

WHITE PAPER



DETERRENCE: A Brief History and a Case Study in Cold War Practice

PART I: 1945 - 1953

*Report of SAC LSUS for the
Deterrence Symposium,
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STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES CONSORTIUM

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Preface

The Strategy Alternatives Consortium (SAC) was developed to advance national policies, plans, strategies, programs (resources), and professionals to enable strategic alternatives development. Initially, the Consortium consists of two parts. External to the Louisiana State University System is a non-LSUS 501(c3) organization comprised of retired senior officers from the United States Air Force and other branches, active duty officers and professional analysts as well, that act as a project initiating, outside funding source (if available), and co-sponsor for symposia and publications. This entity is the Strategic Alternatives Council. The second unit, the Strategic Alternatives Center operates under the umbrella of the LSU System 501c 3 status as a non-profit and all accounting is conducted through LSUS. LSUS houses and maintains all office space and computer access.

The Strategic Alternatives Consortium (SAC) at LSUS (SAC-LSUS) examines strategic issues and events across time and regions, offers analysis and define outcomes, and identifies alternative solutions. SAC-LSUS is the focal point in collecting, synthesizing, and archiving data. The unit also acts as a single point of contact for information, inquiries, and requests for information from the Strategic Alternatives Consortium collaboration network (as entities in other academic institutions are added), public and news media. This includes being as well, the one-stop distribution point for Strategic Alternatives Center papers, presentations, and other materials as appropriate.

The Strategy Alternatives Consortium's goals are: (1) Identify major strategic events or processes, (2) Provide results to agencies or clients, (3) Deploy the results in publications, symposia, and to the public, and (4) Educate leaders, professionals, students and the public.

The Strategy Alternatives Consortium's objectives are: (1) Identify and clarify positions of strategic thought, (2) Educate the anticipated audience of these findings, and (3) Publish the results to enhance future outcomes.

SAC-LSUS serves to further the mission of the United States Air Force Global Strike Command. The Center provides a multi-disciplinary approach to strategic issues faced by the United States Air Force and Department of Defense. The central mission of the Center is to examine issues brought forth in direct contact with Air Force and Department of Defense officials and provide in-depth analysis of emerging issues. LSUS's close proximity to Barksdale Air Force Base has historically had, and continuing through today, provides close ties with base personnel and leadership.

Many faculty members have close relationships with Barksdale Air Force Base either through continued direct contact or retirement. Among the historians at LSUS, Dr. Gary Joiner (Professor and Chair of the Department of History and Social Sciences) has worked with the Eighth Air Force Museum (now Global Airpower Museum) at the base, advising on curation of the collections and cataloguing objects. During 2012-2014 Dr. Joiner committed to an eighteen

month-long assistance to both the Eighth Air Force general staff and Global Strike General Staff in commemorating the 70th anniversary of the creation of the Eighth Air Force, the 60th anniversary of the B-52, and the 40th anniversary of the Linebacker II operations in the Vietnam War, which drove the North Vietnamese to the negotiating table and effectively ended that war. At the end of this effort early in 2014, Dr. Joiner worked with retired Air Force Lt. General Robert Elder to create a symposium at Barksdale Air Force Base to coincide with the annual Air Force-wide bombing competition. The result was a well-received symposium featuring Dr. Joiner and Dr. Alexander Mikaberidze (Associate Professor of History at LSUS) lecturing to the Global Strike and Eighth Air Force leadership, headquarters staff, and air crews. Dr. Joiner's topic detailed the use of air power as a strategic and tactical deterrent in Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Watch between Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Dr. Mikaberidze's lecture covered the development and changing environment of the Soviet and later Russian Air Force from 1970 to the present. This symposium was the impetus for the development of the Strategic Alternatives Center. The result is an ongoing relationship between LSUS and these commands with the intention of widening the scope of symposia and scholarly white papers and to bring historical and geopolitical events into focus for Air Force decision makers and other interested agencies and partners.

Barksdale Air Force Base was created in the mid-1930s as a major expansion of U.S. Army Air Corps presence in the South. The original concept of the airfield being home to the 3rd Tactical Air Wing changed with World War II, when Barksdale Airfield became the home of bomber training for B-17, B-24, B-26 and B-29 bombers. It also served as home for anti-submarine bomber patrols in the Gulf of Mexico during World War II. After the war, and with the creation of the Department of the Air Force, Barksdale became the headquarters of the Second Air Force and took on the mission of hosting B-47 and later B-52 strategic nuclear bombers. At the close of the Vietnam War in 1975, Barksdale became home of the Eighth Air Force, which remains there today. In addition, with the realignment of strategic forces, Barksdale is also the headquarters of Global Strike Command, which controls all nuclear capable war fighting assets in the United States Air Force. The Center and Louisiana State University as whole, are committed to this endeavor.

Executive Summary

Deterrence, in military strategy, is a term that has been out of vogue, especially since September 11, 2001. The term "deterrence" has as many definitions as people who define it. On an individual level, deterrence creates inhibited criminal behavior by creating fear of punishment. For nations, it is best represented by the creation and maintenance of military power for the sole purpose of discouraging attacks and the promise of punishment so severe that an attacker would not seriously contemplate an aggressive action.

It appears to be all but impossible to deter those bent on attacking powerful nations by using guerrilla tactics and asymmetrical warfare. This has changed within the last few years. The world

has witnessed the rise of a resurgent Russia under Vladimir Putin. The Russian invasion of Crimea and eastern Ukraine, has increased tensions within Europe at a time of severe international economic stress. Simultaneously, the Peoples Republic of China has increased the areas it claims in the South China Sea by patrolling and actually creating new islands in the Parasel Islands and the Spratly Islands. The Parasel Islands are claimed by China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The Spratly Islands are claimed to some degree by the Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Vietnam. These aggressive intentions, combined with Russian intervention in Syria, brings deterrence and deterrence theory back into focus.

This paper focuses on the beginning of deterrence theory and containment theory from the end of World War II to the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower in January 1953. This period is essential in the explanation of later Cold War events. President Harry S. Truman's administration witnessed several events and processes that catapulted American foreign affairs in different directions, often forcing decisions that were untenable just months or years earlier.

The elation over the surrender of the Empire of Japan soon gave way to consternation over Soviet Russian intentions to remain in Eastern Europe. The rebuilding of the former enemies of Germany and Japan, and allies in Western Europe advanced the Marshall Plan. This vital economic program was as much preventing Communist takeovers as providing desperately needed revitalization. The Truman Doctrine grew out preventing the Soviets from conquering Europe by either political or military means and isolating the Communists through the policy of containment.

As the Cold War became an ever more dangerous reality, Truman's foreign and domestic policies concentrated on protecting the United States and its allies. The Truman administration brought the United Nations into policy, built alliances that created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other regional affiliations. It created the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and reorganized the War Department into the Department of Defense. The Air Force was given equal footing with the Army and Navy.

The Soviets intimidated the West by attempting a stranglehold on the city of Berlin. North Korea invaded South Korea with strong backing from both the Soviet Union and Peoples Republic of China. The Russians, with the assistance of a deeply entrenched spy network, built and exploded an atomic bomb much faster than the West believed possible. President Truman, attempting to move ahead in the arms race, decided to build the hydrogen bomb. A massive arms buildup by the United States followed in an attempt to catch up with anticipated Soviet progress in arms.

President Truman was assisted during his presidency by advisors who varied widely in their views regarding economics, defense strategy, and the Soviet Union. Hard line anti-Communists battled with others who were accommodating to Soviet designs. The beginnings of the "Red Scare" surfaced with the revelations of spy networks deep inside America's nuclear programs. The position papers that emerged from the President's National Security Council (NSC) and hybrid consulting groups such as the RAND Corporation, reflect these deep divisions. Two seminal documents emerged from the NSC during this period, NSC/20 and NSC/68. They

defined the course that the United States would follow throughout the Cold War and, it is reasonable to assume, in some form, to the present.

This paper forms the first portion of a multi-part project that will trace deterrence theory and practice from the end of World War II through the end of the Cold War and beyond. SAC LSUS is committed to the concept of taking complex issues and distilling often disparate information into a digest format for military civilian leaders, and others in the public interest.

Gary D. Joiner, Ph.D.
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Shreveport, Louisiana
March 2016

DETERRENCE

PART 1:

A BRIEF HISTORY THROUGH THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION 1945 - 1953

We find that what is well known is poorly understood, and what is taken for granted is taken without thought.

Herman Kahn, William Brown, and Leon Martel¹

DETERRENCE AND DETERRENCE THEORY

The term “deterrence” has as many definitions as people who define it. On an individual level, deterrence creates inhibited criminal behavior by creating fear of punishment. For nations, it is best represented by the creation and maintenance of military power for the sole purpose of discouraging attacks and the promise of punishment so severe that an attacker would not seriously contemplate an aggressive action.

The concept of deterrence theory is ancient and has undergone revisions through the centuries. Thucydides, the father of written history, quoted Hermocrates of Syracuse:

Nobody is driven into war by ignorance, and no one who thinks that he will gain anything from it is deterred by fear. The truth is that the aggressor deems the advantage to be greater than the suffering; and the side [that] is attacked would sooner run any risk than suffer the smallest immediate loss . . . [W]hen there is mutual fear, men think twice before they make aggressions upon one another.

Thucydides, book IV, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book IV: 59.²

At the heart of Thucydides’ definition is the belief that both individuals and city-states were motivated by honor, interest, and fear.³ Deterrence only works if it is matched with compellence (its diametric opposite.) There must be a compelling issue to force aggressive action. Deterrence is only viable if the cause is true, a recognized need is pursued, and fear of attack or retaliation is transmitted to the potential foe.

The Roman chronicler Titus Livius, better known as Livy, asserted that deterrence strategy should ensure the status quo, and that Rome pursued the route of passive prevention dated at least to the Second Punic War. Following that dire threat to the Republic’s survival, Rome then

¹ Herman Kahn, William Brown, and Leon Martel, *The Next 200 Years: A Scenario for America and the World* (New York: William Marrow and Company, 1976), ix.

² Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book IV: 59 (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1900), 43.

³ Richard Ned Lebow, “Thucydides and Deterrence,” *Security Studies* 16, no. 2 (April-June 2007): 171.

veered on toward a strategy that alternated deterrence and preemptive wars when it became involved in Macedonia.⁴

Thomas Hobbes, writing during the Enlightenment in 1651 in his *Leviathan*, asserted that man is neither inherently good nor evil but is guided by his own self-interests. Society forces individuals into proper behavior by invoking social contracts. This allows the government to enforce the contract, deter bad behavior, and use force to ensure that behavior is acceptable. This concept also translates between and among nation states.⁵

Cesare Beccaria published a treatise in 1764, *Dei Delitti e delle Pene* (On Crimes and Punishments), in which he expanded Hobbes' theory. He stated that "punishments are unjust when their severity exceeds what is necessary to achieve deterrence."⁶ The unswerving knowledge of swift and certain punishment is "the best means of preventing and controlling crime."⁷

Jeremy Bentham, a contemporary of Beccaria, asserted, "nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure."⁸ All penalties, therefore, are "evil unless punishment is used to avert greater evil, or to control the action of offenders."⁹ In the examples of Hobbes, Beccaria, and Bentham, deterrence is deployed using three separate concepts - severity, certainty, and celerity. Using this triad as baseline philosophy, deterrence theorists in the field of criminal justice believe "if punishment is severe, certain, and swift, a rational person will measure the gains and losses before engaging in crime and will be deterred from violating the law if the loss is greater than the gain."¹⁰ Modern nation-states' attitudes toward deterrence follow a parallel course of thought. The seeds were sown during World War II, particularly at the end of the war with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

The enormous power of the British Royal Navy during the nineteenth century is widely considered as the most stabilizing influence upon the Empire. The British Press and the monarchy issued a constant barrage of good news detailing the Royal Navy's role in keeping the world in order and properly policing the peace. Deterrence through the Navy's mighty wooden (and later steel) walls was present on every ocean on the planet. Some historians have argued

⁴ Bernard Mineo, *A Companion to Livy* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 386.

⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (Hamilton, Ontario: McMaster University Archive of the History of Economic Thought, 2015), 79-88.

⁶ Cesare Beccaria, *Dei Delitti e delle Pene* (*On crimes and punishments*. Introduction by H. Paolucci, Trans.) (New York: Macmillan, 1963, 14. Originally published in 1764.

⁷ Ihekwoaba D. Onwudiwe, Jonathan Odo & Emmanuel C. Onyeozili, "Deterrence Theory" in *Encyclopedia of Prisons & Correctional Facilities*. Ed. By Mary Bosworth (Sage Knowledge, 254): <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412952514.n91>

⁸ Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 125.

⁹ "Deterrence Theory," <https://marisluste.wordpress.com> (Latvian blog with English translation), 235.

