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[H-Diplo will publish a response from Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad when we publish the final set of reviews for the third volume of the The Cambridge History of the Cold War –ed.]
The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Origins (CHCW) is the first of three volumes that will be featured in separate H-Diplo roundtables. In the preface for the series, the co-editors, Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad succinctly explain how the series represents almost a decade of planning, recruiting seventy-three contributors from eighteen different countries, holding three conferences to discuss the approach and issues of the individual essays which average about 23 pages each, with editors and participants reading and re-reading earlier drafts. The effort and planning has been successful as the reviewers of Origins agree, although they raise a few questions about the omission of some topics, the placement of others, and the absence of some authors, but do not suggest there is a lack of shared focus and coherence to the study, a not uncommon complaint with edited collections.

Arriving a decade or more after the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the impact of these unexpected developments on international relations, the CHCW reflects the opening of archival sources, new journals and organizations devoted to Cold War studies such as the National Security Archive, the Journal of Cold War Studies, and Cold War History, and many other outlets, as well as the acquisition of some distance and new perspectives. A transition has taken place as an increasing number of the Cold War specialists who engaged, within the context of a continuing conflict, in the early “battles” over the origins of the Cold War from the decisions to drop the atomic bombs on Japan to the issue of who started the Cold War as well as when it started and who should be blamed for the division of Europe and the spread of the Cold War to Asia and beyond, have concluded their contributions to scholarship on the topic. CHCW has not obtained essays from these Cold Warriors among the twenty-three essays in volume one and does not devote any essays to evaluating the evolving historiography from traditionalists to revisionists to post-revisionists and back to triumphalist traditionalists. David Kaiser very much welcomes this absence and the focus of the essays on specific historical subjects, whereas Mike Sewell would have appreciated “something that made more of historiography and of theoretical approaches.” The overall tone of the volume lacks any of the polemical quality of earlier studies on the origins and its perspective is far more historical and detached from the politics surrounding the conflict. As Westad notes, the CHCW “attempts at seeing the conflict from its edges, as one part of much bigger histories” and as “perhaps the best way for the future to make sense of it all.” (p. 8) By the third volume, Endings, which has a significant focus on the 1980s and the end of the Cold War, historians may have some difficulty staying on the edges as opposed to jumping into the contested issues.

In the first essay, “The Cold War and the international history of the twentieth century,” Westad provides a very good framework for the CHCW and how the series differs from earlier overviews reflecting the perspective of the twenty-first century and the increasing orientation of historians and international relations specialists to an international approach. By placing the Cold War in the twentieth-century context of two destructive world wars and the collapse of Western colonialism, Westad offers the context for
exploring the rise of the U.S. as a key state in the international system and the determination of the Soviet Union to resist the ascendancy of the U.S. in as many areas as possible from conflicting ideological perspectives, economic systems, and alliances around the globe. The essays may focus on political and economic competition, but as Westad emphasizes, all of the essays in the three volumes discuss the interaction, impact and competition that takes place in all areas from science and technology to culture and ideas. “Placing of the Cold War within a larger twentieth-century context helps explain the centrality of the conflict during its heyday,” Westad concludes, with the first volume taking the origins to the early 1960s and the Cold War’s global presence, and this approach “also helps explain its demise” which is the focus of the third volume. (p. 17)

The reviewers express criticism concerning the omission of certain topics and the interpretations of various authors. The framework of the CHCW may endure but new archival sources and perspectives will certainly bring continuing change in assessments. Nataliya Egorova, for example, welcomes David Engerman’s “Ideology and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1962” which sets up a framework for conflict and one of the Cold War’s most important sources of conflict. On the other hand, Egorova critically notes that only one work by a Russian author is included, Vladimir O. Pechatnov’s “The Soviet Union and the World, 1944-1953”, and Egorova questions David Priestland’s “Cold War Mobilization and Domestic Politics: the Soviet Union” for its lack of attention to relevant assessments by Russian historians on the topics under review. In his evaluation, David Kaiser congratulates the editors “on the completion of a rather Herculean task,” and concludes that “many undergraduate courses would benefit from the assignment of some of these readings.” Kaiser does suggest that articles on France, intelligence and the military’s role in the Cold War should have appeared in Volume One as opposed to later volumes. Kaiser also notes a change in tone when culture becomes the focus and the U.S. receives more direct criticism for stimulating anti-Americanism in European attitudes and exaggerating an internal communist espionage and political threat. Sewell agrees with Kaiser’s critique on the culture and intelligence related essays.

Kimber Quinney finds much to praise in the overall approach of the CHCW and the specific articles. What Quinney would add to Westad’s framing of the conflict and perspective of looking at it from the edge is an enhanced version of the post-revisionist perspective which emphasizes the importance of misperception and miscalculation on all sides in exacerbating the real ideological, economic and political conflicts. Using Lewis Carroll’s “looking glass” from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Quinney expands on Westad’s reference to “conceptualism,” (p. 6) redefining it as “another way of peering through the looking glass: we no longer see ourselves reflected back as would be in a mirror; instead, we project an image of how we wish ourselves to be perceived by others.” In applying this directly to the Cold War, Quinney asserts that “throughout the Cold War, things were not as they appeared to be because the concepts and ideas that defined the conflict differed and were wholly dependent upon not merely the respective point of view of the various protagonists, but also the projection of the image that each nation perceived it must portray to the other.” (3-4) Quinney finds many illustrations of this in the various articles and revives two now-deceased but influential Cold Warriors, William A. Williams.
and George Kennan, to demonstrate their understanding of how this problem exacerbated the conflict.

Participants:

Nataliya Egorova is a chief researcher at the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the head of the Institute’s Center for Cold War Studies. She graduated from the Moscow State University and received her Candidate and then Doctorate at the Institute of World History. She is author of Postwar U.S–Soviet Relations in American Historiography (1981), Isolationism and U.S. European policy, 1933—1941 (1995), co-editor with A.O. Chubariyan of The Cold War. 1945-1963. Historical Retrospect (2003) and editor of Russia–USA: Politics and Diplomacy in XX-XXI Centuries (2008), Multilateral Diplomacy During the Cold War (2008). Her current research explores the Partisans of Peace Movement on the basis of new archival documents.


Kimber Quinney is a full-time Lecturer in the History Department at the California State University, San Marcos. She holds an MA in international relations from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C.; and a PhD in history from UC Santa Barbara. Her research has focused on U.S. foreign policy toward modern Italy and in particular American attitudes toward Italy's shifting ideological tides—from monarchism to fascism to communism and, more recently, to what some scholars have identified as a newer form of corporatism. Her current projects explore the impact of ethnic identity on American foreign relations, and especially the role of prominent Italian Americans in shaping early Cold War policy toward Italy.

Mike Sewell is University Lecturer in History and International Relations at the University of Cambridge and Fellow and Admissions Tutor of Selwyn College. He is the author of The Cold War (CUP 2002) and is currently working on British interpretations of the significance of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. He also has an interest in aspects of late nineteenth-century U.S. foreign relations and is the author of “Humanitarian intervention, democracy and imperialism: The American War with Spain, 1898, and after” in D. Trim and B. Simms (eds.): Humanitarian intervention - a history (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
From the very beginning it should be noted that the publication in 2010 of the three-volume *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (CHCW) is a significant event in the further development of historiography of this still acute theme. According to the editors, professors Melvin P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, the main reasons for implementation of this fundamental research project were the Cold War’s gradually becoming a history event as well as the increasing process of declassification of archival documents. Thus, the editors and authors of the volumes pursued the comprehensive objective of looking at the Cold War “far beyond the narrow boundaries of diplomatic affairs” and to pay much more attention to its connection “with the social, intellectual, and economic history of the twentieth century” (p. xv). The CHCW is positioned by its makers as “an international history, covering the period from the variety of geographical and national angles” (p. xvi).

The first volume provides an opportunity to analyze how much the authors have managed to realize these broad intentions. It should be mentioned that in terms of its format, CHCW is not a collective monograph, although sections of its volumes are named chapters. More exactly, each of its volumes looks like a collection of essays, unified by the joint research subject. The importance of the first volume can be evaluated not only by its concentration on the origins of the Cold War, still a very controversial problem, but also by its theoretical statements and the attempts of the authors to interpret the old disputable questions on the basis of new approaches, as declared in the “Preface”. Apart from the novelty in methodological approaches and interpretations, the volume contributes to present historiography with its bibliographical essay at the end of the book.

Among the main questions are examined from the position of contemporary historical knowledge, there are also the traditional topics – the role of ideology, the creation of nuclear weapons, the Marshall Plan, the U.S. and USSR global strategies, the Sovietization of Eastern Europe, the division of Germany, the Korean war – and the aspects of the Cold War not sufficiently studied. Without dwelling on all articles of the first volume, which on the whole comprise the main dimensions of the origins and escalation of the postwar confrontation, this essay will focus on more noteworthy interpretations.

