A critique of selected radical revisionist historical contentions concerning the origins of the Cold War.

Douglas Alden Sears

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A CRITIQUE OF SELECTED RADICAL
REVISIONIST HISTORICAL CONTENTIONS
CONCERNING THE ORIGINS OF
THE COLD WAR

by
Douglas Alden Sears

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, radical revisionist histories of the origins of the Cold War have gained a measure of popularity and scholarly acceptance. Relying on the analytical framework of economic determinism, these accounts argue that the United States, because it pursued aggressive foreign policies determined by its economic needs, bears a greater share of responsibility for the advent of the Cold War in the late 1940's than does the Soviet Union. Despite their apparent relevance in an era when conventional assumptions about the conduct of American foreign policy continue to be rigorously questioned, radical revisionist accounts of the origins of the Cold War are frequently factually inaccurate and based on weak reasoning.

A central contention of radical revisionists such as Gabriel Kolko, Lloyd C. Gardner, and William Appleman Williams, is that the United States used its preponderant military and economic strength to coerce the Soviet Union into accepting the American blueprint for reconstruction of the post-World War II world—a pax americana which envisioned an open world in which the United States could invest and market its surplus goods. In pressuring the Soviet Union, the United States provoked a defensive reaction manifested in the consolidation of Russian control in Eastern Europe from 1947 on. This argument does not
withstand careful examination.

Most importantly, the examples of American diplomatic use of military and economic power most frequently cited by revisionist scholars are based on serious distortions of fact. Only by neglecting contradictory evidence and misrepresenting the evidence they do cite are these scholars able to demonstrate the existence of a consistent American policy of economic and military diplomacy.

Moreover, revisionist scholars impute a motivation underlying ostensible instances of such a policy—the maintenance of an open world in which to market surplus goods—without any directly supporting evidence.

Finally, the argument that American attempts to put pressure on the Soviet provoked it to consolidate control in Eastern Europe after 1947 and to maintain an antagonistic stance toward the United States, rests upon the assumption that prior to instances of American muscle-flexing, Soviet policy—particularly in Eastern Europe—was moderate and characterized by tolerance of limited pluralism. This too is incorrect. Well before many of the ostensible instances of American muscle-flexing that revisionist scholars cite, the Soviet Union demonstrated its intention to control Eastern Europe by using whatever means were necessary.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Cold War, the state of tension between the Soviet Union and the United States that developed in the immediate post-World War II period, lasted until the early 1970's, and in many ways continues to exist, has strongly influenced the course of recent history. Conventional understanding of the origins of the Cold War saw the state of tension arising from Soviet expansionistic tendencies and the felt American need to respond to those tendencies in ways that would stem them without precipitating the nuclear holocaust that possession of atomic weapons by both nations seemed to make likely. The perceived failure and high cost in resources, lives, and human suffering occasioned by this conventional understanding of the Cold War have in recent years brought the conventional understanding into sharp question, with "revisionist" historians questioning not only the immediate policies growing out of the conventional understanding, but questioning also the assumptions that could produce so dismal a problem as the Vietnam War—ultimately offering explanations for events starkly at odds with the conventional.

The nagging suspicion in recent years that American involvement in Vietnam was based on faulty assumptions, or
worse, and was an outgrowth of a deeply flawed political and economic structure, has contributed to a greater willingness in recent years to accept revisions and reinterpretations of the origins, nature, and course of American foreign policy in the post-World War II period. The bitter fruit born of conventional assumptions has prompted closer and more critical attempts to understand and evaluate their intellectual integrity. Although William Appleman Williams's *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* was first published in 1959, revisionist interpretations of the origins of the Cold War proliferated and gained popularity in the mid-to-late 1960's. Gar Alperovitz's *Atomic Diplomacy* appeared in 1965, while Gabriel Kolko's *Politics of War* and Lloyd C. Gardner's *Architects of Illusion* were published in 1968 and 1970 respectively.

This paper will seek to examine the scholarship of "radical" revisionist historians, i.e., those scholars who posit an economically determined motivation to American foreign policy and place greater blame for the development of the Cold War on the United States. Using the writings of Kolko, Williams, and Gardner, particularly, as examples of a strain of revisionist thought relying on the analytical framework of economic determinism, this paper will focus on one of the central themes found in these works: that the United States attempted to use its military and economic strength to achieve its economically determined
diplomatic ends, and in so doing exacerbated Soviet-American tensions, contributing substantially to what is called the Cold War. By making American inflexibility and willingness to brandish military and economic strength one of the central causes of the Cold War, revisionist scholars stand Cold War history on its head. In place of a belligerent, hostile Soviet Union one finds a moderate, defensive nation simply intent upon reconstruction and maintenance of physical security. In place of a moderate defender of freedom (the United States), one finds a nation seeking markets for surplus production, determined to maintain an open world, and willing to exercise the levers of military and economic strength to fulfill these ends.

It is the task of this paper to evaluate this argument.
Revisionist and orthodox historians of the origins of the Cold War agree that conflicting foreign policy aims and philosophies underlay the growth of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in the aftermath of World War II. A major theme of that growth of tensions is that of the clash between conflicting views of world order. Arthur Schlesinger suggests that

One theme indispensable to an understanding of the Cold War is the clash between . . . the 'universalist' view, by which all nations shared a common interest in all the affairs of the world, and the 'sphere-of-influence' view, by which each great power would be assured by the other great powers of an acknowledged predominance in its own area of special interest.¹

In the closing days of World War II, the American universalist view of the world, characterized by a Wilsonian faith in collective security, clashed with a clear Soviet desire to establish a tier of subordinate or "friendly" states in Eastern Europe. This theme, in a variety of forms and interpretations, runs through the accounts of orthodox, revisionist, and neo-revisionist historians.

In summarizing the traditional understanding of American universalism as it affected the American hopes for the Yalta conference, Schlesinger quotes Franklin Roosevelt, who said upon returning from Yalta that the conference would
"spell the end of the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence, the balances of power, and all the other expedients that have been tried for centuries—and have always failed."\(^2\) Similar statements by Cordell Hull emphasized an American desire for an end to traditional patterns of diplomacy and the adoption of new methods for the assurance of peace and stability.\(^3\) Schlesinger notes that Hull's ideas were mirrored in popular suspicion of "European power politics" and in the thinking of Sumner Welles, Averell Harriman, and Charles Bohlen, among others.\(^4\)

In an "orthodox" understanding, American universalism grew out of a genuine concern, on the part of both leaders and the public, with establishing a new pattern of international relations that would avoid the mistakes of the Versailles settlement, a settlement that in Hull's eyes at least had sown the seeds of World War II.\(^5\) That American universalism seemed more fervent far from home than in the area at least nominally proscribed by the Monroe doctrine did not qualify its genuineness.

By stripping American universalism of its visionary internationalist pretensions and investing it with a crasser materialistic foundation, "hard" revisionists stand Cold War history on its head.

One of the earliest of these historians is William Appleman Williams, whose *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*,
first published in 1958, lays the groundwork for the later accounts of the origins of the Cold War written by Gabriel Kolko, and Lloyd Gardner, who was a student of Williams. Instead of focusing on the immediate events of the conclusion of World War II and its aftermath, Williams examines American diplomacy en toto as it relates over time to unique features of American society and especially to economic needs.

Looking back to American diplomatic history of the 19th century, Williams seizes upon the Open Door Notes penned by John Hay in 1899, explaining American policy aims in China, as the codification of American foreign policy philosophy, a policy which Williams suggests, has held from Hay's time to the present. According to Williams, the policy of the Open Door was

designed to clear the way and establish the conditions under which America's preponderant economic power would extend the American system throughout the world without the embarrassment and inefficiency of traditional colonialism.²

Hay saw no need for territorial expansion if commercial expansion were possible through the maintenance of an "open door" to American commerce and navigation in underdeveloped areas and in spheres of interest maintained by other powers. In advancing this line of thought, Hay fused American ideas about relations with the world into a coherent policy. Williams quotes an editorial of 1900, written by former
Secretary of State John W. Foster, who noted:

Whatever difference of opinion may exist among American citizens respecting the policy of territorial expansion, all seem to be agreed upon the desirability of commercial expansion. In fact it has come to be a necessity to find new and enlarged markets for our agricultural and manufactured products. We cannot maintain our present industrial prosperity without them.  

The above excursion into the past is important to an understanding of American universalism in relation to the Cold War because Williams asserts that American concern with Eastern Europe, lay not in a solicitude for democratic values, but in a desire to maintain an open door for American agricultural and manufactured products in much the same way as outlined by John W. Foster in 1900. In the internationalism of the Wilson era Williams finds the same commercial intentions married to the rhetoric of universalism. The Open Door as an American policy in 1900 and 1945 was in essence colonialism without the mess and fuss occasioned by the clumsier efforts of Great Britain, Germany, and France. This "neocolonialism" grew out of the exhaustion of the American frontier and the need for continued expansion—a thesis formulated by Frederick Jackson Turner—who linked American prosperity with expansion across the American continent. Williams suggests that this exhaustion, coupled with the depression of the 1890's, laid the basis for the policy of the Open Door—a policy that bore bitter fruit in the post-World War II era.
Williams accepts the idea that continued American prosperity depended on a market for agricultural and industrial surpluses and suggests that this idea motivated American foreign policy from the turn of the century through the 1960's. To buttress this contention he repeatedly quotes American presidents, statesmen, and businessmen to the effect that prosperity depended upon continued expansion.\textsuperscript{10}

For Williams then, American universalism in the 20th century has been inextricably linked to the perceived need for economic expansion in a particular pattern—an expansionism growing out of the unwillingness of American leaders to make the domestic changes that would make expansion unnecessary and hence an ongoing attempt to "save the existing order of business and politics."\textsuperscript{11}

American universalism, as it came into conflict with Soviet desires for a European tier of "friendly" states represented "only the most recent phase of a more general conflict between the established system of Western capitalism and its internal and external opponents."\textsuperscript{12} Williams focuses on Roosevelt's New Deal trade policies, personified in Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, who Williams suggests posessed "an almost religious faith in the 19th century doctrine of free trade as a solution to the political and social, as well as economic, ills of the United States and the world."\textsuperscript{13} Describing the foreign policy of the Roosevelt administration, Williams emphasizes the concern
with finding markets for American goods articulated not only by Hull, but by numerous other spokesmen within the administration and in business. By making the pursuit of the open door for commerce the engine of American foreign policy for over 50 years, Williams suggests that the traditional pursuit of that policy with its universalist pretensions, was in large part the source of heightened tensions with the Soviet Union.

Although Williams purports to eschew the fruitless debate over who started the Cold War, suggesting that, the real issue is rather the far more subtle one of which side committed its power to policies which hardened the natural and inherent tensions and propensities into bitter antagonisms and inflexible positions, he does indicate that Franklin Roosevelt's successors, having internalized "the theory, the necessity, and the morality of open-door expansion," undertaken "a program to force the Soviet Union to accept America's traditional conception of itself and the world." American rejection of spheres of influence as much for economic as for moral reasons, coupled with a clear belief in American military superiority over the Soviet Union is said to have led to American frustration of "conservative" Soviet desires for a tier of buffer states in Eastern Europe. Another result was American inflexibility in negotiations with the Soviets. American unwillingness to discuss territorial arrangements
with Stalin early in the war stemmed from the fact that American leaders, guided by the traditional assumptions of the Open Door, "had neither the desire nor the intention to negotiate away any equality of opportunity in Eastern Europe." 19

Williams attributes American intransigence in dealings with the Soviet Union over Eastern Europe to an ideological attachment to the philosophy of the Open Door and to America's preponderant postwar military strength. The self-righteous insensitivity to Soviet security needs, coupled with a definition of negotiation as "the acceptance of American proposals," helped lay the foundations of the Cold War. 20 For Williams, the origins of the Cold War lie in the inflexibility manifested by American leaders early in the war—an inflexibility which reinforced Kremlin hard-liners who stressed Western hostility and unwillingness to assist in postwar reconstruction. 21

In assessing blame for the Cold War to the United States, Williams emphasizes the conservative nature of Soviet aims in the postwar world. He notes the stress on domestic reconstruction that predominated in both wartime and postwar Soviet publications and was expressed in the desire for Western loans and German reparations. 22 Williams also notes the traditional vulnerability of the Soviet Union and pre-revolutionary Russia to attack and the
insensitivity of American leaders to that feeling of vulner-
ability.\(^{23}\) For Williams, the sources of Soviet conduct are
"the drives to conquer poverty and achieve basic security in
the world of nation states."\(^{24}\) Because of these basic
drives, Williams suggests that Stalin sought an economic
and political understanding with the United States and as a
result restrained revolutionary actions by foreign com-
munists in hopes of moving slowly enough "to avoid fright-
tening the United States into retaliation against the Soviet
Union itself."\(^{25}\)

As does Williams, Gabriel Kolko posits a materialistic-
ally motivated expansiveness as the source of East-West ten-
sions as well as a broader conflict between revolution and
"reaction" throughout the world—a conflict in which the
United States deliberately ranged itself against what Kolko
calls the "irresistible course toward social transforma-
tion" in the world, or more simply, "the Left."\(^{26}\) Kolko
argues that early in the war American leaders formulated
postwar economic objectives that because of the "reaction-
ary" political imperatives attaching to them would in-
evitably bring the United States into conflict with the
Soviet Union and the Left.\(^{27}\) For Kolko, blame for the Cold
War lies largely with the United States, rather than with
what he sees as a conservative, defensive Soviet Union:

Indeed, even if the Soviet Union had not
existed, the conditions of the Third World
and America's response toward it after
1945 would scarcely have been different--for Washington's goals predated the war and even 1917 itself. Like Williams, Kolko relies on quotations from American leaders, among them Cordell Hull and Dean Acheson, to demonstrate that American postwar objectives dealt with the need to avoid domestic economic crisis by finding markets for the potential production of the American economy. Kolko emphasizes the free trade philosophies of Hull, whom he credits with "basic responsibility for American political and economic planning for the peace," and whose views were unanimously accepted within the Roosevelt administration.

