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# Deja vu in 1946: Reinterpreting the Origins of Containment

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**Deja vu in 1946:  
Reinterpreting the Origins of Containment**

**Jonathan Barry  
Professor Weisbrot  
May 1, 1998**

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## INTRODUCTION

For nearly fifty years, mainstream Cold War historians have credited George Kennan with ushering in a new age in foreign policy. Kennan did, after all, send a "Long Telegram" from Moscow on February 22, 1946 that crystallized for the US government a policy of "containing"<sup>1</sup> the Soviet regime. Kennan, a State Department official and expert on Soviet affairs, submitted to Secretary of State James Byrnes an 8,000 word telegram depicting a communist government bent on upholding the expansionist tradition of the Russian czars. He further claimed that "all Soviet efforts on...[an] international plane will be negative and destructive in character" and that the US should counter Soviet expansionism by providing foreign nations with democratic security.<sup>2</sup> The telegram was received in Washington with open arms. As Kennan reflected in his memoirs, "With the receipt in Washington...of this telegraphic dissertation from Moscow, my official loneliness came to an end...My reputation was made. My voice now carried."<sup>3</sup>

Accolades for Kennan's telegram dominate Cold War historiography. In an interpretation of the "Long Telegram's" impact on Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, Walter Millis posited in 1951 that Kennan had "analyzed the backgrounds and deeper springs of Soviet policy, its purposes and methods, with a remarkable insight--it was exactly the kind of job for which Forrestal had looked vainly elsewhere in the government."<sup>4</sup> Eric Goldman, in a highly influential account of the early years of the Cold War, wrote that Kennan "proved the scholar-diplomat, if the United States has ever had one...[his] cable was studied and re-studied in Washington until it was accepted as something of a classic among American diplomatic analyses."<sup>5</sup> In 1967, Louis Halle, a US

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<sup>1</sup>Kennan did not use the term "contain" in reference to Soviet expansionism until his article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," was published in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947. Nonetheless, the need to contain Soviet expansionism was clearly enunciated in the "Long Telegram" of 1946.

<sup>2</sup>*Foreign Relations of the United States*[FRUS], Vol. 6, 1946, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 696-709.

<sup>3</sup>George Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 295.

<sup>4</sup>Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries*, (New York: Viking Press, 1951), pp. 135-136.

<sup>5</sup>Eric F. Goldman, *The Crucial Decade--And After: America, 1945-1960*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 69, 71.

foreign policy historian and former State Department official, viewed the telegram as the foundation of America's Cold War outlook on the Soviet regime. Halle thought Kennan provided the US government with "new intellectual moorings" and "offered a new and realistic conception" of the Soviet government.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in 1972 John Lewis Gaddis saw Kennan's work as the cornerstone of US foreign policy and concluded that the telegram provided American officials with a varied "intellectual framework they would employ in thinking about communism and Soviet foreign policy for the next two decades."<sup>7</sup> Robert Donovan, in an analysis on the role the Truman Administration played in the Cold War, concluded that the telegram "aroused Washington indeed and set a pattern then and for years to come for official American thinking about the Soviet problem."<sup>8</sup> In a 1991 analysis of Cold War diplomacy, Kenneth Jensen referred to the telegram as a "landmark document" that "influenced U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union for years thereafter..."<sup>9</sup> Finally, in John Spanier's twelfth (and first post-Soviet Union) edition of *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*,<sup>10</sup> he postulated that Kennan "presented the basis of what was to be a new American policy that recognized the hostile character of the Soviet regime."<sup>11</sup>

Kennan's biographers also view the telegram as a watershed in US foreign policy. Wilson Miscamble concludes that "Kennan's cable exercised a catalytic effect upon departmental thinking."<sup>12</sup> Walter Hixson claims that in sending the telegram Kennan was

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<sup>6</sup>Louis J. Halle, *The Cold War as History*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 105-110.

<sup>7</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-47*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 304.

<sup>8</sup>Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), p. 188.

<sup>9</sup>Kenneth Jensen, ed., *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts 'Long Telegrams' of 1946*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1991), p. ix.

<sup>10</sup>The quote from Spanier's text cited in this paper was taken from the twelfth edition (1992) of *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, the first was published in 1960. It is worth noting that Spanier's outlook on Kennan's influence in the 1960 text was virtually identical to the quote cited in this paper. Regardless of the elimination of Cold War tension that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Spanier's views on the monumental effect of Kennan's ideas remained unchanged.

<sup>11</sup>John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1992), p. 34.

<sup>12</sup>Wilson D. Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 26.

"forging the containment consensus."<sup>13</sup> David Mayers wrote that the telegram "filled a conceptual gap in that it was the first lucid, extensive analysis of why the Soviets were not entirely enamored of America's international agenda and were unlikely to cooperate with it."<sup>14</sup> Michael Polley insists that the "policy of containment...was known to be principally the product of Kennan's efforts."<sup>15</sup> Anders Stephanson, while attempting to prove that the telegram was a "theoretically disjointed piece of dictation," could not help but acknowledge that Kennan's analysis was uniquely influential as "one of the two or three most important texts of the early cold war."<sup>16</sup> The aforementioned opinions have been, in essence, the dominant perspectives among Cold War historians.

But the views of these historians are only partially correct. Indeed, the US in 1946 entered an age where democracy collided with communism in an unprecedented fashion. Kennan's thoughts on foreign policy in turn provided the US government with sharp insight into the Soviet regime. The idea of containing Soviet expansionism and communism, however, was entrenched in US foreign policy long before Kennan's 8,000 word telegram was received in Washington. In contrast to the claims of the aforementioned scholars, the policy of containment did not begin with Kennan's telegram in 1946, and it did not begin during World War II. The policy of containment began in 1918 and was always a fundamental aspect of the US government's perception of the Soviet Union. Kennan merely galvanized the concept for US policy makers in 1946. Further, the conclusion of World War II simply brought continuation of the containment principle. The only difference, however, was that the policy was implemented with a heightened degree of intensity in the years immediately following the war.

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<sup>13</sup>Walter Hixson, *George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 29.

<sup>14</sup>David Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 100.

<sup>15</sup>Michael Polley, *A Biography of George F. Kennan: The Education of a Realist*, (Lewiston: The Edward Mellon Press, 1990), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 45.

## PART 1: CONTAINMENT, 1918-1945

### I

The US government's desire to "contain" Soviet expansionism was always present. In the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Maddin Summers, the US Consul General at Moscow, laid the groundwork for a policy of containment when he reported on the undemocratic processes adopted by the Soviets. The "twelve hundred delegates composing the Congress," wrote Summers, "represent an infinitely small proportion of the people of Russia...the delegates were chosen by Bolshevik leaders regardless of the wishes of the people...the vast masses of the peasants are violently opposed to the government of the Soviets."<sup>17</sup> Summers' thoughts on the Soviet regime were prevalent throughout the State Department, and telegrams from American Officials in Eastern Europe insisted on US aid in thwarting the spread of Bolshevism. The US Foreign Minister in Sweden, Ira Morris, wrote of the "great anxiety felt throughout the Baltic provinces and Finland as well as Scandinavia regarding the spread of Bolshevism" and "urgently requested that Allied assistance in the form of warships be dispatched" to prevent the Soviets from taking Riga, Libau, Windau, and Georgia.<sup>18</sup> President Woodrow Wilson listened to this request. US forces, while fighting in Europe during World War I, entered the Soviet Union in 1918 and provided anti-Bolshevik groups with aid at Murmansk and Archangel in northern Russia while 9,000 American troops helped the resistance in Siberia. Ostensibly, US forces occupied Russian territory to defeat the Germans in the west and to thwart Japanese imperialism in the east.<sup>19</sup> In actuality, though, the US government's actions were a precursor for later desires to prevent military expansionism. After all, Wilson thought an

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<sup>17</sup>FRUS, Russia, Vol. I, 1918, p. 400.

<sup>18</sup>FRUS, Russia, Vol. II, 1918, pp. 854, 861.

<sup>19</sup>Thomas A. Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations From Early Times to our Day*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), pp. 241-243.

Allied presence in Russia would ensure "the cessation of attacks by Russian troops on the communities outside their borders."<sup>20</sup>

Some State Department officials even thought the presence of US troops in Russia was not enough to contain the Bolsheviks. The US Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, urged Wilson in 1919 to recognize the potential threat of a powerful Soviet regime: "...I feel it my duty to write you in the hope that there may be [an] opportunity for you to make a frank declaration against the Bolshevik doctrines which are extending far beyond the confines of Russia. I think it is time for this Government to take a very definite stand since there is growing up a propaganda in favor of classism...which seems to me to menace our present social order."<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Frank Polk, Counselor for the State Department, emphasized the need for naval assistance to support anti-Bolshevik groups in north Russia. After all, as Polk wrote, the "revolt of the inhabitants of the Northern region against the Bolsheviks was instigated by the allies" and indeed a necessity to give the anti-Bolshevik campaign a realistic chance.<sup>22</sup> A policy of containment was also expressed through suggestions to extend Russian citizens economic aid. The US Consul at Moscow, DeWitt Clinton Poole, noted in 1919 that economic assistance would "warn people in general against the evil fatuity of Bolshevism" and that aid should be extended "as a deterrent to Bolshevism and a means of bringing about normal conditions of life which will enable the people to choose a representative government."<sup>23</sup> Clearly, as early as 1918 the US government feared and loathed Bolshevism and attempted to subdue the rising Soviet regime with military assistance to anti-Bolshevik groups in Russia and Eastern Europe. It is also important to note that economic assistance was viewed by US officials as an important vehicle for curtailing communist influences nearly thirty years before the US

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<sup>20</sup>*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 55, p. 182.

<sup>21</sup>*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 62, p. 203.

<sup>22</sup>*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 61, p. 526.

<sup>23</sup>*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 62, p. 441.



policy of containment coincided with economic assistance in the form of the Marshall Plan.<sup>24</sup>

If the Bolsheviks' initial desire to expand their influence disturbed the US government, then official Soviet rhetoric was doubly hard for the Wilson Administration to swallow. Nikolai Bukharin, a Bolshevik Central Committee member, aligned the Soviet cause with world revolution in a 1917 speech: "...we will light the fire of world socialist revolution. The only real democratic exit from the blind alley into which the West-European and American countries have gone is the international proletarian revolution, however many victims it may cost us."<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Lenin claimed that "Communism proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat" and that "only when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared" will the Soviet goals of inspiring a world revolution be complete.<sup>26</sup> The 1919 Party Program declared that capitalism was "the exploitation of one human being by another" and ensured that "the necessity for these measures will...gradually disappear and the Party will aim to reduce and completely abolish them."<sup>27</sup> Finally, a text from a meeting of the Communist International in 1919 emphasized, "communists, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of various countries of Europe, America, and Asia" had a goal "to generalize the revolutionary experience of the working class, to...facilitate and hasten the victory of the Communist revolution throughout the world..."<sup>28</sup> The Soviets indeed established a blueprint for a world dominated by communism in the years following the Bolshevik Revolution. It is not surprising, then, that US officials in Europe reflected alarm over the Soviet platform and regarded it as an immediate threat to international stability. The US

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<sup>24</sup>The Marshall Plan was designed to assist in the post-World War II economic recovery of Europe. The Soviets were offered assistance, but declined. The US focused the bulk of its economic aid on countries that had strong communist parties, such as Italy and France. The Marshall Plan will be discussed later in this paper.

<sup>25</sup>Robert Daniels, ed., *A Documentary History of Communism*, (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 96.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 88.

Minister to Norway, Albert George Schmedeman, wrote in 1918 that the Soviet intention was "to spread their doctrines in Scandinavia with particular energy and that similar efforts would be made in England and the United States as soon as agents could be set to work."<sup>29</sup> Secretary of State Lansing in 1919 warned that "It is of the essence of the Bolshevik movement that it is international and not national in character."<sup>30</sup> President Wilson, when debating with British officials in 1919 whether the Bolsheviks should be allowed to attend the Paris Peace Conference,<sup>31</sup> thought that the Soviets' revolutionary insistence on "domination of large vested interests in the political and economic world" was enough to exclude them from the talks. Wilson concluded that "the Bolsheviks would have to withdraw entirely from Lithuania and Poland" if they wanted to open relations with the West.<sup>32</sup> The consensus was evident: the Soviet government had expansionist aims and targeted Western capitalism, and something should be done to stop it.

In fact, the new Soviet influence was so agitating to the US government that a desire to stifle Bolshevism abroad carried over to the domestic front. Soviet Foreign Commissar George Chicherin sent Soviet Party Member Ludwig Martens to the US in 1918 to "open commercial relations for the mutual benefit of Russia and America." It soon became evident, however, that Martens' office in New York was a propaganda outlet for the Kremlin. Marten was in close contact with American Bolsheviks, and often led chants of "We want an American Soviet" at rallies in New York.<sup>33</sup> The Kremlin's influence on the American communists did not stop with Marten's actions. The 1919 American Communist Labor Party's Manifesto, taken directly from the Soviet Third International, stated, "The Communist Party shall keep in the foreground its consistent appeal for

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<sup>29</sup>FRUS, Russia, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 722.

<sup>30</sup>The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 62, p. 204.

<sup>31</sup>The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was an attempt to politically and economically restructure Europe after World War I. That the Bolsheviks were not invited to the talks shows that Western governments did not recognize the input of the new regime as essential to post-war relations.

<sup>32</sup>FRUS, "The Paris Peace Conference, 1919," Vol. 3., pp. 589-593.

<sup>33</sup>Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 47.

proletariat revolution, the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>34</sup> American communists thus probed the raw nerves of Western capitalists. In 1919, Joseph Patrick Tumulty, a close advisor of President Wilson, sent him a memorandum warning that "Bolshevism is the great unrest" of the world and that "America's remedy for this ugly thing" should be found immediately.<sup>35</sup> Tumulty's sentiments were shared throughout the government as US politicians denounced a 1919 strike supported by the Seattle Central Labor Council (SCLC), an organization suspected of communist affiliation. Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson claimed that the strikers "want to take possession of our American Government and try to duplicate the anarchy of Russia." The Wilson administration branded the strike an attempt "to establish a Soviet form of government in the United States." The Seattle state government even went as far as to urge the American Legion, a newly founded organization with aims "to foster and perpetuate a one hundred per cent Americanism," to crush the SCLC.<sup>36</sup> The actions of the American Legion ultimately resulted in four deaths and hundreds of arrests.