The beginning article by Odd Arne Westad “The Cold War and the international history of the twenties century” with its emphasis on the evolution of historiography can be treated as an introduction, emphasizing shared new features in the subsequent articles. Westad analyzes the Cold War in the close connection with core processes of the twentieth century: the evolution of liberal capitalism and its authoritative alternatives (including communism); the influence of economic crises and the two world wars; and the
development of science, technology, culture, and ideas (Marxism, Darwinism). Westad considers that the defining of the Cold War’s proper place in the history of the twentieth century will facilitate a better understanding of the causes of its ending as well as global changes in the world (pp. 17-18). Nevertheless, he justly warns that any placing of the Cold War “within its wider context must be cautious and careful” (p. 80).

David C. Engerman’s article, which outlines the role of ideology in the Cold War’s origins, is notable for such a careful approach. The widening of chronology gives him the possibility to see the roots of the confrontation in Russian revolutionary events of 1917. This dating of the Cold War is rather uncommon in contemporary historiography, with most scholars focusing on contradictions between the wartime allies and on international events after the end of World War II. Engerman’s interpretation considerably differs from the concepts of other scholars who adhere to the very early date of the Cold War. Using a comparative analysis of the diversity and similarities of the American liberal messianic ideology and the deterministic universalism of Soviet ideology, the author considers 1917 only as a “launching” of the American-Soviet conflict, which until 1947 was “a conflict between different social systems each intent on expansion” (p. 36). Thereby Engerman believes that the Cold War was inevitable, because each party tried to change the world in accordance with its understanding of social progress (p. 23). It should be mentioned that the inevitability of the Cold War is a common feature of all articles in the reviewed volume.

In the articles of Melvyn P. Leffler and Vladimir O. Pechatnov, which scrutinize, respectively the American and the Soviet world strategies since the end of World War II until the beginning of 1950s, the origins of the Cold War are analyzed within traditional chronological and geographical frameworks. Nevertheless, the authors’ use of a multifactor approach and new archival documents allows them to update some assessments. On the basis of research into manifold evidence, including the views of George Kennan, Leffler comes to the conclusion about the gradual formation within Truman’s administration not only a policy of nuclear deterrence and the containment but also a policy of victory in the Cold War. (pp. 77, 78) Such a conclusion attributes additional significance to the presidency of Harry Truman. In Leffler’s view, the strategy, formed during the Truman administrations and developed in following decades (which is further traced in the article of Robert J. McMahon to Eisenhower’s and Kennedy’s national security policy), had strong and weak aspects but finally did lead to victory (p. 88). To my mind, this reasoning draws Leffler rather close to the views of triumphalists, who attribute to the U.S. all the merits in the ending of the Cold War and thereby justifying entirely American postwar foreign policy.

Pechatnov’s article is the only contribution by a Russian historian in the CHCW, and this fact should be regarded, in a certain sense, as a shortcoming of the publication, for Russian historiography is obviously under-represented. Undoubtedly, the value of Pechatnov’s article is his use of documents from the practically inaccessible Presidential Archive of the Russian Federation. Relaying heavily on this documentary basis, the author substantiates a thesis about Stalin’s “defensive expansionism” rather akin to the geopolitical aspirations of the tsarist Russian empire (p. 92). Pechatnov underlines the desire of Stalin (until 1947) to continue cooperation with the Western allies but this didn’t exclude his grievances about their behavior and his rigid advocacy of Soviet interests in the postwar settlement (pp. 94,
Pechatnov names Stalin “as a grand strategist”, anxious that “American dominance in both Europe and Japan would mean a drastic shift in the global balance of power” (pp. 97-98). However, he lists many of the Soviet leader’s mistakes in foreign policy (in Iran, Turkey, Korea), which raises doubts about Pechatnov’s positive answer on the disputable question concerning Stalin’s ability as a strategist. Pechatnov concludes that Stalin and his associates involved the Soviet Union, exhausted by the war, in a prolonged struggle with the powerful West, which it was impossible to win. However, they hardly could have acted otherwise, considering the character of Stalin’s regime and the external threats (pp. 110, 111).

In her detailed article about UK foreign policy in 1945-1955, written with the use of new archival documents (including intelligence reports), Anne Deighton reveals that in spite of British official statements about the USSR’s sole responsibility for the break between East and West, Great Britain played an important role in this process (p. 121). Deighton also examines the influence of the Cold War on the posture of British society and its institutions, thereby considerably supplementing two other articles of the first volume that are directly concentrated on this important but still insufficiently studied topic of the Cold War home front. Finally, Deighton is very persuasive in her allegation that national conditions affected the specifics of the Cold War in each country.

The process of the Sovietization of Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries, which were in the Soviet sphere of influence, is thoroughly examined in the articles of Norman Naimark and Svetozar Rajak. Naimark’s article arouses particular interest because the author knows very well not only Western but Russian historiography on this question and rather actively uses evidence from Russian documentary publications. Analyzing the continuing discussions on the start of the Sovietization of Eastern Europe (1944-1945 or 1947-1948), Naimark is more in favor of a view that “the evidence is not conclusive that Stalin planned this process, rather than reacted to a variety of domestic and international stimuli along the way” (p. 197). He considers that the years of 1944-1945 were the first stage in the formation of People’s Democratic governments with the influence of both the USSR and domestic forces. The second stage – with the predominance of the Communists – finished in 1947-1948. After that Stalinization followed (pp. 184, 188, 191-195).

The novelty of William I. Hitchcock’s interpretation of the Marshall Plan, a very well studied subject in Cold War historiography, consists in the shifting of focus of his examination from the economic aspects of the European Recovery Program to its political significance. With reference to the archival documents, the author expresses some doubts concerning the economic achievements of the Marshall Plan (except the importance of financial aid for the import of raw materials). And Hitchcock convincingly proves his assertion that the American recovery program was based on a “community of ideas, economic links, and security ties between Europe and the United State we know simply as the ‘West’ ” (p. 154).

In the articles of William Stueck, Niu Jun, and Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu, the attentive reader will find many details that shed additional light on the origins of the Korean War, its influence on the expansion of the Cold War in Asia, and the transformation of Japan into the
American ally. A number of other articles by Robert McMahon, Vojtech Mastny, Csaba Békés, and Shu Guang Zhang also cover traditional aspects of the Cold War and the superpowers’ policies and the first crises in the Soviet bloc after the mid-1950s to the beginning of 1960s. They are rather distant from the problem of the Cold War origins (except its Asian dimension) but fit with the editors’ chronological approach to the beginning of the Cold War.

In the final bloc of the first volume there are articles which represent less studied fields and relatively new aspects of the Cold War. Mark Philip Bradley’s “Decolonization, the global South, and the Cold War, 1919-1962” demonstrates the increasing research interest in the expansion of the geographical frameworks of the confrontation. The author uses a definition of the “South”, usually not applied to the designation of the “third world” within East–West confrontation, underlining ipso facto the globalization of the Cold War. Bradley considers that after the Communist victory in China in 1949 and the Korean war the processes of decolonization became the main battlefield of the Cold War (p. 474), an approach that has something in common with Odd Arne Westad’s point of view.

Economic dimensions of the Cold War, which are becoming rather popular among contemporary historians, are represented by the articles of Charles S. Maier and David S. Painter. Maier’s article (which is rather unbalanced by its structure, and based only on secondary literature) concludes that the Cold War included competitions of two opposite patterns of economic development, which evolved to the mid-1960s from East–West to North–South confrontations (pp. 46, 52). In the origins and the development of the Cold War, Painter accentuates the significance of control over strategic raw materials – oil and uranium (pp. 486, 487-489). His precise analysis develops the significance of uranium for the development of the American-Soviet nuclear arms race as well as the importance of oil for the prosperity and solidarity of the West and the consolidation of the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Painter’s extensive figures and other economic information considerably deepen existing knowledge of the superpowers and their allies politics in this area.

