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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF IMMINENT RUSSIAN SURPRISE ATTACK

by

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(A. B., West Virginia Wesleyan College, 1951;

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem of the Thesis 1

2. Definitions 2

3. Limitations 3

4. Previous Research in the Field 3

5. The Methodology of the Thesis 3

II. THE MARRIAGE OF NECESSITY: 1941 THROUGH AUGUST, 1945

1. A Heritage of Mistrust 5

2. Comrades in Arms: 1941-1943 8

i. In Praise of Russia 8

ii. A Residuum of Distrust 10

iii. High Hopes for the Future 12

iv. The Big Three at Teheran 15

3. Cracks in the Unity: 1944 through August, 1945 16

i. Currents of Optimism 16

ii. Trends toward Disillusionment 19

iii. Conference at Yalta 21

iv. The Specter of World War III 23

v. Data from the Polls 25

Chapter Page

III. THE SHIFTING OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES: SEPTEMBER, 1945 THROUGH 1946

1. A Curtain of Iron 27

2. Rays of Cautious Optimism 31

3. Getting Tough with Russia 33

i. Journey into Doubt 33

ii. A Fight within the Cabinet 35

4. Growth of the "Pearl Harbor Complex" . . . 36

IV. MARCHING TOWARD THE BLOCKADE: 1947 THROUGH JUNE, 1948

1. Declaration of Cold War 41

2. Searching for Salvation for Europe 44

i. The Plan of the General 44

ii. "Containment" by Mr. "X" 48

3. The Crisis in Berlin 50

i. A New Deal for West Germany 50

ii. Blockade of the City 52

V. ASSUMPTION OF RUSSIAN MILITARY THREAT: AUGUST, 1948-1949

1. The Height of Tension 54

i. Analyzing Russian Motives 54

ii. Further Disquieting Notes 57

2. The Birth of NATO 59

3. Hardening of the Status Quo 62

Chapter Page

VI. ANALYSIS OF THE COURSE OF EVENTS

1. The Passing of a Superficial Friendship . . 65

2. Simple Reaction to Events 66

3. Led by the Elite 68

4. The Relationship between Public Opinion and Foreign Policy 69

i. No Power in the Mass 69

ii. Too Much Irresponsible Power in the Mass 72

iii. Toward a Theory of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy 78

iv. In the Market for a Foreign Policy . . 79

v. An Accumulation of Misunderstandings . 82

VII. CONCLUSIONS 89

BIBLIOGRAPHY 91

ABSTRACT 97

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem of the Thesis

There is no doubt but that current American public opinion is largely convinced that Russia is bent on world domination and that Russia would use military conquest as a technique of expansion, if the Soviets felt that it would be profitable for them. The whole structure of American defense is built upon this presupposition. The network of military alliances across the world is predicated upon the likelihood of Communist military aggression if no counter-force were present as a deterrent. The fantastically expensive continental defense system, with its Distant Early Warning Line and strategically located Nike missile sites, has been built because it is believed that Russia may attack this nation at any time.

This situation is in strange contrast to the friendship and good will, the mutual aid and support shared between the two countries during their struggle against a common fascist foe. It is evident that far-reaching changes have come about in our relationship with Russia since that wartime comradeship.

The question inevitably arises when one confronts this altered point of view: how did such a change come about? It seems to this writer that a proper answer to this question can be found by tracing the development of the key presupposition to current American policy toward Russia: the fear of imminent Russian surprise attack upon the West. This thesis will attempt to trace the historical process in which this idea came to be predominant in American opinion, and to analyze the causes which brought it to the fore.

The problem of this thesis, then, is to trace the development of the idea of imminent Russian surprise attack upon the West as it grew in American public opinion from the closing phases of World War II to the time when it became basic to American political and military planning.

2. Definitions

It is necessary to indicate what connotations are implied in several of the words and phrases of this statement of the problem. In this context, "development" is intended to mean "growth toward becoming dominant in public opinion." "Imminent," as here used, implies "possibly occurring in the immediate future." It is not intended to carry the inference of necessarily occurring soon.

The phrase "surprise attack" refers to aggressive military action taken without clear and unmistakable warning or formal declaration of war. In this thesis, it refers to

surprise attack upon the West, that is, upon any or all of the nations now connected with the United States or Great Britain through military alliances.

3. Limitations

This study is limited to the growth of the fear of imminent surprise attack as the fear grew in public opinion in the United States. Although it will be necessary to include a brief historical note to put the problem in perspective, the scope of time covered will be primarily that period from the Teheran Conference in late 1943 to the point at which the fear of imminent Russian surprise attack became an open and fundamental assumption in American diplomatic and military strategy.

4. Previous Research in the Field

Although there have been a number of studies of various phases of Russian-American relations, none has dealt precisely with the growth of the fear of imminent surprise attack.

5. The Methodology of the Thesis

The method used will be to trace the attitudes of the American people and their government officials as these attitudes relate to the idea of imminent surprise attack. The data used in tracing these attitudes will be popular

periodicals, journals, opinion polls, statements by government officials, records of the proceedings of Congress, and writings reflecting opinion on Russian-American relations. This thesis will attempt to show what course of development these attitudes actually followed in the period under study, then to assess the forces that moved public opinion in that direction.

CHAPTER II

THE MARRIAGE OF NECESSITY

1. A Heritage of Mistrust

William Appleman Williams has recently shown that Russian-American tensions go deep into history, back to the point in the late nineteenth century where the expanding interests of the two nations clashed in Northwest Asia.

> A review of American-Russian relations from 1781 to 1917 reveals that the early friendship between the two countries was at first blurred and then destroyed in the heat of a struggle in Northwest Asia. The Bolsheviks did not disrupt the loose and informal entente--it was ruptured along the rights of way of the South Manchurian and Chinese Eastern Railways between 1895 and 1912.[1]

The rupture was smoothed over during the first world war, only to have relations severed by the Bolshevik revolution. The allied armed intervention in 1918-1919, the memory of which has never ceased to burn in the Russian mind, served to increase hostility between the United States and Russia.[2]

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1. William Appleman Williams, American-Russian Relations, 1781-1947 (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1952), p. 4.

2. This is contrary to the opinion of Vera M. Dean, who minimizes intervention and the resulting tensions: "During the nearly two centuries that the United States and Russia have been in touch with each

From 1920 to 1933, the conflict between the two nations and the two opposing economic systems focused on the issues of trade and diplomatic recognition of the Soviet government by Washington. Soviet spokesmen, especially Maxim Litvinov, made repeated efforts to gain official recognition for their government. A typical incident, to be re-enacted many times in the years between the wars, occurred in 1921.

Litvinov, in a statement from Moscow aimed at Washington, minimized the differences between the two countires and asserted that Russia was "entirely absorbed in the work of internal reconstruction."[1] He urged the American government to consider "the interests of both people which imperatively demand that the wall existing between them should be removed."[2]

Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover answered "that negotiations could be opened only after the Soviets announced the 'abandonment of their present economic system.'"[3]

> other, the relations of the two countries have on the whole been friendly, and at no time has either threatened to make war on the other."

Russia: Menace or Promise (Henry Holt and Company, 1947), p. 77.

1. Williams, op. cit., p. 181. 2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

(His opinion was not to change one whit during his residence in the White House.) Secretary of State Hughes "agreed that no discussions could take place until there was 'convincing evidence' that 'fundamental changes' had been effected in the economic structure of the Soviet Union."[1]

Behind this official coldness lay a widely diffused distrust on the part of the American people. A survey of the controlling factors in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union by the Committee on Russian-American Relations of the American Foundation cited the attitudes that typified American objections to Russia between the wars.

> They [the Russians] do not live by the principles of international law.[2]
>
> Russia is committed to promoting world revolution.[3]
>
> [The Russian government] maintains itself in power by a bureaucratic autocracy involving extreme cruelty . . . and not stopping at wholesale murder and massacre.[4]
>
> The communistic and capitalistic systems are entirely incompatible.[5]
>
> Marriage is taken lightly, family life and the education of the child in the home are not respected. The church is desecrated and the idea of a Supreme Being is repudiated.[6]

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1. Ibid.

2. The United States and the Soviet Union (New York: Charles Francis Press, 1933), p. 2.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

4. Ibid., p. 2.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 3.

A favorable shift in opinion toward Russia during the depths of the depression permitted President Roosevelt to recognize the Soviet government in 1933, but this did not lead to closer ties. In fact, from that time until the beginning of World War II, Russian and American interests clashed ever more frequently both in Europe and Asia.

To be understood in proper perspective, then, the cold war must be seen not as a new departure in the relations between Russia and the capitalist West rising abruptly at the end of the Second World War. Rather, it is a new phase in an era of hostility.

2. Comrades in Arms: 1941-1943

i. In Praise of Russia

During the first two years of the war, "the differences which were to divide the Allies were submerged by their common danger and the sheer struggle to survive."[1] The heat of the war remolded American opinion about Russia. The major portion of the American public was soon expressing sympathy, admiration, and affection for the heroic Russian people and their leaders. The enthusiasm for the fighting spirit of the Russians sometimes even led to a misremembering of history. A. A. Berle, Jr., Assistant

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1. Walter Lippmann, "Peace Settlement with Russia," Representative American Speeches, XX:1 (1947), 104.

Secretary of State, praised Russia as a great power who through the years had "habitually joined with us" in matters of importance.[1] Vice President Henry Wallace waxed very enthusiastic about the Soviets, and to the nation, his sentiments sounded appropriate.[2]

W. Averill Harriman, President Roosevelt's special representative to Russia, referred to Moscow as "that courageous capital of the unconquerable Soviet Union . . . " and reminded Americans that "we are fortunate to have them as allies."[3]

Widely-quoted foreign affairs expert William G. Carlton of the University of Florida noted that there were a few Americans who had an aversion to co-operating with socialist states, but he held this to be unreasonable. He looked forward to our good relations with socialist and communist states after the war to everyone's mutual advantage.[4]

Joseph E. Davies, former ambassador to Russia, was lavish in his affection for the country and her leaders.

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1. A. A. Berle, Jr., "The Realist Base of American Foreign Policy," Vital Speeches, 9:2(November 1, 1942), 54.

2. See, for example, Henry A. Wallace, "Our Friendship with Russia," Vital Speeches, 9:3(November 15, 1942), 71-73.

3. W. Averill Harriman, "The Churchill-Stalin Conference," Vital Speeches, 9:15(May 15, 1943), 749-50.

4. William G. Carlton, "This Time We Must Win the Peace," Vital Speeches, 9:15(May 15, 1943), 467.

He scolded those

> few in our country who still bicker at Russia; who still carp at Russia; who still quarrel at the way in which they live and conduct their own government, which is exclusively their own business. To do this is to play Hitler's game. . . . It is neither sensible, wise, nor right to encourage criticism of the good faith of the Soviet government or attacks upon its leaders.[1]

These men reflected and expressed the general affection in America's attitude toward Russia during the hardest years of the war. Most of the few who spoke against the Soviet Union were attacked as dupes of the German propaganda that was trying to split the allies. Unity was held to be essential.

ii. A Residuum of Distrust

There were still some who clung to old hostilities and chafed under our close alliance with the Soviets. Ernest K. Lindley complained in Newsweek that "from our point of view, the Russians have been difficult allies" and asserted that the "long heritage of distrust between Russia and the two great western democracies . . . has not been surmounted yet."[2]

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1. Joseph E. Davies, "Russia Today," Vital Speeches, 9:20 (August 1, 1943), 640.

