The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System

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I should like to begin this essay with a fable. Once upon a time, there was a great war that involved the slaughter of millions upon millions of people. When, after years of fighting, one side finally prevailed over the other and the war ended, everyone said that it must go down in history as the last great war ever fought. To that end, the victorious nations sent all of their wisest men to a great peace conference, where they were given the task of drawing up a settlement that would be so carefully designed, so unquestionably fair to all concerned, that it would eliminate war as a phenomenon of human existence. Unfortunately, that settlement lasted only twenty years.

There followed yet another great war involving the slaughter of millions upon millions of people. When, after years of fighting, one side finally prevailed over the other and the war ended, everyone said that it must go down in history as the last great war ever fought. To everyone's horror, though, the victors in that conflict immediately fell to quarreling among themselves, with the result that no peace conference ever took place. Within a few years each of the major victors had come to regard each other, and not their former enemies, as the principal threat to their survival; each sought to ensure that survival by developing weapons capable, at least in theory, of ending the survival of everyone on earth. Paradoxically, that arrangement lasted twice as long as the first one, and as the fable ended showed no signs of coming apart anytime soon.

It is, of course, just a fable, and as a general rule one ought not to take fables too seriously. There are times, though, when fables can illuminate reality more sharply than conventional forms of explanation are able to do, and this may well be one of them. For it is the case that the post-World War II system of international relations, which nobody designed or even thought could last for very long, which was based not upon the dictates of morality

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and justice but rather upon an arbitrary and strikingly artificial division of the world into spheres of influence, and which incorporated within it some of the most bitter and persistent antagonisms short of war in modern history, has now survived twice as long as the far more carefully designed World War I settlement, has approximately equaled in longevity the great 19th century international systems of Metternich and Bismarck, and unlike those earlier systems after four decades of existence shows no perceptible signs of disintegration. It is, or ought to be, enough to make one think.

To be sure, the term "peace" is not the first one that comes to mind when one recalls the history of the past forty years. That period, after all, has seen the greatest accumulation of armaments the world has ever known, a whole series of protracted and devastating limited wars, an abundance of revolutionary, ethnic, religious, and civil violence, as well as some of the deepest and most intractable ideological rivalries in human experience. Nor have those more ancient scourges—famine, disease, poverty, injustice—by any means disappeared from the face of the earth. Is it not stretching things a bit, one might well ask, to take the moral and spiritual desert in which the nations of the world conduct their affairs, and call it "peace"?

It is, of course, but that is just the point. Given all the conceivable reasons for having had a major war in the past four decades—reasons that in any other age would have provided ample justification for such a war—it seems worthy of comment that there has not in fact been one; that despite the unjust and wholly artificial character of the post-World War II settlement, it has now persisted for the better part of half a century. That may not be grounds for celebration, but it is at least grounds for investigation: for trying to comprehend how this great power peace has managed to survive for so long in the face of so much provocation, and for thinking about what might be done to perpetuate that situation. For, after all, we could do worse.

Systems Theory and International Stability

Anyone attempting to understand why there has been no third world war confronts a problem not unlike that of Sherlock Holmes and the dog that did not bark in the night: how does one account for something that did not happen? How does one explain why the great conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, which by all past standards of historical experience should have developed by now, has not in fact done so? The question

involves certain methodological difficulties, to be sure: it is always easier to account for what did happen than what did not. But there is also a curious bias among students of international relations that reinforces this tendency: "For every thousand pages published on the causes of wars," Geoffrey Blainey has commented, "there is less than one page directly on the causes of peace."[1] Even the discipline of "peace studies" suffers from this disproportion: it has given far more attention to the question of what we must do to avoid the apocalypse than it has to the equally interesting question of why, given all the opportunities, it has not happened so far.

It might be easier to deal with this question if the work that has been done on the causes of war had produced something approximating a consensus on why wars develop: we could then apply that analysis to the post-1945 period and see what it is that has been different about it. But, in fact, these studies are not much help. Historians, political scientists, economists, sociologists, statisticians, even meteorologists, have wrestled for years with the question of what causes wars, and yet the most recent review of that literature concludes that "our understanding of war remains at an elementary level. No widely accepted theory of the causes of war exists and little agreement has emerged on the methodology through which these causes might be discovered."[2]

Nor has the comparative work that has been done on international systems shed much more light on the matter. The difficulty here is that our actual experience is limited to the operations of a single system—the balance of power system—operating either within the "multipolar" configuration that characterized international politics until World War II, or the "bipolar" con-

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1. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 3.

2. Jack S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), p. 1. Other standard works on this subject, in addition to Blainey, cited above, include: Lewis F. Richardson, *Arms and Insecurity: A Mathematical Study of the Causes and Origins of War* (Pittsburgh: Quadrangle, 1960); Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Kenneth Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, trans. Richard Howard and Annette Baker Fox (New York: Doubleday, 1966); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816–1980* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1982); and Michael Howard, *The Causes of Wars*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984). A valuable overview of conflicting explanations is Keith L. Nelson and Spencer C. Olin, Jr., *Why War? Ideology, Theory, and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

figuration that has characterized them since. Alternative systems remain abstract conceptualizations in the minds of theorists, and are of little use in advancing our knowledge of how wars in the real world do or do not occur.[3]

But "systems theory" itself is something else again: here one can find a useful point of departure for thinking about the nature of international relations since 1945. An "international system" exists, political scientists tell us, when two conditions are met: first, interconnections exist between units within the system, so that changes in some parts of it produce changes in other parts as well; and, second, the collective behavior of the system as a whole differs from the expectations and priorities of the individual units that make it up.[4] Certainly demonstrating the "interconnectedness" of post-World War II international relations is not difficult: one of its most prominent characteristics has been the tendency of major powers to assume that little if anything can happen in the world without in some way enhancing or detracting from their own immediate interests.[5] Nor has the collective behavior of nations corresponded to their individual expectations: the very fact

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3. The classic example of such abstract conceptualization is Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics* (New York: John Wiley, 1957). For the argument that 1945 marks the transition from a "multipolar" to a "bipolar" international system, see Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 419–420; and Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison–Wesley, 1979), pp. 161–163. One can, of course, question whether the postwar international system constitutes true "bipolarity." Peter H. Beckman, for example, provides an elaborate set of indices demonstrating the asymmetrical nature of American and Soviet power after 1945 in his *World Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1984), pp. 207–209, 235–237, 282–285. But such retrospective judgments neglect the perceptions of policymakers *at the time*, who clearly saw their world as bipolar and frequently commented on the phenomenon. See, for example, David S. McLellan, *Dean Acheson: The State Department Years* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1976), p. 116; and, for Soviet "two camp" theory, William Taubman, *Stalin's America Policy: From Entente to Detente to Cold War* (New York: Norton, 1982), pp. 176–178.
4. I have followed here the definition of Robert Jervis, "Systems Theories and Diplomatic History," in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), p. 212. For a more rigorous discussion of the requirements of systems theory, and a critique of some of its major practitioners, see Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 38–78. Akira Iriye is one of the few historians who have sought to apply systems theory to the study of international relations. See his *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921–1931* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); and *The Cold War in Asia: A Historical Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1974).
5. See, on this point, Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 58–62. Jervis points out that "almost by definition, a great power is more tightly connected to larger numbers of other states than is a small power. . . . Growing conflict or growing cooperation between Argentina and Chile would not affect Pakistan, but it would affect America and American policy toward those states. . . ." Jervis, "Systems Theories and Diplomatic History," p. 215.

that the interim arrangements of 1945 have remained largely intact for four decades would have astonished—and quite possibly appalled—the statesmen who cobbled them together in the hectic months that followed the surrender of Germany and Japan.[6]

A particularly valuable feature of systems theory is that it provides criteria for differentiating between stable and unstable political configurations: these can help to account for the fact that some international systems outlast others. Karl Deutsch and J. David Singer have defined "stability" as "the probability that the system retains all of its essential characteristics: that no single nation becomes dominant; that most of its members continue to survive; and that large-scale war does not occur." It is characteristic of such a system, Deutsch and Singer add, that it has the capacity for self-regulation: the ability to counteract stimuli that would otherwise threaten its survival, much as the automatic pilot on an airplane or the governor on a steam engine would do. "Self-regulating" systems are very different from what they call "self-aggravating" systems, situations that get out of control, like forest fires, drug addiction, runaway inflation, nuclear fission, and of course, although they themselves do not cite the example, all-out war.[7] Self-regulating mechanisms are most likely to function, in turn, when there exists some fundamental agreement among major states within the system on the objectives they are seeking to uphold by participating in it, when the structure of the system reflects the way in which power is distributed among its respective members,

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6. "A future war with the Soviet Union," retiring career diplomat Joseph C. Grew commented in May 1945, "is as certain as anything in this world." Memorandum of May 19, 1945, quoted in Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904–1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), Vol. 2, p. 1446. For other early expressions of pessimism about the stability of the postwar international system, see Walter Lippmann, *The Cold War: A Study in U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1947), pp. 26–28, 37–39, 60–62. "There is, after all, something to be explained—about perceptions as well as events—when so much that has been written has dismissed the new state system as no system at all but an unstable transition to something else." A.W. DePorte, *Europe Between the Super-Powers: The Enduring Balance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 167.

7. Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer, "Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability," in James N. Rosenau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory,* rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1969), pp. 315–317. Deutsch and Singer equate "self-regulation" with "negative feedback": "By negative—as distinguished from positive or amplifying—feedback, we refer to the phenomenon of self-correction: as stimuli in one particular direction increase, the system exhibits a decreasing response to those stimuli, and increasingly exhibits the tendencies that counteract them." See also Jervis, "Systems Theories and Diplomatic History," p. 220. For Kaplan's more abstract definition of stability, see his *System and Process in International Politics,* p. 8. The concept of "stability" in international systems owes a good deal to "functionalist" theory; see, on this point, Charles Reynolds, *Theory and Explanation in International Politics* (London: Martin Robertson, 1973), p. 30.

and when agreed-upon procedures exist for resolving differences among them.[8]

Does the post-World War II international system fit these criteria for "stability"? Certainly its most basic characteristic—bipolarity—remains intact, in that the gap between the world's two greatest military powers and their nearest rivals is not substantially different from what it was forty years ago.[9] At the same time, neither the Soviet Union nor the United States nor anyone else has been able wholly to dominate that system; the nations most active within it in 1945 are for the most part still active today. And of course the most convincing argument for "stability" is that, so far at least, World War III has not occurred. On the surface, then, the concept of a "stable" international system makes sense as a way of understanding the experience through which we have lived these past forty years.

But what have been the self-regulating mechanisms? How has an environment been created in which they are able to function? In what way do those mechanisms—and the environment in which they function—resemble or differ from the configuration of other international systems, both stable and unstable, in modern history? What circumstances exist that might impair their operation, transforming self-regulation into self-aggravation? These are questions that have not received the attention they deserve from students of the history and politics of the postwar era. What follows is a series of speculations—they can hardly be more than that, given present knowledge—upon these issues, the importance of which hardly needs to be stressed.

I should like to emphasize, though, that this essay's concentration on the way the world is and has been is not intended to excuse or to justify our current predicament. Nor is it meant to preclude the possibility of moving ultimately toward something better. We can all conceive of international systems that combine stability with greater justice and less risk than the present one does, and we ought to continue to think about these things. But short of war, which no one wants, change in international relations tends to be gradual and evolutionary. It does not happen overnight. That means that alternative systems, if they ever develop, probably will not be total rejections

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8. I have followed here, in slightly modified form, criteria provided in Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. x, a book that provides an excellent discussion of how international systems have evolved since the beginning of the 18th century. But see also Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, pp. 50–105.
9. See, on this point, Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 180–181; also DePorte, *Europe Between the Super-Powers*, p. 167.

of the existing system, but rather variations proceeding from it. All the more reason, then, to try to understand the system we have, to try to distinguish its stabilizing from its destabilizing characteristics, and to try to reinforce the former as a basis from which we might, in time and with luck, do better.