The subject of the Cold War home front is still not enough studied if we look at it from the methodological and analytical points of view. The articles of Laura McEnaney and David Priestland devoted to Cold War domestic politics in the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively, demonstrate the different approaches of the authors to researching this topic. McEnaney claims that using only the historical method makes it difficult to determine influence of the Cold War mindset on American political institutions, “cultural fantasies and fears, and daily practices” (p. 421). From the position of fusion of some older and newer (interdisciplinary) interpretations, and through an analysis of the bureaucratization of the liberal state, the ambiguity of “McCarthysm”, nuclear fear, as well as popular culture, she demonstrates the complexity of the interaction between foreign and domestic politics from the 1940s to the early 1960s. McEnaney emphasizes that the pluralism of postwar American society substantially affected Cold War culture, subjecting it to the impact of political cultural factors which were established much earlier (pp 440, 441).
As opposed to McEnaney, David Priestland is concerned not about the methodology of research but about historians’ insufficient attention toward Soviet internal and social developments through Cold War lenses (p. 442). He considers that one of the reasons for this situation is the specific interest of historians in the influence of Marxist-Leninist ideology on Soviet foreign policy. Priestland thus wonders whether it isn’t now time “for a reconceptualisation of post-1945 Soviet history in which the Cold War plays a central role?” (p. 443) However, this appeal would be much clearer if the author specified that he speaks first of all about Western historiography. Russian historians have already done a large, although incomplete, body of work on the home front of the Cold War. Since the 1990s in Russia a number of monographs and articles were published, devoted to Stalin's ideological campaigns, connected with the beginning of the Cold War; the making of the Soviet atomic project and the development of a military-industrial complex; the restructuring of the Communist party’s and ministries’ apparatus; propaganda; cultural life etc\(^2\). About the availability of such works it is possible to judge on the basis of the articles by Pechatnov, Mastny, and Holloway in the same volume. Priestland himself cites the books of Yelena Zubkova, Oleg Khlevniuk, Nikolai Simonov when he addresses the analysis of public attitudes in the USSR and the impact of Western culture on them. On the whole, Priestland represents the specific view of the Cold War influence on the Soviet leadership’s politics (the struggle between orthodox persons and technocrats) and more familiar interpretations of the Soviet people’s life.

A relatively new direction in contemporary historiography of the Cold War is the study of the interconnection between the development of confrontation and the state of national culture. Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht focuses on the European aspect of the reciprocal influence of the Cold War and culture. Like Laura McEnaney, she underlines that the Cold War did not generate many processes in European economics, social life and cultural debates but it did reshape them. The author dwells on U.S. propaganda in Europe concerning American high and popular culture, the establishment of special structures and cultural programs, and technological achievements. Gienow-Hecht concludes her argument with the controversial assertion that the United States “may have won its ‘first’ cultural war in 1989-91. But the U.S. did not win the second one, the battle against anti-Americanism with all its negative connotations about American culture” (p. 419).

Understanding very well all difficulties arising in the process of the realization of such a large project as “The Cambridge History of the Cold War,” and in the writing of the first volume that serves as its “visiting card”, nevertheless we cannot avoid several critical remarks, besides those mentioned above. There are some shortcomings in the structure of the volume. The problem of nuclear weapons had a principal significance for the origins of the Cold War. Therefore, it is not clear why the article of David Holloway, “Nuclear weapons and the escalation of the Cold War, 1945-1962,” is placed almost at the end of the book before the article about culture. As Holloway underlines, nuclear weapons were both the product of the Cold War and a major contributor to its intensification (p. 397). Concerning the volume’s structure, there is also a question about the reasons for inclusion of the article on Great Britain but the absence of an article on postwar policy of such other European powers as France.

As to other criticisms, it is rather easy to notice the unequal use by the authors of documentary material, including archival documents. The editors should set a standard for the authors from the outset of their work.

However the first volume still deserves high praise. The variety of articles in the volume presents a very impressive picture of the formation and globalization of the Cold War, tracing its influence on all aspects of postwar socio-political life. An attentive reading of the volume gives the possibility to imagine a state of the contemporary historiography of the Cold War and prospects of its further development. Illustrations, diagrams, a bibliographical essay, and a detailed index give an additional value to the volume, which beyond its research aims can be recommended for use in teaching.
The first volume of *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* is, thankfully in my opinion, primarily a work of history rather than historiography, one whose cogent summaries of various aspects and theaters of the conflict from 1945 to 1962 seem likely to stand the test of time. The editors seem to have aimed at a relatively centrist collection of essays, at least in this volume, and very few of them could be described as revisionist. The bulk of the contributions take a refreshingly traditional approach, focusing upon the decisions of presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and general secretaries of the Communist Party. The domestic politics of the western nations receive relatively little attention and there is no systematic treatment of public opinion. Only the last few essays break out of the traditional mold. Politics and economics are the main subject of the book; while several contributions address military questions, one can easily imagine much more detailed treatments of military planning and its implications than those found here. Overall, however, the volume is sensible and informative, even though it includes some regrettable gaps.

Odd Arne Westad’s introductory chapter begins with a notable finding: that it was George Orwell, not Bernard Baruch or Walter Lippmann, who first coined the phrase “Cold War” to describe the emerging Soviet-American rivalry in the nuclear age, specifically in October 1945. (Evidence of any link between Orwell’s usage and Baruch and Lippmann, however, seems to be lacking.) Yet Westad seems to define the Cold War so broadly as to include virtually any significant political, economic, military or cultural development from about 1947 to 1991, rather than as the specific outcome of the Second World War. And at the end of his piece, he suggests that the spread of electoral democracy and the free market brought the Cold War to an end, but without suggesting that this represented a victory for the United States and its ideals and a defeat for Soviet Communism.

David C. Engerman’s chapter, “Ideology and the Origins of the Cold War,” ascribes to the United States an ideology of liberty that incorporated racism. He argues that both American and Soviet ideologies were universal and thus certain to clash—among other things, he thinks, they were fighting over the political legacy of Europe. He claims that Wilson and other Americans expected Russia to adopt the American model after 1917. The article is filled with sweeping and undocumented statements about American attitudes towards the Soviet Union, particularly during the New Deal (p. 29), but also in the postwar period (33). The crusading American spirit that he seems to identify is not illustrated, it seemed to me, by many of the more specific chapters that follow. And factually, Engerman does less well than Westad, attributing the phrase “Iron Curtain” to Churchill, even though it had been introduced by Goebbels in the spring of 1945 and come into common use in the West by that summer.

Charles S. Maier’s discussion of economics and the Cold War actually summarizes the evolution of postwar capitalism in the western camp, while usefully citing the mid-1960s as a turning point, ideologically and economically, within western society. He does a fine job of showing how conflict over the future of the German economy shaped the division of
Germany, as well the Marshall Plan. He carefully analyzes the impact of military spending in the west, finding that it did not harm the economy.

Melvin Leffler’s own piece on the emergence of American grand strategy largely follows his earlier work. I feel it somewhat overestimates the military character of President Truman’s policies, at least before 1950, and also—especially in light of some of the other contributions to the volume—exaggerates American nationalism as a prime mover in the development of the Cold War. I think that he underestimates the difference between the policies initially formulated by George F. Kennan in 1947 on the one hand, and those of his successor Paul Nitze on the other. Kennan thought the Soviets did not want war; Nitze, in a passage from NSC-68 that Leffler does not quote, assumed that the Soviets would unleash war against the United States if they thought they could win it. Nor am I persuaded that the Truman Administration fully committed the U.S. to fighting Communism in the Third World, either—it was quite capable, as subsequent Administrations were not, of distinguishing areas worth fighting for from those that were not. In the end, Leffler, more clearly than his co-editor Westad, gives American strategy credit for eventually winning the Cold War.

An excellent article by Validirmi Vladimir Pechatnov on Stalin’s strategy and Anne Deighton’s chapter on Britain, 1945-55, do a lot to put Washington’s role in perspective. Drawing on Soviet archives, Pechatnov confirms what was quite obvious at the time: that U.S. and Soviet goals for postwar Europe were simply not compatible. Stalin, to begin with, had every intention of maintaining the territory occupied by Soviet troops as a security zone, and every expectation of becoming the dominant power in postwar Europe. While he was quite willing to allow coalition governments within the Soviet sphere until 1948, he immediately interpreted the British-American shift in policy towards western Germany and the Marshall Plan as threats to his security, and reacted by tightening his grip on Eastern Europe and ordering western Communist parties to sabotage the plan. He had no thought of war with the west—indeed, his reductions in his military power were nearly as dramatic as those in the west—but the Berlin blockade was designed to disrupt the western powers’ German plans. He did become more aggressive in Asia after the unexpected victory of the Chinese Communists. At no time did he really believe in the benevolent intentions of any capitalist power. In a fascinating aside, Pechatnov notes that the Soviets made no moves actually to deploy atomic weapons or integrate them into their military doctrine until after Stalin’s death. Deighton shows that both Labour and Conservative governments were even more concerned with the Communist threat than the U.S. was, and probably did more to promote a strong Germany and European defense. She seems to regret the steps British governments took against domestic Communists, although in light of Pechatnov’s revelations and of the extent of Soviet espionage in Britain (which she does mention), it is hard to see why this disturbs her. She mentions, but does not explore, Churchill’s attempts to start detente in the wake of Stalin’s death.