2. Ernest K. Lindley, "Russia and the Foreign Ministers' Meeting," Newsweek, 22:14 (October 4, 1943), 54.

Others were habitually negative in their references to the Soviet Union. Eugene Lyons, editor of the American Mercury, ridiculed those who sought to make Stalin respectable and lashed out at the general public who were eagerly looking for proof that "Stalinism is a species of democracy" so that they can have their "bruised faith in communism healed."[1] James M. Gillis, editor of the conservative Catholic World, was implacable in his opposition to Russia and hardly let a month go by without parading the pristine purity of his eternal hostility to Communist Russia.[2]

For the most part, however, it was only the Gillises, the Lyonses, the Colonel McCormicks who managed to hold on to their doctrinaire dislike of Russia in face of the tide of friendly feeling that flooded the country. Any actual difficulties that the alliance was experiencing at this stage were minimized.[3] It was easier and more patriotic to believe the better side of reports concerning

---

1. Eugene Lyons, "State of the Union," The American Mercury, 54:220(April, 1942), 461-62.

2. See, for example, The Catholic World's editorial comment in 55:927(June, 1942), 257-66, and 55:926(May, 1942), 129-30.

3. John R. Deane, general in charge of the U. S. Military Mission in Moscow, 1943-1945, recounts some of these difficulties in The Strange Alliance (New York: The Viking Press, 1947).

Russia.

iii. High Hopes for the Future

The New Republic editorial in October of 1943 shows the typical analysis of Soviet war aims, giving the Russians every benefit of the doubt.[1] "The prime drive in their foreign policy is still military security."[2] This the Russians would seek to achieve through having friendly neighboring governments. They also desire a peaceful Europe so that they can recoup their terrible war-time losses and raise their living standards--so the argument ran.

Commonweal, taking a peek into the post-war future, saw "a strong alliance between four great powers--ourselves, England, Russia, and China--cemented by the desire of all four to cultivate their own back yards in peace. . . ."[3]

This tendency to hope for the best was characteristic of American opinion at this stage. The bias was strengthened by Stalin's dissolution of the Communist International in the spring of 1943. Commonweal was certain that this

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1. "What Russia Wants," The New Republic, 109:15(October 11, 1943), 474-75.

2. Ibid., p. 474.

3. "The Meaning of the Future," The Commonweal, 37(July 30, 1943), 15.

signified the waning of Russian zeal for world revolution.[1] George Vernadsky, in a lengthy analysis of Soviet foreign policy in The Yale Review, asserted that the move indicated a trend away from the international revolution and toward nationalistic aspirations.[2] Time announced that the "Soviet cycle from world revolution to nationalism had run its course."[3] Even Newsweek agreed.[4]

Public opinion polls reflected both the general optimism and the smaller vein of distrust. In early 1943, a sampling of the population was asked if they agreed with this statement: "In spite of all efforts for peace, nations just can't live together peacefully, so we might just as well expect a war every few years." Fully 71.0 per cent disagreed, 25.1 per cent agreed, and 3.9 per cent said they didn't know.[5]

In June of 1943, over 60 per cent in a poll agreed that "the chances for making a lasting peace after the war will

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1. "The Meaning of It All," The Commonweal, 37:7(June 4, 1943), 159.

2. George Vernadsky, "Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy," The Yale Review, 33:4(June, 1944), 699-720.

3. "Song for the New World," Time, 43:1(January 3, 1944), 32.

4. "Views on the World's Greatest Enigma," Newsweek, 23:17 (April 23, 1944), 47.

5. "Internationalism," The Public Opinion Quarterly, 7:1 (Spring, 1943), 168.

be . . . better than they were after the last war."[1] Another sampling was asked, "Do you think we shall be able to trust the Russians after the war?"[2] Forty-three per cent chose this answer: "We can confidently trust them to act fairly if we do." Twenty per cent thought "we can trust the British, but not the Russians. Another 34 per cent indicated that "we can't really trust the British or the Russians.

In a Fortune poll made during the spring of 1943, only 30.8 per cent thought we might not be able to avoid a war during the next twenty-five to thirty years.[3] Successive polls by the American Institute of Public Opinion asked, "Do you think Russia can be trusted to cooperate with us after the war?" The results showed a growing confidence.

	Yes	No	Undecided
March, 1942	39%	39%	22%
February, 1943	46	29	25
April, 1943	44	34	22
November, 1943	47	27	26[4]

1. Gabriel A. Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1950), p. 89.
2. Ross Stagner, "Public Opinion and Peace Plans," The Public Opinion Quarterly, 7:2(Summer, 1943), 301.
3. "International Relations," The Public Opinion Quarterly, 7:3(Fall, 1943), 501.
4. "Postwar Relations with Russia," The Public Opinion Quarterly, 8:1(Winter, 1944), 156.

At the time these polls were being taken, Russian expert David J. Dallin was warning that the Soviet designs in Europe had not changed appreciably since the time of the czars, whose goal it was to control eastern and central Europe from Stettin south to Trieste.[1] Few paid him much attention. During this period of Russian-American comradship, his ideas were a small eddy in a stream moving swiftly in the opposite direction. The Teheran Conference was soon to give disquieting evidence to support Dallin's thesis.

iv. The Big Three at Teheran

From November 28 to December 1, 1943, the leaders of the three allied nations met face-to-face together for the first time. The conference was held in Teheran, capital of Persia, a country their forces had jointly occupied to use as a supply line into Russia. Although the principal outcome of the meeting was a firm commitment that all three would stay in the war until the end and would move in unity toward victory, the Russians showed that they did not feel bound by the Atlantic Charter and its guaranties that the allies sought no territorial aggrandizement. Stalin reaffirmed what Molotov had said in the foreign ministers'

1. David J. Dallin, Russia in Postwar Europe, trans. F. K. Lawrence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), p. 168.

conference in Moscow six weeks earlier--Russia would seek to annex sections of Poland, Rumania, Czechoslavakia, and Finland. Russia also wanted to be certain that the states bordering her on the west had friendly governments. These demands did not seem at all to be barriers to Big Three unity.

Stalin pressed for a second front in Europe and received assurances that it was coming.[1] Roosevelt spoke about his hopes for a United Nations organization to keep the peace after the war and received tentative affirmative responses. The conference was considered very successful; both President Roosevelt and his intimate adviser Harry Hopkins thought of the meeting as the peak of their careers.[2]

3. Cracks in the Unity: 1944-August, 1945

i. Currents of Optimism

The year following Teheran, the currents of good will continued to flow from the United States toward Russia. People were getting reconciled to the idea that the Soviets needed to be re-assured about their security after

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1. Samuel Flagg Bemis, The United States as a World Power (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1950), p. 416.

2. Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), pp. 775, 778, 799.

the war. It was reasoned that the lands that the Soviets wanted were ethnically and nationally as much like Russia as they were like the countries which held them.[1] The report circulated that the State Department, too, had decided to take a "realistic" rather than an "idealistic" view of Russia's designs.[2] The Soviet desire for an "outer layer" of friendly states along her borders did not seem unnatural either. Just what the Russians meant by "friendly states" was not certain, but the fact that the Commintern had been dissolved re-assured people that the border states would probably not be sovietized.[3]

President Roosevelt said in a fireside chat on March 8, 1944,

> I think the Russians are perfectly friendly; they aren't trying to gobble up all the rest of Europe or the world. . . . They haven't got any crazy ideas of conquest. . . . These fears that have been expressed by a lot of people here--with some reason--that the Russians are going to try to dominate Europe, I personally don't think there's anything in it.[4]

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1. Joachim Joesten, "Why Stalin Acts that Way," The Nation, 158:14(April, 1944), 389.

2. William G. Carlton, "We Are Losing the Battle for Collective Security," Vital Speeches, 10:19(July 15, 1944), 600.

3. "Views on the World's Greatest Enigma," Newsweek, 23:17 (April 24, 1944), 47.

4. Henry M. Wriston, Diplomacy in a Democracy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), pp. 90-91.

Russophile Anna Louise Strong's article in The Nation in the fall of 1944 also exhibited the currents of optimism that were running strong. Her answer to the oft asked question, "What does Russia want?" was that above all else Russia wanted peace and security and friendship. She wrote that the Soviets

> regard American and British friendship with the Soviet Union as infinitely more important to world peace and progress than a Soviet Poland, Rumania, or even France. . . .
> The Soviet Union wants governments in the border states which will be sufficiently capitalistic to win American and British recognition . . . but which will be at the same time definitely 'anti-fascist' and friendly to the Soviets. . . . It wants them to serve, not as a cordon sanitaire between the Soviet Union and the Western world, but as a bridge.[1]

Most of the American public agreed with this approach to the question of what Russia wanted. An August, 1944 poll showed that 45 per cent of the population thought Russia did not have expansionist aims, but was only trying to attain security through friendly neighboring governments. Twenty-two per cent went even further and said they expected Russia to follow a real "good neighbor" policy.[2]

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1. Anna Louise Strong, "Russia's Post-War Policy," The Nation, 159:17(October 21, 1944), 460-61.

2. Almond, op. cit., p. 94.

ii. Trends toward Disillusionment

Doubts about Russia were slowly taking root, however. Sam Rayburn, perennial speaker of the House, told the representatives that any doubts about Russia that they might have ought to be pushed into the background. Speaking to his colleagues in January of 1944, he cited some unfortunate signs of distrust that were appearing.

> Then somebody says to me: "What are we going to do with Russia after the war is over?" "What is Russia going to do after the war is over?" What I am interested in in 1943 and 1944 is what Russia is doing now. We will settle those things after the war is over.[1]

Doubters were not to be put off so easily. Dr. William G. Carlton, ever a sensitive observer of American reactions to Russia, reported in early summer of 1944 that there was a widespread belief "that Russia will not cooperate in a world organization to keep the peace." Dr. Carlton rallied the generally accepted arguments against this view--the fact that Russia was war weary, and that she needed peace for reconstruction--and added another, that there is a kind of pacifism historically inherent in socialism that made it seek for peace.[2]

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1. Sam Rayburn, "We Must Have Unity," Vital Speeches, 10:8 (February 1, 1944), 229.

2. William G. Carlton, "We are Losing the Battle for Collective Security," Vital Speeches, 10:19(July 15, 1944), 601.

It was only three months later, in October, that Dr. Carlton was quoted as warning that we must be realistic about the possibility of a "rift" between the United States and Russia.[1] He reminded Americans that when the war is over America and Russia will be the two great powers of the world. The economic and political systems of these two nations differ, and their interests clash in many parts of the globe. Alert to the changing atmosphere, he stated that a "drift toward rivalry" with Russia was now in process.[2]

Dr. Carlton was right. Negative reaction to Russia was slowly growing. A number of people charged her with violating the Atlantic Charter by seeking territorial gains. Montana Senator Burton K. Wheeler said in a speech that the United States was not fighting to establish communism in Yugoslavia or the Balkan states or to get a piece of Finland for Russia.[3]

Irritation grew at Russia's high-handedness, which was showing that she considered the Balkan nations hers to

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1. William G. Carlton, "The Convergence of the American and Russian Systems," Vital Speeches, 11:4(October 11, 1944), 98-104.

2. Ibid.

3. Burton K. Wheeler, "Sound American Policy," Vital Speeches, 10:23(September 5, 1944), 715.

control and would brook no interference. The Soviets had never actually declared war on Bulgaria, but in October, 1944, just as the Americans and British were sitting down with Bulgarian leaders in Cairo to arrange an armistice, Russia declared war and swiftly occupied the country. Churchill called this intervention "both startling and effective."[1] It was fast becoming clear that Russia would handle all the armistice negotiations for the Balkan area in the future.

