



OXFORD JOURNALS  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS



---

The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-48

Author(s): Melvyn P. Leffler

Source: *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Apr., 1984), pp. 346-381

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Historical Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1862556>

Accessed: 26-11-2017 08:31 UTC

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Oxford University Press, American Historical Association* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The American Historical Review*

The American Conception of National Security  
and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945–48

---

MELVYN P. LEFFLER

IN AN INTERVIEW with Henry Kissinger in 1978 on “The Lessons of the Past,” Walter Laqueur observed that during World War II “few if any people thought . . . of the structure of peace that would follow the war except perhaps in the most general terms of friendship, mutual trust, and the other noble sentiments mentioned in wartime programmatic speeches about the United Nations and related topics.” Kissinger concurred, noting that no statesman, except perhaps Winston Churchill, “gave any attention to what would happen after the war.” Americans, Kissinger stressed, “were determined that we were going to base the postwar period on good faith and getting along with everybody.”<sup>1</sup>

That two such astute and knowledgeable observers of international politics were so uninformed about American planning at the end of the Second World War is testimony to the enduring mythology of American idealism and innocence in the world of Realpolitik. It also reflects the state of scholarship on the interrelated areas of strategy, economy, and diplomacy. Despite the publication of several excellent overviews of the origins of the Cold War,<sup>2</sup> despite the outpouring of incisive monographs on American foreign policy in many areas of the world,<sup>3</sup> and despite

Research on this article was made possible by generous support from the Woodrow Wilson International Center, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Harry S. Truman Institute, and the Vanderbilt University Research Council. The author wishes to express his gratitude for the incisive comments and constructive criticism of Samuel Walker, Michael Hogan, Walter LaFeber, Thomas G. Paterson, Charles Eagles, Cecilia Stiles, Eduard Mark, Robert Pollard, Rajon Menon, Ernest May, and Andrew Goodpaster. Special thanks go to David Rosenberg for his unceasing efforts to declassify documents pertaining to atomic strategy.

<sup>1</sup> Kissinger, *For the Record: Selected Statements, 1977–1980* (Boston, 1980), 123–24.

<sup>2</sup> For recent overviews of the origins of the Cold War, which seek to go beyond the heated traditionalist-revisionist controversies of the 1960s and early 1970s, see, for example, John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, 1972); Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston, 1978); Thomas G. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making of the Cold War* (New York, 1979); and Roy Douglas, *From War to Cold War, 1942–48* (New York, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> For some of the most important and most recent regional and bilateral studies, see, for example, Bruce Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, 1980); Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece* (New York, 1982); Aaron Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939–1949* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1980); Michael B. Stoff, *Oil, War, and American Security: The Search for a National Policy on Foreign Oil, 1941–47* (New Haven, 1980); Timothy Ireland, *Creating the Entangling Alliance: The Origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Westport,

some first-rate studies on the evolution of strategic thinking and the defense establishment,<sup>4</sup> no comprehensive account yet exists of how American defense officials defined national security interests in the aftermath of World War II. Until recently, the absence of such a study was understandable, for scholars had limited access to records pertaining to national security, strategic thinking, and war planning. But in recent years documents relating to the early years of the Cold War have been declassified in massive numbers.<sup>5</sup>

---

Conn., 1981); William W. Stueck, Jr., *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1981); Charles M. Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945–50* (Kent, Ohio, 1981); Dorothy Borg and Waldo Heinrichs, eds., *Uncertain Years: Chinese-American Relations, 1947–50* (New York, 1980); Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1981); Robert M. Blum, *Drawing the Line: The Origin of the American Containment Policy in East Asia* (New York, 1982); Russell D. Buhite, *Soviet-American Relations in Asia, 1945–1954* (Norman, Okla., 1981); Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–47* (Princeton, 1982); Geir Lundestad, *America, Scandinavia, and the Cold War, 1945–49* (New York, 1980); Kenneth Ray Bain, *March to Zion: United States Foreign Policy and the Founding of Israel* (College Station, Texas, 1979); Evan M. Wilson, *Decision on Palestine: How the U.S. Came to Recognize Israel* (Stanford, 1979); Robert M. Hathaway, *Ambiguous Partnership: Britain and America, 1944–47* (New York, 1981); Terry H. Anderson, *The United States, Great Britain, and the Cold War, 1944–47* (Columbia, Mo., 1981); Eduard Mark, "American Policy toward Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–46: An Alternative Interpretation," *Journal of American History* [hereafter, *JAH*], 68 (1981–82): 313–36; Michael Schaller, "Securing the Great Crescent: Occupied Japan and the Origins of Containment in Southeast Asia," *ibid.*, 69 (1982–83): 392–414; Scott Jackson, "Prologue to the Marshall Plan," *ibid.*, 65 (1978–79): 1043–68; and Michael J. Hogan, "The Search for a 'Creative Peace': The United States, European Unity, and the Origins of the Marshall Plan," *Diplomatic History*, 6 (1982): 267–85.

<sup>4</sup> For recent works on strategy, the national military establishment, and the emergence of the national security bureaucracy, see, for example, Richard Haynes, *The Awesome Power: Harry S. Truman as Commander in Chief* (Baton Rouge, La., 1973); Alfred D. Sander, "Truman and the National Security Council, 1945–1947," *JAH*, 59 (1972–73): 369–88; Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941–45* (New Haven, 1977); Brian L. Villa, "The U.S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Declaration," *JAH*, 63 (1976–77): 66–92; James F. Schnaebel, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, volume 1: 1945–1947 (Wilmington, Del., 1979); Kenneth W. Condit, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, volume 2: 1947–49 (Wilmington, Del., 1979); Gregg Herken, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb and the Cold War, 1945–1950* (New York, 1980); David Alan Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," *JAH*, 66 (1979–80): 62–87; Harry R. Borowski, *A Hollow Threat: Strategic Air Power and Containment before Korea* (Westport, Conn., 1982); Mark Stoler, "From Continentalism to Globalism: General Stanley D. Embick, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, and the Military View of American National Policy during the Second World War," *Diplomatic History*, 6 (1982): 303–21; Walter S. Poole, "From Conciliation to Containment: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Coming of the Cold War," *Military Affairs*, 42 (1978): 12–16; Thomas H. Etzold, "The Far East in American Strategy, 1948–1951," in Etzold, ed., *Aspects of Sino-American Relations since 1784* (New York, 1978), 102–26; Paolo E. Coletta, *The United States Navy and Defense Unification, 1947–1953* (East Brunswick, N.J., 1981); Douglas Kinnard, *The Secretary of Defense* (Lexington, Ky., 1980); Anna K. Nelson, "National Security I: Inventing a Process, 1945–1960," in Hugh Hecko and Lester M. Salamon, eds., *The Illusion of Presidential Government* (Boulder, Col., 1981), 229–45; Larry D. O'Brien, "National Security and the New Warfare: Defense Policy, War Planning, and Nuclear Weapons, 1945–50" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1981); John T. Greenwood, "The Emergence of the Post-War Strategic Air Force, 1945–1955," paper delivered at the Eighth Military History Symposium, held at the United States Air Force Academy in October 1978; and Robert F. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: A History of Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force, 1907–1964* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., 1971).

<sup>5</sup> For the records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, see Record Group 218, National Archives, Washington (hereafter, RG 218); for the records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, see Record Group 330, National Archives, Washington (hereafter, RG 330); and, for the records of the National Security Council, see Record Group 273, Judicial, Fiscal, and Social Branch, National Archives, Washington. (I used this special collection of declassified National Security Council documents prior to their receiving a record group number within the Judicial, Fiscal, and Social Branch of the National Archives.) There are important National Security Council materials in the Harry S. Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence Missouri (hereafter, HTL, HSTP, PSF), boxes 191–208. For assessments by the CIA, including those prepared for meetings of the National Security Council (NSC), especially see *ibid.*, boxes 249–60, 203–07. For a helpful guide to War and Army department records in the National Archives, see Louis Galambos, ed.,

This documentation now makes it possible to analyze in greater depth the perceptions, apprehensions, and objectives of those defense officials most concerned with defining and defending the nation's security and strategic interests.<sup>6</sup> This essay seeks neither to explain the process of decision making on any particular issue nor to dissect the domestic political considerations and fiscal constraints that narrowed the options available to policy makers. Furthermore, it does not pretend to discern the motivations and objectives of the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup> Rather, the goal here is to elucidate the fundamental strategic and economic considerations that shaped the definition of American national security interests in the postwar world. Several of these considerations—especially as they related to overseas bases, air transit rights, and a strategic sphere of influence in Latin America—initially were the logical result of technological developments and geostrategic experiences rather than directly related to postwar Soviet behavior.<sup>8</sup> But American defense officials

---

*The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 9 vols. (Baltimore, 1970–78), 9: 2262–70. Of greatest utility in studying the views of civilian and military planners in the Army and War Department are Record Group 165, Records of the Operations Division (OPD), and Records of American-British Conversations (ABC); Record Group 319, Records of the Plans and Operations Division (P&O); Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Robert P. Patterson Papers (RPPP), safe file and general decimal file, and Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, Howard C. Peterson Papers (HCPP), classified decimal file; and Record Group 335, Records of the Under-Secretary of the Army, Draper/Voorhees files, 1947–50. The records of the navy's Strategic Plans Division (SPD) and the Politico-Military Division (PMD) are divided into many subseries; helpful indexes are available at the Naval Historical Center (NHC). The center also contains, among many other collections, the records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO, double zero files) as well as the manuscript collections of many influential naval officers, including Chester Nimitz, Forrest Sherman, Louis Denfeld, and Arthur Radford. For air force records, I tried—with only moderate success—to use the following materials at the National Archives: Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Plans, Policies, and Agreements, 1943–47; Records of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Establishment of Air Fields and Air Bases, 1940–45; and Incoming and Outgoing Cablegrams, 1942–47; and Record Group 18, Records of the Office of the Chief of Air Staff, Headquarters Army Air Forces: Office of the Air Adjutant General, confidential and secret decimal correspondence file, 1945–48. For the records of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and its successor, the State-Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee, see Record Group 353, National Archives, Washington, and, for the important records of the Committee of Three (meetings of the secretaries of state, war, and navy), see Record Group 107, RPPP, safe file.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term “defense officials” broadly in this essay to include civilian appointees and military officers in the departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, in the office of the secretary of defense, in the armed services, in the intelligence agencies, and on the staff of the National Security Council. While purposefully avoiding a systematic analysis of career diplomats in the Department of State, who have received much attention elsewhere, the conclusions I draw here are based on a consideration of the views of high-ranking officials in the State Department, including James F. Byrnes, Dean Acheson, George C. Marshall, and Robert Lovett. For an excellent analysis of the views of career diplomats, see Hugh DeSantis, *The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933–1947* (Chicago, 1980). Also see, for example, Robert L. Messer, “Paths Not Taken: The United States Department of State and Alternatives to Containment, 1945–1946,” *Diplomatic History*, 1 (1977): 297–319; and W. W. Rostow, *The Division of Europe after World War II: 1946* (Austin, Texas, 1981). Many of the references in note 3 deal extensively with the views of State Department officials; see pages 346–47, above.

<sup>7</sup> For recent studies of Soviet policy during this era, see, for example, Adam Ulam, *The Rivals: America and Russia since World War II* (New York, 1971), 3–151, and *Stalin: The Man and His Era* (New York, 1973), 604–99; William Zimmerman, “Choices in the Postwar World, 1: Containment and the Soviet Union,” in Charles Gati, ed., *Caging the Bear: Containment and the Cold War* (Indianapolis, 1974), 85–108; Vojtech Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War* (New York, 1979); William O. McCagg, *Stalin Embattled, 1943–1948* (Detroit, 1978); William Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy: From Entente to Detente to Cold War* (New York, 1982); Werner G. Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Policies: The Fall of Zhadanov and the Defeat of Moderation* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982); and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy since World War II: Imperial and Global* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 2–70.

<sup>8</sup> Any assessment of postwar national security policy must also take note of the role of the atomic bomb in U.S. strategy and diplomacy. But, since nuclear weapons have received extensive attention elsewhere, I deal with this issue rather briefly; see pages 371–72, below. For excellent work on the atomic bomb, see, for

also considered the preservation of a favorable balance of power in Eurasia as fundamental to U.S. national security. This objective impelled defense analysts and intelligence officers to appraise and reappraise the intentions and capabilities of the Soviet Union. Rather modest estimates of the Soviets' ability to wage war against the United States generated the widespread assumption that the Soviets would refrain from military aggression and seek to avoid war. Nevertheless, American defense officials remained greatly preoccupied with the geopolitical balance of power in Europe and Asia, because that balance seemed endangered by communist exploitation of postwar economic dislocation and social and political unrest. Indeed, American assessments of the Soviet threat were less a consequence of expanding Soviet military capabilities and of Soviet diplomatic demands than a result of growing apprehension about the vulnerability of American strategic and economic interests in a world of unprecedented turmoil and upheaval. Viewed from this perspective, the Cold War assumed many of its most enduring characteristics during 1947–48, when American officials sought to cope with an array of challenges by implementing their own concepts of national security.

AMERICAN OFFICIALS FIRST BEGAN to think seriously about the nation's postwar security during 1943–44. Military planners devised elaborate plans for an overseas base system. Many of these plans explicitly contemplated the breakdown of the wartime coalition. But, even when strategic planners postulated good postwar relations among the Allies, their plans called for an extensive system of bases. These bases were defined as the nation's strategic frontier. Beyond this frontier the United States would be able to use force to counter any threats or frustrate any overt acts of aggression. Within the strategic frontier, American military predominance had to remain inviolate. Although plans for an overseas base system went through many revisions, they always presupposed American hegemony over the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. These plans received President Franklin D. Roosevelt's endorsement in early 1944. After his death, army and navy planners presented their views to President Harry S. Truman, and Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall discussed them extensively with Secretary of State James C. Byrnes.<sup>9</sup>

---

example, Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York, 1973); Barton J. Bernstein, "The Quest for Security: American Foreign Policy and International Control of Atomic Energy, 1942–1946," *JAH*, 60 (1973–74): 1003–44; Herken, *The Winning Weapon*; and Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision." For older, but still very important accounts, see P. M. S. Blackett, *Fear, War, and the Bomb* (New York, 1949); Richard G. Hewlett and Oscar G. Anderson, *The New World: A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, 1939–1946* (University Park, Pa., 1962); Richard G. Hewlett and Francis Duncan, *Atomic Shield: A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, 1947–52* (University Park, Pa., 1969); Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York, 1965); and Herbert Feis, *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* (Princeton, 1966).