The most arguable chapter in the volume, I thought, was Hans-Peter Schwarz’s chapter on the division of Germany—largely because it almost completely ignores certain Germans’ own role in bringing it about. Schwarz tells the well-known story of the allied failure to agree on joint institutions for Germany, leading eventually to the founding of the Federal
Republic in 1949, but he never mentions that Konrad Adenauer had made clear to U.S. authorities well before then that he was not especially concerned with the fate of the Prussians now under Soviet occupation and was more than willing—indeed, perhaps eager—to create a West German state with strong democratic traditions and a Catholic majority. And astonishingly, neither Schwarz nor anyone else in the volume mentions one of the critical decisions of the Cold War in Europe: the West German decision, endorsed by the U.S., to write a Constitution that refused to recognize Germany’s new frontiers, established by the Grand Alliance at Yalta and Potsdam, and which also refused to accord the DDR any legitimacy. Those decisions had a great deal to do with the Berlin crises of 1958-62, and it was only Willy Brandt’s decision to undo them in the 1970s that paved the way for detente and a much calmer atmosphere in Europe. Their omission, I think, shows how much room there still is for a more sophisticated view of the Cold War in Europe.

William Hitchcock’s survey of the Marshall plan makes it clear that even though European economies were already slowly recovering by 1948, the plan had tremendous effects both economically and politically, especially since it was linked to the first crucial steps towards European integration. It was undoubtedly the critical step towards the division of Europe because Stalin, who had certainly not foreseen such an important U.S. role on the continent, reacted by completing the Sovietization of Eastern Europe with coups in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and his failed attempt to bring down Tito in Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, Svetozar Rajak shows in his article on the Balkans that Stalin’s disinterest in the Greek Communist cause—partly a result of his percentages deal with Churchill—probably prevented the Greek Communist resistance from seizing power in 1944-5. Niu Jun’s discussion of the Chinese Civil War and Chinese intervention in Korea makes the Soviet-American confrontation more integral to the escalation of the civil war than many previous treatments have, citing General Marshall’s worries about the Soviet presence in Manchuria as a main reason for Jiang Jeshi’s ill-fated decision to take the offensive there. Later in the book Shu Guang Zhang lays out the development of the Sino-Soviet split, which he ultimately ascribes largely to cultural and personal factors, as well as ideological ones.

Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu’s piece on Japan’s early cold war experience is one of the most interesting, partly because of comparisons that it suggests (but does not itself make) between Japan and West Germany. While Adenauer used the Korean War as an excuse to begin German rearmament and secure a full-fledged partnership in the western alliance, the Japanese government and people were far more ambivalent about their postwar role and, indeed, would have preferred, Guthrie-Shimizu suggests, to play a balancing role with the Soviets and the Chinese Communists, something that the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations did not allow them to do. The initiative for Japanese rearmament came from the U.S., not from Tokyo. In order to conclude a peace treaty with the Soviets in 1956, Japan’s Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama was willing to concede Soviet sovereignty over the southern Kurile islands—exactly the kind of concession the West Germans were totally unwilling to make—but Dulles managed to stop him from doing so. William Stueck’s summary of the Korean War is characteristically clear and concise but focuses on the region itself, touching only briefly on the huge repercussions that war had in Europe.
I found Robert J. McMahon’s piece on Eisenhower’s and Kennedy’s National Security strategies somewhat disappointing. I cannot agree with him that Eisenhower was determined never to allow a nuclear war to take place—indeed, as I have shown elsewhere, he once told the NSC that if war with the Soviets broke out everything would have to be subordinated to winning it, whatever the consequences. Nor was his Administration opposed to limited nuclear war—it counted on atomic and nuclear weapons to deal with any conflict that might break out on the periphery of the Free World. McMahon mentions the possibility of atomic war on China in 1958, but he does not mention that Eisenhower Administration policies had brought the U.S. to the brink of war, and possibly nuclear war, over Laos in 1961. With respect to Kennedy McMahon takes the traditional line that Kennedy wanted to refocus on fighting in the third world without mentioning that he refused to do just that in 1961 regarding both Laos and Vietnam. And his very brief discussions of the Berlin crises say nothing about the key political issues that led to them: the American refusal, partly in deference to West Germany, to consider Khrushchev’s proposal for peace treaties with both German states.

Not surprisingly, the distinguished scholar Vojtech Mastny contributes perhaps the single most stimulating article, on the foreign policies of Malenkov, Molotov, and Khrushchev. Few portrayals of the latter have been quite so devastating, and Mastny convicts him of the cardinal sin of believing his own nonsense, for instance, that his nuclear threats had actually saved Egypt in 1956. Khrushchev’s real gestures towards peace—including a drastic cut in Soviet military forces—made little impression in comparison to his threats over Berlin. Mao, as Adam Ulam speculated 40 years ago, actually saw through him, and the violent Sino-Soviet split resulted. Mastny makes the bold claim that Mao’s influence was largely responsible both for Khrushchev’s decision not to crush the Polish revolt in 1956 and for the opposite decision he took in Hungary shortly thereafter. This contention is not supported, though, by Csaba Bekes in a separate chapter on the USSR and east central Europe.

Mastny also points out that Kennedy’s performance in Vienna was actually much stronger than it has often been portrayed. He reveals that Khrushchev commissioned plans not only for a separate peace treaty with East Germany but for a full-scale attack on western Europe, nuclear weapons and all, after the construction of the Berlin wall in August, but apparently decided to be satisfied with a big series of nuclear tests instead and dropped those plans in mid-October. The story certainly validates the fears of imminent war that George F. Kennan, then Ambassador to Yugoslavia, expressed at the time. But Mastny’s chapter ends with the Cuban missile crisis and the first big step towards détente in the next year—the Test Ban Treaty—receives no treatment.

David Holloway’s analysis of the role of nuclear weapons in the Cold War is the only chapter even to touch on the controversy over Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Cold War, and

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he endorses a mostly traditional view, that he ascribes in turn to Barton Bernstein, that Truman sought mainly to end the war but believed the bomb “would help him in his dealings with Josif V. Stalin.” (p. 376) Hollaway mentions the abortive UN negotiations on international control but neither gives the U.S. credit for making a proposal for an international authority nor puts the blame on Stalin for turning it down flat. He also ignores (as so many others have) Roger Dingman’s 1988 article showing that the Eisenhower Administration did not, in fact, make any serious threat to use atomic weapons to end the Korean war. And strangely, although Holloway’s previous work made a related point, this chapter does not say anything about Stalin’s skepticism about the actual use of atomic weapons in war, as Pechatnov has already noted in this volume. Holloway covers the British and French decisions to go nuclear in the most cursory matter and merely refers to West Germany’s ambitions in passing.

Amidst these capable surveys of most (though not all) of the major issues of the 1945-1962 period, I found some unfortunate gaps. One would think, for instance, that the stories of Finland and Austria, which managed to elude the heavy hand of the Soviets and emerge, in different ways, as neutral states, would have added something to the volume, but there is no serious discussion of either one anywhere. An even bigger gap concerns West Germany and Konrad Adenauer’s massive influence upon the course of the Cold War. As I have noted already, the chapter on the initial division of Germany says very little about the role of German political leaders in the process, and not one contributor discusses the critical provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic that refused to recognize the Potsdam borders or give East Germany any legitimacy at all, even though these were key elements behind the Berlin crises and to the West’s inability, until Willy Brandt took power much later, to accept stabilization based upon the status quo. Other interesting European issues, such as the European Defense Community and the Rapacki Plan to denuclearize Central Europe, get either too little attention or none at all. Because of the book’s regional organization, readers will never realize what a huge effect the Korean War had in Western Europe, where it set off a big NATO build-up, West German rearmament (demanded by Adenauer to prevent a replay of the Korean War in Germany), and the whole EDC project. Conventional military planning also gets very little treatment, and the Eisenhower Administration’s emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons is, to say the least, very much understated. The decision to defer any systematic treatment of French policy to volume II seems to me unfortunate. And there is no chapter about the various roles played by the intelligence services of the two protagonists.

The tone of the volume immediately changes when “culture” becomes the subject. Chapters 1-19 would suggest that cold war revisionism is nearly dead: none of their authors regard the Cold War mainly as a capitalist drive for world domination or lament alternative new world orders that might have emerged under more enlightened leaders, and none of the chapters about Soviet policy blame the West for Soviet behavior. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, on the other hand, treats the Soviet Union’s claims to be the true representative of European high culture surprisingly seriously and regards anti-Americanism in Europe as a key legacy of the Cold War. Laura McEnaney’s chapter on the cold war’s domestic impact in the United States refers to the Communist union leaders under attack from the Taft-Hartley law as “the labor movement’s most visionary and
progressive wing,” a claim that would have been hotly disputed by the Reuther brothers (Walter, Victor and Roy), among others, especially in light of Communist behavior in 1939-41. McEnaney relies very heavily on Ellen Schrecker, who tended to deny the reality of a Communist threat, and never refers to the Venona-backed writings of Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes at all. The very real excesses of McCarthyism, it seems to me, should be balanced by some acknowledgement of a genuine Communist threat. She is also harsh on liberal organizations like the NAACP for letting their own Communists go, without ever asking whether in fact such people had anything meaningful to offer in the struggle for equality under the U.S. Constitution. But McEnaney also suggests that some earlier interpretations of the influence of the Cold War on family life may have gone too far, and acknowledges that other unrelated factors were at work in American society—a welcome shift away from the Manichean views that ruled much of the academy in the 1990s. I was disappointed that David Priestland’s parallel chapter on political mobilization in the Soviet Union essentially stopped in the mid-1950s and did not treat the rather remarkable re-orientation of Soviet political and cultural life under Khrushchev, a real thaw (including an anti-Stalinist flood) that came to an end in the mid-1960s.