In Eastern Europe, the American insistence on economic access backed up by political actions clashed with the defense needs of a war-weary Soviet Union, according to this view. Moreover, political development in Eastern Europe, as Kolko sees it, unsurprisingly took a leftward and nationalistic turn. Kolko suggests that American economic objectives called for the restoration of what he terms "conservative" centrist and anti-Soviet parties to power, a policy which was intolerable to the invasion-sensitive Soviet Union and also to the Eastern European masses, who, according to Kolko, strongly favored "long-overdue radical social changes." The United States, he argues, was concerned with restoring the "semicolonial relationship" of Eastern Europe to the rest of the world and preventing radical economic changes which "would have impinged on
American freedom to invest and trade along traditional lines so central to its objectives in that area." 33

As does Williams, Kolko sees the fundamental political divergence between the Soviet Union and the United States over Eastern Europe as a result of the clash between inflexible American universalism and the overriding Soviet desire for physical security. Kolko argues that the United States failed to distinguish between the essentially conservative postwar aims of the Soviet Union and the radicalism that represented Eastern Europe's response to its former semicolonial status. In petulantly responding to Eastern Europe's unwillingness to return to its former status, the United States provided the unifying and isolating impulse in the formation of a hostile eastern bloc. 34

Kolko's analysis of Soviet aims in the postwar world emphasizes, first, the concern with reconstruction and, secondarily, the "definite national security interests in the region through which the Germans had twice invaded their homeland." Suggesting that "these interests did not include revolution," Kolko describes Soviet policy in Eastern Europe as pragmatic and pluralistic, noting that political rectitude and usefulness in that region were defined by the quality of anti-Germanness. This pragmatism or moderation was manifested in Stalin's tolerance of a wide range of political and social configurations—a tolerance which vanished when he confronted the potential of a return to prewar
"reactionary" politics—a phenomenon which the United States encouraged for its own economic and ideological reasons. American leaders never perceived the essential moderation in Soviet policy in Eastern Europe. Kolko says he knows of no evidence American leaders considered these questions: "No one formulated a larger interpretation of Eastern European events which suggested that the Soviets based their policy on pluralistic, nonideological responses always colored by local circumstances they did not always control." 

In this paper, the importance of Kolko's analysis lies in the specific impact of American capitalism on the growth of tension between the Soviet Union and the United States over events in postwar Europe. But for Kolko, these events are only part of a much larger pattern. While his analysis bears substantial similarity to Williams's in its general outlines, his writings show a sense of identification with the movement to the left which he often describes as the "hallmark of this century," as well as a critical view of American capitalism's expansiveness, which he terms "the central theme of postwar history."

Removed stylistically from the simplistic writings of Williams and the polemicizing of Kolko, are the writings of Lloyd C. Gardner. Also a revisionist, he is more sophisticated in his handling of the clash between American universalism and the Soviet desire for a secure sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.
Gardner departs from the interpretations of Kolko and Williams by denying literal American concern with Eastern European markets. He suggests that "few American leaders seriously believed that East European markets were worth all that fuss for any immediate benefit they might have to American postwar economic problems." Yet while he retreats from the notion of a specific American concern with existing and potential markets in Eastern Europe, Gardner does reflect the general outlines of the revisionist accounts of Kolko and Williams. Gardner uses the conflict between American universalism and the Soviet concern with establishing spheres of influence as a starting point.

Gardner's analysis follows the Kolko-Williams pattern in arguing that a preponderantly powerful United States (both economically and militarily) had the ability and the desire to reconstruct the world in a manner consonant with certain deeply held assumptions. For Gardner, the American possession of preponderant power suggests that the United States played a more active role in determining the "contours" of the ultimate clash between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Gardner emphasizes the general American concern with combating economic nationalism and establishing an integrated world economy, and once again resurrects Dean Acheson's remarks on the dependence of domestic prosperity on "constantly expanding trade with other nations and
between other nations." Gardner imputes a fundamentally expansionist thrust to American universalism—emphasizing the economic aspects of the universalist ideology and hinting that the belief that the cause of world peace was served by free economic intercourse among nations was more than a little self-serving. Thus, for Gardner, the American goals that clashed with a misunderstood Soviet defensiveness were not the outgrowth of a literal desire to penetrate the Eastern European market, but of a broader ideological belief in internationalism (or collective security) that made acceptance of the Russian desire for a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe difficult:

Economic opportunity in Eastern Europe was not essential to American capitalists, but an open world was. . . . The world could not be divided without being closed to someone, so it had better not be divided.

Gardner contrasts American expansiveness with Soviet conservatism, noting Stalin's restraint of Greek communists and his overriding concern with "closing the gate that had been forced twice in the last generation by German armies." Ultimately, Gardner lays the blame for the Cold War squarely with the United States:

Responsibility for the way in which the Cold War developed, at least, belongs more to the United States. At the end of the war it had much greater opportunity and far more options to influence the course of events than the Soviet Union, whose situation in victory was worse in some ways than that of the defeated countries.
The preceding summary of the analyses of three radical revisionist historians of the origins of the Cold War suggests that despite subtle differences of interpretation among them, they have articulated similar versions of events that depart strikingly from more conventional orthodox or neo-revisionist accounts. The heart of their argument is the image of an ideologically inspired, expansionistic United States, willing to use its overwhelming military and economic power to coerce a prostrate and defensive Soviet Union into accepting *pax americana* and to channel the global political events to benefit American economic needs.

The task of this paper is to assess the validity of these analyses and the methodologies underlying them.

Rather than attempt to comprehensively analyze the writings of Kolko, Williams, and Gardner as they describe the origins of the Cold War, this paper will focus primarily on the events which revisionist scholars frequently cite as specific examples of a perceived American intent to use its preponderant economic and military strength coercively. These are examples cited by the authors as the concrete manifestation of policy specifically antagonizing the Soviet Union. Because the issues (and literature) relating to the origins of the Cold War are vast and complicated, they defy comprehensive coverage. Since American attempts to use economic and military might as a bargaining counter constitute a central pillar in the argument that the United
States antagonized a Soviet Union ostensibly willing to tolerate limited pluralism in Eastern Europe and concerned primarily with its own physical security they provide a fruitful framework within which to test the validity of the scholarship of major revisionist scholars. Williams, Kolko, and Gardner all suggest that specific attempts at using American strength to alter Soviet behavior, especially after the successful testing of the atom bomb, antagonized the Soviet Union and ultimately provoked the consolidation of Soviet control in Eastern Europe. Kolko, for example, indicates that the Soviet Union became "defensive and vigilant" only in 1947 after the United States had made "a sincere effort" to secure Eastern Europe "for its framework of multilateral trade" by using "many means of pressure." Williams similarly suggests that only after the autumn of 1947 did Stalin, who had only in 1946 become skeptical about the possibility of Soviet-American cooperation, "ruthlessly" consolidate Soviet control in Eastern Europe. Williams argues elsewhere that American deployment of its preponderance of economic and military power "crystallized" the Cold War. Gardner, in the same vein, intimates that the handling of postwar economic aid to the Soviet Union and the American use of the atom bomb—and mishandling of attendant atomic energy questions—were important elements in the growth of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. Thus a discussion of the particular instances of
economic and military diplomacy as presented in revisionist accounts would address concretely the thesis that the United States for economic reasons pursued a policy of expansion that ultimately conflicted with the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union.

The validity of this thesis can be analyzed by posing a number of questions in the discussion of specific instances of economic or military diplomacy. These would be, (1) what motivated a specific American action? (2) Did the action or event occur in the way it is portrayed in major revisionist accounts? and (3) What was the impact of the action on Soviet-American relations? It is hoped that these heuristic questions will help to answer the broader question of whether American policy was motivated by the "Open Door" philosophy ascribed to it in revisionist accounts and whether American actions provoked Soviet-American tensions.

It is recognized that a concentration on revisionist arguments regarding American use of preponderant military and economic strength is in some ways an artificial approach to the question and involves the neglect of other significant areas. Nonetheless, this approach can shed light on arguments propounded by Kolko, Williams, and Gardner. As much as possible, other significant themes relating to the origins of the Cold War will be discussed within the context of the "preponderant strength" theme. It will be necessary however,
to follow a discussion of the specific instances of economic and military diplomacy with brief, general discussions of the broader themes of the history of the origins of the Cold War in relation to the "preponderant strength" theme—in addition to drawing conclusions and advancing some methodological criticisms.
CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

American initiatives concerning a postwar loan, German reparations, Lend-Lease aid, and eventually Marshall Plan aid are all portrayed in revisionist accounts as either direct or indirect attempts to "pressure" the Soviet Union to acquiesce in American wishes.

One of the central "economic diplomacy" themes is that the United States sought to alter Soviet behavior by "... denying Russia economic aid, first from United States sources, then from German resources." Kolko, for example, suggests that as World War II drew to a close, lessened American dependence on Soviet military actions underlay Averell Harriman's advice to Washington to use economic assistance as a bargaining counter—advice which was linked with a shift in policy from cooperation to opposition in American dealings with the Soviet Union. It is a revisionist article of faith that manipulation of offers of reconstruction loans from the United States and American reparations policies constituted attempts to "exploit Russian weakness" and contributed to a worsening of American-Soviet relations. The failure to work out a postwar program of assistance to the Soviet Union is portrayed as a lost opportunity to allay Soviet suspicions and help
that nation recover from the devastation of war. Kolko asserts that the American policy of "using economic aid as an instrument of political and economic policy" meant that Soviet requests for loans, such as the six billion dollar request of January 1945, went unfulfilled because Washington was unwilling to grant aid "save as part of a vast quid pro quo on global political and economic questions." Kolko notes that "economic experts in the State Department knew that without external aid Soviet recovery would be much slower and more painful, the result of a national effort from a people already intensely weary and wounded." Kolko clearly indicates that outside of American aid, the only other source of "assistance" for Russian reconstruction was the extraction of reparations from Germany, and that American failure to come to terms over loans forced the Soviets to exercise this alternative. In addition, Kolko suggests that failure to respond to Molotov's January 1945 request reflected a feeling in Washington that a strong Russia was not in America's interest. He cites Harriman's suggestion that "our basic interests might be better served by increasing our trade with other parts of the world." According to Kolko, Harriman recommended a policy of "feigning" interest in granting a loan, but with numerous conditions attached--a stance which made any such grant "improbable."

Williams similarly suggests that Stalin went to Yalta with two possible approaches to the postwar world in mind:
One was based on receiving a large loan from the United States... his other alternative was to obtain... economic reparations from Germany and a strong strategic position in eastern Europe.55

Instead of seeking a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union that would have involved economic aid and assurances of security,56 the United States sought to apply the "Open Door" in Eastern Europe by bringing economic pressure to bear on the Soviet Union by manipulating the possibility of a loan.57 Averell Harriman's advice that assistance be dispensed in a manner that would exploit Russian weakness presaged Byrnes's unwillingness in 1945 to work out an agreement with Russia "that involved the recovery loan they had requested."58

Gardner suggests that Harriman and the State Department convinced President Roosevelt to take the "tactical point of view" which they had been urging on the matter of aid to the Soviet Union and forestalled consideration of Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau's proposal for a ten billion dollar loan--favoring instead the use of an offer of credit as "the only concrete bargaining lever" the United States had.59 The only "hitch" in a policy of economic diplomacy was the possibility that Russia would resort to German reparations rather than American aid--a realization that underlay subsequent efforts to limit the extraction of reparations.60 Gardner suggests that had the United States handled the question of economic aid differently, instead of
hoping that the economic lever "could have been used to force drastic changes in Russia's East European policy," some of the "worst" moments of the Cold War could have been avoided. 61

Revisionist discussions of the loan question are highly speculative and rest on a questionable factual basis. Although the diplomatic use of credits and loans is portrayed as a manifestation of an American desire for economic access to Eastern Europe, 62 the connection between this motivation and the actual discussions about the use of aid is not demonstrated.