The federal government also went to great lengths to place a barricade between the Kremlin's influence and the American mainland. The Wilson Administration attempted to thwart Soviet influence in the United States by using tactics that were in many ways unconstitutional. As of November 1919, 600 people were arrested by the federal government for allegedly having communist ties.<sup>37</sup> Immigration officials were told by federal authorities to be extremely suspicious of those coming from Eastern Europe. It was not uncommon for immigrants to be detained, rigorously questioned about communist activity, and then deported. In December 1919, the US government sanctioned the deportation of 249 immigrants for formerly being members of the Union of Russian Workers, an organization that existed under the auspices of Soviet communism. In 1920

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>35</sup>*The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. 60, p. 147.

<sup>36</sup>M.J. Heale, *American Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 62-65.

<sup>37</sup>Murray, p. 205.

the federal government issued more than 3,000 arrests warrants for members of the American Communist Party. That Wilson told Attorney General Mitchell Palmer "not to let this country see red"<sup>38</sup> prior to the deportations and raids is quite revealing. Palmer and other US officials were emphatic about preventing the Kremlin's doctrine from reaching mainstream America. The federal governments' cure for the communist virus that infected US soil contradicted the democratic values that Wilson and his supporters strove to protect. Wilson wanted to suppress the rise of Bolshevism, and it did not matter if that meant infringing upon the rights of citizens by raiding the households and workplaces of those accused of communist activity, or deporting immigrants who happened to come from regions of communist influence in Eastern Europe. Further, the fervor displayed by the federal government filtered down to the regional level. In January 1920, state governments in New England seized 800 persons for alleged connections with communism, New Jersey 500, and Chicago and Detroit a total of 800.<sup>39</sup> Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota expressed disgust over the alleged rise of communist activity in his home state. In reference to a communist magazine, Nelson claimed, "...this publication is printed in red-- the color of the anarchist and the socialists. It is entitled 'Hunger,' as though there was hunger among the people of Minneapolis...It is misleading and a slander upon of the good people of Minneapolis to intimate there is hunger and starvation there."<sup>40</sup> Nelson's outlandish claim, that there was absolutely no poverty in Minneapolis, is indicative of how intense anti-communist sentiments overshadowed the rationality of some US politicians. Actions by US officials within the United States proved that, as early as 1919, the spread of communism would not be tolerated. Moreover, the domestic anti-Bolshevik sentiments

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 206-215.

<sup>40</sup>*The Congressional Record of the United States*, Vol. 56, 1919, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), p. 2942.

of 1919 foreshadowed the anti-communist hysteria of the mid-1940's that followed the US government's insistence on a foreign policy of "containment."<sup>41</sup>

## II

Nonetheless, the Red Scare of 1919 dissipated, and communism became a less prominent aspect of America's political agenda. After all, the twenties marked a financial boom, quieting the alarm over the Soviets' anti-capitalist regime. The US Senate even indicated in early 1922 the possibility of opening diplomatic negotiations with the Soviets.<sup>42</sup> But the Senate's optimism was extinguished in March of 1922 after the Soviets attended the Genoa Conference<sup>43</sup> and claimed the rights to old Czarist territories while failing to recognize the rights American investors claimed to Russian oil fields.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the US government's desire to block communist influence was exacerbated when the Soviet government failed to sign an agreement requiring it to "suppress all attempts in its territory to assist revolutionary movement in other states."<sup>45</sup> Consequently, the US government continued its attempts to prevent Bolshevism from reaching beyond Eastern Europe. A 1923 State Department memorandum noted that the Soviets would not stop until the "Communist International" movement triumphed and that any further successes of international communism would "contribute to the consolidation of the political and

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<sup>41</sup>Following the US government's adoption of a containment policy, there was a desire within the State Department to promote the dangers of communism. Schoolbooks were re-written, curriculums revised, and pupils re-taught that the US' former ally embraced an unfriendly form of government. Further, there was growing speculation of communist infiltration within the US government. For example, in 1948, Alger Hiss, former director of the Special Political Affairs Division of the State Department, was accused of informing the Soviet government of vital American information. Such fears would culminate in the McCarthy hearings of the early 1950's, in which an abundance of high American officials were accused of communist affiliations.

<sup>42</sup>Robert K. Murray, *The Harding Era: Warren G. Harding and His Administration*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 352.

<sup>43</sup>The European Allied Supreme Council met on March 8, 1922, in Genoa, Italy. The objective of the conference was to discuss "the economic reconstruction of Central and Eastern Europe." The United States was invited to participate but declined. For more information on the Genoa Conference see Robert K. Murray, *Ibid.*, p. 351.

<sup>44</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 2, 1922, pp. 770-810.

<sup>45</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 2, 1922, p. 797.

economic position of Soviet Russia."<sup>46</sup> President Calvin Coolidge in 1923 stated that the US "government does not propose...to enter into relations with another regime which refuses to recognize the sanctity of international obligations."<sup>47</sup> In 1924, reports from China told of the massive rise of Bolshevism. In the wake of Soviet intervention in China, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, C.T. Wang, told US officials, "Any conditions derogatory to her [China's] rights to exist as a free and independent nation must by necessity be rectified...to ensure durable peace on the Pacific."<sup>48</sup> The US Ambassador to China, Franklin Randolph Mayer, urged the Chinese leader, Marshall Chang Tso-lin, to liquidate all forms of Leninism because "it was seeking to acquire [the] wealth of the world and that it was imperatively necessary to accomplish the overthrow of the United States."<sup>49</sup> The US government ultimately urged "the diplomatic representatives in Peking" to "take some decided stand respecting the question of Bolshevism." US diplomats thus continued to closely advise the Chinese government in hopes of preventing communism from overshadowing democratic influences there.<sup>50</sup> The US took an even harder stance in regard to Bolshevism in the western hemisphere. The State Department became aware in 1924 of Moscow's urgent call for the destruction of "American Imperialism" in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti, and Latin America.<sup>51</sup> Further, the fact that the Soviets wanted Mexico to be the outpost for "liberation...against imperialism of the United States" meant that the base for a world communist revolution would be alarmingly close to the American border.<sup>52</sup> This fostered an antipathy toward the Soviet regime, and the US government continued to keep a close watch on the small contingency of American Leninists and their devotion to the communist world order. In 1925, the Soviet Minister to

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<sup>46</sup>FRUS, Vol. 2, 1923, pp. 791-792.

<sup>47</sup>Donald R. McCoy, *Calvin Coolidge: The Quiet President*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 182.

<sup>48</sup>FRUS, Vol. 1, 1924, p. 391.

<sup>49</sup>FRUS, Vol. 1, 1924, p. 403.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>FRUS, Vol. 1, 1927, pp. 354-360.

<sup>52</sup>FRUS, Volume I, 1927, p. 357.

Mexico, Madame Kollontai, was denied "a visa to enable her to enter the United States in transit to her post" for being "actively associated with the International Communist subversive movement."<sup>53</sup> This was undoubtedly an attempt by the US to eliminate a connection between Mexican and American communists and Moscow. With an official outlet in Mexico, it would have been easier for the Soviets to instigate resistance to American capitalism and "imperialism," and it would have provided Moscow a channel through which to easily receive reports on American activity in the Western Hemisphere. The Bolshevik rhetoric clearly showed that the Soviet Union wanted to expand communism on a global scale. But the US government, even back in the mid 1920's, did everything in its power to stand in the way of the Soviet machine.

American intellectuals also radiated a desire to stop Soviet expansionism. In fact, dating as far back as the turn of the century, intellectuals wrote about the need to contain Russian imperialism. In 1900, Brooks Adams actually employed the verb "contain" in reference to Russian imperialism.<sup>54</sup> There are indisputable similarities between John Spargo's 1919 study on Bolshevism and Kennan's "Long Telegram," despite nearly a thirty year gap. Spargo notes that the Soviets inherited from the Czars a propensity to expand Russia's borders, that the Soviet regime was fanatical and authoritarian, and concluded that the "remedy for Bolshevism is a sane and far-reaching program of constructive social democracy."<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Kennan wrote of a Soviet government intent on expanding its borders for reasons of security and influence, depicted a society run by military police that carry out "the instinctive urges of Russian rulers," and concluded that in order to abridge Soviet influence the US "must formulate and put forward for other nations a much more positive and constructive picture of [our] sort of world."<sup>56</sup> Spargo's

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<sup>53</sup>FRUS, Volume II 1926, p. 911.

<sup>54</sup>See William Appleman Williams, *America Confronts A Revolutionary World*, excerpt in *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*, Ernest May, ed., (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 134.

<sup>55</sup>John Spargo, *Bolshevism: The Enemy of Political and Industrial Democracy*, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1919), pp. 1-38, 294, 323.

<sup>56</sup>FRUS, Volume 6, 1946, pp. 696-708.

writings, if nothing else, show that Kennan's ideas, although recorded during different circumstances, were in many ways a continuation of thoughts on the Soviet regime articulated in the years immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution.

Throughout the 1920's and early 1930's, the eminent journal *Foreign Affairs* published several articles that expressed concern over the insidious nature of Soviet expansionism. Boris Bakhmeteff wrote in 1924 that the Soviet government's shift toward capitalism<sup>57</sup> provided the "real source of change in Russian life...in spite of the Communist rule" and thus aided the American cause of containing communism.<sup>58</sup> To Bakhmeteff, the best way to stop the Soviets in their tracks was to facilitate the improvement of the Russian economy through capitalist investment. This would ultimately prove that "there is no escape without the abandonment of Communism."<sup>59</sup> Bruce Hopper tried to show in 1929 how the Soviets were utilizing rail transportation to consolidate communist influence in Eastern Europe. The US should be aware that "the central object of Soviet transport development is an intensification of the existing services." That is, rail systems would soon make it easier for the Soviets to extend their sphere of influence to China and other Asian territories. Unless the West did something to prevent the spread of Soviet influence, "China...will have to test out in her dawning industrialism the comparative merits of capitalism and socialism."<sup>60</sup> During the Depression, the socialist Harold Laski perceptively wrote that the growing appeal of Soviet communism presented the US with perhaps its greatest exigency to date, and that communism would only be contained if the West demonstrated "the capacity of capitalist society to repair its foundation."<sup>61</sup> Finally, Columbia University Professor Michael Florinsky, in a 1932 book on the Bolshevik

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<sup>57</sup>Famine and economic instability forced Lenin in 1922 to encourage an influx of foreign investment and to revise Soviet economic policies. The new policies were in many ways capitalist by nature, although Lenin and other Soviet officials never abandoned Bolshevik rhetoric.

<sup>58</sup>Boris Bakhmeteff, "Russia at the Cross-roads," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. II, 1923-24, (New York: Foreign Affairs, 1924), p. 421.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 429.

<sup>60</sup>Bruce C. Hopper, "Soviet Transport Plans: Winning the East," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 8, 1929, pp. 652-657.

<sup>61</sup>Harold Laski, "The Position of Communism," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 11, 1932, p. 104.



international revolution, warned that the Soviets thrived on conflicts between western capitalists powers. Most notably, "the shifting of the economic centre of the world to the United States," according to Soviet doctrine, "has caused the relations between the United States and European capitalism...to become strained."<sup>62</sup> Florinsky wrote that unless Britain and the US coalesce, Soviet influence would spread and infect western societies as if "Bolshevism were typhus or scarlet fever."<sup>63</sup> It is evident that a desire to quell the appeal and influence of Soviet communism permeated foreign policy thinking since the Bolshevik Revolution. The issue of Soviet expansionism, therefore, catapulted into the intellectual spotlight years before communist influence in Eastern Europe and Asia became a Cold War issue.

### III

Although Franklin Roosevelt's presidency marked the beginning of an official relationship with the Soviet Union, the US government's policy toward communist expansionism meshed with those of Roosevelt's predecessors. On October 4, 1933, Assistant Secretary of State Robert Moore seemingly paved the way for a new era in Soviet-American relations when he wrote that recognition of Russia "as a rule, [should] be given without any condition whatever, provided the new State is safely and permanently established."<sup>64</sup> On November 17, The White House officially announced US recognition of the Soviet state, and insisted that cordial diplomatic relations were "the greatest victory of our peace policy."<sup>65</sup> In reality, the new policy had little to do with preserving the integrity of diplomatic relations. Prior to the November 17 announcement, the State Department harbored growing concern over Soviet-backed communist campaigns within the US. A July 1933 memorandum by the Division of Eastern European Affairs reported,

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<sup>62</sup>Michael T. Florinsky, *World Revolution and the U.S.S.R.*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 182.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>64</sup>*FRUS*, "The Soviet Union, 1933-1939," p. 16.

<sup>65</sup>*FRUS*, "The Soviet Union, 1933-1939," pp. 42, 45.

"the Communist regime continues to carry on in other countries activities designed to bring about ultimately the overthrow of the Government and institutions" of democracy.<sup>66</sup> Roosevelt was bothered by such activity, and only opened relations with Russia after a guarantee from the Soviet government that it would refrain from all types of propaganda aimed at American political or economic institutions.<sup>67</sup> The official policy toward Russia was hence contingent upon the Soviet government's acknowledgment of "Prohibition of communist propaganda in the United States by the Soviet government and by the Comintern."<sup>68</sup> America's desire to contain Soviet influence was thus evident in the earliest documents of official Soviet-American relations.