<sup>9</sup> Plans for America's overseas base system may be found in RG 218, Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) series 360 (12-9-42): Joint Strategic Survey Committee [hereafter, JSSC], "Air Routes across the Pacific and Air Facilities for International Police Force," March 15, 1943, JSSC 9/1; Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], "United States Military Requirements for Air Bases, Facilities, and Operating Rights in Foreign Territories," November 2, 1943, JCS 570/2; Joint War Plans Committee [hereafter, JWPC], "Overall Examination of the United States Requirements for Military Bases," August 25, 1943, JWPC 361/4; and JWPC, "Overall Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases," September 13, 1945, JWPC 361/5 (revised). For Roosevelt's endorsement, see Roosevelt to the Department of State, January 7, 1944, *ibid.*, JWPC 361/5; for civilian-military

Two strategic considerations influenced the development of an overseas base system. The first was the need for defense in depth. Since attacks against the United States could only emanate from Europe and Asia, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded as early as November 1943 that the United States must encircle the Western Hemisphere with a defensive ring of outlying bases. In the Pacific this ring had to include the Aleutians, the Philippines, Okinawa, and the former Japanese mandates. Recognizing the magnitude of this strategic frontier, Admiral William E. Leahy, chief of staff to the president, explained to Truman that the joint chiefs were not thinking of the immediate future when, admittedly, no prospective naval power could challenge American predominance in the Pacific. Instead, they were contemplating the long term, when the United States might require wartime access to the resources of southeast Asia as well as “a firm line of communications from the West Coast to the Asiatic mainland, plus denial of this line in time of war to any potential enemy.”<sup>10</sup> In the Atlantic, strategic planners maintained that their minimum requirements included a West African zone, with primary bases in the Azores or Canary Islands. Leahy went even further, insisting on primary bases in West Africa itself—for example, at Dakar or Casablanca. The object of these defensive bases was to enable the United States to possess complete control of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and keep hostile powers far from American territory.<sup>11</sup>

Defense in depth was especially important in light of the Pearl Harbor experience, the advance of technology, and the development of the atomic bomb. According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Experience in the recent war demonstrated conclusively that the defense of a nation, if it is to be effective, must begin beyond its frontiers. The advent of the atomic bomb reemphasizes this requirement. The farther away from our own vital areas we can hold our enemy through the possession of advanced bases . . . , the greater are our chances of surviving successfully an attack by atomic weapons and of destroying the enemy which employs them against us.” Believing that atomic weapons would increase the incentive to aggression by enhancing the advantage of surprise, military planners never ceased to extol the utility of forward bases from which American aircraft could seek to intercept attacks against the United States.<sup>12</sup>

---

discussion of base requirements following the president's death, see OPD, “Extract of Conversation—Adm. Duncan and Gen. Lincoln,” June 18, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret); OPD, Memorandum for the Record, June 30, 1945, *ibid.*; General George A. Lincoln, “Memorandum concerning U.S. Post-War Pacific Bases,” June 30, 1945, *ibid.*; and George C. Marshall to James F. Byrnes, July 23, 1945, *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> For Leahy's explanation, see JCS, “Strategic Areas and Trusteeships in the Pacific,” October 10, 18, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42), JCS 1619/15, 19; JCS, “United States Military Requirements for Air Bases,” November 2, 1943; JCS, “Overall Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases and Base Rights,” October 25, 1945, *ibid.*, JCS 570/40.

<sup>11</sup> JCS, “United States Military Requirements for Air Bases,” November 2, 1943; JCS, Minutes of the 71st meeting, March 30, 1943, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42); Leahy, Memorandum for the President, November 15, 1943, *ibid.*; Nimitz, Memorandum, October 16, 1946, *ibid.*, JCS 1619/16; and Joint Planning Staff [hereafter, JPS], “Basis for the Formulation of a Post-War Military Policy,” August 20, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 (5-13-45), JPS 633/6.

<sup>12</sup> JCS, “Statement of Effect of Atomic Weapons on National Security and Military Organization,” March 29, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 471.6 Atom (8-17-45), JCS 477/10. Also see JCS, “Guidance as to the Military Implications of a United Nations Commission on Atomic Energy,” January 12, 1946, *ibid.*, JCS 1567/26; and JCS, “Over-All Effect of Atomic Bomb on Warfare and Military Organization,” October 30, 1945, *ibid.*, JCS 1477/1.

The second strategic consideration that influenced the plan for a comprehensive overseas base system was the need to project American power quickly and effectively against any potential adversary. In conducting an overall examination of requirements for base rights in September 1945, the Joint War Plans Committee stressed that World War II demonstrated the futility of a strategy of static defense. The United States had to be able to take "timely" offensive action against the adversary's capacity and will to wage war. New weapons demanded that advance bases be established in "areas well removed from the United States, so as to project our operations, with new weapons or otherwise, nearer the enemy." Scientists, like Vannevar Bush, argued that, "regardless of the potentialities of these new weapons [atomic energy and guided missiles], they should not influence the number, location, or extent of strategic bases now considered essential." The basic strategic concept underlying all American war plans called for an air offensive against a prospective enemy from overseas bases. Delays in the development of the B-36, the first intercontinental bomber, only accentuated the need for these bases.<sup>13</sup>

In October 1945 the civilian leaders of the War and Navy departments carefully reviewed the emerging strategic concepts and base requirements of the military planners. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal and Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson discussed them with Admiral Leahy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of State Byrnes. The civilian secretaries fully endorsed the concept of a far-flung system of bases in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans that would enhance the offensive capabilities of the United States.<sup>14</sup> Having expended so much blood and effort capturing Japanese-held islands, defense officials, like Forrestal, naturally wished to devise a base system in the Pacific to facilitate the projection of American influence and power. The Philippines were the key to southeast Asia, Okinawa to the Yellow Sea, the Sea of Japan, and the industrial heartland of northeast Asia. From these bases on America's "strategic frontier," the United States could preserve its access to vital raw materials in Asia, deny these resources to a prospective enemy, help preserve peace and stability in troubled areas, safeguard critical sea lanes, and, if necessary, conduct an air offensive against the industrial infrastructure of any Asiatic power, including the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For the emphasis on "timely" action, see JWPC, "Overall Examination of Requirements for Military Bases" (revised), September 13, 1946; for the need for advance bases, see JCS, "Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces," September 19, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 (5-13-45), JCS 1518; for Bush's view, see JWPC, "Effect of Foreseeable New Developments and Counter-Measures on a Post-War Strategic Concept and Plan," August 22, 1945, *ibid.*, JWPC 394/1/M. Also see, for the evolution of strategic war plans, many of the materials in RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46).

<sup>14</sup> For the discussions and conclusions of civilian officials, see Leahy to Patterson and Forrestal, October 9, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret); Robert Lovett to Chief of Staff, October 12, 1945, *ibid.*; Patterson to the Secretary of Navy, October 17, 1945, *ibid.*; and Forrestal to Byrnes, October 4, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42). For Forrestal's views, also see Forrestal to James K. Vardaman, September 14, 1945, Mudd Library, Princeton University, James Forrestal Papers [hereafter ML, JFP], box 100; Forrestal to Byrnes, October 4, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42); and Vincent Davis, *Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943-1946* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1962), 157-206, 259-66.

<sup>15</sup> For the Philippines, see, for example, Strategy Section, OPD, "Post-War Base Requirements in the Philippines," April 23, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret), and "Report on the Military Base Requirements in the Philippines," October 20, 1945, *ibid.* For Okinawa, see JCS, "Disposition of the Ryukyu Islands," September 10, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42), JCS 1619/9; JCS, "Review of United States Control Needed over the Japanese Islands," August 26, 1947, *ibid.*, JCS 1619/24; and Lincoln, "Memorandum concerning U.S. Post-War Pacific Bases," June 30, 1945.

Control of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through overseas bases was considered indispensable to the nation's security regardless of what might happen to the wartime coalition. So was control over polar air routes. Admiral Leahy criticized a Joint Strategic Survey Committee report of early 1943 that omitted Iceland and Greenland as primary base requirements. When General S. D. Embick, the senior member of that committee, continued to question the desirability of a base in Iceland, lest it antagonize the Russians, he was overruled by Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy. McCloy charged that Embick had "a rather restricted concept of what is necessary for national defense." The first postwar base system approved by both the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the civilian secretaries in October 1945 included Iceland as a primary base area. The Joint War Plans Committee explained that American bases must control the air in the Arctic, prevent the establishment of enemy military facilities there, and support America's own striking forces. Once Soviet-American relations began to deteriorate, Greenland also was designated as a primary base for American heavy bombers and fighters because of its close proximity to the industrial heartland of the potential enemy. As the United States sought rights for bases along the Polar route in 1946 and 1947, moreover, American defense officials also hoped to thwart Soviet efforts to acquire similar rights at Spitzbergen and Bear Island.<sup>16</sup>

In the immediate postwar years American ambitions for an elaborate base system encountered many problems. Budgetary constraints compelled military planners to drop plans for many secondary and subsidiary bases, particularly in the South Pacific and Caribbean. These sacrifices merely increased the importance of those bases that lay closer to a potential adversary. By early 1948, the joint chiefs were willing to forego base rights in such places as Surinam, Curacao-Aruba, Cayenne, Nounea, and Vivi-Levu if "joint" or "participating" rights could be acquired or preserved in Karachi, Tripoli, Algiers, Casablanca, Dharan, and Monrovia. Budgetary constraints, then, limited the depth of the base system but not the breadth of American ambitions.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the governments of Panama, Iceland, Denmark, Portugal, France, and Saudi Arabia often rejected or abolished the exclusive rights the United States wanted and sometimes limited the number of American personnel on such bases. Washington, therefore, negotiated a variety of arrangements to meet the objections of host governments. By early 1948, for example, the base in Iceland was operated by a civilian company under contract to the United

<sup>16</sup> For Leahy's views, see JCS, Minutes of the 71st meeting, March 30, 1943. For the differences between Embick and McCloy, see Embick to John Hickerson, June 8, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret); and Harrison A. Gerhardt, Memorandum for General Hull, June 16, 1945, *ibid.* For the utility of Iceland and Greenland as bases, see JWPC, "Attributes of United States Overseas Bases," November 2, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42), JWPC 361/10; NSC, "Report by the NSC on Base Rights in Greenland, Iceland, and the Azores," November 25, 1947, *ibid.*, NSC 2/1; and Albert C. Wedemeyer to Secretary of Defense, March 6, 1948, RG 330, box 19, CD 6-1-44 (decimal correspondence file). And, for the dilemma posed by prospective Soviet demands for similar base rights at Spitzbergen, see, for example, JCS, "Foreign Policy of the United States," February 10, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 US (12-21-45), JCS 1519/2; Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [hereafter, *FRUS*], 1947, 8 vols. (Washington, 1971-73), 1: 708-12, 766-70, and 3: 657-87, 1003-18; and Lundestad, *America, Scandinavia, and the Cold War*, 63-76.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Report of the Director, Joint Staff, March 18, 1948, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42), Joint Strategic Plans Group [hereafter JSPG] 503/1. For the special emphasis on North African bases, see, for example, Forrestal to Truman, January 6, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 156. And, for further evidence regarding plans for the development of the base system in 1947-48, see notes 70-71, below.

States Air Force; in the Azores, the base was manned by a detachment of Portuguese military personnel operating under the Portuguese flag, but an air force detachment serviced the American aircraft using the base. In Port Lyautey, the base was under the command of the French navy, but under a secret agreement an American naval team took care of American aircraft on the base. In Saudi Arabia, the Dharan air strip was cared for by 300 U.S. personnel and was capable of handling B-29s. Because these arrangements were not altogether satisfactory, in mid-1948 Secretary of Defense Forrestal and Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall advocated using American economic and military assistance as levers to acquire more permanent and comprehensive base rights, particularly in Greenland and North Africa.<sup>18</sup>

Less well known than the American effort to establish a base system, but integral to the policymakers' conception of national security, was the attempt to secure military air transit and landing rights. Military planners wanted such rights at critical locations not only in the Western Hemisphere but also in North Africa, the Middle East, India, and southeast Asia. To this end they delineated a route from Casablanca through Algiers, Tripoli, Cairo, Dharan, Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, and Saigon to Manila.<sup>19</sup> In closing out the African–Middle East theater at the conclusion of the war, General H. W. Aurand, under explicit instructions from the secretary of war, made preparations for permanent rights at seven airfields in North Africa and Saudi Arabia.<sup>20</sup> According to a study by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Military air transit rights for the United States along the North African–Indian route were most desirable in order to provide access to and familiarity with bases from which offensive and defensive action might be conducted in the event of a major war, and to provide an alternate route to China and to United States Far Eastern bases." In other words, such rights would permit the rapid augmentation of American bases in wartime as well as the rapid movement of American air units from the eastern to the western flank of the U.S. base system. In order to maintain these airfields in a state of readiness, the United States would have to rely on private airlines, which had to be persuaded to locate their operations in areas designated essential to military air transit rights. In this way, airports "in being" outside the formal American base system would be available for military operations in times of crisis and war. Assistant Secretary McCloy informed the State

<sup>18</sup> For the situation in Iceland, the Azores, and Port Lyautey, see Edmond T. Wooldridge to the General Board of the Navy, April 30, 1948, NHC, Records of the General Board 425 (ser. 315); for Saudi Arabia, see G. R. Cooper *et al.*, "Joint Report on Pertinent Observations during Recent Trip to the Mediterranean–Middle East Area," September 25, 1948, NHC, SPD, central files, 1948, A8; for more information on the Dharan base, also see *FRUS, 1948*, 5: 209–63; James L. Gormly, "Keeping the Door Open in Saudi Arabia: The U.S. and the Dharan Airfield, 1945–46," *Diplomatic History*, 4 (1980): 189–206; and, for aspirations to secure more permanent and comprehensive base rights, see Royall to Forrestal, July 28, 1948, RG 330, box 119, CD 27-1-21; and Forrestal to Royall, August 7, 1948, *ibid.* The State Department's concern with base rights in Iceland and Greenland was evident throughout the exploratory talks on a security pact; see *FRUS, 1948*, 3: 169–351. For North Africa, also see *ibid.*, 682–715.

<sup>19</sup> JCS, "Over-All Examination of United States Requirements for Military Bases and Rights," September 27, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (12-9-42), JCS 570/34; JPS, "Over-All Examination of Requirements for Transit Air Bases in Foreign Countries," January 8, 1946, *ibid.*, JPS 781; and JCS, "Over-All Examination of Requirements for Transit Air Bases and Air Base Rights in Foreign Countries," June 30, 1946, *ibid.*, JCS 570/52.

<sup>20</sup> Aurand to Patterson, February 7, 1946, Dwight David Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas [hereafter, DDEL], H. S. Aurand Papers, box 28; Secretary of War to Secretary of State, March 17, 1946, *ibid.*

Department at the beginning of 1945 that a “strong United States air transport system, international in scope and readily adapted to military use, is vital to our air power and future national security.” Even earlier, the joint chiefs had agreed not to include South American air bases in their strategic plans so long as it was understood that commercial fields in that region would be developed with a view to subsequent military use.<sup>21</sup>

In Latin America, American requirements for effective national security went far beyond air transit rights. In a report written in January 1945 at Assistant Secretary McCloy’s behest, the War Department urged American collaboration with Latin American armed forces to insure the defense of the Panama Canal and the Western Hemisphere. Six areas within Latin America were considered of special significance either for strategic reasons or for their raw materials: the Panama Canal and approaches within one thousand miles; the Straits of Magellan; northeast Brazil; Mexico; the river Plate estuary and approaches within five hundred miles; and Mollendo, Peru-Antofagusta, and Chile. These areas were so “important,” Secretary of War Patterson explained to Secretary of State Marshall in early 1947, “that the threat of attack on any of them would force the United States to come to their defense, even though it were not certain that attack on the United States itself would follow.” The resources of these areas were essential to the United States, because “it is imperative that our war potential be enhanced. . . during any national emergency.”<sup>22</sup>

While paying lip service to the United Nations and worrying about the impact of regional agreements in the Western Hemisphere on Soviet actions and American influence in Europe, the Joint Chiefs of Staff insisted that in practice non-American forces had to be kept out of the Western Hemisphere and the Monroe Doctrine had to be kept inviolate. “The Western Hemisphere is a distinct military entity, the integrity of which is a fundamental postulate of our security in the event of another world war.”<sup>23</sup> Developments in aviation, rockets, guided missiles, and atomic energy had made “the solidarity of the Hemisphere and its united support of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine” more important than before. Patterson told Marshall that effective implementation of the Monroe Doctrine now meant “that we not only refuse to tolerate foreign colonization, control, or the extension of a foreign political system to our hemisphere, but we take alarm from the appearance on the continent of foreign ideologies, commercial exploitation, cartel arrangements, or

<sup>21</sup> JPS, “Over-All Examination of Requirements for Transit Air Bases . . .,” January 20, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 360 (10-9-42), JPS 781/1; and McCloy, Memorandum to the Department of State, January 31, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret). Also see JPS, “Over-All Examination of Requirements for Transit Air Bases,” January 8, 1946; and, for the joint chiefs’ view on South American air fields, see JCS, Minutes of the 69th meeting, March 23, 1943, RG 218, CCS 360 (12-9-42).