Kolko's unattributed assertion that State Department economists knew that Soviet recovery would be "much slower and more painful" without American assistance is directly contradicted by John Lewis Gaddis's description of a 1944 Office of Strategic Services study concluding that "Soviet reconstruction would depend very little on foreign credit," and a 1945 State Department study estimating that,

without receiving foreign loans and through only limited use of its gold reserves the Soviet Union could, with the help of German reparations, regain its prewar level of capital investment by 1948. American credits would accelerate the process by only a matter of months. 63

Furthermore, Kolko advances no evidence to suggest that in the early part of 1945 American policy was to "feign" interest without genuine intent to extend credit. It may well be that consideration of the Molotov request was
postponed for essentially political reasons, but Roosevelt's explanation of this was that he wished to talk with Stalin at Yalta before taking a particular course of action. Harriman's advice to the State Department about Molotov's request, which had been proffered as a solution to impending American economic problems, was that the "unconventional form and unreasonable terms" of Molotov's request be ignored. He advised that the United States do everything to insure a sound Russian economy but also make clear that American cooperation depended in some measure on Soviet behavior. Harriman's opinions reflect neither a policy of "feigned" interest nor a feeling that a strong Russia was not in America's interest. In fact, Harriman linked improved Soviet economic conditions with improved (from a Western standpoint) Soviet behavior in the world. In addition to distorting Harriman's position, Kolko simply fails to tell his readers what the vast American quid pro quo he mentions was—or when and how it was communicated to Soviet leaders.

Gardner and Williams correctly note that in early 1945 American policy-makers considered using a postwar loan as a bargaining counter. They do not, however, demonstrate that the United States was particularly clear in its purposes beyond the postponement of action on Molotov's request prior to the Yalta conference. Gardner, for example, bases his assertion that American reparations policy represented an attempt to plug a possible hole in a policy of economic
diplomacy on an editorial in Nation pointing out that Russia could recover quite well using its own resources and German reparations. Gardner proceeds from this to the assertion that subsequent policy statements on reparations reflected an effort to "undo the hitch in economic diplomacy." That American policy statements on reparations reflected a conscious effort to solidify the basis of economic diplomacy is purely inferential. Gardner provides no evidence that the policy statements he fleetingly mentions were an outgrowth of the particular line of reasoning he describes.

In the same vein, Williams asserts that "failing to obtain a loan from America" Stalin was led to choose German reparations as the solution to Russia's recovery problems. But he, too, offers no concrete evidence that the specific failure to come to terms on a loan underlay Soviet reparations policies, or that Stalin saw loans and reparations as an "either-or" proposition. In fact, in April of 1945, Harriman had specifically written that there was little to suggest that even a reparations agreement would mitigate Soviet zeal in "removing vast quantities of goods" from Germany as the Red Army advanced. Even in April of 1945, before the loan issue had been resolved in any fashion, the Soviet Union was stripping Germany. In any case, revisionist scholars offer no evidence that a loan would have mitigated Soviet removals or that the issue was ever discussed in those terms. In fact, Kolko notes that Soviet
loan requests were repeated in August 1945 and October 1946. This was well after the systematic stripping of Germany described in numerous accounts had begun—suggesting perhaps that reparations and loans were not seen as mutually exclusive in the Kremlin.

Because Averell Harriman was perhaps the earliest and most vocal advocate of the use of American economic bargaining levers, it is worthwhile to examine the development of his views on the question. In revisionist accounts Harriman is portrayed as "anti-Russian." Williams, for example, says:

Harriman's natural antipathy to the Soviets was reinforced by his vigorous belief in the necessity of open-door expansion, a belief that may have been heightened even more by an unhappy experience with the Russians in the 1920's, when his attempt to control a sizable segment of the world's manganese market by developing Russian supplies ended in mutual dissatisfaction.

Similar explanations of Harriman's anti-Russianness occur in other revisionist accounts.

Interestingly, this quality of "anti-Russianness" was not perceived by the Russians. Khrushchev, in his memoirs suggests that Harriman pursued policies "much to our liking," and that Harriman was "a highly realistic man, an experienced specialist who understood us, who stood for peaceful coexistence ..." Khrushchev mentions that Stalin even considered compensating Harriman for his lost
manganese concession. More importantly, we know from a variety of sources that Harriman's views on the use of an economic bargaining lever developed out of his specific experiences as ambassador. George Kennan reports that in August 1944 Harriman returned from a meeting with Stalin in which Stalin refused to permit the dropping of supplies to the Warsaw Poles, "shattered by the experience." Lynn Davis reproduces a memo of August 1944 to the Secretary of State from Harriman, in which he said: "For the first time since coming to Moscow I am gravely concerned by the attitude of the Soviet Government in its refusal to permit us to assist the Poles in Warsaw." In a September 1944 cable to Harry Hopkins Harriman noted that,

[our relations with the Soviets now that the end of the war is in sight have taken a startling turn... The Soviets have held up our requests with complete indifference. The time has come when we must make clear what we expect of the Soviets as the price of our goodwill. There is every indication that unless we take issue with the present policy the Soviet Union will become a world bully...]

Herbert Feis notes that Harriman's experiences led him to conclude the impossibility of banking good will in Moscow and that a loan would probably have little lasting positive effect on Soviet-American relations. Rather than deriving from congenital antagonism to the Soviet Union, Harriman's views derived specifically from his experiences in Moscow during the war.
To be sure, Roosevelt's postponement of consideration of a loan to the Soviet Union seems to have been politically motivated. Roosevelt adopted a "wait-and-see" attitude toward Soviet behavior and sought to retain a possible bargaining lever with the Soviet Union. But the connection between this action and the specific aims attributed to American policy by revisionist scholars is not clear. Herbert Feis notes that in the spring of 1945 the loan question was simply left "swinging in the breezes of diplomacy." Whatever the motivation, this particular course of policy amounts, at most, to a sin of omission—it cannot fairly be characterized as a coercive policy requiring a vast *guid pro quo* from its intended victim. The closest the United States seems to have come in the spring of 1945 to an actual articulation of American conditions for economic assistance to the Soviet Union was in Truman's April 22 meeting with Molotov, which Truman describes in his memoirs:

I explained to Molotov that in Roosevelt's last message to Marshal Stalin on April 1 the late President had made it plain that no policy in the United States, whether foreign or domestic, could succeed unless it had public confidence and support. This, I pointed out, applied in the field of economic as well as political collaboration. In this country, I said, legislative appropriations were required for any economic measures in the foreign field, and I had no hope of getting such measures through Congress unless there was public support for them. I expressed the hope that the Soviet Government would keep these factors in mind.
in considering the request that joint British and American proposals be accepted, and that Mr. Molotov would be authorized to continue the discussions in San Francisco on that basis."

Truman's oblique threat was advanced in connection with an American communication to Stalin regarding the Yalta agreement on Poland. The communication sought the invitation of a group of "democratic" Polish leaders to Moscow for consultations leading to "the establishment of a new Provisional Government of National Unity genuinely representative of the democratic elements of the Polish people." Whether this diplomatic request and its accompanying threat of economic sanctions--however oblique--represented an essentially aggressive American stance in contrast to a moderate, nonideological Soviet posture, depends in large part on a definition of the nature of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe in the spring of 1945. This will be discussed later in the paper. What is significant here is that Truman's indirect linkage of reconstruction assistance with Soviet behavior was made in connection with a particular political matter and was not related to a vast quid pro quo. Truman said nothing on this occasion even remotely related to the question of American economic access to Eastern Europe. Truman's threat, such as it was, sought Stalin's adherence to the Yalta agreement on Poland, which had as its primary aim "the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage
Whatever American economic needs and interests in Eastern Europe may have been, they were simply not articulated on one of the very few occasions when a representative of the United States government actually linked economic assistance with Soviet behavior in the presence of a representative of the Soviet government. Had the United States had a well-defined policy of using economic diplomacy to preserve economic access to Eastern Europe and preclude "the Left" from power, as revisionist scholars assert, these matters would have been at least fleetingly mentioned when the club of economic assistance was actually being wielded. Perhaps more significant than Truman's failure to articulate the aims attributed to American policy by revisionist scholars, was the American failure, roughly one month after the Truman-Molotov meeting, to respond to the Soviet Union's negotiation of "extensive trade and commercial agreements with Bulgaria and Rumania, although these agreements virtually monopolized all Rumanian and Bulgarian exports." If American policy had been motivated largely by a desire for free trade, would not this Soviet action, which struck at the heart of principles of free trade, have provoked some sort of American response? Kolko, referring specifically to American policy toward Eastern Europe, asserts that, "The United States was especially alarmed that the Russians, via reparations agreements and joint companies, would establish a monopoly
position in the former Axis satellites." He notes further,

If American policy was vague on political demands for Eastern Europe, it was remark-ably precise in its economic goals. If the Eastern European nations decided to embark on any radically new economic course, it would impinge in some manner on American objectives . . . 84

Kolko cites no evidence to support the assertion that the "United States was especially [emphasis added] alarmed" at the Soviet establishment of a monopoly relationship with former Axis nations. He fails to mention the American failure to respond to the Soviet actions in Rumanian and Bulgaria, which might well be characterized as radical new economic courses for those nations--and certainly inimical to the economic objectives attributed to American policy.

However vague American political demands may have been, Truman's blunt discussion with Molotov, complete with the veiled threat to withhold economic assistance, centered specifically on the essentially political matter of the composition of the Polish government. The Soviet conclusion of bilateral trade arrangements with Bulgaria and Rumania provoked no such American behavior. Accounts of the Hopkins mission to Moscow in July of 1945 by those who sat in on his meetings with Stalin (Bohlen and Harriman) indicated that the discussions centered once again on the composition of the Polish government. Neither Harriman nor Bohlen mention anything about the recently concluded trade agreements. 85 One might speculate that had the Soviet action
"especially" alarmed American policy-makers, it might at least have been mentioned in a meeting between Stalin and a special emissary of the American president.

Truman's April meeting with Molotov demonstrates the central role Poland played in the deterioration of Soviet-American relations in the spring of 1945. Averell Harriman, for example, recounts that he "discussed the future of Poland with Stalin more often than any other single subject." 86 Bohlen notes that at Yalta, Poland was "the most difficult question of all" and that the Western objective was "absurdly simple—the right of the Poles to govern themselves, even if they chose a Communist government." 87 Bohlen's memoirs indicate that American policy-makers clearly felt that the unwillingness of the Soviet government to invite non-Lublin Poles to Moscow for consultations leading to reorganization of the Lublin government constituted a violation of the Yalta agreement on Poland. His account also indicates that the Soviet actions in Poland in the spring of 1945 provoked doubts about the possibility of dealing with the Soviet Union. 88 Following Roosevelt's death, Harriman flew to Washington to specifically ensure that Truman "understood that Stalin was already failing to keep his Yalta commitment." He records that Truman

grasped the importance of the Polish problem and took the opportunity of Molotov's call . . . to impress on him, perhaps too bluntly, the United States' insistence that the Yalta agreement be carried out. 89
The preceding exposition suggests that Truman's blunt treatment of Molotov in April of 1945 was connected largely with political rather than economic concerns and had antecedents in Soviet behavior as it was perceived by American policy-makers.

