of the new weapon. "The United States," Truman admonished his White House guest, "possessed a new weapon, the atomic bomb, which would defeat any aggressor. What the whole world needed most was economic re-establishment. At present, all the powers, including England and Russia, were asking for assistance from the United States." Truman then raised some "questions" about Communist ministers in de Gaulle's government and the obstructions American businessmen were encountering in their attempts to cooperate with French industrialists. Americans believed that atomic superiority in the early Cold War, even if the bomb could not defeat the Soviets in actual warfare, gave them a powerful leverage to restore the world economy along liberal capitalist lines. The first secretary of defense, James V. Forrestal, put this point succinctly in a private letter to a friend: "As long as we can outproduce the world, can control the sea and can strike inland with the atomic bomb, we can assume certain risks otherwise unacceptable in an effort to restore world trade, to restore the balance of power--

military power--and to eliminate some of the conditions which breed war." (Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, New York, 1951, pp. 350-51.) More recently, historians have picked up on Forrestal's point to argue that with the bomb reassuring Europe, the United States could proceed to rearm Germany safely, and, in later years, undertake to shore up the positions of the "Free World" in Korea and Vietnam. (See Gar Alperovitz and Kai Bird, "The Centrality of the Bomb," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1994: 3-20.)

Gaddis argues effectively that whatever Stalin really thought about the American bomb, he practiced atomic diplomacy in reverse by pretending not to be frightened at all. How are we to tell, then, whether statements about the need to prepare for war are, like those the author analyzes from Eisenhower, designed to discourage war by making it seem as horrible as possible, or, like Acheson's to overcome worry that morale will disintegrate without constant reassurances and promises of military superiority? And there is now Richard Overly's argument adding another possibility. So if we still need to ask would earlier Russian possession of atomic weapons have intimidated the West we need to concentrate on political, not military advantage. We have seen that Acheson thought parity would have forced him to compromise on key political issues--without stipulating which ones. The intimations in *We Now Know* suggest agreement with Acheson's view, and yet it is not clear how Russian possession of atomic weapons would have changed Soviet behavior in Germany and Eastern Europe and it was the example of that behavior that helped to overcome any lingering admiration for the Soviet Union that constituted the greatest danger that leftist inroads might shred the fragile reconnections being made between war-damaged institutions and individuals. Great emphasis in post-revisionist works is placed upon "rape," in both its specific and generic senses. Stalin's armies made it impossible for him to consolidate an empire to match the "empire by invitation" the Americans created in the West. There was no moral equivalency—ever—runs the argument, to which one should add there was no military equivalency either. Russian atomic weapons would not have changed either situation. In the end, then, the question of a Soviet breakthrough to achieve the atomic bomb first has to contend with many questions besides Stalin's warped visions. From the beginning, it was a matter of catch-up, first to get the bomb, then to develop a weapons system, and finally to amass warheads.

Some historians have suggested wryly that the bomb ought to be given the Nobel Peace Prize. If so, it would have to be awarded jointly to Moscow and Washington. In this regard let us examine one final time the context of Stalin's speeches about atomic war—and their American counterparts. We need to inquire about what is being said or written in both Cold War capitals so as to discover not only the words, but the environment in which they exist, if we are to understand fully their weight and purpose. An example from American archives will serve as illustration. During an NSC meeting in February, 1953, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson declared that the time had come to stop talking out of "both sides of our mouth at the same time, on the one hand urging an increase in the level of armament for the defense of the free world, and on the other urging the virtues of arms limitation." In any event, he went on, it was now "most desirable to outline what kind of a peace we should seek to impose in the event that we could not avoid war with the Soviet Union." (Memorandum of a Discussion, February 18, 1953, *Foreign Relations, 1952-1954*, II, 1106-1109) Strong stuff, indeed. Wilson's statement might be taken to mean the United States ought to cease its shilly-shallying around and show the other guy evidence it was ready for the right war, in the right place. One would want more of the context

to reach a conclusion. A historian could read campaign statements about liberation, Dulles's speeches about massive retaliation, and peek at Eisenhower's troubled private ruminations concerning the threat to American freedoms from maintaining a constant high level of national mobilization, and conclude that the new administration was trying to convince itself of the need to end the impasse with dramatic action.