The Structural Elements of Stability

BIPOLARITY

Any such investigation should begin by distinguishing the structure of the international system in question from the behavior of the nations that make it up.[10] The reason for this is simple: behavior alone will not ensure stability if the structural prerequisites for it are absent, but structure can under certain circumstances impose stability even when its behavioral prerequisites are unpromising.[11] One need only compare the settlement of 1945 with its predecessor of 1919 to see the point.

If the intentions of statesmen alone had governed, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 would have ushered in an era of stability in world politics comparable to the one brought about in Europe by the Congress of Vienna almost a century earlier. Certainly the diplomats at Paris had that earlier precedent very much in mind;[12] conscious of what victory had cost, they approached their task wondering whether war had not altogether lost its usefulness as a means of resolving disputes among nations.[13] Few if any peace negotiators have been able to draw upon such an impressive array of technical expertise as was available in 1919.[14] Moreover, the most influential of them, Woodrow Wilson, had determined to go beyond the practices and procedures of the "old diplomacy" to construct a settlement that would

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10. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 73–78; Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, pp. 85–88.

11. " . . . [S]tructure designates a set of constraining conditions. . . . [It] acts as a selector, but it cannot be seen, examined, and observed at work. . . . Because structures select by rewarding some behaviors and punishing others, outcomes cannot be inferred from intentions and behaviors." Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 73–74.

12. Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1965), pp. 30–31.

13. Bernadotte E. Schmitt and Harold C. Vedeler, *The World in the Crucible: 1914–1919* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 470. "Mr Evelyn Waugh's view, that what began as a crusade turned into a tug of war between indistinguishable teams of sweaty louts, is idiosyncratic. Most of us [in World War II] did not feel like that. But it is evident that by the end of the First World War a large number of intelligent people did; and ten years later their doubts had become general." Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace* (New York: Viking, 1970), p. 99.

14. Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919*, pp. 26–29. See also Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917–1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

integrate power with morality. "Tell me what's right and I'll fight for it," Wilson is said to have demanded of his advisers,[15] and at least as far as the idea of self-determination was concerned, the Versailles Treaty did come about as close as any in modern history to incorporating within itself the principles of justice.[16]

Unfortunately, in so doing, it neglected the realities of power. It broke up the old Austro–Hungarian Empire, a move that reflected accurately enough the aspirations of the nationalities involved, but that failed to provide the successor states of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Hungary with the military or economic means necessary to sustain their new-found sovereignty.[17] Even more shortsightedly, the treaty made no effort to accommodate the interests of two nations whose population and industrial strength were certain to guarantee them a major influence over postwar European developments—Germany and Soviet Russia. It should have been no surprise, therefore, that when the Versailles system finally broke down in 1939, it did so largely as the result of a deal cut at the expense of the East Europeans by these two countries whose power had been ignored, twenty years earlier, in the interests of justice.[18]

Nobody, in contrast, would picture the post-World War II settlement as a triumph of justice. That settlement arbitrarily divided sovereign nations like Germany, Austria, and Korea, not because anyone thought it was right to do so, but because neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could agree on whose occupation forces would withdraw first.[19] It did nothing to

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15. Quoted in John Morton Blum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1956), p. 161. The most convenient overview of Wilson's ideas regarding the peace settlement can be found in N. Gordon Levin, Jr., *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics: America's Response to War and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), especially pp. 123–251; and Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1979), pp. 72–103.
16. See, on this point, Gelfand, *The Inquiry*, pp. 323–326; Schmitt and Vedeler, *The World in the Crucible*, pp. 474–475; and Klaus Schwabe, *Woodrow Wilson, Revolutionary Germany, and Peacemaking, 1918–1919: Missionary Diplomacy and the Realities of Power* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 395–402.
17. Winston Churchill's is the classic indictment of this decision. See his *The Gathering Storm* (New York: Bantam, 1961), pp. 9–10.
18. Craig and George, *Force and Statecraft*, pp. 87–100; see also Howard, *The Causes of Wars*, pp. 163–164. ". . . [T]he victors at Versailles . . . failed . . . because, as if lulled by their own rhetoric, they continued to assert morality while they neglected armaments." Blainey, *The Causes of War*, p. 163.
19. See, on Germany, Tony Sharp, *The Wartime Alliance and the Zonal Division of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), and John H. Backer, *The Decision to Divide Germany: American*

prevent the incorporation of several of the countries whose independence the 1919 settlement had recognized—and, in the case of Poland, whose independence Great Britain had gone to war in 1939 to protect—into a Soviet sphere of influence, where they remain to this day.[20] It witnessed, in response to this, the creation of an American sphere of influence in Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific, which although different from its Soviet counterpart in the important fact that the nations lying within it for the most part voluntarily associated themselves with the United States,[21] nonetheless required, however willingly, some sacrifice of national independence as well.

What resulted was the first true polarization of power in modern history. The world had had limited experience with bipolar systems in ancient times, it is true: certainly Thucydides' account of the rivalry between Athens and Sparta carries an eerie resonance for us today; nor could statesmen of the Cold War era forget what they had once learned, as schoolboys, of the antagonism between Rome and Carthage.[22] But these had been regional, not global conflicts: not until 1945 could one plausibly speak of a *world* divided into two competing spheres of influence, or of the *superpowers* that controlled them. The international situation had been reduced, Hans Morgenthau wrote in 1948, "to the primitive spectacle of two giants eyeing each other with watchful suspicion. . . . Thus contain or be contained, conquer or be con-

Foreign Policy in Transition (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1978); on Austria, William Bader, *Austria Between East and West, 1945–1955* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), and Sven Allard, *Russia and the Austrian State Treaty: A Case Study of Soviet Policy in Europe* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970); on Korea, Charles M. Dobbs, *The Unwanted Symbol: American Foreign Policy, the Cold War, and Korea, 1945–1950* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1981), and Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981). For useful comparative perspectives on the issue of partition, see Thomas E. Hachey, ed., *The Problem of Partition: Peril to World Peace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

20. Lynn Etheridge Davis, *The Cold War Begins: Soviet–American Conflict Over Eastern Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974); Eduard Mark, "American Policy toward Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1946: An Alternative Interpretation," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 68 (September 1981), pp. 313–336; and, for first-person accounts from American diplomats, Thomas T. Hammond, ed., *Witnesses to the Origins of the Cold War* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982).

21. See, on this point, John Lewis Gaddis, "The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 8 (Summer 1983), pp. 181–183. For a perceptive discussion of post-World War II American "imperial" expansion, see Tony Smith, *The Pattern of Imperialism: The United States, Great Britain, and the Late-Industrializing World since 1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 182–202.

22. Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Autobiography of Harry S. Truman* (Boulder, Colo.: Colorado Associated University Press, 1980), p. 120; McLellan, *Dean Acheson*, p. 116.

quered, destroy or be destroyed, become the watchwords of the new diplomacy."[23]

Now, bipolarity may seem to many today—as it did forty years ago—an awkward and dangerous way to organize world politics.[24] Simple geometric logic would suggest that a system resting upon three or more points of support would be more stable than one resting upon two. But politics is not geometry: the passage of time and the accumulation of experience has made clear certain structural elements of stability in the bipolar system of international relations that were not present in the multipolar systems that preceded it:

(1) The postwar bipolar system realistically reflected the facts of where military power resided at the end of World War II[25]—and where it still does today, for that matter. In this sense, it differed markedly from the settlement of 1919, which made so little effort to accommodate the interests of Germany and Soviet Russia. It is true that in other categories of power—notably the economic—states have since arisen capable of challenging or even surpassing the Soviet Union and the United States in the production of certain specific commodities. But as the *political* position of nations like West Germany, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong suggests, the ability to make video recorders, motorcycles, even automobiles and steel efficiently has yet to translate into anything approaching the capacity of Washington or Moscow to shape events in the world as a whole.

(2) The post-1945 bipolar structure was a simple one that did not require sophisticated leadership to maintain it. The great multipolar systems of the 19th century collapsed in large part because of their intricacy: they required a Metternich or a Bismarck to hold them together, and when statesmen of

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23. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 285. For the transition from bipolarity to multipolarity, see the 1973 edition of *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 338–342; also Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 162. For an eloquent history of the Cold War that views it as the product of the polarization of world politics, see Louis J. Halle, *The Cold War as History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).
24. Among those who have emphasized the instability of bipolar systems are Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 350–354; and Wright, *A Study of War*, pp. 763–764. See also Blainey, *The Causes of War*, pp. 110–111.
25. ". . . [W]hat *was* dominant in their consciousness," Michael Howard has written of the immediate post-World War II generation of statesmen, "was the impotence, almost one might say the irrelevance, of ethical aspirations in international politics in the absence of that factor to which so little attention had been devoted by their more eminent predecessors, to which indeed so many of them had been instinctively hostile—military power." Howard, *The Causes of War*, p. 55.

that calibre were no longer available, they tended to come apart.[26] Neither the Soviet nor the American political systems have been geared to identifying statesmen of comparable prowess and entrusting them with responsibility; demonstrated skill in the conduct of foreign policy has hardly been a major prerequisite for leadership in either country. And yet, a bipolar structure of international relations—because of the inescapably high stakes involved for its two major actors—tends, regardless of the personalities involved, to induce in them a sense of caution and restraint, and to discourage irresponsibility. "It is not," Kenneth Waltz notes, "that one entertains the utopian hope that all future American and Russian rulers will combine in their persons . . . nearly perfect virtues, but rather that the pressures of a bipolar world strongly encourage them to act internationally in ways better than their characters may lead one to expect."[27]

(3) Because of its relatively simple structure, alliances in this bipolar system have tended to be more stable than they had been in the 19th century and in the 1919–1939 period. It is striking to consider that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has now equaled in longevity the most durable of the pre-World War I alliances, that between Germany and Austria–Hungary; it has lasted almost twice as long as the Franco–Russian alliance, and certainly much longer than any of the tenuous alignments of the interwar period. Its principal rival, the Warsaw Treaty Organization, has been in existence for almost as long. The reason for this is simple: alliances, in the end, are the product of insecurity;[28] so long as the Soviet Union and the United States each remain for the other and for their respective clients the major source of insecurity in the world, neither superpower encounters very much difficulty in maintaining its alliances. In a multipolar system, sources of insecurity can vary in much more complicated ways; hence it is not surprising to find alliances shifting to accommodate these variations.[29]

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26. Henry Kissinger has written two classic accounts dealing with the importance of individual leadership in sustaining international systems. See his *A World Restored* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1957), on Metternich; and, on Bismarck, "The White Revolutionary: Reflections on Bismarck," *Daedalus*, Vol. 97 (Summer 1968), pp. 888–924. For a somewhat different perspective on Bismarck's role, see George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order: Franco-Russian Relations, 1875–1890* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), especially pp. 421–422.
27. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 176. On the tendency of unstable systemic structures to induce irresponsible leadership, see Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of the European Power Struggle*, trans. Charles Fullman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 257–258.
28. See, on this point, Roger V. Dingman, "Theories of, and Approaches to, Alliance Politics," in Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy*, pp. 247–247.
29. My argument here follows that of Snyder and Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations*, pp. 429–445.