Additional disagreements arose over a variety of issues, such as oil concessions in Iran, and who should participate in a civil aviation conference in Chicago. Noting the disruptions, The Nation observed as 1944 drew to a close that "recent events serve to underscore the precarious character of the unity among the big three 'United Nations.'"[2]

iii. The Conference at Yalta

In February of 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met in the historic conference at Yalta in the Crimea. This was to go down in history as one of the most dramatic events in American diplomacy. There plans were made for the final military operations against Germany, and the

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1. "Bear in the Balkans," Newsweek, 24:15(October 9, 1944), 59.

2. "Not United Enough," The Nation, 159:20(November 11, 1944), 577.

occupation of the defeated nations with separate zones for each of the allies under a central control commission. The Big Three announced a conference to be called in San Francisco to set up a United Nations organization, and that they had agreed upon voting procedures in its security council. They pledged that the liberated nations would be given provisional governments representative of all democratic elements in the population, these to be followed by free elections establishing de jure governments. They provided for periodic meetings of the Big Three foreign ministers and made agreements concerning Russia's entry into the war against Japan.

The American delegation had no doubts but that the Russians would live up to their agreements.

> The mood of the American delegates, including Roosevelt and Hopkins, could be described as one of supreme exultation as they left Yalta. . . . Hopkins later said to me [reported Robert Sherwood], 'We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years. We were absolutely certain that we had won the first great victory of the peace--and by "we," I mean all of us, the whole civilized human race. The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine.'"[1]

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1. Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 870.

iv. The Specter of World War III

As the war in Europe progressed in early 1945 to the stage of mopping up operations, however, and attempts were made to carry out the Yalta agreements, allied unity faltered, and so did the easy optimism about Russia and the postwar world that had been prevailing.

German propaganda worked hard at trying to widen the cracks that were developing in allied co-operation. The government that took up the threads of remaining power in Germany after the death of Hitler tried to maneuver a separate surrender to the United States and Great Britain with an offer to help them in fighting the Russians.[1] It is impossible to judge whether this effort of the Germans had any effect at all upon the West, but the German leaders had apparently convinced many of their followers they were being successful. A number of German army units were shocked when their American captors disarmed them, for they fully expected to be allowed to keep their weapons and to assist in fighting Russia.[2] But the possible threat of armed conflict among the allies had been averted by the agreements on military occupation zone boundaries.

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1. "The Occupation," Time, 45:21(May 21, 1945), 24.

2. Ibid.

Questions about how Russia would use her new position of power were a part of the increasing tensions between the West and the Soviet Union. The feeling was growing that these tensions might lead to war. Arthur Koestler expressed this feeling when he wrote The Yogi and the Commissar, published in early June, 1945. In the book of essays he stated that the thrust of Russian westward expansion was inevitable.[1] He predicted that the technique Russia would use would be brisk surprise blows interspersed with periods of good will.[2] Koestler was one of the first prominent persons to speak of Russian surprise attack as a real danger.

On June 11, 1945, Time reported that "last week the possibility of World War III was more and more in the horrified world's public eye," and that so many important people were speaking of war as inevitable that it was no longer considered news.[3] The news was being made by those few who continued to talk as though war was not necessarily awaiting the nation. The article was a vast exaggeration of the real situation, but it was a fact

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1. Arthur Koestler, The Yogi and the Commissar (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945), pp. 203-204.

2. Ibid., p. 206.

3. "World War III?" Time, 45:24(June 11, 1945), 24.

that more prominent people were speaking about the possibility of war than before.

v. Data from the Polls

Public opinion polls still showed that, in spite of the new tensions, the general attitude of the American people toward Russia was one of cautious optimism. A January, 1945 poll showed that 70 per cent of the population thought that the United States could get on with Russia better than before the war.[1] Those who expected the United States to be at war within the next twenty-five years rose just slightly from 38 per cent in March to 40 per cent in August.[2]

Just as victory over Japan became a reality, another poll showed that 30 per cent saw Russia's aims in Eastern Europe as "defensive"; 25 per cent of the people attached pure economic or humanitarian motives to Russia's East European policy; 20 per cent had no opinion; and another 25 per cent thought that Russia was trying to extend the Communist orbit in Eastern Europe.[3]

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1. Almond, op. cit., p. 94.

2. Reported in The Public Opinion Quarterly, Summer and Fall issues of 1945 (Vol. 9, Nos. 3 and 4).

3. Almond, op. cit., p. 90.

Gabriel Almond estimates from opinion poll data that American opinion about Russia at the end of the war was divided into three rough groups: (1) about 20-30 per cent were "deeply and invariably distrustful"; (2) 20-30 per cent were "fully sold on Russia's amicable and peaceful intentions"; (3) 40-60 per cent constituted a large middle group "whose attitudes ranged from non-committal to hope and moderate optimism."[1]

A good basis thus existed for building a relationship of friendliness and mutual trust with the Soviet Union.

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

CHAPTER III

THE SHIFTING OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES: SEPTEMBER, 1945-1946

1. A Curtain of Iron

Clare Booth Luce expressed a new look that a number of Americans were taking at Russia as hostilities were ending. She said that we must not overlook the crimes of communism. We must apply the same moral standards in judging Russia as we had used in judging Germany.

> Our gratitude is so very, very great to the heroic people of Russia, who helped us gain . . . victory. But a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that we examine the immoral nature of this communism that is sweeping Europe.[1]

After examining communism's "immoral nature" Mrs. Luce concluded, "This cannot long remain two worlds, as it is today--the world of totalitarianism and the world of liberty."[2]

Mrs. Luce was reacting to what was already happening in the countries of Eastern Europe. According to the terms of Yalta, the allies had recognized Russia's right to have "friendly governments" around her. It was specified,

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1. Clare Booth Luce, "America and World Communism," Vital Speeches, 11:21(August 15, 1945), 649.

2. Ibid.

however, that those governments would be representative of all democratic sections of the population and would be followed by free elections. A few weeks after Yalta, Russia imposed a communist government on Rumania. Bulgaria soon followed.

In the negotiations concerning a new government for Poland which would include not only members of the Lublin group which the Russians sponsored, but also persons from the Polish government in exile in London, the West began to understand for the first time just what the Russians meant by "friendly governments." The Soviets eventually conceded to vigorous Western protests and allowed a government representing both groups to sit in Warsaw for a short while. One-by-one, however, the non-communist members were eliminated. A similar pattern of events was to follow in Hungary.

These developments were concurrent with the sealing off of borders with Western Europe, the enforcement of rigid travel restrictions, and the clamping of tight censorship on the Russian occupied areas. The Joint Allied Control Commission discovered that it had no effective jurisdiction over the Russian zones. By March 5, 1946, Sir Winston Churchill was able to speak of an "iron curtain" having been drawn across Eastern Europe.[1]

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1. Sir Winston Churchill, "Alliance of English Speaking People," Vital Speeches, 12:11(March 15, 1946), pp. 329-332.

Speaking at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, with President Truman behind him on the platform, Sir Winston called for mutual defense and security agreements between the United States and the British Commonwealth. He said:

> From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. . . .
>
> Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies. . . .
>
> On the other hand I repulse the idea that a new war is inevitable; still more that it is imminent. . . . I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines. . . . From what I have seen of our Russian friends and allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than military weakness.[1]

The general population of this country was not so ready as Sir Winston to admit relations with Russia had reached a state where military security was needed against them. Most "viewed with distaste and alarm the kind of military marriage proposed by Churchill: such an alliance would only provoke suspicion. . . ."[2] A poll taken on

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1. Ibid., pp. 331-32.

2. "Mr. Truman's Balloon," Time, 17:11(March 18, 1946), 19.

April first showed that of the 68 per cent who knew about Churchill's suggestion of a U.S.-British alliance to check Russia, 18 per cent approved and 40 per cent disapproved.[1]

This poll cannot be understood, however, as indicating that crucial changes in America's attitude toward Russia had not been taking place in the preceding months. As negotiations over recognition of the Polish and Balkan governments had dragged from late 1945 into 1946, a definite shift in public opinion about Russia could be seen.

This shift in attitudes was noticeable especially in the "jelling" of the feeling that war with Russia was inevitable. In August, 1945, only 40 per cent had expected the nation to be at war within twenty-five years. This rose sharply in an October poll to 54 per cent. By March of 1946 it was 64 per cent.[2] This feeling continued high during 1946, with polls in May and September showing 62 per cent predicting war within the stated period. Another March, 1946 poll revealed that 49 per cent of the people thought the United States would be at war within ten years. Apparently the negative reaction to Churchill's suggestion

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1. "International Relations," The Public Opinion Quarterly, 10:2(Summer, 1946), 264.

2. This and the immediately following poll data are from polls reported in Vol. 10, Nos. 2, 3, and 4 (Summer, Fall, Winter, 1946).

was due not so much to a cheery optimism about Russian aims, but to a fear of making an alliance that might provoke Russia while there was still some hope.

Time showed, though, that negative feeling toward Russia continued to mount. From early 1946 onwards, "well over a majority in a series of national samplings viewed Russia as aiming to build herself up to be the ruling power of the world."[1] At the same time, the number of those willing to have the United States Government "make every possible effort" to keep on friendly terms with Russia fell from 23 per cent in September of 1945 to 15 per cent in July of 1946.[2] A series of Gallup polls in 1946 indicated 60 per cent or more felt that American policy toward Russia was too "soft."[3]

2. Rays of Cautious Optimism

Even if many people did think that war might be coming, the immediacy of a Russian military threat was not felt keenly. The demobilization of American armed forces from their strength of eleven million men to one and a half million proceeded with rapidity. The Truman

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1. Almond, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 95. 2. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 97.

3. These were reported in Vol. 10, Nos. 2-4, and Vol. 11, No. 1 of <u>The Public Opinion Quarterly</u>.

administration, still hopeful of being able to deal trustfully with the Russians, proposed in mid-July, 1946, before the United Nations, a plan

> for an International Atomic Development Authority, to which the United States would turn over its atomic secrets, provided that there were international control and inspection. The control and inspection were to apply to all nations and to be subject to no veto. Further manufacture of bombs was to cease immediately, and existing bombs were to be destroyed.[1]

Russia dashed many hopes when she refused to accept any kind of international inspection, but the plan itself, submitted in good faith, showed that the administration had not yet given up hopes for co-operation.

The influential military analyst, Major George Fielding Eliot, expressed the same cautious optimism.

> There is actually no irreconcilable conflict between the constitutional-capitalistic system of the Anglo-American nations and the statist-socialist system of the U. S. S. R. No deep lying moral issue is here involved.[2]

In assessing the situation, Major Eliot came to the conclusion that

> Neither a planned war nor a war brought about by deliberate creation of conditions which would lead

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1. Herbert Agar, The Price of Power (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 55.

2. George Fielding Eliot, The Strength We Need (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), p. 49.

> to war can offer any military attraction for the Russian leaders . . . and therefore it is not an unreasonable assumption that no such war is likely to occur for the present.[1]

Most people were not thinking of Russian surprise attack as an imminent danger.

3. Getting Tough with Russia

i. Journey into Doubt

It is interesting to trace the development of President Truman's attitudes toward Russia during his first year in office following Roosevelt's death in April of 1945. Mr. Truman had no experience of his own with the Russians and shared in the cheerful hope that prevailed in Washington when he took office.[2] No sooner had he become president than he was involved in the middle of long and disillusioning negotiations over the "Polish Question." In the process of his second conference with Molotov, he told the Soviet foreign minister "that in its larger aspects the Polish question had become for our people the symbol of the future development of our international relations."[3]

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1. *Ibid*., p. 55. 2. Agar, *op. cit*., pp. 10-11.

3. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), I, 76.

Mr. Truman saw the issue as a clear and simple one. Agreements had been made at Yalta about the type of government Poland was to have. He kept asking Molotov, "Why don't you carry out your agreements? You made them. Why don't you keep them?"[1] At this stage he felt certain that the Russians could be convinced that they had nothing to fear from America, and then they would co-operate fully.