Another historian, looking at Stalin's statements to the Central Committee might have (and has) suggested that **he was building up to something**. In particular, that we should pay attention to Stalin's comments against the view that the world "peace movement" would prevent the outbreak of global war. Surely both pronouncements should be considered within the larger contextual circle of the Korean War, and not simply as free-standing declarations. Korea tried men's souls on both sides of the Iron Curtain. There were more than a few moments when it threatened to get out of control. That Stalin found it necessary to reassert Soviet stalwartness by denouncing the world peace movement is really not terribly surprising.

Part IV

But what of the effects of atomic diplomacy outside Europe? At Yalta a "Far Eastern" deal was struck, involving Russian entrance into the war against Japan and Moscow's revived claims to old Tsarist holdings in the area of Manchuria and Korea. I have no intention of throwing another set of footnotes into the controversy over the origins of atomic diplomacy. Americans clearly regarded the bomb as an asset and useful in forestalling a Russian role in the occupation of Japan. Truman came back from that last World War II summit conference determined that the Soviets should not share in any major way in the American reconstruction of the other enemy nation. At Potsdam, Truman wrote in his memoirs, he had proposed an international regime for European waterways and the Turkish Straits. Stalin had rejected this plan, the plain spoken man from Missouri wrote, because—"The Russians were planning world conquest." They were not going to get a chance to move forward in Japan. What Truman left out was what had happened when Stalin inquired if the same proposal was being offered for Suez. Embarrassed, Truman had retreated at Potsdam into a series of clarifications that trailed off into vagueness. But he remembered the situation perfectly in his memoirs, insisting that he had offered the Russian an international solution to all the crucial waterways, Panama and Suez included. It was not so. But Truman's faulty memory aside, the interesting thing is the impression that the president got of Stalin's ultimate purposes. Whatever it took to diminish Russia's role in Japan, Truman seized upon without any second thoughts. "When Japan did capitulate," Nikita Khrushchev recalled, "we had no representatives present at the surrender ceremony. This was not by chance. Even though we had not fought on the Japanese islands, the Americans might still have invited their ally to the ceremony and waited until we arrived. But Truman didn't want that. He seemed to be making a point of signing the surrender in our absence. This irritated us." (Jerrold L. Schecter and Vyacheslav V. Luchkov eds., *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, Boston, 1990, p. 82.)

American unilateralism in Japan affected the interests of other countries, of course, including as well British and French aspirations, the restless and increasingly rebellious colonial possessions, and Chinese and Korean affairs. But they adjusted to American hegemony, while Stalin's pique kept him from signing the Japanese peace treaty, much, Khrushchev lamented, to the

disadvantage of Moscow's economic and political interests. It was an odd way, certainly, for an aspiring world power to behave, deliberately cutting itself off that way. While Franklin Roosevelt had not abandoned the Chinese Nationalists during World War II, he lowered his expectations of what Jiang might be able to achieve after the war though keeping his disappointment to himself. Both Roosevelt and Stalin dabbled in Chinese politics, and both indicated a preference for working with a coalition government. Chinese resentments against both, on the other hand, had long-range consequences. But Stalin did not see an American pull-out as on the boards. He disparaged Mao's chances of an early victory, while stripping Manchuria of Japanese assets and rushing in to cash his Yalta checks before a possible default.

None too soon, for Mao's triumph forced both Moscow and Washington to recalculate. Stalin had some serious fence-mending to do, while the new regime's hostility to the defeated American-sponsored "dynasty" was further inflamed by abundant evidence that Washington was taking up positions previously held on China's periphery by the rapacious Japanese, and moving to restore Japan itself as the "workshop" of Asia. Stalin's advantage, of course, was presumed ideological affinity. Given the split with Tito, moreover, the empire badly needed a victory somewhere. Gaddis sees more than simple affinity, however. He sees a Stalin fully reenergized by the Chinese Revolution. Old Bolshevik ashes fanned into burning revolutionary zeal, not simply for the Chinese, but as the beginning of a new phase in the progress of the world revolution. (Later on, Fidel Castro's triumph in Cuba would supposedly have the same impact on Khrushchev.) Without doubt, Moscow welcomed a new player on the world scene, ending an embarrassing isolation and silencing critics who used the Yugoslav dictator's criticisms against him, openly abroad, secretly at home. During the war, recall, Washington's allies had suspected that FDR relished pulling out the Chinese "vote" to demonstrate an alliance against old-fashioned diplomacy, however lopsided the alliance might be. Now, the tables were turned. There was a Communist "bloc," not just the Soviets and the "captive peoples of Eastern Europe."