The experiences of American diplomats in the Soviet Union after 1933 reinforced the US government's desire to combat Soviet influences and practices. The Soviet purges of the mid-1930's prompted US officials to investigate the meaning of Bolshevik "Party democracy."<sup>69</sup> The Soviets claimed that the purges were attempts to dispel "questions of genuine loyalty towards the Soviet leaders" that would ultimately lead to the "persecutions of the enemies of the State: as a question of Trotskiism."<sup>70</sup> One unnamed informant assured Assistant Secretary of State Moore that the purges would not continue and that the Soviets would ultimately engage the democratic principles of Western countries "not only with tolerance but with sympathy and respect."<sup>71</sup> In 1935, a Resolution of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, contradicted the guarantee: "Election campaigns must be utilized for the further development and strengthening of the united

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<sup>66</sup>FRUS, "The Soviet Union, 1933-1939," p. 6.

<sup>67</sup>William C. Bullitt, "Letter to Roosevelt," in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, Vol. I*, Edgar Nixon, ed., (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1969), p. 293.

<sup>68</sup>FRUS, "The Soviet Union, 1933-1939," p. 17.

<sup>69</sup>FRUS, "The Soviet Union, 1933-1939," p. 304.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid. Leon Trotsky was an important player in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and maintained a prominent role in the party until Lenin's death in 1923. Trotsky then engaged in a bitter struggle with Stalin over party leadership, which he ultimately lost. Consequently, Trotsky's beliefs constituted a separate faction from Stalin's thoughts on governing. Stalin viewed Trotsky's supporters as a threat to his rule, and the purges were thus an attempt to cleanse the nation of those disloyal to Stalin. For an in-depth account on Trotskyism, see Adam Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and His Era*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1973).

<sup>71</sup>FRUS, "The Soviet Union, 1933-1939," p. 306.

fighting front of the proletariat...every effort to prevent the election" of anti-communist candidates is vital "to the growth and success of the united front movement." The resolution concluded that all those who contradict party policy would be severely punished.<sup>72</sup> US officials therefore continued to grow leery of Soviet practices. In 1936, the First Secretary of the American Embassy in the Soviet Union, Loy Henderson, acknowledged the terror and suspicion associated with the purges. Soviet citizens, wrote Henderson, were "careful not to reveal their true feelings" despite the fact that there was little evidence to support claims that those executed "participated in a plot to kill Soviet leaders."<sup>73</sup> American Ambassador to Moscow, Joseph Davies, informed the US Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, that every household "lives in constant fear of a nocturnal raid by the Secret Police"<sup>74</sup> and that the purges had "shaken to its foundation" the basis for positive governing.<sup>75</sup> Kennan, then an aide at the US embassy in Moscow, wrote in 1938 that the purges caused the Soviet government to "keep their people in darkness rather than risk illumination by contact with foreign culture."<sup>76</sup>

The purges of the mid-1930's painted for US officials a clear picture of the brutality associated with the Soviet regime. The advice Roosevelt received from US Ambassador to Italy, Breckinridge Long clearly reflected the US government's revulsion toward Soviet policies of the 1930's. Although the Nazis were gaining military strength and embracing an expansionist mentality, alarm over Soviet intentions and capabilities continued to dominate the thoughts of some US officials. In response to Roosevelt's concern over Hitler's growing power, Long wrote:

The only cure for it is war, from which there will emerge a real victor. There are only two governments in Europe capable of being a real victor...Germany, and the other is Russia...I shudder to think of a Russian domination of Europe. While a German domination would be hard and cruel...it would be an intensification of a culture which is

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<sup>72</sup>Daniels, p. 116.

<sup>73</sup>FRUS, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939, p. 303.

<sup>74</sup>FRUS, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939, p. 546.

<sup>75</sup>Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941) pp. 181, 202.

<sup>76</sup>George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1825-1950*, (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1967), pp. 73-74.

more akin to ours than would be that of Russia. Further than that, if Germany should be dominant throughout the greater part of Europe, she would act as a bulwark against the westward progress of Russia, and that Government would be confined to Russia and Siberia and would not have its strength tapped in the European struggle...<sup>77</sup>

The US ultimately allied itself with the Soviets to prevent German expansionism. But Long's ideas reflected growing recognition of the need to prevent communism from reaching Western Europe, regardless of the German menace. A German victory in Eastern Europe meant that Soviet influences would be suppressed, and Long's analysis evinced an interesting forecast for the future of Soviet-American relations: containing communism would be vital to the preservation of American interests.

#### IV

The historian John Lewis Gaddis writes that the Soviet-American alliance during World War II presented a "perplexing anomaly."<sup>78</sup> It comes as no surprise, then, that the alliance was preceded by a Soviet-German pact that enhanced American animosities toward the communist regime. In 1939, Stalin used Hitler's expansive tendencies to justify Soviet expansion and declared that "Soviet troops have entered Poland to protect the rights of the Belorussian and Ukranian minorities."<sup>79</sup> Stalin, however, also invaded Finland in the winter of 1939, a military tactic that had been discussed in the Kremlin prior to the German-Soviet pact.<sup>80</sup> "Finland could easily become a bridgehead for anti-Soviet action," Army commander Dmitri Mereskov told Stalin prior to the conclusion of the agreement, "by either of the two main imperialist groupings--the Germans or the Anglo-French." The Soviet claim that the tiny Finnish army might attack the mighty Soviet Union was preposterous indeed,<sup>81</sup> and American suspicions of Soviet imperialism were verified in

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<sup>77</sup>Breckinridge Long, "Letter to Roosevelt," in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, Vol. II*, pp. 487-488.

<sup>78</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-47*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 32.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup>Edvard Radzinsky, *Stalin*, (New York: Bantam Dell Doubleday, 1996), p. 446.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*

1940 after Stalin annexed part of Rumania and absorbed Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania.<sup>82</sup> Averell Harriman, sent by Roosevelt on a special mission to Moseow in 1940, declared that the Soviet-German alliance proved that Stalin "never lost sight of the ultimate goal--world domination by Communism."<sup>83</sup> Kennan recorded that the Soviet purges of 1930's were carried into Poland against people guilty of "no specific offense whatsoever"; they were just destroyed "as a class."<sup>84</sup> In 1940, Walter Thurston, a US diplomat in the Soviet Union, let Secretary of State Hull know that he was concerned with the Soviets' desire to impose communist beliefs on American citizens in Poland who were "forced to accept Soviet passports and Soviet citizenship in order to keep a roof over their heads and to obtain a means of making a [livelihood]."<sup>85</sup> Finally, the US Foreign Minister in Rumania, Christian Gunther, wrote in 1940 that the religious tension in that country could easily become an excuse for "further encroachment," and that "the eventual potentialities of Russian aggression [have] become more apparent."<sup>86</sup> In 1939-40, the US government was deeply concerned over the escalation of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. The Soviets were expanding their territory, and US officials recognized this as an immediate threat to the European order. It was only after Hitler posed a bigger threat to both nations that a Soviet-American alliance was forged in 1941. Missouri Senator Harry Truman, in the wake of the German invasion of Russia, bluntly summarized the sentiments of many Americans: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances."<sup>87</sup> Although the Soviet Union and the United States became allies during World War II, the US government's desire to curb Soviet influence was not extinguished.

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 448.

<sup>83</sup>Averell Harriman, *Peace With Russia?*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), p. 2.

<sup>84</sup>Kennan, *Memoirs...*, p. 200.

<sup>85</sup>*FRUS*, 1940, Vol. II, p. 146.

<sup>86</sup>*FRUS*, 1940, Vol. II, p. 765.

<sup>87</sup>David McCullough, *Truman*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 262.

## V

In fact, the Roosevelt Administration sought to use the Soviet-American alliance to stem the tide of communist influence in the US.<sup>88</sup> The Soviet Comintern, the committee created by Lenin to create propaganda and "spread communist ideas" throughout the world, had been a source of tension for US officials since the early 1920's.<sup>89</sup> In 1942, the US continued to resent the possibility of Kremlin-based activity on the American mainland. The State Department was extremely distrustful of Russian immigrants and feared "that the Soviet authorities frequently brought pressure upon persons in the Soviet Union desiring to come to the United States to act as Soviet agents."<sup>90</sup> The State Department concluded, "Although the United States and the Soviet Union are fighting a common enemy, the United States authorities continue to look with suspicion upon persons endeavoring to come to the United States from the Soviet Union over whom the Soviet authorities may be in a position to exert control by treating as hostages their close relatives remaining in the Soviet Union."<sup>91</sup> Consequently, the US government closely monitored Soviet and Eastern European immigrants to ensure that the Kremlin's influence remained outside American borders. Further, Elbridge Durbrow, a member of the US Division of European Affairs, warned the Soviets in 1943 that future relations between the two governments "would have to include a very concrete and definite understanding...that the activities of the Comintern would have to be liquidated."<sup>92</sup> The Soviet Ambassador to the US, Maxim Litvinoff, denied that the Soviet government had any connections with the Comintern, other than the "rare occasion of a courtesy call from officials attached to that organization."<sup>93</sup> In 1943, Stalin, in dire need of American economic and military aid, went as far as to officially

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<sup>88</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins...*, p. 47.

<sup>89</sup>Daniels, ed., pp. 96-97.

<sup>90</sup>FRUS, 1942, Vol. 2, p. 436.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins...*, p. 47.

<sup>93</sup>FRUS, 1943, Vol. 3, p. 503.

dissolve the Comintern to facilitate "the organization of the common onslaught of all freedom-loving nations against the common enemy--Hitlerism."<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, US officials continued to frown upon the Soviet tendency to impose communist beliefs on foreign nations. Kennan wrote in 1944 that "people at home would find Soviet words and actions easier to understand if they would bear in mind the character of Russian aims in eastern and central Europe. Russian efforts in this area are directed to only one goal: power."<sup>95</sup> Durbrow expressed similar sentiments in 1944 when he wrote of a new and emerging Soviet Comintern:

Through Comintern techniques...the various national organizations have been well schooled in the usefulness of the 'front' organizations and how to utilize them in the common cause. Therefore it apparently proved expedient to announce publicly the dissolution of the Comintern and thus give greater opportunity to local Communist parties to work...as...national political groups.<sup>96</sup>

Despite the official dissolution of the Comintern, it continued to function implicitly, and US officials continued to abhor the existence of Soviet propaganda. The US government's interest in the dissolution of the Comintern was an omen for later desires to abridge Soviet influence after World War II.

The Red Army's actions in Poland during World War II exacerbated American concern that the Soviet Union sought to achieve political hegemony in Eastern Europe. Throughout the war, the Soviets occupied the eastern portion of Poland allocated them through the Soviet-German protocol of 1939, all the while insisting that a Soviet presence was necessary to "lead to consolidation" of allied forces in Eastern Europe.<sup>97</sup> This was in some ways a legitimate argument. Poland would have undoubtedly become a Nazi stronghold without the Soviet presence. But at the same time, the State Department noted that Stalin repeatedly alluded to the legacy of Peter the Great and the necessity of annexing

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<sup>94</sup>Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, (New York: Random House, 1960), pp. 195-196.

<sup>95</sup>*FRUS*, 1944, Vol. 4, p. 908.

<sup>96</sup>*FRUS*, 1944, Vol. 4, p. 814.

<sup>97</sup>Daniels, ed., p. 136.

the land ruled by the former czarist governments.<sup>98</sup> In 1942, the Acting Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, told Soviet officials, "Legitimate measures of security when the war was over called for the disarmament of the aggressor nations and that if Germany were disarmed the Soviet Union would not have to have provided the type of barrier between Germany and the Soviet Union" which existed in Poland during the alliance.<sup>99</sup> Secretary of State Hull reported in 1943 that Polish citizens were treated unfairly by the Soviets and that in certain areas the "Soviet Government no longer recognized the rights of persons of Polish race."<sup>100</sup> In 1944, Harriman argued against the Soviet desire to absorb Poland: "If the policy is accepted that the Soviet Union has a right to penetrate her immediate neighbors for security, penetration of the next immediate neighbors becomes at a certain time equally logical."<sup>101</sup> Stalin assured the Roosevelt administration as late as 1944 that the "Soviet Government declares that it does not pursue aims of acquiring any part of Polish territory or of a change of social structure in Poland, and that the military operations of the Red Army...are dictated solely by military necessity...to render the friendly Polish people aid in its liberation..."<sup>102</sup>

Yet American officials were not buying into Stalin's guarantee. Harriman emitted concern over the actions of Soviet police in Poland: "I have...objection to the institution of secret police who may become involved in the persecution of persons of truly democratic convictions who may not be willing to conform to Soviet methods."<sup>103</sup> Likewise, Kennan addressed concerns over Soviet occupation in Poland in a 1944 dispatch: "If initially successful, will it know where to stop? Will it not be inexorably carried forward, by its very nature, in a struggle to reach the whole--to attain complete mastery of the shores of the

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<sup>98</sup>FRUS, 1942, Vol. 3, p. 140.

<sup>99</sup>FRUS, 1942, Vol. 3, p. 116.

<sup>100</sup>FRUS, 1943, Vol. 1, p. 154.

<sup>101</sup>FRUS, 1944, Vol. 4, p. 993.

<sup>102</sup>Rubinstein, p. 174.

<sup>103</sup>Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Origins of the Cold War," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46, (New York: Foreign Affairs, 1968), p. 38.



Atlantic and the Pacific?"<sup>104</sup> Despite the Soviet-American alliance, the US government still indicated concern over the occupation and primary motives of the Soviet regime in Eastern Europe. The Soviet presence in Poland during the alliance was a harbinger for its post-war demand of a bloc of "friendly" bordering states. The US government's skepticism over Soviet actions, then, was also an antecedent of its post-war aims of preventing such a bloc from expanding westward. There was an unequivocal interest in containing the Soviet government in Europe years before it became official US policy.