<sup>22</sup> P&O, “The Strategic Importance of Inter-American Military Cooperation” [January 20, 1947], RG 319, 092 (top secret). Also see H. A. Craig, “Summary,” January 5, 1945, RG 107, Records of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Establishment of Air Fields and Air Bases, box 216 (Latin America); and War Department, “Comprehensive Statement” [January 1945], *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> JCS, “Foreign Policy of the United States,” February 10, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 United States (12-21-45), JCS 1592/2; and JCS to the Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of War, September 19, 1945, *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 (9-10-45), JCS 1507/2. For JCS views on the Western Hemisphere, also see JCS to the Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of War, February 11, 1945, *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 (1-18-45); JCS, “International Organization for the Enforcement of World Peace and Security,” April 14, 1945, *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 (4-14-45), JCS 1311; and JCS, “Guidance as to Command and Control of the Armed Forces to be Placed at the Disposal of the Security Council of the United Nations,” May 26, 1946, *ibid.*, JCS 1670/5.

other symptoms of increased non-hemispheric influence. . . . The basic consideration has always been an overriding apprehension lest a base be established in this area by a potentially hostile foreign power." The United States, Patterson insisted, must have "a stable, secure, and friendly flank to the South, not confused by enemy penetration, political, economic, or military."<sup>24</sup>

The need to predominate throughout the Western Hemisphere was not a result of deteriorating Soviet-American relations but a natural evolution of the Monroe Doctrine, accentuated by Axis aggression and new technological imperatives.<sup>25</sup> Patterson, Forrestal, and Army Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower initially were impelled less by reports of Soviet espionage, propaganda, and infiltration in Latin America than by accounts of British efforts to sell cruisers and aircraft to Chile and Ecuador; Swedish sales of anti-aircraft artillery to Argentina; and French offers to build cruisers and destroyers for both Argentina and Brazil.<sup>26</sup> To foreclose all foreign influence and to insure United States strategic hegemony, military officers and the civilian secretaries of the War and Navy departments argued for an extensive system of United States bases, expansion of commercial airline facilities throughout Latin America, negotiation of a regional defense pact, curtailment of all foreign military aid and foreign military sales, training of Latin American military officers in the United States, outfitting of Latin American armies with U.S. military equipment, and implementation of a comprehensive military assistance program.<sup>27</sup>

The military assistance program, as embodied in the Inter-American Military Cooperation Act, generated the most interagency discord. Latin American experts in the State Department maintained that military assistance would stimulate regional conflicts, dissipate Latin American financial resources, and divert attention from economic and social issues. Before leaving office, Byrnes forcefully presented the State Department position to Forrestal and Patterson. Instead of dwelling on the consequences of military assistance for Latin America, Byrnes maintained that such a program would be too costly for the United States, would focus attention on a region where American interests were relatively unchallenged, and would undermine more important American initiatives elsewhere on the globe. "Greece and Turkey are our outposts," he declared.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For Patterson's views, see P&O, "Strategic Importance of Inter-American Military Cooperation" [January 20, 1947]; and Patterson to Byrnes, December 18, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 3.

<sup>25</sup> This evaluation accords with the views of Chester J. Pach, Jr.; see his "The Containment of United States Military Aid to Latin America, 1944-1949," *Diplomatic History*, 6 (1982): 232-34.

<sup>26</sup> For fears of foreign influence, see, for example, [no signature] "Military Political Cooperation with the Other American Republics," June 24, 1946, RG 18, 092 (International Affairs), box 567; Patterson to the Secretary of State, July 31, 1946, RG 353, SWNCC, box 76; Eisenhower to Patterson, November 26, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, general decimal file, box 1 (top secret); S. J. Chamberlin to Eisenhower, November 26, 1946, *ibid.*; Minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, December 11, 1946, *ibid.*, RPPP, safe file, box 3; and Director of Intelligence to Director of P&O, February 26, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 091 France. For reports on Soviet espionage, see, for example, Military Intelligence Service [hereafter, MIS], "Soviet-Communist Penetration in Latin America," March 24, 1945, RG 165, OPD, 336 (top secret); and MIS, "Summary of a Study . . . on Soviet-Communist Penetration in Latin America," September 27, 1945, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Craig, "Summary," January 5, 1945; JPS, "Military Arrangements Deriving from the Act of Chapultepec Pertaining to Bases," January 14, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 (9-10-45), JPS 761/3; Patterson to Byrnes, December 18, 1946; and P&O, "Strategic Importance of Inter-American Military Cooperation" [January 20, 1947].

<sup>28</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy, December 18, 1946, April 23, May 1, 1947, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 3; and M. B. Ridgway, Memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of War, February 1947, *ibid.*, HCPP, 092 (classified).

The secretary of state clearly did not think that Congress would authorize funds for Latin America as well as for Greece and Turkey. Although Truman favored military assistance to Latin America, competing demands for American resources in 1947 and 1948 forced both military planners and U.S. senators to give priority to Western Europe and the Near East. In June 1948 the Inter-American Military Cooperation Act died in the Senate. But this signified no diminution in American national security imperatives; indeed, it underscored Byrnes's statement of December 1946 that the "outposts" of the nation's security lay in the heart of Eurasia.<sup>29</sup>

FROM THE CLOSING DAYS OF WORLD WAR II, American defense officials believed that they could not allow any prospective adversary to control the Eurasian land mass. This was the lesson taught by two world wars. Strategic thinkers and military analysts insisted that any power or powers attempting to dominate Eurasia must be regarded as potentially hostile to the United States.<sup>30</sup> Their acute awareness of the importance of Eurasia made Marshall, Thomas Handy, George A. Lincoln, and other officers wary of the expansion of Soviet influence there. Cognizant of the growth in Soviet strength, General John Deane, head of the United States military mission in Moscow, urged a tougher stand against Soviet demands even before World War II had ended. While acknowledging that the increase in Soviet power stemmed primarily from the defeat of Germany and Japan, postwar assessments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized the importance of deterring further Soviet aggrandizement in Eurasia.<sup>31</sup> Concern over the consequences of Russian domina-

<sup>29</sup> Pach, "Military Aid to Latin America," 235–43.

<sup>30</sup> This view was most explicitly presented in an army paper examining the State Department's expostulation of U.S. foreign policy. See S. F. Giffin, "Draft of Proposed Comments for the Assistant Secretary of War on 'Foreign Policy'" [early February 1946], RG 107, HCPP 092 international affairs (classified). The extent to which this concern with Eurasia shaped American military attitudes is illustrated at greater length below. Here I should note that in March 1945 several of the nation's most prominent civilian experts (Frederick S. Dunn, Edward M. Earle, William T. R. Fox, Grayson L. Kirk, David N. Rowe, Harold Sprout, and Arnold Wolfers) prepared a study, "A Security Policy for Postwar America," in which they argued that the United States had to prevent any one power or coalition of powers from gaining control of Eurasia. America could not, they insisted, withstand attack by any power that had first subdued the whole of Europe or of Eurasia; see Frederick S. Dunn *et al.*, "A Security Policy for Postwar America," NHC, SPD, ser. 14, box 194, A1–2.

The postwar concept of Eurasia developed out of the revival of geopolitical thinking in the United States, stimulated by Axis aggression and strategic decision making. See, for example, the re-issued work of Sir Halford F. Mackinder. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919; reprint edn., New York, 1942), and "The Round World and the Winning of Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, 21 (1943): 598–605. Mackinder's ideas were modified and widely disseminated in the United States, especially by intellectuals such as Nicholas John Spykman. Hans W. Weigert, Robert Strausz-Hupé, and Isaiah Bowman. Spykman flatly took exception to Mackinder's dictum, "Who controls eastern Europe rules the heartland; who rules the Heartland rules the World Island; and who rules the World Island rules the World." Instead, Spykman emphasized, "Who controls the rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world." Spykman, *The Geography of Peace* (New York, 1944), 43. Also see Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (New York, 1942); Weigert, *Generals and Geographers: The Twilight of Geopolitics* (New York, 1942); Strausz-Hupé, *Geopolitics: The Struggle for Space and Power* (New York, 1942); Russell H. Fifield and G. Etzel Percy, *Geopolitics in Principle and Practice* (Boston, 1944); and Alfred C. Eckes, *The United States and the Global Struggle for Minerals* (Austin, Texas, 1979), 104–08.

<sup>31</sup> For views of influential generals and army planners, see OPD, Memorandum, June 4, 1945, RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret). Also see the plethora of documents from May and June 1945, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York [hereafter, USMA], George A. Lincoln Papers [hereafter, GLP], War Department files. For Deane's advice, especially see Deane, "Revision of Policy with Relation to Russia," April 16, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JCS 1313, and *The Strange Alliance: The Story of Our Efforts at Wartime Co-operation with Russia* (New York, 1946), 84–86. For the JCS studies, see, for example, JPS, "Strategic Concept and Plan for the

tion of Eurasia helps explain why in July 1945 the joint chiefs decided to oppose a Soviet request for bases in the Dardanelles; why during March and April 1946 they supported a firm stand against Russia in Iran, Turkey, and Tripolitania; and why in the summer of 1946 Clark Clifford and George Elsey, two White House aides, argued that Soviet incorporation of any parts of Western Europe, the Middle East, China, or Japan into a communist orbit was incompatible with American national security.<sup>32</sup>

Yet defense officials were not eager to sever the wartime coalition. In early 1944 Admiral Leahy noted the “phenomenal development” of Soviet power but still hoped for Soviet-American cooperation. When members of the Joint Postwar Committee met with their colleagues on the Joint Planning Staff in April 1945, Major General G. V. Strong argued against using U.S. installations in Alaska for staging expeditionary forces, lest such a move exacerbate Russo-American relations. A few months later Eisenhower, Lincoln, and other officers advised against creating a central economic authority for Western Europe that might appear to be an anti-Soviet bloc.<sup>33</sup> The American objective, after all, was to avoid Soviet hegemony over Eurasia. By aggravating Soviet fears, the United States might foster what it wished to avoid. American self-restraint, however, might be reciprocated by the Soviets, providing time for Western Europe to recover and for the British to reassert some influence on the Continent.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, many defense officials in 1945 hoped to avoid an open rift with the Soviet Union. But at the same time they were determined to prevent the Eurasian land mass from falling under Soviet and communist influence.

Studies by the Joint Chiefs of Staff stressed that, if Eurasia came under Soviet domination, either through military conquest or political and economic “assimilation,” America’s only potential adversary would fall heir to enormous natural resources, industrial potential, and manpower. By the autumn of 1945, military planners already were worrying that Soviet control over much of Eastern Europe and its raw materials would abet Russia’s economic recovery, enhance its war-making capacity, and deny important foodstuffs, oil, and minerals to Western Europe. By the early months of 1946, Secretary Patterson and his subordinates in the War Department believed that Soviet control of the Ruhr-Rhineland industrial complex would constitute an extreme threat. Even more dangerous was the

---

Employment of United States Armed Forces,” September 14, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 (5-13-45), JPS 744/3; and JCS, “United States Military Policy,” September 17, 1945, *ibid.*, JCS 1496/2.

<sup>32</sup> For the decision on the Dardanelles, see the attachments to JCS, “United States Policy concerning the Dardanelles and Kiel Canal” [July 1945], RG 218, ser. CCS 092 (7-10-45), JCS 1418/1; for the joint chiefs’ position on Iran, Turkey, and Tripolitania, see JCS, “U.S. Security Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean,” March 1946, *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JCS 1641 series; and Lincoln, Memorandum for the Record, April 16, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 336 Russia (8-22-43); and, for the Clifford memorandum, see Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line* (New York, 1968), 477–82.

<sup>33</sup> Leahy, excerpt from letter, May 16, 1944, RG 59, lot 54D394 (Records of the Office of European Affairs), box 17. For Strong’s opinion, see JPS, Minutes of the 199th meeting, April 25, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 334 (3-28-45); and, for the views of Eisenhower and Lincoln, see Lincoln, Memorandum for Hull, June 24, 1945, USMA, GLP, War Dept. files; and Leahy, Memorandum for the President [late June 1945], *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> For the emphasis on expediting recovery in Western Europe, see, for example, McCloy, Memorandum for Matthew J. Connelly, April 26, 1945, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 178; and, for the role of Britain, see, for example, Joint Intelligence Staff [hereafter, JIS], “British Capabilities and Intentions,” December 5, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 000.1 Great Britain (5-10-45), JIS 161/4.

prospect of Soviet predominance over the rest of Western Europe, especially France.<sup>35</sup> Strategically, this would undermine the impact of any prospective American naval blockade and would allow Soviet military planners to achieve defense in depth. The latter possibility had enormous military significance, because American war plans relied so heavily on air power and strategic bombing, the efficacy of which might be reduced substantially if the Soviets acquired outlying bases in Western Europe and the Middle East or if they “neutralized” bases in Great Britain.<sup>36</sup>

Economic considerations also made defense officials determined to retain American access to Eurasia as well as to deny Soviet predominance over it. Stimson, Patterson, McCloy, and Assistant Secretary Howard C. Peterson agreed with Forrestal that long-term American prosperity required open markets, unhindered access to raw materials, and the rehabilitation of much—if not all—of Eurasia along liberal capitalist lines. In late 1944 and 1945, Stimson protested the prospective industrial emasculation of Germany, lest it undermine American economic well being, set back recovery throughout Europe, and unleash forces of anarchy and revolution. Stimson and his subordinates in the Operations Division of the army also worried that the spread of Soviet power in northeast Asia would constrain the functioning of the free enterprise system and jeopardize American economic interests. A report prepared by the staff of the Moscow embassy and revised in mid-1946 by Ambassador (and former General) Walter Bedell Smith emphasized that “Soviet power is by nature so jealous that it has already operated to segregate from world economy almost all of the areas in which it has been established.” While Forrestal and the navy sought to contain Soviet influence in the Near East and to retain American access to Middle East oil, Patterson and the War Department focused on preventing famine in occupied areas, forestalling communist revolution, circumscribing Soviet influence, resuscitating trade, and preserving traditional American markets especially in Western Europe.<sup>37</sup> But American economic

<sup>35</sup> Joint Logistic Plans Committee [hereafter, JLPC], “Russian Capabilities,” November 15, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JLPC 35/9/RD; Military Intelligence Division [hereafter, MID], “Intelligence Estimate of the World Situation and Its Military Implications,” June 25, 1946, RG 319, P&O 350.05 (top secret); Joint Intelligence Committee [hereafter, JIC], “Intelligence Estimate Assuming that War between the Soviet Union the Non-Soviet Powers Breaks Out in 1956,” November 6, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIC 374/1; and JIC, “Capabilities and Military Potential of Soviet and Non-Soviet Powers in 1946,” January 8, 1947, *ibid.*, JIC 374/2. For concern with the Ruhr-Rhineland industrial complex, especially see Patterson to the Secretary of State, June 10, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified); and, for the concern with Western Europe, especially France, see, for example, JCS, “United States Assistance to Other Countries from the Standpoint of National Security,” April 29, 1947, in *FRUS, 1947*, 1: 734–50, esp. 739–42. Also see the General Board, “National Security and Navy Contributions Thereto for the Next Ten Years,” Enclosure D, June 25, 1948, NHC, General Board 425 (ser. 315).

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, JIS, “Military Capabilities of Great Britain and France,” November 13, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 000.1 Great Britain (5-10-45), JIS 211/1; JIS, “Areas Vital to Soviet War Effort,” February 12, 1946, *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 (3-27-45), JIS 226/2; and JIS, “Supplemental Information Relative to Northern and Western Europe,” April 18, 1947, *ibid.*, JIS 275/1.