Mark Philip Bradley’s chapter on decolonization and the global South shows relatively more influence of recent academic trends, and is rather selective in its citation of facts. He seems concerned above all to portray decolonization as an autonomous third world movement, relatively unaffected by the Cold War or by policy shifts within the colonial powers. (In fact, Bradley defines his topic very loosely, since he treats the Latin American states that had been independent for well over a century on more or less the same footing as newly independent former colonies.) Bradley gives some credit to Wilsonian principles for inspiring anti-colonial movements, while noting rightly that Wilson gave little support to them at the time. But although he talks about Mahatma Gandhi’s protests in the 1920s and 1930s, he does not mention that the British government had already agreed in principle on near-term Dominion status for India before the Second World War, or that the United States had promised the Philippines their independence and scheduled it for 1946. Nor, astonishingly, does he even mention the Atlantic Charter’s promise to restore self-governance to those who had been deprived of it—a clause which Churchill claimed did not apply to European empires, but which Roosevelt thought did, leading to numerous disputes between them. The Labour Government gets no credit for the independence of India, and in a fascinating omission, the emergence of Israel isn’t mentioned at all. Nor does he mention the basic shift in U.S. attitudes towards third world neutralism when Kennedy took over from Eisenhower. It is clear that chapters in the later volumes will deal much more with the interaction between Moscow, Washington, and various Third World trouble spots.

The concluding chapter on raw materials and the Cold War—in particular oil—by David Painter, summarizing some of the findings of his larger work, is a fascinating and succinct exposition of how energy needs interacted with political developments and cold war rivalries all over the globe, and sets the stage very nicely for the emergence of a new era in 1973. It also raises in print--the first time I have seen it--the possibility that the CIA supported the Ba’ath Party coup in Iraq in 1963.
The editors are to be congratulated on the completion of a rather Herculean task, and many undergraduate courses would benefit from the assignment of some of these readings.
The Cold War through the Looking Glass

“Be what you would seem to be”—or if you’d like it put more simply—“Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.”

—The Duchess to Alice, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Chapter IX

INTRODUCTION

Recent scholarship on the Cold War confirms that the “war” is more aptly described as an “era.” Since 1991, Cold War histories examine not merely the Soviet-American relationship, but place considerable emphasis on the global impact of the conflict and the ways in which it shaped all corners of the twentieth century world. The breadth of such a task is reflected in the heft of the 643 pages of the first volume of the three-volume Cambridge History of the Cold War.

The breadth and depth of coverage is impressive. The thirty-two chapters offer a wide variety of perspectives on the origins and early years of the Cold War, focusing not just on politics and economics, but also on science and technology, and culture and ideas. As the editors assert at the start, theirs is a “heterogeneous approach,” but one that demands contextualization. “We need to place the Cold War in the larger context of chronological time and geographical space,” emphasizes Odd Arne Westad, “within the web that ties the never ending threads of history together. First and foremost we need to situate the Cold War within the wider history of the 20th century in a global perspective.”

Together, the chapters weave a world that is undoubtedly shaped by the Soviet-American rivalry. But the multilayered perspectives included in the book help to reveal a different world, too, one that demonstrates how the superpower relationship was influenced by factors unrelated to—or at least incidental to—the actions of the main actors themselves. We see, for example, how the evolution of the international system both promoted and hampered policymaking by the protagonists. In this respect, Soviet-American relations were buffered by the actions of less powerful—but, in the context of understanding the early years of the Cold war, no less significant—actors in the international system (Britain, Germany, China, Japan, and Korea; as well as regions small and large, such as the Balkans.

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2 Indeed, Westad acknowledges “global processes of changes” as an all-important context of the Cold War that may or may not be the result of national behavior. Westad, p. 17.
East Central Europe, and the Third World). This contextualized world of the Cold War era helps readers to understand how independent events—however important in and of themselves—were inevitably linked to create an era that spanned a century.

**THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS**

In many respects, the history of the early Cold War constitutes a traditional balance of power; with the actions of one power inevitably provoking counteractions by the other. This paralleling of policy strategies is evident on a number of different levels, including the opposing ideologies of communism and capitalism; moves to divide Europe between East and West; Kennan’s “Long Telegram” and the Novikov Report; U.S.-Japanese relations countered by the Sino-Soviet relations; the creation of NATO and then of the Warsaw Pact; the development of atomic weapons, and the ensuing arms race; and the imperial behavior of both the United States and the Soviet Union in the Third World.

The Soviet-American confrontation was certainly characterized by mirrored behavior. To a large extent, the two states designed their own policy moves based on the moves of the other, constantly calculating and predicting the other’s move in order to decide upon their own next step. But, as the various chapters in the first volume of the *Cambridge History of the Cold War* show, the Cold War was also marked by contradictory internal conditions, unpredictable and elusive behavior by the respective protagonists, and perceptions and misperceptions that consistently threatened the balance of power system that both states sought to exploit.

In this respect, the analogy of mirroring behavior gives way to something much more complex and erratic: Rather than peer into the looking-glass, the superpowers seemed more often to be peering *through* the looking glass—which, of course, resulted in a far different outcome. Like Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, the actions of the actors, no matter how straightforward they were designed and rationalized to be, did not result in expected or predicted or rational results. A step taken to bolster the defense of one state was perceived as an attempt to threaten the other;

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3 See, in particular, Anne Deighton, “Britain and the Cold War, 1945-1955” (Ch. 6); Hans-Peter Schwarz, “The Division of Germany, 1945-1949” (Ch. 7); Svetozara Rajak, “The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1956” (Ch. 10); “Niu Jun, “The Birth of the People's Republic of China and the Road to the Korean War,” (Ch. 11); Sayru Guthrie, Shimizu, “Japan, the United States, and the Cold War,” 1945–1960 (Ch. 12); William Steuck, “The Korean War” (Ch. 13); Csaba Bekes “East Central Europe, 1953-1956” (Ch. 16); Shu Chang Zhang, “The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954-1962” (Ch. 17); Mark Philip Bradley, “Decolonization, the Global South, and the Cold War, 1919-1962” (Ch. 21).

4 Imperialism is perhaps the most controversial “mirrored” policies of the two states. In his chapter on “Decolonization, the Global South, and the Cold War, 1919–1962,” Mark Philip Bradley echoes the imperial rivalry and its impact on the global south. He explains how “the impact of modernization theory and US economic assistance sometimes replicated the results of Soviet development projects and aid.” And that “developments in the global South were increasingly viewed through a Cold War lens in the United States. Like the Soviets, Americans were also actively engaged in efforts to promote development in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin Americans.” (pp. 477, 476)
steps intended to stave off a third world war brought the world that much closer to just that war.

The editors of the book acknowledge the warped nature of the Cold War world. One of the more provocative theses of this overarching history of the Cold War is the centrality of what Odd Arne Westad terms “conceptualism.” Westad defines conceptualism as the belief that “each group involved in the conflict had sets of concepts or ideas which defined and constituted them.” Conceptualism is another way of peering through the looking glass: we no longer see ourselves reflected back as we would be in a mirror; instead, we project an image of how we wish ourselves to be perceived by others.

Throughout the Cold War, things were not as they appeared to be because the concepts and ideas that defined the conflict differed and were wholly dependent upon not merely the respective point of view of the various protagonists, but also the projection of the image that each nation perceived it had to portray to the other.

Examples of the elusive nature of the Cold War abound in the *Cambridge History*. David C. Engerman explains how ideology perpetuated the Cold War: “Ideologies were lenses that focused, and just as often distorted, understandings of external events and thus the actions taken in response.” Interestingly enough, according to Engerman, the opposing ideologies of capitalism and communism did not, in and of themselves, make coexistence impossible. It was instead the inherent “universality” of the ideologies—in other words, the claim of universal applicability, which the ideologies shared in common—that created irreconcilable differences. Engerman writes, “Each side feared the advance of the other as a step backward. Americans understood Soviet expansion as a direct blow to the gradual spread of freedom, while Soviet observers saw American expansion as proof that the final crisis of capitalism was near.”