When, in the closing days of the war in Europe, Churchill urged President Truman and General Eisenhower to drive as deeply into Eastern Europe as possible to gain a good bargaining position with Russia, Truman rejected the proposal. After all, agreements had been made about occupation zones. When the German surrender came, much to Churchill's dismay, Mr. Truman ordered American troops to withdraw to the agreed-upon boundaries, moving troops back as much as one hundred fifty miles at points.

Truman, like Roosevelt before him, felt certain that the disagreements arising between Russia and the West could be best handled on a man-to-man basis, and urged a meeting of the three heads of state. This conference took place at Potsdam in July, 1945, "where the American leaders discovered the second phase of disillusionment--no longer [did the Americans ask] 'Why don't they keep

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-82.

their promises?' but rather, 'Are there any bounds to their ambitions?'"[1] President Truman wrote later that at Potsdam he had found "the Russians were relentless bargainers, forever pressing for every advantage for themselves."[2]

Little was settled at Potsdam. Almost all the knotty problems of the peace treaties for defeated nations were referred to the foreign ministers to handle in subsequent meetings. The foreign ministers' conferences were held in London the following September, in Moscow in December, then again in Paris during April and May of 1946. The Paris conference recessed for the summer, then reconvened in September. During the negotiations in these meetings as they dragged on with the appearance that the Russians really did not want the problems settled, Truman's attitude grew more pessimistic and distrustful. After the failure of the Moscow Conference he told Secretary Byrnes, "I'm tired of babying the Soviets."[3]

iii. A Fight within the Cabinet

In September of 1946 a controversy within the President's cabinet broke into the open and showed that

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1. Agar, op. cit., p. 29.
2. Truman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 411. 3. Ibid., p. 552

official policy was solidifying into a "tough" attitude toward Russia. On September twelfth, while Secretary of State Byrnes was in Paris still trying to get negotiations to lead to peace treaties for all the occupied countries, Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace spoke to a political rally in Madison Square Garden.

In his address Wallace rejected the concept of an alliance of mutual defense with Great Britain as the "key to our foreign policy."[1] We ought not to get involved in the "ballance of power manipulations" which characterize British diplomacy.[2] Wallace contended that we must analyze Russia's history and character in forming our policy toward her. If we did so, we would realize that "we are reckoning with a force which cannot be handled successfully by a 'get tough with Russia' policy."[3] Wallace proposed that we allow Russia the control of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and seek to neutralize China and to build up a United Nations military force.[4]

Secretary Wallace had released this speech to the press the morning of the day that he delivered it. In

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1. Henry A. Wallace, "Is American Foreign Policy Leading to War?" Representative American Speeches, XX:1(1947), 37.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 38.

4. Ibid., pp. 39-41.

answer to queries about it from reporters in his press conference that day, President Truman said that he had read it and that it represented his and the State Department's ideas.[1] When reports of Wallace's address reached Secretary Byrnes in Paris, he was greatly disturbed and called Truman to discuss it with him. Critical reaction also flowed in from the Western capitals.

President Truman found it necessary to retract his previous statement to the press. He explained that he had not actually read the document and had not intended to endorse what Wallace was going to say; he had only meant that he approved Wallace's right to make the speech.[2]

During the next week Secretary Wallace made his views on foreign policy even clearer in a public letter to the president as the controversy raged. His position was in outright opposition to that of Secretary Byrnes. Byrnes wrote the president saying that he would resign immediately if Wallace's attacks continued.[3] On September twentieth, President Truman asked for and received Wallace's resignation from the cabinet.

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1. The data surrounding this address are recounted in detail in the preface to the text of the speech in _ibid._, pp. 35-36.

2. Truman, _op. cit._, Vol. I, p. 557.

3. _Ibid._, p. 559.

At the beginning of this incident, it appeared that American policy toward Russia was still somewhat flexible, perhaps even undecided. When the incident was finally closed, it had marked the solidification of Washington's attitude into a "tough" policy toward the Soviets.

In this atmosphere, the words of caution which Russian expert Vera Micheles Dean was penning sounded rather poignant:

> We must be constantly on guard against the possibility that the atmosphere of war in which we have been living may have made us unjustifiably suspicious of the motives of other peoples; and that we may be attributing to Russia sinister motives for actions which, from Moscow's point of view, can be explained by the historical development and centuries-old aspirations of the Russian nation.[1]

But calm reasonableness was not the mood in Washington. They had decided to "get tough with Russia."

4. Growth of the "Pearl Harbor Complex"

It is difficult to ascertain with certainty what role, if any, American military leaders were playing in the build up of anti-Russian sentiment. We do know that General Eisenhower and the other military chiefs were adverse to taking any steps in the closing phases of the war that

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1. Vera Micheles Dean, Russia: Menace or Promise (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), p. 91.

"mixed politics with military planning," that is, allowed any supposed rivalry with Russia have any bearing on the conduct of the war.[1] We may judge from this that they probably did not give much weight to speculation about a threat from the Soviets.

After the war there were occasional statements of a "sensational" nature by military leaders. General Patton was quoted as saying to some Los Angeles Sunday School children in an Episcopal church that "you children here, whether you like it or not, are the soldiers and nurses of the next war. There will be war again because there have always been such things."[2] In June, 1946, Senator Glen Taylor told reporters that "the brass and braid told the Senate committee there may be another war soon."[3] It is impossible to say what might have transpired in the hearing rooms of Congressional committees.

Public utterances of military leaders, however, were very circumspect, much more so than those of many politicians. One reason may have been that the military chiefs

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1. Truman, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 212.

2. Kenneth McFarland, "Momentous September," Vital Speeches, 12:1(October 15, 1945), 13.

3. "World War III?" Facts on File, 6:294(June, 1946), 177.

were pressing hard for Universal Military Training and were afraid that sensational tactics might harm their efforts to make the training sound almost routine for a modern democracy.

In any discussion of the military aspects of Russian-American relations that did take place, the "Pearl Harbor Complex" was unmistakable. It involved the idea that in our era wars begin with "Pearl Harbors"--that is, with surprise attacks. Here the military along with civilian advocates of Universal Military Training did play a role. Those who during 1946 and 1947 worked assiduously for the passage of compulsory training bills said that the reason we needed such a military reserve was to carry out our commitments in Europe and to the United Nations. But they also reminded people in almost every speech that we must be ready for the next Pearl Harbor if and when it should come, for with modern weapons, there would be no interlude following an attack in which we could mobilize our forces. The name of any possible aggressor was never mentioned, but any idea of the possibility of war carried with it the corollary that such a war would start with a surprise attack upon the West.

CHAPTER IV

MARCHING TOWARD THE BLOCKADE: 1947 THROUGH JUNE, 1948

1. Declaration of Cold War

1946 had been a year of disillusionment for the American people. The course of events in 1947 was not destined to ease the pain of adjustment to a world vastly different from their expectations at the end of the war. As Secretary of State Byrnes had noted in his October, 1946, report on the Paris Conference, tensions with Russia were mounting.[1]

On January 19 of the new year, Iran charged Russia with interfering in her internal affairs. Iran had been occupied jointly by the British, Americans, and Russians during the war, and had provided the main supply route into the Soviet Union. At Yalta the occupying powers had jointly agreed to evacuate troops from Iran following the cessation of hostilities. American and British troops were removed, and the Russians appeared to be leaving. It was discovered, however, that before all the Russian troops had withdrawn, they had reversed their direction. More

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1. James F. Byrnes, "We Oppose Privilege and Defend Freedom," Vital Speeches, 13:2(November 1, 1946), 39.

Soviet forces had entered the country, set up a puppet government in the northeast provinces, and cut off communications between that area and Teheran. This appeared to be another in the pattern of broken agreements.

The long-drawn negotiations for the establishment of a democratic government in Poland came to a heartbreaking end with the general election held in that nation on January 19. The State Department protested that their reports showed conclusively that the election had failed to be a truly "free expression of the will of the Polish people," but to no avail. Poland, in whose behalf France and Britain had entered the war, was lost for the foreseeable future as a free democratic nation.

In February, Britain informed President Truman that she was going to have to end her financial and military support of the Greek government. In the allied division of occupation responsibilities at the end of the war, Greece, for long a part of the British sphere of influence, was given over to British occupation. Almost from the time they entered the country British troops were engaged in military action against Greek partisans. The partisans were able to fade across the borders of communist neighbors when hotly pursued, there to regroup and sally out again. The fighting and the task of maintaining the Green government was too great a strain on the threadbare British

economy. In giving the option on action to President Truman, Churchill warned that if no one took up the burden, the Greek economy would collapse. This together with the pressure that Russia was putting on Turkey both for territorial concessions, control of the Dardanelles, and military bases, convinced Truman that if no action was taken Greece and Turkey would soon become Russian satellites.

President Truman decided that the United States would have to take up the responsibility for attaining stability in the area. Mr. Truman went before Congress on March 12 and asked for $400 millions for military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey. He stated American policy in what was to be known as the Truman Doctrine:

> I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.[1]

Senators Claude Pepper and Glen Taylor led the opposition to the proposal. Senator Pepper said:

> The effect of this proposal, if enacted, is officially to brand the United Nations as a failure, and of no force or power to achieve the sacred functions for which it was founded.[2]

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1. Harry S. Truman, "Aid to Greece and Turkey," Vital Speeches, 13:11(March 15, 1947), 323.

2. Claude Pepper, "Against Aid to Greece and Turkey," Representative American Speeches, XX:1(1947), 74.

As Congress debated, the United Nations investigating committee sent to Greece to inquire into the charges that rebels were receiving help from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria reported affirmatively. The Senate, under the leadership of Arthur Vandenberg, approved the aid bill on April 10, by a vote of 67 to 23.

This measure clarified just what the implications of a "tough" policy toward Russia were. President Truman's own estimation is that "this was . . . the turning point in America's foreign policy, which now declared that whereever aggression, direct or indirect, threatened the peace, the security of the United States was involved."[1]

Bernard Baruch summed it all up very aptly: "Let us not be deceived--we are today in the midst of a cold war."[2]

2. Searching for Salvation for Europe

i. The Plan of the General

The State Department, now under the direction of General George Marshall, was dubious that the aid to Greece and Turkey and the few scattered loans the country had made would be sufficient to stem the tide of European

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1. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), II, 106.

2. Ernest W. Lefever, Ethics and United States Foreign Policy (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1957), p. 30.

disintegration. It was a question as to whether or not Europe could be saved.

The situation was even worse in China, ravaged by the years of war, torn by civil strife, and almost helpless under a corrupt government. The decision had to be made as to how much the United States could do to fortify Western Europe and Asia. Secretary of State Marshall and his planning staff under George Kennan concluded that our resources were not enough to make a substantial difference in both areas and that Western Europe should receive top priority.[1]

On June 5, speaking at Harvard University, Secretary Marshall called for the European governments to meet, declare their joint needs, and suggest methods that the United States could help to meet them.[2] The invitation included Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe. Announcing that "our policy is not directed against any country of doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos," he promised that the United States would do her best to aid their joint economic recovery.[3]

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1. Agar, op. cit., p. 71.

2. George C. Marshall, "European Unity," Vital Speeches, 13:18(July 1, 1947), 553-54.

3. Ibid., p. 553.

The war-torn nations of Europe met immediately to set up a plan for meeting their economic needs through American aid. Molotov attended briefly, but left after delivering a blistering attack on American imperialism. Poland and Czechoslovakia made plans to send representatives to the meeting only to have them vetoed by Russia.