(4) At the same time, though, and probably because of the overall stability of the basic alliance systems, defections from both the American and Soviet coalitions—China, Cuba, Vietnam, Iran, and Nicaragua, in the case of the Americans; Yugoslavia, Albania, Egypt, Somalia, and China again in the case of the Russians—have been tolerated without the major disruptions that might have attended such changes in a more delicately balanced multipolar system. The fact that a state the size of China was able to reverse its alignment twice during the Cold War without any more dramatic effect upon the position of the superpowers says something about the stability bipolarity brings; compare this record with the impact, prior to 1914, of such apparently minor episodes as Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the question of who was to control Morocco. It is a curious consequence of bipolarity that although alliances are more durable than in a multipolar system, defections are at the same time more tolerable.[30]

In short, without anyone's having designed it, and without any attempt whatever to consider the requirements of justice, the nations of the postwar era lucked into a system of international relations that, because it has been based upon realities of power, has served the cause of order—if not justice—better than one might have expected.

INDEPENDENCE, NOT INTERDEPENDENCE

But if the structure of bipolarity in itself encouraged stability, so too did certain inherent characteristics of the bilateral Soviet–American relationship. It used to be fashionable to point out, in the days before the Cold War began, that despite periodic outbreaks of tension between them Russians and Americans had never actually gone to war with one another; the same claim could not be made for the history of either country's relations with Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Austria–Hungary, Japan, or (if the Americans' undeclared naval war of 1798–1800 is counted) France. This record was thought to be all the more remarkable in view of the fact that, in ideological terms, Russian and American systems of government could hardly have been more different. Soviet-American friendship would not evolve easily, historian Foster Rhea Dulles noted in the wake of the first meeting between Roosevelt and Stalin in 1943, but the fact that "its roots were so deep in the past, and that it had developed through the years out of common interests transcending all other points of difference, marked the effort toward a new rapprochement as

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30. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 167–169.

conforming not only to the immediate but also to the long-term interests of the two nations."[31]

The onset of the Cold War made this argument seem less than convincing. To assert that American relations with Russia had once been good, students of the subject now suggested, was to confuse harmony with inactivity: given the infrequency of contacts between Russia and the United States in the 19th century, their tradition of "friendship" had been decidedly unremarkable. Once contacts became more frequent, as they had by the beginning of the 20th century, conflicts quickly followed, even before Western statesmen had begun to worry about the impact of Bolshevism, or the imminence of the international proletarian revolution.[32] But even after this breakdown in cordiality—and regardless of whether that cordiality had been real or imagined—Dulles's point remained valid: there still had been no Russian–American war, despite the fact that Russians and Americans had at one time or another fought virtually every other major power. This raises the question of whether there are not structural elements in the Russian–American relationship itself that contribute to stability, quite apart from the policies actually followed by Russian and American governments.

It has long been an assumption of classical liberalism that the more extensive the contacts that take place between nations, the greater are the chances for peace. Economic interdependence, it has been argued, makes war unlikely because nations who have come to rely upon one another for vital commodities cannot afford it. Cultural exchange, it has been suggested, causes peoples to become more sensitive to each others' concerns, and hence reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings. "People to people" contacts, it has been assumed, make it possible for nations to "know" one another better; the danger of war between them is, as a result, correspondingly reduced.[33]

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31. Foster Rhea Dulles, *The Road to Teheran: The Story of Russia and America, 1781–1943* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 8.

32. See, for example, Thomas A. Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian–American Relations from Early Times to Our Day* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), pp. 347–349. A more recent discussion of these developments is in John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretive History* (New York: Wiley, 1978), pp. 27–56.

33. The argument is succinctly summarized in Nelson and Olin, *Why War?*, pp. 35–43. Geoffrey Blainey labels the idea "Manchesterism" and satirizes it wickedly: "If those gifted early prophets of the Manchester creed could have seen Chamberlain—during the Czech crisis of September 1938—board the aircraft that was to fly him to Bavaria to meet Hitler at short notice they would have hailed aviation as the latest messenger of peace. If they had known that he met Hitler without even his own German interpreter they would perhaps have wondered whether the conversation was in Esperanto or Volapuk. It seemed that every postage stamp, bilingual

These are pleasant things to believe, but there is remarkably little historical evidence to validate them. As Kenneth Waltz has pointed out, "the fiercest civil wars and the bloodiest international ones are fought within arenas populated by highly similar people whose affairs are closely knit."[34] Consider, as examples, the costliest military conflicts of the past century and a half, using the statistics conveniently available now through the University of Michigan "Correlates of War" project: of the ten bloodiest interstate wars, every one of them grew out of conflicts between countries that either directly adjoined one another, or were involved actively in trade with one another.[35] Certainly economic interdependence did little to prevent Germany, France, Britain, Russia, and Austria–Hungary from going to war in 1914; nor did the fact that the United States was Japan's largest trading partner deter that country from attacking Pearl Harbor in 1941. Since 1945, there have been more civil wars than interstate wars;[36] that fact alone should be sufficient to call into question the proposition that interdependence necessarily breeds peace.

The Russian–American relationship, to a remarkable degree for two nations so extensively involved with the rest of the world, has been one of mutual *independence*. The simple fact that the two countries occupy opposite sides of the earth has had something to do with this: geographical remoteness from one another has provided little opportunity for the emergence of irredentist grievances comparable in importance to historic disputes over, say, Alsace–Lorraine, or the Polish Corridor, or the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. In the few areas where Soviet and American forces—or their proxies—have come into direct contact, they have erected artificial barriers like the Korean demilitarized zone, or the Berlin Wall, perhaps in unconscious

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dictionary, railway timetable and trade fair, every peace congress, Olympic race, tourist brochure and international telegram that had ever existed, was gloriously justified when Mr Chamberlain said from the window of number 10 Downing Street on 30 September 1938: 'I believe it is peace for our time.' In retrospect the outbreak of war a year later seems to mark the failure and the end of the policy of appeasement, but the policy survived. The first British air raids over Germany dropped leaflets." *The Causes of War*, p. 28.

34. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 138. For Waltz's general argument against interdependence as a necessary cause of peace, see pp. 138–160.

35. Small and Singer, *Resort to Arms*, p. 102. The one questionable case is the Crimean War, which pitted Britain and France against Russia, but that conflict began as a dispute between Russia and Turkey.

36. Small and Singer identify 44 civil wars as having been fought between 1945 and 1980; this compares with 30 interstate and 12 "extra-systemic" wars during the same period. Ibid., pp. 92–95, 98–99, 229–232.

recognition of an American poet's rather chilly precept that "good fences make good neighbors."

Nor have the two nations been economically dependent upon one another in any critical way. Certainly the United States requires nothing in the form of imports from the Soviet Union that it cannot obtain elsewhere. The situation is different for the Russians, to be sure, but even though the Soviet Union imports large quantities of food from the United States—and would like to import advanced technology as well—it is far from being wholly dependent upon these items, as the failure of recent attempts to change Soviet behavior by denying them has shown. The relative invulnerability of Russians and Americans to one another in the economic sphere may be frustrating to their respective policymakers, but it is probably fortunate, from the standpoint of international stability, that the two most powerful nations in the world are also its two most self-sufficient.[37]

But what about the argument that expanded international communication promotes peace? Is not the failure of Russians and Americans to understand one another better a potential source of instability in their relationship? Obviously it can be if misunderstandings occur at the level of national leadership: the most serious Soviet–American confrontation of the postwar era, the Cuban missile crisis, is generally regarded as having arisen from what appear in retrospect to have been quite remarkable misperceptions of each side's intentions by the other.[38] But "people to people" contacts are another matter. The history of international relations is replete with examples of familiarity breeding contempt as well as friendship: there are too many nations whose people have known each other all too well and have, as a result, taken an intense dislike to one another—French and Germans, Russians and Poles, Japanese and Chinese, Greeks and Turks, Arabs and Israelis—to lend very much credence to the invariably pacifying effects of "people to people" contacts.[39] Moreover, foreign policy in the United States depends

37. Soviet exports and imports as a percentage of gross national product ranged between 4 and 7 percent between 1955 and 1975; for the United States the comparable figures were 7–14 percent. This compares with figures of 33–52 percent for Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy in the four years immediately preceding World War I, and figures of 19–41 percent for the same nations plus Japan for the period 1949–1976. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 141, 212.
38. See, on this point, Herbert S. Dinerstein, *The Making of a Missile Crisis, October 1962* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), especially pp. 230–238.
39. See footnote 35, above. It is worth noting, in this connection, the striking tendency of American diplomats who have spent time inside the Soviet Union to become Russophobes. Comparable tendencies seem strikingly absent among China specialists in the Foreign Service. Compare, for the contrast, Hugh DeSantis, *The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service,*

only to a limited extent upon mass perceptions; in the Soviet Union, it depends upon them not at all.[40] There is little reason to think that opportunities for travel, academic and cultural exchanges, and even "sister city" contacts have any consistently destabilizing effect on relations between the United States and the Soviet Union; but there is little evidence of their consistently stabilizing effect either.

It may well be, then, that the extent to which the Soviet Union and the United States have been independent of one another rather than interdependent—the fact that there have been so few points of economic leverage available to each, the fact that two such dissimilar people have had so few opportunities for interaction—has in itself constituted a structural support for stability in relations between the two countries, whatever their respective governments have actually done.

DOMESTIC INFLUENCES
Structure can affect diplomacy from another angle, though: that has to do with the domestic roots of foreign policy. It was Karl Marx who first called attention to the effect of social and economic forces upon political behavior; John A. Hobson and V.I. Lenin subsequently derived from this the proposition that capitalism causes both imperialism and war. Meanwhile, Joseph Schumpeter was working out an alternative theory that placed the origins of international conflict in the "atavistic" insecurities of aristocracies, bureaucracies, and individual leaders.[41] Historians of both Marxist and non-Marxist persuasions have stressed the importance of domestic structural influences in bringing about World War I;[42] and there has been increasing scholarly

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the *Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933–1947* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and E.J. Kahn, Jr., *The China Hands: America's Foreign Service Officers and What Befell Them* (New York: Viking, 1975). Whether Soviet diplomats who serve in the United States develop "Americophobic" tendencies is difficult to say, given currently available information.

40. Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Power: USA/USSR* (New York: Viking, 1964), pp. 90–104. For a more recent assessment of the extent of public participation in the Soviet political system, see Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 314–319.

41. For a useful brief review of this literature, see Nelson and Olin, *Why War?*, pp. 58–84; also Richard J. Barnet, *Roots of War* (New York: Atheneum, 1972), pp. 208–214.

42. See, most recently, Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), especially pp. 304–323; and Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860–1914* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1980), especially pp. 465–466.

interest as well in the role of such factors in interwar diplomacy.[43] But to what extent can one argue that domestic structures have shaped the behavior of the Soviet Union and the United States toward each other since 1945? What has been the effect of such influences upon the stability of the post-World War II international system?