But the Russian dictator approached the new Chinese rulers with a display of calculated circumspection well worthy of mention in a new edition of Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*. As early as July, 1949, even before the final victory for Mao's forces, Chinese representatives in Moscow gained the impression that he was sending them forth to carry on the world revolution in Asia—perhaps to compensate for the temporary checkmate U.S. policies had put on Soviet expansion in Europe. (*We Now Know*, p. 66-7, 72-73.) But V.M. Molotov recalled in the 1970s that the Soviet leader approached his Chinese opposite with great wariness, asking others to sound out Mao after meeting him himself—not simply for information, but to get a sense of the man. After several days of allowing Mao to cool his heels in Moscow, Stalin ordered Molotov to "Go and see what sort of fellow he is." (*Molotov Remembers*, p. 81.) Molotov urged Stalin to invite Mao in for a talk—in fact discussions on the Sino-Soviet Treaty went on for a long time. During World War II, Stalin often acted stand-offish—forcing diplomatic guests to pay him homage in this fashion, but the nonchalance Mao met in Moscow does not square with a man smitten with a recurring case of romantic revolutionary fever. The minutes of their discussions so far revealed suggest a continued wariness, behind facades of mutual congratulations, and screens of ideology.

Talking to a Chinese delegation, moreover, Stalin put the odds against war as better than even. "A third world war is improbable, if only because no one has the strength to start it." And when

the Chinese requested help in conquering Stalin, the Soviet tyrant refused. It might detonate a new world war: "If we, as leaders, do this, the Russian people will not understand us. More than that. It could dismiss us. For underestimating its wartime and postwar misfortunes and efforts. For thoughtlessness. . . ." (Overy, *Russia's War*, p. 331.) It would seem that Stalin had learned how to invoke "public opinion" to avoid directness in negotiations from masters like Roosevelt and Truman.

But then there is Korea. Much of the "new" documentation concerns Moscow decisions about the origins of that war. Great emphasis is placed on Stalin's conversion from skeptic to supporter of Kim Il-sung's petitions for aid and approval. It is still agreed, however, that Stalin was never the prime mover. His "enthusiasm" for the advancing world revolution down the narrow Korean peninsula as a first thrust that would carry Communism triumph upon triumph across Asia was conditioned on several things. (Never mind, of course, that he had just backed out of a possible military confrontation in Germany when the West resisted, and never mind that he knew full well that such "adventurism" would command a high price in world opinion.) First, he apparently believed Kim's claim that the South Korean regime was rotten and ready to collapse from within at the slightest blow—a miscalculation he may have gained from American skepticism about Syngman Rhee, whatever importance he may have attached to Dean Acheson's famous exclusion of Korea from the American defense perimeter. Second, he made it clear the North Koreans were on their own if they got into trouble. Khrushchev, who fully supported the decision to aid Kim, was surprised that no sooner had a date been set but that Stalin ordered Marshal Bulganin to withdraw all Russian advisers from the North Korean advisers. Why do this? he asked. Stalin wanted no excuse for the Americans to turn Korea into an opportunity to expand a military conflict into war with Russia. Khrushchev said he understood—but there was no getting around that "it weakened the North Korean army," and, he always believed, contributed to the debacle that followed. (*Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 146.)

There were other matters on Stalin's mind as well that we sometimes forget. The American program for Japan was moving into high gear. Here was an instance where Soviet intelligence may have learned a great deal about American plans from British "moles," but Stalin needed no spies to convince him of Washington's uneasiness and the sense of urgency it felt to settle with Japan before things came apart with the unpopular Rhee, and Jiang's exile regime on Taiwan. George Kennan put it well in his memoirs: "I find it hard to accept the suggestion that the Russians should have waited for the final denouement of the State Department's differences with the Pentagon over the timing of our renewed approach for a Japanese peace treaty before drawing their own conclusions as to what was cooking in Washington. I would submit that by the middle of February 1950, at the latest (I stress here the element of time), it was clear for all reasonable people in Moscow (1) that the treaty for which the State Department was angling was to be a separate one (unless the Russians wished to adhere to something they had never approved and to which they had not been invited to adhere); (2) that this treaty was to mark, or be accompanied by, an arrangement that would turn Japan into a permanent military ally of the United States; (3) that the arrangement would provide for the continued use of the Japanese archipelago by the American armed forces for an indefinite period to come; and (4) that the remaining differences of opinion within the official American establishment in this matter were ones that might at best delay, but would not prevent, the ultimate realization of such a program." (*Memoirs*, II, pp. 41-2.)