The containment principle was again implemented by the US government when Italy surrendered to Allied forces in July 1943.<sup>105</sup> The Soviets, primarily because they were engaging the bulk of the Nazi onslaught in Eastern Europe, had no troops in Italy. US and British officials were therefore in a position to dictate the Italian peace settlement. The US government appeared to be more than willing to include the Soviet Union in the Italian peace process. The US Ambassador in Britain, John Winant, acknowledged, "Russia in some way should be brought into our councils in considering the Italian situation...When the tide turns and the Russian armies are able to advance we might well want to influence their terms of capitulation and occupancy in Allied and enemy territory."<sup>106</sup> Secretary of State Hull emphasized "a communication to the Soviet Government" on the Italian situation.<sup>107</sup> But despite the US government's ostensible desire for a mutually beneficial approach to the Italian peace process, the State Department did not openly inform the Soviets about its intentions in Italy. The US government ultimately adopted a policy that, in the words of Winant, "puts the Russians under an obligation to seek suggestions from us and to reply to specific inquiries by us if we choose to make them."<sup>108</sup> In other words, the US government prevented the Soviet government from becoming involved in Italy by communicating, at its discretion, with Soviet leaders

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>105</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins...*, p. 88.

<sup>106</sup>FRUS, Vol. 2, 1943, p. 335.

<sup>107</sup>FRUS, Vol. 2, 1943, p. 340.

<sup>108</sup>FRUS, Vol. 2, 1943, p. 344.

who were on the periphery of the peace process. This did not go over well with Stalin, as a cable he sent to Roosevelt and Churchill clearly demonstrated: "...it is necessary to state that the Soviet Government is not informed about the negotiations of the British and the Americans with the Italians...The United States and Great Britain made agreements but the Soviet Union received information about the results of the agreement...as a casual third observer. I have to tell you that it is impossible to tolerate such [a] situation any longer."<sup>109</sup>

There is little dispute that Stalin was initially left in the dark after Mussolini's defeat. Evidence points to British and American insistence on establishing a democratic presence in Italy before any semblance of Soviet influence was welcomed. In August 1943, Churchill alarmed the Roosevelt administration when he reported on "rampant Bolshevism" in Italy and predicted that a sudden interest in communism might follow the demise of fascism. Churchill concluded, "the sooner we land [to instill a democratic mindset] in Italy the better."<sup>110</sup> In his memoir, then Assistant Secretary of State James Byrnes wrote that US occupation of Italy and subsequent talks with Soviet leaders evinced "Soviet ambition and effort to obtain direct control of one of Italy's Mediterranean colonies...the U.S.S.R. was determined to use the Italian treaty to further its goal of a base in the Mediterranean. By holding firm, Britain, France, and the United States prevented this."<sup>111</sup> That the US government all but excluded the Soviets from the Italian peace process can be viewed as an attempt to preclude Soviet influence in Italy. By combating the Germans in Eastern Europe, the Soviets had already established themselves as a leading political voice there. US and British leaders, in brief, sought to close the window through which the Soviet government could export communist influences into Italy. The actions of American officials in Italy helped establish a democratic presence in Southern Europe and

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<sup>109</sup>FRUS, Vol. 2, 1943, p. 354.

<sup>110</sup>James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), pp. 391-392.

<sup>111</sup>James Byrnes, *All In One Lifetime*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 363.

forced Stalin to look elsewhere for a political and military outlet to the Mediterranean and Africa.

The US government feared Soviet expansionism even beyond Europe during the wartime alliance. The Soviets entered Iran in 1941 to prevent the Nazis from fortifying a Middle Eastern base.<sup>112</sup> The Soviets also seized an opportunity to impose communist practices and beliefs on the citizens of northern Iran. According to the State Department, US military advisors entered Iran in 1942 to "facilitate the steady transportation of American supplies" to the Red Army and,<sup>113</sup> in an official agreement with the Soviets, to "jointly and severally undertake to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Iran."<sup>114</sup> It soon became evident, however, that like the Soviets, the US government did not send assistance to Iran only to protect that country's political integrity from the German threat. Reports that the Soviet Union was imposing communist beliefs in Iran were abundant within the State Department. The US Minister in Iran, Louis Dreyfus, wrote in 1943, "There is mounting evidence of increase in Soviet domination of Iran and obnoxious pressure to obtain their ends and Soviet resentment and suspicions of [the] American adviser program and general action in Iran."<sup>115</sup> John Jernegan, a member of the US Division of Near Eastern Affairs, expressed a similar view: "It appeared that the Soviets were increasing their influence in northern Iran and at the same time looking with suspicion upon the efforts of American advisors to assist the Iranian people."<sup>116</sup> General Patrick Hurley, Personal Representative to President Roosevelt, informed Washington that "there is deep fear of the eventual objectives of Russia" as the Soviets "have occupied the northern portion of Iran constituting roughly one third of the country's area and a majority of its population."<sup>117</sup> On April 14, 1943, Washington received perhaps its most emphatic

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<sup>112</sup>Stephen McFarland, "The Iranian Crisis of 1946 and the Onset of the Cold War," in *Origins of the Cold War: An International History*, Melvyn Leffler, ed., (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 241.

<sup>113</sup>FRUS, Vol. 4, 1942, p. 223.

<sup>114</sup>Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 6, 1942, p. 249.

<sup>115</sup>FRUS, Vol. 4, 1943, p. 345.

<sup>116</sup>FRUS, Vol. 4, 1943, p. 349.

<sup>117</sup>FRUS, Vol. 4, 1943, p. 364.

telegram, again from Dreyfus, claiming that the Soviets continued to "ensconce themselves securely in Iran, by means of astute propaganda, by socialist indoctrination, by good example of their forces and by a policy consisting of...strong arm methods. Soviet policy in Iran continues to be...aggressive."<sup>118</sup>

The US State Department also harbored concern over the growing appeal of Soviet economic policies in Iran. For instance, Iran was extremely low on wheat and pleaded with the allies for aid. The Soviets were quick to come to the rescue and exported 25,000 tons of Soviet wheat to feed the people of Tehran. US officials believed that the Soviets had waited until the last minute to deliver "their punch" by making it seem as though the Americans failed to fulfill promises of economic assistance. According to one report, the "Soviets have stepped in when the wheat crisis in Iran is virtually over and offered wheat which is not presently needed" to attract communist followers.<sup>119</sup> The importation of Soviet wheat provided the Iranians with a surplus of a vital commodity which could have easily magnified the appeal of communism. The threat of another government under the umbrella of Soviet influence prompted the US to maintain military advisers in Iran until 1946 in hopes of preventing the Soviet Union from establishing a stranglehold on the Iranian political structure.

There is ample evidence that the Soviets wanted more than to ensure Hitler's defeat when they entered Iran. In 1941, the USSR declared that the "Soviet Government has no designs affecting the territorial integrity and independence of the Iranian State" and that as soon as the war ended the Red Army would "immediately withdraw Soviet troops from Iranian territory."<sup>120</sup> The Soviets verified their commitment by signing the Anglo-Soviet Treaty in 1942, stipulating that a withdrawal of all Soviet forces would take place within six months after the war's end.<sup>121</sup> Yet the Soviets resented that American "advisors" had

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<sup>118</sup>FRUS, Vol. 4, 1943, p. 357.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Rubinstein, p. 185.

<sup>121</sup>FRUS, Vol. 4, 1942, p. 265.

planned on entering Soviet-occupied territories in Northern Iran. After all, the Soviets had firmly established themselves in Northern Iran, making the territory a convenient outpost for communist propaganda. Soviet officers even went as far as to initially deny passage to American personnel going to northern Iran and Russia despite the fact that Soviet troops desperately needed aid. According to the State Department, Soviet Ambassador to Iran A.A. Smirnov's official reason for blocking American assistance was that the US "had failed to notify him or Soviet Government of fact of...troops coming to Iran."<sup>122</sup> Further, beginning in 1942 the Soviets released all communist prisoners from Iranian jails in the north and staunchly supported Iran's Tudeh Communist Party.<sup>123</sup> If the Soviets had occupied Iran for the sole purpose of defeating Germany, why did they openly support Iranian communism? If the Soviet government had intended to withdraw troops after an Allied victory, why did it feel threatened when American advisors arrived? It would be foolish to claim that neither side entered Iran to defeat the Axis powers. But aside from the German threat, the US entered Iran after reports that the Soviets were attempting to impose a communist mentality on regions in the north. The US advisory presence in Iran during World War II was at least partly an expression of a desire to prevent Soviet communism from entrenching itself in the Middle East.

In the same way Soviet actions spawned American animosity during the war, US policies fostered Soviet suspicions that would have far-reaching implications on post-war relations. The Soviets suffered massive casualties in 1941, and Stalin desperately wanted the allies to open a second front: "I think the only way out is this very year to create a second front...capable of drawing thirty to forty German divisions off the eastern front...Without these two kinds of aid, the Soviet Union will either be defeated or so weakened that it will lose its capacity to help its allies for a long time to come."<sup>124</sup> The US government acknowledged the legitimacy of Stalin's claim. In a letter to General George

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<sup>122</sup>FRUS, Vol. 4, 1943, p. 346.

<sup>123</sup>McFarland, pp. 241-45.

<sup>124</sup>Dmitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*, (Rocklin: Prima Publishing, 1988), p. 485.

Marshall in early 1942, Roosevelt concluded, Stalin "is correct in saying...that one armored division of the allies operating in Western Europe in 1942 is more effective than five such divisions in 1943."<sup>125</sup> Later that year, Roosevelt stated in a memorandum that "the so-called Second Front must be launched in 1942."<sup>126</sup> But the second front was not delivered with the immediacy that Stalin had emphasized. General John Deane summed up the US government's perspective when he told Marshall, "the Soviets viewed the second front more in the nature of desirable insurance than as an immediate necessity."<sup>127</sup> High ranking Soviet officials in turn radiated suspicions over the US failure to open a second front. Maxim Litvinoff, the Soviet Ambassador in the United States, suggested that lack of additional American military effort meant that the US wanted to "form a compromise peace proposal with the German government."<sup>128</sup> Vyacheslav Molotov, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, warned that without a second front the US "will eventually have to bear the brunt of the war" and that "cruel disillusionment" would undoubtedly follow an American "failure to redeem" "broken promises."<sup>129</sup> Finally, after Stalin learned that the US would not be opening a second front in 1943, he wrote Roosevelt that the Soviet Union's "confidence in its allies...is being subjected to severe stress."<sup>130</sup>

Although the US failed to open a second front, it did supply an abundance of military and economic aid to the Red Army. Moreover, the US was at war in the Pacific, making it exceedingly difficult to invest such a large portion of American troops in a European second front. But it is also plausible that the US failed to provide a second front because any relief the Soviets received from the west would have given the Red Army an opportunity to expand and occupy more European territory. Just prior to the Teheran

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<sup>125</sup>Elliot Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945, Vol. II*, (New York: Duell, Sloan and Peace, 1970), p. 1313.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1338.

<sup>127</sup>*FRUS*, "The Conferences at Teheran and Cairo," 1943, p. 328.

<sup>128</sup>*FRUS*, 1942, Vol. 3, p. 472.

<sup>129</sup>*FRUS*, 1942, Vol. 3, pp. 577, 608.

<sup>130</sup>Levering, p. 5.

Conference of 1943,<sup>131</sup> the US failed to guarantee Stalin a second front, despite the Soviets' belief that it would have likely ended the ground war with "Germany successfully and immediately."<sup>132</sup> If the war had ended immediately, the US would not have had time to ensure a post-war Soviet evacuation of Eastern Europe. After all, as of 1943, any questions brought forth by the American government regarding communist practices in Soviet-occupied territories were, according to the State Department, "looked on with suspicion by the Russians."<sup>133</sup> Perhaps British Earl Anthony Eden described the American perspective best when he recalled a 1942 meeting between Stalin and Roosevelt: "...there were signs, especially in the Russian attitude of aloofness and suspicion, that the problem of restoring political liberty, independence, and a sense of security to the states of Europe would not be solved merely by the defeat of Hitler."<sup>134</sup> While the political fate of Eastern Europe remained uncertain during the war, the lack of a second front proved a convenient method of containing Soviet influence.

## PART 2: CONTAINMENT IN THE POST-WAR ERA

### I

Although the Soviet-American alliance defeated the Axis powers in World War II, tensions between the two nations intensified in 1945. Roosevelt declared in January of that year, "The nearer we come to vanquishing our enemies, the more we inevitably become

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<sup>131</sup>The Tehran Conference of 1943 was the first of three meetings between Soviet, American, and British leaders. The focus of the conference was to explore long-range possibilities of the restructuring of post-war Europe. Topics of immediate importance, such as the Soviet desire for a second front and the American desire for a Soviet strike against Japan, were also thoroughly discussed. For a primary account of the Tehran Conference see *FRUS*, "The Conference at Cairo and Tehran," 1943.

<sup>132</sup>*FRUS*, The Conference at Cairo and Tehran, p. 265.

<sup>133</sup>*FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 1, pp. 451-459.

<sup>134</sup>Francis L. Lowenheim, et al., *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1975), p. 58.

conscious of differences among victors."<sup>135</sup> Similarly, the Turkish Foreign Office warned the US government that the "Soviets, like Hitler, have become victory drunk and are embarking on world domination."<sup>136</sup> The State Department noted the Turkish government's concerns, and the US Ambassador in Turkey, Edwin Wilson, reported on the "new phase Soviet war of nerves in which in mockery of principles [of the] United Nations [the] USSR is seeking dismemberment of Turkey" and that the "Georgian people felt very strongly on [the] question of recovering territory from Turkey which they regarded as Georgian."<sup>137</sup> Soviet occupation of Iran also continued to aggravate American suspicions toward the Soviet regime. "We must clearly recognize," Harriman said in a cable to Washington in April 1945, "that the Soviet program is the establishment of totalitarianism, ending personal liberty and democracy as we know and respect it."<sup>138</sup> Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal's diary entry for September 7, 1945, reveals suspicion of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe:

Berry's [Burton Y. Berry, Foreign Service Officer] dispatches from Bucharest and Harriman's from Moscow indicate that the Russians have no idea of going through with the Allied Nations statement of policy about Rumania, namely to permit the establishment of free and democratic institutions in Rumania...[Ambassador Laurence] Steinhardt makes strong recommendations from Czechoslovakia against complete withdrawal of American forces. He says this will be an open invitation to the Communists in the country and to Russian influence from without to take over.<sup>139</sup>

In 1945, the US government faced a new form of Soviet imperialism. The Soviets had played a vital role in the Allied victory over Germany, and Stalin sought to receive compensation through territorial expansion. Prior to 1945, the US government had attempted to curtail communist influence. The conclusion of World War II presented a

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<sup>135</sup>Walter Millis, *The Forrestal Diaries*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>137</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 8, 1945, pp. 1285, 1287.