The Marshall Plan went before Congress in January of 1948. It marked the death struggle of isolationist sentiment in the legislature. The whole nation debated the plan's merits. It was attacked by Taft on the right as involving the United States too deeply and at too great an expense in European affairs. It was attacked from the far left as being only a veiled threat toward Russia. However, Senator Vandenberg, aided by a ground swell of public opinion in its favor, piloted the Economic Co-operation Act through the Republican controlled senate. He also received considerable assistance from the February 25 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, the last outpost of democracy in Eastern Europe.

The lengthy public debate over the Marshall Plan reached deep into the grass roots of American society and served to solidify the country's apprehension about Russian communist expansion. There was no question now in which direction public opinion had moved.

The public was listening in 1947 to the kind of attacks upon the Soviet Union that it had ignored in 1945. The speeches and writings of those who loved to quote from Marx, Lenin, and Stalin about communist aims and tactics had a growing audience. The sort of quotations usually referred to in such diatribes is illustrated by the testimony given by William Bullitt, one-time ambassador to Russia, before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He used two quotations from Lenin that were becoming favorites of anti-communist agitators. Lenin, Bullitt pointed out to the congressmen, had written:

> We are living not merely in a state but in a system of states; and it is inconceivable that the Soviet Republic should continue for a long period side by side with imperialist states. Ultimately one or the other must conquer. Meanwhile, a number of terrible clashes between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states is inevitable.
>
> It is necessary to use any ruse, cunning, unlawful method, evasion, concealment of truth.[1]

The anti-communists were on the move.

ii. "Containment" by Mr. "X"

During the process of the national debate on the Marshall Plan, an article entitled "The Sources of Soviet

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1. William C. Bullitt, "The Communist Creed," Vital Speeches, 13:15(May 15, 1947), 460. This same quote from Lenin is used by John Foster Dulles in War or Peace? (New York: Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 10; and by Paul Winterton in Inquest on an Ally (London: Cresset Press, 1948), p. 10.

Conduct" appeared in the July issue of Foreign Affairs, signed mysteriously by "X". At first the article aroused only mild discussion, but when it was learned that the mysterious "X" was probably none other than George Kennan, head of the State Department's planning staff, the article became considered as a definitive statement of American policy toward Russia.

The article affirmed that the Kremlin undoubtedly believed that conflict with the West was inevitable, but asserted that this does not mean that they have a do-or-die program to overthrow our society by a given date.[1] "The theory of the inevitability of the eventual fall of capitalism has the fortunate connotation that there is no hurry about it."[2] The author expressed the conviction that Russia is essentially politically and socially unstable.

> This cannot be proved. And it cannot be disproved. But the possibility remains (and in the opinion of this author it is a strong one) that Soviet power, like the capitalist world of its conception, bears within it the seeds of its own decay, and that the sprouting of these seeds is well advanced.[3]

Since we can expect sometime in the future Russian decay and change, and since the West has the atomic bomb and is stronger than Russia, the United States would be warranted

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1. X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs, 25:4(July, 1947), 572.

2. Ibid., p. 572.

3. Ibid., p. 580.

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> entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.[1]

The assumptions behind this policy of containment were to be decisive in American foreign policy for many years and still largely prevail. Some alternatives were discussed in the debate that followed the article's appearance, ranging from "appeasement" to "preventive war," but none modified the posture that the State Department had assumed toward Russia.[2]

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1. Ibid., p. 581.

2. One of the most interesting alternatives suggested was that of Walter Lippmann in The Cold War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), in which he said that the Soviet thrust into Eastern Europe was not to be understood in terms of communist proselytism so much as the fulfillment of Russian imperialist ambitions that antedated the communist revolution by many years. Lippmann held that, although communist expansion must be confronted with counter-force, the most immediate objective of American policy ought to be to get the Red Army out of Eastern Europe through negotiations. He even advocated evacuating American troops from Europe if necessary to win this concession. This was one of the earliest suggestions of "disengagement" as an aim for American policy. Mr. Kennan has changed his own mind in recent years, and is now, in his unofficial role of foreign affairs pundit, the major voice calling for disengagement. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if he had had his conversion experience earlier.

3. Crisis in Berlin

i. A New Deal for West Germany

By this time peace treaties had been signed with all the defeated countries but Germany herself. The negotiations for a German treaty had been going on for so long that the possibility of arriving at one suitable to both Russia and the West was very dim indeed. The continuing stalemate and lack of decisive action in a Germany experiencing the depths of despair was becoming increasingly unbearable. After two and a half years of fruitless negotiations, the Western powers decided that there was no hope of achieving a united Germany with a government chosen freely by the electorate in the foreseeable future. Unwilling to compromise on the issue of free elections, France, Britain, and the United States determined to attack the problems in West Germany without waiting for a treaty and united government.

Aiming at economic and political stability in the Western sectors, they decided that the best way to realize the goal was through currency reform and constitutional government. Plans were drawn up for the election of a constituent assembly representing the three Western zones to write a federal constitution. It was realized that the Soviets might take offense at this action, but "the possibility of Soviet retaliations has been fully

considered and discounted," it was reported. "In the view of the American and British commanders, the risk exists but is well worth taking."[1]

Arrangements for the reform of West German currency proceeded rapidly. The utter worthlessness of the occupation Marks was holding up economic recovery. A prime factor in the collapse of the currency system was that the Russians, having plates for the currency, had flooded West Germany with the paper money. The deterioration of the occupation Mark had virtually led to a barter type of exchange based primarily on American cigarettes. Almost as many transactions were occurring on the Black Market as on the open market.

The Russians did react vigorously to these Western moves, claiming that the West did not really want a re-united Germany and was doing its best to prevent one. The Soviets increased their pressure on West Berlin, pressure which had been building up for some time. The gradual tightening of restrictions on the Western sectors of Berlin had virtually eliminated industry there, and all rail shipments out of West Berlin had been prohibited since April. To give further warning about the powers

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1. "Germany: Agreement in the West," Newsweek, 31:24(June 14, 1948), 36.

they held over the Western sectors, on June 11, the Russians stopped all rail traffic into the city for a twenty-two hour period.

ii. Blockade of the City

The Western powers did not change their plans for currency reform, but introduced the new Deutches Mark on June 18. The Russians stated that they would have to eliminate the possibility of the dumping of old currency into East Germany, and closed all land routes across their occupation zone to the Western zones of the en-claved city. The fact that the strangulation of Western communications with Berlin had built up gradually from the first of April through the end of June had left the West confused and unaware of exactly what was happening.[1]

As several days passed and the blockade was not lifted, the situation of West Berliners, completely de-pendent upon supplies from the Western powers, became desperate. It became increasingly clear that the Russians had determined to force the British, French, and Americans out of Berlin by making it impossible for them to supply the population. Tension mounted to close to the breaking point.

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1. Harry S. Trumen, Memoirs (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), II, 122.

The decision was made in Washington and London neither to force the way into Berlin nor to withdraw.[1] The now famous airlift was begun, and, for some reason--probably because they expected it to fail and because they did not want to be maneuvered into firing the first shot--the Russians allowed traffic to fly through the air corridor to the city. This airlift was to continue for almost eleven months, providing an average of 4000 tons of supplies daily to the blockaded city. A non-violent solution had been found.

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1. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

ASSUMPTION OF RUSSIAN MILITARY THREAT: AUGUST, 1948-1949

1. The Height of Tension

i. Analyzing Russian Motives

The Berlin Blockade marked the lowest depths to which Western relations with Russia had fallen in the three years since the end of the war. Most people interpreted the blockade as an attempt to expose Western weakness, embarrass America before the eyes of Europe, and at the same time gain control of West Berlin without firing a shot. As Herbert Agar assessed it, the blockade was "an intelligent and seemingly irresistible way of destroying British and American prestige in Germany."[1]

Others speculated that the Russians may have had broader purposes in the blockade, and had hoped to draw the West into at least a limited war. George Fielding Eliot, who by now had reversed his previous analysis of our relations with Russia (see above page 30), surmised:

> the Soviet estimate must have been either that the Western Powers would leave Berlin because

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1. Agar, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

> of their inability to feed the population of the three western zones of the city, or that . . . they would try to ram an armored convoy through by road. This latter move might, if resisted, have meant war. Only the Soviet high command knows whether they meant to resist. If they did not then they must have been planning their own humiliating retreat before a display of Western force, which is unlikely.
>
> It is far more likely . . . that they were trying to put themselves into the position of being attacked by the Western powers, so that they could afterward plead self-defense in the court of their own and world public opinion. It is also likely that they expected to have to fight, but hoped to limit actual hostilities to the immediate area concerned.[1]

Although Major Eliot's thesis must be taken seriously, it seems more probable that the estimate which John Thompson, Berlin correspondent of Newsweek, gave on the occasion of the blockade is accurate. Assuming that its aim was to embarrass the West and get them out of Berlin, he pointed out that "the Soviet technique for ousting us from Berlin is obviously designed to avoid major conflicts which could dramatize the situation sufficiently to provoke war."[2]

General Lucius Clay, allied commander in Berlin, drew similar conclusions. He reported to President Truman that the Russians probably did not want a war, but rather a

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1. George Fielding Eliot, If Russia Strikes (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1949), pp. 56-57.

2. John Thompson, "Stranglehold on Berlin," Newsweek, 31:26(June 28, 1948), 29.

major victory without war.[1]

It is more difficult than usual to read the mind of the Russian high command in this instance, but it is certain that the American public entertained the gravest fears. A late June poll indicated that 74 per cent of the people responded "yes" to the question, "Do you expect the United States to be at war within the next ten years?"[2] Almost one-third (32 per cent) said in September that they expected the country to be at war within the next twelve months.[3]

Like a shadow, with the heightened fear of war came increased anxiety about a surprise attack. The title of Major Eliot's book, If Russia Strikes, expressed a dread that many had. He warned that the "danger of war was a grim reality," and that the fear that the free world felt was no longer vague and distant, but "definite, personal, and ever present."[4]

According to Gabriel Almond's estimate--and the public opinion polls bear him out--American "war panic"

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1. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), II, 122.

2. Almond, op. cit., p. 91. 3. Ibid.

4. George Fielding Eliot, If Russia Strikes (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1949) pp. 2, 29.

reached its peak in mid-1948.[1] Although the immediacy of the fear of war was to wane in succeeding months to a degree, the series of crises since the end of the war had produced a general and persisting anxiety about the threat of Russian attack.

ii. Further Disquieting Notes

Though the development of the Berlin blockade was such that it made any analysis of Russian motives and plans problematic, the experience of the blockade convinced the American people that Russia posed an immediate military threat. Evidence that they might be right was to be found in the new interpretations of communist theory being made by Russians themselves. N. Rubinstein, an official theoretician writing in the New Times, indicated what appeared to be a novel development in communist theory on war. He wrote that the Bolsheviks

> recognize the justice of wars of liberation, non-aggressive wars, the aim of which is to defend a nation against outside attack and attempts to enslave it, or to deliver the people from capitalist servitude, or lastly, to liberate a colony or dependent country from oppression by the imperialists.[2]

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1. Almond, op. cit., p. 92.

2. N. Rubinstein, "Soviet Foreign Policy and Its Principles," New Times, No. 12(March 17, 1948).

Rubinstein stated that the Red Army's role is as a possible "implement for the emancipation of the toiling masses in justifiable wars of liberation."[1] This was written just before the strangulation of Berlin began.

Signs that there were highly explosive possibilities in the Berlin crisis came from another source, too. It is never safe to give too much weight to evidence supplied by communists who defect to the West, but neither can one safely ignore their testimony. G. A. Tokaev, a Russian officer in Berlin, fled to the West in early 1948. He testified that "feverish" war preparations were being made in Russia with great "urgency." "There is no possible doubt," he wrote, "that as soon as Stalin is satisfied that the U. S. S. R. is sufficiently strong, he will give the word for a general attack on the West. There will be no warnings. . . ."[2] Tokaev claimed to have been present at top level meetings with Stalin, Malenkov, Molotov, and others in which strategy for war was being planned, aggressive war. "They [the Kremlin] are now fully reconciled to the fact that their brand of world revolution means war."[3]

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1. Ibid.