¹⁰ Ibid.

that this was not completely the case, citing tensions with the United States and France over colonial boundaries, naval primacy with France, and the Opium War with China.¹¹

Deterrence took on a new identity in the realm of national policy immediately following World War II. Discussions among political and military leaders and their advisors illustrated a new reality. How should deterrence be carried out? Should it be purely defensive or as an offensive policy? As the post-war world descended into apparent chaos fomented by Soviet Russia, the debates coalesced to how to protect national security, American Liberty, and society against any foreign tyranny and domestic usurpation.¹²

During the height of the Cold War, deterrence theory took on a nontraditional path. The massive destructive power of, first, atomic and, later, hydrogen weapons created such potential force that most historians of the Cold War believed that a nation with an inferior weapons stockpile could deliver a mortal or near mortal blow to a stronger foe if these weapons were used in a surprise preemptive attack. Deterrence, therefore, became a strategy to convince a potential adversary to alter its plans and to convince them from escalating a situation with a massive nuclear response. Bernard Brodie, known as the “American Clausewitz,” was a chief architect of nuclear deterrence theory. He was one of the chief nuclear strategists at RAND Corporation between 1951 and 1966. In 1959, Brodie wrote that a nation with a credible nuclear deterrent must always be prepared, but must never use it.¹³ Brodie set this tone from the end of World War II and throughout his career as both an academician and strategist. In his 1946 book *The Absolute Weapon*, Brodie explained:

Thus, the first and most vital step in any American security program for the age of the atomic bombs is to take measures to guarantee to ourselves in case of attack the possibility of retaliation in kind. . . . Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them.¹⁴

Both conventional and nuclear deterrence sit at the core of American military strategy. Nuclear deterrence, in particular, has been viewed as necessary evil, akin to attempting to put the genie back in the bottle. The concept of using a psychological tactic to convince an opponent not to escalate a heated scenario into a nuclear exchange yields no standardized results. Quantitative analysis can only apply in percentages of probability and not within the realm of certainty. The idea of threatening entire nations or societies with guaranteed annihilation is coercive at the least and abhorrent at the worst. Following the Cold War many politicians and strategists believed that the worst was behind us and that deterrence theory might die a rapid death. They had no need for mutually assured destruction. This form of peace dividend always comes after a war. It is normally short lived and myopic. The attacks of September 11, 2001 appeared to confirm the end

¹¹ Rebecca Berens Matzke, *Deterrence through Strength: British Naval Power and Foreign Policy under Pax Britannica* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2011), passim.

¹² Arthur I. Waskow, *The Limits of Defense* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 10-11.

¹³ Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 264-304.

¹⁴ Bernard Brodie, *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1946), 76.

of deterrence.¹⁵ The U.S. homeland was attacked for the first time since Pearl Harbor. Following the attacks and with the Soviet Union a rapidly retreating episode in history, the White House declared deterrence theory irrelevant to the then major threats from nations and non-governmental terrorist groups.¹⁶ This reluctance to embrace deterrence did not last. Four years later the term returned to national defense policy.¹⁷ The rise of a resurgent Russia under Vladimir Putin, the rapidly expanding role of China in claiming large areas of the South China Sea, the increasingly erratic behavior of North Korea at a time that it appears to be testing not only small hydrogen weapons but intercontinental ballistic missile delivery systems, and the utterly destabilizing ascendance of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) all insure that deterrence will remain in the national strategic lexicon. As President George W. Bush stated in 2006, the new paradigm in which the United States finds itself is that of “a long struggle, similar to what our country faced in the early years of the Cold War.”¹⁸ This long war is at the core of the current, but shifting, status quo.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN AND THE EARLY POST WORLD WAR II WORLD

Pax Americana and the Soviet Issue

The Empire of Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, following the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, ending the fighting in World War II. The threat of a third atomic bomb demolishing the Japanese capital of Tokyo sufficed to convince the Japanese to surrender. An air of hopefulness turned into one of caution. The Soviet Union, a major Allied power during the war, occupied large amounts of former Japanese territory and the northern half of Sakhalin Island. The Soviets also occupied a huge swath of Eastern Europe and controlled the German capital of Berlin. Much of Europe and Asia lay in ruins. The United States was the only nation on Earth that possessed the atomic bomb. Equally significant, it also had the means to deliver these weapons. This fact alone was thought to be enough to keep the Russian bear at bay.

Deterrence theory evolved almost overnight. American soil had been attacked at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, leading to the nation’s entry into World War II. That memory still reverberated after the end of the war. The immediate questions that required answers were vast. What should the United States do with respect to its former enemies? How should it treat its former ally, the Soviet Union? Communist ideology must be dealt with deftly, but how? How should the United States deal with its allies? What should be done to ensure that the homeland would be safe from attack? All of these questions were argued within President Harry S. Truman’s cabinet and in the halls of Congress. The American press used its ‘bully pulpit’ to extend the conversation to the public at large. The United States had unilaterally used two atomic weapons on Japan. The concept of their use in a first strike scenario after the war was not

¹⁵ Austin Long, *Deterrence From Cold War to Long War: Lessons from Six Decades of Rand Research* (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 2008), vii.

¹⁶ White House Office, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: President of the United States, July 2002), 15.

¹⁷ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: White House, March 2006), 1. As of March 1, 2016: <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS67777>

¹⁸ Ibid.

considered out of bounds. This was truly a “brave new world.” Truman’s actions were not consistent and coherent.¹⁹ Rather than presenting a unified response to threats, the Truman White House reacted differently at each turn in a rapidly increasing set of events and provocations.

President Truman was not aware of the Manhattan Project (the creation of atomic bombs) prior to the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Truman was forced to decide whether to continue the research and drop the bombs on Japan or to invade Japan and potentially lose hundreds of thousands of American and allied lives. The result was not immediately clear. Truman told Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin that the U.S. had a very destructive bomb, but did not elaborate further. Historians and political leaders have argued ever since about the effects of that disclosure.²⁰ According to Soviet Marshal Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov, Stalin did grasp the full weight of the disclosure:

I do not recall the exact date, but after the close of one of the formal meetings Truman informed Stalin that the United States now possessed a bomb of exceptional power, without, however, naming it the atomic bomb.

As was later written abroad, at that moment Churchill fixed his gaze on Stalin’s face, closely observing his reaction. However, Stalin did not betray his feelings and pretended that he saw nothing special in what Truman had imparted to him. Both Churchill and many other Anglo-American authors subsequently assumed that Stalin had really failed to fathom the significance of what he had heard.

In actual fact, on returning to his quarters after this meeting Stalin, in my presence, told Molotov about his conversation with Truman. The latter reacted almost immediately. **“Let them. We’ll have to talk it over with Kurchatov and get him to speed things up.”** [Emphasis by the authors.]

I realized that they were talking about research on the atomic bomb.

It was clear already then that the US Government intended to use the atomic weapon for the purpose of achieving its Imperialist goals from a position of strength in “the cold war.” This was amply corroborated on August 6 and 8 [sic]. Without any military need whatsoever, the Americans dropped two atomic bombs on the peaceful and densely-populated Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²¹

¹⁹ Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.

²⁰ See for example: Winston Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1953), 669-70; James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 2; Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History 1929-1969* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 247-248; Anthony Eden, *The Reckoning: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 6, and Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971), 674-675.

²¹ Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971), 674-675.

It appears that Truman was more confident about his stance with the Russians after the initial test of the weapon at Alamogordo, New Mexico, in July 1945, making him more forceful in

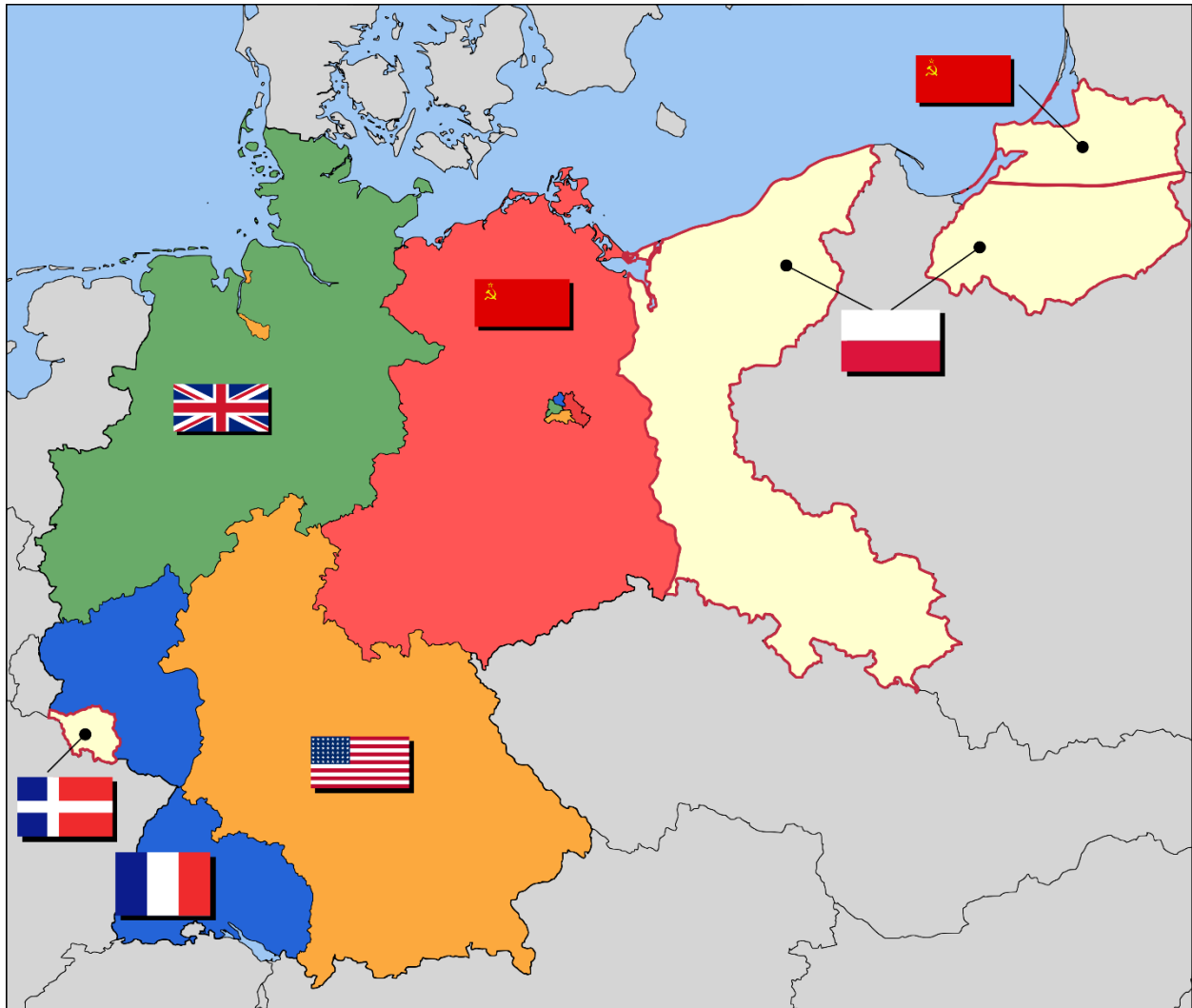


Figure 1. Partition of Germany in 1945. Open source map Based on map data of the IEG-Maps project (Andreas Kunz, B. Johnen and Joachim Robert Moeschl: University of Mainz) - www.ieg-maps.uni-mainz.de

obtaining compromises.²² Following the Japanese surrender, Truman had problems during the remainder of 1945 in determining what his Secretary of State was negotiating with the Soviets,

²² U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945-1952": <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/atomic>

what the Soviets intended to do with their forces in Eastern Europe and in Asia, and what courses should be taken regarding atomic energy.²³ Of these, Soviet posturing in Eastern Europe was the most annoying. The Soviet armies remained in Eastern Europe and initiated the process of creating puppet governments. Truman's foreign policy, which became the Truman Doctrine, can be traced to a letter the president wrote to James Byrnes, his Secretary of State, on January 5, 1946:

There isn't a doubt in my mind that Russia intends an invasion of Turkey and the seizure of the Black Sea Straits to the Mediterranean. Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making. Only one language do they understand – "How many divisions have you?"

I do not think we should play compromise any longer. We should refuse to recognize Rumania and Bulgaria until they comply with our requirements; we should let our position on Iran be known in no uncertain terms and we should continue to insist on the internationalization of the Kiel Canal, the Rhine-Danube waterway and the Black Sea Straits and we should maintain complete control of Japan and the Pacific. We should rehabilitate China and create a strong central government there. We should do the same for Korea.

Then we should insist on the return of our ships from Russia and force a settlement of the Lend-Lease Debt of Russia.

I'm tired of babying the Soviets.²⁴

Truman sent the letter just days after Byrnes had travelled to Moscow in December 1945, to determine whether the Soviets were complying with agreements reached at the Yalta Conference held the previous February. Byrnes unilaterally agreed that the Soviets were within compliance and, without consulting the president; the Secretary of State recognized the governments of Bulgaria and Romania on behalf of the United States. Truman was furious at this action and, although he reluctantly agreed, the signing created a schism between the president and his cabinet officer. Byrnes left office the following January. Others would follow.