<sup>37</sup> Moscow embassy staff, “Russia’s International Position at the Close of the War with Germany,” enclosed in Smith to Eisenhower, July 12, 1946, DDEL, Dwight David Eisenhower Papers, file 1652, box 101. Also see, for example, Stimson to Roosevelt, September 15, 1944, ML, JFP, box 100; Stimson to Truman, May 16, 1945, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 157; McCloy, Memorandum for Connelly, April 26, 1945, *ibid.*, box 178; MID, “Intelligence Estimate of the World Situation,” June 25, 1946; numerous memoranda, June 1945, USMA, GLP, War Dept. files; numerous documents, 1946 and 1947, RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (Classified); and Rearmament Subcommittee, Report to the Special Ad Hoc Committee, July 10, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC

interests in Eurasia were not limited to Western Europe, Germany, and the Middle East. Military planners and intelligence officers in both the army and navy expressed considerable interest in the raw materials of southeast Asia, and, as already shown, one of the purposes of the bases they wanted was to maintain access to those resources and deny them to a prospective enemy.<sup>38</sup>

While civilian officials and military strategists feared the loss of Eurasia, they did not expect the Soviet Union to attempt its military conquest. In the early Cold War years, there was nearly universal agreement that the Soviets, while eager to expand their influence, desired to avoid a military engagement. In October 1945, for example, the Joint Intelligence Staff predicted that the Soviet Union would seek to avoid war for five to ten years. In April 1946, while Soviet troops still remained in Iran, General Lincoln, the army's principal war planner, concurred with Byrnes's view that the Soviets did not want war. In May, when there was deep concern about a possible communist uprising in France, military intelligence doubted the Kremlin would instigate a coup, lest it ignite a full scale war. At a high-level meeting at the White House in June, Eisenhower stated that he did not think the Soviets wanted war; only Forrestal dissented. In August, when the Soviet note to Turkey on the Dardanelles provoked consternation in American policy-making circles, General Hoyt Vandenberg, director of central intelligence, informed President Truman that there were no signs of unusual Soviet troop movements or supply build-ups. In March 1947, while the Truman Doctrine was being discussed in Congress, the director of army intelligence maintained that the factors operating to discourage Soviet aggression continued to be decisive. In September 1947, the CIA concluded that the Soviets would not seek to conquer Western Europe for several reasons: they would recognize their inability to control hostile populations; they would fear triggering a war with the United States that could not be won; and they would prefer to gain hegemony by political and economic means. In October 1947, the Joint Intelligence Staff maintained that for three years at least the Soviet Union would take no action that would precipitate a military conflict.<sup>39</sup>

Even the ominous developments during the first half of 1948 did not alter these assessments. Despite his alarmist cable of March 5, designed to galvanize congressional support for increased defense expenditures, General Lucius Clay, the

---

400.336 (3-20-47). For Forrestal's concern with Middle Eastern oil, see, for example, "Notes in Connection with Navy's 'Line' on Foreign Oil" [late 1944 or early 1945], ML, JFP, box 22; Minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy, April 17, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 3; and Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, 1951), 272, 356-58.

<sup>38</sup> Strategy Section, OPD, "Post-War Base Requirements in the Philippines," April 23, 1945; JCS, "Strategic Areas and Trusteeships in the Pacific," October 18, 1946; MID, "Positive U.S. Action Required to Restore Normal Conditions in Southeast Asia," July 3, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); and Lauris Norstad to the Director of Intelligence, July 10, 1947, *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> JIS, "Russian Military Capabilities," October 25, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/10; Lincoln to M. B. Gardner and F. F. Everest, April 10, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 336 Russia (8-22-43); O. S. P., Memorandum for Hull, May 3, 1946, *ibid.*, ser. ABC 381 (9-1-45); S. W. D., Memorandum for the Record, June 12, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President, August 24, 1946, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; Chamberlin, "Reevaluation of Soviet Intentions," March 27, 1947, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Russia (top secret); CIA, "Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States," September 26, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 203; and JIC, "Soviet Military Objectives and Capabilities, 1947-50," October 27, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 381 USSR (3-2-46), JIC 391/1.

American military governor in Germany, did not believe war imminent. A few days later, the CIA concluded that the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia would not increase Soviet capabilities significantly and reflected no alteration in Soviet tactics. On March 16, the CIA reported to the president, "The weight of logic, as well as evidence, also leads to the conclusion that the Soviets will not resort to military force within the next sixty days." While this assessment was far from reassuring, army and navy intelligence experts concurred that the Soviets still wanted to avoid war; the question was whether war would erupt as a result of "miscalculation" by either the United States or Russia. After talking to Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov in June, Ambassador Smith concluded that Soviet leaders would not resort to active hostilities. During the Berlin blockade, army intelligence reported few signs of Soviet preparations for war; naval intelligence maintained that the Soviets desired to avoid war yet consolidate their position in East Germany. In October 1948, the Military Intelligence Division of the army endorsed a British appraisal that "all the evidence available indicates that the Soviet Union is not preparing to go to war in the near future." In December Acting Secretary of State Robert Lovett summed up the longstanding American perspective when he emphasized that he saw "no evidence that Soviet intentions run toward launching a sudden military attack on the western nations at this time. It would not be in character with the tradition or mentality of the Soviet leaders to resort to such a measure unless they felt themselves either politically extremely weak, or militarily extremely strong."<sup>40</sup>

Although American defense officials recognized that the Soviets had substantial military assets, they remained confident that the Soviet Union did not feel extremely strong. Military analysts studying Russian capabilities noted that the Soviets were rapidly mechanizing infantry units and enhancing their firepower and mobility. It was estimated during the winter of 1946–47 that the Soviets could mobilize six million troops in thirty days and twelve million in six months, providing sufficient manpower to overrun all important parts of Eurasia. The Soviets were also believed to be utilizing German scientists and German technological know-how to improve their submarine force, develop rockets and missiles, and acquire knowledge about the atomic bomb. During 1947 and 1948, it was reported as well that the Soviets were making rapid progress in the development of high performance jet fighters and already possessed several hundred intermediate range bombers comparable to the American B-29.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> CIA, "Special Evaluation No. 27," March 16, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); MID, "Intelligence Division Daily Briefing," October 18, 1948, *ibid.*; and Lovett to John L. Sullivan, December 20, 1948, NHC, double zero files, 1948, box 2. Also see Jean Edward Smith, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany, 1945–1949*, 2 vols. (Bloomington, Ind., 1974), 2: 564–65, 568–69, 602; CIA, "Review of the World Situation," March 10, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 203; R. H. Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, March 16, 1948, *ibid.*, box 249; Chamberlin, Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, March 14, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); Thomas B. Inglis, Memorandum of Information, March 16, September 28, 1948, NHC, SPD, central files, 1948, A8 and EF30; Smith to Kennan, June 11, 1948, ML, George F. Kennan Papers [hereafter, GFKP], box 28; and Carter Clarke to the Chief of Staff, August 6, 1948, RG 330, CD 2-2-2, box 4.

<sup>41</sup> For reports on Soviet mobilization capabilities and conventional strength on the land, see, for example, Chamberlin, Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, March 14, 1948; Carter Clarke, "Present Capability of the U.S.S.R. Armed Forces," September 16, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 091 Russia (top secret); and P&O, "Capabilities (Ground) and Intentions of the USSR for Overrunning Northern and Western Europe in 1947, 1948, and 1949," February 28, 1947, *ibid.*, 350.05 (top secret). The war plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff outline the extensive ground capabilities of Soviet forces. See especially the documents in RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR

Even so, American military analysts were most impressed with Soviet weaknesses and vulnerabilities. The Soviets had no long-range strategic air force, no atomic bomb, and meager air defenses. Moreover, the Soviet navy was considered ineffective except for its submarine forces.<sup>42</sup> The Joint Logistic Plans Committee and the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department estimated that the Soviet Union would require approximately fifteen years to overcome wartime losses in manpower and industry, ten years to redress the shortage of technicians, five to ten years to develop a strategic air force, fifteen to twenty-five years to construct a modern navy, ten years to refurbish military transport, ten years (or less) to quell resistance in occupied areas, fifteen to twenty years to establish a military infrastructure in the Far East, three to ten years to acquire the atomic bomb, and an unspecified number of years to remove the vulnerability of the Soviet rail-net and petroleum industry to long-range bombing.<sup>43</sup> For several years at least, the Soviet capability for sustained attack against North America would be very limited. In January 1946 the Joint Intelligence Staff concluded that “the offensive capabilities of the United States are manifestly superior to those of the U.S.S.R. and any war between the U.S. and the USSR would be far more costly to the Soviet Union than to the United States.”<sup>44</sup>

Key American officials like Lovett, Clifford, Eisenhower, Bedell Smith and Budget Director James Webb were cognizant of prevailing Soviet weaknesses and potential American strength. Despite Soviet superiority in manpower, General Eisenhower and Admiral Forrest E. Sherman doubted that Russia could mount a surprise attack, and General Lincoln, Admiral Cato Glover, and Secretaries Patterson and Forrestal believed that Soviet forces would encounter acute logistical problems in trying to overrun Eurasia—especially in the Near East, Spain, and Italy. Even Forrestal doubted reports of accelerating Soviet air capabilities. American experts believed that most Soviet planes were obsolescent, that the Soviets had insufficient airfields and aviation gas to use their new planes, and that these planes had serious problems in their instrumentation and construction.<sup>45</sup>

---

(3-2-46); for information on Soviet use of German scientists, see, for example, JIS, “Capabilities and Intentions of the USSR in the Postwar Period,” July 9, 1946, *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/26; MID, “Ability of Potential Enemies to Attack the Continental United States,” August 8, 1946, RG 319, P&O 381 (top secret); and JIC, “Soviet Capabilities to Launch Air Attacks against the United Kingdom,” November 29, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIC 375/1. For assessments of the improvements in Soviet air power, see, for example, Patterson to Truman, June 23, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 157; JIC, Moscow Embassy, “Soviet Intentions,” April 1, 1948, RG 330, box 4, CD2-2-2.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, JIS, “Russian Military Capabilities,” October 25, 1945; JIS, “Estimate of Soviet Postwar Military Capabilities and Intentions,” November 8, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/14; JIS, “Military Capabilities of Great Britain and France,” November 13, 1945; JWPC, “Military Position of the United States in Light of Russian Policy,” January 8, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JWPC 416/1; and Inglis, Memorandum of Information, January 21, 1946, ML, JFP, box 24.

<sup>43</sup> JLPC, “Russian Capabilities,” November 15, 1945; and MID, “Intelligence Estimate of the World Situation for the Next Five Years,” August 21, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret). For a contemporary analysis of the Soviet transport network, also see Paul Wohl, “Transport in the Development of Soviet Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, 24 (1946): 466–83.

<sup>44</sup> JIS, “Soviet Post-War Military Policies and Capabilities,” January 15, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/24; MID, “Ability of Potential Enemies to Attack the Continental United States,” August 8, 1946; and P&O, “Estimate of the Situation Pertaining to the Northeast Approaches to the United States,” August 12, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 381 (top secret).

<sup>45</sup> For the views of Eisenhower and Sherman, see S. W. D., Memorandum for the Record, June 12, 1946; Galambos, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 7: 1012–13, 1106–07; Sherman, “Presentation to the President,”

In general, improvements in specific areas of the Soviet military establishment did not mean that overall Soviet capabilities were improving at an alarming rate. In July 1947, the Military Intelligence Division concluded, "While there has been a slight overall improvement in the Soviet war potential, Soviet strength for total war is not sufficiently great to make a military attack against the United States anything but a most hazardous gamble." This view prevailed in 1946 and 1947, even though the American nuclear arsenal was extremely small and the American strategic bombing force of limited size. In the spring of 1948 the Joint Intelligence Committee at the American embassy in Moscow explained why the United States ultimately would emerge victorious should a war erupt in the immediate future. The Soviets could not win because of their "inability to carry the war to U.S. territory. After the occupation of Europe, the U.S.S.R. would be forced to assume the defensive and await attacks by U.S. forces which should succeed primarily because of the ability of the U.S. to outproduce the U.S.S.R. in materials of war."<sup>46</sup>

Awareness of Soviet economic shortcomings played a key role in the American interpretation of Soviet capabilities. Intelligence reports predicted that Soviet leaders would invest a disproportionate share of Russian resources in capital goods industries. But, even if such Herculean efforts enjoyed some success, the Soviets still would not reach the pre-World War II levels of the United States within fifteen to twenty years. Technologically, the Soviets were behind in the critical areas of aircraft manufacturing, electronics, and oil refining. And, despite Russia's concerted attempts to catch up and to surpass the United States, American intelligence experts soon started reporting that Soviet reconstruction was lagging behind Soviet ambitions, especially in the electronics, transportation, aircraft, construction machinery, nonferrous metals, and shipping industries. Accordingly, throughout the years 1945-48 American military analysts and intelligence experts believed that Soviet transportation bottlenecks, industrial shortcomings, technological backwardness, and agricultural problems would discourage military adventurism.<sup>47</sup>

---

January 14, 1947, NHC, Forrest E. Sherman Papers, box 2; for the views of Lincoln, Glover, Patterson, Forrestal, and others on Soviet logistical problems, see JPS, Minutes of the 249th meeting, May 22, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46); Glover to Lincoln and Kissner, June 24, 1947, NHC, SPD, ser. 4, box 86; Louis Denfeld, Memorandum, March 29, 1948, *ibid.*, central files, 1948, Al6-3 (5); and Millis, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 272. For assessments of Soviet air power, see, for example, JIS, "Estimate of Soviet Postwar Military Capabilities and Intentions," November 8, 1945; JIC, "Soviet Capabilities to Launch Air Attacks against the United Kingdom," November 29, 1946; Office of Naval Intelligence [hereafter, ONI], "A Study of B-29 Airfields with a Capacity in Excess of 120,000 Pounds" [Spring 1948], NHC, General Board 425 (ser. 315); General Board, "National Security and Navy," Enclosure B, June 25, 1945, *ibid.*, page 16; Forrestal and Clarence Cannon, Excerpt of Conversation, April 9, 1948, ML, JFP, box 48; Inglis to Op-30, December 1, 1948, NHC, SPD, central files, 1948, A8; and Robert Lovett, Diary Entry, December 16, 1947, New York Historical Society, Robert Lovett MS Diaries. For a recent assessment of Soviet conventional strength, see Matthew A. Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised," *International Security*, 7 (1982-83): 110-38.

<sup>46</sup> MID, "Estimate of the Possibility of War between the United States and the USSR Today from a Comparison with the Situation as It Existed in September 1946," July 21, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); and JIC, Moscow Embassy, "Soviet Intentions," April 1, 1948.

<sup>47</sup> For assessments of the interrelationships between the state of the Soviet economy and Soviet military capabilities, see, for example, JIS, "Postwar Economic Policies and Capabilities of the USSR," November 1, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/12; JIS, "Soviet Postwar Economic Capabilities and Policies," January 8, 1946, *ibid.*, JIS 80/22; JIS, "Soviet Post-War Military Policies and Capabilities," January 15, 1946; W. B. Shockley, "Relative Technological Achievements in Weapons Characteristics in USSR and USA," January 30, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 6; MID, "Ability of Potential Enemies to Attack the United States," August 8, 1946; U.S. Military Attache (Moscow) to Chamberlin, March 21, 1947, NHC, Operations

IF AMERICAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS DID NOT EXPECT a Soviet military attack, why, then, were they so fearful of losing control of Eurasia? The answer rests less in American assessments of Soviet military capabilities and short-term military intentions than in appraisals of economic and political conditions throughout Europe and Asia. Army officials in particular, because of their occupation roles in Germany, Japan, Austria, and Korea, were aware of the postwar plight of these areas. Key military men—Generals Clay, Douglas MacArthur, John Hilldring, and Oliver P. Echols and Colonel Charles H. Bonesteel—became alarmed by the prospects of famine, disease, anarchy, and revolution. They recognized that communist parties could exploit the distress and that the Russians could capitalize upon it to spread Soviet influence. As early as June 1945, Rear Admiral Ellery Stone, the American commissioner in Italy, wrote that wartime devastation had created fertile soil for the growth of communism in Italy and the enlargement of the Soviet sphere. MacArthur also feared that, if the Japanese economy remained emasculated and reforms were not undertaken, communism would spread. Clay, too, was acutely aware that German communists were depicting themselves and their beliefs as their country's only hope of salvation. In the spring of 1946 military planners, working on contingency plans for the emergency withdrawal of American troops from Germany, should war with Russia unexpectedly occur, also took note of the economic turmoil and political instability in neighboring countries, especially France. Sensitivity to the geopolitical dimensions of the socioeconomic crisis of the postwar era impelled Chief of Staff Eisenhower to give high priority in the army budget to assistance for occupied areas.<sup>48</sup>

Civilian officials in the War, Navy, and State departments shared these concerns. In the autumn of 1945, McCloy warned Patterson that the stakes in Germany were immense and economic recovery had to be expedited. During the first half of 1946 Secretary Patterson and Assistant Secretary Peterson continually pressed the State Department to tackle the problems beleaguering occupation authorities in Germany and pleaded for State Department support and assistance in getting the Truman administration to provide additional relief to the devastated areas of Europe. On Peterson's urging, Acheson wrote Truman in April 1946, "We have now reached the most critical period of the world food crisis. We must either immediately greatly increase the exports of grain from the United States or expect general disorder and political upheaval to develop in [most of Eurasia]."<sup>49</sup> Forrester had already pressed

---

Division, ser. 2 (secret and under), box 33, EF 61; JIC, "Soviet Military Objectives and Capabilities," October 27, 1947; and JIC, Moscow Embassy, "Soviet Intentions," April 1, 1948.