The loan issue left swinging in the breeze in spring and summer of 1945 surfaced again in February of 1946, when, according to Thomas G. Paterson, the United States communicated to the Soviets a desire to reopen discussion of outstanding issues, among them the question of a $1 billion credit. The American note to the Soviet government suggested discussion of policies that would assist

the peoples liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany and the peoples of former Axis satellite states of Europe to solve by democratic means their pressing economic problems.90

A Soviet reply to the American message, while agreeing to a discussion of a number of matters, did not mention the Eastern European matters implied in the above quotation and was met with a letter from Secretary of State Byrnes which linked the $1 billion credit with "the creation of an international economic environment permitting a large volume of trade and expanding mutually beneficial economic relations among nations."91

Surprisingly, neither Williams nor Gardner discuss the handling of the loan question in 1946. Yet this instance of economic diplomacy, if taken alone, might indicate that
the United States had a policy of using the possibility of economic assistance to promote a global economy based on multilateral trade. Only Kolko cites the Byrnes letter of April 1946 mentioned above, saying that American officials "persisted in the strategy of linking the matter [the loan] to an omnibus agreement on an economic policy that neither a socialist nor a capitalist nation was likely to accept." 92

A more thorough reading of the sections of the *Foreign Relations* series dealing with the loan question in 1946 indicates that American policy-makers did indeed ponder using the Soviet loan request to alter Soviet economic policies in Eastern Europe. Elbridge Durbrow, in a memorandum of January 1946, lamented the weakening of the American bargaining position "with regard to the economic blackout in Eastern Europe" because of a $400 million Lend-Lease settlement and UNRRA benefits extended to the Soviets. 93 Durbrow's memo was written in support of a Harriman telegram which advocated not making "isolated economic arrangements" pending an "over-all" economic understanding. 94 Harriman added that an understanding should be reached, "at least regarding the manner in which outstanding economic questions are to be adjusted." 95

The Byrnes letter which Paterson cites, while stating that it would be virtually impossible to discuss a loan without discussing certain other questions relating to the "sound development" of "mutually beneficial economic
relations among nations," did not overtly link a loan to a specific Soviet position as Truman did with Molotov in 1945.\textsuperscript{96} The loan was linked with discussion of outstanding economic issues. It is clear however, that in this case, the United States did use its bargaining lever to attempt to bring Soviet economic behavior closer to the American position, which did envision expanding trade among nations. But the particular points Byrnes sought to discuss in connection with a loan do not indicate a narrow, self-interest-ed desire on the part of the United States "to solve its own dilemmas through reorganizing the world economy" or an expectation that other nations "agree to commit economic suicide by accepting the American program."\textsuperscript{97} The point dealing with Eastern Europe sought to determine joint British-Soviet-American policies to solve the economic problems of former Axis states.\textsuperscript{98} Of course documents meant for foreign consumption are unlikely to articulate crass self-interest. Kolko, who uses the phrase "economic suicide," does not explain how American economic aims in the world required other nations--particularly Britain and Russia--to destroy themselves. Asserting that it was "predictable in advance" that other nations would not agree to self-destruction, Kolko says that Cordell Hull saw the problems of the postwar world "from the viewpoint of the problems and needs of American economic interests."\textsuperscript{99} Whatever Hull's viewpoint may have been, it did not dictate
that other nations agree to economic suicide. The very essence of his thinking—thinking mirrored in some measure in the Byrnes letter—was that the lowering of trade barriers would encourage higher living standards in all countries and eliminate the economic jealousy that he saw as a cause of war.  

In any case, the terms attached to the loan offer in 1946 were sufficient, Herbert Feis suggests, to snuff out the possibility of coming to agreement. The effect of this is hard to determine. While revisionist scholars portray the failure as evidence of a "hard" American policy toward the Soviet Union, and generally stress the issue in assigning greater responsibility for the growth of tensions between the two nations to the United States, they do not demonstrate its specific impact. Discussions of the impact of the failure focus largely on what a loan could have accomplished had the United States correctly understood Soviet aims and hopes in the world. Even the linkage of a failure to come to terms on economic aid and Soviet reparations policy is speculative. Thomas Paterson captures the spirit of these speculations on the failure of the loan discussions: "The proposed American loan to Russia was never given the opportunity to demonstrate whether it could serve as a peace potion for easing increasingly bitter Soviet-American relations." Although he says that the diplomatic use of economic power is to be expected and can
be helpful, Paterson suggests that if "that power thwarts negotiations or is employed to buttress demands which alone are held to be the sine qua non for peaceful settlement, the result is schism and conflict." This last statement may be true, but it does not reflect events as they happened or even as portrayed in revisionist accounts. Paterson's own account argues only that American demands were held to be the sine qua non for a $1 billion credit—not for a "peaceful settlement." Whatever the tensions between the Soviet Union and United States may have been in 1946, the two countries were not at war. If American demands thwarted anything, they thwarted the possibility of a loan to the Soviet Union. Had American "economic power" not existed, the whole question of credits (and attendant negotiations) would not have arisen.

In revisionist accounts of the origins of the Cold War, including Paterson's more detailed study of specific economic issues, the effect of the failure of the Soviet Union and the United States to come to terms on a loan is never made clear. But it is implied that American policy-makers haltingly attempted to use assistance as a diplomatic weapon and that as a result relations between the two nations worsened over time.

Lend Lease Controversy

Perhaps because it is a case in which an American action produced a demonstrably negative Soviet response, one
of the most frequently cited examples of "economic diplomacy" cited in revisionist histories is the American Lend-Lease cancellation of May 12, 1945. Kolko, Williams, and Gardner all portray the Lend-Lease cutoff as an attempt by the United States to make the Soviet Union aware of a willingness to use economic might to alter Soviet behavior.

Gardner describes Truman's oblique hints to Molotov in their April 1945 meeting that postwar assistance depended upon Soviet behavior, an admonition that Gardner suggests "was given more substance a few weeks later when Washington abruptly cut off Lend-Lease aid following the German surrender." Gardner argues that "Truman wanted to sensitize the Russians to America's economic ability to reward its friends and discourage its adversaries." Gardner dismisses the argument that the Soviet Union had few grounds for complaint in view of the $11 billion of aid previously transferred from the United States with the reasoning that,

(1) the Soviets had more than paid their way in blood and treasure, and (2) both sides knew that there would be a new account sheet started after the war, based on trial political balances.

In any case, the bluntness of Stalin's reaction indicated that Truman had sensitized him to American willingness to exercise its economic might. 104

Kolko sets his version of the cancellation in the context of the May 1945 impasse over Anglo-American unwillingness to deal with the Warsaw Provisional Government:
In this setting Washington chose to apply pressures on the Russians via a manipulation of the Lend-Lease program, a policy Harriman had been urging and with which John Grew agreed. While he does concede that the cutoff affected Great Britain more than the Soviet Union and that the abruptness of the cutoff, which had involved the recall of ships from the high seas, had been mitigated by later actions, Kolko unequivocally states that "Insofar as the discussions concerned the Russians, they were set entirely in the context of pressuring them along lines Harriman advised."106

Williams suggests that the knowledge of America's great absolute as well as relative advantage in both economic and military power . . . encouraged Truman and other leaders after 1945 to think that they could force the Soviets to accept American proposals without recourse to war. Williams asserts that "a strong view prevailed" in Washington's approach to Moscow: "Thus, for example, additional lend-lease allocations and shipments to Russia were canceled in May 1945." Williams notes further that "on a comparative basis, Russia was treated far less considerately than England and France during the process of termination."107

Thomas Paterson, while acknowledging the domestic considerations involved in the cutback decision, suggests that it "must be viewed within the context of the administration's thinking about economic power as diplomatic leverage." Paterson asserts that the interpretation of the Lend-Lease legislation that dictated an abrupt cancellation,
derived from the assumption that economic power as a diplomatic weapon would make the Russians pliable; a different assumption would have produced a different interpretation.

He suggests further that American officials expected an irritated Soviet reaction, hoped a cutback would affect Soviet behavior, and simply wanted the affair handled gently enough to forestall charges of economic diplomacy. The execution of the decision made the "application of economic pressure... quite conspicuous and naked." 108

The interpretation of the Lend-Lease cutoff that stresses its coercive aspects has been comprehensively disputed by George C. Herring, who asserts that the versions advanced by Kolko, Williams, Gardner, and others, all contain substantial errors of fact and omission. 109

Gardner and Paterson, for example, neglect to tell their readers that the Lend-Lease cutoff was not solely directed at the Soviet Union and applied to all nations receiving American aid. 110 Williams never makes clear that the cutoff applied to all nations and that it followed the German surrender. On this point Kolko is somewhat more faithful to actual events when he mentions the impact of the cancellation on Great Britain, but with his assertion that discussions preceding the cutoff were set entirely in the context of coercive use of economic power, he skates on thin ice.

Herring's version of the Lend-Lease cancellation illuminates areas of the question rarely mentioned by
revisionist historians, among them, the domestic and legis- lative constraints on the continuance of aid after the ces- sation of hostilities, the special care and sensitivity ac- corded to Lend-Lease dealings with the Soviet Union by American policy-makers, and the errors of policy execution that made the cutoff unnecessarily abrupt.  

A decline in public support for the Lend-Lease pro- gram and public opposition to the continuation of such aid programs after the cessation of hostilities prompted con- gressional efforts to prevent the renewal of the program in February of 1945. Although the program was renewed, "House Republicans forced the administration to accept an amendment to the act which explicitly stated that Lend-Lease could not be used for postwar purposes."  Domestic political considerations growing out of the strong public op- position to Lend-Lease, as well as the terms of the legis- lation dealing with it, had much to do with the May 12 can- cellation.

Truman admits in his memoirs that he signed the actual cutoff order, which took a very rigid interpretation of the terms of the legislation, without reading it. When high officials realized how zealously the order had been execu- ted, they immediately prevailed upon Truman to countermand it.

This is not to suggest that the possibility of using Lend-Lease coercively was not discussed. Herring describes the change in official thinking about American-Soviet
relations, an evolution in which Averell Harriman did counsel greater American wariness in dealings with the Soviet Union and suggested the possibility that economic assistance could be advanced on a quid pro quo basis:

It is quite true that some State Department officials discussed the possibility of using lend-lease as an instrument of coercion. Harriman himself had suggested the same possibility in 1944. Those responsible for initiating the policy change were more cautious, however, because they feared that a rupture on the lend-lease issue might jeopardize the delicate negotiations then taking place at San Francisco on the Polish question and the organizational structure of the United Nations.115

In fact, Harriman and Edward Stettinius "discussed the possible impact of the lend-lease reduction on other issues," agreeing that "no acts of pressure should be 'suggested or considered' until after the San Francisco Conference." They also agreed that adjustments in Lend-Lease aid occasioned by the cessation of hostilities be made "without any hint of relationship with the Polish or other political problems with the Soviet Union."116

It is important to point out that Lend-Lease assistance to the Soviet Union had had unique status in that it was unconditional. American officials had given priority to, and had been singularly uncritical of, Soviet requests for material assistance during the war.117 Harriman's recommendations on the possible coercive use of Lend-Lease aid centered first on the adoption of a "firm but friendly" quid pro quo approach that would have involved reductions in the...
unconditional status of assistance—rather than abrupt or arbitrary cutoffs. The "firm but friendly" approach evolved from reported abuse of the unconditional aid policy, continued secretiveness in Soviet dealings with the United States, and indications that unconditional assistance, rather than encouraging friendliness, had prompted greater Soviet aggressiveness because it was interpreted as a "sign of weakness." ¹¹⁸

Herring concludes:

Truman's decision to reduce lend-lease after V-E Day did not discriminate against the Soviets. It did not mark an abandonment of American attempts to cooperate with Russia, nor was it intended to coerce the Soviets. The lend-lease cutback was general; it applied to all nations. The reason the Russian aid program required separate handling before V-E Day was the unique status it had been given at the beginning of the war. . . . The termination of the unconditional aid policy did not mean Truman had ended Roosevelt's policy of attempting to cooperate with the Russians. Harriman and Truman believed, on the contrary, that the unconditional aid policy had jeopardized their objective. Only if the United States demonstrated a determination to defend its own interests could a sound basis for postwar cooperation be constructed. . . . There is no evidence whatever that the May 11 decision was designed to drive the Russians from Eastern Europe. From time to time some of Truman's advisers had suggested such a course. But after V-E Day, Harriman had underscored the need for caution in handling lend-lease to avoid any break during the San Francisco conference. . . . No attempt was made during the period from V-E Day to V-J Day to extort concessions, large or small, in return for American materials. ¹¹⁹

It is worthwhile to deal at length with the Lend-Lease
cancellation because it did demonstrably antagonize the Soviet Union. When Harry Hopkins met with Stalin on May 27, 1945, Stalin described the manner of the cutback as, "unfortunate and even brutal," and characterized it as an attempt to "pressure" the Soviet Union—even though he admitted he was aware that cessation of hostilities would mean a reduction in aid. Similarly, Nikita Khrushchev, in the second volume of his memoirs, describes the "bitter experience with the Americans over Lend-Lease," suggesting that the Americans cared little about "the blood we'd shed in the fight against our common enemy."

Kolko's assertions that "key leaders in Washington understood that they were applying economic tools for political ends" and that "Hopkins feigned innocence" in his meeting with Stalin notwithstanding, it is ironic that one of the few instances in which a specific American action provoked a documented Soviet reaction was in fact largely unrelated to economic coercion. Furthermore, Stalin's remarks should not necessarily be taken at face value—as revisionist scholars, who assail American acceptance at face value of the Jacobin rhetoric of some communist leaders, would doubtlessly agree. Harriman's account of his first meeting with Stalin in 1941 describes instances in which Stalin was "brutally critical" of meager American offers of wartime assistance, implying that the Americans and British wished to see the Soviet Union defeated. Stalin on this occasion
rejected Harriman's explanations of the difficulties involved in supplying specific items, especially on short notice:

Why is it that the United States can only offer one thousand tons of armor plate for tanks, a country with a production of over fifty million tons of steel?