2. G. A. Tokaev, Stalin Means War (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd., 1951), p. 185.

3. Ibid., p. 187.

The fact that the West had the atomic bomb at this time throws doubt on the accuracy of Tokaev's statements. Our monitoring devices were not to record a Russian atomic explosion until September, 1949. It is true, however, that after Mr. Truman announced our knowledge of the explosion, Molotov retorted that Russia had had an atomic bomb for a year. Perhaps they had; at least they knew they would soon have one.

It is in addition impossible to know whether or not Stalin was completely sane during this period of his life. During the later phase of "de-Stalinization" in Russia, some of his comrades seemed to think that he was not.

However, this was not the level of speculation of the mass of Americans. Their opinions about the probability of Russian attack rested upon emotional responses to events that seemed like threats of war. In the latter half of 1948 there can be no doubt but the preponderance of American opinion assumed the likelihood of military conflict. Once moving in that direction, public opinion had a momentum that made further shifts difficult.

2. The Birth of NATO

Although the Marshall Plan was having almost immediate salutory effects upon the European economy, the belief was growing during 1948--especially in response to the

Berlin crisis--that the economic aid was insufficient to guarantee Western Europe's ability to withstand possible military aggression.[1] Although American opinion had reacted negatively in 1946 to Churchill's suggestion of a "friendly association" of Britain and the United States to maintain the peace, opinion was now moving toward the possibility of a military alliance with the Marshall Plan countries.[2] The senate, showing how thoroughly diminished isolationist sentiment was, adopted in June a resolution advocating further regional mutual defense agreements like that already adopted for the Americas at Rio de Janeiro in 1947.

A bitterly contested election intervened in American affairs at this point. The nominating and balloting confirmed the fact that the public had rejected both the Taft and Wallace approaches to foreign policy. President Truman was re-elected by castigating the Republican controlled Eightieth Congress as a "do-nothing Congress," although in actual fact it had taken the most momentous steps toward peacetime involvement in international affairs

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1. Foster Rhea Dulles, America's Rise to World Power (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 241.

2. Ibid. See also reports of polls in The Public Opinion Quarterly, 12:2(Summer, 1948) 549, 760.

in the history of the nation.

Right-wing elements in the country were shocked by Truman's completely unexpected victory. Their sense of shock combined with the frustration many people were feeling at having their beautiful dreams of a happy postwar world ruined. The search for scapegoats soon turned into a witchhunt for communist conspirators in high places. This could only have happened after the movement of public opinion about Russia had taken the direction it did in 1948.

Plans for a European Alliance proceeded after the campaign and its aftermath had quieted down. In his inaugural address in January, 1949, President Truman named as a principal object of American foreign policy the establishment of a "collective defense agreement" between the United States and other free nations of the North Atlantic area.[1] The North Atlantic Treaty Organization agreement was submitted to the senate in June of 1949 and ratified, over Senator Taft's vigorous opposition, July 21, 1949. While the debate was going on, the sense of ominous danger was heightened by the disintegration of the Nationalist Chinese Government before the

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1. Harry S. Truman, "The Faith By Which We Live," Vital Speeches, 15:8(February 1, 1949), 227.

unrelenting revolutionary forces.

At this point in the history of the United States, the assumption that there was a strong possibility of Russian attack had become basic to American foreign policy and military planning. NATO was held to be necessary because it was believed Russia presented an immediate military threat. John Foster Dulles, Republican advisor to the State Department and future Secretary of State, called article five of the treaty its "heart."[1] Article five stated that "the parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all."[2]

The idea of the danger of imminent Russian attack had reached its full development and had become an integral part of the American attitude toward the Soviet Union and a formalized assumption of American foreign policy.

3. Hardening of the *Status Quo*

It is not within the purpose of this thesis to trace through the years succeeding 1949 the various ways in which the assumption of the threat of Russian military aggression showed itself. Official opinion and public

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1. John Foster Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

2. *Ibid.*

opinion had achieved sufficient momentum and had enough inherent inertia that their direction has not changed appreciably since that year. The Korean War in 1950, beginning as it did with a surprise attack by North Korea upon the South Koreans, was understood to corroborate the soundness of the posture toward the Soviet Union that the American people had assumed.

President Truman spoke for many when he said in late June, 1950,

> the attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. . . .[1]

In the months following Truman's action in ordering American troops into the Korean fighting "the ranks of the American people were nearly closed in agreeing that the challenge of communist aggression could not possibly be allowed to go by default."[2] Even Henry Wallace supported the president's action.[3]

Much of American policy since 1949 has been deduction from the major premise that Russian surprise attack was an

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1. Agar, op. cit., p. 116.

2. Foster Rhea Dulles, op. cit., p. 258. For confirmation see poll reported in The Public Opinion Quarterly, 15:1 (Spring, 1951), 170.

3. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1955), I, 560.

immediate possibility. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, the Distant Early Warning radar system around the continent, the Nike missile sites, and the emphasis upon civil defense are some of the deductions from this premise.

On September 24, 1949, President Truman announced that a nuclear explosion had taken place in Siberia. The Russians had an atomic bomb. It is tragic that American policy and public opinion had completed its turn from optimistic hopefulness to the expectation of war at that very time when the whole concept of war was made utterly irrational. The Soviet Union and the United States could now threaten each other with mutual extermination, but neither could hope to win a war between themselves. Since wars are fought to be won, the very term "war" had become obsolete.

In spite of this, throughout the 1950's the American press, government, and people have continued to think in terms of the threat of war. Until the understanding of what nuclear conflict means has caught up with their antagonism toward Russia, the American people will continue to be victims of a tragic madness, still living in a world that ceased to exist in the fall of 1949.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF THE SHIFT OF PUBLIC OPINION

What caused public opinion to move from cautious optimism toward Russia to the belief that the West was in danger of imminent Russian attack? In attempting to answer this question, we must attempt to find a theory that fits the development of public opinion as it has been outlined in preceding chapters.

1. The Passing of a Superficial Friendship

Several possible answers could be given to our question. One is that the reversion of public opinion to hostility toward Russia was merely a return to what had been "underground" during the war. The war against a common foe made it necessary to achieve a superficial layer of friendliness, but when the fighting was over we were able to revert to our more fundamental suspicious attitude. This answer is implied by several analysts of Soviet-American relations.[1]

It is probably true that a future historian will see the conflict between Russia and the United States

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1. This seems, for example, to be the viewpoint of William Appleman Williams in *op. cit.*, p. 4.

as one of long duration, broken only briefly by the war. Yet it is not accurate to conceive of American goodwill toward Russia during the war as merely floating on the top of deeper unchanged hostility. Before the war Americans were generally negatively disposed toward the Soviet Union. This attitude was re-inforced by the Finnish War and the Stalin-Hitler pact. But by 1943, after being allied with the Russians for over a year, American public opinion had made a genuine shift. Opinion poll data cited earlier bear this out.[1]

In general, public opinion on particular subjects expresses itself in simplified positive and negative moods. The mood toward Russia was definitely positive at the end of the Second World War and, given proper encouragement, could have continued to be so disposed. If public opinion after an interlude returns to a previous position, it is because new forces have been pushing it to that position again and not because it is "remembering" how it used to feel.

2. Simple Reaction to Events

A second possible answer to the question as to why American opinion moved toward belief that the West was in

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1. Above, pp. 12-14.

immediate danger of Russian attack is that the shift was due to spontaneous reactions to objective events. This answer is the popular one, but it is too neat and simple. It ignores the nature of public opinion. Public opinion is not creative and does not interpret events on its own. As Walter Lippman has pointed out, it reacts to events and proposals with either positive or negative moods: the mass can only say "yes" or "no."[1] The formally instituted leaders of public opinion and the informal leaders with their personal followings supply interpretations to the events which the mass of opinion approves or disapproves.

Usually, by the time the public hears about an event, the happening is no longer merely objective fact. Reporters always do an important measure of interpreting by the way they relay information about an event. Along with news of the happening itself comes news of official reaction. Knowledge of an event does not reach the public as an undifferentiated complex reality; it comes with choices made as to which factors are important and with subtle but unmistakable emotional overtones.

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1. Walter Lippmann, The Public Philosophy (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1955), p. 19.

If American opinion arrived at the conclusion that events showed Russia posed a military threat, it was not because the public "thought the problem out" itself. Rather, it accepted the understanding of these events provided by opinion leaders.

3. Led by the Elite

The above suggests a third answer to the question. It is this: American attitudes toward Russia developed in the direction they did because they were led in that direction by the foreign policy opinion elite, that is, by those leaders whose opinions are influential with the public. The foreign policy opinion elite includes government leaders, those in sensitive positions in mass communications, respected persons with followings of their own, and persons representing groups with particular attitudes on particular problems.

Were the American people led into hostility toward Russia by this elite? There is no doubt but that our investigations have produced evidence that accords with this theory. For example, President Truman did act to lead opinion at a very crucial time when opinion was still somewhat flexible. The fact that he introduced Churchill at Fulton in March, 1946, and sat on the platform with him, gave a touch of official sanction to Churchill's

warnings about Russia and suggestions for an Anglo-American defensive association. The furor which followed that speech showed that it had not just reflected public opinion, but moved beyond it in significant ways.

Since it is the function of the executive in the American system to take the initiative in foreign affairs, one might hold that the Truman administration decided upon a negative, tough, suspicious attitude toward Russia at a time when the public still had a great deal of sympathy with the Soviets, and by subtle moves led the people into a similar attitude that would back the administration's "get tough with Russia" policy. To see whether or not this is an adequate explanation of what happened it will be necessary to inquire into the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy.

4. The Relationship between Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

i. No Power in the Mass

A number of different descriptions of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy in the United States have been given. At one end of the scale, C. Wright Mills tends toward the position that in modern America the mass of public opinion has practically no effect on foreign policy, but merely reflects the thinking of the "power elite." He holds that

> Within the United States today three broad levels of power may now be distinguished: the top of modern America is increasingly unified and often seems wilfully coordinated. At the top there has emerged an elite whose power probably exceeds that of any small group of men in world history. . . . The middle levels are often a drifting set of stalemated forces. The middle does not link the bottom with the top. The bottom of this society is politically fragmented and even as a passive fact, increasingly powerless; at the bottom is emerging a mass society.[1]

Mills points out the complexity of the problems faced and the extreme distance from the centers of decision the average person feels himself to be. As a result, the mass of the public has resigned the policy and decision making powers in foreign affairs entirely into the hands of the military, political, and economic elite.[2]

It is certainly true as Mills emphasizes that the public has no effective opinion on many matters of great importance. The public rarely rouses itself enough to make its pressures felt in the decisions that must constantly be made in foreign affairs.

However, the public does play a much more fundamental role in foreign policy than Mills gives it credit for. Its role is two-fold. In the first place, public opinion is

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1. C. Wright Mills, The Causes of World War Three (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958), p. 21.

2. Ibid.

decisive in setting what Gabriel Almond calls the "ideological consensus" within which foreign policy operates.[1] This consensus consists of "agreement on the main themes of contemporary foreign policy--resistance to communist expansion by economic, diplomatic, propaganda, and, if necessary, military means, and the establishment of a peaceful international order. . . ."[2] The elite share in this consensus, primarily because they have arisen out of the aggregate of citizens and partly because the tenure of elected officials, and appointive office holders depends upon a degree of responsiveness to the public's wishes.