<sup>48</sup> Stone to Admiral H. R. Stark, June 25, 1945, NHC, double zero files, 1942–47, folder 23. For MacArthur's view, see J. W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 292–303; for the situation in Germany, see Patterson to Byrnes, February 25, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, general decimal file, box 8; materials in RG 165, ser. ABC 387 Germany (12-18-43), sects. 4D, 4E; Smith, *Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1: 165–66, 184, 187–89, 196–98, 201–02, 207–08, 217; Galambos, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 7: 892; and, for the relationship between the situation in France and American war planning, see, for example, JPS, Minutes of the 249th and 250th meetings, May 22, 29, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46). For evolving war plans in the Pincher series, see *ibid.*, sects. 1, 2; also see Forrester, "French Situation," May 6, 1946, ML, JFP, box 20; and *FRUS, 1946*, 5: 434–40; and, for Eisenhower's concern, see Galambos, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 8: 1516–20.

<sup>49</sup> Acheson to Truman, April 30, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, general subject file, box 1. Also see McCloy to Patterson, November 24, 1945, *ibid.*, RPPP, safe file, box 4. For pressure on the State Department, see Patterson

for a reassessment of occupation policies in Germany and Japan. In May, Clay suspended reparation payments in order to effect an accord on German economic unity. In June, Patterson began to support the merger of the American and British zones. The man most responsible for this latter undertaking was William Draper, Forrestal's former partner in Dillon, Read, and Co., and Clay's chief economic assistant. Draper firmly believed that "economic collapse in either [France or Germany] with probable political break-down and rise of communism would seriously threaten American objectives in Europe and in the world."<sup>50</sup>

American defense officials, military analysts, and intelligence officers were extremely sensitive to the political ferment, social turmoil, and economic upheaval throughout postwar Europe and Asia. In their initial postwar studies, the Joint Chiefs of Staff carefully noted the multiplicity of problems that could breed conflict and provide opportunities for Soviet expansion. In the spring of 1946 army planners, including General Lincoln, were keenly aware that conflict was most likely to arise from local disputes (for example, in Venezia-Giulia) or from indigenous unrest (for example, in France), perhaps even against the will of Moscow. A key War Department document submitted to the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee in April 1946 skirted the issue of Soviet military capabilities and argued that the Soviet Union's strength emanated from totalitarian control over its satellites, from local communist parties, and from worldwide chaotic political and economic conditions. In October 1946 the Joint Planning Staff stressed that for the next ten years the major factor influencing world political developments would be the East-West ideological conflict taking place in an impoverished and strife-torn Europe and a vacuum of indigenous power in Asia. "The greatest danger to the security of the United States," the CIA concluded in mid-1947, "is the possibility of economic collapse in Western Europe and the consequent accession to power of Communist elements."<sup>51</sup>

---

to Byrnes, December 10, 1945, RG 165, Civil Affairs Division [hereafter, CAD], ser. 014 Germany; Patterson to Byrnes, February 25, 1946; OPD and CAD, "Analysis of Certain Political Problems Confronting Military Occupation Authorities in Germany," April 10, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified); and "Combined Food Board" file, spring 1946, *ibid.*, HCPP, general subject file, box 1.

<sup>50</sup> William Draper, Memorandum [early 1947], RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified); and Forrestal to Acheson, January 14, 1946, ML, JFP, box 68. For Clay's initiative, see Smith, *Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1: 203–04, 213–14, 218–23; John F. Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945–1949* (Stanford, 1968), 35–91; John H. Backer, *The Decision to Divide Germany: American Foreign Policy in Transition* (Durham, N.C., 1978), 137–48; and Bruce Kuklick, *American Policy and the Division of Germany: The Clash with Russia over Reparations* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1972), 205–35. For Patterson's concerns and his support of Bizonia, see Patterson to Byrnes, June 11, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified); Patterson to Truman, November 20, 1946, *ibid.*, RPPP, safe file, box 4; Minutes of the War Council meeting, December 5, 1946, *ibid.*, box 7; and Patterson to Palmer Hoyt, December 27, 1946, *ibid.*, box 4. For the merger of the zones, also see *FRUS, 1946*, 5: 579–659; Smith, *Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1: 245, 248–49; and, for Draper's importance, also see Carolyn Eisenberg, "U.S. Social Policy in Post-War Germany: The Conservative Restoration," paper delivered at the Seventy-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, held in April 1981, in Detroit.

<sup>51</sup> CIA, "Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States," September 26, 1947. Also see, for example, JCS, "Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces," Appendix A, September 19, 1945; JPS, Minutes of the 249th and 250th meetings; Lincoln to Wood, May 22, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 381 (9-1-45); [Giffin (?)] "U.S. Policy with Respect to Russia" [early April 1946], *ibid.*, ser. ABC 336 (8-22-43); JPS, "Estimate of Probable Developments in the World Political Situation up to 1956," October 31, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 (10-9-46), JPS 814/1; MID, "World Political Developments Affecting the Security of the United States during the Next Ten Years," April 14, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret).

In brief, during 1946 and 1947, defense officials witnessed a dramatic unraveling of the geopolitical foundations and socioeconomic structure of international affairs. Britain's economic weakness and withdrawal from the eastern Mediterranean, India's independence movement, civil war in China, nationalist insurgencies in Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, Zionist claims to Palestine and Arab resentment, German and Japanese economic paralysis, communist inroads in France and Italy—all were ominous developments. Defense officials recognized that the Soviet Union had not created these circumstances but believed that Soviet leaders would exploit them. Should communists take power, even without direct Russian intervention, the Soviet Union, it was assumed, would gain predominant control of the resources of these areas because of the postulated subservience of communist parties everywhere to the Kremlin. Should nationalist uprisings persist, communists seize power in underdeveloped countries, and Arabs revolt against American support of a Jewish state, the petroleum and raw materials of critical areas might be denied the West. The imminent possibility existed that, even without Soviet military aggression, the resources of Eurasia could fall under Russian control. With these resources, the Soviet Union would be able to overcome its chronic economic weaknesses, achieve defense in depth, and challenge American power—perhaps even by military force.<sup>52</sup>

IN THIS FRIGHTENING POSTWAR ENVIRONMENT American assessments of Soviet long-term intentions were transformed. When World War II ended, military planners initially looked upon Soviet aims in foreign affairs as arising from the Kremlin's view of power politics, Soviet strategic imperatives, historical Russian ambitions, and Soviet reactions to moves by the United States and Great Britain. American intelligence analysts and strategic planners most frequently discussed Soviet actions in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Near East, and Manchuria as efforts to establish an effective security system. Despite enormous Soviet gains during the war, many assessments noted that, in fact, the Soviets had not yet achieved a safe security zone, especially on their southern periphery. While Forrestal, Deane, and most of the planners in the army's Operations Division possessed a skeptical, perhaps even sinister, view of Soviet intentions, the still prevailing outlook at the end of 1945 was to dismiss the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy yet emphasize Soviet distrust of foreigners; to stress Soviet expansionism but acknowledge the possibility of accommodation; to abhor Soviet domination of Eastern Europe but discuss Soviet policies elsewhere in terms of power and influence; and to dwell upon the Soviet preoccupation with security yet acknowledge doubt about ultimate Soviet intentions.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, JIS, "Soviet Postwar Economic Capabilities," January 8, 1946; MID, "Intelligence Estimate of the World Situation," June 25, 1946; JCS, "Presidential Request for Certain Facts and Information Regarding the Soviet Union," July 25, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JCS 1696; H. D. Riley to Op-30, February 7, 1947, NHC, SPD, ser. 5, box 111, A16-3 (5); MID, "Capabilities (Ground) and Intentions of the USSR for Overrunning Northern and Western Europe," February 28, 1947; P&O, "Strategic Study of Western and Northern Europe," May 21, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); and Wooldridge to the General Board, April 30, 1948.

<sup>53</sup> For assessments of Soviet intentions, see, for example, JIC, "Estimate of Soviet Post-War Capabilities and Intentions," February 2, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 000.1 USSR (10-2-44), JIC 250/2; John S. Wise to Hull, April

This orientation changed rapidly during 1946. In January, the Joint War Plans Committee observed that “the long-term objective [of the Soviet Union] is deemed to be establishment of predominant influence over the Eurasian land mass and the strategic approaches thereto.” Reports of the new military attaché in Moscow went further, claiming that “the ultimate aim of Soviet foreign policy seems to be the dominance of Soviet influence throughout the world” and “the final aim . . . is the destruction of the capitalist system.” Soon thereafter, Kennan’s “long telegram” was widely distributed among defense officials, on whom it had considerable impact. Particularly suggestive was his view that Soviet leaders needed the theme of capitalist encirclement to justify their autocratic rule. Also influential were Kennan’s convictions that the Soviet leaders aimed to shatter the international authority of the United States and were beyond reason and conciliation.<sup>54</sup>

During the spring and summer of 1946, defense officials found these notions persuasive as an interpretation of Soviet intentions because of the volatile international situation, the revival of ideological fervor within the Soviet Union, and the domestic political atmosphere and legislative constraints in the United States. President Truman wished to stop “babying the Soviets,” and his predilection for a tougher posture probably led his subordinates to be less inclined to give the Soviets the benefit of any doubt when assessing Russian intentions.<sup>55</sup> Forrestal believed the Soviet communist threat had become more serious than the Nazi challenge of the 1930s; General John E. Hull, director of the Operations Division, asserted that the Soviets were “constitutionally incapable of being conciliated”; and Clark Clifford and George Elsey considered Soviet fears “absurd.” A key subcommittee of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee declared that Soviet suspicions were “not susceptible of removal,” and in July 1946 the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared the Soviet objective to be “world domination.” By late 1946 it was commonplace for intelligence reports and military assessments to state, without any real analysis, that the “ultimate aim of Soviet foreign policy is Russian domination of a communist

3, 1945, RG 319, P&O, 350.05, State Department red file (top secret); JSSC to JCS, April 5, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45); Deane, “Revision of Policy with Relation to Russia,” April 16, 1945 (JCS 1313); Secretary of War to Secretary of State [early July 1945], RG 165, ser. ABC 093 Kiel (7-6-45); Marshall to McCloy, July 3, 1945, *ibid.*, OPD 336 (top secret); OPD, “Soviet Intentions,” July 6, 1945, *ibid.*, ser. ABC 092 USSR (11-15-44); JCS, “United States Policy concerning the Dardanelles” [July 1945]; JCS, “Military Position of the United States in the Light of Russian Policy,” October 8, 1945, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JCS 1545; JIS, “Soviet Postwar Foreign Policy,” October 25, 1945, *ibid.*, JIS 80/9; JIS, “Russian Military Capabilities,” October 25, 1945; Ritchie, “Report of the United States Mission to Moscow, 18 October 1943 to 31 October 1945” [October 31, 1945], RG 165, OPD 336 (top secret); ONI, “Basic Factors in World Situation,” December 1945, NHC, SPD, ser. 5, box 106, A8; JIS, “Capabilities and Intentions of the USSR in the Post-War Period,” January 2, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIS 80/20; Forrestal, Notes for remarks to the Harvard Club, January 18, 1946, JL, JFP, box 29; Inglis, Memorandum of Information, January 21, 1946; Stoler, “Continentalism to Globalism,” 315–21; and Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War*, 159–90.

<sup>54</sup> JWPC, “Military Position of the United States in Light of Russian Policy,” January 8, 1946; and U.S. Military Attache (Moscow), “Estimate of the Situation as of February 1,” February 18, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 381 Germany (1-29-43). For Kennan’s telegram, see *FRUS*, 1946, 4: 696–709; and, for the distribution of Kennan’s telegram, see R. L. Vittrup, Memorandum for Craig, February 26, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 5; Vittrup to Lincoln, March 1, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 350.05, State Department red file (top secret); and Bruce Hopper to Kennan, March 29, 1946, ML, GFKP, box 28.

<sup>55</sup> Robert L. Messer, *The End of an Alliance: James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman, and the Origins of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982), 152–94, and “Paths Not Taken,” 297–319.

world.”<sup>56</sup> There was, of course, plentiful evidence for this appraisal of Soviet ambitions—the Soviet consolidation of a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe; the incendiary situation in Venezia Giulia; Soviet violation of the agreement to withdraw troops from Iran; Soviet relinquishment of Japanese arms to the Chinese communists; the Soviet mode of extracting reparations from the Russian zone in Germany; Soviet diplomatic overtures for bases in the Dardanelles, Tripolitania, and the Dodecanese; Soviet requests for a role in the occupation of Japan; and the Kremlin’s renewed emphasis on Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the vulnerability of capitalist economies, and the inevitability of conflict.

Yet these assessments did not seriously grapple with contradictory evidence. While emphasizing Soviet military capabilities, strategic ambitions, and diplomatic intransigence, reports like the Clifford-Else memorandum of September 1946 and the Joint Chiefs of Staff report 1696 (upon which the Clifford-Else memorandum heavily relied) disregarded numerous signs of Soviet weakness, moderation, and circumspection. During 1946 and 1947 intelligence analysts described the withdrawal of Russian troops from northern Norway, Manchuria, Bornholm, and Iran (from the latter under pressure, of course). Numerous intelligence sources reported the reduction of Russian troops in Eastern Europe and the extensive demobilization going on within the Soviet Union. In October 1947 the Joint Intelligence Committee forecast a Soviet army troop strength during 1948 and 1949 of less than two million men. Soviet military expenditures appeared to moderate. Other reports dealt with the inadequacies of Soviet transportation and bridging equipment for the conduct of offensive operations in Eastern Europe. And, as already noted, assessments of the Soviet economy revealed persistent problems likely to restrict Soviet adventurism.<sup>57</sup>

Experience suggested that the Soviet Union was by no means uniformly hostile

<sup>56</sup> Forrestal to Clarence Dillon, April 11, 1946, ML, JFP, box 11; Hull to Theater Commanders, March 21, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 336 (8-22-43); for the Clifford-Else viewpoint, see Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line*, 428; and SWNCC, “Resume of Soviet Capabilities and Possible Intentions,” August 29, 1946, NHC, SPD, ser. 5, box 106, A8. For the SWNCC estimate, see JCS, “Political Estimate of Soviet Policy for Use in Connection with Military Studies,” April 5, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JCS 1641/4; and JCS “Presidential Request for Certain Facts and Information Regarding the Soviet Union,” July 25, 1946. Some of the most thoughtful studies on Soviet intentions, like that of the Joint Intelligence Staff in early January 1946 (JIS 80/20), were withdrawn from consideration. See the evolution of studies and reports in RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), sects. 5–7.