Harriman's specific explanation of the amount of time required to increase capacity for certain types of steel was brushed aside with, "One only has to add some alloys." Harriman recounts numerous similar instances in which Stalin crudely impugned Western or American purposes. The first instance, mentioned above, happened well before many of the occurrences frequently associated with the growth of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, such as the failure to open the Second Front. This is not to suggest that Stalin was necessarily hostile in 1941, but simply that the remarks he used with Hopkins did not represent a new departure in Soviet diplomacy. One might note in passing that Stalin's remarks in 1941 do represent a peculiar way of dealing with representatives of nations offering unsolicited military assistance to a nation struggling to survive a major invasion. If either Britain or the United States had wanted the Soviet Union defeated, an easier solution was close to hand.

In any case, the revisionist interpretation of the Lend-Lease cancellation conflicts with more complete accounts of what actually happened. The revisionists neglect whole
aspects of the question and impute a specific motivation to
the cutoff without any directly supporting evidence. Gar
Alperovitz, who uses the Lend-Lease cutoff as an example of
a change in American policy from conciliation to confronta-
tion with the Soviet Union, provides a good example of this
when he suggests that Truman "later characterized his first
attempt to utilize economic bargaining strength through
Lend-Lease as a 'mistake.'" In his memoirs Truman
described the abrupt execution of the cancellation order as
"unfortunate," acknowledged that he had learned a lesson
about reading documents before signing them, and recalled
Hopkins's assurances to Stalin that the cutoff was not an
attempt to pressure the Soviet Union. Alperovitz, not
Truman, characterized the cutoff as an attempt to utilize
economic bargaining strength.

It seems clear then, that one of the most frequently
cited examples in support of one the central revisionist
contentions does not in fact support that contention.

Reparations and Postwar Reconstruction

The revisionist assertion that American policy on re-
parations was part of a broader policy of economic diplo-
macy is also without foundation. Kolko suggests that, "A
high level of German reparations available to Russia . . .
would exclude the United States as the major source for the
reconstruction of the world economy." Williams similarly
suggests that the United States sought to avoid "any indirect
financing of Soviet recovery." Gardner's version has been recounted previously in this paper, but essentially he asserts that American reparations policy derived from a desire to maintain economic leverage over the Soviet Union.

Harry Truman clearly links American unwillingness to place a specific figure on reparations from Germany with American unwillingness to underwrite reparations as had happened (in the American view) after World War I. He writes that "we remembered that after 1919 Germany was so enfeebled that only American money made it possible to pay the reparations that had been imposed." Truman suggests that American policy sought to deprive the Germans of the ability to make war but leave "sufficient means to provide a minimum subsistence level without sustained outside (which could only mean American) relief." Bohlen similarly recounts that at Potsdam, "The Americans were determined not to get trapped, as in World War I, in paying for Germany's reparations to other countries." There is nothing to suggest that this explanation was offered insincerely or that the United States hoped to manipulate the reparations question to alter Soviet behavior.

In revisionist accounts the Marshall Plan is portrayed as a logical development in the continuing American effort to maintain an open world in which to invest and market surplus production. Kolko, for example, argues that

By June 1948 the United States had embarked on its ambitious program to reconstruct European capitalism in a manner that could sustain
American trade, so vital to the very survival of American capitalism... Unable to alter its internal economic priorities, American capitalism could only turn outward, not with disinterested aid but with new designs to save itself.  

Kolko suggests that the European recovery of 1946 "involved far less guidance and participation than that nation could afford," and that by 1947 the United States was seeking means to "reverse the much more prevalent economic policy of trade restrictionism, autarchy, and European sufficiency." Thus the United States "came to believe" that a "system of grants... could restructure an ideal world capitalist trading structure... able to purchase America's vast surplus." Kolko argues further that the Truman administration, despite its internal admissions that the Marshall Plan was not directed at a communist threat specifically, "conjured up the bolshevik threat" for public consumption. Congress, rather than Eastern Europe--which had by 1947 been written off, was the threat. Lest Congress not provide "essential funding" with which the administration hoped "to secure its economic aims," a Red Scare and crisis mentality was fostered.

The Marshall Plan offer had an important impact on the Soviet Union. Molotov attended the Paris meeting of foreign ministers to discuss the proposal, decided that the proposals being discussed by the British and French would have involved "unprecedented interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states," had his proposals rejected by the
British and French, and left. Kolko argues that after
the Paris meeting the Russians started to "consolidate
their international position and to offer aid and trade
agreements to neighboring states."  
Williams argues that the Marshall Plan cannot be seen
as "solely" humanitarian, pointing out that despite great
need, China and Latin America were excluded. As does Kolko,
Williams portrays the Marshall Plan as a way of forestal-
ing the loss of foreign markets, and suggests that Secre-
tary of State Marshall assumed that the program "offered
the only solution to America's economic difficulties."  
The Russians, Williams asserts,
clearly interpreted the Marshall Plan
as the over-all economic equivalent of
Baruch's proposal on atomic energy. It
was to them an American strategy for set-
ting and maintaining conditions on econ-
omic development in eastern Europe and
the Soviet Union. That estimate prompt-
ed them first to refuse to participate,
and then to embark upon a series of ac-
tions which most Americans mistakenly
think had already occurred. They initia-
ted a program of general political repres-
sion in Rumania. They sharply curtailed
freedom of the press in Bulgaria, Rumania,
and eastern Germany. They shot the Pea-
sant Party leader Patlov in Bulgaria.
And within the year the Communist Party in
Czechoslovakia seized a monopoly of poli-
tical power.  
Thus for revisionists, the Marshall Plan seems to be the
last straw in a policy of economic diplomacy growing out
of essentially domestic needs of American capitalism.
While there is a measure of truth in the revisionist
treatment of the Marshall Plan, it is not clear that the policy was essentially a reflection of domestic economic needs or an effort to "restore the institutions of the old order on an inter-European basis." 143

George Kennan, who headed the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department, which did much of the research leading to the Marshall Plan, describes the origins of the program in his memoirs. Kennan recounts that Secretary of State Marshall returned from the Moscow meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in April of 1947, "shaken by the realization of the seriousness and urgency of the plight of Western Europe . . . where something approaching total economic disintegration seemed now to be imminent." 144 He notes further that Marshall's experience in Moscow led him to feel that "the Soviet leaders had a political interest in seeing the economies of the Western European peoples fail under anything other than Communist leadership." 145 Kennan describes the reasons for the American insistence that the initiative in planning and organizing a reconstruction program come from the Europeans and that such a program be a joint program "agreed to by several European nations." He cites the original memorandum:

It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this nation to draw up unilaterally and to promulgate formally . . . a program designed to place Western Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans . . . The program which this country is asked to support . . . must, for psychological as well as economic reasons,
be an internationally agreed upon program.146

Kennan suggests that there were two reasons for the requirement that such a program be internationally agreed upon. The first was that the United States would have faced "a whole series of competing national demands" which would have forced the United States to make politically unpopular decisions, had the international requirement not been insisted on. The second reason was that,

We considered that one of the long-term deficiencies of the European economy as a whole was its excessive fragmentation . . . the lack, in particular, of a large consumer's market.147

Clearly, in Kennan's account, the United States did advocate multilateral economic organization for Europe. The reasons he cites in particular have more to do with fostering European recovery however, than with asserting American control or solving American dilemmas. Marshall seems to have been genuinely disturbed by economic conditions in Europe rather than a recovery in which the United States had had scant influence—for which Kolko offers no evidence.

Kolko's assertion that within the government it was recognized that the Marshall Plan was not a means of combating communism and that communism was not at the root of European economic problems is based on a citation from the same paper Kennan cites. The quotations as used in Kolko and Kennan support contradictory conclusions. Kolko quotes:
[the State Department] ... did not see communist activities as the root of the present difficulties in Western Europe ... American effort to Europe should be directed not to the combatting of communism as such but to the restoration of the economic health and vigor of European society.148

Kennan's version is somewhat different:

the paper recognized . . . that the Communists are exploiting the European crisis and that further Communist successes would create serious danger to American security. It (the Staff) considers, however, that American effort in aid to Europe should be directed not to the combatting of communism as such but to the restoration of the economic health and vigor of European society. It should aim, in other words, not to combat communism but the economic maladjustment which makes European society vulnerable to exploitation by any and all totalitarian movements and which Russian communism is now exploiting.149

The more complete quotation suggests that the "bolshevik threat" which Kolko argues was simply "conjured up" for public consumption, was very much on the minds of those writing a paper that helped lay the foundations of the Marshall Plan. It is important to point out that while the threat was perceived and was not simply conjured up as a political expedient, much evidence suggests that the theme of a communist threat was manipulated and exaggerated by the Truman administration.150 Nonetheless, it is a comment on Kolko's scholarship that he uses a quotation to prove the opposite of what it says when ellipses are filled in and an additional sentence added.

Bohlen, who attended Marshall's meeting with Stalin in April of 1947 and drafted the speech Marshall delivered at
the Harvard commencement, describes the development of the program much as Kennan does, citing particularly the "deep impression" Stalin's "seeming indifference to what was happening in Germany" made. 151

Both Bohlen and Kennan indicate that the origins of The Marshall Plan lay in perceptions of the economic devastation in Europe and in the impression that Stalin was content to "let matters drift" as the best way of advancing Soviet interests. 152 There is scant mention in their discussion of the Marshall Plan of a vast American surplus of goods, for which markets had to be assured. In fact, Bohlen points out that "the United States was short of many of the items which were to be included in the Marshall Plan." 153

American self-interest was a component of the thinking behind the memorandum cited by Kolko and Kennan, but the reference was to security, not expanded markets for American goods. The irony of the revisionist analysis of the purpose of the Marshall plan is that the public statements of economic self-interest made by Marshall before Congress and business groups that they cite, 154 were not reflected in the internal process of policy formulation. One might speculate that these remarks were intended to smooth the passage of legislation.

In revisionist accounts, the impact of the Marshall Plan on Soviet foreign policy is not specifically demonstrated; it is merely implied. Williams, for example, offers no direct evidence that Soviet perception of a

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particular purpose in the program prompted the repressive series of Soviet actions he describes. Kolko merely asserts that it was in the "general context" of the post-Paris meeting period that the Soviets moved to consolidate their international position.

Adam Ulam fills the gap by suggesting that by the time of the founding meeting of the Cominform in September 1947, "Soviet suspicion about the real purpose of the Marshall Plan had hardened into conviction."

The real goals of the plan, the Russians argued . . . had little to do with economic rehabilitation, not even with stopping the spread of Communism in the West; the real aim was an aggressive one: to lay down the economic base for political and military pressures against Eastern Europe.

Ulam suggests that Stalin's perception of the dangers posed by the Marshall Plan--the magnetic effect on the satellites of a prosperous West, the need to divulge economic information in the event of Soviet participation in the Plan, and the domestic political problem of reconciling anti-bourgeois vigilance with incoming American billions--underlay Stalin's efforts to secure the satellites and redirect the efforts of Western Communists from attempting to gain power to simple disruption.

The promulgation of the Marshall Plan did, it seems, help provoke a reinforcement of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. To argue, however, as revisionist scholars do, that this was the frustrated response of a nation whose
previous foreign policies were essentially moderate and pluralistic, to a consistent pattern of aggressive behavior on the part of the United States, requires the neglect or redefinition of numerous Soviet actions and policies which underlay American actions. The Marshall Plan clearly had as underpinnings, a perception of Europe in distress, and an assumption about the nature of Soviet intentions in the world. The policy was defensive inasmuch as it sought to forestall communist exploitation of economic conditions in Western Europe. It was not motivated by a desperate American desire to insure markets for American goods.

The Marshall Plan was an example of economic diplomacy. It sought to achieve diplomatic ends through the manipulation of economic power. It was not, however, part of a broader pattern of American economic diplomacy—a pattern in which American economic power was clumsily and inflexibly wielded to secure carefully defined American aims. Although revisionist historians clearly assert the existence of such a policy and assign it a major role in the growth of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, the examples cited do not in many cases substantiate the broader assertion. In the cases of the Lend-Lease cancellation, American reparations policy, and post-war loans, a specific motivation is imputed rather than demonstrated, and the impact of a particular action is seldom demonstrated. While American policy-makers discussed
and on occasion exercised economic bargaining power, they did not formulate a coherent, long-range policy with clear objectives.