The Truman Doctrine

Joseph Stalin addressed the Communist Party Congress in Moscow on February 9, 1946, and suggested that the competing ideologies of Communism and Capitalism were incompatible. This created a diplomatic firestorm. Two weeks later, on February 22, George F. Kennan, the American *charge d'affaires* in Moscow sent an 8,000 word, so-called "Long Telegram," to the State Department in Washington, in which he created the foundation for an enduring American foreign policy. He contended that the behavior of the Russians was driven by a "traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity," and that "we have here a political force committed

²³ Letter, President Harry S. Truman to James Byrnes, January 5, 1946. Truman Library, Independence, MO.

²⁴ Ibid.

fanatically to the belief that with US there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*.”²⁵ The “Long Telegram” became one of the founding cornerstones of both American Policy during the entire Cold War, but it also provided a completely new direction in deterrence theory regarding the Soviets. Two weeks later, Former British Prime Minister Sir Winston S. Churchill, delivered an address at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri on March 5, that gave the name “Iron Curtain” to the adversarial nature of the Cold War. Churchill laid out his vision of the world at that moment. In part he said:



Figure 2. Greece and Turkey immediately following World War II. Image courtesy of the Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone - Greece with its immortal glories - is free to decide its future at an election under British, American and French observation. The Russian-dominated Polish Government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. . . . On the other hand, I repulse the idea that a new war is inevitable;

²⁵ Telegram – George F. Kennan to State Department, February 22, 1946, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., National Security Archives.

still more that it is imminent. It is because I am sure that our fortunes are still in our own hands and that we hold the power to save the future, that I feel the duty to speak out now that I have the occasion and the opportunity to do so. I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines. But what we have to consider . . . is the permanent prevention of war and the establishment of conditions of freedom and democracy as rapidly as possible in all countries. Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them. They will not be removed by mere waiting to see what happens; nor will they be removed by a policy of appeasement. What is needed is a settlement, and the longer this is delayed, the more difficult it will be and the greater our dangers will become. From what I have seen of our Russian friends and Allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness. For that reason, the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound.²⁶

The Soviets invaded northern Iran during World War II. The British occupied the southern portion. The Russians had not withdrawn. President Truman demanded they withdraw with no promise of oil concessions and no guarantee of annexation of Azerbaijan. This was in response to Kennan's estimate on March 17 that the Soviets were preparing to install a puppet government in Tehran.²⁷ Truman became increasingly irritated with his cabinet when former vice president and then Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace delivered a speech in New York where he announced "the tougher we get with Russia, the tougher they will get with us."²⁸ Wallace remained in office for another week before resigned under pressure on September 20.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of President Truman's reforms was the creation of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), activated on March 21, 1946.²⁹ SAC's headquarters were located at Andrews Field in Maryland until November 1948, when it transferred to Offutt Air Force Base at Omaha, Nebraska. The new command controlled all nuclear weapons, bombers, and later missiles until the Navy acquired missile capabilities. Also created were the Tactical Air Command (TAC), which was the fighter command that operated all ground-support missions outside the United States, and the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD), responsible for all fighter interceptors guarding the continental United States. CONAD consisted of four numbered air forces, the First, Second, Third and Fourth. SAC became the most visible image of nuclear deterrence until the end of the Cold War.

²⁶ Sir Winston S. Churchill, "The Sinews of Peace," in Robert Rhodes James (ed.), *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches 1897-1963* Volume VII: 1943-1949 (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974) 7285-7293.

²⁷ Kenneth L. Hill, *Cold War Chronology: Soviet-American Relations 1945-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1993), 14-15.

²⁸ *Vital Speeches of the Day* (October 1, 1946), v. 12, n. 24, p. 738.

²⁹ The Strategic Air Command will be examined in-depth in a separate position paper.



Figure 3. General Curtis LeMay. United States Air Force file photo.

SAC proved itself as a cornerstone in deterrence and the nation's defense through rapid expansion after its leadership changed under General Curtis LeMay, who became the public face of SAC and is also considered to be its true father.³⁰ LeMay trained his wings and crews to the highest state of readiness. He provided the leadership that turned SAC into the leading deterrent force on the planet. The SAC motto, "Peace is our Profession," also imbued the true mission. As Paula Thornhill stated, "He [LeMay] turned SAC into a hair-trigger force prepared to launch its nuclear arsenal on a moment's notice, but also one that considered each day it did not conduct such a mission a success. LeMay's innovative leadership was essential to the creation of this nuclear deterrent force; however, a similar spirit was not cultivated among SAC's Airmen. In an operational environment dominated by the importance of speed and zero defects, these Airmen were incentivized to focus on rapid, efficient execution of their nuclear mission. In short, compliance-driven mission competence overshadowed innovation. . . . Innovative thinking and technologies rather than any specific military operation helped prevent nuclear war and contributed to the end of the Cold War."³¹ SAC and its bomber fleet became in the latter twentieth century what the British Royal Navy battle fleets had been in the nineteenth. The great "Wooden Wall" gave way to high flying, potent bombers.³²

Several efforts led to the public knowledge of SAC's war fighting potential and global reach. None were lost on the attention of the Soviets. Among these was a spectacular mission conducted by the Eighth Air Force, 43rd Bombard Group based at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona. A B-50 bomber, "Lucky Lady II", s/n 46-010, launched on February 26, 1949, with four others from Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, Texas, and flew the first

non-stop flight around-the-world. Carswell was, at the time, headquarters for Eighth Air Force. "Lucky Lady II" carried a double crew and conducted four air-to-air refueling by Eighth Air Force KB-29M tankers (modified B-29s as was the B-50. The 43rd Bombardment Group was the first SAC unit to receive the new B-50 and the second to be all nuclear capable).³³ The tankers refueled over the Azores, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and Hawaii. The mission landed at Carswell Air Force Base on March 2.³⁴ Captain James G. Gallagher (aircraft commander) and the crew of the "Lucky Lady II" were awarded the Mackay Trophy, awarded yearly by the US Air Force for the "most meritorious flight of the year."³⁵ It is administered by the National Aeronautic Association.

³⁰ Warren Kozak, *LeMay: The Life and Wars of General Curtis LeMay*, Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2009, 279–314; Paula G. Thornhill, "Over Not Through": *The Search for a Strong, Unified Culture for America's Airmen* (Occasional Paper) (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2012), 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

³² George E. Lowe, *The Age of Deterrence* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), 7.

³³ Geoffrey Hays, *Boeing B-50* (Simi Valley, CA: Steve Ginter, 2012), 10-14.

³⁴ Information on this mission is found in "8 AF Snapshot – 26 February 2016", William Lane Callaway, CIV USAF AFGSC 8 AF/HO to Major General Richard Clark, USAF 8 AF/CC etal, February 26, 2016.

³⁵ National Aeronautical Association:

<https://naa.aero/awards/awards-and-trophies/mackay-trophy/mackay-1940-1949-winners>.



Figure 4. B-29 “Lucky Lady II” being refueled by B-29M aerial tanker. United States Air Force file photo.

President Truman replaced Byrnes with General George C. Marshall. Marshall was an excellent choice as head of the State Department. His organizational skills were vital to the Allied effort during World War II. He put this energy to work and results came quickly. Truman delivered an address before Congress on March 12, 1947 in which he outlined the Truman Doctrine.³⁶ The doctrine attempted to combat Soviet gains by providing direct aid to countries fighting Communism. The most important of these at the time of the speech were Greece and Turkey. The doctrine also addressed deteriorating conditions between America and the Soviets. Greece was fighting a civil war against communist insurgents. Turkey fought a diplomatic threat by Soviet attempts to wrest control of the Dardanelles. Russia also tried to gain control of Turkish territory lost to Russia during the long wars with the Czars. The president centered deterrence theory in his doctrine, stating:

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or

³⁶ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1947), 176.

indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.³⁷

Truman's new doctrine presented two agendas: deterrence through prosperity in war torn countries not allied or controlled by the Soviets and containment of Communism by military support to allied nations. Secretary of State George C. Marshall led the rebuilding of the free countries of Europe. The effort created the European Recovery Act, commonly known as the Marshall Plan. It was announced at the commencement ceremony at Harvard University on June 5, 1947. Marshall told the audience that the plan was not "directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos."³⁸ Congress passed the National Security Act three weeks later on June 26, 1947. It renamed and streamlined the War Department into the Department of Defense, eliminated the post of Secretary of War and replaced it with a civilian Secretary of Defense, created the National Security Council, and created the Central Intelligence Agency.³⁹ The new Defense Department organization merged the War Department and Navy Department and brought the newly created United States Air Force under the single umbrella on September 18, 1947. Kennan made his containment theory public in an article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled "Sources of Soviet Conduct" in its July issue. He published the article under the *nom de plume* "X." It contained many of the points of the "Long Telegram," and legitimized the Truman Doctrine. Perhaps most important, Kennan outlined what must happen regarding the Soviets:

In the light of the above, it will be clearly seen that the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence. The Russians look forward to a duel of infinite duration, and they see that already they have scored great successes. It must be borne in mind that there was a time when the Communist Party represented far more of a minority in the sphere of Russian national life than Soviet power today represents in the world community.⁴⁰

The Berlin Crisis

The Soviets countered this new aggressive strategy and doctrine by expanding their hold in Eastern Europe. With Russian help, Communists in Czechoslovakia overthrew the last democratic government in the region on February 24, 1948. The United States, Great Britain, and France merged their occupation zones in western Germany and from the Republic of West Germany in June 1948. Tensions increased immeasurably in Germany in June when the Russians

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ George C. Marshall baccalaureate address, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, June 5, 1947.

³⁹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945-1952":

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/national-security-act>

⁴⁰ George F. Kennan ("X"), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct, *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947:

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/authors/x-george-f-kennan>.

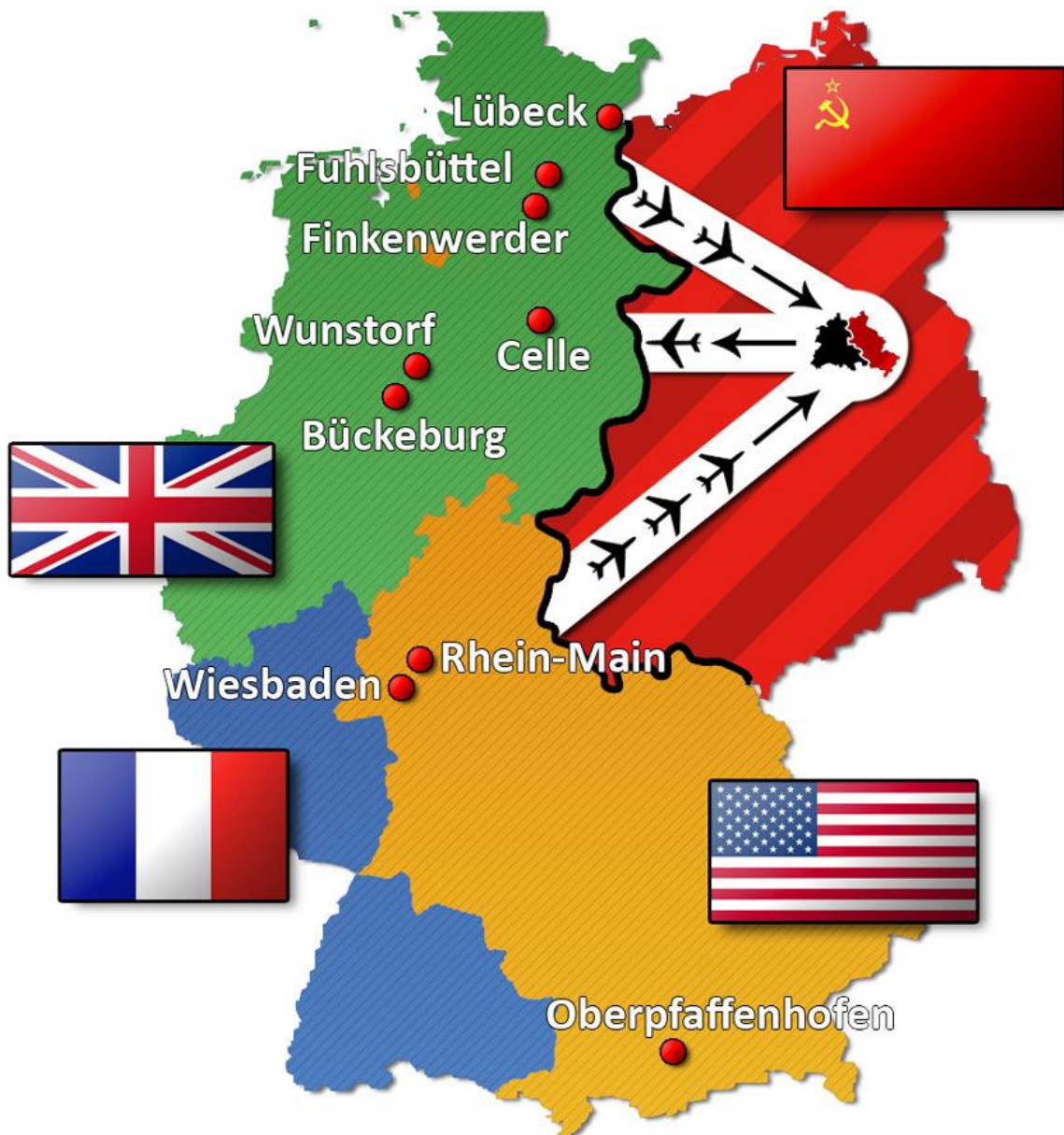


Figure 5. The air corridors into Berlin and the occupation zones in Germany.