The literature on the relationship between domestic structures and diplomacy in the United States is both vast and diffuse: certainly there is no clear consensus on how internal influences determine behavior toward the world at large.[44] There has been, though, a persistent effort to link the structure of the American economy to foreign policy, most conspicuously through the assertion that capitalism requires an aggressive search for raw materials, markets, and investment opportunities overseas in order to survive. The theory itself pre-dates the Cold War, having been suggested by Charles A. Beard during the 1920s and 1930s, but it was left to William Appleman Williams to work out the most influential characterization of what he called "open door" expansionism in his classic work, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, first published in 1959.[45] More recently—and in a much more sophis-

43. Examples include Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975); Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe: The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976); Michael J. Hogan, *Informal Entente: The Private Structure of Cooperation in Anglo–American Economic Diplomacy, 1918–1928* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977); Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Elusive Quest: America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

44. For some recent—and sometimes contradictory—attempts to come to grips with this question, see: John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 352–357; Ralph B. Levering, *The Public and American Foreign Policy, 1918–1978* (New York: Foreign Policy Association/Morrow, 1978); William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy: Their Meaning, Role, and Future* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), especially pp. 371–386; Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), especially pp. xi–xx; Lloyd C. Gardner, *A Covenant with Power: America and World Order from Wilson to Reagan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

45. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, rev. ed. (New York: Dell, 1962). See also Charles A. Beard, *The Idea of National Interest: An Analytical Study in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), and *The Open Door at Home: A Trial Philosophy of National Interest* (New York: Macmillan, 1934). Other important expressions of the Beard/Williams thesis include Gabriel Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Power and Purpose* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); and Harry Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969).

ticated way—the linkage between domestic economic structure and foreign policy has taken the form of studies demonstrating the effects of "corporatism": the *cooperation* of business, labor, and government to shape a congenial external environment.[46]

Both the "open door" and "corporatist" models have been criticized, with some justification, for their tendency toward reductionism: the explanation of complex phenomena in terms of single causes.[47] But for the purposes of this analysis, these criticisms are beside the point. What is important here is that these most frequently advanced arguments linking the structure of American capitalism with American foreign policy do not assume, from that linkage, the inevitability of war. One of the great advantages of the "open door," Williams has pointed out, was precisely the fact that it *avoided* military confrontations: it was a way to "extend the American system throughout the world without the embarrassment and inefficiency of traditional colonialism"; "*it was conceived and designed to win the victories without the wars.*"[48] Similarly, "corporatist" historiography stresses the stabilizing rather than the de-stabilizing effects of American intervention in Europe after World Wars I and II; here, if anything, attempts to replicate domestic structure overseas are seen as reinforcing rather than undermining existing international systems.[49] Neither the "open door" nor the "corporatist" paradigms, therefore, offer evidence sufficient to confirm the old Leninist assertion that a society com-

46. Charles S. Maier, "The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in Twentieth-Century Western Europe," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 86 (April 1981), pp. 327–352; Robert Griffith, "Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 87 (February 1982), pp. 87–122; Michael J. Hogan, "American Marshall Planners and the Search for a European Neocapitalism," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 90 (February 1985), pp. 44–72.
47. The best critiques of the "open door" model are Robert W. Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Charles S. Maier, "Revisionism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins," *Perspectives in American History*, Vol. 4 (1970), pp. 313–347; Richard A. Melanson, "Revisionism Subdued? Robert James Maddox and the Origins of the Cold War," *Political Science Reviewer*, Vol. 7 (1977), pp. 229–271, and "The Social and Political Thought of William Appleman Williams," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 31 (1978), pp. 392–409. Kenneth Waltz provides an effective theoretical critique of "reductionism" in his *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 60–67. There is as yet no substantial published critique of "corporatism," although the present author has attempted an insubstantial one soon to be published in *Diplomatic History*.
48. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, pp. 43, 49 [emphases in original]. See also N. Gordon Levin's elaboration of this key point in *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics*, pp. 2–5.
49. Maier, "The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in Twentieth-Century Western Europe"; Hogan, "American Marshall Planners and the Search for a European Neocapitalism."

mitted to capitalism is necessarily precluded from participation in a stable world order.

There have been, of course, Schumpeterian as well as Leninist explanations of how domestic influences affect American foreign policy. C. Wright Mills some three decades ago stressed the interlocking relationship of businessmen, politicians, and military officers whose "power elite" had imposed a form of "naked and arbitrary power" upon the world;[50] subsequent analysts, no doubt encouraged by Dwight D. Eisenhower's perhaps inadvertent endorsement of the term,[51] transformed Mills's argument into a full-blown theory of a "military-industrial complex" whose interests necessarily precluded any significant relaxation of world tensions.[52] There were, to be sure, certain difficulties with this model: it did not plausibly explain the Truman administration's low military budgets of the 1945–50 period, nor did it deal easily with the dramatic shift from defense to welfare expenditures presided over by Richard Nixon during the early 1970s.[53] It neglected evidence that a "military-industrial complex" existed inside the Soviet Union as well.[54] But even if one overlooked these problems, it was not clear how the existence of such a "military-industrial complex" necessarily made war any more likely, given the opportunities deterrence offered to develop and deploy a profusion of military hardware without the risks war would pose to one's ability to continue doing precisely this.

More recently, attention has been given to the problems created by the structure of American domestic politics in attempting to formulate coherent policies for dealing with the Soviet Union. There is, of course, nothing new

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50. C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 360.
51. Eisenhower "farewell address," January 17, 1961, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960–61* [hereinafter *Eisenhower Public Papers*] (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 1038.
52. Fred J. Cook, *The Warfare State* (New York: Macmillan, 1962); Carroll W. Pursell, Jr., ed., *The Military–Industrial Complex* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Bruce M. Russett and Alfred Stepan, *Military Force and American Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Seymour Melman, *The Permanent War Economy: American Capitalism in Decline* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).
53. See, on the immediate postwar period, Warner R. Schilling, "The Politics of National Defense: Fiscal 1950," in Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder, *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 1–266; on the 1970s, Lawrence J. Korb, *The Fall and Rise of the Pentagon: American Defense Policies in the 1970's* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979).
54. Vernon V. Aspaturian, "The Soviet Military–Industrial Complex—Does It Exist?," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 26 (1972), pp. 1–28; William T. Lee, "The 'Politico–Military–Industrial Complex' of the U.S.S.R.," ibid., pp. 73–86; and Andrew Cockburn, *The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine* (New York: Random House, 1983), pp. 120–149.

about this: the constitutionally mandated division of authority over foreign affairs has always made policy formulation in the United States a less than orderly process. But there is reason to think the problem is getting worse, partly because of the increasing number of government departments, Congressional committees, and interest groups who have a stake in foreign policy decisions, partly because of an increasingly protracted presidential selection process that has eroded an already imperfect tradition of keeping electoral politics apart from world politics.[55] Even here, though, the effect of such disarray on the long-term Soviet–American relationship has not been as great as might have been expected: what is impressive, when one considers all of the domestically motivated mutations American foreign policy has gone through during the past four decades, is how consistent its fundamental objectives in dealing with the Soviet Union have nonetheless remained.[56]

But what about domestic structural constraints inside the Soviet Union? Here, of course, there is much less hard information with which to work; generalizations, as a result, are not as firmly grounded or as richly developed as they are with regard to the United States. One point seems clear enough, though: in attempting to understand the effect of internal influences on Soviet foreign policy, American analysts have found Schumpeter a more reliable guide than Lenin; they have stressed the extent to which the structural requirements of legitimizing internal political authority have affected behavior toward the outside world. It was George F. Kennan who most convincingly suggested this approach with his portrayal, in the famous "long telegram" of February 1946, of a Soviet leadership at once so insecure and so unimaginative that it felt obliged to cultivate external enemies in order to maintain itself in power. Without at least the image of outside adversaries, he argued, "there would be no justification for that tremendous crushing bureaucracy of party, police and army which now lives off the labor and idealism of [the] Russian people."[57] Whatever the validity of this theory—

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55. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., ed., *The Making of America's Soviet Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); I.M. Destler, Leslie H. Gelb, and Anthony Lake, *Our Own Worst Enemy: The Unmaking of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

56. See, on this point, Seyom Brown, *The Faces of Power: Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Reagan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 7–14.

57. Kennan to State Department, March 20, 1946, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1946* [hereinafter FRUS], Vol. 6, p. 721. See also Kennan's famous "long telegram" of February 22, 1946, in ibid., pp. 696–709; and his influential "Mr. X" article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25 (July 1947), pp. 566–582. The circumstances surrounding the drafting of these documents are discussed in George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925–1950* (Boston: Atlantic/Little, Brown, 1967), pp. 292–295, 354–357.

and however limited Kennan himself considered its application to be[58]—this characterization of a Kremlin leadership condemned by its own nervous ineptitude to perpetual distrust nonetheless remains the most influential explanation in the West of how domestic structure influences Soviet foreign policy.[59]

But this theory, too, did not assume the inevitability of war. Institutionalized suspicion in the U.S.S.R. resulted from weakness, not strength, Kennan argued; as a consequence, the Kremlin was most unlikely actually to initiate military action.[60] With rare exceptions,[61] American officials ever since have accepted this distinction between the likelihood of hostility and the probability of war: indeed, the whole theory of deterrence has been based upon the assumption that paranoia and prudence can co-exist.[62] By this logic, then, the domestic structures of the Soviet state, however geared they may have been to picturing the rest of the world in the worst possible light, have not been seen as likely in and of themselves to produce a war.

One should not make too much of these attempts to attribute to domestic constraints the foreign policy of either the United States or the Soviet Union. International relations, like life itself, is a good deal more complicated than these various models would tend to suggest. But it is significant that these efforts to link internal structure to external behavior reveal no obvious proclivity on either side to risk war; that despite their striking differences, Soviet and American domestic structures appear to have posed no greater impedi-

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58. Kennan has emphasized that the recommendations advanced in the "long telegram" and the "X" article applied only to the Stalin regime. See his *Memoirs: 1925–1950*, pp. 364–367. But he does still see the role of institutionalized suspicion in Soviet society as making relations with the outside world unnecessarily difficult. See, for example, George F. Kennan, "Letter to a Russian," *New Yorker*, September 24, 1984, pp. 55–73.

59. See, for example, Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy*, pp. 243–255; Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Internal Politics and Foreign Policy in the Soviet System," in Aspaturian, ed., *Process and Power in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), pp. 491–551; Seweryn Bialer, "The Political System," in Robert F. Byrnes, ed., *After Brezhnev: Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 10–11, 35–36, 51, 55; Adam Ulam, "The World Outside," in ibid., pp. 345–348.

60. On this point, see Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, pp. 34–35, 62, 74, 83–84.

61. The most conspicuous exception would appear to be the authors of NSC-68, the comprehensive reassessment of national security policy drafted early in 1950, who argued that when Soviet *capabilities* reached the point of being able to win a war, Soviet *intentions* would automatically be to provoke one. See NSC-68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," April 14, 1950, *FRUS: 1950*, Vol. 1, especially pp. 251–252, 266–267.

62. See, on this point, Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 527–530; also Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977), pp. 205–207.

ment to the maintenance of a stable international system than has bipolarity itself or the bilateral characteristics of the Soviet–American relationship.

The Behavioral Elements of Stability

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Stability in international systems is only partly a function of structure, though; it depends as well upon the conscious behavior of the nations that make them up. Even if the World War II settlement had corresponded to the distribution of power in the world, even if the Russian–American relationship had been one of minimal interdependence, even if domestic constraints had not created difficulties, stability in the postwar era still might not have resulted if there had been, among either of the dominant powers in the system, the same willingness to risk war that has existed at other times in the past.

Students of the causes of war have pointed out that war is rarely something that develops from the workings of impersonal social or economic forces, or from the direct effects of arms races, or even by accident. It requires deliberate decisions on the part of national leaders; more than that, it requires calculations that the gains to be derived from war will outweigh the possible costs. "Recurring optimism," Geoffrey Blainey has written, "is a vital prelude to war. Anything which increases that optimism is a cause of war. Anything which dampens that optimism is a cause of peace."[63] Admittedly, those calculations are often in error: as Kennan, in his capacity as a historian, has pointed out, whatever conceivable gains the statesmen of 1914 might have had in mind in risking war, they could not have come anywhere close to approximating the costs the ensuing four-year struggle would actually entail.[64] But it seems hard to deny that it is from such calculations, whether accurately carried out, as Bismarck seemed able to do in his wars against Denmark, Austria, and France in the mid-19th century, or inaccurately carried out, as was the case in 1914, that wars tend to develop. They are not

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63. Blainey, *The Causes of War*, p. 53. See also Howard, *The Causes of Wars*, pp. 14–15; Paul M. Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy: 1870–1945* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983), pp. 163–177; and Richard Smoke's perceptive discussion of the role of expectations in escalation in *War: Controlling Escalation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 268–277.
64. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order*, pp. 3–4.

something that just happens, like earthquakes, locust plagues, or (some might argue) the selection of presidential candidates in the United States.