With the Japanese treaty about to be completed, moreover, there was the refitting of former Japanese air bases on Okinawa in order to make them ready for B-29's capable of carrying the atomic bomb. If we turn the Asian kaleidoscope a few notches to see how things might have appeared from Moscow's side of the world, a fertile field for carrying on the mission of world revolution becomes a dangerously unstable situation with the American right in an angry state over the "loss of China" and spoiling for an opportunity to give Mao a pretty hard smack. America apparently was abandoning Korea to its fate, with two leaders ambitious to send one another to the guillotine and reunite their country; Chinese revolutionaries were bristling with hatred for the United States, most recently for defending Jiang's island redoubt and were themselves spoiling for some sort of fight; and Washington was moving ahead with a plan for Japan that could also provide a reopening of conflict throughout Southeast Asia. Stalin wanted reunification of Korea—but Kim Il-sung was not worth a World War III. Almost as soon as the fighting began on June 25, proposals were floated for opening negotiations on the question of Korean unification. On July 6, 1950, for example, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko had a serious discussion with the British ambassador and did not flinch at the latter's suggestion that not only an end to the fighting was required, but also progress on negotiations leading to reunification. Stalin then reported this development to Mao. The British suggestion that the first step had to be a North Korean withdrawal to the 38th Parallel was "impertinent and unacceptable," he said. In the next paragraph, however, he gave notice that he would reply to the British that "the Korean question had become too complicated after the armed foreign intervention and that such be resolved only by the participation of the USSR in order to hear their [*Stalin thus covered all his bets*] a complex question can be resolved only by the Security Council with the participation of the USSR and China and with the summoning of representatives of Korea in order to hear their opinion." The message closed with a question about Chinese readiness to send divisions to the Korean border—and a promise to send jet fighter planes "for covering these troops." (See *Foreign Relations*, 1950, VII, pp. 312-3, and Stalin to Zhou, July 13, 1950, in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issues 6-7, "The Cold War in Asia," p. 44.)

Stalin thus covered all his bets. When the British were told that Moscow desired a Security Council meeting with China present, it raised the political stakes very high indeed. London had granted diplomatic recognition to the new government in Beijing—a position that would cause serious acrimony in trans-Atlantic cable traffic for years to come. The British, in turn, were perturbed by Truman's seemingly deliberately provocative statements about Formosa that implied it should never go back to China so long as the Communist regime existed. Such an approach could hardly calm a tense situation made worse by the war in Korea. The McCarthyite infection of American politics had already reached a virulent stage, unfortunately, so that no matter what State Department thinking might be, politically, Truman felt enough heat on this one that he had to get out of the kitchen, without turning the gas burners off first. The upshot of the Gromyko-Kelly exchanges produced a flat Washington pronouncement that the only thing that needed settling in Korea was the presence of North Korean forces in the south and an end to the fighting. The Indian ambassador, Madame Pandit, who had also gotten involved in the pre-negotiations going on, was told that the seating of Communist China was an entirely separate matter that should not divert the world's attention from aggression in Korea. Assistant Secretary

of State George McGhee noted that he "was aware that our position on this and other matters was being misinterpreted, but he feared that this was the price we had to pay for the role of world leadership which had been thrust upon us." (*Foreign Relations*, 1950, VII, p. 418.)

Far from seeing the Korean War as a prelude to a Soviet world offensive, Ambassador Kirk perceived the situation, as revealed in the Gromyko-Kelly conversations, as a move to correct a mistake. "If we are all correct in assuming that Soviets are trying to bail maximum prestige out of a bad situation with minimum losses, we ourselves should be the ones to obtain concessions from them." (*Ibid.*, 332.) And that, notes a new book on American policy, is exactly what happened. Secretary of State Acheson ruled out any talk about seating China, but insisted that the Korean negotiations—if they should take place—should begin with agreement to restore the status quo ante bellum, and then proceed to reunification via the UN General Assembly. "This last requirement was significant, revealing American intentions early on in the war to establish a unified and democratic Korea by bringing the issue to the Western-dominated General Assembly If a settlement were made, it would be one that enhanced American and U.N. prestige at the expense of world communism." (Steven Hugh Lee, *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam, and the Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954*, Montreal, 1997, p. 81.)