<http://bifsigcsehistorygrade10.wikispaces.com/file/view/Berlin%20Airlift%20map.jpg/367847654/Berlin%20Airlift%20map.jpg>

blockaded the three Western zones of Berlin. The Soviets cut off all railroad and road access to the former German capital. Those living in Berlin had no access to normal food supplies and faced starvation. The Allies delivered their response within days, beginning June 24. The Russians also hoped to drive the token Berlin Brigade out of the western sector of Berlin,

allowing them to install a puppet regime with Berlin as its capital. The Allies opened three main air corridors to airlift supplies into Berlin. This air bridge lasted for eleven months, ending when the Soviets lifted the blockade on May 12, 1949.⁴¹ The air bridge effort was a major shift in deterrence theory, allowing the United States and its allies to influence Soviet behavior without using atomic weapons



Figure 6. The last transport bringing needed supplies into Berlin, Operation VITTLES, the Berlin Airlift. United States Air Force file photo.

<http://www.wiesbaden.army.mil/hunion/Archive/webJune1908/LastVittles.gif>

However, the nuclear threat option remained if needed. President Truman conferred with the British early in the crisis. On June 27, 1948, the Strategic Air Command alerted its forces. Two heavy bombardment groups, consisting of sixty B-29s of the 28th Bombardment Group from Rapid City Air Force Base, South Dakota and the 307th Bombardment Group from MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, deployed to Britain on a temporary assignment that was to last several months.⁴² The British Air Ministry agreed to long-term use of RAF stations on November 13.⁴³ Of all of the chess-like strategic moves by the United States during that time, perhaps the least

⁴¹ Major documents from the Berlin Airlift are found at the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum in Independence, Missouri. <mailto:truman.library@nara.gov> See the bibliography for an extensive list of primary and secondary sources related to the Airlift. The topic of the Berlin Airlift will be covered separately in another position paper by SAC LSUS.

⁴² Roger G. Miller, *To Save A City: The Berlin Airlift 1948-1949* (Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C.: Air Force History Support Office, 1998), 26.

⁴³ Walton S. Moody, *Building a Strategic Air Force*, (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1996), 141-42.

known but the most important was the (seemingly) rapid and quiet deployment of the 509th Bombardment Group from Walker Air Force Base, New Mexico, in April 1949, to an undisclosed location. The 509th was, at that time, one of only two nuclear capable Bombardment Groups. The other was the 43rd Bombardment Group. The Soviets knew very well that the 509th was the unit that executed the two successful atomic attacks on Japan in 1945. The Russians noted the deployment but had no idea of where it was going or if the bombers carried nuclear weapons.⁴⁴ The long range B-29s also received additional capabilities the previous year by using inflight air-to-air refueling. Some B-29s and the newer variant B-50s were modified as tankers.⁴⁵ The B-29 Super Fortresses could be anywhere and attack major targets from any direction. The Soviets dialed down the threats on Berlin. The blockade ended within a month. Non-nuclear deterrence, with a decidedly huge veiled threat, had succeeded.

The Russians appear to have created the Berlin crisis, not as a direct provocation possibly escalating to war, but as a heavy-handed attempt to destabilize the Germans in the western sectors as they became the new Republic of West Germany. The creation of West Germany proved a surprise to the Soviets and the rapid Allied response placed them in an awkward position. The problem for the Russians became how to stabilize or de-escalate the situation.

NATO

Western Europe and the United States agreed upon a common defensive organization to counter the Soviet threat in Eastern Europe. The result was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States as the original members. NATO provided the framework for deterrence of the Soviet threat in the region. NATO stood up on April 4, 1949 during the tenth month of the Berlin Blockade.

NATO remains the lynchpin for the security of Western Europe. The new organization provided a strong message to the Soviets concerning the West's stance on deterring Communist aggression. The creation of a formal pact surprised the Russians, who then moved into a protective stance, eventually created the Warsaw Pact, a counter organization.

NSC/20

The National Security Council staff prepared a number of documents in late 1948 describing both United States security and intelligence objectives as well as potential Soviet plans and responses. Secretary of State James V. Forrestal requested a "comprehensive statement of

⁴⁴ [General Hoyt] Vandenberg to [General Curtis] LeMay, July 23, 1948, sec. 1, OPD 381 Berlin (15 Jan 1948) folder box 807, TS Decimal File, RG 341 NARA; Daniel Harrington, *Berlin on the Brink: The Blockade, the Airlift, and the Early Cold War* (Louisville, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 341n.

⁴⁵ Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Force Historical Studies, "20 Years of Dynamic Deterrence: SAC Before the Berlin Blockade: <http://www.afgsc.af.mil/Portals/51/Docs/AFD-140320-008.pdf?ver=2015-12-15-161405-950>.

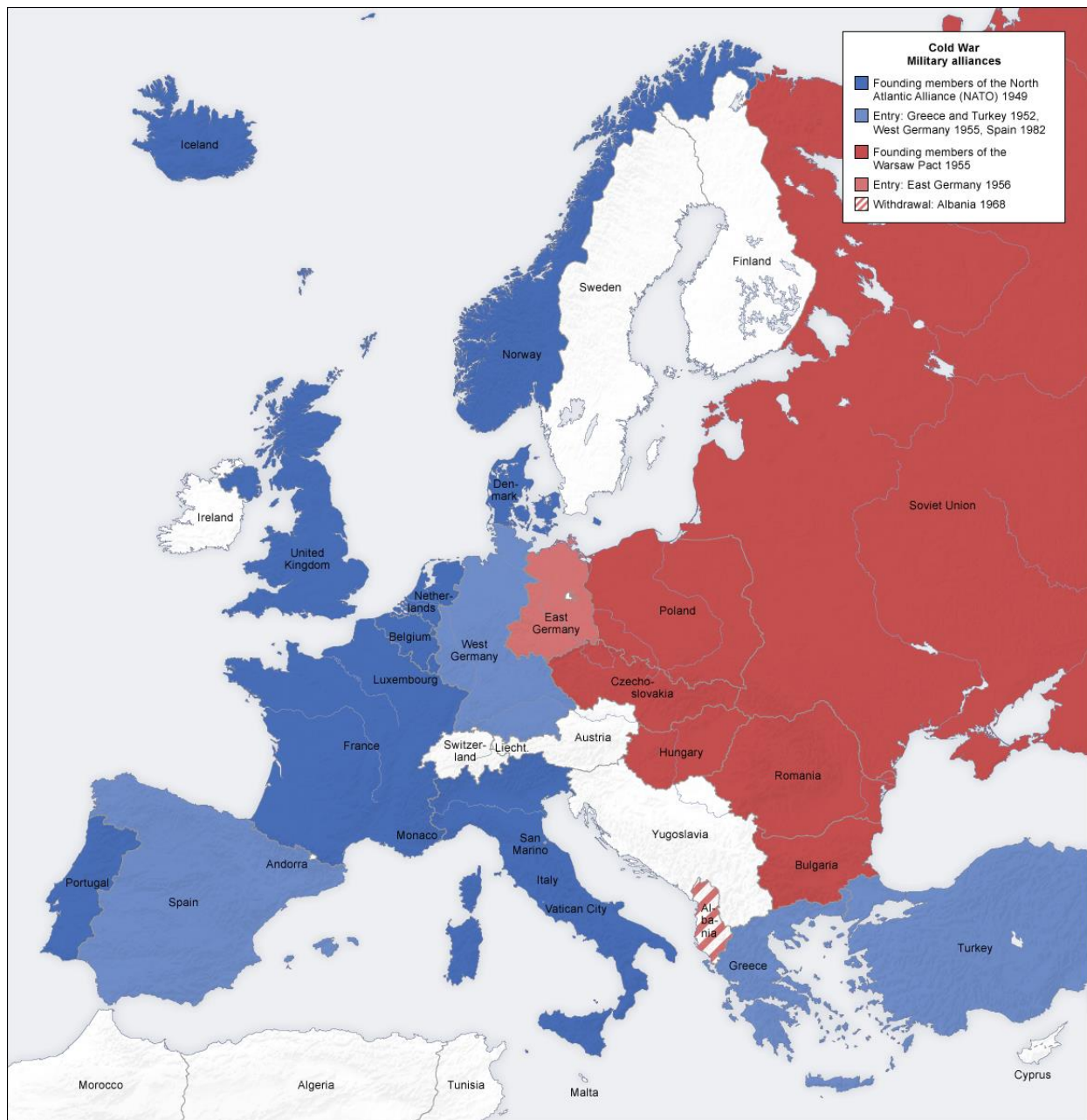


Figure 7. The founding of NATO and later members. www.gammacloud.org

national policy" with regard to the Soviet Union, on the grounds that until such a statement was prepared.⁴⁶ He told his National Security Council staff that "no logical decisions can be reached

⁴⁶ James V. Forrestal to Sidney W. Souers, July 10, 1948, quoted in NSC 20, "Appraisal of the Degree and Character of Military Preparedness Required by the World Situation," July 12, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1948*, I (part 2) 589-592.

as to the proportion of our resources which should be devoted to military purposes. . .”⁴⁷ Up to that time the document was the most complete definition of the objectives that policy of containment planned to accomplish.⁴⁸

NSC 20/4 was the most important of the drafts.⁴⁹ In very plain terms it defined that the United States viewed the Communist threat as monolithic and orchestrated by Moscow. The analysts asserted that the Soviets used a huge military buildup and subversive groups to intimidate free countries. Regarding direct threats to the United States by the Soviets:

It is impossible to calculate with any degree of precision the dimensions of the threat to U.S. security presented by these Soviet measures short of war. The success of these measures depends on a wide variety of currently unpredictable factors, including the degree of resistance encountered elsewhere, the effectiveness of U.S. policy, the development of relationships within the Soviet structure of power, etc. Had the United States not taken vigorous measures during the past two years to stiffen the resistance of western European and Mediterranean countries to communist pressures, most of western Europe would today have been politically captured by the communist movement. Today, barring some radical alteration of the underlying situation which would give new possibilities to the communists, the communists appear to have little chance of effecting at this juncture the political conquest of any countries west of the Luebeck-Trieste line. The unsuccessful outcome of this political offensive has in turn created serious problems for them behind the iron curtain, and their policies are today probably motivated in large measure by defensive considerations. However, it cannot be assumed that Soviet capabilities for subversion and political aggression will decrease in the next decade, and they may become even more dangerous than at present.⁵⁰

The NSC concluded that the greatest threat to the U.S. came from the Soviets and that the U.S. must make adequate preparations to counter this threat and assure that internal security was adequate to defeat sabotage. It cautioned that the U.S. should “develop a level of military readiness which can be maintained as long as necessary as a deterrent to Soviet aggression. . .”⁵¹ Although not stated directly, there appeared to be no doubt that they should use nuclear as

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, eds, *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945 – 1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 203-10.

⁴⁹ “U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security”, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, Department of State, 1948), 663-669.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 663-64.