<sup>57</sup> For the withdrawal of Soviet troops, see, for example, MID, “Soviet Intentions and Capabilities in Scandania as of 1 July 1946,” April 25, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); and [Giffin (?)] “U.S. Policy with Respect to Russia” [early April 1946]. For reports on reductions of Russian troops in Eastern Europe and demobilization within the Soviet Union, see MID, “Review of Europe, Russia, and the Middle East,” December 26, 1945, RG 165, OPD, 350.05 (top secret); Carl Espe, weekly calculations of Soviet troops, May–September 1946, NHC, SPD, ser. 5, box 106, A8; MID, “Soviet Capabilities in Germany and West Europe,” December 26, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); JIC, “Movement of Russian Troops Outside of USSR except in the Far East,” December 31, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), JIC Memorandum of Information no. 237; MID, “Estimate of the Possibility of War,” July 21, 1947; and JIC, “Soviet Military Objectives and Capabilities,” October 27, 1947. For references to Soviet military expenditures, see Patterson to Julius Adler, November 2, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 5; and Abram Bergson, “Russian Defense Expenditures,” *Foreign Affairs*, 26 (1948): 373–76. And, for assessments of the Soviet transport system, see R. F. Ennis, Memorandum for the P&O Division, June 24, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 336 (8-22-43); U.S. Military Attache (Moscow) to Chamberlin, March 21, 1947; Op-32 to the General Board, April 28, 1948, NHC, General Board 425 (ser. 315); and Wohl, “Transport in the Development of Soviet Policy,” 475–76, 483.

or unwilling to negotiate with the United States. In April 1946, a few days after a State-War-Navy subcommittee issued an alarming political estimate of Soviet policy (for use in American military estimates), Ambassador Smith reminded the State Department that the Soviet press was not unalterably critical of the United States, that the Russians had withdrawn from Bornholm, that Stalin had given a moderate speech on the United Nations, and that Soviet demobilization continued apace. The next month General Lincoln, who had accompanied Byrnes to Paris for the meeting of the council of foreign ministers, acknowledged that the Soviets had been willing to make numerous concessions regarding Tripolitania, the Dodecanese, and Italian reparations. In the spring of 1946, General Echols, General Clay, and Secretary Patterson again maintained that the French constituted the major impediment to an agreement on united control of Germany. At the same time the Soviets ceased pressing for territorial adjustments with Turkey. After the diplomatic exchanges over the Dardanelles in the late summer of 1946 the Soviets did not again ask for either a revision of the Montreux Convention or the acquisition of bases in the Dardanelles. In early 1947 central intelligence delineated more than a half-dozen instances of Soviet moderation or concessions. In April the Military Intelligence Division noted that the Soviets had limited their involvement in the Middle East, diminished their ideological rhetoric, and given only moderate support to Chinese communists. In the months preceding the Truman Doctrine, Soviet behavior—as noted by American military officials and intelligence analysts—hardly justified the inflammatory rhetoric Acheson and Truman used to secure congressional support for aid to Greece and Turkey. Perhaps this is why General Marshall, as secretary of state, refrained from such language himself and preferred to focus on the socioeconomic aspects of the unfolding crisis.<sup>58</sup>

In their overall assessments of Soviet long-term intentions, however, military planners dismissed all evidence of Soviet moderation, circumspection, and restraint. In fact, as 1946 progressed, these planners seemed to spend less time analyzing Soviet intentions and more time estimating Soviet capabilities.<sup>59</sup> Having accepted the notion that the two powers were locked in an ideological struggle of

<sup>58</sup> For the SWNCC estimate, see JCS, "Political Estimate of Soviet Policy," April 5, 1946; for Smith's despatch, see Smith to the Secretary of State, April 11, 1946, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Russia; and, for Soviet negotiating concessions, see Lincoln, Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, May 20, 1946, USMA, GLP, War Dept. files; James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York, 1947), 129–37; Patricia Dawson Ward, *The Threat of Peace: James F. Byrnes and the Council of Foreign Ministers* (Kent, Ohio, 1979), 95–102. For the situation in Germany, see OPD and CAD, "Analysis of Certain Political Problems Confronting Military Occupation Authorities in Germany," April 10, 1946, RG 107, HCPP, 091 Germany (classified); Patterson to Truman, June 11, 1946, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Germany. For Clay's references to French obstructionism, see, for example, Smith, *Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 1: 84–85, 88–89, 151–52, 189–90, 212–17, 235–36; for American perceptions of the situation in Turkey, see Melvyn P. Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and N.A.T.O.," paper delivered at the Seventy-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, held in April 1983, in Cincinnati; for overall intelligence assessments, see Central Intelligence Group [hereafter, CIG], "Revised Soviet Tactics in International Affairs," January 6, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 254; MID, "World Political Developments Affecting the Security of the United States during the Next Ten Years," April 14, 1947; and Walter E. Todd to the Director of P&O, April 25, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); for background on the Truman Doctrine, see Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks* (New York, 1955), esp. 138–70; and, for Marshall's emphasis on the economic roots of the European crisis, see *ibid.*, 203–06, 220–24; and Charles Bohlen, *The Transformation of American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1969), 87–89.

<sup>59</sup> Both the quantity and the quality of JCS studies on Soviet intentions seem to have declined during 1946. In "Military Position of the United States in Light of Russian Policy" (January 8, 1946), strategic planners of the Joint War Plans Committee maintained that it was more important to focus on Soviet capabilities than on Soviet

indefinite duration and conscious of the rapid demobilization of American forces and the constraints on American defense expenditures, they no longer explored ways of accommodating a potential adversary's legitimate strategic requirements or pondered how American initiatives might influence the Soviet Union's definition of its objectives.<sup>60</sup> Information not confirming prevailing assumptions either was ignored in overall assessments of Soviet intentions or was used to illustrate that the Soviets were shifting tactics but not altering objectives. Reflective of the emerging mentality was a report from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the president in July 1946 that deleted sections from previous studies that had outlined Soviet weaknesses. A memorandum sent by Secretary Patterson to the president at the same time was designed by General Lauris Norstad, director of the War Department's Plans and Operations Division, to answer questions about relations with the Soviet Union "without ambiguity." Truman, Clark Clifford observed many years later, liked things in black and white.<sup>61</sup>

DURING 1946 AND EARLY 1947, the conjunction of Soviet ideological fervor and socioeconomic turmoil throughout Eurasia contributed to the growth of a myopic view of Soviet long-term policy objectives and to enormous apprehension lest the Soviet Union gain control of all the resources of Eurasia, thereby endangering the national security of the United States. American assessments of Soviet short-term military intentions had not altered; Soviet military capabilities had not significantly increased, and Soviet foreign policy positions had not greatly shifted. But defense officials were acutely aware of America's own rapidly diminishing capabilities, of Britain's declining military strength, of the appeal of communist doctrine to most of the underdeveloped world, and of the opportunities open to communist parties throughout most of Eurasia as a result of prevailing socioeconomic conditions. War Department papers, studies of the joint chiefs, and intelligence analyses repeatedly described the restiveness of colonial peoples that had sapped British and French strength, the opportunities for communist parties in France, Italy, and even Spain to capitalize upon indigenous conditions, and the ability of the Chinese communists to defeat the nationalists and make the resources and manpower of Manchuria and North China available to the Soviet Union. In this turbulent international arena, the survival of liberal ideals and capitalist institutions was anything but assured. "We

---

intentions. During a key discussion at the White House, Admiral Leahy also was eager to dismiss abstract evaluations of Russian psychology and to focus on Russian capabilities; S. W. D., Memorandum for the Record, June 12, 1946. My assessment of the quality of JCS studies is based primarily on my analysis of the materials in RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45); ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46); RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); and NHC, SPD, central files, 1946-48, A8.

<sup>60</sup> During 1946 it became a fundamental tenet of American policy makers that Soviet policy objectives were a function of developments within the Soviet Union and not related to American actions. See, for example, Kennan's "long telegram," in *FRUS, 1946*, 4: 696-709; JCS, "Political Estimate of Soviet Policy," April 5, 1946; JCS, "Presidential Request," July 25, 1946; and the Clifford/Else memorandum, in Krock, *Memoirs*, esp. 427-36.

<sup>61</sup> For Norstad's comment, see Norstad, Memorandum, July 25, 1946, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret). For references to shifting tactics and constant objectives, see Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President, September 27, 1946, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; CIG, "Revised Soviet Tactics," January 6, 1947; and, for the JCS report to the president, compare JCS 1696 with JIC 250/12. Both studies may be found in RG 218, ser. CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45). For Clifford's recollection, Clark Clifford, HTL, oral history, 170.

could point to the economic benefits of Capitalism," commented one important War Department paper in April 1946, "but these benefits are concentrated rather than widespread, and, at present, are genuinely suspect throughout Europe and in many other parts of the world."<sup>62</sup>

In this environment, there was indeed no room for ambiguity or compromise. Action was imperative—action aimed at safeguarding those areas of Eurasia not already within the Soviet sphere. Even before Kennan's "long telegram" arrived in Washington the joint chiefs adopted the position that "collaboration with the Soviet Union should stop short not only of compromise of principle but also of expansion of Russian influence in Europe and in the Far East."<sup>63</sup> During the spring and summer of 1946, General Lincoln and Admiral Richard L. Conolly, commander of American naval forces in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, worked tirelessly to stiffen Byrnes's views, avert American diplomatic concessions, and put the squeeze on the Russians.<sup>64</sup> "The United States," army planners explained, "must be able to prevent, by force if necessary, Russian domination of either Europe or Asia to the extent that the resources of either continent could be mobilized against the United States." Which countries in Eurasia were worth fighting over remained unclear during 1946. But army and navy officials as well as the joint chiefs advocated a far-reaching program of foreign economic assistance coupled with the refurbishment of American military forces.<sup>65</sup>

During late 1946 and early 1947, the Truman administration assumed the initiative by creating German Bizonia, providing military assistance to Greece and Turkey, allocating massive economic aid to Western Europe, and reassessing

<sup>62</sup> [Giffin] "U.S. Policy with Respect to Russia" [early April 1946]. Also see Giffin, Draft of Proposed Comments for Assistant Secretary of War on "Foreign Policy," [early February 1946]; MID, "Intelligence Estimate," June 25, 1946; JPS, "Estimate of Probable Developments in the World Political Situation," October 31, 1946, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 (10-9-46), JPS 814/1; Special Ad Hoc Committee of SWNCC, "Study on U.S. Assistance to France," April 9, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 400.336 France (3-20-47); MID, "World Political Developments," April 14, 1947; JWPC, "The Soviet Threat against the Iberian Peninsula and the Means Required to Meet It," May 8, 1947, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), JWPC 465/1; and CIA, "Review of the World Situation," September 26, 1947. With regard to China, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stressed the importance of Soviet aid to Chinese communist forces in late 1945. But both naval and army intelligence were fully cognizant of the corruption and ineptness of nationalist forces and of the indigenous appeal of the Chinese communist party. The important point, from the perspective of American defense officials, was that Chinese communist victories would offer the Soviets control over critical resources and enable them to achieve greater defense in depth in parts of Asiatic Russia. See, for example, Patterson, Notes on Cabinet Meeting, August 2, 1946, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 2; Minutes of the meetings of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, September 11, 1946, February 12, 1947, June 20, 1947, *ibid.*, box 3; Lincoln, Proposed Memorandum for the Secretaries of War and Navy [September 1946], NHC, SPD, ser. 12, box 158, C2 (4); Richard M. Phillips, Memorandum, September 6, 1946, *ibid.*; Charles J. Rend, Memorandum of Information, June 3, 1947, *ibid.*, ser. 5, box 110, A8; Nimitz to JCS, June 9, 1947, *ibid.*, box 109, A1; JWPC, "Moonrise," June 16, 1947, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), JWPC 476/1; MID, "Soviet Influence in China," June 16, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); and SWNCC, "United States Policy Toward China," June 11, 1947, *FRUS, 1947*, 7: 838–48.

<sup>63</sup> JCS, "Foreign Policy of the United States," February 10, 1946.

<sup>64</sup> Lincoln to Hull [April 1946], RG 59, Office of European Affairs, box 17; Lincoln, Memorandum for the Record, April 16, 1946; Lincoln to Hull, April 16, 1946, RG 165, ser. ABC 092 USSR (11-15-44); Lincoln to Cohen, June 22, 1946, *ibid.*, ABC 381 (9-1-45); Richard L. Conolly, oral history (Columbia, 1960), 293–304; Lincoln, Memorandum for Chief of Staff, May 20, 1946; and Lincoln, Memorandum for Norstad, July 23, 1946, USMA, GLP, War Department files.

<sup>65</sup> Giffin, "Draft of Proposed Comments" [early February 1946]. Also see, for example, JCS, "Foreign Policy of the United States," February 10, 1946; [Giffin] "U.S. Policy with Respect to Russia" [early April 1946]; JCS, "Political Estimate of Soviet Policy," April 5, 1946; and Sherman, Memorandum for Forrestal, March 17, 1946, ML, JFP, box 24.

economic policy toward Japan. These initiatives were aimed primarily at tackling the internal sources of unrest upon which communist parties capitalized and at rehabilitating the industrial heartlands of Eurasia. American defense officials supported these actions and acquiesced in the decision to give priority to economic aid rather than rearmament. Service officers working on foreign assistance programs of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee supported economic aid, showed sensitivity to the socioeconomic sources of unrest, and recognized that economic aid was likely to be the most efficacious means of preserving a favorable balance of power in Eurasia.<sup>66</sup> Because they judged American military power to be superior and war to be unlikely, Forrestal, Lovett, and Webb insisted that military spending not interfere with the implementation of the Marshall Plan, rehabilitation of Germany, and revival of Japan. "In the necessarily delicate apportioning of our available resources," wrote Assistant Secretary of War Peterson, "the time element permits present emphasis on strengthening the economic and social dikes against Soviet communism rather than upon preparing for a possibly eventual, but not yet inevitable, war."<sup>67</sup>

Yet if war should unexpectedly occur, the United States had to have the capability to inflict incalculable damage upon the Soviet Union. Accordingly, Truman shelved (after some serious consideration) proposals for international control of atomic energy. The Baruch Plan, as it evolved in the spring and summer of 1946, was heavily influenced by defense officials and service officers who wished to avoid any significant compromise with the Soviet Union. They sought to perpetuate America's nuclear monopoly as long as possible in order to counterbalance Soviet conventional strength, deter Soviet adventurism, and bolster American negotiating leverage. When negotiations at the United Nations for international control of atomic energy languished for lack of agreement on its implementation, the way was clear for the Truman administration gradually to adopt a strategy based on air power and atomic weapons. This strategy was initially designed to destroy the adversary's will and capability to wage war by annihilating Russian industrial, petroleum, and urban centers.<sup>68</sup> After completing their study of the

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, SWNCC, "Policies, Procedures, and Costs of Assistance by the United States to Foreign Countries," April 21, 1947, *FRUS*, 1947, 3: 204–20; *ibid.*, 1: 725–34; JCS, "United States Assistance to Other Countries," *ibid.*, 734–50, 762–63; and Lincoln to Peterson, May 2, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 400.336 (3-20-47). Also see the many SWNCC subcommittee reports on individual countries, *ibid.*: Report of the Working Group on Economic Aid to the Special Ad Hoc Committee of the SWNCC, "Foreign Needs for United States Economic Assistance during the Next Three to Five Years" [July 1947], RG 353, box 134; and Report of Rearmament Subcommittee to Special Ad Hoc Committee, July 10, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 400.336 (3-20-47).

<sup>67</sup> Peterson, as quoted in Chief of Staff, Memorandum [July 1947], RG 165, ser. ABC 471.6 Atom (8-17-45). Also see, for example, Lovett diaries, December 16, 1947, January 5, 15, 1948; Baruch to Forrestal, February 7, 1948, ML, JFP, box 78; Forrestal to Baruch, February 10, 1948, *ibid.*; and Excerpt of Phone Conversation between Forrestal and C. E. Wilson, April 2, 1948, *ibid.*, box 48.