For whatever reason, it has to be acknowledged that the statesmen of the post-1945 superpowers have, compared to their predecessors, been exceedingly cautious in risking war with one another.[65] In order to see this point, one need only run down the list of crises in Soviet–American relations since the end of World War II: Iran, 1946; Greece, 1947; Berlin and Czechoslovakia, 1948; Korea, 1950; the East Berlin riots, 1953; the Hungarian uprising, 1956; Berlin again, 1958–59; the U-2 incident, 1960; Berlin again, 1961; the Cuban missile crisis, 1962; Czechoslovakia again, 1968; the Yom Kippur war, 1973; Afghanistan, 1979; Poland, 1981; the Korean airliner incident, 1983—one need only run down this list to see how many occasions there have been in relations between Washington and Moscow that in almost any other age, and among almost any other antagonists, would sooner or later have produced war.

That they have not cannot be chalked up to the invariably pacific temperament of the nations involved: the United States participated in eight international wars involving a thousand or more battlefield deaths between 1815 and 1980; Russia participated in nineteen.[66] Nor can this restraint be attributed to any unusual qualities of leadership on either side: the vision and competency of postwar Soviet and American statesmen does not appear to have differed greatly from that of their predecessors. Nor does weariness growing out of participation in two world wars fully explain this unwillingness to resort to arms in their dealings with one another: during the postwar era both nations have employed force against third parties—in the case of the United States in Korea and Vietnam; in the case of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan—for protracted periods of time, and at great cost.

It seems inescapable that what has really made the difference in inducing this unaccustomed caution has been the workings of the nuclear deterrent.[67]

65. See Michael Howard's observations on the absence of a "bellicist" mentality among the great powers in the postwar era, in his *The Causes of War*, pp. 271–273.
66. Small and Singer, *Resort to Arms*, pp. 167, 169.
67. For a persuasive elaboration of this argument, with an intriguing comparison of the post-1945 "nuclear" system to the post-1815 "Vienna" system, see Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics Before and After Hiroshima* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 58–77; also Morgan, *Deterrence*, p. 208; Craig and George, *Force and Statecraft*, pp. 117–120; Howard, *The Causes of War*, pp. 22, 278–279. It is interesting to speculate as to whether Soviet–American bipolarity would have developed if nuclear weapons had never been invented. My own view—obviously unverifiable—is that it would have, because bipolarity resulted from the way in which World War II had been fought; the condition was already evident at the time

Consider, for a moment, what the effect of this mechanism would be on a statesman from either superpower who might be contemplating war. In the past, the horrors and the costs of wars could be forgotten with the passage of time. Generations like the one of 1914 had little sense of what the Napoleonic Wars—or even the American Civil War—had revealed about the brutality, expense, and duration of military conflict. But the existence of nuclear weapons—and, more to the point, the fact that we have direct evidence of what they can do when used against human beings[68]—has given this generation a painfully vivid awareness of the realities of war that no previous generation has had. It is difficult, given this awareness, to produce the optimism that historical experience tells us prepares the way for war; pessimism, it appears, is a permanent accompaniment to our thinking about war, and that, as Blainey reminds us, is a cause of peace.

That same pessimism has provided the superpowers with powerful inducements to control crises resulting from the risk-taking of third parties. It is worth recalling that World War I grew out of the unsuccessful management of a situation neither created nor desired by any of the major actors in the international system. There were simply no mechanisms to put a lid on escalation: to force each nation to balance the short-term temptation to exploit opportunities against the long-term danger that things might get out of hand.[69] The nuclear deterrent provides that mechanism today, and as a result the United States and the Soviet Union have successfully managed a whole series of crises—most notably in the Middle East—that grew out of the actions of neither but that could have involved them both.

None of this is to say, of course, that war cannot occur: if the study of history reveals anything at all it is that one ought to expect, sooner or later,

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of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Whether bipolarity would have lasted as long as it has in the absence of nuclear weapons is another matter entirely, though: it seems at least plausible that these weapons have perpetuated bipolarity beyond what one might have expected its normal lifetime to be by minimizing superpower risk-taking while at the same time maintaining an apparently insurmountable power gradient between the superpowers and any potential military rivals.

68. See, on this point, Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution*, p. 109; also the discussion of the "crystal ball effect" in Albert Carnesale et al., *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Bantam, 1983), p. 44.

69. For a brief review of the literature on crisis management, together with an illustrative comparison of the July 1914 crisis with the Cuban missile crisis, see Ole R. Holsti, "Theories of Crisis Decision Making," in Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy*, pp. 99–136; also Craig and George, *Force and Statecraft*, pp. 205–219.

the unexpected. Nor is it to say that the nuclear deterrent could not function equally well with half, or a fourth, or even an eighth of the nuclear weapons now in the arsenals of the superpowers. Nor is it intended to deprecate the importance of refraining from steps that might destabilize the existing stalemate, whether through the search for technological breakthroughs that might provide a decisive edge over the other side, or through so mechanical a duplication of what the other side has that one fails to take into account one's own probably quite different security requirements, or through strategies that rely upon the first use of nuclear weapons in the interest of achieving economy, forgetting the far more fundamental systemic interest in maintaining the tradition, dating back four decades now, of never actually employing these weapons for military purposes.

I am suggesting, though, that the development of nuclear weapons has had, on balance, a stabilizing effect on the postwar international system. They have served to discourage the process of escalation that has, in other eras, too casually led to war. They have had a sobering effect upon a whole range of statesmen of varying degrees of responsibility and capability. They have forced national leaders, every day, to confront the reality of what war is really like, indeed to confront the prospect of their own mortality, and that, for those who seek ways to avoid war, is no bad thing.

THE RECONNAISSANCE REVOLUTION
But although nuclear deterrence is the most important behavioral mechanism that has sustained the post-World War II international system, it is by no means the only one. Indeed, the very technology that has made it possible to deliver nuclear weapons anywhere on the face of the earth has functioned also to lower greatly the danger of surprise attack, thereby supplementing the self-regulating features of deterrence with the assurance that comes from knowing a great deal more than in the past about adversary capabilities. I refer here to what might be called the "reconnaissance revolution," a development that may well rival in importance the "nuclear revolution" that preceded it, but one that rarely gets the attention it deserves.

The point was made earlier that nations tend to start wars on the basis of calculated assessments that they have the power to prevail. But it was suggested as well that they have often been wrong about this: they either have failed to anticipate the nature and the costs of war itself, or they have misjudged the intentions and the capabilities of the adversary they have

chosen to confront.[70] Certainly the latter is what happened to Napoleon III in choosing to risk war with Prussia in 1870, to the Russians in provoking the Japanese in 1904, to the Germans in World War I when they brought about American entry by resuming unrestricted submarine warfare, to the Japanese in World War II by attacking Pearl Harbor and to Adolf Hitler in that same conflict when he managed within six months to declare war on *both* the Soviet Union and the United States, and most recently, to General Galtieri and the Argentine junta in deciding to take on Mrs. Thatcher.

Now, it would be foolish to argue that Americans and Russians have become any more skillful than they ever were at discerning the other's *intentions:* clearly the United States invasion of Grenada surprised Moscow as much as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan surprised Washington. The capacity of each nation to behave in ways that seem perfectly logical to it but quite unfathomable to the other remains about what it has been throughout the entire Cold War. But both sides are able—and indeed have been able for at least two decades—to evaluate each other's *capabilities* to a degree that is totally unprecedented in the history of relations between great powers.

What has made this possible, of course, has been the development of the reconnaissance satellite, a device that if rumors are correct allows the reading of automobile license plates or newspaper headlines from a hundred or more miles out in space, together with the equally important custom that has evolved between the superpowers of allowing these objects to pass unhindered over their territories.[71] The effect has been to give each side a far more accurate view of the other's military capabilities—and, to some degree, economic capabilities as well—than could have been provided by an entire phalanx of the best spies in the long history of espionage. The resulting intelligence does not rule out altogether the possibility of surprise attack, but it does render it far less likely, at least as far as the superpowers are concerned. And that is no small matter, if one considers the number of wars in

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70. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, pp. 202–203. Geoffrey Blainey, citing an idea first proposed by the sociologist Georg Simmel, has suggested that, in the past, war was the only means by which nations could gain an exact knowledge of each others' capabilities. Blainey, *The Causes of War*, p. 118.
71. A useful up-to-date assessment of the technology is David Hafemeister, Joseph J. Romm, and Kosta Tsipis, "The Verification of Compliance with Arms-Control Agreements," *Scientific American*, March 1985, pp. 38–45. For the historical evolution of reconnaissance satellites, see Gerald M. Steinberg, *Satellite Reconnaissance: The Role of Informal Bargaining* (New York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 19–70; Paul B. Stares, *The Militarization of Space: U.S. Policy, 1945–1984* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 30–33, 47–57, 62–71; also Walter A. McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. 177–226.

history—from the Trojan War down through Pearl Harbor—in the origins of which deception played a major role.[72]

The "reconnaissance revolution" also corrects, at least to an extent, the asymmetry imposed upon Soviet–American relations by the two countries' sharply different forms of political and social organization. Throughout most of the early Cold War years the Soviet Union enjoyed all the advantages of a closed society in concealing its capabilities from the West; the United States and its allies, in turn, found it difficult to keep anything secret for very long.[73] That problem still exists, but the ability now to see both visually and electronically into almost every part of the Soviet Union helps to compensate for it. And, of course, virtually none of the limited progress the two countries have made in the field of arms control would have been possible had Americans and Russians not tacitly agreed to the use of reconnaissance satellites and other surveillance techniques to monitor compliance;[74] clearly any future progress in that field will depend heavily upon these devices as well.

There is no little irony in the fact that these instruments, which have contributed so significantly toward stabilizing the postwar international system, grew directly out of research on the intercontinental ballistic missile and the U-2 spy plane.[75] Technological innovation is not always a destabilizing force in the Soviet–American relationship. There have been—as in this case—and there could be again instances in which the advance of technology, far from increasing the danger of war, could actually lessen it. It all depends upon the uses to which the technology is put, and that, admittedly, is not an easy thing to foresee.

IDEOLOGICAL MODERATION

If technology has had the potential either to stabilize or destabilize the international system, the same cannot as easily be said of ideology. One

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72. The most recent assessment, but one whose analysis does not take into account examples prior to 1940, is Richard K. Betts, *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1982). See also, on the problem of assessing adversary intentions, Ernest R. May, ed., *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

73. For a summary of what the open literature reveals about the difficulties faced by American intelligence in the first decade after World War II, see Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 43–58; and John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence and Russian Military Strength* (New York: Dial Press, 1982), pp. 24–30.

74. On this point, see Michael Krepon, *Arms Control: Verification and Compliance* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1984), especially pp. 8–13.

75. Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, pp. 30–35, 96–110.

cannot help but be impressed, when one looks at the long history of national liberation movements, or revolutions against established social orders, or racial and religious conflict, by the continuing capacity of ideas to move nations, or groups within nations, to fight one another.[76] It is only by reference to a violent and ultimately self-destructive ideological impulse that one can account for the remarkable career of Adolf Hitler, with all of its chaotic consequences for the post-World War I international system.[77] Since 1945, the ideology of self-determination has not only induced colonies to embroil colonial masters in protracted and costly warfare; it has even led factions within newly independent states forcibly to seek their own separate political existence.[78] Ideologically motivated social revolution, too, has been a prominent feature of the postwar international scene, what with major upheavals in nations as diverse as China, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Nicaragua. But the most surprising evidence of the continuing influence of ideology has come in the area of religion, where conflicts between Hindus and Moslems, Arabs and Israelis, Iranians and Iraqis, and even Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland provide little reason to think that ideas—even ideas once considered to have little relevance other than for historians—will not continue to have a major disruptive potential for international order.[79]

The relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States has not been free from ideological rivalries: it could be argued, in fact, that these are among the most ideological nations on the face of the earth.[80] Certainly their respective ideologies could hardly have been more antithetical, given the self-proclaimed intention of one to overthrow the other.[81] And yet, since their emergence as superpowers, both nations have demonstrated an impressive

76. See, on this point, Wright, *A Study of War*, pp. 1290–1291; Aron, *Peace and War*, pp. 64–69; Reynolds, *Theory and Explanation in International Politics*, p. 176; also Murray Edelman, *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence* (Chicago: Markham, 1971), pp. 53–64.

77. Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, the Nazi State, and the Course of Expansion* (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. xxxvi–xxxvii, xlii–xliii, 3–10.

78. One thinks, in this connection, of the successful struggles of the Vietnamese and the Algerians against the French and of Portugal's African colonies against that country, of equally successful separatist movements within India and later Pakistan, and of the unsuccessful Biafran rebellion against Nigeria.

79. On the recent resurgence of religion as an influence on world politics, see Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: The World From the Twenties to the Eighties* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), pp. 698–710.

80. See, on this point, Halle, *The Cold War as History*, pp. 157–160.

81. Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–73*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 130–131.

capacity to subordinate antagonistic ideological interests to a common goal of preserving international order. The reasons for this are worth examining.

If there were ever a moment at which the priorities of order overcame those of ideology, it would appear to be the point at which Soviet leaders decided that war would no longer advance the cause of revolution. That clearly had not been Lenin's position: international conflict, for him, was good or evil according to whether it accelerated or retarded the demise of capitalism.[82] Stalin's attitude on this issue was more ambivalent: he encouraged talk of an "inevitable conflict" between the "two camps" of communism and capitalism in the years immediately following World War II, but he also appears shortly before his death to have anticipated the concept of "peaceful coexistence."[83] It was left to Georgii Malenkov to admit publicly, shortly after Stalin's death, that a nuclear war would mean "the destruction of world civilization"; Nikita Khrushchev subsequently refined this idea (which he had initially condemned) into the proposition that the interests of world revolution, as well as those of the Soviet state, would be better served by working within the existing international order than by trying to overthrow it.[84]

The reasons for this shift of position are not difficult to surmise. First, bipolarity—the defining characteristic of the postwar international system—implied unquestioned recognition of the Soviet Union as a great power. It was "no small thing," Khrushchev later acknowledged in his memoirs, "that

82. See, on this point, E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923* (New York: Macmillan, 1951–1953), Vol. 3, pp. 549–566; and Marshall D. Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 82. It is fashionable now, among Soviet scholars, to minimize the ideological component of Moscow's foreign policy; indeed Lenin himself is now seen as the original architect of "peaceful coexistence," a leader for whom the idea of exporting revolution can hardly have been more alien. See, for example, G.A. Trofimenko, "Uroki mirnogo sosushestvovaniia," *Voprosy istorii*, Number 11 (November 1983), pp. 6–7. It seems not out of place to wonder how the great revolutionary would have received such perfunctory dismissals of the Comintern and all that it implied; certainly most Western students have treated more seriously than this the revolutionary implications of the Bolshevik Revolution.

83. For Stalin's mixed record on this issue, see Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised*, *passim*; also Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy*, pp. 128–227; and Adam B. Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and His Era* (New York: Viking, 1973), especially pp. 641–643, 654. It is possible, of course, that Stalin followed both policies intentionally as a means both of intimidating and inducing complacency in the West.

84. Herbert Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union: Nuclear Weapons and the Revolution in Soviet Military and Political Thinking* (New York: Praeger, 1959), pp. 65–90; William Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations, 1956–1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 251–252.

we have lived to see the day when the Soviet Union is considered, in terms of its economic and military might, one of the two most powerful countries in the world."[85] Second, the international situation in the 1950s and early 1960s seemed favorable, especially because of the decline of colonialism and the rise of newly independent nations likely to be suspicious of the West, to the expansion of Soviet influence in the world.[86] But third, and most important, the proliferation of nuclear capabilities on both sides had confirmed Malenkov's conclusion that in any future war between the great powers, there would be no victors at all, whether capitalist or communist. "[T]he atomic bomb," Soviet leaders reminded their more militant Chinese comrades in 1963, "does not observe the class principle."[87]

The effect was to transform a state which, if ideology alone had governed, should have sought a complete restructuring of the existing international system, into one for whom that system now seemed to have definite benefits, within which it now sought to function, and for whom the goal of overthrowing capitalism had been postponed to some vague and indefinite point in the future.[88] Without this moderation of ideological objectives, it is difficult to see how the stability that has characterized great power relations since the end of World War II could have been possible.

Ideological considerations have traditionally played a less prominent role in shaping American foreign policy, but they have had their influence nonetheless. Certainly the Wilsonian commitment to self-determination, revived and ardently embraced during World War II, did a great deal to alienate Americans from their Soviet allies at the end of that conflict. Nor had their military exertions moderated Americans' long-standing aversion to collectivism—of which the Soviet variety of communism appeared to be the most

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85. Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), p. 529.
86. Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations*, pp. 252–255.
87. Ibid., pp. 5, 255–259. See also *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 530.
88. ". . . [P]layers' goals may undergo very little change, but postponing their attainment to the indefinite future fundamentally transforms the meaning of . . . myth by revising its implications for social action. Exactly because myths are dramatic stories, changing their time-frame affects their character profoundly. Those who see only the permanence of professed goals, but who neglect structural changes—the incorporation of common experiences into the myths of both sides, shifts in the image of the opponent ('there are reasonable people also in the other camp'), and modifications in the myths' periodization—overlook the great effects that may result from such contextual changes." Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *International Order and Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Sketch of Post-War International Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), p. 117.

extreme example.[89] But there had also developed, during the war, an emphatic hostility toward "totalitarianism" in general: governments that relied upon force to sustain themselves in power, it was thought, could hardly be counted on to refrain from the use of force in the world at large. Demands for the "unconditional surrender" of Germany and Japan reflected this ideological position: there could be no compromise with regimes for whom arbitrary rule was a way of life.[90]

What is interesting is that although the "totalitarian" model came as easily to be applied to the Soviet Union as it had been to Germany and Japan,[91] the absolutist call for "unconditional surrender" was not. To be sure, the United States and the U.S.S.R. were not at war. But levels of tension were about as high as they can get short of war during the late 1940s, and we now know that planning for the *contingency* of war was well under way in Washington—as it presumably was in Moscow as well.[92] Nevertheless, the first of these plans to be approved by President Truman, late in 1948, bluntly stated that, if war came, there would be no "predetermined requirement for unconditional surrender."[93] NSC-68, a comprehensive review of national

89. John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 56–62, 133–175.

90. See, on this point, Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941–45* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 52–53; Eduard Maximilian Mark, "The Interpretation of Soviet Foreign Policy in the United States, 1928–1947," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1978, pp. 95–96, 326–329; and, for the Wilsonian background of this idea, Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics*, pp. 37–45. For the ideological roots of "unconditional surrender," see Anne Armstrong, *Unconditional Surrender: The Impact of the Casablanca Policy Upon World War II* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), pp. 250–253.

91. See, for example, Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1951), and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956); also Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's–1950's," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 75 (April 1970), pp. 1046–1064.

92. The best brief review of early American war plans is in Gregg Herken, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb in the Cold War, 1945–1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), pp. 195–303. A selection from these plans has been published in Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, eds., *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 277–381. The Soviet Union has yet to make any comparable selection of its postwar documents available.

93. NSC 20/4, "U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security," November 23, 1948, *FRUS: 1948*, Vol. 1, pp. 668–669. In an earlier version of this document, George F. Kennan had explained that "we could not hope to achieve any total assertion of our will on Russian territory, as we have endeavored to do in Germany and Japan. We must recognize that whatever settlement we finally achieve must be a *political* settlement, *politically* negotiated." NSC 20/1, "U.S. Objectives With Respect to Russia," August 18, 1948, in

security policy undertaken two years later, elaborated on the point: "our over-all objectives . . . do not include unconditional surrender, the subjugation of the Russian peoples or a Russia shorn of its economic potential." The ultimate goal, rather, was to convince the Soviet government of the impossibility of achieving its self-proclaimed ideological objectives; the immediate goal was to "induce the Soviet Union to accommodate itself, with or without the conscious abandonment of its [ideological] design, to coexistence on tolerable terms with the non-Soviet world."[94]

It is no easy matter to explain why Americans did not commit themselves to the eradication of Soviet "totalitarianism" with the same single-minded determination they had earlier applied to German and Japanese "totalitarianism." One reason, of course, would have been the daunting prospect of attempting to occupy a country the size of the Soviet Union, when compared to the more manageable adversaries of World War II.[95] Another was the fact that, despite the hostility that had developed since 1945, American officials did not regard their Russian counterparts as irredeemable: the very purpose of "containment" had been to change the *psychology* of the Soviet leadership, but not, as had been the case with Germany and Japan, the leadership itself.[96]

But Washington's aversion to an "unconditional surrender" doctrine for the Soviet Union stemmed from yet another less obvious consideration: it had quickly become clear to American policymakers, after World War II, that insistence on the total defeat of Germany and Japan had profoundly destabilized the postwar balance of power. Only by assuming responsibility for the rehabilitation of these former enemies as well as the countries they had ravaged had the United States been able to restore equilibrium, and even then it was clear that the American role in this regard would have to be a continuing one. It was no accident that the doctrine of "unconditional sur-

Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, eds., *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945–1950* (New York: 1978), p. 193. George H. Quester has made the point that "containment" itself reflected, by its nature, a repudiation of "unconditional surrender". "Containment, the Soviet Nuclear Buildup, and the Strategic Balance," paper presented at the National Defense University symposium on "Containment and the Future," November 7–8, 1985.

94. NSC 68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," *FRUS: 1950,* Vol. 1, p. 242.
95. Kennan made the point explicitly in NSC 20/1 (Etzold and Gaddis, eds., *Containment,* p. 191); also in his *The Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 80.
96. On changing Soviet psychology as the ultimate goal of containment, see Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment,* pp. 48–51, 71–83, 98–99, 102–106.

render" came under severe criticism, after 1945, from a new school of "realist" geopoliticians given to viewing international stability in terms of the wary toleration of adversaries rather than, as a point of principle, their annihilation.[97]

Largely as a result of such reasoning, American officials at no point during the history of the Cold War seriously contemplated, as a deliberate political objective, the elimination of the Soviet Union as a major force in world affairs. By the mid-1950s, it is true, war plans had been devised that, if executed, would have quite indiscriminately annihilated not only the Soviet Union but several of its communist and non-communist neighbors as well.[98] What is significant about those plans, though, is that they reflected the organizational convenience of the military services charged with implementing them, not any conscious policy decisions at the top. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy were appalled on learning of them; both considered them ecologically as well as strategically impossible; and during the Kennedy administration steps were initiated to devise strategies that would leave open the possibility of a surviving political entity in Russia even in the extremity of nuclear war.[99]

All of this would appear to confirm, then, the proposition that systemic interests tend to take precedence over ideological interests.[100] Both the Soviet ideological aversion to capitalism and the American ideological aversion to totalitarianism could have produced policies—and indeed had produced policies in the past—aimed at the complete overthrow of their respective adversaries. That such ideological impulses could be muted to the extent they have been during the past four decades testifies to the stake both Washington

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97. See, for example, Hans J. Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 31–33, 142–146. The critique of "unconditional surrender" can best be followed in Armstrong, *Unconditional Surrender*, pp. 248–262; and in Hanson W. Baldwin, *Great Mistakes of the War* (New York: Harper, 1950), pp. 14–25.