In the second place, within the consensus of general values and aims, the public allows its elite in foreign policy a large measure of freedom to handle matters of strategy and technique. Occasionally, however, the public will become concerned about a particular issue and exert great pressure upon the elite. For example, in 1954 when some government officials attempted to lead public

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1. Almond, op. cit., p. 159.

2. Ibid. Ernest Lefever makes roughly the same point when he says that the public sets the national value consensus, and "the national value consensus defines the limits within which the government must act and sets the goals which our leaders are morally obligated to pursue." Op. cit., p. 166.

opinion into approval of possible American intervention in French Indo-China, the public refused to be led and made such intervention politically impossible. Another example would be the refusal of the American people to consider the possibility of preventive war.

As a rule, however, the public allows the elite freedom to maneuver within the bounds of the ideological consensus. "The influence of the elite . . . in policy making varies with the level of public concern with the issue."[1] The more public concern, the less elite influence.

It is not true, then, that the main thrust of American foreign policy has been set independently of the mass opinion. Mass opinion sets the boundaries within which the elite may maneuver and occasionally will force a policy upon the leadership or refuse to accept particular tactics.

ii. Too Much Irresponsible Power in the Mass

Walter Lippmann approaches the problem of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy with a theory almost opposite to that of C. Wright Mills, at least in its emphasis. Whereas Mills asserts that the mass of public opinion has almost no effect on foreign

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1. Almond, op. cit., p. 142.

policy, Lippmann holds that the public has great influence, in fact, far too much influence on decisions about foreign affairs. "The unhappy truth is," states Mr. Lippmann, "that the prevailing public opinion has been destructively wrong at the critical junctures" of world affairs, and has forced democratic governments to make the wrong moves.[1]

> The rule to which there are few exceptions . . . is that at critical junctures, when the stakes are high, the prevailing mass opinion will impose what amounts to a veto upon changing the course on which the government is at the time proceeding.[2]

Lippmann holds further that a primary reason for the decay of the Western democracies today is that the executive power has been consistently eroded, and the pressures of a public opinion that is largely out of touch with the real situation have become decisive in foreign policy.[3] As evidence for his thesis Lippmann describes what he feels was the destructive role of public opinion in such matters as the repudiation of Wilson, the failure to prepare for war in 1939-1940, and the too rapid demobilization of American forces in 1945-1946. Lippmann explains this flaw in public opinion as being primarily due to its inertia.

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1. Walter Lippmann, The Public Philosophy (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1955), p. 20.

2. Ibid., p. 19.

3. Ibid., p. 24.

> The movement of public opinion is slower than the movement of events. Because of that, the cycle of subjective sentiments on war and peace is usually out of gear with the cycle of objective developments. Just because they are mass opinions there is an inertia in them. The opinion deals with a situation which no longer exists.[1]

There is a great measure of accuracy in Lippmann's theoretical approach to the workings of public opinion. The public has had a growing ability to apply pressures on the executive in Western democracies. Too, this mass opinion has a momentum and inertia which tend to keep it moving in the same direction, even after circumstances which made that direction wise have altered substantially. However, Walter Lippmann makes the same error that Mills and others writing in this field tend to make. He has taken a particular pattern found within the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy elites and asserts that it is an adequate description of the total process.

The exceptions to Lippmann's thesis are too important to be dismissed easily. In the first place, although the mass opinion has had growing power in the democracies, it is also true that the executive in American government has been given increasing powers of decision in

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1. Ibid., pp. 20-21.

foreign affairs. Presidents Roosevelt and Truman were able to act with much greater freedom and initiative, as far as public opinion was concerned, than was Wilson. Mills is right in holding that the foreign policy elite have unprecedented decision making powers.[1]

In direct answer to Lippmann, Henry Wriston has written:

> The outstanding fact today is that the executive has the initiative in foreign policy to a degree unknown before in our history. . . . Public demand is always for the exercise of that initiative, for clear and explicit statements of policy, for energy and adroitness in pursuit of the national objectives.[2]

In many places where public opinion has overruled the elite, the problem was that the leadership was weak and improperly exercised. Sometimes this has been due to the fact that the elite themselves had only very tentatively come to grips with the new facts. This appears to have been the situation in the first year after the end of World War II, when Lippmann says the public forced the government into a soft attitude toward Russia. The fact is, though, that Truman made no decisive shifts in American policy toward Russia until mid-1946, not so much

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1. Mills, op. cit., p. 21.

2. Henry M. Wriston, Diplomacy in a Democracy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 94.

because he feared public opinion, but because he had not settled the ambiguities in his own attitudes.

In the second place, public opinion is not always wrong at critical junctures. Lippmann himself admits that the Marshall Plan is an important exception to his thesis.[1] The public veto of American intervention in Indo-China could not be classed as a critical error by any means. It is also anything but self-evident that the American public was wrong to be optimistic about the Soviets and give Russia the benefit of the doubt. In fact, compared with the records of kings and dictators who are free to respond to "objective facts," one cannot agree that democratic opinion has erred more radically at times of crisis.

In the third place, although public opinion does have a tendency to lag behind events, this is not an invariable condition. Public opinion was able to move very rapidly and make extremely difficult adjustments in the three years following the war. The public was not at all far behind the State Department and President Truman in their coming to the position that Russia was a threat to American security. This is evident in the October public

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1. Walter Lippmann, loc. cit., p. 19.

opinion poll which showed in 1945 that 54 per cent of the population expected war within twenty-five years, rising to 64 per cent in March of 1946. By mid-1946, half of the population thought that Russia was out to dominate as much of the world as possible. This appears to be an instance when executive opinion and popular opinion moved very closely together.

Lippmann himself admitted that the Marshall Plan was a perfect example of the mass of the public rising to a crisis and moving to a proper decision with the executive. They even moved ahead of some influential members of the elite. "Congress would never have been cooperative if public opinion had not given it a strong impulse to such action."[1]

> There has never been a better example of how public opinion, in a sprawling federal nation, can inform itself and bring pressure to bear, once it has been roused to make the effort of thinking.[2]

There are enough exceptions of significant proportions to Lippmann's theses to make them unacceptable as a comprehensive theory concerning the relationship between public opinion and the foreign policy elite.

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1. Wriston, op. cit., p. 98.   2. Agar, op. cit., p. 78.

iii. Toward a Theory of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

Out of the discussion of C. Wright Mills' and Walter Lippmann's conceptions of the relationship between the mass of public opinion and the formulations of the foreign policy elite have emerged several general principles which we may here summarize.

(1) Public opinion has its primary effect on foreign policy and its formulators by establishing the value consensus within which foreign policy operates and the general goals which it must seek.

(2) American public opinion allows the foreign policy elite a large measure of initiative and freedom within the bounds of the general consensus.

(3) Ordinarily public opinion expresses itself in approving or disapproving policies or ideas offered by the foreign policy opinion elite. It does not originate or create on its own.

(4) Occasionally and unpredictably, the body of public opinion will become aroused about a particular issue and force its attitude upon its leaders.

(5) Public opinion moves with a certain amount of inertia and tends to continue in the same direction, sometimes with the result of having opinion lag behind changes in circumstances. However, this does not happen invariably. Public opinion, when the issues before it are fairly clear,

can shift with surprising rapidity.

Before we have a theory adequate for the analysis we are trying to make, it is necessary to inquire more precisely into the way public opinion in a democracy chooses the broad outlines within which the elite administers foreign policy.

iv. In the Market for Foreign Policy

In a highly suggestive metaphor, Gabriel Almond has compared the process by which this is done to people buying in a market.

> Foreign policies themselves . . . are the product of leadership groups (elites) who carry on the specific work of policy formulation and policy advocacy. The public share in policy decisions may be compared, with important qualifications, to a market. It buys or refuses to buy the "policy products" offered by competing elites.[1]
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> The primary qualifications to the metaphor are that policy products cannot be felt, tasted, and weighed. They are predictions of consequences of action, hardly a tangible product with regard to which consumer preferences can easily be registered.[2]

The factor that is necessary for this process to be a democratic one is that there must be genuinely competing elites offering alternative policies and interpretations.[3] "In most cases, the influential policy alternatives placed

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1. Almond, op. cit., p. 28.   2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 192.

before the public . . . represent in more or less articulate form the vaguer impulses and preferences of the masses."[1]

Let us see if this approach of Almond's fits the data that we have concerned the shift of American attitudes toward Russia. In 1945-1946 when the shift of opinion was in process there were roughly three competing foreign policies before the public. Henry Wallace symbolized the optimistic, trusting approach to Russia and a policy of doing everything possible to maintain Soviet friendship. Senator Robert A. Taft symbolized the attitudes of those who were not only very suspicious of Russia, but also desired as little involvement in international affairs as possible. The official government leadership--Secretaries of State Byrnes and Marshall and President Truman--symbolized a get "tough" with Russia attitude, which meant refusal to give in in negotiations on points held to be important and the development of a strong military posture. Taft and Wallace were both very clear in asserting that they differed with administration policy as it was developing, and both were articulate in proclaiming their own points of view.

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1. Ibid., p. 142.

In mid-1946, the people "bought" the Truman-Byrnes policy and attitude toward Russia, thus changing the direction in which opinion had been moving at the end of the war. The poll data cited earlier point to this period as the turning point. In the first quarter of 1946 the percentage of the population expecting war in twenty-five years jumped to well over 60 per cent and the percentage expecting war in ten years rose to about 50 per cent. From early 1946 on, well over a majority in Gallup polls thought that Russia was trying "to build herself up to be the ruling power of the world." The percentage advocating that we should make every effort to keep friendly with Russia dropped to 15 per cent. Sixty per cent of the American public indicated that they thought American policy toward Russia was too soft.[1] This all adds up to the fact that a little less than a year after the end of the war, the majority of American opinion had shifted toward a suspicious, hostile attitude toward Russia and was ready for a "tough" foreign policy.

Why did the public "buy" the Truman-Byrnes policy? In this writer's opinion, the reason was that the Truman-Byrnes interpretation of the situation seemed more in

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1. All the above poll data and their sources have been cited before.

accord with what was happening. The people had seen Russia incorporate into her own Soviet Union 24,355,500 non-Russian peoples since 1939, "more than the populations of Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, and Norway combined. The 273,947 square miles acquired since 1939 exceeded the areas of France, Belgium, Netherlands and Portugal combined."[1]

Russia had repudiated Western trust and good will by violating the Yalta agreements and turning the nations of Eastern Europe into satelites. Negotiations over postwar problems had turned into interminable wrangles, giving many Americans the conviction that the Soviets were not interested in European recovery or in reaching agreements with the West. In addition to this, while the United States and Great Britain disarmed, the Soviets maintained a strong military force. These and other actions created a hostile mood which expressed itself in acceptance of the "tough" policy toward Russia.

v. An Accumulation of Misinterpretations

There is an alternative explanation to the build up of mutual animosity between Russia and the West. According

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1. E. Day Carman, Soviet Imperialism (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1950), p. 9. This territory includes the Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, Eastern Poland, Bessarabia from Rumania, Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia, and portions of Finland.

to this explanation, with their mutual suspicions, each was quick to interpret any action by the other as threatening, whether it was meant to be or not, and to reply with a defensive move of his own. This, in turn, was understood by the first as evidence of evil intent and fostered aggressive and defensive maneuvers. Thus, starting with each mistrusting the other but having little real malevolence toward the other, a cumulative build up of actions and reactions led to the impasse that has developed.

There is no doubt but that this type of mechanism has operated in Russian-American affairs. For example, cumulative mutual retaliations definitely played a part in the development of the Berlin blockade. Similar processes complicated the drawing up of agreements for four-power control of Vienna.