⁵¹ Ibid., 668-69.

well as conventional weapons in a war with the Soviets. Containment became the principal tenet of American foreign policy, but deterrence was the key to insuring success.⁵²

Project RAND

Coinciding with the National Security Council's efforts in determining America's path was a hybrid project that continues at the forefront of strategic thought to this day. General 'Hap' Arnold, then commander of the U.S. Army Air Forces, desired to create a closed forum that gave military senior commanders access to civilian theorists in the realm of defense, particularly atomic weapons strategy. The avenue he chose was to have the Douglas Aircraft Company initiate Project Research and Development (RAND). RAND became an independent nonprofit corporation in 1948.⁵³ Among the leading strategists and analysts of American strategic foreign policy, international economics, Soviet intentions, defense spending, and arms control were Herman Kahn, Thomas Schelling, Bernard Brodie, James Schlesinger, and Albert Wohlstetter.⁵⁴ RAND became the principal think tank for the U.S. Air Force. Its contributions to deterrence theory and military strategy during the Cold War were unparalleled.⁵⁵

The Russian Atomic Bomb

American intelligence services knew that the Soviet Union was working on an atomic bomb, but little information surfaced regarding the extent of their progress. That changed on August 29, 1949 when the Russians exploded their first atomic weapon at Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan, named "Joe 1" for Joseph Stalin by the West. The Russians, through a spy ring hidden deep within the Manhattan Project, gained the blue prints and technical data needed to fabricate an atomic bomb.⁵⁶ The Russians did not test another atomic bomb for another two years.⁵⁷

The most valuable Soviet spy was Klaus Fuchs, a British physicist. The most famous "atomic spies" were Julius and Ethel Rosenberg at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.⁵⁸ Russian espionage efforts were superior to American and British counterespionage efforts during most of the Cold War. This offered a counterbalance to Western technological superiority. Soviet rapid response to a new technology kept them within range of creating new weapons, but, in effect, the response was often heavy handed, premature, often dangerous to themselves, and puzzling to Western analysts. American theorists were not shocked but concerned at the speed with which the Soviets

⁵² See the first draft of NSC 20/1. Forrestal to Souers, July 10, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 589-592; United States Department of State: *Foreign relations of the United States, 1948. General; the United Nations (in two parts)*, (1948), 609.

⁵³ Austin Long, *Deterrence From Cold War to Long War: Lessons from Six Decades of RAND Research* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2008), 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-7.

⁵⁵ Thomas Schelling, "Bernard Brodie (1910-1978)," *International Security*, 3, No. 3, Winter 1978-1979, 2-3.

⁵⁶ Michael L. Schwartz, "The Russian-A(merican) Bomb: The Role of Espionage in the Soviet Atomic Bomb Project" *History of Science: J. Undergrad Sci* 3 (Summer 1996), 103-108.

⁵⁷ http://www.atomicarchive.com/History/hbomb/page_09.shtml.

⁵⁸ For a thorough examination of the Soviet spy rings, see: U.S. Department of Energy, "The Manhattan Project: an interactive history," (Office of History and Heritage Resources) <https://www.osti.gov/opennet/manhattan-project-history/Events/1942-1945/espionage.htm>.



Figure 8. Detonation of the first Soviet atomic bomb, nicknamed “JOE 1” by the West. United States Department of Energy file photo.

conducted the effort. The prevailing view within the military was that even if the Russians had exploded a single atomic weapon, they probably did not possess enough fissionable material to create a stockpile and had no means to deliver the weapons to the continental United States (CONUS) in the foreseeable future.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ William B. Kieffer (Colonel USAF), “The Impact of Russian Acquisition of Atomic Weapons Upon the United States Defense Problem” (Washington, D.C.: The National War College, February 4, 1954), 9-10.

NSC/30

Less than two weeks after the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb, The National Security Council drafted NSC/30, entitled “United States Policy on Atomic Warfare.”⁶⁰ This paper proved to be a tremendous shift toward the power of the Strategic Air Command. It mandated that only the President must authorize the use of all weapons, both conventional and atomic, in the event of war. It said nothing about targets or methods to attack them. This placed the planners in the “National Military Establishment,” the military, in control. The paper highly recommended that all debates be hidden from the public, since it might show the Russians that the United States was “soft” on the use of atomic weapons. If the decision entered the public realm, it should be during an actual emergency when public opinion would be for the use of atomic weapons.⁶¹ The authors also stated that if public debate occurred, it would lead to condemnation by “every sound citizen in Western Europe.”⁶² President Truman placed knowledge and control of fissionable material in the hands of a civilian Atomic Energy Commission. The military controlled the bombs and the delivery vehicles, but not the nuclear material. Two cabinet officers and the head of the Atomic Energy Commission alone knew the full capacity of the stockpile of plutonium. A very small cadre of military officers knew how many potential bombs existed. The entire number of people in this circle was no more than ten. Presidential, in effect, washed his hands of this information and left the nuts and bolts up to Joint Chiefs of Staff and particularly, to General Curtis LeMay, the commander of the Strategic Air Command.⁶³

The Chinese Civil War

Europe was not the only region in which the Soviets were active. Beginning with the end of World War II, the Soviets allied with Communists in China to fill the void left by the surrender of Japanese forces. During a four-year civil war, Communist Chinese forces led by Mao Zedong, defeated the pro-Western Kuomintang forces led by General Chiang Kai-shek. The Nationalist forces fled to the island of Taiwan and created the Republic of China.⁶⁴ The Chinese Communist revolution was a convoluted story of changing allegiances, massive famine and ended with a near god-like adoration of Mao.⁶⁵ The Soviets portrayed the revolution as the model of Marxist-Leninist unity. The fall of the Nationalists created new concerns for American policymakers. It appeared as if Soviet-style Communism was, if not stoppable, perhaps not manageable either.

⁶⁰ “United States Policy on Atomic Warfare”, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, Department of State, 1948), 624-631.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, paragraph 5, 626.

⁶² *Ibid.*, paragraph 7, 627.

⁶³ Peter Pringle and William Arkin, S.I.O.P.: The Secret U.S. Plan for Nuclear War (New York: W.W; Norton and Company, 1983), 52-53.

⁶⁴ Perhaps the best brief history of this conflict and the life of Chiang Kai-shek is found in his obituary in *the New York Times*: Alden Whitman, “The Life of Chiang Kai-shek: A Leader Who Was Thrust Aside by Revolution,” *New York Times*, April 6, 1975.

⁶⁵ The most thorough examination of China during this period is found in: R. Keith Schoppa, *Twentieth Century China: A History in Documents* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004, and Andrew G. Walker, *China Under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

build one. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff requested that the U.S. make an “all out effort to build the H-bomb.”⁶⁶

NSC/68

The rapid course of events that culminated in the Soviets exploding their first atomic bomb and the collapse of the Chinese Nationalists in the Chinese Civil War forced Secretary of State Dean Acheson and the National Security Council to reexamine the recent policies outlined in NSC-20/4. Acheson ordered Paul Nitze, then head of the Policy Planning Staff of the NSC, to convene the staff and create a thorough review of U.S. national strategic thought.⁶⁷ The new document was not intended to scrap NSC-20/4 but to expand it under the light of the new events. The result was, perhaps, the most important civilian Cold War document from the United States. The paper, entitled “A Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,” was issued April 14, 1950.⁶⁸ The result was, of course, Top-Secret status and remained so until it was declassified on February 23, 1975.⁶⁹ This 66-page document laid the course for American foreign policy for almost thirty years.

Nitze and his group contended that the Soviet Union was “animated by a new fanatic faith” antithetical to that of the United States and was obsessed “to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world.”⁷⁰ The planners concluded that “violent and non-violent” conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union had become “endemic.”⁷¹

The planning staff created a broad range of scenarios, offered a wide range of options with arguments for and against each. They also, for the first time definitively described why Soviet-style Communism was anathema to Western democracy. Among the principal points were:

1. The most pressing threat to the United States was the “hostile design” of the Soviet Union.⁷²
2. The Soviets were obsessed with achieving world domination through force of arms.⁷³
3. The Soviet Union was increasing its arsenal of conventional weapons and equipment and would soon add to its nuclear arsenal.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ A concise timeline of this rapidly unfolding set of events is found in PBS.org, *American Experience* “Race for the Superbomb.” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/timeline/index.html>; Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), passim.

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Milestones: 1945-1952”: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NSC68>.

⁶⁸ “A Report to the National Security Council - NSC 68”, April 12, 1950. President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers, Truman Presidential Library, Independence, Missouri. The digital version used was Copy No. 1, President Truman's copy with strikeouts and annotations:

https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Cover.

⁷⁰ NSC/68, 4.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 6.

⁷³ Ibid., 6-8.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 12-20.

4. The best response to the Soviet threat was to increase the American arsenal in-kind with an immediate build-up of new generations of aircraft, nuclear weapons and conventional weapons.⁷⁵
5. The United States must not return to isolationism.⁷⁶
6. The free world must consider “the rapid building up of the political, economic, and military strength...”⁷⁷
7. The United States should not contemplate a first strike scenario in a nuclear war.⁷⁸
8. Public opinion would not support another lengthy war.⁷⁹
9. The U.S. should be willing to negotiate with the Soviet Union if needed, but only if this would create “political and economic conditions in the free world” favorable to deterring the Soviet Union from following negative actions in the military balance of power.⁸⁰
10. The only plausible course of action for the United States was for the President to “support a massive build-up of both conventional and nuclear arms.”⁸¹
11. This build-up should “seek to protect the United States and its allies from Soviet land and air attacks, maintain lines of communications, and enhance the technical superiority of the United States through “an accelerated exploitation of [its] scientific potential.”⁸²
12. To afford this massive increase in military spending, NSC/68 suggested increasing taxes and reduce expenditures.⁸³

The planning staff followed a detail analysis of specific known factors and a broad range of unknown but probable scenarios with a long list of conclusions and two recommendations. To fully understand the depth of these, they are included here.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The foregoing analysis indicates that the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union have greatly intensified the Soviet threat to the security of the United States. This threat is of the same character as that described in NSC 20/4 (approved by the President on November 24, 1948) but is more immediate than had previously been estimated. In particular, the United States now faces the contingency that within the next four or five years the Soviet Union will possess the military capability of delivering a surprise atomic attack of such

⁷⁵ Ibid., 21-24.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 25-30.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 34-36.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 38-51.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 34-36.

⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Milestones: 1945-1952”: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NSC68>.

⁸² Ibid., 54-55.

⁸³ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Milestones: 1945-1952”: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NSC68>.

weight that the United States must have substantially increased general air, ground, and sea strength, atomic capabilities, and air and civilian defenses to deter war and to provide reasonable assurance, in the event of war, that it could survive the initial blow and go on to the eventual attainment of its objectives. In return, this contingency requires the intensification of our efforts in the fields of intelligence and research and development.

Allowing for the immediacy of the danger, the following statement of Soviet threats, contained in NSC 20/4, remains valid:

14. The gravest threat to the security of the United States within the foreseeable future stems from the hostile designs and formidable power of the USSR, and from the nature of the Soviet system.

15. The political, economic, and psychological warfare which the USSR is now waging has dangerous potentialities for weakening the relative world position of the United States and disrupting its traditional institutions by means short of war, unless sufficient resistance is encountered in the policies of this and other non-communist countries.

16. The risk of war with the USSR is sufficient to warrant, in common prudence, timely and adequate preparation by the United States.

a. Even though present estimates indicate that the Soviet leaders probably do not intend deliberate armed action involving the United States at this time, the possibility of such deliberate resort to war cannot be ruled out.

b. Now and for the foreseeable future there is a continuing danger that war will arise either through Soviet miscalculation of the determination of the United States to use all the means at its command to safeguard its security, through Soviet misinterpretation of our intentions, or through U.S. miscalculation of Soviet reactions to measures which we might take.

17. Soviet domination of the potential power of Eurasia, whether achieved by armed aggression or by political and subversive means, would be strategically and politically unacceptable to the United States.

18. The capability of the United States either in peace or in the event of war to cope with threats to its security or to gain its objectives would be severely weakened by internal development, important among which are:

a. Serious espionage, subversion and sabotage, particularly by concerted and well-directed communist activity.

- b. Prolonged or exaggerated economic instability.
- c. Internal political and social disunity.
- d. Inadequate or excessive armament or foreign aid expenditures.
- e. An excessive or wasteful usage of our resources in time of peace.
- f. Lessening of U.S. prestige and influence through vacillation of appeasement or lack of skill and imagination in the conduct of its foreign policy or by shirking world responsibilities.
- g. Development of a false sense of security through a deceptive change in Soviet tactics.

Although such developments as those indicated in paragraph 18 above would severely weaken the capability of the United States and its allies to cope with the Soviet threat to their security, considerable progress has been made since 1948 in laying the foundation upon which adequate strength can now be rapidly built.

The analysis also confirms that our objectives with respect to the Soviet Union, in time of peace as well as in time of war, as stated in NSC 20/4 (para. 19), are still valid, as are the aims and measures stated therein (paras. 20 and 21). Our current security programs and strategic plans are based upon these objectives, aims, and measures:

19.

- a. To reduce the power and influence of the USSR to limits which no longer constitute a threat to the peace, national independence, and stability of the world family of nations.
- b. To bring about a basic change in the conduct of international relations by the government in power in Russia, to conform with the purposes and principles set forth in the UN Charter.

In pursuing these objectives, due care must be taken to avoid permanently impairing our economy and the fundamental values and institutions inherent in our way of life.