<sup>68</sup> These generalizations are based on the following materials: Stimson, Memorandum for the President, September 11, 1945, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 1; Forrestal, Memorandum, September 21, 1945, ML, JFP, box 48; Mathia F. Correa to Forrestal, September 27, 1945, *ibid.*, box 28; Forrestal, Memorandum for the President, October 1, 1945, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 158; documents in HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 199; RG 165, ser. ABC 471.6 Atom (8-17-45); "Brief of Letters Addressed to Mr. Baruch by Each of the Members of the JCS" [June 1946], Bernard Baruch Papers [hereafter, BBP], ML, box 65; Dennison, Draft Reply to Letter from Mr. Baruch, June 4, 1946, NHC CNO, double zero files, folder 31; and Minutes of the meeting of the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, January 29, 1947, RG 107, RPPP, safe file, box 3. For the negotiations at the United Nations, see *FRUS*, 1947, 1: 327–614; also see Herken, *Winning Weapon*; Larry G. Gerber, "The Baruch Plan

1946 Bikini atomic tests, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in July 1947 called for an enlargement of the nuclear arsenal. While Truman and Forrestal insisted on limiting military expenditures, government officials moved vigorously to solve problems in the production of plutonium, to improve nuclear cores and assembly devices, and to increase the number of aircraft capable of delivering atomic bombs. After much initial postwar disorganization, the General Advisory Committee to the Atomic Energy Commission could finally report to the president at the end of 1947 that "great progress" had been made in the atomic program. From June 30, 1947, to June 30, 1948, the number of bombs in the stockpile increased from thirteen to fifty. Although at the time of the Berlin crisis the United States was not prepared to launch a strategic air offensive against the Soviet Union, substantial progress had been made in the development of the nation's air-atomic capabilities. By the end of 1948, the United States had at least eighteen nuclear-capable B-50s, four B-36s, and almost three times as many nuclear-capable B-29s as had been available at the end of 1947.<sup>69</sup>

During late 1947 and early 1948, the administration also responded to pleas of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to augment the overseas base system and to acquire bases in closer proximity to the Soviet Union. Negotiations were conducted with the British to gain access to bases in the Middle East and an agreement was concluded for the acquisition of air facilities in Libya. Admiral Conolly made a secret deal with the French to secure air and communication rights and to stockpile oil, aviation gas, and ammunition in North Africa.<sup>70</sup> Plans also were discussed for postoccupation bases in Japan, and considerable progress was made in refurbishing and constructing airfields in Turkey. During 1948 the Turks also received one hundred eighty F-47 fighter-bombers, thirty B-26 bombers, and eighty-one C-47 cargo planes. The F-47s and B-26s, capable of reaching the vital Ploesti and Baku oil fields, were more likely to be used to slow down a Soviet advance through Turkey or Iran, thereby

---

and the Origins of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History*, 6 (1982): 69–95; Bernstein, "Quest for Security," 1033–44; and Rosenberg, "Hydrogen Bomb Decision," 66–71.

<sup>69</sup> For the views of the General Advisory Committee, see Robert Oppenheimer to Truman, December 31, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 200; for the views of the JCS, see, for example, JCS, "Guidance on Military Aspects of United States Policy to Be Adopted in Event of Continuing Impasse in Acceptance of International Control of Atomic Energy," July 14, 1947, RG 165, ser. ABC 471.6 Atom (8-17-45), JCS 1764/1; and Leahy to the Secretaries of War and the Navy, August 13, 1947, NHC, CNO, double zero files, 1947, folder 13; and, for the size and quality of the stockpile and the number of nuclear-capable aircraft, see especially David Alan Rosenberg, "U.S. Nuclear Stockpile, 1945 to 1950," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 38 (1982): 25–30. The number of nuclear-capable B-29s grew with great rapidity at the end of 1948. One memorandum in early 1949 enumerated eighty-three such planes; see O. S. Picher, Memorandum for Colonel Page, February 14, 1949, RG 330, box 126, CD 33-1-4. Both Borowski and Rosenberg have stressed the problems beleaguering the Strategic Air Command until the Korean War, but their work also illustrates the significant changes and improvements that began to occur late in 1947 and especially during 1948. See Borowski, *Hollow Threat*; David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945–1960," *International Security*, 7 (1983): 11–27.

<sup>70</sup> For negotiations with the British over Middle East strategy and bases, see *FRUS*, 1947, 5: 485–626; and Sullivan to the Acting Secretary of State, September 26, 1947, NHC, SPD, ser. 5, box 110, A14; for facilities in Libya, see, for example, Leahy to the Secretary of Defense, March 18, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); and *FRUS*, 1948, 3: 906–07; and, for negotiations with the French, see Spaatz to Symington, [October 1947], RG 107, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, 1947, 090, box 187B; Symington to Spaatz, October 30, 1947, *ibid.*, Wooldridge, Memorandum for Op-09, October 13, 1948, NHC, CNO, double zero files. 1948, box 4 (29); and Wooldridge, Memorandum for Op-09, October 25, 1948, *ibid.*, SPD, central files, 1948, A14. For bases in North Africa, see Forrestal to Truman, January 6, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 156; also see *FRUS*, 1948, 1: 603–04, 674–76.

affording time to activate a strategic air offensive from prospective bases in the Cairo-Suez area.<sup>71</sup>

Despite these developments, the joint chiefs and military planners grew increasingly uneasy with the budgetary constraints under which they operated. They realized that American initiatives, however necessary, placed the Soviet Union on the defensive, created an incendiary situation, and made war more likely—though still improbable. In July 1947, intelligence analysts in the War Department maintained that the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan had resulted in a more aggressive Soviet attitude toward the United States and had intensified tensions. “These tensions have caused a sharper line of demarcation between West and East tending to magnify the significance of conflicting points of view, and reducing the possibility of agreement on any point.” Intelligence officers understood that the Soviets would perceive American efforts to build strategic highways, construct airfields, and transfer fighter bombers to Turkey as a threat to Soviet security and to the oilfields in the Caucasus. The latter, noted the director of naval intelligence, “lie within easy air striking range of countries on her southern flank, and the Soviet leaders will be particularly sensitive to any political threat from this area, however remote.” Intelligence analysts also recognized that the Soviets would view the Marshall Plan as a threat to Soviet control in Eastern Europe as well as a death-knell to communist attempts to capture power peacefully in Western Europe. And defense officials were well aware that the Soviets would react angrily to plans for currency reform in German Trizonia and to preparations for a West German republic. “The whole Berlin crisis,” army planners informed Eisenhower, “has arisen as a result of . . . actions on the part of the Western Powers.” In sum, the Soviet clampdown in Eastern Europe and the attempt to blockade Berlin did not come as shocks to defense officials, who anticipated hostile and defensive Soviet reactions to American initiatives.<sup>72</sup>

The real consternation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other high-ranking civilian and military officials in the defense agencies stemmed from their growing conviction that the United States was undertaking actions and assuming commitments that now required greater military capabilities. Recognizing that American initiatives, aimed at safeguarding Eurasia from further communist inroads, might

<sup>71</sup> For references to Japanese bases, see, for example, “Discussion of Need of Obtaining Long-Term Rights for a U.S. Naval Operating Base in Japan” (approved by Nimitz) [Autumn 1947], NHC, SPD, ser. 4, box 86; Nimitz to Under Secretary of the Navy, December 12, 1947, *ibid.*, ser. 5, box 110; and Denfeld, Memorandum for Schuyler, February 20, 1948, *ibid.*, central files, 1948, box 245, EF37; for the transfer of planes to Turkey, see Report No. 29, March 12, 1949, RG 59, 867.00/5–1249; and, for the uses of military assistance to Turkey, see Leffler, “The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945–52.”

<sup>72</sup> MID, “Estimate of the Possibility of War,” July 21, 1947, RG 319, P&O, 350.05 (top secret); Op-32 to General Board, April 28, 1948, NHC, General Board 425 (serial 315); and “National Military Establishment Views on Germany” [appended to memorandum for Maddocks], June 30, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret). For the repercussions of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, see Chamberlin to Chief of Staff, July 9, 1947, RG 165, Records of the Chief of Staff, 091 Greece; and Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, November 7, 1947, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; and, for a similar view in the State Department, see *FRUS*, 1947, 1: 770–75. For prospective Soviet reactions to American assistance to Turkey, also see General Board, “National Security and the Navy,” enclosure D, June 25, 1948; and Conolly to CNO, December 4, 1947, NHC, Operations Division, ser. 1, A4/FF7. For assessments of Soviet reactions to Western initiatives in Germany, also see Hillenkoetter, Memoranda for the President, March 16, 1948, and June 9, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 249; CIA, “Possible Program of Future Soviet Moves in Germany,” April 28, 1948, *ibid.*, box 255; and Inglis, Memorandum of Information, April 3, 1948, NHC, Operations Division, ser. 1, box 3.

be perceived as endangering Soviet interests, it was all the more important to be ready for any eventuality. Indeed, to the extent that anxieties about the prospects of war escalated in March and April 1948, these fears did not stem from estimates that the Soviets were planning further aggressive action after the communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia but from apprehensions that ongoing American initiatives might provoke an attack. On March 14 General S. J. Chamberlin, director of army intelligence, warned the chief of staff that “actions taken by this country in opposition to the spread of Communism . . . may decide the question of the outbreak of war and of its timing.” The critical question explicitly faced by the intelligence agencies and by the highest policy makers was whether passage of the Selective Service Act, or of universal military training, or of additional appropriations for the air force, or of a military assistance program to Western European countries, or of a resolution endorsing American support for West European Union would trigger a Soviet attack. Chamberlin judged, for example, that the Soviets would not go to war just to make Europe communist but would resort to war if they felt threatened. The great imponderable, of course, was what, in the Soviet view, would constitute a security threat justifying war.<sup>73</sup>

Recognizing the need to move ahead with planned initiatives but fearing Soviet countermeasures, the newly formed staff of the National Security Council undertook its first comprehensive assessment of American foreign policy. During March 1948, after consulting with representatives of the army, navy, air force, State Department, CIA, and National Security Resources Board, the National Security Council staff produced NSC 7, “The Position of the United States with Respect to Soviet-Dominated World Communism.” This study began with the commonplace assumption that the communist goal was “world conquest.” The study then went on to express the omnipresent theme behind all conceptions of American national security in the immediate postwar years. “Between the United States and the USSR there are in Europe and Asia areas of great potential power which if added to the existing strength of the Soviet world would enable the latter to become so superior in manpower, resources, and territory that the prospect for the survival of the United States as a free nation would be slight.” Accordingly, the study called, first, for the strengthening of the military potential of the United States and, second, for the arming of the non-Soviet world, particularly Western Europe. Although this staff study was never formally approved, the national security bureaucracy worked during the spring and summer of 1948 for West European unity, military assistance to friendly nations, currency reform in Trizonia, revitalization of the Ruhr, and the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> For Chamberlin’s views, see, for example, Chamberlin, Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, March 14, 1948; and Chamberlin, Memorandum for Wedemeyer, April 14, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret). For the view from Moscow, see JIC, “Soviet Intentions,” April 1, 1948 (extracts of this report are printed in *FRUS, 1948*, 1: 550–57); also see, for example, Hillenkoetter, Memorandum for the President, March 16, 1948; CIA, Special Evaluation No. 27, March 16, 1948; Inglis, Memorandum of Information, March 16, 1948; CIA, “Possibility of Direct Soviet Military Action during 1948,” April 2, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 255; and CIA, “Review of the World Situation,” April 8, 1948, *ibid.*, box 203.

<sup>74</sup> For NSC 7, see *FRUS, 1948*, 1: 545–50; for reactions and reservations of the State Department and the JCS, see *ibid.*, 557–64; and, for the support of Western Union, see *ibid.*, 3: 1–351. Also see, for example, materials in RG 218, Leahy Papers, boxes 5, 6; *ibid.*, ser. CCS 092 Western Europe (3-12-48). For military

The priority accorded to Western Europe did not mean that officials ignored the rest of Eurasia. Indeed, the sustained economic rejuvenation of Western Europe made access to Middle Eastern oil more important than ever. Marshall, Lovett, Forrestal, and other defense officials, including the joint chiefs, feared that American support of Israel might jeopardize relations with Arab nations and drive them into the hands of the Soviet Union. Although Truman accepted the partition of Palestine and recognized Israel, the United States maintained an embargo on arms shipments and sought to avoid too close an identification with the Zionist state lest the flow of oil to the West be jeopardized.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, the Truman administration moved swiftly in June 1948 to resuscitate the Japanese economy. Additional funds were requested from Congress to procure imports of raw materials for Japanese industry so that Japanese exports might also be increased. Shortly thereafter, Draper, Tracy S. Voorhees, and other army officials came to believe that a rehabilitated Japan would need the markets and raw materials of Southeast Asia. They undertook a comprehensive examination of the efficacy and utility of a Marshall Plan for Asia. Integrating Japan and Southeast Asia into a viable regional economy, invulnerable to communist subversion and firmly ensclosed in the Western community, assumed growing significance, especially in view of the prospect of a communist triumph in China.<sup>76</sup> But communist victories in China did not dissuade policymakers from supporting, for strategic as well as domestic political considerations, the appropriation of hundreds of millions of dollars in additional aid to the Chinese nationalists in the spring of 1948. And the American commitment to preserve the integrity of South Korea actually increased, despite the planned withdrawal of occupation forces.<sup>77</sup>

---

assistance, see *FRUS, 1948*, 1: 585–88; also see materials in RG 330, boxes 22 and 24, CD 6-2-46 and 6-2-49; RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); Lawrence S. Kaplan, *A Community of Interests: NATO and the Military Assistance Program, 1948–1951* (Washington, 1980); Condit, *History of the JCS*, 2: 409–36; and Chester J. Pach, “Arming the Free World: The Origins of the United States Military Assistance Program, 1945–1949” (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1981). For Germany, see especially *FRUS, 1948*, 2: 1–1340; and Smith, *Papers of General Lucius D. Clay*, 2: 527–969.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, *FRUS, 1948*, 5: 545–54, 972–76, 1005–07, 1021–22, 1380–81; CNO to the Secretary of the Navy, January 24, 1948, NHC, CNO, double zero files, 1948, box 2; Leahy, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, October 10, 1947, RG 330, box 20, CD 6-1-8; Millis, *Forrestal Diaries*, 344–49, 356–65, 376–77; Bain, *March to Zion*, 137–213; and Miller, *Search for Security*, 173–203.

<sup>76</sup> For the rehabilitation of Japan, see Special Ad Hoc Committee [of SWNCC], Country Report on Japan, August 8, 1947, RG 353, box 109; Blum to Ohly, December 22, 1947, RG 330, box 9, CD 3-1-9; Blum to Forrestal, December 29, 1947, *ibid.*; Royall to Forrestal, April 28, 1948, *ibid.*; Royall, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, May 18, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 182; and CIA, “Strategic Importance of Japan,” May 24, 1948, *ibid.*, box 255. Also see *FRUS, 1948*, 6: 654–56, 694–95, 712–17, 733–34, 750–51, 964–65. For Japan and Southeast Asia, see Ad Hoc Committee, “Study of a United States Aid Program for the Far East,” February 16, 1949, RG 319, P&O, 092 Pacific (top secret); and Schaller, “Securing the Great Crescent,” 392–414.

<sup>77</sup> In recent years scholars have shown that the limited aid to China was not simply a consequence of the influence of the China lobby and the administration’s concern with the legislative fate of the European Recovery Program. Some policymakers (especially military officers) also were motivated by fear of the strategic and geopolitical consequences of a communist takeover in China, even though they fully recognized the ineptitude of the Chinese nationalists. See, for example, John H. Feaver, “The China Aid Bill of 1948: Limited Assistance as a Cold War Strategy,” *Diplomatic History*, 5 (1981): 107–20; Russell D. Buhite, “Major Interests: American Policy toward China, Taiwan, and Korea, 1945–50,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 47 (1978): 425–51; and Thomas G. Paterson, “If Europe, Why Not China? The Containment Doctrine, 1947–49,” *Prologue*, 13 (1981): 19–38. For a fine analysis of developments in both China and Korea, see Stueck, *Road to Confrontation*, 31–110; and, for aid to China, also see *FRUS, 1948*, 8: 1–269, 442–601.

The problem with all of these undertakings, however, was that they cost large sums, expanded the nation's formal and informal commitments, and necessitated larger military capabilities. Yet on March 24, 1948, just as NSC 7 was being finished, Truman's Council of Economic Advisors warned that accelerating expenditures might compel the president "to set aside free market practices—and substitute a rather comprehensive set of controls." Truman was appalled by this possibility and carefully limited the sums allocated for a build-up of American forces.<sup>78</sup> Key advisers, like Webb, Marshall, Lovett, and Clifford, supported this approach because they perceived too much fat in the military budget, expected the Soviets to rely on political tactics rather than military aggression, postulated latent U.S. military superiority over the Soviet Union, and assumed that the atomic bomb constituted a decisive, if perhaps short-term, trump card. For many American policy makers, moreover, the Iranian crisis of 1946, the Greek civil war, and the ongoing Berlin airlift seemed to demonstrate that Russia would back down when confronted with American determination, even if the United States did not have superior forces-in-being.<sup>79</sup>

As secretary of defense, however, Forrestal was beleaguered by pressures emanating from the armed services for a build-up of American military forces and by his own apprehensions over prospective Soviet actions. He anguished over the excruciatingly difficult choices that had to be made between the imperatives of foreign economic aid, overseas military assistance, domestic rearmament, and fiscal orthodoxy. In May, June, and July 1948, he and his assistants carefully pondered intelligence reports on Soviet intentions and requested a special State Department study on how to plan American defense expenditures in view of prospective Soviet policies. He also studied carefully the conclusions of an exhaustive study of the navy's contribution to national security undertaken by the General Board of the navy under the direct supervision of Captain Arleigh Burke. Still not satisfied, Forrestal asked the president to permit the National Security Council to conduct another comprehensive examination of American policy objectives. Forrestal clearly hoped that this reassessment would show that a larger proportion of resources should be allocated to the military establishment.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Edwin G. Nourse, Leon Keyserling, and Clark to Truman, March 24, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 143; Truman to Nourse, March 25, 1948, *ibid.*; Statement by the President to the Secretary of Defense, the Secretaries of the Three Departments, and the Three Chiefs of Staff, May 13, 1948, *ibid.*, box 146; and Truman to Forrestal, July 13, 1948, RG 330, box 18, CD 5-1-20.