The contention that Soviet policy became militant "only" in 1947 after the United States had sought to secure an "open door" in Eastern Europe using "many means of pressure"\textsuperscript{159} rests on a demonstration that pressure was exerted to fulfill this objective, and on a demonstration that Soviet policy until 1947 was indeed moderate. Although this last point will be dealt with later in the paper, the existence of a clear policy of using economic pressure is simply not demonstrated.
The companion to the revisionist theme that the United States pursued a policy of "economic diplomacy" is the thesis that the United States deployed its military power in a manner consistent with the assumptions and objectives of the "Open Door." Particularly important strands of this theme include the handling of the German surrender, the earlier Italian surrender, and the reasons for the use of the atom bomb and its effect on American diplomacy toward the Soviet Union. American failure to mount the Second Front offensive in 1942, while cited as a source of greater Soviet-American tension in most histories of the period, is not portrayed in revisionist accounts as an attempt to alter Soviet behavior or as motivated (at least on the part of the United States) by economic or political considerations. Gardner suggests that the failure to open a front, as promised by Roosevelt in 1942, led to Soviet suspicions that the United States and Britain would let Russia take "the heart and iron out of the German army" before dashing across Europe. He does not, however, question the fact that the United States wanted to open a Second Front against Germany and was stymied by British unwillingness. The negative consequences of the two-year gap in Allied promise and
performance for Soviet-American relations have been recorded in numerous accounts, but few assert that this failure of American action was the overriding cause of future disagreements. Adam Ulam notes that the Normandy landing of 1944 did much to dispel Soviet bitterness at carrying a greater share of the military burden, and was met with effusive praise from Stalin himself.\textsuperscript{162}

While Gardner and Williams concentrate their attention on atomic diplomacy, Kolko deals at some length with the political motivation underlying American wartime strategy and the handling of the German surrender. He argues that American strategy during the war was aimed at mitigating the consequences of Soviet military actions in Europe and Germany especially. Since Germany was "far more consequential to the future of world politics than control of the Balkans," the United States formulated a plan entitled RANKIN which involved a hasty rush across Europe in the event of a premature German collapse.\textsuperscript{163} Although Kolko asserts that this politically inspired plan was conceived to "solve the dilemmas of Soviet military domination in Europe,"\textsuperscript{164} he offers no direct evidence that this was so. In fact, the plan, as described in a summary for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in August 1943, specifically envisioned that the plan was "to be carried out in cooperation with the Russians."\textsuperscript{165}

Another example of politically motivated military decisions which Kolko cites is the American failure to
advance to Prague in May of 1945. Kolko asserts that the decision was motivated by an unwillingness to "aid what the Americans understood to be a Communist-led uprising." Once again, Kolko provides no direct evidence that this particular event motivated American policy. The overwhelming weight of evidence suggests nearly the opposite conclusion. Despite Churchill's strenuous urgings that the United States advance to Prague to prevent Soviet dominance in Czechoslovakia, and despite State Department support for this position, Eisenhower and George Marshall specifically rejected the intermingling of political and military considerations. Truman furthermore, specifically chose not to revise strategy in light of Churchill's importunities. Before Roosevelt's death in April of 1945, Eisenhower had announced his intention to halt his troops at the Elbe and not undertake the capture of Berlin. The reasons for this were a desire to avoid inadvertent clashes with Soviet troops and a fear that a thrust to Berlin "might have exposed Eisenhower's flanks to attacks from the German army." Further Churchill requests that the United States not withdraw its forces, already deep within the Russian occupation zone, were met with a note from Truman, saying, "I am unable to delay the withdrawal of American troops from the Soviet zone in order to use pressure in the settlement of other problems." Clearly, the political advantages of advancing to Prague were considered and rejected. Kolko's
analysis of American policy is speculative at best. Furthermore, Kolko shows a bothersome willingness to accept "strictly military" explanations for Soviet behavior, while rejecting similar explanations for American actions—with no reason given for the distinction. While the American decision not to advance to Prague leads Kolko to say, "[a]t the very least [emphasis added] one may conclude that there was probably no desire to aid what the Americans understood to be a Communist led uprising,"\textsuperscript{168} Soviet failure to aid the Warsaw uprising in August of 1944 was a purely military decision, with "consideration of the political aspects ... an afterthought."\textsuperscript{169} Kolko does not mention the radio appeals from Moscow that urged an uprising in Warsaw in support of the advancing Red Army,\textsuperscript{170} or the Soviet refusal to permit the West to drop supplies to the struggling Poles.\textsuperscript{171}

Kolko does not suggest that the specific instances of American use of military power for political ends were critically important taken alone, but he cites them as evidence of a broader American intent to impose its will on Europe and limit Soviet influence by curtailing the "Left" and controlling Germany. Whatever the American intent, the evidence Kolko cites does not substantiate his broad thesis. The best example of Kolko's assignment of political motivation to military actions is his assertion that American orders to surrendering German troops in Italy to hand over weapons to only those forces designated by General
Alexander was designed to prevent transfer of power to the Italian Resistance: "If the Anglo-American forces could not stop a possible Communist takeover, they would rely on the Germans to fend off the Resistance as best they could." It would seem more logical to suggest that American policy sought to ensure an orderly transfer of authority and minimize possible threats to the physical security of occupying American troops. Kolko offers no evidence to suggest that the United States hoped German troops would attempt to prevent the Resistance from seizing power.

One of the critical events that marred relations among the Allies as World War II drew to a close was the bitter exchange of letters between Stalin and Roosevelt over the Anglo-American negotiations with German representatives leading toward a possible surrender of German troops in Italy. Although the Soviets were informed of the discussions and sent a representative to be present in the event of an actual surrender, the discussions excited Stalin's fears that the Germans would conclude a separate peace in the West. Stalin's letter to Roosevelt of April 3, 1945, charged that the Anglo-Americans had concluded a surrender of German forces in Italy in exchange for an agreement to go easy on Germany. Stalin specifically said, "Some of my advisers find it difficult to explain the rapidity of the advance of the Anglo-American armies in Germany unless there is some underlying agreement with the Nazis." According
to Bohlen, who helped draft Roosevelt's reply, Roosevelt "emphatically" denied Stalin's insinuations. Stalin's subsequent reply averred that his advisers "must have been misinformed" and expressed reassurance at Roosevelt's message.175

Revisionist scholars virtually turn this version of events on its head, suggesting that Stalin's fears may have had some basis and that the Berne negotiations, as they were called, were aimed at the "containment of the Italian Left."176 Kolko suggests that Roosevelt's denial was made with "less than convincing candor," and that all parties to the incident "understood" that separate German surrenders in a major theater of war would permit Western forces to fill the political vacuum created by a German collapse.177 Beyond a reinterpretation of Roosevelt's letter to Stalin, which Bohlen reports was written by a singularly outraged President,178 and Stalin's accusation, Kolko offers no evidence that the speed of the Anglo-American advance was in any way related to a secret agreement. The relation of the Berne negotiations to a desire to contain the Italian Left is not demonstrated. Adam Ulam points out that the Italian government to whom control of regions surrendered by the Germans would pass, was supported by the Italian Communists—in addition to being recognized by all three Allies.179 Moreover, the invitation of Russian observers to future meetings with Germans, rather than reflecting a desire to exclude Soviet participation and weakening an
already shaky alliance, went beyond normal practice in regional surrenders. Ulam points out that no Western representative attended the German surrender in Stalingrad. Instead of reflecting a Western willingness to consider "every political advantage" to be gained from "alternative military strategies," the Berne incident suggests that Britain and the United States were willing to accommodate Stalin's sensibilities on some occasions. More importantly, the incident illustrates the nature and extent of Soviet fears.

Kolko manages to find a deeply political motivation in the American handling of the final German surrender:

Given the entirely political basis of Anglo-American military strategy at the time, and the general relations with the U.S.S.R., such hard facts as exist point unmistakably to a tawdry effort by the United States and England to wring something out of the surrender for themselves.

On May 6, 1945, German efforts to arrange a separate surrender of German forces in the West so that forces in the East could fight a holding action against the Russians—permitting evacuation of soldiers and civilians to within Anglo-American lines—prompted Eisenhower to threaten to break off surrender negotiations altogether and seal the Western Front to westward movement unless his terms of surrender were accepted. The German response to this ultimatum, while accepting terms of full surrender, specified that fighting cease 48 hours after the signing of a surrender document.
Since this arrangement allowed the Germans to decide when to sign—facilitating a strategy of delay while troops evacuated to the West—Eisenhower insisted on a halt to fighting "on both fronts in 48 hours from midnight" May 6 or he would seal the front against any westward movement. This is essentially the version of events found in Truman's memoirs. Although much of the factual information is the same, Kolko's version makes it look as though the United States acquiesced in a German strategy of fighting Russians while surrendering to the Western armies:

When Eisenhower wired Truman about the situation on May 6, he also informed him that the purpose of the German 48-hour strategy 'is to continue to make a front against the Russians as long as they possibly can in order to evacuate maximum numbers of Germans into our lines.'

From this Kolko concludes: "The West it appeared could only gain." A fuller version of Eisenhower's wire includes nothing that would even remotely substantiate Kolko's conclusion that "The West it appeared could only gain."

Eisenhower mentioned nothing about possible military or political advantages in the situation. Kolko himself does not explain what it was that was apparently to be gained in the situation. Moreover, Eisenhower said nothing about a 48-hour German strategy. He noted that the overall German purpose was to make a front in the East while evacuating to the West. Kolko's critical distortion is his portrayal of the 48-hour period as part of a German strategy
of delay—with the result that American agreement to such a period appears to be acquiescence in a German scheme that might hold political advantages for the United States. In Eisenhower's wires to Truman, the 48-hour period was seen as the conventional period of grace in which word of surrender was conveyed to outlying units. The German strategy was seen in the attempt to retain the choice of when to sign the surrender document—presumably after many Germans had managed to escape to the West.187 If anything, Eisenhower seems to have manipulated the German fear that the United States would permit no westward movement of any German refugees, to hasten an unconditional surrender on all fronts. Eisenhower's original ultimatum to the Germans included no period of grace. He simply said that unless his surrender terms were accepted he would close the Western Front. When the Germans attempted to manipulate the timing of the signing of the surrender—which in any case would have included some period of grace—Eisenhower forestalled delay by insisting that all fighting had to have ceased within 48 hours of midnight May 6, or he would carry out his threat.188

American actions in the closing days of World War II, if represented with any accuracy, do not substantiate the revisionist understanding of American objectives in the postwar world. The decision to retreat from the Elbe to previously agreed upon zones of occupation was made with the
realization that the United States was foregoing a possible bargaining lever—inasmuch as Churchill had urged linkage of Allied withdrawals to Soviet actions and Truman had rejected that approach. The evidence does not indicate that the United States used its wartime military strength in any consistently political fashion—let alone to assure access to East European markets or "contain the Left." Perhaps the best example of the American subordination of political considerations was the fact that in Yugoslavia military considerations "gradually led to almost total United States military support for the Partisan guerilla forces of Marshal Tito." By misreading his sources Kolko manages to deny even this however.

While Kolko emphasizes the political uses to which American conventional military strength was put, particularly in the closing stages of World War II, Williams and Gardner stress the role an American policy of "atomic diplomacy" played in aggravating Soviet-American relations. Although neither accepts Gar Alperovitz's thesis that President Truman initiated an abrupt turnaround in Roosevelt's policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union—if only because their demonology assigns greater consistency and calculation to American policy than does Alperovitz's—Gardner and Williams both cite Alperovitz as a source and echo much of his argument about the actual uses and effects of the American atomic monopoly.
Alperovitz argues that the prospect of possession of atomic power reinforced Truman's resolve to "get tough" with the Soviet Union and led him to postpone the Potsdam conference as long as possible in hopes of having a bomb that could be used to influence the Russians. Truman's resolve was heightened by the failure of his policy of economic coercion. Alperovitz's central thesis is that atomic bombs were used against Japan to "make Russia more manageable in Europe." The more general effect of possession of atomic power, as Alperovitz sees it, was that it emboldened American policy-makers in their pursuit of foreign policy goals, one of which was to force Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe:

Truman . . . believed that the United States had sufficient power to force Soviet acceptance of the American plan for lasting world peace. Above all, his policy required a stable Europe based upon democratic governments and a sound Continental economy . . . the bomb seemed likely to force Soviet agreement to American economic and political plans for Eastern Europe.

Alperovitz notes further,

Byrnes has been quite explicit; his policy always aimed at forcing the Russians to yield in Eastern Europe, and in mid-1947 he still continued to argue that the United States had it in its power to force the Russians to 'retire in a very decent manner.'