<sup>138</sup>Schlesinger, "Origins of the Cold War," p. 43.

<sup>139</sup>Millis, p. 98. There were indeed American troops stationed in Czechoslovakia at the end of World War II. Secretary of War William Patterson claimed that the Czechs wanted two divisions of US troops to "remain because they have 150,000 Russian troops on their hands who are apparently going to remain for an indefinite time." See Forrestal's diary entry of October 16, 1945, in Millis, p. 101.



different scenario for American policy makers because the Soviet Union had gained enough military prestige to command a profound international presence. The containment strategy thus continued in the post-war epoch, but with a new sense of urgency.

## II

As the war drew to a close, the Soviet government showed that expanding communists practices outside Russia would be atop its political agenda. Stalin also sought to take advantage of the USSR's wartime achievements by expanding Soviet territory through a network of communist parties in Eastern Europe.<sup>140</sup> Stalin's campaign speech of February 9, 1946, alienated State Department officials who dreamed of positive Soviet-American relations and aggravated a fear in those who viewed communism as a threat. In blaming the war on the West, Stalin asserted, "Marxists have declared more than once that the capitalist system of world economy harbors elements of general crises...the development of world capitalism in our time proceeds not in the form of smooth and even progress but through crises and military catastrophes."<sup>141</sup> The speech marked a departure from Stalin's wartime rhetoric praising Western practices, and former Secretary of State Dean Acheson saw the oratory as the beginning of "Stalin's offensive against the United States and the West."<sup>142</sup>

While American officials recognized that a Soviet military presence insured Stalin's domination of Eastern Europe, they felt greater possibilities for containing Soviet influence in Germany. Dispatches from the Kremlin to communist camps in Germany demonstrated that Stalin was cautious yet intent on bringing at least a section of Germany under the umbrella of Soviet communism: "The creation of independent Communist and Socialist Parties was in direct contradiction with the directives which we had received...At that time

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<sup>140</sup>J.M. Mackintosh, *Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 59.

<sup>141</sup>Daniels, ed., pp. 142-143.

<sup>142</sup>Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969), p. 194.

we had been told that political activity on the part of the German people could only be developed initially in the context of a large-scale comprehensive anti-fascist movement." Stalin's concern over political activity in post-war Germany stemmed from a desire to directly control the German communists. The political situation in Soviet-occupied regions of Germany in many ways resembled the puppet regimes the Soviets had established throughout Eastern Europe, and Stalin certainly wanted to maintain control of those territories.<sup>143</sup> That Stalin told Milovan Djilas,<sup>144</sup> a member of Yugoslavia's communist delegation, "all of Germany must be ours, that is, Soviet, Communist," points to a government reliving Lenin's expansionist rhetoric.<sup>145</sup> Political tension between the two superpowers, therefore, escalated after Germany's defeat.

Restructuring a defeated Germany was in turn central to the US government's continued desire to contain Soviet influence. There was unanimity within the US government that Germany should be severely punished for its wartime actions. In a 1944 memorandum to the president, Secretary of State Hull wrote, "In the post-war period Germany will presumably be debarr'd by its own weakness and by the continuing resentment of its smaller neighbors...The exaction of an admission of total defeat might prevent the invention of new legends about the alleged invincibility of German arms."<sup>146</sup> Under Secretary of State Edward Stettinius thought that an "unconditional surrender" from Germany was vital in order to implement American post-war aims of demilitarization.<sup>147</sup> Roosevelt expressed similar sentiments on more than one occasion. In August 1944, he told Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, "We have got to be tough with Germany

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<sup>143</sup> Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1967*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 441.

<sup>144</sup> From 1945-1948, while Yugoslavia was tied politically with the Soviet Union, Djilas occupied a senior post in Josip Tito's cabinet. During this time, Djilas frequently interacted with Stalin to discuss communist strategies in Eastern Europe. Interestingly, during the 1950's, Djilas was expelled from Tito's government and lived in exile where he vehemently opposed the communist movement. For a biographical summary of Djilas' life, see Milovan Djilas, *Conversations With Stalin*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1962).

<sup>145</sup> Djilas p. 153.

<sup>146</sup> *FRUS*, 1944, Vol. 1, p. 314.

<sup>147</sup> *FRUS*, 1944, Vol. 1, pp. 507-508.

and I mean the German people not just the Nazis...we either have to castrate the German people or you have got to treat them in such a manner so they can't just go on producing people who want to continue the way they have in the past."<sup>148</sup> Longtime Roosevelt aide Harry Hopkins recalled that the President wanted "total surrender" of the German people to ensure the full dissipation of the Third Reich.<sup>149</sup>

But although a desire to punish Germany was prevalent within the State Department, an emphasis on containing Soviet influence was first and foremost. In fact, as early as 1943, Hopkins told Roosevelt that unless the US held a strong presence in Germany's post-war plans, "one of two things would happen--either Germany will go Communist or an out and out anarchic state would set in; that, indeed, the same kind of thing might happen in any of the countries in Europe and Italy as well."<sup>150</sup> The concern to prevent Soviet influence from reaching German soil even contributed to the rejection to a plan devised by Morgenthau and initially sponsored by Roosevelt. Morgenthau shared many of Roosevelt's opinions on plans for post-war Europe and, at the President's request, was quick to draft up a strategy to economically restructure Germany. Morgenthau, however, intended a far worse fate for the German people than his peers. According to E.F. Penrose, an economic advisor to the State Department, Morgenthau wanted to completely dismantle German culture by eliminating all remnants of an industrial society and transforming it "into a pastoral country."<sup>151</sup> His ideas developed into the Morgenthau Plan of August 1944, a conception that saw industrial deprivation as central to the structure of post-war Germany.<sup>152</sup> Roosevelt initially defended Morgenthau's ideas<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins...*, p. 119.

<sup>149</sup>Sherwood, p. 715.

<sup>150</sup>Sherwood, pp. 714-715.

<sup>151</sup>Penrose, p. 246.

<sup>152</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins...*, p. 118.

<sup>153</sup>Roosevelt waffled between the recommendations of Morgenthau, and those of Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Secretary of State Cordell Hull. After initially supporting the Morgenthau Plan in August 1944, he told Stimson that Morgenthau "pulled a boner" and that "No one wants to make Germany a wholly agricultural nation again." The Morgenthau plan was short-lived, primarily because it would have left Germany susceptible to high amounts of Soviet influence. For a complete synopsis on the Morgenthau Plan and its effects on State Department thinking, see Gaddis' *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, pp. 114-125.

in a letter to Secretary of War Henry Stimson. The Germans, wrote Roosevelt, "should be fed three times a day with soup from Army soup kitchens. That will keep them perfectly healthy and they will remember that experience all their lives...The German people as a whole must have it driven home to them that the whole nation has been engaged in a lawless conspiracy against the decencies of modern civilization."<sup>154</sup>

Roosevelt, however, was one of the few supporters of the Morgenthau Plan. Indeed, the State Department wanted to paralyze Germany's military capability and to punish the German people with economic sanctions. Many US officials, however, thought a complete decomposition of Germany's industrial capability would make it dependent on the Soviets, a scenario to be avoided at all costs.<sup>155</sup> Stimson, for instance, thought the Morgenthau Plan would create a window for the Soviets through which they could politically restructure German industry in the mold of communist practices.<sup>156</sup> Hull's opposition to Morgenthau's Plan paved the way for his more positive approach to post-war Germany. "Nazi and Fascist governments cannot exist together in this world," Hull told the American public via radio, "it is essential that we...are...reestablishing a government and repairing the most brutal savages of war." To Hull, the best way to do this was not by permanently crippling German society, but rather by creating in Germany "the institutions of a free and democratic way of life" to offset the appeal of communism.<sup>157</sup> Penrose called the Morgenthau Plan "a sorry story" and thought that the "recommendation of large scale looting and [industrial] destruction seems incredible," given the fact that Germany would not have nearly enough agricultural output to support its people and political turmoil would surely ensue.<sup>158</sup> Philip Mosely, an assistant to US Ambassador in London John Winant, was against any attempts to "smash" the German economy, fearing that such devastation

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<sup>154</sup>John Morton Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of War, 1941-1945*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 349.

<sup>155</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins...*, p. 118.

<sup>156</sup>Blum, p. 286.

<sup>157</sup>Norman Graebner, *Cold War Diplomacy: American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1962), p. 134.

<sup>158</sup>Penrose, pp. 247-252.

would engender an influx of Soviet influence in economically deprived regions.<sup>159</sup> Lucius Clay, the director of the American military office in Germany, noted in regard to the plan, "If Germany ended in economic chaos it would have been even more susceptible to Communist indoctrination."<sup>160</sup> Roosevelt ultimately succumbed to pressure from Hull and Stimson and opted for a more positive approach to Germany than the one Morgenthau had proposed. The State Department wanted to walk down any avenue that would have promoted a democratic presence in Germany, and at the same time attempted to place roadblocks on the paths that pointed to an obvious injection of Soviet activity. By abandoning Morgenthau's radical approach to the post-war treatment of Germany, the Roosevelt Administration was, according to top State Department officials, preventing the Soviets from politically remodeling German society.

But it would have been naive of US officials to think that they could dominate post-war planning for Germany. Clearly the Soviets, after absorbing much of Hitler's bloodshed in Europe, would have a loud voice in Germany's post-war activities. This did not stop the US government from attempting to enhance the appeal of democracy in order to eclipse the presence of Soviet communism. In a May 1945 letter to the Heads of War Agencies on economic development in Europe, President Truman emphasized that restructuring German territories must be made "from a humanitarian point of view...because they necessarily involve many internal and international political considerations," and that a "chaotic and hungry Europe is not a fertile ground in which stable, democratic and friendly governments can be reared."<sup>161</sup> Further, in 1945, US policy makers initiated a complete reversal from the plan Morgenthau devised. German industry would not be looked upon as the seed of a brutal war machine, but rather as a spark-plug for a democratic, economically revitalized Europe. After all, an economically vibrant Germany meant that the appeal of Soviet influence in the country would be virtually

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<sup>159</sup>Blum, p. 338.

<sup>160</sup>Lucius D. Clay, *Decisions in Germany*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1950), p. 123.

<sup>161</sup>Harry S. Truman, *Public Papers of the Presidents, 1945*, p. 61.

nonexistent. In particular, according to Clay, German coal mines were the key to stabilization in Western Europe: "the successful large-scale mining of coal means some restoration of the German economy, and some industrial activity to support coal mining."<sup>162</sup> However, the Soviet Union's interest in Nazi territory and a demand for billions of dollars in reparations were potholes in the US government's road to a democratic Germany. The US government's efforts to contain Soviet influence in Germany continued at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences in 1945.

One of the US government's aims at the Yalta Conference in February 1945 was to limit the ability of the Soviet government to dominate post-war German politics. The US government concluded that the best way to do this was to devise a post-war governing body consisting of the Allied nations. In a memorandum to the State Department, US Ambassador Averell Harriman verified what the US government had long expected: "In connection with reparations the Soviet Government had [territorial] security in mind first."<sup>163</sup> The State Department introduced a proposal that called for "American, British and Soviet generals, each in his own zone of occupation and also jointly, in matters affecting Germany as a whole...to ensure uniformity of action in the several zones of occupation."<sup>164</sup> This proposal, as viewed by the Roosevelt Administration, was the best way to maintain a democratic presence in Germany while preventing the spread of communism. It "is highly desirable," the State Department noted, "even at the expense of curtailing to some degree the freedom of action of the commander of the United States zone, to prevent any of the occupying powers from dealing as it pleases with its zone of occupation."<sup>165</sup> The proposal was also dependent upon the US government, in its governing zone, to plant the seeds of democracy that would eventually spread to neighboring zones and allow US forces to withdraw from the country. Nonetheless, the

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<sup>162</sup>Leffler, *The Struggle For Germany and the Origins of the Cold War*, (Washington: German Historical Institute, 1996), pp. 18-19.

<sup>163</sup>*FRUS*, The Conference at Yalta, p. 177.

<sup>164</sup>*FRUS*, The Conference at Yalta, p. 180.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.*

proposal was not without its skeptics within the State Department. Kennan, then US Charge in the Soviet Union, in a personal note written in early summer 1945, concluded, "The idea of a Germany run jointly with the Russians is a chimera. The idea of both the Russians and ourselves withdrawing politely at a given date and a healthy, peaceful, stable, and friendly Germany arising out of the resulting vacuum is also a chimera."<sup>166</sup> The Yalta talks ultimately failed to achieve a settlement on the US government's proposal for an Allied governing body for Germany. The US government's desire to weaken Soviet influence in Germany carried over to the Potsdam Conference of July 1945.

While a plan for dismembering Germany was discussed as early as the Tehran Conference of 1943,<sup>167</sup> growing tension between the Soviet Union and the United States forced the US government to crystallize its plans for Germany at Potsdam. After all, Churchill informed Roosevelt during the Yalta talks that Stalin wanted neighboring Eastern European nations "to form a realm of independent anti-Nazi pro-Russian states."<sup>168</sup> Although the US government supported the idea of anti-Nazi governments in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union's growing ability to export communism caused the State Department to enter the Potsdam Conference with clear objectives for a democratic post-war Germany. In fact, the State Department went as far as to radically revise the plan it adhered to at Yalta. More specifically, a policy of completely banning political activity in Germany, an idea many US officials had emphatically supported at Yalta, was challenged by US policy makers. Prior to the Potsdam talks, the US Political Adviser in Germany, Raymond Murphy, in a letter to Secretary of State James Byrnes, argued that such a ban might lead to strong communist support:

Our current policy is essentially negative and suppressive and results in a political vacuum which various groups will undoubtedly try to fill. If we continue [the] ban too long, it may discourage the more democratic elements which begin to show signs...of a desire to express themselves following the years of Nazi suppression...when

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<sup>166</sup>Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, p. 258.