It can be argued that the Korean War—certainly from the Kremlin's vantage point—enhanced the world counter-revolution far more than it aided the Communists. At the outset, President Truman re-drew the American defense perimeter to include stronger commitments to conservative governments in the Philippines and Vietnam, along with blocking off the Chinese from Taiwan by placing the 7th Fleet in the straits. Korea, he told the nation and the world, demonstrated that the Soviets had gone beyond insurrection and subversion to direct aggression in pursuit of their goal of world dominion. Acheson was delighted by the war's impact on moving Europe toward rearmament and reintegration—especially of Germany—and the general resurgence of a sense of purpose uniting the West. At home, finally, the war had a good effect by defanging Republican accusations of appeasement and, in some extreme cases, treason. There was even the possibility that an actual rollback would begin in Korea, thanks in large measure to General MacArthur's brilliantly executed campaign that began with the Inchon landings.

Retreating before UN forces racing toward his capital, Pyongyang, Kim Il-sung was in a desperate mood. "There is no way out," he cried to the Russian ambassador, "The Americans are sure to come and occupy North Korea." What would Stalin do to help him survive? "So what?," snapped the Communist Tsar, his revolutionary fever apparently in remission. "If Kim Il Sung fails, we are not going to participate with our troops. Let it be. Let the Americans now be our neighbors in the Far East." When the Chinese spoke up, according to Nikita Khrushchev, Stalin rejected all efforts to exact a price for their participation. Khrushchev was embarrassed and even disgusted by what he was witnessing. "He showed cowardice. He was afraid of the United States. Stalin had his nose to the ground. He developed fear, literally fear, of the United States." (*Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 147.)

The Chinese intervened anyway, and Korea suffered the fate small nations located at pivotal points in pivotal times often do—pounded by two armies unable to disengage without suffering loss of face. The Cold War had become a struggle, Dean Acheson wrote to a disgruntled father,

pitting an evil so immense it reached into the lives of every American with its torment. The moral balance between the two empires must surely include as well the fate of those who became caught up in this titanic, life and death struggle, out of no desire to be aligned with either side. The world's population has paid a heavy price for ideological certainties imposed by the rivals, who then abandoned the field to arrange things between themselves. In the spring of 1951, pre-negotiations picked up where the Gromyko exchange had left things a year earlier. George Kennan, the recognized (if anguished by that sobriquet) author of "Containment," traveled in secret out to Long Island to meet with the Russian Ambassador to the United Nations, Jacob Malik. They chatted away and during the course of the afternoon agreed that settlement of either the Chinese question or reunification was not on the agenda. Malik did press for an American approach directly to China and North Korea, but Kennan demurred. The United States, he said, would have great difficulty relying on anything those regimes promised. He regarded the Soviets as holding "a serious and responsible attitude toward what they conceived to be their own interests" while the Chinese were an "excited, irresponsible people." Malik responded that the Americans were the ones responsible for exciting the Chinese. (William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History*, Princeton, 1995, p. 206.)

Part V

Not Stalin then, not his enthusiasm for Mao's born-again faith? In this final section, I will attempt to recapitulate certain arguments and offer something of a different perspective. Gaddis resolves old Cold War question marks by positing Stalin as the demiurge that contains within himself power to unleash a revolutionary force of eager zealots or confront the world with the expressionless gaze of brutish power. Stalin the brutal realist accounts for the treatment of the Baltic States and later the Iron Curtain, while the romantic revolutionary comes to the surface when summoned by opportunity or renewed ambition to drive the Soviet state toward the goal of world revolution. It is an explanation that finally accounts for nearly everything that happened--and permits Western policy to be seen as a normative response to the threat of the "other." In the end, however, it is the revolutionary romantic that most threatens us, because he has found a way inside the West's psychological defenses, working through Communist Parties. Stalin's ability to control non-Russian Communist leaders in the early Cold War does indeed become a crucial point to consider, though it does not always point to the place where Gaddis wishes us to follow.

John Foster Dulles paused in trying to formulate an answer a similar question in 1957. Asked to explain his complex statements about the role of "International Communism" as against the Soviet Union itself as the controlling voice in Moscow's decisions and ultimate purpose, Dulles told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "You can have a long discussion, Senator, on whether or not the Russian State controls international communism or international communism controls the Russian State. There are all kinds of books and theses written about it. Stalin wrote a book about it. You can argue about that one for a long time." Perhaps sorry he had asked the secretary to explain himself at such length, Senator Henry Jackson tried another approach: "Would you not agree on this: that international communism has been used to date as an instrument of Russian foreign policy since 1918?" Dulles would not. "I would put it the other way around. Russian foreign policy is an instrument of international communism." (U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings: The President's Proposal on the