Domestic politics and culture played a similarly crucial role in the development of the superpowers’ foreign policies toward the other, but contradictions within the respective states themselves, international restraints placed on the actors, as well as a genuine lack of understanding and misperceptions on both sides served to undermine the intended impact

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5 Westad explains, “When being tempted by the term ‘conceptualism’ I am thinking more of Immanuel Kant than of art history (even though Christo’s *Iron Curtain* [1962] may be relevant: it consisted of a barricade of oil barrels in a narrow Paris street which held up traffic; the artwork was of course not the barricade itself but the resulting traffic jam).” Westad, “The Cold War and International History of the Twentieth Century,” *CHCW*, p. 6.


of a given strategy. In two separate pieces on domestic politics in the United States (by Laura McEnaney) and in the Soviet Union (by David Priestland), the authors reach similar conclusions with respect to how the Cold War impacted national culture and defined national identity. In the case of the United States, McEnaney asserts that the Cold War culture, however prevalent, was never “absolute” in the lives of Americans. “In the end, it was the diversity, plurality, and the decentralized individuality of postwar American society—the very characteristics celebrated by Cold War boosters—that made Cold War political culture less sturdy and steady than its adherents had hoped.”\footnote{Laura McEnaney, “Cold War Mobilization and Domestic Politics: the United States,” CHCW, p. 441.} In the case of the Soviet Union, Priestland draws a similar conclusion—although on a much different premise—noting that the Cold War “did not create a fundamentally different form of politics or a new official political culture because the Soviet system was already designed for the mobilization of its population for war.”\footnote{David Priestland, “Cold War Mobilization and Domestic Politics: the Soviet Union,” CHCW, p. 463.} The conclusions drawn by both authors demonstrate our illusions about the domestic impact of the Cold War; whereas we might assume that both nations were immersed in Cold War hysteria, the citizens of each state seemed to handle the fears, quite apart from the state propaganda, and in spite of intentions to the contrary.

Similarly, when it comes to the cultural impact of the Cold War in Europe, despite elaborate efforts by the CIA to “strengthen anti-Communist tendencies and promote Atlantic harmony” in Europe, these efforts very often backfired. “The American vision of a transatlantic alliance based on a shared set of cultural values always encountered serious problems in Europe and the United States,” Jessica Gienow-Hecht explains in her chapter.\footnote{Jessica C.E Gienow-Hecht. “Culture and the Cold War in Europe,” CHCW, p. 410.} This is due in party to the unwieldy and ineffective propaganda tools employed by U.S. organizations. But more relevant to the larger theme of this critique is Gienow-Hecht’s observation that the U.S. failed to stare hard into the looking-glass: “Hoping to change what could never be changed,” she concludes “U.S. propagandists failed to see that the European image of the United States reflected everything Europeans feared about modernization: materialism, individualism, and loss of cultural identity.”\footnote{Ibid., pp. 418-19.} The result was to create hostility toward American culture, in spite of the policies employed to create favoritism toward it.

Politics and economics, as the editors contend, are crucial to our understanding of the Cold War. In his chapter on the world economy and the Cold War, Charles Maier underscores the significance of U.S. economic power and policies, which handed the burden of empire in the developing world to America. The result of various economic policies practiced by the United States from 1944 to 1973—including direct loans to London and Paris, the Marshall Plan, and generous military assistance—was that, “in effect, the United States became the

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{9} Laura McEnaney, “Cold War Mobilization and Domestic Politics: the United States,” CHCW, p. 441.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{10} David Priestland, “Cold War Mobilization and Domestic Politics: the Soviet Union,” CHCW, p. 463.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{11} Jessica C.E Gienow-Hecht. “Culture and the Cold War in Europe,” CHCW, p. 410.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 418-19.
de facto heir to the 'Third World’ empire, now exercised through economic influence and selective military or covert action.”

In its efforts to counter imperial Russia, the United States took concrete steps toward becoming an imperial power. Thus, we can begin to see how the pursuit of an Open Door for the Americans appeared to be a Trap Door to the Russians. In the case of the Marshall Plan, the very act of being invited and yet not invited at the same time created profound distrust. A policy that was ostensibly framed on benign reconstruction of postwar Europe, but resulted ultimately in the division of East and West, stands as a classic illustration of the twisted nature of Cold War politics.

Four chapters on strategy and the implementation of strategy make clear that motivations and intentions are rarely reflected in the results. Vladimir O. Pechatnov and Vojtech Mastny respectively, portray Soviet foreign policy from 1944 to 1953 and from 1953 to 1962. Melvyn Leffler and Robert McMahon offer similar analyses of U.S. national security policy from 1945-1952 (Leffler) and from 1952 to 1963 (McMahon).

Pechatnov’s and Mastny’s accounts demonstrate how the Soviet Union was wracked with contradictions and insecurities—both internally and externally. In the immediate postwar era, for example, although Soviet foreign policy was “in line with traditional Russian imperialist policy,” Stalin sought to preserve stable relations with the West for a number of reasons—including preventing the resurgence of Germany and Japan, as well as legitimizing the new borders of the Soviet Union. But as U.S. policies posed a direct threat to these very interests; Soviet internal assessments increasingly portrayed the United States as “the main adversary, set on an aggressive course: resurrecting Russia’s old enemies, and surrounding the Soviet state with military bases, and threatening it with atomic bombs.” By 1949, the “hostile encirclement” of the Soviet Union by U.S. military bases added credibility to Stalin’s blame of the West for Russia’s economic troubles. In other words, however rational the American strategy seemed to Americans, the impact was contrary to U.S. intentions: “This aggressive U.S. posture, designed to stabilize the Soviet system, produced, at least in the short run, the opposite effect.”

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13 Maier, “The World economy and the Cold War in the Middle of the Twentieth Century,” CHWC p. 61.

14 In her analysis of culture and Cold War Europe, Gienow-Hecht reaches a similar conclusion about the dual nature of the Marshall Plan. Although “designed to catalyze European integration and economic activity while also sending a cultural message stressing modernization,” the Marshall Plan ultimately served in alienating European allies. European debates over the plan were “inextricably intertwined with fears of Americanization.” Gienow-Hecht, “Culture and the Cold War in Europe,” CHCW, p. 411.

15 Pechatnov, p. 94.

16 Ibid., p. 101.

17 Ibid., 108.
Mastny similarly reveals how Russian posturing during Khrushchev’s rule can be explained by insecurity and misjudgment. In the Hungarian crisis and Suez Canal crises of 1956, for example, Mastny explains that Khrushchev’s behavior revealed “a dangerous self-delusion” due to insecurities: “Having proved a poor manager of the crisis he had unexpectedly had to face in Eastern Europe, Khrushchev showed a propensity for gratuitously creating an unnecessary crisis to divert attention from his shortcomings.” The “tragedy” of Soviet foreign policy from 1953 to 1962, Mastny concludes, was defined as much by the insecure personality of Khrushchev as it was by the system in which the Soviet premier was forced to operate. Ultimately, however, because of Khrushchev’s “disregard of the likely consequences of his actions” the two nations came perilously close to military conflict over the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Robert McMahon’s analysis of U.S. national security policy from Eisenhower to Kennedy reveals similar misjudgments on the American side, especially with respect to national security strategies vis-à-vis the Third World. McMahon points to “the broader, conceptual problem that plagued Eisenhower’s grand strategy throughout this presidency: namely, the administration’s persistent failure to gauge accurately and adapt effectively to Third World nationalism.” Similarly, in spite of Kennedy’s sympathies toward “anticolonial nationalism” the implementation of the administration’s new Third World initiatives in the form of the Alliance for Progress “rarely proceeded as smoothly or as efficaciously as administration strategists hoped.”

The inability to clearly predict the consequences of any given strategy fogged events in the early Cold War period, as exemplified by Leffler’s discussion of an American grand strategy from 1945-1952. Leffler portrays the North Atlantic Treaty as “the capstone” of a grand strategy that included taking West Germany into a “healthy Atlantic community led by the United States and committed to the values of democratic capitalism.” The overarching design of the Truman administration, he explains, “was to lock West Germany and Japan into permanent association with a Western alliance system spearheaded by the United States.”

Leffler contends that Truman’s overriding priority was “to prevent a totalitarian adversary from conquering or assimilating resources of Europe and Asia and using them to wage war against the United States.” Surely, one asks, the U.S. administration would have considered how this grand strategy, including its centerpiece of the North Atlantic Treaty, might have

18 Mastny, p. 321.


20 McMahon, p. 307.


22 Leffler, p. 86.
been perceived by the Soviet Union as provocative and militarily aggressive? The answer, however, is no. The administration, it seems, sought only to further its military expansion and control; in addition to including West Germany and Japan, Leffler reminds us, the United States “increased its strategic reach in the eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia.”