20. We should endeavor to achieve our general objectives by methods short of war through the pursuit of the following aims:

- a. To encourage and promote the gradual retraction of undue Russian power and influence from the present perimeter areas

around traditional Russian boundaries and the emergence of the satellite countries as entities independent of the USSR.

b. To encourage the development among the Russian peoples of attitudes which may help to modify current Soviet behavior and permit a revival of the national life of groups evidencing the ability and determination to achieve and maintain national independence.

c. To eradicate the myth by which people remote from Soviet military influence are held in a position of subservience to Moscow and to cause the world at large to see and understand the true nature of the USSR and the Soviet-directed world communist party, and to adopt a logical and realistic attitude toward them.

d. To create situations which will compel the Soviet Government to recognize the practical undesirability of acting on the basis of its present concepts and the necessity of behaving in accordance with precepts of international conduct, as set forth in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

21. Attainment of these aims requires that the United States:

a. Develop a level of military readiness which can be maintained as long as necessary as a deterrent to Soviet aggression, as indispensable support to our political attitude toward the USSR, as a source of encouragement to nations resisting Soviet political aggression, and as an adequate basis for immediate military commitments and for rapid mobilization should war prove unavoidable.

b. Assure the internal security of the United States against dangers of sabotage, subversion, and espionage.

c. Maximize our economic potential, including the strengthening of our peacetime economy and the establishment of essential reserves readily available in the event of war.

d. Strengthen the orientation toward the United States of the non-Soviet nations; and help such of those nations as are able and willing to make an important contribution to U.S. security, to increase their economic and political stability and their military capability.

e. Place the maximum strain on the Soviet structure of power and particularly on the relationships between Moscow and the satellite countries.

f. Keep the U.S. public fully informed and cognizant of the threats to our national security so that it will be prepared to support the measures which we must accordingly adopt.

In the light of present and prospective Soviet atomic capabilities, the action which can be taken under present programs and plans, however, becomes dangerously inadequate, in both timing and scope, to accomplish the rapid progress toward the attainment of the United States political, economic, and military objectives which is now imperative.

A continuation of present trends would result in a serious decline in the strength of the free world relative to the Soviet Union and its satellites. This unfavorable trend arises from the inadequacy of current programs and plans rather than from any error in our objectives and aims. These trends lead in the direction of isolation, not by deliberate decision but by lack of the necessary basis for a vigorous initiative in the conflict with the Soviet Union.

Our position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility upon the United States for leadership. We must organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world in a positive program for peace which will frustrate the Kremlin design for world domination by creating a situation in the free world to which the Kremlin will be compelled to adjust. Without such a cooperative effort, led by the United States, we will have to make gradual withdrawals under pressure until we discover one day that we have sacrificed positions of vital interest.

It is imperative that this trend be reversed by a much more rapid and concerted build-up of the actual strength of both the United States and the other nations of the free world. The analysis shows that this will be costly and will involve significant domestic financial and economic adjustments.

The execution of such a build-up, however, requires that the United States have an affirmative program beyond the solely defensive one of countering the threat posed by the Soviet Union. This program must light the path to peace and order among nations in a system based on freedom and justice, as contemplated in the Charter of the United Nations. Further, it must envisage the political and economic measures with which and the military shield behind which the free world can work to frustrate the Kremlin design by the strategy of the cold war; for every consideration of devotion to our fundamental values and to our national security demands that we achieve our objectives by the strategy of the cold war, building up our military strength in order that it may not have to be used. The only sure victory lies in the frustration of the Kremlin design by the steady development of the moral and material strength of the free world and its projection into the Soviet world in such a way as to bring about an internal change in the Soviet

system. Such a positive program--harmonious with our fundamental national purpose and our objectives--is necessary if we are to regain and retain the initiative and to win and hold the necessary popular support and cooperation in the United States and the rest of the free world.

This program should include a plan for negotiation with the Soviet Union, developed and agreed with our allies and which is consonant with our objectives. The United States and its allies, particularly the United Kingdom and France, should always be ready to negotiate with the Soviet Union on terms consistent with our objectives. The present world situation, however, is one which militates against successful negotiations with the Kremlin--for the terms of agreements on important pending issues would reflect present realities and would therefore be unacceptable, if not disastrous, to the United States and the rest of the free world. After a decision and a start on building up the strength of the free world has been made, it might then be desirable for the United States to take an initiative in seeking negotiations in the hope that it might facilitate the process of accommodation by the Kremlin to the new situation. Failing that, the unwillingness of the Kremlin to accept equitable terms or its bad faith in observing them would assist in consolidating popular opinion in the free world in support of the measures necessary to sustain the build-up.

In summary, we must, by means of a rapid and sustained build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world, and by means of an affirmative program intended to wrest the initiative from the Soviet Union, confront it with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin design of a world dominated by its will. Such evidence is the only means short of war which eventually may force the Kremlin to abandon its present course of action and to negotiate acceptable agreements on issues of major importance.

The whole success of the proposed program hangs ultimately on recognition by this Government, the American people, and all free peoples, that the cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake. Essential prerequisites to success are consultations with Congressional leaders designed to make the program the object of non-partisan legislative support, and a presentation to the public of a full explanation of the facts and implications of the present international situation. The prosecution of the program will require of us all the ingenuity, sacrifice, and unity demanded by the vital importance of the issue and the tenacity to persevere until our national objectives have been attained.

Recommendations

That the President:

a. Approve the foregoing Conclusions.

b. Direct the National Security Council, under the continuing direction of the President, and with the participation of other Departments and Agencies as appropriate, to coordinate and insure the implementation of the Conclusions herein on an urgent and continuing basis for as long as necessary to achieve our objectives. For this purpose, representatives of the member Departments and Agencies, the Joint Chiefs of Staff or their deputies, and other Departments and Agencies as required should be constituted as a revised and strengthened staff organization under the National Security Council to develop coordinated programs for consideration by the National Security Council.⁸⁴

Regarding the Soviets, NSC/68 proposed clear methods to achieve the twin goals of containment and deterrence. It offered no set standards that must be followed. However, it created a clear set of actions when certain provocations appeared. The document was circulated at the highest levels of government and the reaction was mixed. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson agreed with George Kennan and Charles Bolden, two former ambassadors to the Soviet Union, that the United States was, at that time, more militarily powerful than the Soviet Union.⁸⁵ They also contended that the United States could and should negotiate with the Soviets on every major point of contention.⁸⁶ International events overran these arguments. That June North Korea invaded South Korea with major assistance from both Russia and Communist China. Congressional and public criticism of the Truman administration's perceived soft handling of Communism also doomed the nay-sayers. The Truman administration roughly tripled its defense budget as defined by a percentage of gross domestic product for the next three years (5 percent increased to 14.2 percent).⁸⁷ NSC/68 became policy. This seminal document provided the framework for policy and its conclusions were very clear. However, interpreting the document has created a "cottage industry" for historians and researchers.⁸⁸ NSC/68 was a paradigm shift in U.S. strategic policy primarily due to a reappraisal of Soviet policies and intentions. Deterring and defeating Soviet expansion was linked to defensive containment. Containment alone was insufficient. The United States must reduce the power of the Kremlin by creating pro-Western friendly governments.⁸⁹

The new definition of deterrence entered into mainstream thought and the public landscape. When the motion picture *A Gathering of Eagles* was released in 1962, the press copy quoted General Thomas S. Power, the SAC commander-in-chief:

⁸⁴ NSC/68, 60-66.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945-1952": <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/NSC68>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ See Ernest R. May, ed. *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1993)

⁸⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950, 284.

Deterrence is more than bombs and missiles and tanks and armies. Deterrence is a sound economy and prosperous industry. Deterrence is scientific progress and good schools. Deterrence is adequate civil defense and a stable professional military force. Most of all, deterrence is the determination of the American people to prevent and, if necessary, fight and *win* any kind of war, whether hot or cold, big or small.⁹⁰

The Korean War

Korea was among the many unresolved issues from the end of World War II. The West found itself mired in a complex scenario that taxed the twin theories of containment and deterrence. From ancient times the Korean Peninsula has been a place conquered and reconquered by the Chinese, Mongols, and Japanese. Both the Chinese and Japanese treated the Koreans and their governments as subservient. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 was largely fought on the Korean Peninsula and in the waters adjacent to it. The Japanese defeated the Imperial Russians and annexed Korea as a colony. Japan ruled Korea directly until the end of World War II.

The Cairo Conference in November and December 1943 was one in a series of meetings among Allied leaders to determine the course of action of the war and beyond. This conference dealt with prosecuting the war against Japan and the ultimate fate of its colonial holdings. The functionaries were U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek. The leaders dealt with long-term goals in addition to the immediate issues of logistics and manpower needed to fight the war. The three men issued a press release that affirmed China's status as one of the four Great Powers and that Japan be stripped of its territories and colonies, including Manchuria, Taiwan, and the Pescadore Islands, all returned to China.⁹¹ The Russians were not part of this arrangement as they were not yet a belligerent power in the Pacific War. The three leaders also issued the Cairo Declaration on December 1, 1943, in which all three nations pledged to continue the war against the Empire of Japan and "eject the Japanese forces from all the territories it had conquered, including the Chinese territories, Korea, and the Pacific Islands."⁹² The Chinese were not a Great Power, but both Roosevelt and Churchill believed the pro-western Chiang Kai-shek would be a reasonable alternative to the defeated Japanese. This was a serious blunder as events soon revealed.

The Soviet Union entered the war in the Pacific just prior to its end. The State Department had hoped that Korea would be kept as a single political unit and avoid partitioning the peninsula into zones of military occupation as was the case in Germany. They were not aware of the Manhattan Project and, when Japan surrendered much faster than anticipated, an emergency division was thought to be the best method for accepting surrender of Japanese forces in Korea.⁹³ An

⁹⁰ Patrick Lucanio and Gary Colville, *Smokin' Rockets: The Romance of Technology in American Film, Radio and Television, 1945-1962* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2002), 135.

⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945-1952": <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/korean-war-2>.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Department of the Air Force, *US Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953 (Study No. 137 – Part I)* (Washington, D.C.: USAF Historical Division, c. 1956), 14.

American Army Colonel, Dean Rusk (later Secretary of State), submitted an idea that the Soviet Union should accept the surrender of the Japanese forces north of the 38th parallel (line of latitude) which bisected the Korean Peninsula. United States forces would accept the surrender in the south.⁹⁴ Only later was this also viewed as a serious mistake on the part of the well-meaning Americans. The 38th parallel was an arbitrary line splitting villages, separating families, and creating an artificial border that would be hard to defend. The planners believe this to be only a temporary line and that once postwar elections were held, the Koreans would decide for themselves. This was a tragic mistake. The Truman Administration was not forceful in its dealing with the Russians and Chinese in this region during the period that the United States owned an atomic monopoly. President Truman vacillated on this issue often during the late 1940s and this lack of resolve continued into the Korean War. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, writing a position paper in January 1950, failed to include Korea from the list of nations to be part of the nation's Far East Defense Perimeter (FEDP.)

The United Nations was created with the hope that any future disputes among nations could be resolved diplomatically. In 1947 the UN agreed to be the arbiter and guarantor of elections in both North and South Korea to install a legitimate single government. The Soviet Union used its veto power to block elections in the North and backed Kim Il Sung as the official leader of the newly created Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The United States supported Syngman Rhee as the duly elected head of state of the newly founded Republic of Korea (ROK). Both North Korea and South Korea declared that they wished for reunification, but under very different concepts. The United Nations brokered an agreement in which both the United States and the Soviet Union withdrew formal military units from both states but left large numbers of training and political advisors. Under President Truman's guidance, the United States negotiated with the Russians concerning elections, even if neither side was pleased with the outcome. This implied that a military solution was not planned and would not be considered.⁹⁵

The War began on June 25, 1950, when the North Korean Army streamed over the 38th Parallel with 135,000 troops. The South Koreans were completely unprepared, still hoping for negotiated elections while the United States and Russia were in diplomatic talks. The South Korean military abandoned their capital, Seoul, and retreated south. Two weeks later, on July 7, the United Nations appointed American General Douglas MacArthur, the architect of Japan's defeat in World War II, to defend the Republic of Korea on July 8, 1950.⁹⁶ The South Koreans were driven into the southeastern corner of the peninsula based on the city of Pusan. An advantage to being driven into a fairly small area is that the attacker must apply more force than might be

⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1945-1952": <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/korean-war-2>.

⁹⁵ Perhaps the best appraisal of American interests and the course of the Korean War is found in: David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hachette Books, 2008), passim.

⁹⁶ *The New York Times*, July 8, 1950.