98. David Alan Rosenberg, "'A Smoking, Radiating Ruin at the End of Two Hours': Documents on American Plans for Nuclear War with the Soviet Union, 1954–55," *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Winter 1981/82), pp. 3–38, and "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945–1960," *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Spring 1983), pp. 3–71. For more general accounts, see Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), especially pp. 263–270; and Gregg Herken, *Counsels of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 137–140.

99. Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," pp. 8, 69–71; Kaplan, *Wizards of Armageddon*, pp. 268–285; Herken, *Counsels of War*, pp. 140–165; and Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 494, 523, 564.

100. See, on this point, John Spanier, *Games Nations Play: Analyzing International Politics*, 5th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), p. 91.

and Moscow have developed in preserving the existing international system: the moderation of ideologies must be considered, then, along with nuclear deterrence and reconnaissance, as a major self-regulating mechanism of postwar politics.

"RULES" OF THE SUPERPOWER "GAME"

The question still arises, though: how can order emerge from a system that functions without any superior authority? Even self-regulating mechanisms like automatic pilots or engine governors cannot operate without someone to set them in motion; the prevention of anarchy, it has generally been assumed, requires hierarchy, both at the level of interpersonal and international relations. Certainly the statesmen of World War II expected that some supra-national structure would be necessary to sustain a future peace, whether in the form of a new collective security organization to replace the ineffectual League of Nations, or through perpetuation of the great-power consensus that Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin sought to forge.[101] All of them would have been surprised by the extent to which order has been maintained since 1945 in the absence of any effective supra-national authority of any kind.[102]

This experience has forced students of international politics to recognize that their subject bears less resemblance to local, state, or national politics, where order does in fact depend upon legally constituted authority, than it does to the conduct of games, where order evolves from mutual agreement on a set of "rules" defining the range of behavior each side anticipates from the other. The assumption is that the particular "game" being played promises sufficient advantages to each of its "players" to outweigh whatever might be obtained by trying to upset it; in this way, rivalries can be pursued within an orderly framework, even in the absence of a referee. Game theory therefore helps to account for the paradox of order in the absence of hierarchy that characterizes the postwar superpower relationship: through it one can get a sense of how "rules" establish limits of acceptable behavior on the part of nations who acknowledge only themselves as the arbiters of behavior.[103]

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101. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, pp. 23–31.
102. The United Nations, regretfully, cannot be considered an effective supra-national authority.
103. My definition here is based on Paul Keal, *Unspoken Rules and Superpower Dominance* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983), pp. 2–3. Other more generalized studies dealing with theories of games and bargaining include Kratochwil, *International Order and Foreign Policy*, passim; Snyder and Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations*, especially pp. 33–182; Anatol Rapaport, *Fights, Games, and*

These "rules" are, of course, implicit rather than explicit: they grow out of a mixture of custom, precedent, and mutual interest that takes shape quite apart from the realm of public rhetoric, diplomacy, or international law. They require the passage of time to become effective; they depend, for that effectiveness, upon the extent to which successive generations of national leadership on each side find them useful. They certainly do not reflect any agreed-upon standard of international morality: indeed they often violate principles of "justice" adhered to by one side or the other. But these "rules" have played an important role in maintaining the international system that has been in place these past four decades: without them the correlation one would normally anticipate between hostility and instability would have become more exact than it has in fact been since 1945.

No two observers of superpower behavior would express these "rules" in precisely the same way; indeed it may well be that their very vagueness has made them more acceptable than they otherwise might have been to the nations that have followed them. What follows is nothing more than my own list, derived from an attempt to identify *regularities* in the postwar Soviet–American relationship whose pattern neither side could now easily disrupt.

(1) RESPECT SPHERES OF INFLUENCE. Neither Russians nor Americans officially admit to having such "spheres," but in fact much of the history of the Cold War can be written in terms of the efforts both have made to consolidate and extend them. One should not, in acknowledging this, fall into so mechanical a comparison of the two spheres as to ignore their obvious differences: the American sphere has been wider in geographical scope than its Soviet counterpart, but it has also been a much looser alignment, participation in which has more often than not been a matter of choice rather than coercion.[104] But what is important from the standpoint of superpower "rules" is the fact that, although neither side has ever publicly endorsed the other's right to a sphere of influence, neither has ever directly challenged it either.[105]

Debates (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960); and Charles Lockhart, *Bargaining in International Conflicts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

104. On this point, see Geir Lundestad, *America, Scandinavia, and the Cold War, 1945–1949* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), especially pp. 327–338. For the formation of spheres of influence, see Keal, *Unspoken Rules and Superpower Dominance*, pp. 66–71, 80–84, 90–98; also John Lewis Gaddis, "The United States and the Question of a Sphere of Influence in Europe, 1945–1949," in Olav Riste, ed., *Western Security: The Formative Years: Europe and Atlantic Defence, 1947–1953* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1985), pp. 60–91.

105. "In general terms, acquiescence in spheres of influence has taken the form of A disclaiming

Thus, despite publicly condemning it, the United States never attempted seriously to undo Soviet control in Eastern Europe; Moscow reciprocated by tolerating, though never openly approving of, Washington's influence in Western Europe, the Mediterranean, the Near East, and Latin America. A similar pattern held up in East Asia, where the Soviet Union took no more action to oppose United States control over occupied Japan than the Truman administration did to repudiate the Yalta agreement, which left the Soviet Union dominant, at least for the moment, on the Northeast Asian mainland.[106]

Where the relation of particular areas to spheres of influence had been left unclear—as had been the case with the Western-occupied zones of Berlin prior to 1948, or with South Korea prior to 1950—or where the resolve of one side to maintain its sphere appeared to have weakened—as in the case of Cuba following the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961—attempts by the other to exploit the situation could not be ruled out: the Berlin blockade, the invasion of South Korea, and the decision to place Soviet missiles in Cuba can all be understood in this way.[107] But it appears also to have been understood, in each case, that the resulting probes would be conducted cautiously, and that they would not be pursued to the point of risking war if resistance was encountered.[108]

Defections from one sphere would be exploited by the other only when it was clear that the first either could not or would not reassert control. Hence, the United States took advantage of departures from the Soviet bloc of Yugoslavia and—ultimately—the Peoples' Republic of China; it did not seek to do so in the case of Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, or (in what was admittedly a more ambiguous situation) Poland in 1981. Similarly, the Soviet Union exploited the defection of Cuba after 1959, but made no attempt to contest the reassertion of American influence in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, the Dominican Republic in 1965, or Grenada in 1983.[109]

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what B does and in fact disapproving of what B does, but at the same time acquiescing by virtue of effectively doing nothing to oppose B." Keal, *Unspoken Rules and Superpower Dominance,* p. 115.

106. For a good overview of this process of consolidation, see ibid., pp. 87–115.

107. George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy,* pp. 523–526, 557–560.

108. Ibid., pp. 536–543.

109. For a discussion of the Hungarian, Czech, Cuban, and Dominican Republic episodes, see Keal, *Unspoken Rules and Superpower Dominance,* pp. 116–158. There is no adequate comparative analysis of how the United States responded to the defections of Yugoslavia and China.

(2) AVOID DIRECT MILITARY CONFRONTATION. It is remarkable, in retrospect, that at no point during the long history of the Cold War have Soviet and American military forces engaged each other directly in sustained hostilities. The superpowers have fought three major limited wars since 1945, but in no case with each other: the possibility of direct Soviet–American military involvement was greatest—although it never happened—during the Korean War; it was much more remote in Vietnam and has remained so in Afghanistan as well. In those few situations where Soviet and American military units have confronted one another directly—the 1948 Berlin blockade, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the Cuban missile crisis the following year—great care was taken on both sides to avoid incidents that might have triggered hostilities.[110]

Where the superpowers have sought to expand or to retain areas of control, they have tended to resort to the use of proxies or other indirect means to accomplish this: examples would include the Soviet Union's decision to sanction a North Korean invasion of South Korea,[111] and its more recent reliance on Cuban troops to promote its interests in sub-Saharan Africa; on the American side covert intervention has been a convenient (if not invariably successful) means of defending spheres of influence.[112] In a curious way, clients and proxies have come to serve as buffers, allowing Russians and Americans to pursue their competition behind a facade of "deniability" that minimizes the risks of open—and presumably less manageable—confrontation.

The two superpowers have also been careful not to allow the disputes of third parties to embroil them directly: this pattern has been most evident in the Middle East, which has witnessed no fewer than five wars between Israel

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110. Coral Bell, *The Conventions of Crisis: A Study in Diplomatic Management* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Phil Williams, *Crisis Management: Confrontation and Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Wiley, 1976). They have also managed successfully to control incidents at sea: see Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "A Quiet Success for Arms Control: Preventing Incidents at Sea," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Spring 1985), pp. 154–184.

111. This analysis assumes, as do most scholarly examinations of the subject, that the North Korean attack could not have taken place without some form of Soviet authorization. The most thorough assessment of this admittedly unclear episode is Robert R. Simmons, *The Strained Alliance: Peking, Pyongyang, Moscow and the Politics of the Korean Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1975).

112. Which is not to say that the Soviet Union does not engage in covert operations as well; it is, however, somewhat more successful at concealing them. The best recent overview is John Barron, *KGB Today: The Hidden Hand* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1983).

and its Arab neighbors since 1948; but it holds as well for the India–Pakistan conflicts of 1965 and 1971, and for the more recent—and much more protracted—struggle between Iran and Iraq. The contrast between this long tradition of restraint and the casualness with which great powers in the past have allowed the quarrels of others to become their own could hardly be move obvious.[113]

(3) USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ONLY AS AN ULTIMATE RESORT. One of the most significant—though least often commented upon—of the superpower "rules" has been the tradition that has evolved, since 1945, of maintaining a sharp distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons, and of reserving the military use of the latter only for the extremity of total war. In retrospect, there was nothing at all inevitable about this: the Eisenhower administration announced quite publicly its willingness to use nuclear weapons in limited war situations;[114] Henry Kissinger's *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* strongly endorsed such use in 1957 as a way to keep alliance commitments credible;[115] and Soviet strategists have traditionally insisted as well that in war both nuclear and conventional means would be employed.[116] It is remarkable, given this history, that the world has not seen a single nuclear weapon used in anger since the destruction of Nagasaki forty-one years ago. Rarely has *practice* of nations so conspicuously departed from proclaimed *doctrine*; rarely, as well, has so great a disparity attracted so little public notice.

This pattern of caution in the use of nuclear weapons did not develop solely, as one might have expected, from the prospect of retaliation. As early as 1950, at a time when the Soviet Union had only just tested an atomic bomb and had only the most problematic methods of delivering it, the United

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113. The classic case, of course, is the amply documented July 1914 crisis, the implications of which have most recently been reassessed in a special edition of *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Summer 1984). But see also Richard Smoke's essays on how the Seven Years War and the Crimean War grew out of a comparable failure of the major powers to limit the escalation of quarrels they did not initiate. Smoke, *War: Controlling Escalation*, pp. 147–236.
114. See Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, pp. 145–152; also Glenn H. Snyder, "The 'New Look' of 1953," in Schilling, Hammond, and Snyder, *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets*, pp. 379–524.
115. Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper, 1957). It should be added, in fairness, that Kissinger by 1961 had repudiated his earlier position on this point. See his *The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).
116. For a summary of Soviet thinking on the subject, see Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), especially pp. 55–56, 61–62.