<sup>167</sup>Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History*, p. 797.

<sup>168</sup>FRUS, *The Conference at Yalta, 1945*, pp. 159-160.

we finally raise the present ban on political activity, Communists may profit from a considerable head start as the only political group in Germany organized and active on a national basis.<sup>169</sup>

Moreover, the US government feared the possibility of communist propaganda infiltrating a Soviet-occupied German territory. "In any consideration of the propaganda problem," declared a memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "it must be recognized that the national aims and ideologies of...Russia, are such that they may well intend to further them...with or without the consent of the other occupying powers."<sup>170</sup> To counter the Soviet propaganda, the US should create its own "positive" propaganda aimed at fortifying democratic institutions in Germany.<sup>171</sup> The plan finally agreed upon at Potsdam, to allow a governing body consisting of the Allied nations and France to run Germany, was short-lived. But Truman's goals at Potsdam, in essence, kept in stride with past containment policies in that the State Department sought to prevent Soviet influence from consuming all of Germany.

The US government's leering over Soviet aims in Germany continued throughout 1946. Molotov had informed Secretary of State James Byrnes at Potsdam that "neither the United States or Great Britain had had their territory occupied by Germany" and that the Soviet government should be allowed a great deal of latitude in establishing "secure" relations with the Germans.<sup>172</sup> It is not surprising that the Soviet demand for "security" was highly debated within the State Department. In September 1945, Charles Bohlen, the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, cited Byrnes when he informed Washington that "a treaty between the Four Principle Powers for the demilitarization of Germany to run for twenty or twenty-five years, would be a good thing."<sup>173</sup> Byrnes told Molotov that "continued cooperation of the four Allies in keeping Germany demilitarized would relieve

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<sup>169</sup>FRUS, The Conference at Potsdam, 1945, Vol. 1, pp. 472-473.

<sup>170</sup>FRUS, The Conference at Potsdam, 1945, Vol. 1, p. 467.

<sup>171</sup>Ibid.

<sup>172</sup>FRUS, The Conference at Potsdam, 1945, Vol. 2, p. 431.

<sup>173</sup>FRUS, 1945, Vol. 2, p. 268.



your fears and perhaps influence your actions in the Balkan states."<sup>174</sup> This revision of the US government's post-war goals reflects Byrnes' desire for long-range American involvement in Germany and a hope that Soviet-American cooperation might increase the prospects for a communist evacuation elsewhere in Europe. Senator Arthur Vandenberg had proposed a similar plan eight months earlier,<sup>175</sup> but the solid prospects of democratic order in post-war Germany overshadowed his ideas. The Soviet government's continual demand for territorial security, however, caused Byrnes to latch on to Vandenberg's plan and to make it the foundation of US policy in Germany. Further, Kennan's insistence on a revision of American policy in Germany was quite convincing. In reference to a clause in the Potsdam agreement that emphasized the establishment of democratic methods in Germany, Kennan wrote in March 1946, "I do not think [the] Soviets will really encourage establishment of such agencies, as we envisage them, until such time that they are fairly sure that within this new framework they can contrive not only to preserve in effect their exclusive control in their own zone but also to advance materially their possibilities for influencing [the] course of events elsewhere in Germany."<sup>176</sup> Kennan concluded, "we should be careful in assuming that by establishment of such agencies we could accomplish as much as we hope [sic] to break exclusive Russian control in their own zone or to impede [an] advance of Soviet political influence to other zones of Germany."<sup>177</sup>

Byrnes, in an effort to expose Stalin's post-war objectives in Germany,<sup>178</sup> attempted to bring the new plan to fruition at the Paris Conference<sup>179</sup> in the spring of 1946. As Byrnes told Molotov, "This treaty will serve as added insurance against your fears of a

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<sup>174</sup>James Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 172.

<sup>175</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War...*, pp. 328-329.

<sup>176</sup>FRUS, 1946, Vol. 5, p. 518.

<sup>177</sup>FRUS, 1946, Vol. 5, p. 520.

<sup>178</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War...*, pp. 328-329.

<sup>179</sup>The Council of Foreign Ministers met in Paris for four months beginning in April 1946 to draft peace treaties for the European nations involved in World War II. Byrnes, after proposing to Molotov the twenty-five year plan for demilitarizing Germany in September 1945, presented a final draft of the proposal at the Paris Peace Conference. For an account of the importance and implications of the Paris Peace Conference, see Stephen Kertesz, *The Last European Peace Conference: Paris 1946--Conflict of Values*, (Buffalo: University Press of America, 1992).

renewed attack by Germany...I must tell you frankly, that there were many people in the United States who were unable to understand the exact aim of the Soviet Union--whether it was in search for security or merely expansion."<sup>180</sup> Similarly, Vandenberg, a member of the American delegation at the Paris Peace talks, concluded, "This treaty would be the fundamental answer to all the Russian 'security' pleas...It would have robbed the Soviets of every excuse for seeking territorial expansion and satellites in the name of 'security.' If and when Molotov finally refuses this offer, he will confess that he wants expansion and not 'security.'"<sup>181</sup> An unidentified member of the American delegation echoed Byrnes' and Vandenberg's sentiments: "If they [the Soviets] are sincere in their intentions toward the rest of the world, they must sign [Byrnes' proposal]. If they are not and refuse to sign, it will make them appear an outlaw nation before the eyes of the world."<sup>182</sup> Molotov rejected Byrnes proposal on July 9, 1946, exacerbating the US government's suspicions of Soviet intentions in Germany. The governing zones established by the Allies in 1945 began an era of political division in Germany that lasted for four decades. The communist-democracy dissection that emerged in post-war Germany fostered American suspicions of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe. In the words of Lucius Clay, after trying to form an agreement with the Soviets for a unified Germany, the US government "found that it would result only from acceptance of the Soviet will to dominate Germany. We were forced to combine the American and British zones to achieve economic progress and...to form a West Germany in which 45,000,000 German people are separated from 20,000,000 Germany people by the Soviet-constructed 'Iron Curtain.'"<sup>183</sup> The repeated shift in US policy from 1944 through 1946 is indicative of how a desire to contain Soviet influence was a continuous process imprinted on the minds of US officials.

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<sup>180</sup>Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 173.

<sup>181</sup> Arthur Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), p. 268.

<sup>182</sup>Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War...*, p. 329.

<sup>183</sup>Clay, p. 1.

## III

Kennan's "Long Telegram," received in Washington in late February 1946, articulated a continuation of the US government's current and past Soviet-policy. That is, the Soviet regime was to be viewed as hostile and expansionist. More importantly, the perspective that communism should somehow be contained had been in practice for nearly thirty years. But because the Soviet-American alliance had grown sour and Stalin's expansive motives seemed to be at an all time high, Kennan's cable was received at an extremely opportune time. Byrnes and Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal<sup>184</sup> urged top US officials to read Kennan's telegram and to use it as a guide to interpret Soviet foreign policy.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, public rhetoric, such as Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, reinforced Kennan's thoughts and further propelled the US government to believe that the Soviets should remain on their side of the drapes. US officials stationed in Eastern Europe who saw faults in the containment theory were quickly converted to its corner. Robert Murphy, the US political advisor for Germany, at first thought that Kennan's telegram served primarily to promote anti-Russian sentiments in Washington. But H. Freeman Matthews, the head of the State Department's Committee on European Affairs, emphasized to Murphy that there was a "basic doctrine in the Kremlin that the Soviet and non-Soviet systems cannot exist in this world side by side. This being so, the Soviet leaders...want no peace, or stability or rehabilitation in Europe--or at least west of the Iron Curtain--for under such conditions their infiltration and communization methods do not prosper." Murphy later backed Kennan's analysis and concluded, because the Soviets clearly wanted to politically dominate Germany, "[it] became necessary for our government to coordinate its plans with the plans of friendly nations...This meant that we had decided a host of

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<sup>184</sup>Forrestal, interestingly, had personal views of the Soviet regime that directly corresponded to those of Kennan. It is implicated by Walter Millis in *The Forrestal Diaries* that Forrestal clung to the "Long Telegram" because Kennan was able to crystallize thoughts that Forrestal himself did not have time to articulate. See *The Forrestal Diaries*, pp. 135-140.

<sup>185</sup>There are several primary synopses of the initial impact of the "Long Telegram." For reference, see Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, pp. 292-295; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 150-151; and Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, pp. 109-111.

details as to what would be done if the Soviet Union moved militarily--what forces would be employed, what equipment would be required, what emergency measures would be taken" to counter the Soviet advance.<sup>186</sup> Murphy's initial thoughts represented a minority within the US government as top officials vigorously supported Kennan's ideas and urged junior officials to do the same. Ironically, Murphy, despite initially finding faults in the containment doctrine, had a hand in attempting to contain the Soviets in Germany before Kennan sent his telegram. Perhaps the policy of containment was so deeply engrained in the legacies of US foreign policy that American officials failed to recognize that such a strategy existed. In any event, Kennan's ideas were not new, but the panic surrounding the threat of Soviet dominance in the post-war era spawned US officials to view his analysis as a fresh perspective on Soviet-American relations.

The dismissal of Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace, a leading liberal critic of containment, shows how strongly the containment theory was advocated in the post-war era. By the summer of 1946, Kennan's telegram had been widely circulated and was generally accepted as the cornerstone of the US government's perception of the Soviet Union. President Truman haphazardly approved Wallace's request to refer to US foreign policy during a speech at Madison Square Garden on September 12, 1946. Wallace contradicted American policy when he argued that the US had "no more business in the political affairs of Eastern Europe than Russia has in the political affairs of Latin American, Western Europe, and the United States."<sup>187</sup> State Department officials were infuriated by Wallace's rhetoric. Byrnes even threatened to resign his post as Secretary of State in fear that the Soviets would not take his word seriously. After much pressure from the Truman Administration, Wallace resigned as Secretary of Commerce in late September 1946, a reminder of how the US government rallied behind the containment theory.<sup>188</sup> There was,

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<sup>186</sup>Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1964), p. 437.

<sup>187</sup>Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 117.

<sup>188</sup>Robert H. Ferrel, *Harry S. Truman: A Life*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), pp. 224-226.

in the post-war era, a new sense of urgency that accompanied the Soviet threat and the State Department's desire to confront and subdue the potential rise of communist influence throughout the world.

Not only were Kennan's ideas consistent with past US foreign policy, but much of his language could be seen in contemporary political viewpoints. Clark Clifford, Special Counsel to President Truman, took Kennan's analysis a step further in the Fall of 1946. Although Kennan's telegram was hailed as brilliant by top US officials, Clifford attempted to "fill the gap between Kennan's analysis and policy recommendations by assembling the views of those senior officials most concerned with American policy toward the Soviet Union, to see what consensus, if any, existed."<sup>189</sup> The result was the Clifford Report,<sup>190</sup> "American Relations with the Soviet Union." The report was submitted in September 1946 and only twenty copies were circulated within the Truman Administration.<sup>191</sup> Consequently, there is little evidence on exactly how much influence Clifford's document had on US officials. The report was remarkably similar to Kennan's telegram in that it concisely enunciated the theory of containment. The Clifford Report concluded, "...as long as the Soviet government adheres to its present policy, the United States should maintain military forces powerful enough to restrain the Soviet Union and to confine Soviet influence to its present area. All nations not now within the Soviet sphere should be given generous economic assistance and political support in their opposition to Soviet penetration."<sup>192</sup> Clifford later joked that if the top-secret document had "been circulated, future historians might have referred to the policy of 'restraintment' instead of 'containment.'"<sup>193</sup> Kennan actually coined the term "containment" nearly ten months after Clifford insisted on the "restraintment" and "confinement" of Soviet influence. The Clifford

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<sup>189</sup>Clifford, p. 111.

<sup>190</sup>Because so few copies of the report were made, very few people had access to it, let alone knew about it. The full publication of the Clifford Report can only be found in Arthur Krock's, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line*, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), pp. 419-482.

<sup>191</sup>Clifford, p. 123.

<sup>192</sup>Krock, p. 482.

<sup>193</sup>Clifford, p. 125.

Interestingly, a February 8, 1946 article in *US News and World Report* articulated (and foreshadowed) for the American public many of the same views Kennan recorded in the classified "Long Telegram." The article examined the roots of the Soviet government's post-war aims and claimed that "Territorial expansion is a result of the Russian idea of security. Over the years Russia has had fixed territorial goals, whether her rulers were czars or commissars...Suspicion and fear of other nations" continues to plague Soviet foreign policy. "The U.S.," concluded the article, "may find it impossible to develop warmly cordial relations with Russia."<sup>199</sup> One column questioned the Soviets' demand for "friendly governments" by positing, "Until totalitarianism is overthrown everywhere, and peoples, guided by an informed public opinion, can decide for themselves whether or not to engage again in organized murder, there can be no 'security' in the world."<sup>200</sup> In August 1946, *US News and World Report* criticized Soviet policy in China: "Now the Russians, through their press, are giving moral support to the Communists of China, and are joining with the latter in denouncing the U.S. for aiding the Nationalist Government while claiming to be neutral."<sup>201</sup> Anti-Soviet sentiments, therefore, reached a boiling point in the US media in the months following the Axis surrender. Unlike the pre-war era, in 1946 the US government's push to curtail communism coincided with a growing sense of alarm within the American mainstream that the Soviet government wanted to use its post-war status to achieve unwarranted political hegemony.

#### IV

As the case had been during the war, in 1946 the US government expressed a desire to contain communism beyond Europe. Much like the situation in Germany, Soviet-American friction in Iran during World War II proved to be a harbinger for post-war

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<sup>199</sup>"Key to Moves of Soviet Union: Long-Range Drive for Security," *US News and World Report*, 8 Feb., 1946, pp. 26-27.

<sup>200</sup>David Lawrence, "Security Against What Enemy?," *US News and World Report*, 10 May, 1946, pp. 26-27.