There is no doubt, either, but that the United States and Russia have given each other grounds for suspicion. Dr. Raymond G. McKelvey, who accounts for the problems in Russian-American Relations primarily in terms of mutual misunderstandings has drawn up a bill of complaints that each could well submit to the other.[1] Russia could submit that

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1. Raymond G. McKelvey, "Daisies and Foreign Policy," Vital Speeches, 12:4(December 1, 1945, pp. 112-115.

> American troops fought them in 1918-19. . . . To the Soviet we appear to have a bevy of client states in this hemisphere. Many are semi-fascist. . . . Russia sees us strong-arm Argentine into the United Nations Organization over its objections and at a time when Argentina has one of the most flagrantly Fascist dictatorships among our neighbors to the South. Russia sees us support monarchist-clerical elements in those areas of Germany we administer. She finds us apparently more interested in Democracy in the Balkans than we are in South Carolina. . . . She hears of United States Senators querying our soldiers in Italy as to whether the soldiers wouldn't think it smart to clean-up on the Soviet Union now. . . . We bring forth the atomic bomb in collaboration with Britain and Canada without apparently giving the Soviet any intimation about what was in progress. We decline to share our information about atomic energy. We develop bases all over the world. . . . We terminate lend lease. Immediately we consult with Britain as to long-term financial arrangements to replace it. Apparently no such conversations are being held with Russia. We seek universal peace-time military training. . . . When we confer in London, the Soviet finds itself steadily outvoted.[1]

Meanwhile the United States sees the huge Soviet nation

> buttressed in Eastern Europe by a series of satellite states. . . . We see the Soviet securing additional protection by an agreed removal of Chinese interests in Outer Mongolia, and by occupation of the Kurile Islands. We see a nation sealed against contact with the outside world. . . . We see a dictatorship with no popular check on the power of its rulers to make war. . . . We see a nation apparently indifferent to the economic recovery of Europe. . . . We see the Soviet stripping like locusts the territories it occupies.[2]

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

Certainly mutual mistrust and misinterpretations of intentions have helped to foul our relations with the Soviet Union. But two important points must be born in mind before this is accepted as an adequate explanation to the cumulative animosities between the two countries.

First, although Americans had some fear and suspicions, the attitude of the American people and the American government at the end of the war was primarily one of trust in Russia's peaceful intentions and willingness to co-operate. President Roosevelt displayed what to many now appears to have been an amazing naivete in dealing with Russia. The truth is that he had faith that Russia and Stalin would cooperate fully in postwar matters. President Truman when he first took office shared in these views. Even though the discouraging negotiations over Poland's government were causing him to ask questions, Truman still believed that Russia could be persuaded to live up to the Yalta agreements.

It is true that Churchill and the British were highly suspicious of Russia and tried mightily to move Truman in that direction. He did not so move, however, until convinced by Molotov, rather than Churchill, that he could not trust the Russians.

At the close of the war it was American decisions that prevailed when differences arose between the United

States and Britain, both as to the conduct of the closing phases of the war, and the diplomatic strategy. It was Truman who decided, against Churchill's advice, to have American troops retire to the agreed occupation areas. Although the British were champions of Poland, it was Truman who convinced the Russians, at least for a while, to broaden the base of the Warsaw government.[1] It was also Truman, through Hopkins, who convinced the Soviet ruler that he should send the foreign minister to the San Francisco Conference and not just second rank diplomats. It was also Truman who took the lead in calling for the Potsdam Conference. Churchill was later to complain that too much time elapsed before President Truman was able to see the Russians in their true light.[2] The power of diplomatic decision had shifted across the Atlantic, and, in Washington, they still had hopes that they could trust Russia to co-operate.

Therefore, the base upon which Russian-American relations rested at this time at the end of the war is not adequately described as one of mutual distrust. The American government became predominantly suspicious only after it became perfectly clear that the Soviets had no

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1. Truman, Memoirs . . ., I, 79.

2. Agar, op. cit., p. 10.

intention of living up to the Yalta agreements.

In the second place, the theory of cumulative reactions to each other's defensive measures is not adequate to explain the forcefulness of the Russian moves. Giving Dr. McKelvey's list of reasons Russia might have to fear us its full weight, these still do not begin to balance the Russian tactics of territorial aggrandizement and the subjugation of the nations of Eastern Europe. The Soviets may have been laboring under an exaggerated fear of the capitalist West that made its reactions to Western moves violent ones. One cannot know. Even if it is so, the fact still remains that the Soviet countermoves were so extreme that they destroyed the attitude of friendship that existed in Washington and among the American people.

Therefore, the shift in public opinion is best accounted for as an acceptance of the Truman-Byrnes attitude toward Russia because this seemed most in accord with the dramatic moves Russia had made since the war.

Once public opinion was moving in the direction of hostility and distrust toward the Soviets, it maintained its course and increased in momentum as further events convinced more people of Russia's aggressive intentions. The circumstances of 1947--Iran's complaint about Russian interference, the Truman doctrine and its operation against

communist pressures on Greece and Turkey, the communist take-over in Hungary--all added to the conviction that Russia was a direct threat, economic, political, and military, to American interests. The public opinion poll data quoted above (pp. 30-31, 56) showed the growth of the fear of war with Russia that this heightening hostility carried with it. The fear of war reached its climax in the Berlin blockade and involved as a basic corollary the idea that such a war would begin with a Russian surprise attack.

Dexter Perkins' comment is very appropriate.

> The more one ponders, indeed, the more one is impressed with the folly of the Kremlin in the years 1945 to 1948. In the climate of opinion which existed at the end of the war, it might easily have won for itself the good will of the Western World.[1]

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1. Dexter Perkins, Popular Government and Foreign Policy (Fund for Adult Education Lectures, 1955; Los Angeles: Anderson, Ritchie, and Simon, 1956), p. 36.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions, then, are to be drawn from this survey of the growth of American attitudes toward Russia?

(1) American good will toward Russia, both popular and official, was, though cautious, genuine at the end of the war. There existed an undercurrent of animosity on all levels, but this was over-ridden by a confidence that any differences with the Soviets could be worked out. The expectation was that we were entering an era of peace and understanding under the United Nations, an era in which Russia would share fully and responsibly.

(2) The Truman administration moved from its position of cautious optimism to distrust and suspicion during its drawn out negotiations over the governments and peace treaties for nations which were being subjugated by the Soviets.

(3) Once the Truman administration had changed its attitude toward Russia, at least three distinct foreign policy alternatives received wide publicity and sought the approval of the American public--those alternatives represented by Byrnes, Wallace, and Taft.

(4) The greater portion of public opinion reversed its attitude toward Russia during the latter half of 1945 and the first half of 1946, only slightly behind the shift of administration opinion, and in so doing gave its approval to the official policy of growing firmness.

(5) Although the public was led in this direction by the Truman administration, it followed primarily because this attitude seemed to be in keeping with events in Eastern Europe.

(6) Once moving in the direction of hostility toward Russia and fear of Soviet intentions, public opinion gathered momentum both through its own internal generation of energy and through the impetus of further Soviet moves. This attitude involved a growing conviction that war between the United States and Russia was inevitable and the fear that such a war would begin with a surprise attack by the Soviet Union.

(7) The feeling of the heightened probability of military conflict and the imminent danger of Russian surprise attack solidified in American opinion, both public and official, during the tensions of the Berlin blockade and was formalized in the NATO alliance.

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this thesis is to trace the development of American attitudes toward Russia from the closing phase of World War II to the point at which the fear of the imminent danger of Russian surprise attack was a basic part of this attitude.

Although Americans generally had been negatively disposed toward Russia before the Second World War, during the first year of the alliance this attitude underwent a drastic change. Both governmental and public opinion by 1943 were overwhelmingly favorable toward the Soviet Union. Statements by government officials, articles by journalists, and public opinion polls indicated a genuine admiration for Russia and an expectation that future relations between the two countries would be characterized by mutual respect and co-operation. There was a sub-stratum of hostility and distrust in some quarters, but it represented a distinct minority.

This optimism on the part of the American people and their government continued into the closing phases of the war. Americans were willing to concede to Russia the territories she demanded and agreed that Russia should

have friendly governments in the states of Eastern Europe. Under the terms of the Yalta Conference in early 1945, these "friendly governments" in Russia's western neighbors would be established by the occupying forces, would be representative of all democratic elements in the population, and would hold free elections as soon as possible.

As the war in Europe drew to a close, tensions between Russia and the West began to appear. Communications with Russian occupied territories were severed and communist governments were forced upon several of these nations. Negotiations among the big three aimed at having truly representative governments in the Eastern states turned into caustic wrangles. The Truman administration showed in late 1946 that its attitude toward Russia was one of suspicion and distrust by adopting a "get tough with Russia" approach to foreign affairs. Public opinion polls show that during the first year after the war the American people gradually shifted their optimistic attitude toward the Soviets to one involving hostility and a feeling that the danger of war between the two nations was growing. Along with the feeling that war was very possible came the corollary that such a war would probably starts with a new "Pearl Harbor," a Russian surprise attack upon the West.

What the administration meant by "getting tough with Russia" became clear in the Truman doctrine in 1947, a policy of containment of communism by economic, political, and, if necessary, military means. Tensions continued to increase as the economic and political instability of Western Europe became more acute. Under the leadership of Secretary of State Marshall, the American public rose to the occasion by giving overwhelming popular support to the Marshall Plan. The wide public discussion of the plan served to intensify the sense of danger from Russian communism.

In June of 1948 the tension between the United States and Russia reached its highest pitch as the Soviets blockaded the Western sector of the city of Berlin. The Russians were apparently gambling that the West would not retaliate with military action and expecting to be able to force the West out of Berlin. The possibility of at least limited war was great but was avoided by the airlift. Public opinion polls showed that the American people accepted the blockade as a sign that war with Russia was very likely before long. The administration entered the NATO alliance to strengthen the West against Soviet military aggression should it come.

In analyzing the causes why the American public changed its attitude toward Russia and gave its support

to the Truman administration's tough policy, it is necessary to have a workable theoretical approach to the relationship between public opinion and foreign affairs. An outline of such a theory would include the following propositions: (1) public opinion establishes the value concensus within which foreign policy operates and the goal which it must seek; (2) public opinion allows the executive a fair amount of freedom of movement within the coneensus, but occasionally, when aroused, may force its attitude on particular issues upon its leaders; (3) public opinion does not originate policies or ideas, rather, it approves or disapproves ideas suggested by the foreign policy elite; (4) public opinion moves with inertia and sometimes lags behind changes in circumstances, though it can shift with rapidity in response to clear and dramatic events; (5) in a democracy, the public effects foreign policy by choosing between alternative policies and ideas offered by competing foreign policy elites.

When the above theory is applied to and combined with the data concerning the shift of mass opinion about Russia, it leads one to the following conclusions. (1) The Truman administration moved from its position of cautious optimism toward Russia to one of distrust and suspicion in the process of the negotiations about the governments of and treaties for the nations being subjugated by the Soviet

Union. This was not a case of a cumulative build up of mutual misunderstandings, but one of the destruction of genuine American trust by Russian failure to keep the agreements made at Yalta. (2) Once the administration had changed its attitude, three types of policies--those symbolized by Truman, Wallace, and Taft--competed for public acceptance. By mid-1946, the shift in American attitudes toward Russia had been made which led the public to choose the administration policy. The public chose this policy because it seemed best to fit the situation which Russia had created. (3) The build up of hostility toward Russia continued to develop in 1947 and reached a fever pitch in the process of the Berlin blockade. During the crisis of the blockade, American opinion became convinced that Russia was a military threat and that the West was in danger of imminent Russian surprise attack. The NATO alliance formalized this as a basic presupposition of American policy. This presupposition has not altered appreciably since, and most American defense policy consists of deductions from this premise.