

# MEASURES SHORT of WAR



the **GEORGE F. KENNAN**  
**LECTURES** at the  
**NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE 1946-47**

Edited by Giles D. Harlow and George C. Maerz

The cover is an artistic interpretation of George F. Kennan as he may have contemplated the Washington skyline from his office in the National War College. The postwar years of 1946–47, in an innovative academic setting near the symbolic and actual centers of American government, provided a unique time and place for the early Kennan writings in this volume.

This depiction was drawn by graphic artist Laszlo Bodrogi, Visual Communications and Printing Division, National Defense University.

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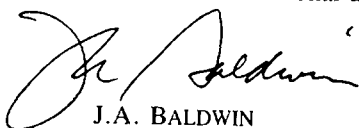
## FOREWORD

The current transition to a post-Cold War world is in certain ways reminiscent of the immediate post-World War II years. Then, amidst the euphoria of victory over the Axis powers, the Allies immediately had to face new problems, among them the threat of nuclear weapons, the necessity of rebuilding Europe and stabilizing Japan, and the need to contain Communist expansionism across the globe. Today, the West has had precious little time to celebrate the end of the Cold War before turning to the destabilizing problems of Soviet disintegration and the blatant military aggression of Iraq.

This volume holds the unpublished lectures and other writings of George F. Kennan at the National War College in its first academic year, 1946–47. Kennan and his generation, having won the war, faced the challenges of winning the peace. This they did, by creating and fostering the policies and structures that we now often take for granted: the Marshall Plan, the concept of containment, and institutions such as the US Department of Defense, NATO, and the United Nations. The National War College itself was an experiment in coeducating military and civilian leaders.

As the first Deputy for Foreign Affairs at the War College, George Kennan had no small role in shaping these developments. His 1946–47 lectures and papers, specially edited for this book in collaboration with Professor Kennan, document his thinking on many critical national security topics of those days when the Iron Curtain was falling across much of the world. Of particular interest is an early, unpublished version of his famous “Mr. X” essay, which develops his containment thesis more fully than the well known and often anthologized article.

Kennan’s patterns of sound, critical thinking, his idealism tempered by realism, his intellectual rigor and command of history, and his repeated insistence on America’s internal moral and social strength as essential components of national power all help make *Measures Short of War* valuable reading for any historian or student of international affairs.



J.A. BALDWIN  
Vice Admiral, US Navy  
President, National Defense  
University

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors acknowledge George F. Kennan first and foremost. His early writings not only inspired but make up the substance of this volume; he is, in a real sense, the author of this work. The active, scholarly interest he showed in the editing and publication of the lectures was instrumental in the production of an authoritative edition. Professor Kennan graciously reviewed the edited lectures and discussed their historical significance with us. We thank him for the many courtesies shown to us, and hope that our editing has done justice to the wealth of original thinking that he articulated long ago.

Many others contributed in various ways to this project.

Professor John Lewis Gaddis of Ohio University, George Kennan's biographer, was the first to suggest publication of the lectures, offering useful advice whenever we called upon him.

At National Defense University, Ambassador L. Bruce Laingen urged publication as a University project. Susan Lemke, Chief of the Library Special Collections, assisted by Tina Lavato, located the original lecture manuscripts and other historical material in the archives. Dr. Terry Deibel, National War College, Professor Joseph Goldberg of the Institute for National Strategic Studies, and Dr. Frederick Kiley, Director of NDU Press, responded generously with advice and counsel.

At Princeton University, Mrs. Elizabeth Stenard, secretary at the Institute for Advanced Study, ably coordinated our various consultations with Professor Kennan. The Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library allowed us to review the Kennan papers and to include photographs from its holdings.

At the National Defense University Press, a skilled publications team helped to produce this volume. Editorial supervisor, Ms. Lora Conk, ensured that the lecture manuscripts were accurately typed and proofread. Editorial assistants Mrs. Patricia Williams, Mrs. Myrna Morgan, Mrs. Karren Villahermosa, and Ms. Wendy Mahan prepared the many drafts. Captain George Luker, US Air Force,

edited the Introduction. Mr. Laszlo Bodrogi, of the University's Visual Communications and Printing Division, created the imaginative sketch and other artwork for the cover.

To everyone named above, and others whom we may have overlooked, we owe a debt of gratitude that we hope will be repaid, if only in part, by seeing these important lectures in print at last.

GILES D. HARLOW

I would also like to thank my wife, Joan, whose encouragement and advice on this project meant a great deal to me.

GEORGE C. MAERZ

## INTRODUCTION

**S**HORTLY AFTER WORLD WAR II, BEFORE US FOREIGN POLICY embraced containment as the focus of US-Soviet relations, George F. Kennan presented thirteen lectures to the students and faculty of the new National War College in Washington, DC. This book is an edited collection of these previously unpublished lectures, originally delivered in the fall of 1946 and during 1947. Within these pages, one can find the genesis of ideas that have shaped American foreign policy for over four decades. These declarations, which we might dub “Kennanisms,” are the beginning of what was to become an out-pouring of scholarly pronouncements soon to achieve worldwide acclaim for their controversial, realistic, and prescient insights into American foreign policy.