One way to measure the reverberations of the U.S. strategies in Moscow is to turn to contemporary reports by George F. Kennan. Although we habitually refer to the “Long Telegram” and “X’ Article” as evidence for Kennan’s influential role in the origins of the Cold War, we would do well to pay closer attention to the counsel that came from the embassy in Moscow just a few years later. In 1952, for example, Kennan observed that the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty was perceived by the Russians as anything but defensive in nature. This was largely due to the irrational character of the Kremlin. But it was also due, as Kennan explains, to the timing and the manner in which the strategy was implemented. The result of the pact, writes Kennan, “was that the Soviet leaders, themselves in so many respects irrational in their approach to their external environment, found themselves confronted with a line of policy on the part of the Western powers for which they could discover no adequate rationale.” The pact, according to Kennan, led to international insecurity, even if its intention was to create security.

Believing the Western world a conspiracy; finding themselves unable to discover a fully rational justification for the Atlantic Pact (in the form in which it was presented) as a move of their capitalistic adversaries in the political war; noting that it was in fact in certain respects disruptive—rather than promotive—of firm political morale in the Western countries; observing, finally, that the pact was supported publicly by a portrayal of their own intentions and strength that they did not recognize as fully accurate [italics added]—it was no wonder that the Soviet leaders found it easy to conclude that the Atlantic Pact project concealed intentions not revealed to the public, and that these intentions must add up to a determination on the part of the Western powers to bring to a head a military conflict with the Soviet Union as soon as the requisite strength had been created on the Western side.”

Kennan’s words remind us that implementation of strategy is more important than the development of the strategy itself; maintaining stability has as much to do with timing of a policy initiative and the reaction it provokes as it has to do with the policy itself. Indeed, if one chapter is missing from the first volume of the Cambridge History, it would seem to be one on the significance of timing. William Appleman Williams argued in reference to the early Cold War period, “the timing of apparently disparate, incidental and unrelated events is crucial to an understanding of what was going on inside and between the [United States

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23 Leffler, p. 87.

and the Soviet Union.”

25 Kennan’s reflections in the early 1950s underscore this point. Timing as a factor in the Cold War seems to be even more relevant when one considers the importance of “conceptualism.”

Both Leffler and McMahon conclude that the early Cold War strategists—Kennan included—sought not merely to contain the Soviets, but to “win the war.”

If the strategies that prevailed served to provoke and antagonize the enemy, and to alienate and embitter alliances, do we not find ourselves staring through the looking-glass yet again? The rationale of provoking a dangerous antagonist to war is irrational, as is the risk of losing friends in the process. If war was deemed a potential reality, and winning the war was a strategic priority, why did U.S. policymakers take steps to bring the world yet closer to that disastrous point? And why did they not consider the impact of such policies?

In his 1952 memorandum, Kennan reminded strategists in the State Department how U.S. military policies might be perceived in Moscow: “Many of our defensive measures must appear offensively motivated to the Russians,” he began.

Surely as one moves one’s bases and military facilities toward the Soviet frontiers there comes a point where they tend to create the very thing they were designed to avoid. It is not for us to assume that there are no limits to Soviet patience in the face of encirclement by American bases. Quite aside from political considerations, no great country, peaceful or aggressive, rational or irrational, could sit by and witness with indifference the progressive studding of its own frontiers with the military installation of a great-power competitor.

CONCLUSION

Whereas new approaches to the history of the Cold War have sought to explore the conflict “from within,” the editors of the Cambridge History urge historians to “see the conflict from its edges, as one part of much bigger histories,” and as “the best way for the future to make sense of it all.”

In this respect, one of the more fruitful contributions of the study is in its attempt to “step back,” to contextualize and frame the conflict in the web of history, and to make a deliberate attempt to see the conflict from “the outside in.” Such an approach is to be commended, not least because it allows historians to escape the trap of peering through the looking glass, thus providing a more objective and “scientific” view. By allowing for analysis from a distance, the volume not only illuminates the motivations and intentions of the actors but also reveals the reactions to their actions. This kind of “objectivity” requires


26 Leffler, p. 88; McMahon, p. 311.

27 Kennan, op cit. p. 354.

28 Westad, “The Cold War and the International History of the Twentieth Century,” CHCW, p. 8
focus and direction, two qualities that appear to get lost in so many incidents of the early Cold War era.

In addition to aiding historians, “seeing from the edges” might help policymakers to avoid the warped world of the looking glass. In his 1951 Foreign Affairs article, “America and Russia’s Future,” Kennan expanded on the ways that America could influence Russia’s future. The best way to have an impact, he asserted, was to stay focused and to remain explicitly clear about American interests and objectives, and strategies intended to achieve those objectives: “Two things are of major importance,” he asserted: “1) that we should know what we want; and 2) that we should know how to conduct ourselves in order to facilitate, rather than to impede, the coming into being of what we want.” 29 The constant looming shadow of nuclear war contributed to the irrationality and illogical nature of the era. Knowing not merely what you want, but also behaving in such a way as to “facilitate, rather than to impede” getting it would seem to be a priority. And yet, time and time again, this logic proved elusive to Cold War policymakers.

Clouding American objectivity, according to Kennan, was the U.S. tendency to shape the world in its own image and judge nations who did not meet our expectations, “Above all,” Kennan warned, “it behooves us Americans … to repress, and if possible to extinguish once and for all, our inveterate tendency to judge others by the extent to which they contrive to be like ourselves.”30 For many critics of U.S. foreign policy, the Cold War was perpetuated by the inability of the United States to do just this—to step back sufficiently to be able to critically reflect upon and correct a policy that was not constructive. William Appleman Williams, for example, shares Kennan’s criticism of the American tendency to repeat this mistake. Referring to the early Cold War years, Williams laments: “All segments of American leadership still shared the traditional objective of the 1890s: Stabilize the world in a pro-American equilibrium.”

Yet that conception of what could and should be done was precisely the cause of the continuing crisis. The scene recalled Alice in the Looking-Glass Land running as fast as she could to stay under the same tree—with the vital difference that she was not succeeding in her effort. This image helped dramatize the point that American was not

29 Indeed, as David Holloway notes in his chapter “Nuclear Weapons and the Escalation of the Cold War, 1945-1962,” observers recognized the tension created by the sheer fear of attack: “Some analysts worried that the ‘reciprocal fear of surprise attack’ might create a spiral of anxiety and suspicion that would result in one side’s attacking for fear that the other was about to do so.” p. 388

30 Kennan, “America and Russia’s Future, Foreign Affairs, 1951. Kennan also acknowledged the power of projecting a particular image to the Russians, and allowing for the possibility of Russia’s changed behavior, as a consequence. “We must admit with respect to the future of government in Russia, we see ‘as through a glass, darkly.’ … The main thing is that we keep clearly in mind the image of what we would like to see in the personality of Russia as an actor on the world stage, and let that be our guide in all our dealings with Russian political factions, including both that which is in power and those which are in opposition to it. And if it should turn out to be the will of fate that freedom should come to Russia by erosion from despotism rather than by the violent upthrust of liberty, let us be able to say that our policy was such as to favor it, and that we did.”
the victim of a simple case of failure, but rather was plagued by the infinitely more subtle paradox of the failure of success.\textsuperscript{31}

Undoubtedly, the first volume of the \textit{Cambridge History} helps us to grapple with “the failure of success” that riddled the Cold War from the start, and thus to understand, at least in part, how the conflict could define an era. Indeed, among the more fundamental lessons to be gained from the experts in the first volume of the \textit{Cambridge History} is this: Strategists who seek to navigate the highly unpredictable, ideologically divisive twenty-first century world of weapons of mass destruction would do well to peer \textit{into} the looking-glass rather than \textit{through} it for sound foreign policy options.

\textsuperscript{31}Williams, \textit{The Tragedy of American Diplomacy}, p. 299.
The Cambridge History of the Cold War (CHCW) marks a coming of age for Cold War studies. This multi-volume compilation provides a synthesis of the ‘New Cold War History’. It is a signal moment in the evolution of the field. With new perspectives, the opening of post-Communist archives, the flowering of critical oral history events in the 1990s, and the declassification of materials whose sensitivity was reduced by changed circumstances, post-Cold War scholarship underwent a massive transformation. Genuinely multi-archival projects covering both sides became possible. Ventures such as the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) made available significant amounts of declassified and translated materials. International collaborations permitted new perspectives on familiar topics. After two decades, the resulting work is new only in that it differs from what went before. It is familiar. The CHCW collects and summarises that work.

In contrast to much scholarship of the last twenty years that stressed the overwhelming significance of the Cold War to explain many things, the field’s growing maturity is reflected in a number of essays in this collection on the years to 1963 that manifest a consciousness of the limits of the impact of the confrontation. One of the many qualities of these essays is the capacity of the authors to discern other narratives that intersected with the Cold War story, impacting upon it as much as it affected them. Sometimes, they note, its impact was to change the pace and details rather than the general momentum of such processes as decolonisation, economic change in the West, or the cultural and generational shifts of the later years covered here. This is hardly surprising given editor Odd Arne Westad’s previous work in which this theme has been evident. The volume shows that the field has reached a stage where the notion that Cold War confrontation explains everything and anything that took place is unsustainable. The challenge is now for historians of the Cold War to spread this word and ensure that accounts of countries’ domestic affairs, local and regional relations, or cultural, economic, or social matters acknowledge the limits of the Cold War’s explanatory power as we have learned to do.