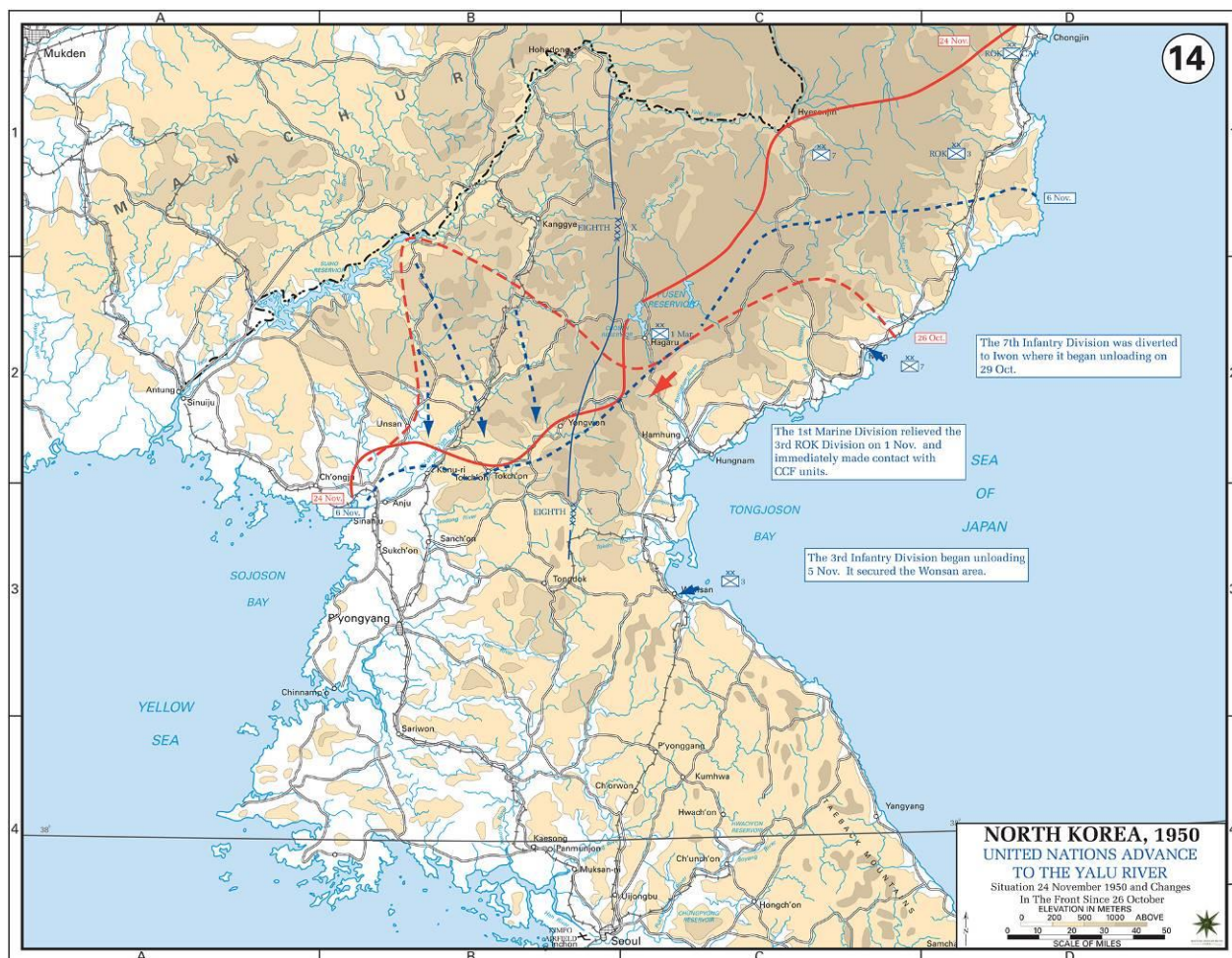


Figure 11. The Korean War November 1950.

<http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/Korean%20War/Korea14.gif>

General MacArthur performed the unexpected by launching amphibious landings at Inchon, far behind the North Korean lines. Suddenly faced with fighting forces at the front and rear, the Pusan Perimeter was relieved and South Korean and United Nations forces drove north before the retreating northern columns. MacArthur's units drove east from Inchon and by the end of the month, Seoul was recaptured and the North Korean forces fled north of the 38th Parallel. The United Nations gave MacArthur permission to cross the border to chase and perhaps destroy the North Korean Army.⁹⁸ This is a proper application of deterrence theory, punishing the aggressor to the point of giving up an invasion. However, MacArthur's units pressed north to the border of Communist China at the Yalu River.

⁹⁸ <http://www.history.army.mil/books/pd-c-11.htm>.



Figure 12. The Korean War, December 1950.

<http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/Korean%20War/Korea15.gif>

Although wary of the Chinese, United Nations leaders did not believe they would enter the conflict. The Chinese poured hundreds of thousands of soldiers into North Korea in December 1950 and drove south of the 38th Parallel. Chinese forces pressed two offensive thrusts at Kunu-ri and at the Chosin Reservoir.⁹⁹

General Matthew Ridgeway assumed tactical command of the United Nations forces as General MacArthur lobbied for an invasion of China and for a first use of atomic bombs to create a cauterized zone along the Yalu River border. Tensions rose between President Truman and his senior commander. This turned into rancor as MacArthur questioned the President's leadership capabilities. In this he crossed the line of the role of a commander. The Chinese forces reached

⁹⁹ Seth Robson, "Battle of Kunu-ri remembered" *Stars and Stripes*, December 5, 2004.

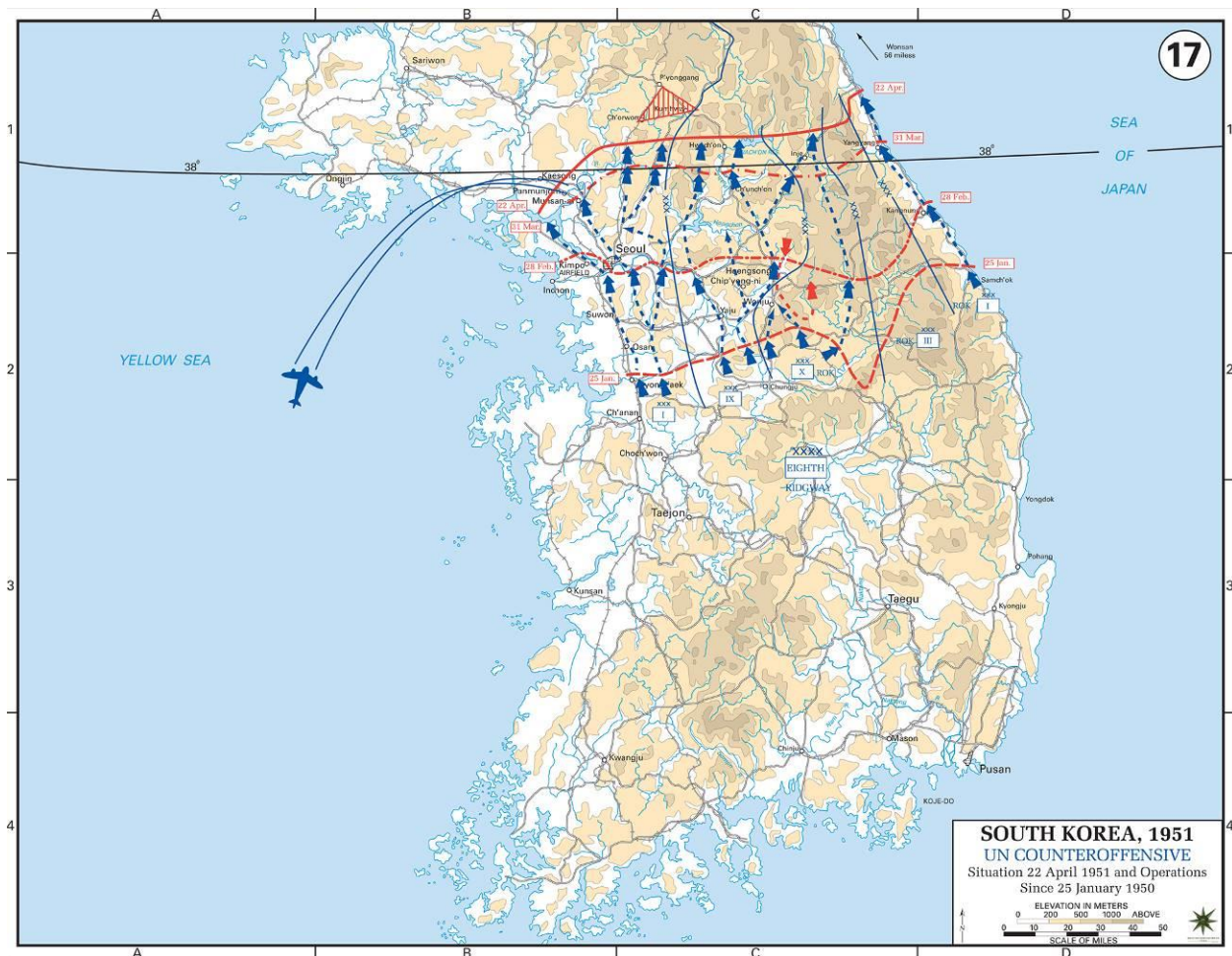


Figure 13. The Korean War April 1951.

<http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/Korean%20War/Korea17.gif>

the apex of their attacks during the Korean War in January and February 1951. General Ridgway fought fierce battles in the central spine of the peninsula and halted Chinese advances.

President Truman relieved General MacArthur of command on charges of insubordination on April 11, 1951. General Ridgway replaced him. Truman had full authority to fire MacArthur and, politically, it was a brave move. The general was the hero of the Pacific Theater in World War II. He was, perhaps, one of the two most beloved living American military commanders, the other being General Dwight Eisenhower. The firing of General MacArthur eroded Truman's support in the United States. it made the President almost completely un-electable. MacArthur's support swelled and many wished he would run for president in the 1952 elections. Another issue concurrent with Truman's handling of MacArthur was the President's refusal to call the Korean War what it was, a war. He referred to it as a 'Police Action' and the Korean Conflict.

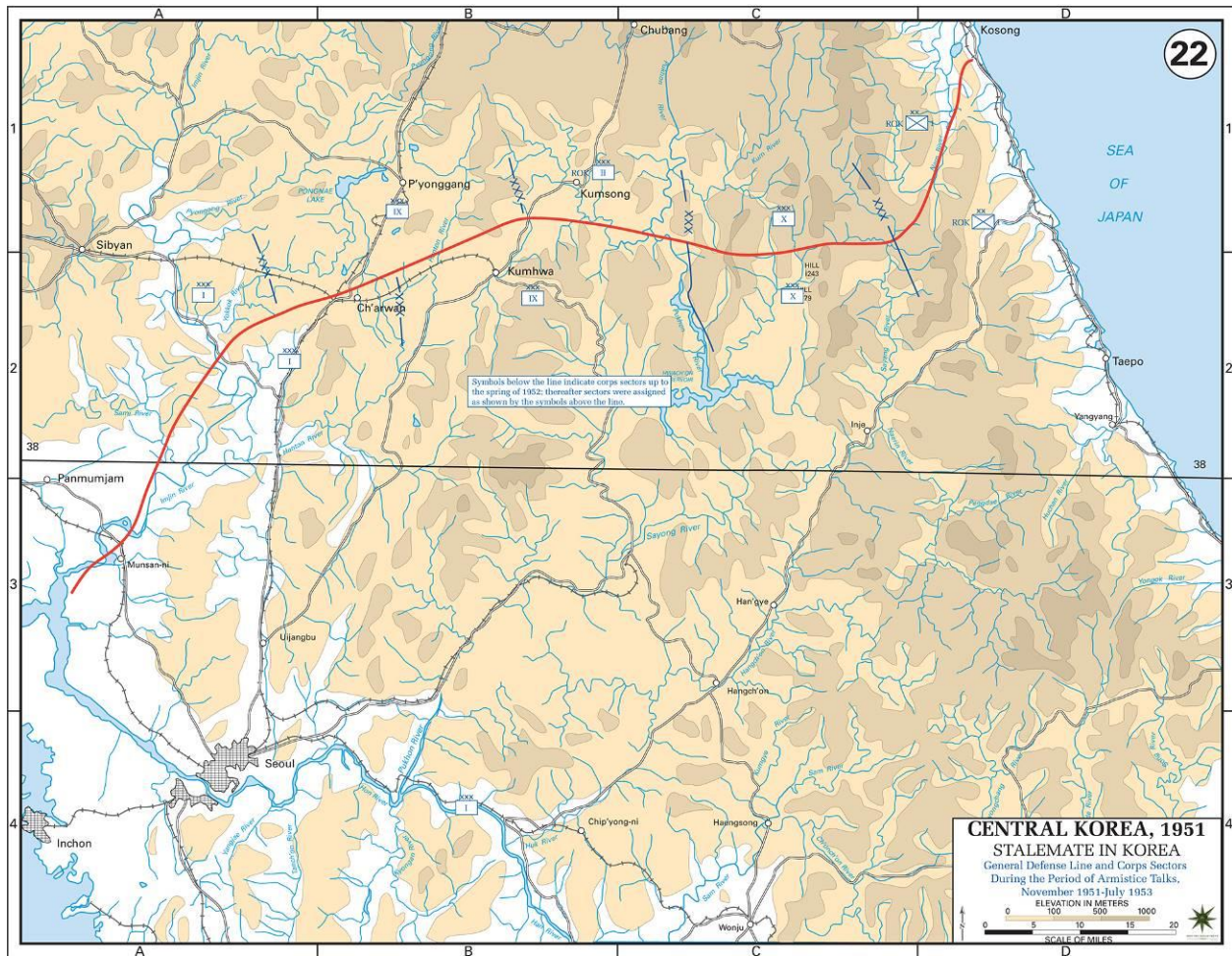


Figure 14. The Korean War, Stalemate 1951.