Middle East, 85th Cong., 1st. Sess. Washington, D.C., 1957, , pp. 175-77). One can appreciate the secretary's concern to emphasize the revolutionary elements--or at least the "agent" theory of revolution—because he was testifying for legislative endorsement of the "Eisenhower Doctrine" to give the president powers to send military forces to protect Western interests where it was not always easy to see a direct connection with the Kremlin. At another point in his testimony, Dulles argued, "Well, international communism is a conspiracy composed of a certain number of people, all of whose names I do not know, and many of whom I suppose are secret. They have gotten control of one government after another." Within three years of the end of World War II, however, Tito had defected, while Yugoslavia remained Communist. The next year Mao triumphed in China, and was then greeted in Moscow by a seemingly contrite Stalin who confessed his error in not appreciating the potential for Asian revolutions—but who also seemed loathe to part too quickly with his substantial gains under the Yalta Agreements, a bargain struck with an ousted regime. But Dulles had seen the enemy threaten Iran and Guatemala. It was a totalitarian force that seemingly had the capacity—even after Stalin's death—to subsume all differences to direct the full force of its malevolence in whatever direction it chose at the moment.

The propensity to label Soviet society under Stalin and his heirs, "totalitarian," writes David Joravsky, renders simple a complex problem. Interestingly, Joravsky takes the binary question back to Marx himself. "His mixture of utopian vision and grim realism challenged the intelligentsia of poor a 'mass base' for a great poverty and despotism but hypocritical pretensions to equitable prosperity that advanced countries. Most achieve such a utopian politically impotent Historical Perspective,"

"Disappointment led to suspicion, suspicion to repression, repression to terror..."

despotic countries to seek leap, not merely out of also out of the genuine democracy and Marx exposed in of the parties created to goal proved to be sects." ("Communism in *American Historical Review*, June 1994, pp. 837-57.) Where they did triumph was in countries where "men of property were conspicuously feeble as leaders." Elsewhere the industrial revolution was managed—not without great pain to the lower class majority—to secure a "democratic" ending to what had begun in Boston Harbor and the streets of Paris. Russia was the scene of their original triumph, and they came to power obsessed with overtaking the West. "They yearned to overtake and surpass the West in a journey through efficiently organized violence to democratic peace and prosperity." It was to be a journey to the "mythic concept" they had about the West's success, which, itself was something of an irony. (*Ibid.*) But after they won, after the bloodshed of a civil war, the famine, and—we should not forget—ostracism from the West, the promises they made could not be fulfilled. Disappointment led to suspicion, suspicion to repression, repression to terror, and, eventually the revolution from below was overtaken by a revolution from above carried out by the original revolutionaries, who, not surprisingly, excused themselves by blaming the "evil empire" of the West for all the tribulations and sufferings their people must endure. Eventually, too, the survivors had to purge themselves to eliminate memories—by eliminating those who might dare to recall, or, finally, those who even reminded the inner circle of the original promise. Only at rare moments when the task of overtaking the West seemed achievable, did Communist rulers allow, outsiders and themselves, a glimpse of the internal

tensions and ambiguity that would dog the Soviets all their time in power. Stalin's willingness to join the United Nations at the moment of triumph in World War II and Khrushchev's talk about peaceful co-existence against the background of space exploits are examples. When these hopes went a-glimmering, well-known reactions set in: the Berlin Blockade and the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution.

It is an exciting time for historians of the Cold War. The new documents now becoming available from various archives once jealously guarded by secretive bureaucrats are beginning to yield their secrets. In Moscow and Beijing the authorities have at least made a beginning, and we await others such as Hanoi and Havana, but also Seoul and Taipei. And we await here at home a breakthrough on access to the files of the Central Intelligence Agency's covert activities—if indeed, they have not been destroyed as has been reported. John Gaddis has given us his statement on what the new history of the Cold War will look like, a history that will pay greater attention to the so-called lesser powers and will indeed consider not simply the new documents, but also input from related disciplines in the field of history and international relations. Historians should look carefully at the new lexicon and especially such terms as "empire by invitation" as an anodyne description of the postwar situation in Europe, and still more closely at its application to all the areas outside that war-ravaged continent. It is worth noting, in closing, that in *We Now Know* the only index entry for ideology on the American side is "Wilson." I wonder if Messrs. Acheson and Dulles feel short-changed.

—Lloyd Gardner, Rutgers University

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