Although Alperovitz's case is exhaustively argued, his book is fraught with errors of scholarship, including abuse of ellipsis, removal of quotations from context, stringing together of previously unrelated quotations, and misrender-
The magnitude and frequency of these errors is sufficient to bring his conclusions into question. In the quotation cited above, Alperovitz makes it appear that Secretary of State Byrnes hoped to force the Russians to retire from Eastern Europe in nothing less than a "very decent manner." In fact, when placed in context, Byrnes's remarks do not even refer to Eastern Europe. The quotation, "to retire in a very decent manner," belonged to Karl Marx, whom Byrnes cited to illustrate that Russian goals had changed little since 1853. Byrnes's argument was that if other powers held firm, the Soviet Union would not "violate the integrity of Iran, Turkey, Greece, Italy, or any other country." Another example of Alperovitz's scholarship is his rendering of yet another quotation from Byrnes: "Byrnes's new advice to Truman was quite straightforward: 'The bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms. . . ." This he sets in the context of discussions about how to deal with the Soviet Union. In the passage Alperovitz cites for this statement Byrnes's concern is clearly with the possibility that the bomb would shorten the war with Japan. In their original context the Byrnes remarks about "dictating terms" reflect his concern. Nothing suggests that Byrnes felt the bomb made possible the dictation of terms to the Soviet Union.

Lloyd Gardner in his discussion of the effect of the atomic bomb on American policy resurrects the Byrnes
quotation about dictation of terms, once again placing it in the context of dictating terms to Russia rather than Japan.201 The gist of Gardner's treatment of the atomic theme is that the United States, more than simply hoping to "make the Russians more manageable in Europe,"202 looked upon atomic power as a lever with which to "back the full range of peaceful pressures . . . to create the world they wanted."203 Suggesting that "to argue . . . that Americans never made political atomic threats . . . is to miss the point," Gardner notes that Truman's language in his August 1945 "rain of ruin" announcement about the bombing of Hiroshima "must have caused them [the Russians] to base their policy in part upon what they thought America believed about its new weapon."204

Williams talks of a new "vision of omnipotence" that informed American foreign policy after the successful test of an atomic device. He writes:

Particularly after the atom bomb was created and used, the attitude of the United States left the Soviets with but one real option: either acquiesce in American proposals or be confronted with American power and hostility.205

Although he does not accept the Alperovitz argument that Truman initiated an abrupt change in American policy— noting that "the success of the bomb strengthened an existing attitude and a traditional strategy,"206 Williams asserts that "The United States dropped the bomb to end the war against Japan and thereby stop the Russians in Asia,
and to give them sober pause in Eastern Europe."

[author's emphasis] 207 Thus at Potsdam, possession of the bomb convinced the United States that it could "bargain from a position of formidable strength" in pursuit of its broad objective of the "Open Door." 208

There are significant flaws in the "atomic diplomacy" argument found in revisionist accounts. Adam Ulam openly scoffs at the Alperovitz thesis, saying, "it cannot withstand the test of simple logic, not to mention the facts." He notes that whatever the intention, the dropping of the bomb did not prevent Soviet entry into the war with Japan. Furthermore, Soviet help was repaid with "substantial Chinese concessions" consistent with the Yalta agreement. Ulam suggests that, "even at Potsdam after [author's emphasis] the new weapon had been fully tested, it was a firm decision ... that Soviet help would still be needed, and that the price for it should be paid in full." 209

More importantly, Ulam observes that even Soviet sources "do not accuse the United States of threatening the Soviet Union in 1945." 210 This serves to point out one of the central flaws in the atomic diplomacy theme: that the United States never made overt threats with the bomb. Of course the existence of a policy of atomic diplomacy should not be judged solely on the point of whether overt threats were made. If American policy at Potsdam and after had taken a dramatic turn or had become tangibly firmer toward
the Soviet Union, it would be possible to argue that American policy-makers were emboldened by the atom bomb. This is not the case however. In the normal give-and-take of the conference, there was little to suggest dramatic departures in policy. Ulam notes that the agreement on the Polish western frontier followed Soviet wishes in substance. More importantly, Ulam observes that Soviet accounts of the conference were favorable. He quotes from V.L. Israeliian, who says,

One must admit that on the whole the decisions of the conference represented a victory for democratic principles of postwar reconstruction of the world. Decisions on Poland, Germany . . . peace negotiations placed solid foundations for a durable and lengthy peace.

Israeliian also notes that on the whole Harry Truman managed to repulse the intrigues of the British. Lisle Rose recounts that at Potsdam Byrnes made "repeated assurances of the American desire to see governments in the area (Eastern Europe) friendly to Russia." Moreover, Rose notes that years later Marshal Zhukov of the Soviet Union said of the Potsdam conference,

Despite inevitable disputes and differences, the Potsdam Conference on the whole showed a universal desire to lay the foundations for cooperation between the great powers on whose policies so much depended.

Although they are not conclusive, the Soviet sources cited suggest that the Russians were on the whole satisfied with the conference—nothing is mentioned about a hard American line or an abrupt change.
Thomas Hammond asserts that after the Potsdam meeting the United States did nothing to even suggest a diplomatic offensive aimed at forcing Soviet withdrawal from Europe. In the case of Bulgaria, for example, Alperovitz portrays Secretary of State Byrnes as undertaking a new initiative in which he demanded that the Bulgarian government be "radically reorganized." Hammond points out that the United States made no such request. Byrnes merely restated the fact that the United States would not recognize Bulgaria until free elections had been held—a longstanding declaration. More revealing of the nature of American intentions was the reprimand given the American representative in Bulgaria, Maynard Barnes, by Byrnes after Barnes had sought postponement of the Bulgarian election without prior approval of the State Department. Barnes's representation to Moscow brought not only Soviet agreement to a postponement, but a telegram from Washington saying, "Dept has consistently felt the formation of a representative democratic Government in Bulgaria is matter for Bulgarians to undertake." Barnes's insubordination produced results, but can hardly be characterized as part of a policy of atomic diplomacy. In Rumania, the government crisis brought on by King Michael's request that pro-Soviet Petru Groza resign, elicited this message from Byrnes to the American representative in Rumania:
Principal concern of US Govt at present juncture is, as you know, to keep the road open to a solution of Rumanian political crisis which will be acceptable to all three Allied Govts. We hope no action will be taken which might seem to give ground for Soviet suspicion that crisis was brought about by "Anglo-American intervention." Contact with Rumanian political leaders should be avoided at present stage.

In this connection we do not think that any advice or assurances should be given the King regarding his present difficult position vis-a-vis Groza and Soviet officials or regarding contingencies which may arise with respect to his political future or personal position ... though you may apprise him of this Gov't's hope that measures which might further provoke Soviet officials will be avoided.216

Although the above quotation demonstrates American concern with Rumanian affairs, it hardly smacks of a desire to force Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe or atomic intoxication.

Hammond suggests that possession of the bomb did encourage Truman to resist Soviet demands seen as "extravagant" and "wholly outside the sphere of normal Russian interest," but did not provoke an American effort to force Soviet retirement from Eastern Europe. He observes that there is nothing to suggest the United States pursued such a goal--"even with the atom bomb." Furthermore, while the possibility of using the bomb as a bargaining chip was discussed in Washington, discussion never led to policy.217

Thus it seems that the United States never actually used the atom bomb as a direct threat or a bargaining chip. Moreover, American policy-makers were not sufficiently intoxicated with it to attempt to drive the Soviet Union out
of Eastern Europe as revisionist writers assert. The bomb
did, however, constitute an implied threat to the Soviet
Union. Charles Maier argues that, "the simple fact of one-
sided possession of the bomb was bound to evoke mis-
trust." At best however, it would be difficult to sug-
gest that American possession of the atom bomb did more than
exacerbate prior Soviet mistrust, given previously men-
tioned examples of mistrust such as Stalin's crude question-
ing of American motivation with Harriman in 1941 and his
accusatory note to Roosevelt concerning the Berne surrender
negotiations. Thomas Hammond points out that while the
atomic bomb constituted an implied threat as long as the
United States held it exclusively, the Red Army also con-
stituted an implied threat—especially after the withdrawal
of American forces from Western Europe. 

The American handling (or mishandling) of proposals
for international control of atomic energy cannot fairly be
portrayed as of a piece with a coercive policy of atomic
diplomacy as Gardner does. Suggesting that Americans
"behaved more like Zeus than Archimedes, jealously boasting
of their ability to bring a 'rain of ruin from the air,'"
Gardner imputes broader meaning to a specific threat dir-
ected at a country with whom the United States was at
war. There is nothing to suggest that the United States
"jealously" boasted of its atomic abilities in any context
other than the specific threat directed at Japan. Gardner's
juxtaposition of Truman's "rain of ruin" statement with a critique of the American handling of atomic energy proposals in the United Nations obscures a critical difference between failure to share atomic secrets—at worst a sin of omission—and the use of the threat of violence as a means to an end. Aggressive policies of "atomic diplomacy" are not of a piece with mishandled proposals for international control.

In any case, failure to involve the Soviets in workable plans for atomic energy control should be seen as a missed opportunity to assuage longstanding Soviet suspicions—if indeed it were possible to do so—rather than an aggressive, threatening exercise of power.

Like so many of the examples of economic and military diplomacy cited by revisionist scholars, "atomic diplomacy" succumbs to contradictory evidence.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The preceding discussion suggests that the United States did not in fact pursue a foreign policy in which its economic and military capabilities were ostentatiously brandished to secure certain clearly defined goals. The examples of such a policy most frequently cited in revisionist accounts turn out on closer examination to be either (1) not in fact cases of economic or military diplomacy, or (2) exaggerations of actual cases where consistency of motivation and intent are clearly distorted. The "atomic diplomacy" argument found in many revisionist accounts postulates a substantial hardening of the American diplomatic stance which did not in fact take place, and an objective (Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe) whose existence is demonstrated by incomplete quotations taken out of context. Much the same pattern of scholarship occurs in the cases of the Lend-Lease cancellation and the handling of the German surrender.

The actual examples cited to demonstrate a coherent American policy of economic and military coercion do not support the conclusion of (1) an "Open Door" economic motivation to American foreign policy, or (2) consistent obduracy or aggressiveness, whatever the motivation. Moreover, such actions as Eisenhower's withdrawal from the Elbe
despite the knowledge of the bargaining potential involved in continued occupation of lands within the Soviet zone, the acceptance of the substance of Soviet territorial demands in Poland, the assignment of unique status to Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union, and the precipitate demobilization of American troops after the war was concluded, do not bespeak an attitude of intoxication with the bargaining potential of military and economic might or an attitude of hostility to the Soviet Union. Only in 1947 with the articulation of the Truman Doctrine and the promulgation of the Marshall Plan did the United States actually formulate what might be called policies of economic and military diplomacy. These were not part of a broader pattern. Both programs were seen as responses to specific conditions, the Marshall Plan to the economic devastation in Europe, and the Truman Doctrine to the perceived overt Soviet probings in Greece, Iran, and Turkey.

One of the problems with revisionist accounts is that they consistently misstate American foreign policy goals. Emphasizing general statements about the importance of international trade to the American economy made by various prominent Americans with varying degrees of involvement in the formulation of foreign policy, revisionist scholars conclude that the engine of American foreign policy was the need to insure an open world in which "American business could trade, operate, and profit without restrictions."
The pattern in revisionist accounts seems to be to simply state that this was the overriding goal of policy in introductory remarks, and then simply impute it to various specific actions. Gardner provides an excellent example of this technique. In setting the stage for the Potsdam conference, Gardner cited statements by Alf Landon, Herbert Hoover, Eugene Rostow, and John M. Hancock on the importance of private property, free trade, and the dangers of state trading. He then quoted a worried article in *Business Week* lamenting the closing of Eastern Europe to Western European exports and concluded: "The issue was in Truman's hands at Potsdam." Whatever Landon, Rostow, et al, may have felt, neither they nor *Business Week* made American foreign policy in 1945, nor did they speak for the government. Truman's version of his objectives at Potsdam was that he wanted "to get the Russians into the war against Japan as soon as possible," and more importantly he wished to "come out with a working relationship to prevent another world catastrophe." Gardner simply imputes the concerns of a number of private citizens and a financial publication to Truman. His stated objectives were not theirs.

In their almost palpable eagerness to demonstrate the economic roots of American foreign policy, revisionist scholars occasionally read incorrect meaning into statements about economic matters by American officials. Williams, for example, takes a statement by Will Clayton and fundamentally
The capitalistic system, whether internally or internationally . . . can only work by the continual creation of disequilibrium in the comparative costs of production.

Williams suggests that implicitly Clayton was saying: "The profitability of America's corporate system depended upon overseas economic expansion." Clayton's statement, an exposition of a specific economic principle, clearly said no such thing. If the statement was meant to imply dependence on overseas expansion, it would not have included the phrase "whether internally or internationally." On its very face the statement contradicts Williams's explanation of its meaning.