<sup>79</sup> For the views of Lovett and Webb, see Lovett diaries, December 16, 1947, January 15, 1948, April 21, 1948; for Clifford's view of the importance of the atomic bomb, see Clifford, Oral History, 88; and, for Marshall's reliance on the atomic bomb, see McNarney, Memorandum for the JCS, November 2, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 114. Also see Policy Planning Staff [hereafter, PPS], "Factors Affecting the Nature of the U.S. Defense Arrangements in the Light of Soviet Policies," June 23, 1948, RG 330, box 4, CD 2-2-2; and Lovett to Forrestal, June 25, 1948, *ibid.* For the lessons derived from crisis decision making over Iran, Greece, and Turkey, see John R. Oneal, *Foreign Policy Making in Times of Crises* (Columbus, 1982).

<sup>80</sup> For the conflicting pressures on Forrestal and his own uncertainties, see, for example, Excerpt of Phone Conversation between Forrestal and C. E. Wilson, April 2, 1948, ML, JFP, box 48; Excerpt of Phone Conversation between Forrestal and Cannon, April 9, 1948, *ibid.*; and Forrestal to Ralph Bard, November 20, 1948, *ibid.*, box 78; for Forrestal's intense interest in the assessments of Soviet intentions, see Forrestal to Charles A. Buchanan [July 1948], RG 330, box 4, CD 2-2-2; and John McCone to Forrestal, July 7, 1948, *ibid.*, for Forrestal's request for a State Department study, see Lovett to Forrestal, June 25, 1948; for the naval study and Forrestal's interest therein, see General Board, "National Security and Navy," June 25, 1948; Arleigh

The Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State prepared the initial study that Forrestal requested and Truman authorized. Extensively redrafted it reappeared in November 1948 as NSC 20/4 and was adopted as the definitive statement of American foreign policy. Significantly, this paper reiterated the longstanding estimate that the Soviet Union was not likely to resort to war to achieve its objectives. But war could erupt as a result of "Soviet miscalculation of the determination of the United States to use all the means at its command to safeguard its security, through Soviet misinterpretation of our intentions, and through U.S. miscalculation of Soviet reactions to measures which we might take." Immediately following this appraisal of the prospects of war, the National Security Council restated its conception of American national security: "Soviet domination of the potential power of Eurasia, whether achieved by armed aggression or by political and subversive means, would be strategically and politically unacceptable to the United States."<sup>81</sup>

Yet NSC 20/4 did not call for a larger military budget. With no expectation that war was imminent, the report emphasized the importance of safeguarding the domestic economy and left unresolved the extent to which resources should be devoted to military preparations. NSC 20/4 also stressed "that Soviet political warfare might seriously weaken the relative position of the United States, enhance Soviet strength and either lead to our ultimate defeat short of war, or force us into war under dangerously unfavorable conditions." Accordingly, the National Security Council vaguely but stridently propounded the importance of reducing Soviet power and influence on the periphery of the Russian homeland and of strengthening the pro-American orientation of non-Soviet nations.<sup>82</sup>

Language of this sort, which did not define clear priorities and which projected American interests almost everywhere on the globe, exasperated the joint chiefs and other military officers. They, too, believed that the United States should resist communist aggression everywhere, "an overall commitment which in itself is all-inclusive." But to undertake this goal in a responsible and effective fashion it was necessary "to bring our military strength to a level commensurate with the distinct possibility of global warfare." The Joint Chiefs of Staff still did not think the Soviets wanted war. But, given the long-term intentions attributed to the Soviet Union and given America's own aims, the chances for war, though still small, were growing.<sup>83</sup>

Particularly worrisome were studies during 1948 suggesting that, should war

Burke, Oral History, NHC, 2: 30; and, for Forrestal's request and for a comprehensive study of American policy and Truman's responses, see Truman to Forrestal, July 13, 1948, RG 330, box 18, CD 5-1-20; Truman to Forrestal, July 15, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 150; and *FRUS, 1948*, 1: 589-93.

<sup>81</sup> NCS 20/1 and 20/4 may be found in Gaddis and Etzold, *Containment*, 173-211 (the quotations appear on page 208). Also see *FRUS, 1948*, 1: 589-93, 599-601, 609-11, 615-24, 662-69.

<sup>82</sup> Gaddis and Etzold, *Containment*, 209-10.

<sup>83</sup> NSC 35, "Existing International Commitments Involving the Possible Use of Armed Forces," November 17, 1948, *FRUS, 1948*, 1: 656-62. For assessments of Soviet intentions and the prospects of war, see the citations in note 74, pages 374-75, above; also see CIA, "Possibility of Direct Soviet Military Action during 1948-49," September 16, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 255; CIA, "Threats to the Security of the United States," September 28, 1948, *ibid.*, box 256; COMNAVFORGER, Intelligence Report, September 30, 1948, NHC, SPD, central files, 1948, box 245, EF61; JSPC, "Revised Brief of Short-Range Emergency Plan: Fleetwood," October 14, 1948, RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46), JSPC 877/23; and *FRUS, 1948*, 1: 648-50, and 5: 942-47.

occur, the United States would have difficulty implementing basic strategic undertakings. Although the armed services fought bitterly over the division of funds, they concurred fully on one subject—the \$15 billion ceiling on military spending set by Truman was inadequate. In November 1948, military planners argued that the \$14.4 billion budget would jeopardize American military operations by constricting the speed and magnitude of the strategic air offensive, curtailing conventional bombing operations against the Soviet Union, reducing America's ability to provide naval assistance to Mediterranean allies, undermining the nation's ability to control Middle East oil at the onset of a conflict, and weakening initial overall offensive capabilities. On November 9, the joint chiefs informed the secretary of defense that the existing budget for fiscal 1950 was “insufficient to implement national policy in any probable war situation that can be foreseen.”<sup>84</sup>

From the viewpoint of the national military establishment, the deficiency of forces-in-being was just one of several problems. Forrestal told Marshall that he was more concerned about the absence of sufficient strength to support international negotiations than he was about the availability of forces to combat overt acts of aggression, which were unlikely in any case. During 1948, the joint chiefs also grew increasingly agitated over the widening gap between American commitments and interests on the one hand and American military capabilities on the other. In November, the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted to the National Security Council a comprehensive list of the formal and informal commitments that already had been incurred by the United States government. According to the joint chiefs, “current United States commitments involving the use or distinctly possible use of armed forces are very greatly in excess of our present ability to fulfill them either promptly or effectively.” Limited capabilities meant that the use of American forces in any specific situation—for example, in Greece, Berlin, or Palestine—threatened to emasculate the nation's ability to respond elsewhere.<sup>85</sup>

HAVING CONCEIVED OF AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY in terms of Western control and of American access to the resources of Eurasia outside the Soviet sphere, American defense officials now considered it imperative to develop American military capabilities to meet a host of contingencies that might emanate from

<sup>84</sup> JCS, Denfeld, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, November 8, 1948, RG 218, ser. CCS 370 (8-19-45), JCS 1800/14. For the impact of the \$14.4 billion budget on strategic plans, see JCS, “Allocation of Forces and Funds for the FY 1950 Budget,” November 22, 1948, RG 330, box 16, “Draper: Budget File,” JCS, 1800/18; for overall problems facing strategic planners, see the voluminous studies in RG 218, ser. CCS 381 USSR (3-2-46); and, for a few examples of the problems in implementing strategic plans, see JLPG, “Quick Feasibility Test of JSPG 496/4,” March 19, 1948, *ibid.*, JLPG 84/5; JCS, “The Logistic Feasibility of Doublestar,” August 12, 1948, *ibid.*, JCS 1844/15; JLPG, “Supply Priorities, for Fleetwood,” October 15, 1948, *ibid.*, JLPG 84/31; and JLPC, “The Correction of Deficiencies Revealed by the Limited Feasibility test of ABC 101,” December 23, 1948, *ibid.*, JLPC 416/36. In late 1948 and 1949 the navy challenged fundamental aspects of the strategic air offensive. See the studies in *ibid.*, ser. CCS 373 (10-23-48); also see Rosenberg, “Hydrogen Bomb Decision,” 71–75. For service rivalries and the budgetary process, see, for example, Warner R. Schilling, “The Politics of National Defense: Fiscal 1950,” in Schilling *et al.*, *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets* (New York, 1962), 5–266.

<sup>85</sup> For the position of the JCS, see NSC 35, “Existing International Commitments,” November 17, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, 1: 656–62. For Forrestal's view, see *ibid.*, 644–46. For background, see William A. Knowlton,

further Soviet encroachments or from indigenous communist unrest. Such contingencies were sure to arise because American strategy depended so heavily on the rebuilding of Germany and Japan, Russia's traditional enemies, as well as on air power, atomic weapons, and bases on the Soviet periphery.<sup>86</sup> Such contingencies also were predictable because American strategy depended so heavily on the restoration of stability in Eurasia, a situation increasingly unlikely in an era of nationalist turmoil, social unrest, and rising economic expectations.<sup>87</sup> Although the desire of the national military establishment for large increments in defense expenditures did not prevail in the tight budgetary environment and presidential election year of 1948, the mode of thinking about national security that subsequently accelerated the arms race and precipitated military interventionism in Asia was already widespread among defense officials.

Indeed, the dynamics of the Cold War after 1948 are easier to comprehend when one grasps the breadth of the American conception of national security that had emerged between 1945 and 1948.<sup>88</sup> This conception included a strategic sphere of influence within the Western Hemisphere, domination of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, an extensive system of outlying bases to enlarge the strategic frontier and project American power, an even more extensive system of transit rights to facilitate the conversion of commercial air bases to military use, access to the resources and markets of most of Eurasia, denial of those resources to a prospective enemy, and the maintenance of nuclear superiority. Not every one of these ingredients, it must be emphasized, was considered vital. Hence, American officials could acquiesce, however grudgingly, to a Soviet sphere in Eastern Europe and could avoid direct intervention in China. But cumulative challenges to these concepts of national security were certain to provoke a firm American response. This occurred initially in 1947–48 when decisions were made in favor of the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, military assistance, Atlantic alliance, and German and Japanese rehabilitation. Soon thereafter, the "loss" of China, the Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb, and the North Korean attack on South Korea intensified the perception of threat to prevailing concepts of national security. The Truman administration responded with military assistance to southeast Asia, a decision to build the hydrogen bomb, direct military intervention in Korea, a commitment to station troops permanently in Europe, expansion of the American alliance system, and a massive rearmament program in the United States. Postulating a long-term Soviet intention to gain

---

Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, October 21, 1948, RG 319, P&O, 092 (top secret); for the reference to Greece, see JCS, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Greece," April 13, 1948, RG 218, ser. CCS 092 Greece (12-30-47), JCS 1826/8.

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, the citations in notes 72–73, pages 373–74, above.

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, CIA, "The Break-Up of the Colonial Empires and Its Implications for U.S. Security," September 3, 1948, HTL, HSTP, PSF, box 255; CIA, "Review of the World Situation," September 16, 1948; and Inglis, Memorandum of Information, February 16, 1949, NHC, SPD, central files, 1949, box 249, A11.

<sup>88</sup> The view presented here of the expansive American conception of national security conflicts in part with the one presented by John L. Gaddis's *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York, 1981), 3–88. Gaddis's argument is thoughtful and insightful but relies too heavily on the recommendations of Kennan and his Policy Planning Staff. Indeed, the adoption of NSC 68 and the massive military build-up that accompanied the Korean War are much easier to understand if one grasps the expansive conception of national security that was pervasive in defense circles after World War II.

world domination, the American conception of national security, based on geopolitical and economic imperatives, could not allow for additional losses in Eurasia, could not risk a challenge to its nuclear supremacy, and could not permit any infringement on its ability to defend in depth or to project American force from areas in close proximity to the Soviet homeland.

To say this is neither to exculpate the Soviet government for its inhumane treatment of its own citizens nor to suggest that Soviet foreign policy was idle or benign. Indeed, Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe was often deplorable; the Soviets sought opportunities in the Dardanelles, northern Iran, and Manchuria; the Soviets hoped to orient Germany and Austria toward the East; and the Soviets sometimes endeavored to use communist parties to expand Soviet influence in areas beyond the periphery of Russian military power. But, then again, the Soviet Union had lost twenty million dead during the war, had experienced the destruction of seventeen hundred towns, thirty-one thousand factories, and one hundred thousand collective farms, and had witnessed the devastation of the rural economy with the Nazi slaughter of twenty million hogs and seventeen million head of cattle. What is remarkable is that after 1946 these monumental losses received so little attention when American defense analysts studied the motives and intentions of Soviet policy; indeed, defense officials did little to analyze the threat perceived by the Soviets. Yet these same officials had absolutely no doubt that the wartime experiences and sacrifices of the United States, though much less devastating than those of Soviet Russia, demonstrated the need for and entitled the United States to oversee the resuscitation of the industrial heartlands of Germany and Japan, establish a viable balance of power in Eurasia, and militarily dominate the Eurasian rimlands, thereby safeguarding American access to raw materials and control over all sea and air approaches to North America.<sup>89</sup>

To suggest a double standard is important only insofar as it raises fundamental questions about the conceptualization and implementation of American national security policy. If Soviet policy was aggressive, bellicose, and ideological, perhaps America's reliance on overseas bases, air power, atomic weapons, military alliances, and the rehabilitation of Germany and Japan was the best course to follow, even if the effect may have been to exacerbate Soviet anxieties and suspicions. But even when one attributes the worst intentions to the Soviet Union, one might still ask whether American presuppositions and apprehensions about the benefits that would accrue to the Soviet Union as a result of communist (and even revolutionary nationalist) gains anywhere in Eurasia tended to simplify international realities, magnify the breadth of American interests, engender commitments beyond American capabilities, and dissipate the nation's strength and credibility. And,

<sup>89</sup> For Soviet losses, see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (3d edn., New York, 1977), 584–85. While Russian dead totaled almost twenty million and while approximately 25 percent of the reproducible wealth of the Soviet Union was destroyed, American battlefield casualties were three hundred thousand dead, the index of industrial production in the United States rose from 100 to 196, and the gross national product increased from \$91 billion to \$166 billion. See Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War* (New York, 1968), 264–65. For an analysis of Soviet threat perception in the aftermath of World War II, see Michael McGwire, "The Threat to Russia: An Estimate of Soviet Military Requirements" (manuscript in preparation at the Brookings Institution [title tentative]).

perhaps even more importantly, if Soviet foreign policies tended to be opportunist, reactive, nationalistic, and contradictory, as some recent writers have claimed and as some contemporary analysts suggested, then one might also wonder whether American capabilities, and dissipate the nation's strength and credibility. And, engender anxieties and to provoke countermeasures from a proud, suspicious, insecure, and cruel government that was at the same time legitimately apprehensive about the long-term implications arising from the rehabilitation of traditional enemies and the development of foreign bases on the periphery of the Soviet homeland. To raise such issues anew seems essential in the 1980s, when a correct understanding of an adversary's intentions, a shrewd grasp of an adversary's perceptions of vital interests, and a sound assessment of America's own national security imperatives seem to be indispensable prerequisites for the avoidance of nuclear war and the establishment of a safer climate for great power competition.