<sup>201</sup>"What is Russia's aim in China?," *US News and World Report*, 23 August, 1946, p. 13.

relations. Upon the conclusion of World War II, the US government became aware of the increasing influence Soviet forces had in Iran. In the months immediately following Japan's surrender, the Soviet government used its influence over Iran's Tudeh Communist Party to propel a separatist movement in Azerbaijan and to establish the Kurdish People Republic, both of which ensured the brief existence of a communist territory.<sup>202</sup> In December of 1945, the Tudeh Party announced that Ja'far Pishevari, a pro-Soviet, ex-Comintern agent, was the new leader of Azerbaijan, a region in North Eastern Iran.<sup>203</sup> The Soviet government also prevented Iranian troops from entering Azerbaijan and attempted to extend the Tudeh Party's communist message to Eastern Turkey.<sup>204</sup> US officials were alarmed by the situation in Azerbaijan. On January 21, 1946, Wallace Murray, the US Ambassador in Iran, alerted Byrnes that without US intervention, communist leaders would have no problem "declaring complete separation from Iran and requesting Soviet protection." Further, Iranian Prime Minister Ibrahim Hakimi "was at first reluctant to attempt anything on grounds that [the] Azerbaijan 'govt' is completely under Russian domination and so terrorized it could not come to any reasonable agreement."<sup>205</sup> Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson thought the main question the US government should address was whether Stalin "would succeed in creating out of the northern Iranian province of Azerbaijan an autonomous entity subject to Soviet control."<sup>206</sup> Truman thought Soviet actions "seemed to add up to a planned move on the part of the Russians to get at least northern Iran under their control."<sup>207</sup> The communist rise in northern Iran forced the US government to continue its policies of containment there.

Even more disconcerting to US officials than the rise of the Tudeh Party was the fact that Soviet troops failed to evacuate Iran as scheduled on March 2, 1946.<sup>208</sup> US

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<sup>202</sup>Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 426.

<sup>203</sup>Rubinstein, p. 206.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid.

<sup>205</sup>FRUS, Vol. 7, 1946, p. 305.

<sup>206</sup>Acheson, p. 197.

<sup>207</sup>Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, p. 523.

<sup>208</sup>Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 427.

forces evacuated Iran on January 1, 1946, while British troops withdrew on March 2 in recognition of the Iranian-Soviet-British treaty of 1942. Although Soviet forces completely evacuated Iran on May 9, 1946,<sup>209</sup> the Soviet government's failure to immediately comply to the agreement generated outrage by the US government. Stalin attempted to justify a Soviet presence in Iran by claiming that the Baku oil fields in southern Russia needed to be safeguarded against the potential of any hostile activity from northern Iranian citizens. Byrnes called Stalin's claim a "poor excuse" and wrote, "The more I thought about Generalissimo Stalin's excuse for retaining troops in Iran, the less confidence I had in the Soviet position."<sup>210</sup> Kennan saw it as a "a foregone conclusion that [the] Soviets must make some effort in [the] immediate future to bring into power in Iran a regime to accede to major Soviet demands...Soviet government has no intention of withdrawing its troops from Iran. On the contrary, reinforcements, even though not on large scale, have been sent in."<sup>211</sup> Clark Clifford noted, "As the date passed without Soviet withdrawal, it became apparent that Moscow's objective was, in fact, to create a separate state in Azerbaijan, and then, presumably, later annex it to the Soviet empire."<sup>212</sup> Finally, Truman's sentiments summed up those of the entire government: "These were ominous signs which called for every effort we could make...to compel the Russians to carry out the London agreement and get out of Iran."<sup>213</sup> The Soviet presence in Iran engendered new skepticism in the State Department and validated the containment strategy that Truman inherited from his predecessors.

Even when the Soviets pulled out of Iran, a desire to prevent the Near East from turning red pervaded the minds of State Department officials. Acting Secretary of State William Clayton, in a memorandum that insisted upon an American military presence in the Near East, concluded on September 12, 1946, "The Soviet Union has shown itself

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<sup>209</sup>Ibid.

<sup>210</sup>Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 119.

<sup>211</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 7, 1946, pp. 362-363.

<sup>212</sup>Clifford, p. 110.

<sup>213</sup>Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, p. 523.



determined to continue to adhere to, and to pursue unswervingly, its policies of endeavoring to create instability in certain of the Near and Middle East countries...and to obtain hegemony over those countries."<sup>214</sup> Loy Henderson, the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, expressed the importance of thwarting Soviet influence in Iran in the Fall of 1946. "I need not elaborate on the consequences for this country of Iran's falling under Soviet domination," wrote Henderson. "...The JCS is strongly of the opinion that our strategic interests would be greatly harmed by [a] division of Iran into spheres of influence or by Iran's falling completely under Soviet domination. They hold the view that the oil fields in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq are absolutely vital to the security of this nation."<sup>215</sup> The report referred to by Henderson, submitted on October 12, 1946, claimed that allowing the Soviets to dominate northern Iran

would enhance the ability of the Soviets to achieve their "security" ends in this area by political means while having the effect of serving notice to other countries that Western democracies admit their inability to protect their strategic interests in this area...it would give the Soviets opportunity...to organize northern Iran for defense, and to prepare northern Iran as a possible base for operations against British and/or American oil resources in southern Iran and Saudi Arabia.<sup>216</sup>

In addition to Soviet intervention, industrial cities in Northern Iran were enthusiastically supporting the Tudeh Communist Party.<sup>217</sup> Although the US government wanted to instill democratic ideals in Iran, it was against free elections in the northern region, reflecting that containing Soviet influence was top-priority, even if it meant undercutting democratic principles. Harold Minor, the Chief of the Division of Middle Eastern and Indian Affairs, concluded on October 8, "[E]lections will certainly have the effect of returning...a solid bloc of Soviet dominated deputies from Azerbaijan and possibly from other northern areas. The result of this Soviet bloc will give the Russians virtual control of the central

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<sup>214</sup>FRUS, Vol. 7, 1946, p. 211.

<sup>215</sup>FRUS, Vol. 7, 1946, p. 524.

<sup>216</sup>FRUS, Vol. 7, 1946, p. 531.

<sup>217</sup>McFarland, p. 243.

government and all that that entails."<sup>218</sup> The State Department opted to negotiate with the Soviets through the newly founded United Nations, a tactic that Russian officials found extremely cumbersome.<sup>219</sup> By using the UN to challenge Soviet interests outside the Middle East, Stalin was left no alternative but to capitulate to America's demands regarding Iran. The US government's steadfast commitment to eradicate Soviet influence in Iran paid off in December 1946 when all communist threats in the nation were subdued and Azerbaijan was restored to the control of the central government.<sup>220</sup> In the words of political scientist Adam Ulam, "The case of Iran...demonstrated the meaning of containment before the doctrine was actually enunciated."<sup>221</sup>

## V

The US government's post-war actions in Greece were also an intensified continuation of the containment policy. After acceding to Stalin's demands for "friendly territories" in Eastern Europe, US officials faced the rise of Soviet influence in Greece with a sense of immediacy. As early as 1944, Greek leaders expressed concern to US officials over the increase of communist influence that followed the Soviets' occupation of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Slovakia in August of that year.<sup>222</sup> As the State Department noted, "Severe inflation,...disrupted Civil Service, stagnant industry and trade, and widespread unemployment" made Greece a hotbed for communist organizations.<sup>223</sup> Further, the Soviet Union backed the revolutionary rhetoric of the Communist Party of Greece, and even took a hand in developing the organization's political strategy.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>218</sup>FRUS, Vol. 7, 1946, p. 526.

<sup>219</sup>There is an excellent primary account of the UN negotiations in Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, pp. 118-123.

<sup>220</sup>Rubinstein, p. 208.

<sup>221</sup>Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 428.

<sup>222</sup>William Hardy McNeill, *America, Britain, and Russia: Their Cooperation and Conflict, 1941-1946*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 457.

<sup>223</sup>Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, p. 522.

<sup>224</sup>Peter J. Stavrakis, *Moscow and Greek Communism, 1944-1949*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 5, 142.

Cavendish Cannon, a US political advisor stationed in Europe, repeatedly addressed the potentially catastrophic effects should Greece fall under Soviet influence. Cannon insisted that unless the US government took action, Soviet communism would eclipse any democratic efforts and "would have the direst consequences for the Greek nation."<sup>225</sup> Cannon even backed the Greek government's claims for an alteration of old borders when he wrote, "...the attitude of the Soviet-bloc as regards to territorial changes in the Greek-Bulgarian frontier-region" involves "the fundamental assurance for Greece as far more realistic than any transfer of territory, which with modern methods of warfare would not constitute a genuine security factor."<sup>226</sup> Finally, on October 5, 1946, Cannon summarized the US government's policy toward Greece to Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh: "We have made it a matter of principle to support the Greek delegation wherever possible, and...to help them over the rough spots when their projects were rejected [by the UN]."<sup>227</sup>

Cannon's consistent emphasis on democratic security for the Greek state is just one example of the US government's desire to inject some semblance of political certainty into Southern Europe. Acting Secretary of State William Clayton informed Byrnes on September 12, 1946, of the increasing pressure the Soviet Government placed on nations in the Mediterranean region. The problem, thought Clayton, "is whether in view of the policy which the Soviet Union appears to be pursuing of endeavoring to undermine the stability and to obtain control of the countries in the Near and Middle East such as Greece, Turkey, and Iran, we should make certain changes in our general policies to strengthen the[ir] will and ability...under Soviet pressure to resist that pressure."<sup>228</sup> Joseph Jones, a member of the State Department's Office of Public Affairs, acknowledged in early 1947, "... the political integrity of Greece...should be maintained and...every effort should be made to extend the aid necessary to assure the development of those countries as

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<sup>225</sup> *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 1946, p. 687.

<sup>226</sup> *FRUS*, Vol. 3, 1946, p. 688.

<sup>227</sup> *FRUS*, Vol. 4, 1946, p. 882.

<sup>228</sup> *FRUS*, Vol. 7, 1946, p. 209.

democratic states with sound economies."<sup>229</sup> Similarly, Byrnes, in reference to the Soviet government's steadfast support of communist parties in the Mediterranean region, concluded, "It seemed that the Soviet Union was determined to dominate Europe."<sup>230</sup> By early 1947, the State Department was thus determined to financially aid "Greece and Turkey, [and] the situation those countries were left in, vulnerable to Soviet domination."<sup>231</sup> Vandenberg told Congressional peers, "I am frank in saying that I do not know the answer to the latest Greek challenge because I do not know all the facts...But I sense enough of the facts to realize that the problem in Greece cannot be isolated by itself. On the contrary, it is probably symbolic of the world-wide ideological clash between Eastern communism and Western democracy."<sup>232</sup> On February 28, a committee consisting of Eastern European Officials and members of Truman's cabinet met to discuss the possibilities of aid to Greece and Turkey. Jones, who is credited with initiating the talks, saw financial assistance as "a statement of global policy that picked up the ideological challenge of communism." Jones concluded, the "explicit reaction of all in government, from the President down, who were concerned with the decision to aid Greece and Turkey was that a historical turning point had been reached, that the United States must now stand forth as leader of the free world...and use its power directly and vigorously to strengthen free nations."<sup>233</sup> The committee placed a democratic anchor in the Mediterranean when it resolved to ask Congress to authorize aid for Greece and Turkey. Indeed, the US government polished its old containment strategy to meet the rising threat of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe.

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<sup>229</sup>Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks (February 21-June 5, 1947)*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), p. 136.

<sup>230</sup>Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 99.

<sup>231</sup>Jones, p. 139.

<sup>232</sup>Vandenberg, p. 340.

<sup>233</sup>Jones, p. 143.

## VI

Discussions about sending aid to the Mediterranean region prompted US officials to place the concept of economic assistance into a broader context. The possibility of communism dominating Western Europe had troubled US politicians since the dissipation of the Soviet-American alliance. In June 1946, Rep. William Pittenger of Minnesota linked Europe's financial turmoil with communist expansionism: "[I]n the hour of the world's greatest opportunity, the communists, under orders from Russia and its leaders, are interfering with the program of furnishing food to famine-stricken Europe." Herbert Hoover, working as an economic advisor to the State Department, claimed, "the universal party line of the communist party in every country is trying to break down the provision of food for hungry people and thus produce chaos where they can fish in troubled waters."<sup>234</sup> "It is apparent that communism has spread from Russia until it has almost enveloped the continent of Europe," argued Rep. Charles Vursell. "France today is almost controlled by the communists. Poland has been absorbed, as has most of the countries in western Europe south of Sweden."<sup>235</sup>

The media also acknowledged the potentially volatile situation in Europe. "Food, give us food!" was one newspaper's cry for the average European citizen. Another publication wrote that France, suffering from agricultural devastation after a 1946 drought, would plunge further into debt after being forced to import two or three million tons of wheat for one hundred dollars-per-ton.<sup>236</sup> Journalist Anne O'Hare McCormick even linked Europe's economic downslide with the growing appeal of communism. "The fight for survival is so primitive," argued McCormick, "the submergence of the middle class so general, the individual so helpless...it is harder to stand fast than to follow the easier path--toward a Communist dictatorship or reaction."<sup>237</sup> Another paper wrote, "The Ministry of

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<sup>234</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. 92, 1946, p. A3548.

<sup>235</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. 92, 1946, p. A1425.

<sup>236</sup> Jones, p. 83.

<sup>237</sup> Anne O'Hare McCormick, "Democracy in Europe Means Sacrifices Here," *New York Times*, 17 Feb., 1947, p. 18.