Not only do revisionist scholars misstate American objectives by emphasizing general statements about free trade made by American leaders, misreading others, and imputing economic motivation where no direct evidence of it exists, they largely ignore other stated objectives. One of the most frequently articulated objectives of American policy toward Eastern Europe was the holding of free elections. A list of general principles compiled in the fall of 1945 as a guide for American policy toward Eastern Europe had as its first principle to be pursued,

The right of peoples to choose and maintain for themselves without outside interference the type of political, social, and economic systems they desire, so long as they conduct their affairs in such a way as not to menace the peace and security of others."
Lynn Davis notes that at Yalta, Roosevelt "proclaimed the primary goal of American policy in Eastern Europe to be the establishment of representative governments through the holding of free elections." Kolko, Williams, and Gardner largely ignore the self-determination/free election goal of American policy and the diplomacy aimed at fulfilling it.

The revisionist contention that American objectives in the world "precluded the Left from power" or dictated efforts to "pry the Russians out of Eastern Europe" is not reflected in State Department briefing papers recommending policy toward Eastern Europe. For example, a January 1945 paper on "Liberated Countries" said,

Judging from recent indications the general mood of the people of Europe is to the left and strongly in favor of far-reaching economic and social reforms, but not, however, in favor of left-wing totalitarian regimes to achieve these reforms. . . . These governments must be sufficiently to the left to satisfy the prevailing mood in Europe and to allay Soviet suspicions.

Similarly, a briefing paper for the Potsdam conference stated,

While this government may not want to oppose a political configuration in Eastern Europe which gives the Soviet Union a predominant influence in Poland, neither would it desire to see Poland become in fact a Soviet satellite and have American influence there completely eliminated.

These are not conclusive statements of American goals of course, but they give a more accurate indication of the thinking of policy-makers in 1945 than isolated quotations.
from American leaders—with qualifying or contradicting phrases lopped off—or the general statements of private citizens or publications.

By misrepresenting the nature of American goals and needs and imputing a single, overriding, economic motivation to American actions, several revisionist historians have done violence to the historical record. A need for economic access to Eastern Europe was never sufficiently strongly felt to require efforts to force Soviet withdrawal from that region.

Although revisionist scholars assert that the policies of economic and military diplomacy growing out of perceived American economic needs provoked a defensive Soviet reaction, particularly after 1947, their accounts are conspicuously lacking in direct evidence of the impact of the specific American policies they discuss upon the Soviet Union. The discussion of the consequences of the failure to come to terms on a postwar loan is a good example of this. The negative impact (or its relative significance) is inferred without reference to any particular Soviet response. Another example of this approach is Gardner's suggestion that Truman's supposedly boastful "rain of ruin" language "must have" caused the Russians "to base their policy in part upon what they thought America believed about its new weapon."

Revisionist scholars rarely demonstrate the linkage between American policy and Soviet actions.
It is not entirely fair to dismiss revisionist arguments for failure to demonstrate specific Soviet reactions to American actions, given the paucity of Soviet sources and the inaccessibility of Soviet archives. Students of Soviet foreign policy often seem to be reduced to drawing inferences from limited information and the broader flow of events. If one could demonstrate a consistent pattern of expansive American behavior characterized by the use of blunt economic pressures and atomically induced inflexibility, and a pattern of essentially moderate Soviet behavior, it would be quite plausible (in the absence of better evidence) to infer that a consolidation of the Soviet grip in Eastern Europe was a response to American actions. In a broader sense, the post-World War II descent into Cold War could be blamed to a greater extent on the United States if Soviet policy is defined as defensive and moderate and American policy as expansive and inflexible. This is the essence of the revisionist argument and its overriding flaw. The argument rests on a definition of American policy already shown to be inaccurate in a number of respects, and a definition of Soviet policy as pluralistic, moderate, and defensive—at least before 1947. Where revisionist scholars fail in their discussion of Soviet policy is in glossing over or simply neglecting any number of Soviet actions that disturbed American policy-makers, or more importantly, demonstrate significant qualities of
ruthlessness and intolerance on the part of Soviet foreign policy-makers—quite apart from American actions. Moreover, the evidence cited to demonstrate a pattern of Soviet circumspection is often less than convincing.

Lloyd Gardner, for example, suggests that by avoiding involvement in Greece, Stalin adhered to his celebrated "percentages" agreement with Churchill in which Russian and British predominance in the various countries of the Balkans was determined in varying percentages. Williams describes Stalin's "self-containment" in Greece, noting Churchill's feeling that Stalin adhered to their agreement. Whatever Churchill may have felt, the agreement was never applied to concrete reality. Adam Ulam points out that Britain never received its requisite 50 percent share of Hungarian affairs and speculates that Stalin's failure to aid Greek communists had more to do with the fact that the Red Army simply did not occupy Greece than with an abstract and unworkable agreement. The Soviet Union did not accord Britain so much as one percent influence or predominance in the various countries mentioned in the Churchill-Stalin agreement.

Soviet attempts to neutralize any Western participation in the control commissions managing Allied (i.e., Soviet occupation in Eastern Europe are portrayed as essentially moderate by the citation of Western precedent. Unilateral Soviet behavior is seen as the mirror image of the Anglo-American handling of the Italian surrender and occupation,
in which Soviet representatives played a minimal role. Kolko asserts that the Soviet Union applied "precisely" the Italian pattern in the occupation of Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, and that the United States was particularly exercised at the precise application of the pattern. This is simply not so. In Bulgaria, for example, the United States accepted Soviet domination of the Allied Control Commission and expressed the hope that the United States be permitted to participate "in a manner similar to that of the Soviet representative in Italy." Similarly, American proposals to the Soviet government regarding participation in control commissions in Eastern Europe "sought a degree of participation . . . equal to that given the Soviet representative in Italy." The Soviet Union clearly did not apply the Italian pattern. Moreover, the Soviet Union obstructed the sending of American representatives to Prague in April of 1945—and Czechoslovakia was technically a liberated ally with an independent government. Similarly, Western observers were not allowed into Poland in the spring of 1945. Such actions cannot be construed as reflections of Western actions.

A central point in the revisionist argument is that Soviet policy in Eastern Europe after World War II was pluralistic and nonideological—and therefore essentially moderate. Kolko and Williams particularly point to the existence of "popular front" governments as evidence for this.
The definition of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe (particularly before 1947) as moderate and defensive is critical to the conclusion that American actions provoked the less tolerant, ideological Soviet policies ultimately manifested in the ruthless consolidation of 1947-48. This definition is open to question.

In the first place revisionist scholars ignore or gloss over Soviet actions of 1945 and earlier that were seen as part of an effort to establish total communist control by strong-arm methods. In January of 1945, for example, "American officials . . . became concerned over Soviet efforts to establish total political control in Bulgaria." Reports from the American representative to the Secretary of State noted that,

Communists were gradually seizing power through the activities of the Communist-controlled Ministry of the Interior, the Bulgarian police, and the Soviet army . . . The severity of the penalties administered by the People's Courts in the war crimes trials confirmed Communist determination to eliminate all potential opposition.246

Brzezinski writes that in September of 1944 when the Soviet Union declared war on Bulgaria and the Fatherland Front seized power, the Communist Party played a major role in a purge of public officials which "amounted simply to a terror operation, designed to destroy the political cadres of the 'bourgeoisie'." He notes that within six months of the entry of Soviet troops, 2,138 people were executed.247
In May 1945, the American representative to the Allied Control Commission in Rumania, General Schuyler, reported that "[t]he present Rumanian government is a minority government imposed on the nation by direct Soviet pressure."248

George Kennan recounts that in the spring of 1945,

What little we were able to learn ... about what was occurring in that part of Czechoslovak territory occupied by Soviet forces made it evident that every device of infiltration, intimidation, and intrigue was being brought into play with a view to laying the groundwork for establishment of a Communist monopoly of power in that country.

Kennan notes that this impression was confirmed when the Soviet Union obstructed the sending of American representatives to the restored Czech government.249

In March of 1945, the British and Americans disagreed over "the best strategy to prevent the arrests, deportations, and liquidations" occurring under the Warsaw-cum-Lubin government. The upshot of these discussions was a simple American expression of the need for tranquility in Poland.250

Although it did not produce a change in American policy, the Soviet handling of the Warsaw uprising in the summer of 1944 was disillusioning for American policy-makers. Dean Acheson mentions the chilling effect on Soviet-American relations of the Soviet behavior,251 and Kennan recalls that the Soviet position on the matter was seen as a "gauntlet thrown down" to state Russian intentions toward
Political consequences of the uprising (the slaughter of the Polish underground) as an afterthought, he does not account for Soviet obstruction of efforts to assist the doomed Poles, or the Soviet radio broadcasts urging an uprising.

The examples cited above do not substantiate the assertion that the Soviet Union was largely unconcerned with internal developments in Eastern Europe. Nor do these examples suggest that the Soviet Union entertained feelings of pluralistic solicitude for potential opponents. Given this evidence and additional confirmation of "constant and vigorous Russian intrusion" into Eastern European internal affairs by the Ethridge report, it is not altogether surprising that by the end of 1945 American officials were concluding that "to concede a limited Soviet sphere of influence ... might be to invite its extension to other areas."

More importantly, the existence of popular front governments in Eastern Europe in the immediate postwar period is not necessarily convincing evidence of a pluralistic, nonideological Soviet foreign policy. Thomas Hammond suggests that popular front governments were important elements in a takeover strategy. Hammond notes that most of the Communist takeovers of the 1940's were directed by Communists who had spent the war years in Russia, who returned to their native lands with takeover plans carefully worked out in advance, and who received
instructions regularly from Moscow and from Soviet officials on the scene... ... During the war Communist cadres from Europe and Asia were trained in special schools in the Soviet Union to participate in the communization of their homelands.

Hammond describes Soviet orders to Eastern European communists to employ conscious tactics of, "gradualism and camouflage instead of immediately establishing a one-party regime." The essence of these policies is expressed in a remark of Walter Ulbricht's which Hammond cites: "It's got to look democratic, but we must have everything in our control." Hammond concludes that Eastern European takeovers reflected a tactical blueprint:

If by a blueprint one means a rigid plan which all Communist leaders were ordered to follow without a change, then of course there was no blueprint. If, however, one means a general tactical plan which Stalin expected each Communist leader to adapt and modify to suit local conditions, then it seems clear that there was such a blueprint.258

Also revealing of the nature of Soviet intentions in Europe and of Soviet policy in general is the fact that in 1943 the Comintern was dissolved in name only. While Stalin announced the dissolution with a good deal of fanfare, the Comintern apparatus remained intact to continue training people such as Wolfgang Leonhard for future political tasks.259

None of this suggests either a pluralistic, nonideological Soviet approach to Eastern European politics or the conclusion that American policies caused the demise of such
an approach. Zbigniew Brzezinski argues that the popular front or "People's Democracy" period, in which communists and other progressive groups cooperated, represented a definite, ideologically defined intermediate stage in the realization of communist goals. Once again, there is little in this analysis to suggest that popular front governments were anything but transient phenomena. Moreover, Brzezinski's analysis does not suggest a nonideological approach on the part of Soviet leaders.

Khrushchev's discussion of Soviet policies toward Poland in the immediate postwar period is couched in terms of almost nonchalant inevitability, with little reference to outside political pressures:

We knew that sooner or later Poland would be a socialist country and our ally. Many of us felt, myself included, that someday Poland would be part of one great country or socialist commonwealth of nations. Khrushchev accents this sense of "sooner or later" inevitability to the direction of politics in postwar Poland by jovially passing along the anecdote about the Polish election, in which voters put a Mikolajczyk ballot in the box and get a Gomulka ballot out of it. Despite this, Khrushchev suggests, the Poles decided to "build socialism."

Khrushchev says little that would suggest consolidation in Poland was determined by Western pressures. He does suggest that the first shot in the Cold War was fired by Churchill in his Fulton, Missouri speech of 1946. He
notes that "It was largely [emphasis added] because of Churchill's speech that Stalin exaggerated our enemies' strength and their intention to unleash war on us." 263

This last statement suggests that previous Western actions were not perceived as particularly unsettling.

The revisionist argument that the American attempt to use its preponderant economic and military strength to alter Soviet behavior, preserve economic access in Eastern Europe, and reconstruct the postwar world in a manner consistent with deeply held economic assumptions fails on a number of counts. First of all, a consistent policy of military and economic diplomacy was never applied. Second, the goals attributed to American foreign policy are incorrect. Third, the direct, negative consequences of particular American actions on Soviet-American relations are rarely demonstrated. Fourth, in the absence of direct evidence of Soviet reactions to specific American actions, the revisionist argument rests on the questionable assumption that Soviet policy, particularly in Eastern Europe, was essentially moderate and nonideological.
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