The three volumes are a magnificent achievement and a considerable success. Well-presented, imaginatively illustrated, splendidly indexed, and with topics for essays thoughtfully chosen, they provide an accessible synthesis of recent scholarship. Reading lists at all levels must change to incorporate several of the essays. In this volume, the over forty pages of the bibliographical essay provide a treasure trove of references for teachers, researchers and students of the years between 1945 and 1963. The volume’s subtitle, ‘Origins’, is misleading. It covers nearly half the Cold War years. The essays provide lucid accounts that transmit key knowledge about the early Cold War whilst also advancing usually subtle and convincing interpretations. Specialists familiar with the authors’ works may feel that this collection offers few startling revelations, new perspectives, or polemical revisionism. It is a balanced and full series of accounts that can safely be entrusted to Cold War novices, safe in the knowledge that they will find stimulation and a reliable jumping off point from which to build a knowledge of the formative years of Soviet-American confrontation and its globalisation.
This is no mean achievement. Nor should what I have just claimed for the volume be interpreted as faint praise. The whole point of the Cambridge histories since the time of Lord Acton has been to synthesise, make research accessible, provide a definitive resource, and give succinct access to leading scholarship. This volume bears testament to an internationalisation of scholarship that is itself eloquent testimony to the way in which the collapse of Cold War confrontation, along with the process of globalisation, has impacted on historiography. Little more than twenty years ago the project would have been inconceivable in this form. The literature reflected the confrontation. In the West the battles of revisionists, post-revisionists and the older orthodoxies were based very largely on western sources – multi-archival generally meant London, Paris, Bonn, Rome, Tokyo, or some other western archive in addition to those in the U.S. Scholarly collaborations across the divide were rare. ‘Eastern’ scholars in the West were most likely political exiles. In the East bloc authors had to contend with censorship. On all sides, access to archives or to interviewees was limited by considerations of national security. The world has changed. The over 70 contributors to these three volumes of CHCW are based in eighteen countries including (for this volume) Russia, Hungary, and China. They hail from more. Scholarly exile no longer implies, by and large, what it once did. The CIA has published materials. The U.K. has acknowledged the existence of its Secret Services and published official histories. The NSA released the VENONA transcripts. East and Central European archives have opened as states have changed and disappeared. Russian and Chinese ones have tended to be less open, but translators, military, security, and policy veterans have been keen to cash in with memoirs and interviews. The volume is a monument to the world the end of the Cold War created.

The monument is designed in the ‘Cambridge History’ style of synoptic and synthetic summaries of the state of the art. Leading experts discuss their specialist subjects. Conclusions emerge from a combination of repetition, juxtaposition, contrasts, or conjunctions around the core topic. The value comes from the accumulation of evidence and from the triangulations that are possible when scholars covering different aspects and who hail from different sub-disciplines or different academic cultures provide complementary evidence that allows the reader to develop a rounded vision of the whole subject. Contrast the ‘Oxford History’ approach where distinguished scholars offer a comprehensive synopsis in a definitive single-authored text. Cohesiveness, a single analytical line, and usually a narrative thrust inform such works and give them unity. But the more kaleidoscopic approach inspires a greater confidence that all aspects are equally expertly treated and that, for instance as regards different national roles and perspectives, no one perspective predominates.

That said the absence of more synoptic essays does detract from the overall value of this volume. David Engerman’s and Charles Maier’s essays, on ideology and economics respectively, and Westad’s location of the Cold War in the wider currents of twentieth-century history, do provide overviews. These whet the appetite. The volume ends with essays on culture, domestic mobilisation east and west, decolonization, and nuclear weapons. These do cover the whole period. But there is an unsatisfactory feel that these come after the regional, national, and specific (Korean War, Marshall Plan) studies that constitute the main course. The pudding, to turn Churchillian, is tasty but it has no theme.
It does not help that some of the weaker essays in the volume (notably those on culture in Europe and on natural resources, really only on oil with a nod to uranium) are amongst these. *Jessica Gienow-Hecht*'s chapter on culture was too narrowly defined. Its geographical focus is insufficiently pan-European, and it ignores whole areas of popular culture such as sport or religion. A return to a wider canvass, drawing together strands, is missing from the end of the volume. Perhaps something that made more of historiography and of theoretical approaches may have provided a more satisfactory conclusion. A discussion of theory and method, drawing on much that is discussed in this volume, could have done this well.

The pre-history of the Cold War features in a number of the chapters but not the aspect of the early Cold War that entailed a conflict of views about the nature of historical processes and that saw historians co-opted into the struggle. On both sides 'lessons' learned from the recent past were as instrumental in shaping policies as ideology, economics, or domestic political concerns. The western notion of totalitarianism and the vision of Communism as 'red Fascism' was an aspect of this. So was the ‘Munich analogy' that taught that dictators understood only the logic of force rather than compromise. In George Kennan's vision of the challenge facing the West, or John Kennedy's fear that the tides of history were turning against it; or in Marxist-Leninist notions of the historically pre-determined inevitability of the triumph of Communism, one sees a real-world working out of visions of the historical process. Whether one system would 'bury' the other was partly a matter of industrial production or the arms race. It was also a claim made in the faith that history was on the side of the victors in the sense that it shaped the forces that would give one side victory.

There are other gaps. Most notably, the rich post-Cold War history of secret intelligence communities is weakly reflected here. Hints surface where authors have used some of this scholarship. But I was disappointed that this vital part of the New Cold War History has been neglected. Those unfamiliar with recent work on the history of the secret world may not appreciate from this collection just how significant a contribution this sub-field has made to the development of a fuller understanding of the early Cold War. VENONA, for example, warrants only two references in the index, both to the article in Volume II by *Christopher Andrew*. He begins by suggesting that “studies of policy-making in East and West which fail to take intelligence into account are at best incomplete, at worst distorted.” (II, 417) This observation is apt when considering Volume I. That *Laura McEnaney* does not mention VENONA in her chapter on American domestic politics and mobilisation weakens her essay and reflects a viewpoint that downplays the element that intelligence communities played in the history of both counter-subversive and other types of American anti-Communism. Her account seems dated given the scholarship of the last fifteen years (I refer to Richard Gid Powers, David Oshinsky, R. Bruce Craig as well as the more contentious John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr) that has filled out what we now know of the Red Scare. Similarly, although there is a cogent and interesting essay by *Mark Philip Bradley* on decolonization, the rich literature on the issue of race as a factor in U.S. policy may usefully have been brought out either in this essay or in McEnaney’s, where there is only one mention of Martin Luther King Jr. and that relating to his assassination. The diplomacy of white supremacy was an important issue by the sixties and both Eisenhower and Kennedy
wrestled with the interlinked matters of relations with Portugal and South Africa, just as with the impact of Jim Crow on their efforts to woo the new nations of the global South.

The gaps are not fatal flaws. This is a valuable synthesis of the New Cold War History. The introductions to key aspects of the early Cold War are well-written, grounded in great expertise, and provide clear expositions of the state of current knowledge. We have reason to be grateful to the editors and authors. The collection offers something greater than the sum of its parts. Only such a multi-author study can properly do justice to the nuances, contradictions, and multi-factorial interdependency of multiple variables that is needed to produce a truly international history of how the post-war order turned into a global confrontation, with local or regional eddies and flows, and that involved so many dimensions beyond the strategic, military, and diplomatic. This collection reminds us, however, of another core lesson of the New Cold War History. The overall impression of the period that emerges is one that will be familiar to H-Diplo participants of the last fifteen years. Reading the essays that touch on the USSR and its neighbours brought back to mind 1990s reconsiderations of Soviet agency in the origins of the confrontation. The preferences, choices, hopes, fears, and actions of the Soviet Union and the United States were central to the story. Had both superpowers somehow (implausibly) chosen to turn inwards and ignore events outside their borders there would not have been a Cold War of which to write a Cambridge History. With reference to the historiographical battles of the Cold War period, this volume provides substantial evidence that supports many realist rather than revisionist positions, if not entirely. The Soviet Union that emerges is more bungling and ham-fisted than either its critics or those of the United States then understood: less omnicompetent evil empire than Chaplinesque great dictatorship in foreign affairs. But its actions, and especially the role of Stalin, emerge as probably the most significant single theme to recur in the explanations of the authors who have contributed to this excellent summation of the current state of knowledge on the early Cold War.

One final point. The field has reached a point of maturity. This volume (and the scholarship it synthesises) is now the orthodoxy to which new scholarship will react. The scholars of the next twenty years will challenge, revise, and reflect upon what is in these pages. Let us hope that they do as good a job.

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