States nonetheless effectively ruled out the use of its own atomic weapons in Korea because of the opposition of its allies and the fear of an adverse reaction in the world at large. As one State Department official put it: "[W]e must consider that, regardless of the fact that the military results achieved by atomic bombardment may be identical to those attained by conventional weapons, the effect on world opinion will be vastly different."[117] Despite his public position that there was "no reason why [nuclear weapons] shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else," President Eisenhower repeatedly rejected recommendations for their use in limited war situations: "You boys must be crazy," he told his advisers at the time of the collapse of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. "We can't use those awful things against Asians for the second time in less than ten years. My God."[118]

It was precisely this sense that nuclear weapons were qualitatively different from other weapons[119] that most effectively deterred their employment by the United States during the first decade of the Cold War, a period in which the tradition of "non-use" had not yet taken hold, within which ample opportunities for their use existed, and during which the possibility of Soviet retaliation could not have been great. The idea of a discrete "threshold" between nuclear and conventional weapons, therefore, may owe more to the moral—and public relations—sensibilities of Washington officials than to any actual fear of escalation. By the time a credible Soviet retaliatory capability was in place, at the end of the 1950s, the "threshold" concept was equally firmly fixed: one simply did not cross it short of all-out war.[120] Subsequent

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117. John K. Emmerson to Dean Rusk, November 8, 1950, *FRUS: 1950*, Vol. 7, pp. 1098–1099. See also a memorandum by Paul Nitze, November 4, 1950, ibid., pp. 1041–1042; and Philip C. Jessup's notes of a meeting between Truman and Attlee at the White House, December 7, 1950, ibid., pp. 1462–1465. For a comprehensive policy statement on the use of atomic weapons in war, see the Department of State–Joint Strategic Survey Committee paper, "United States Position on Considerations Under Which the United States Will Accept War and on Atomic Warfare," August 3, 1951, *FRUS: 1951*, pp. 866–874.

118. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*, p. 184. For examples of Eisenhower's refusal to authorize the use of nuclear weapons, see ibid., pp. 179, 206, 213, 229–230, 243, 274, 483–484. Eisenhower's "bullet" statement is from his March 16, 1955 press conference, *Eisenhower Public Papers, 1955* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 332.

119. With the exception of chemical weapons, for which there appears to be an even deeper aversion than to the use of nuclear weapons. See, on this point, Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution*, especially pp. 29–40. For the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons, see Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 132–134.

120. It is interesting to note that John F. Kennedy began his administration with what appeared to be a pledge never to initiate the use of nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union; after protests from NATO allies, though, this was modified into a promise not to initiate hostilities

limited war situations—notably Vietnam for the Americans, and more recently Afghanistan for the Russians—have confirmed the continued effectiveness of this unstated but important "rule" of superpower behavior, as have the quiet but persistent efforts both Washington and Moscow have made to keep nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of others who might not abide by it.[121]

(4) PREFER PREDICTABLE ANOMALY OVER UNPREDICTABLE RATIONALITY. One of the most curious features of the Cold War has been the extent to which the superpowers—and their respective clients, who have had little choice in the matter—have tolerated a whole series of awkward, artificial, and, on the surface at least, unstable regional arrangements: the division of Germany is, of course, the most obvious example; others would include the Berlin Wall, the position of West Berlin itself within East Germany, the arbitrary and ritualized partition of the Korean peninsula, the existence of an avowed Soviet satellite some ninety miles off the coast of Florida, and, not least, the continued functioning of an important American naval base within it. There is to all of these arrangements an appearance of wildly illogical improvisation: none of them could conceivably have resulted, it seems, from any rational and premeditated design.

And yet, at another level, they have had a kind of logic after all: the fact that these jerry-built but rigidly maintained arrangements have lasted for so long suggests an unwillingness on the part of the superpowers to trade familiarity for unpredictability. To try to rationalize the German, Korean, or Cuban anomalies would, it has long been acknowledged, create the unnerving possibility of an uncertain result; far better, Soviet and American leaders have consistently agreed, to perpetuate the anomalies than to risk the possibilities for destabilization inherent in trying to resolve them. For however unnatural and unjust these situations may be for the people whose lives they directly affect, it seems nonetheless incontestable that the superpowers' preference for predictability over rationality has, on the whole, enhanced more than it has reduced prospects for a stable relationship.

(5) DO NOT SEEK TO UNDERMINE THE OTHER SIDE'S LEADERSHIP. The death of Stalin, in March 1953, set off a flurry of proposals within the United States

only. See Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Question: The United States and Nuclear Weapons, 1946–1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 75.
121. For a recent review of non-proliferation efforts, see the National Academy of Sciences study, *Nuclear Arms Control: Background and Issues* (Washington: National Academy Press, 1985), pp. 224–273.

government for exploiting the vulnerability that was thought certain to result: it was a major American objective, Secretary of State Dulles informed embassies overseas, "to sow doubt, confusion, uncertainty about the new regime."[122] And yet, by the following month President Eisenhower was encouraging precisely that successor regime to join in a major new effort to control the arms race and reduce the danger of war.[123] The dilemma here was one that was to recur throughout the Cold War: if what one wanted was stability at the international level, did it make sense to try to destabilize the other side's leadership at the national level?

The answer, it appears, has been no. There have been repeated leadership crises in both the United States and the Soviet Union since Stalin's death: one thinks especially of the decline and ultimate deposition of Khrushchev following the Cuban missile crisis, of the Johnson administration's all-consuming fixation with Vietnam, of the collapse of Nixon's authority as a result of Watergate, and of the recent paralysis in the Kremlin brought about by the illness and death of three Soviet leaders within less than three years. And yet, in none of these instances can one discern a concerted effort by the unaffected side to exploit the other's vulnerability; indeed there appears to have existed in several of these situations a sense of frustration, even regret, over the difficulties its rival was undergoing.[124] From the standpoint of game theory, a "rule" that acknowledges legitimacy of leadership on both sides is hardly surprising: there have to be players in order for the game to proceed. But when compared to other historical—and indeed other current—situations in which that reciprocal tolerance has not existed,[125] its importance as a stabilizing mechanism becomes clear.

Stability, in great power relationships, is not the same thing as politeness. It is worth noting that despite levels of hostile rhetoric unmatched on both

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122. Dulles to certain diplomatic posts, March 6, 1953, *FRUS: 1952–54*, Vol. 2, pp. 1684–1685. Contingency planning for such an effort had been under way for years, although Eisenhower complained that these had provided no clear conclusions. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*, pp. 67–68.
123. Eisenhower speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953, *Eisenhower Public Papers: 1953* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 179–188. For the origins of this speech, see Emmet John Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), pp. 100–112.
124. See, for example, Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963–1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 468–469; also Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), pp. 287–288.
125. I have in mind here the long history of dynastic struggles in Europe up through the wars of the French Revolution; also, and much more recently, the way in which a refusal to acknowledge leadership legitimacy has perpetuated the Iran–Iraq war.

sides since the earliest days of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States have managed to get through the early 1980s without a single significant military confrontation of any kind. Contrast this with the record of Soviet–American relations in the 1970s: an era of far greater politeness in terms of what the two nations *said* about one another, but one marred by potentially dangerous crises over Soviet submarine bases and combat brigades in Cuba, American bombing and mining activities in Vietnam, and a pattern of Soviet interventionism in Angola, Somalia, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Afghanistan. There was even a major American nuclear alert during the Yom Kippur War in 1973—the only one since the Cuban missile crisis—ironically enough, this occurred at the height of what is now wistfully remembered as the era of "detente."[126]

What stability does require is a sense of caution, maturity, and responsibility on both sides. It requires the ability to distinguish posturing—something in which all political leaders indulge—from provocation, which is something else again. It requires recognition of the fact that competition is a normal rather than an abnormal state of affairs in relations between nations, much as it is in relations between major corporations, but that this need not preclude the identification of certain common—or corporate, or universal—interests as well. It requires, above all, a sense of the relative rather than the absolute nature of security: that one's own security depends not only upon the measures one takes in one's own defense, but also upon the extent to which these create a sense of insecurity in the mind of one's adversary.

It would be foolish to suggest that the Soviet–American relationship today meets all of these prerequisites: the last one especially deserves a good deal more attention than it has heretofore received, on both sides. But to the extent that the relationship has taken on a new maturity—and to see that it has one need only compare the current mood of wary optimism with the almost total lack of communication that existed at the time of the Korean War, or the extreme swings between alarm and amiability that characterized relations in the late 1950s and early 1960s, or the inflated expectations and resulting disillusionments of the 1970s—that maturity would appear to reflect an increasing commitment on the part of both great nations involved to a "game" played "by the rules."

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126. I am indebted to Ambassador Jack Matlock for suggesting this point.

Stability and the Future

History, as anyone who has spent any time at all studying it would surely know, has a habit of making bad prophets out of both those who make and those who chronicle it. It tends to take expectations and turn them upside down; it is not at all tolerant of those who would seek too self-confidently to anticipate its future course. One should be exceedingly wary, therefore, of predicting how long the current era of Soviet–American stability will last. Certainly it is easy to conceive of things that might in one way or another undermine it: domestic developments in either country could affect foreign policy in unpredictable ways; the actions of third parties could embroil the superpowers in conflict with each other against their will; opportunities for miscalculation and accident are always present; incompetent leadership is always a risk. All that one can—or should—say is that the relationship has survived these kinds of disruptions in the past: if history made bad prophets out of the warmakers of 1914 and 1939–41, or the peacemakers of 1919, all of whom approached their tasks with a degree of optimism that seems to us foolish in retrospect, then so too has it made bad prophets out of the peacemakers of 1945, who had so little optimism about the future.

Whether the Soviet–American relationship could survive something more serious is another matter entirely. We know the answer when it comes to nuclear war; recent scientific findings have only confirmed visions of catastrophe we have lived with for decades.[127] But what about a substantial decline in the overall influence of either great power that did not immediately result in war? Here, it seems to me, is a more probable—if less often discussed—danger. For if history demonstrates anything at all, it is that the condition of being a great power is a transitory one: sooner or later, the effects of exhaustion, overextension, and lack of imagination take their toll among nations, just as surely as does old age itself among individuals. Nor is it often that history arranges for great powers to decline simultaneously and symmetrically. Past experience also suggests that the point at which a great power perceives its decline to be beginning is a perilous one: behavior can become erratic, even desperate, well before physical strength itself has dissipated.[128]

127. See Carl Sagan, "Nuclear War and Climatic Catastrophe: Some Policy Implications," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 62 (Winter 1983/84), pp. 257–292.
128. Paul Kennedy has pointed to the significance of the perception among Germans, after

The Soviet–American relationship has yet to face this test, although there is no reason to think it will escape it indefinitely. When that time comes, the preservation of stability may require something new in international relations: the realization that great nations can have a stake, not just in the survival, but also the success and prosperity of their rivals. International systems, like tangoes, require at least two reasonably active and healthy participants; it is always wise, before allowing the dance to end, to consider with what, or with whom, one will replace it.

The Cold War, with all of its rivalries, anxieties, and unquestionable dangers, has produced the longest period of stability in relations among the great powers that the world has known in this century; it now compares favorably as well with some of the longest periods of great power stability in all of modern history. We may argue among ourselves as to whether or not we can legitimately call this "peace": it is not, I daresay, what most of us have in mind when we use that term. But I am not at all certain that the contemporaries of Metternich or Bismarck would have regarded their eras as "peaceful" either, even though historians looking back on those eras today clearly do.

Who is to say, therefore, how the historians of the year 2086—if there are any left by then—will look back on us? Is it not at least plausible that they will see our era, not as "the Cold War" at all, but rather, like those ages of Metternich and Bismarck, as a rare and fondly remembered "Long Peace"? Wishful thinking? Speculation through a rose-tinted word processor? Perhaps. But would it not behoove us to give at least as much attention to the question of how this might happen—to the elements in the contemporary international system that might make it happen—as we do to the fear that it may not?

1900, that British influence in the world was increasing, while their own was not. *The Rise of Anglo–German Antagonism*, p. 313.