Foreign Affairs announced today that Russia had agreed to supply understocked wheat reserves of France...Announcement of the deal recalled the fact that the French Communist Party has been making political capital of Russian willingness to assist France."<sup>238</sup>

While the prospects of Greece and Turkey bowing to Soviet pressure troubled the US government, a French communist state would have been even more disturbing to US officials. If France became communist, the US would lose one of its closest allies to the Soviets. Perhaps more importantly, communism would have been alarmingly close to the British mainland. The US Ambassador in France, Jefferson Caffrey, warned the Truman Administration in April 1946 that the Soviets were trying to exploit economic stagnation in France for political gain. "The Communists are...giving tremendous publicity to Soviet wheat shipments to France and...spending hundreds of millions of francs on electoral propaganda. [Soviet Ambassador to France Alexander] Bogomolov is proceeding to Marseille to meet the first Russian wheat ship, and I am reliably informed that no money or effort is being spared to make this arrival a tremendous Communist propaganda show."<sup>239</sup> In July 1946, Rep. E.E. Cox argued that the roots of communism could be found in French history. Cox cited the twelfth-century organization *Conferie de la Paix* and dominant labor principles that emerged after the eighteenth century French Revolution as examples. "Communism thrives on misery," concluded Cox. "The most glaring and cruel exhibit in this respect is the present world famine...Hungry people can't think straight. Hence, they will be more ready to turn to the golden but specious promises of communism."<sup>240</sup> Rep. Walter Judd, in linking financial difficulty with the indecisive nature of the French electorate, cited a report written immediately after the elections of 1946: "The French voters have not yet defeated the Communist offensive--they have merely stopped it."<sup>241</sup> Rep. Daniel Reed of Connecticut urged the French to recall

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<sup>238</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. 92, 1946, p. A1311.

<sup>239</sup> *FRUS*, Vol. 5, 1946, p. 421.

<sup>240</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. 92, 1946, p. A3922.

<sup>241</sup> *Congressional Record*, Vol. 92, 1946, p. A1311.

sentiments F.D.R. expressed in 1941: "We have seen how the workers of France were betrayed by their so-called champions, the communists. For no matter what communist lips have to say their actions have proved that in their hearts they care nothing for the rights of labor."<sup>242</sup> The Senate was also concerned with the political situation in France. One Senate committee was quick to note that despite Soviet pleas for economic assistance, Stalin agreed "to sell France 500,000 tons of foodstuffs, and...the first shipment under that arrangement was announced with great gusto by the head of the communist party in France." The committee concluded that the US should stop providing foodstuffs to the USSR and that sending immediate aid to France was the only way to nullify the rise in communist support there.<sup>243</sup> Finally, in late 1946, Caffrey informed Byrnes that "the Communist[s] continue to attack the United States and are trying hard to convince the French people that we are pursuing [a] policy of economic enslavement of the world in general and France in particular."<sup>244</sup>

The situation in Italy mirrored that of France. In the fall of 1946 David Key, the US Charge in Italy, informed Byrnes that a lack of food had caused political turmoil and public disorder there.<sup>245</sup> Key also expressed concern over the resignation of the Minister of the Treasury, Epicarmo Corbino. Key saw Corbino as "one of the outstanding exponents of economic liberalism in Italy which to him means full development of private enterprises, economic freedom and political liberty." Key concluded that without a such a liberal economic voice in the Italian government, the Soviets would "keep the country in a state of disorder and confusion for political reasons."<sup>246</sup> John Hickerson, Deputy Director of the Office for European Affairs, requested shipments of wheat in December 1946 to increase the chances of democratic Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi's reelection bid.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>242</sup>*Congressional Record*, Vol. 92, 1946, p. A4123.

<sup>243</sup>*Congressional Record*, Vol. 92, 1946, p. 3486.

<sup>244</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 5, 1946, pp. 470-471.

<sup>245</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 5, 1946, p. 940.

<sup>246</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 5, 1946, pp. 931-932.

<sup>247</sup>*FRUS*, Vol. 5, 1946, p. 948.

In early 1947, Connecticut Rep. John Davis Lodge told Congress, "Not only are the Communists gaining strength [in Italy], but the majority of the divided Socialist Party...are helping them" overrun formerly democratic sectors of the country.<sup>248</sup> Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, also in early 1947, addressed the political volatility in Italy: "Ominous portents of the rise of communism are implicit in the resignation of Premier De Gasperi. It is time that we demonstrate a vigorous consistency and forthright leadership in the conduct of our foreign affairs."<sup>249</sup> As in France, the US government unanimously sought to extirpate communism in Italy.

Hence, by March 1947, the US government was ready to commit to a program of economic recovery to stop Soviet expansionism in Europe. William Clayton, the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, sent a classified memorandum on March 5 that enunciated the seriousness of Europe's financial situation. According to Clayton, the Soviet and American governments were vying for power in an open economic market. If the US did not establish an economic presence in Greece and Turkey, the communist parties of the Middle East, Northern Africa, France, and Italy would dominate those areas: "The United States must take world leadership and quickly, to avert world disaster...In every country in the Eastern Hemisphere and most of the countries of the Western Hemisphere Russia is boring from within...If Greece and then Turkey succumb, the whole Middle East will be lost. France may then capitulate. As France goes, all Western Europe and North Africa will go. These things must not happen." Financial assistance to these countries was the only solution Clayton foresaw.<sup>250</sup> Further, on March 12, 1947, President Truman made the idea of "containing" the Soviet Union official policy. In an address to Congress, Truman related the economic crisis in Greece and Turkey with the US

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<sup>248</sup>*Congressional Record*, Vol. 93, 1947, p. A1920.

<sup>249</sup>*Congressional Record*, Vol. 93, 1947, p. 5347.

<sup>250</sup>Ellen Clayton Garwood, *Will Clayton: A Short Biography*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), pp. 115-118.



government's responsibility to lead an international fight against communism. Truman argued,

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching in the West as well as to the East...The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want...The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world--and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation.<sup>251</sup>

The speech, later named the "Truman Doctrine," marked the first time the containment strategy was publicly advocated by a President. Although the idea behind the doctrine had been embedded in American foreign policy thinking since 1918, the situation in Europe in early 1947 propelled US officials to sponsor an intensification of the containment strategy.

The European Recovery Program (ERP), more commonly referred to as the Marshall Plan, was the US government's answer to Europe's economic crisis. On June 4, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall told a Harvard audience that economic aid was essential to upholding democratic governments in Europe. The speech had a catalytic effect on the State Department; committees were formed and countless proposals were drafted throughout the summer of 1947 so that the US government could define its economic policy in Western Europe in hopes of alleviating the threat of Soviet expansionism. The chief organization for this task, the Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC), put the finishing touches on the Marshall Plan in the fall of 1947. The CEEC concluded that \$17 billion in economic aid was needed to restructure the ailing economies of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and West Germany.<sup>252</sup> Members from all sectors of the US government supported the Marshall Plan. Under Secretary of State Acheson, who helped draft Marshall's Harvard

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<sup>251</sup> *Public Papers of the Presidents*, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 179-180.

<sup>252</sup> Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Statesman, 1945-1959*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 232-233.

speech, thought, "[H]uman beings and nations exist in narrow economic margins, but also human dignity, human freedom, and democratic institutions. It is one of the principle aims of our foreign policy today to use our economic and financial resources to widen these margins. It is necessary if we are to preserve our own freedom and our own democratic institutions."<sup>253</sup> The Policy Planning Staff, headed by Kennan, concluded in July 1947, the "principles of law, justice, and of restraint in the exercise of political power, already widely impugned and attacked, might be finally swept away" unless the American people make "material sacrifices...far exceeding the maximum implications of a program of aid to European reconstruction."<sup>254</sup> Allen Dulles, founder of the Committee for the Marshall Plan to Aid European Recovery, attempted to garner public support for the ERP when he wrote, "Today we face the decision as to whether...we now propose to leave Western Europe" unaided in the face of a Soviet threat. Dulles claimed that the Marshall Plan, although a tax burden on some US citizens, was essential to preserve American ideals abroad.<sup>255</sup> Wyoming Senator Joseph O'Mahoney argued, "The task before us is no easy one. It involves great risks--risks of inflation and risks of great drafts upon the commodities essential to our own future." Such economic risk, however, was well worth trying to stop communist expansionism: "The alternative is so dreadful that we must assume the risk if we have any determination to perpetuate American ideals of living which have been cherished on this continent from the beginning."<sup>256</sup> Truman saw the Marshall Plan as "proof that free men can effectively join together to defend their free institutions against totalitarian pressures."<sup>257</sup> Even Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of Britain, called the plan "a turning point in the history of the world."<sup>258</sup> The Marshall Plan represented a culmination of American desires to contain communism through economic aid

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<sup>253</sup>Acheson, p. 229.

<sup>254</sup>Thomas Etzold, ed., et al., *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 108-109.

<sup>255</sup>Allen W. Dulles, *The Marshall Plan*, (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993), pp. 1-3.

<sup>256</sup>*Congressional Record*, Vol. 93, 1947, p. A4243.

<sup>257</sup>Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 119.

<sup>258</sup>Clifford, p. 145.

that began in 1918. More importantly, because of its grand scope, the Marshall Plan proved that the paradigm of containing the Soviets that began after the Bolshevik Revolution would continue into the second half of the twentieth century.

## CONCLUSION

US officials conveyed a desire to contain Soviet influence in 1918 that endured for the next three decades. President Wilson had attempted to thwart the spread of Bolshevism by providing military and economic aid to anti-communist regimes in Eastern Europe and Russia. The initial concern over Soviet practices and beliefs were crystallized through an abundance of primary accounts by US officials stationed in Eastern Europe and Russia. Concern over the spread of Bolshevism was further exacerbated when American communists adhered to the Kremlin's ideology. The US government, on both the state and federal level, in turn took drastic measures to curb Soviet influence on the American mainland. The Red Scare of 1919 aggravated US animosities toward Soviet expansionism as the federal government deported and arrested thousands of American immigrants for suspected communist affiliation. Moreover, the fact that issues surrounding the danger of Soviet expansionism pervaded intellectual analyses throughout the 1920's and 1930's reinforced the political consensus that Bolshevism, for a number of reasons, had to be stopped.

Wilson's successors continued the trend of containing the Soviet Union. President Roosevelt, for instance, only opened relations with the USSR after a guarantee that the Soviets would not attempt to extend communist propaganda to the Western Hemisphere. Even after Soviet-American relations were established in 1932, cables from American officials in Europe expressed concern over the Soviets' imperialistic aims, and urged the federal government to take the necessary steps to block communist expansionism. Despite the fact that the Soviets and Americans were allies during World War II, the US government's desire to block Soviet expansionism burned fiercely. The US government's

concern over the Soviet government's occupation of Poland, Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and the Baltics was accentuated when Stalin refused to provide any formal guarantees of a post-war evacuation of those territories. Tensions between the nations were further elevated when the US failed to launch a second front against Hitler's armies in Europe. The lack of a second front forestalled the Nazis' surrender, and consequently prevented the Soviets from firmly establishing a political presence in Central and Western Europe. Finally, a US advisory presence in Iran during World War II, although a tactic to defeat the Axis powers, was also an attempt to prevent the Soviets from establishing a political foothold there. Throughout the war, the US government, on a number of different occasions, accelerated America's containment policy and ensured that an end to the detestation toward Soviet expansionism was nowhere in sight.

The containment principle continued to resonate in the post-war epoch, though with a new sense of urgency. Stalin's demand for a bloc of pro-Soviet states in Eastern Europe spawned an amplified fear of communist expansionism within the State Department. The US government in turn sought to prevent the Soviet Union from ensconcing itself in Germany and the Near East. The US government's motivation to severely punish Germany for its war-time actions was overshadowed by a greater desire to impede the spread of communism in economically deprived regions. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau's 1944 plan to convert Germany into a pastoral nation was harshly criticized by State Department officials who feared that a lack of industrial power would engender an influx of Soviet influence and support. In 1945, the US government proposed several plans that called for an Allied presence in Germany to oversee the political and economic restructuring of different regions. These proposals failed to come to fruition and the US government, in response to the Soviet presence in East Germany, established a democratic stronghold in West Germany that served as an emblem of the American desire to confront communism in the post-war era.

The containment strategy was again enforced in Iran in 1946. Reports from US officials told of the Soviet government's desire to politically entrench itself in Iran. The Kremlin had firm control over Iran's Tudeh Communist Party and supplied the newly formed communist government in Azerbaijan with military support and political advice. Moreover, American suspicions of the Kremlin's intentions were exacerbated when Soviet troops ignored a 1942 agreement to evacuate Iran by March 2, 1946. To combat Soviet actions in Azerbaijan, the US government, during UN negotiations, rejected Soviet demands for reparations and economic aid until Stalin agreed to withdraw Russian forces from Iran. The Soviets ultimately pulled out of Iran, an anti-communist regime was firmly established, and Azerbaijan was taken under the control of the federal government. The US government's actions in Iran proved that in the post-war era UN diplomacy was an effective vehicle for curbing Soviet expansionism.

Sentiments within the United States also reflected an intensified desire to contain the Soviet government. The media embarked on a radical departure from its war-time praise of Stalin and the Soviet government when it warned the American public of the rising threat of communist expansionism. The growing fear of Soviet imperialism within the American people coincided with the federal government's tough stance against communism. When some within the Truman Administration criticized containment ideology, such as Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace in September 1946, they were replaced by supporters of the strategy. Virtually all sectors of the country recognized that there emerged from World War II a refined Soviet imperialistic machine and hence rallied behind the old notion that communism had to be contained.

The prospect of Western and Southern Europe falling under the Soviet domain most concerned US officials in the years immediately after World War II. The economic devastation that followed the war left many European nations susceptible to political turmoil. Members of Congress, the State Department, and the Truman Administration all supported the idea of sending billions of dollars in aid to stave off the communist surge in

Western and Southern Europe. Further, the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine turned the containment strategies that began with the Wilson Administration into official policy. More importantly, the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, while regarded as pioneering Cold War policies, in reality reinforced the credibility and legitimacy of those US officials who embraced similar containment strategies in the years before 1947. Containment, then, was not solely result of Kennan's influence, but rather a concept inherited from past US officials.

The historians who consider Kennan's "Long Telegram" groundbreaking tend to overlook the persistent actions and beliefs of American officials since 1918. Containment was always the fulcrum of the US government's policy toward the Soviet Union. Kennan's telegram, therefore, merely reiterated a theme that had prevailed in US politics for twenty-eight years. Cold War historians should therefore focus more on the rich continuities surrounding the containment principle rather than viewing the "Long Telegram" as a new dawn in American history. Maybe then Kennan will be given credit for what he really deserves: forcefully articulating an amalgamation of beliefs and practices that had dominated US politics since 1918.

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