<http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/Korean%20War/Korea22.gif>

The Korean War settled into a World War I style of fighting.¹⁰⁰ The stalemate continued until July 27, 1953, when a cease-fire was signed between the United Nations and North Korea. It remains a major flashpoint to this day. Estimates of casualties are imprecise, but American losses were approximately 33,000, South Korea suffered 415,000, and combined Chinese and North Korean casualties approximated 1.5 million.¹⁰¹

Historians ponder many questions concerning Korea. Relevant to this paper, some of them are: Did containment succeed or fail in the Korean War? The war was contained within the Korean Peninsula but only at extremely high levels of casualties. Were the United States and the United Nations prepared for such a war? The answer is an unqualified, “No.” Were General

¹⁰⁰ The Department of the Army, *The Korean War: Years of Stalemate* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, N.D. passim.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Milestones: 1945-1952”: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/korean-war-2>.

MacArthur's concepts of deterrence out of bounds? This question will be debated for generations to come. MacArthur's plan to create a dead zone along the Yalu River would have trapped all Chinese forces within Korea and they probably would be dealt with piecemeal. It was a popular scenario with the public. The general made certain that his thoughts were known to the media. Would Russia, then with the atomic bomb, have entered the war? There is no way to answer this "What if?" At that time, only the United States possessed a true first strike capability and the Soviets were aware of NATO capabilities in Europe American forces and within the continental United States to deliver a devastating blow to their homeland. The threat of a first strike by America on the Soviet Union most likely curtailed their involvement. The Chinese Communists did the Russians' bidding but at a terrible cost. This strained the relationship between the two Communist giants, a situation that remains today.

MILITARY BUILDUP

The military buildup recommended by NSC/68 and triggered by the invasion of South Korea validated policy set forth in the document. The Soviets acted on provocations using surrogates to further, as the NSC and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) observed, and in their common view, "world domination."¹⁰² The Chinese intervention served as proof that the Communists "aggressively [pursued] their world-wide attack on the poser position" of America and its allies.¹⁰³

The Truman Administration's military budget for Fiscal Year 1952 jumped dramatically from 10 to 18 army divisions, 397 combatant naval vessels from 281 vessels, and 95 air wings from 58 wings. The total number of military personnel in all branches more than doubled to 3,211,000.¹⁰⁴ This tremendous surge in military spending and acquisitions was not enough according to the Munitions Board. It "estimated that at least 30 percent of the NSC/68/4¹⁰⁵ programs" . . . for "critical weapons systems," could not be completed by mid-year 1952.¹⁰⁶ NSC 114/1, a later review monitoring the status of the buildup in August 1951, concluded that NSC/68 underestimated the Soviet threat and that it was believed the Soviets had outpaced the West and that they would have 200 atomic weapons by late 1953 or in 1954.¹⁰⁷

This added fuel to other issues, particularly in Europe. Heightened concerns among NATO members led to near hysteria among the European nations in late 1950 and 1951. At the same time, the Germans wanted to increase their own funding and defensive status and this alarmed the French, who had all to recent memories of German military buildups. The NATO members decided to create a new command with an integrated defense force and a post of Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR). General Dwight D. Eisenhower was the first commander. President

¹⁰² Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 23.

¹⁰³ Walter Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1950-52* Volume 4 of *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (Wilmington, DE, 1979), 4: 67; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950. 7: 1308.

¹⁰⁴ Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy* 1950, 4: 83.

¹⁰⁵ The fourth draft of NSC/68.

¹⁰⁶ Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy* 1950, 4: 88-89.

¹⁰⁷ *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1951, 1: 127-57; Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy* 1950, 4: 91-93.

Truman ordered four more divisions to be sent to Europe.¹⁰⁸ European issues with allies and force levels continued throughout the remainder of the Truman presidency. General Eisenhower, as SACEUR, met with the President several times attempting to devise a strategy to stabilize Western Europe in the event of a massive Soviet land attack. **Without a total commitment to keep massive American forces in Europe, while they were hard pressed in Korea, Eisenhower decided that in the event of a Soviet blitzkrieg, American and NATO forces would withdraw as quickly as possible after SAC conducted a nuclear strike just behind the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). The Emergency War Plan approved in September 1952 called for this withdrawal from the Rhine to the Pyrenees Mountains and from Northern Europe to Norway, and in the South, trying to hold a line in Southern Italy somewhere south of Rome.**¹⁰⁹ (Emphasis by the authors.) In this scenario, containment theory is nonexistent and deterrence is stretched beyond its limits. Eisenhower's assessment, with full knowledge of both American and NATO capabilities, became the first manifestation of what would become his "New Look" strategy during his presidency.

Schism Within the NSC

President Truman ordered a reappraisal of NSC 68 during the second half of 1951. In the light of these new pressures. The primary issue was cost. Could the nation afford what the analysts and military leaders needed? The President ordered the NSC to pen a reappraisal in mid-July with a completion date of October 1 in order for the budget in Fiscal Year 1953 to be assessed.¹¹⁰ The new report was titled NSC 114. Charles Bohlen, the senior member of the State Department representative on the NSC, believed that NSC/68 was incorrect in its assumptions of the Soviets, and he tried to persuade Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Paul Nitze to agree with his positions.¹¹¹ Bohlen contended that NSC/68 ignored three primary theses of Soviet doctrine: first, that the "guiding thought" of Soviet leaders was that "under no circumstances and for no revolutionary gains must the Soviet state be involved in risks to the maintenance of Soviet power in Russia."¹¹² Second, "the [Soviet] internal situation is the single greatest controlling factor in foreign policy" but "virtually ignored in the entire [NSC] 68 series." Third, "any war, whether the prospect of victory be dim or bright, carries with it major risks to the Soviet system in Russia . . . I am convinced are predominately present in Soviet thinking on any question of war, are either ignored or treated as insignificant [in NSC 68]."¹¹³ Nitze thought Bohlen to be misguided or simply arbitrary. He did not state that Bohlen might be soft on Communism, but the underlying tone of his rebuttal carried a sense of it.¹¹⁴ Bohlen then proposed that, for funding purposes, NSC/68 be restricted to only programs that would balance Soviet capabilities.¹¹⁵ The divergent opinions were not resolved by the October 17, when NSC 114/2 was presented to the

¹⁰⁸ Robert Wampler, "Ambiguous Legacy: The United States, Great Britain, and the Formation of NATO Strategy 1948-1957," PhD. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1991),30.

¹⁰⁹ Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1950*, 4: 307-08.

¹¹⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States 1951*, 1: 88-89, 101-3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 106-8, 163-78, 180-81, 221-25.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 165.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 172-75,177-78.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

NSC. This draft was delivered in two parts. Part I consisted of policy review and Part Two detailed proposed agency programs. President Truman approved the programs in Part II for inclusion in the budget for Fiscal Year 1953 but sent Part I back to the NSC to review both NSC 68 and NSC 114. The President reasoned that both documents needed a reassessment “in light of (1) the second Soviet atomic bomb explosion and 92) the current evaluation of the net of the USSR to injure the continental United States.”¹¹⁶ The dispute continued for almost a year.¹¹⁷

The Truman Legacy

The legacy of the Truman Administration’s concept and implementation of containment and deterrence is one of discordance, attempts at resolve and forbearance, followed by disarray and internal bickering. The concepts of NSC/68 would survive during the Cold War, solidified and augmented by the Eisenhower Administration. Near the end of Truman’s term, the President decided that he would not survive another election. His NSC staff authored two more reports. NSC/135/3, “Reappraisal of U.S. Objectives and Strategy for National Security,” approved on September 25, 1952, and NSC/141, “Reexamination of U.S. Programs for National Security,” submitted on January 19, 1953.¹¹⁸

Charles Bohlen and Paul Nitze continued their infighting through the end of the Truman Administration. Bohlen was a firm “Dove” in the administration and opposed the “Hawks.” He disagreed with his mentor, George F. Kennan, renounced containment, and argued for “accommodation,” believing that Stalin should have an undisturbed control over Eastern Europe.¹¹⁹ Bohlen won his position in NSC/135/3 over two and half years after he first proffered it. Secretary of State Dean Acheson allowed Bohlen’s statement regarding the Soviet leaders’ position was self-preservation.¹²⁰ This would provide a deterrent against Soviet intentions.¹²¹ This was predicated upon the Soviets recognizing that an attack on the United States or Europe would yield significant damage to themselves.¹²² According to Bohlen’s view, the greatest threat was in Soviet piecemeal advances rather than general war, either conventional or nuclear.¹²³

As the Korean War dragged on in stalemate, NATO received less practical assistance. The Joint Chiefs of Staff wrote in 1952: “A loss of momentum became apparent in every aspect of NATO activities.”¹²⁴ The Truman administration budget chiefs could agree on how much the defense appropriations should be and aid to Europe fell from \$11.2 billion to \$ 3.2 billion in 1953 based

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 234-38.

¹¹⁷ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 29.

¹¹⁸ *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1952, 2: 554, 142-50, 209-31.

¹¹⁹ John L. Harper, "Friends, Not Allies: George F. Kennan and Charles E. Bohlen," *World Policy Journal* 1995 12(2): 77-88. The day that Dwight Eisenhower took office on January 20, 1953, Bohlen was made United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union after gaining approval over the outrage of Senator Joseph McCarthy. His tenure in Moscow was stormy as he could not deliver better relations with the Russians. He ran afoul of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was demoted on April 18, 1957. He remained in diplomatic posts, though none as important as the USSR.

¹²⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1952, 2: 89-94.

¹²¹ Ibid., 12-17.

¹²² Ibid., 145—147.

¹²³ Ibid., 144-45.

¹²⁴ Poole, *Joint Chiefs of Staff* 4, 109; Wampler, *Ambiguous Legacy*, Chapter 6.

on the Truman budget for that year.¹²⁵ NSC/68 placed a high degree of importance protecting the United States through air defense, but little was done during 1952. Early warning radar and fighter interceptor defense were “extremely meager.”¹²⁶

Almost all historians agree that President Truman was an extremely honest man who came into the presidency without knowledge of the atomic bomb, plans for the invasion of Japan. His early civilian advisors were often inadequate in their roles. Finally, President Truman’s legacy in the realm of containment and deterrence was a mix of brilliant success and awkward planning. The Marshall Plan saved Western Europe from ruin and probable Communist rule. Militarily, the creation of SAC and NATO assisted by augmented defense budgets allowed for a high degree of cooperation with America’s allies, both in Europe and in the Far East. Early tough stances against the Soviet Union allowed for containment policy to gain traction. On the other side of the equation, Korea provided a case book of lessons to be learned: preparedness, relations with the U.S. military, inconsistent policy, and whether or not the nation’s civilian leaders had the will to execute a winning strategy. Last, and most far reaching for this discussion, divisions within the NSC were allowed to continue without addressing their problems. The timeline was pushed back for delivery of much needed defense equipment, manpower, and aid to allies.

Although President Truman was eligible to run for a second full term in office, he chose not to. The Senate Un-American Affairs Committee, led by Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, investigated unproven accusations that both insiders within the administration and in the U.S. State Department, among others, were infiltrated by communist spies. The public rode a wave of anti-communist rhetoric and Truman decided he was unelectable. He announced in March 1952 that he would not run.¹²⁷ The Democratic Party ran Adlai Stevenson, then governor of Illinois. The Republicans ran General Dwight David Eisenhower. The Republicans won easily. Among Eisenhower’s political promises was that he would end the War in Korea.

¹²⁵ Poole, *Joint Chiefs of Staff* 4, 299; Wampler, *Ambiguous Legacy*, 378-82.

¹²⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1952-4, 2: 167-68.

¹²⁷ President Truman retired to his home in Independence, Missouri. He wrote his memoirs and led a quiet life until his death, in Kansas City, Missouri, on December 26, 1972.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFGSC	Air Force Global Strike Command
CC	Commander in Chief (Numbered Air Force)
CONAD	Continental Air Defense Command (United States Air Force)
CONUS	Continental United States
DPRK	Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea)
FEBA	Forward Edge of Battle Area
FEDP	Far East Defense Perimeter
HO	History Office
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
LSUS	Louisiana State University Shreveport
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
RAF	Royal Air Force (Great Britain)
RAND	Research and Development Corporation
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
SAC	Strategic Air Command (United States Air Force)
SAC	Strategy Alternatives Consortium
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
TAC	Tactical Air Command (United States Air Force)
UN	United Nations
USAF	United States Air Force
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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