By way of introduction, let us briefly review the setting, intellectual contribution, content, and literary style of these lectures. This introduction is by no means a comprehensive, critical analysis, but an attempt to describe the historical context and immediate setting of these lectures, leading to a fuller appreciation of their historical significance.

### THE SETTING

I had the position of Deputy for Foreign Affairs at the National War College in the first year of its existence—in the academic year of 1946–47. I look back on that year as one of the happiest and most exciting of my life.<sup>1</sup>

Kennan’s assignment, in August 1946, as one of the foremost Soviet experts in the US government, to the newly created position of Deputy Commandant for Foreign Affairs was fortuitous. State Department participation in a new national-level institution studying the political and military considerations of American policy was strongly supported by President Harry Truman, Army Chief of Staff

Dwight D. Eisenhower, and other top officials. During the winter of 1946 and spring of 1947, the newly formed National War College—the setting for these lectures—became a highly respected forum for influential policymakers in Washington. Situated on what is now Fort McNair in Southwest Washington, in the shadow of the Capitol, the Pentagon, and other Washington landmarks, the War College was within easy reach of national policymakers, who often took advantage of its proximity. During the immediate post-World War II period, which Kennan called “that winter of transition and uncertainty,” admirals, generals, senators, congressmen, and cabinet members frequently attended the War College’s daily lectures and seminars.<sup>2</sup> For example, Secretary of the Navy (later to become the first Secretary of Defense) James Forrestal was a periodic attendee and maintained a close working relationship with George Kennan. Stimulating exchanges of ideas at Fort McNair influenced many of the nation’s policy planners as they attempted to define a postwar national security policy.

The reader should bear in mind the world situation when Kennan began lecturing in the fall of 1946. His first National War College presentation was made barely a year after the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay. The advent of the atomic age had ended World War II, but it presented unprecedented challenges to policymakers grappling with the complexities of postwar planning and peace.

Depressed post-World War II economic conditions in Europe and Asia presented staggering problems. Populations were decimated and uprooted, industries were in shambles, and newly created international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, were just beginning their work. In Europe, the armies of the vanquished and all the victors, except the Soviet military forces, had been largely demobilized. Communist party membership in Western Europe approached all-time highs, with Communists threatening to assume political control in some countries, notably France and Italy. In Washington, leaders with recent experience in wartime grand strategy were designing new structures to better integrate military power with diplomacy and to bring coherence to postwar US national security policy formulation. The US wartime military organizations were still in existence. The Department of Defense had not yet been created; in fact, the concept for such a structure was still being debated. In the State Department,

there was no division for German affairs, which were still the province of the Occupied Areas Office of the War Department; there was no formal staff for planning overall foreign policy and there was no National Security Council at the White House.

In 1946, Kennan was writing and speaking before the great body of Cold War commentary had evolved. The term "Cold War" was not yet in common usage. These National War College lectures were delivered *before* the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), *before* the first Soviet nuclear explosion, and *before* the Chinese Revolution were realities. The United Nations Organization was only a year old. Most of the lectures were delivered before the massive economic aid plan for European reconstruction, the Marshall Plan, was unveiled. Europe was deep in political turmoil, its economic recovery had not begun in earnest, and its future was uncertain.

Although the Allies had prevailed in the war, a major new international problem had emerged: the perception of Soviet Communism as a major threat. With the benefit of historical hindsight, we take many of the American responses to the postwar political and economic problems for granted. However, in 1946–47, the direction of the programs and policies that today we accept as all but inevitable was not at all clear or predictable.

In addition to recalling the international political environment, the reader of these lectures should consider the immediate setting and locale. The National War College curriculum, the venue for Kennan's lectures, was in 1946 and still is conducted partially in a closed forum, because portions of the subject materials deal with sensitive aspects of national security policy. To encourage academic candor, lecturers generally speak under a policy of non-attribution, which allows them to express personal views—ideas that may not be reflective of the current or past administration's policies—without risk of attribution. Consequently, from their beginning, the War College lectures have been a sounding board for new and untried ideas and policies. Originally classified for national security reasons, the Kennan War College lectures are now part of the public record.

The first class to attend the newly formed National War College was exposed to an academic environment focusing on something broader than US foreign or military policy: namely, a *national* policy for our country's security. The select student body consisted of the brigadier generals, colonels, and Navy captains who had planned,

fought, and won World War II, as well as mid-career foreign service officers, most of whom had wartime diplomatic experience. Many of these students were destined to become future generals, admirals, and ambassadors. The creation of the National War College was much heralded in the news media, whose reports contained two major themes of interest here: first, a clear sense that this institution was something new and innovative; and second, an air of expectation that these elite students would produce grand results in this novel setting.<sup>3</sup>

Favorably disposed to the armed forces, perhaps as a result of his upbringing in a traditional midwestern setting and education at a private military academy, Kennan was comfortable in the military setting of an Army post dating back to 1794 and now named Fort McNair. He lived in quarters number 11 on the "Generals' Row" of red-brick, white-columned, stately houses overlooking the Washington channel of the Potomac River. As the resident diplomat and Soviet expert, he was a respected member of the military-academic community. The collegiality of this enclave in peaceful postwar Washington—in contrast to the turmoil of postings in European wartime capitals—must have been conducive to contemplation and writing; the quality and quantity of Kennan's writing and speeches during this period certainly indicates that it was.

From his office at the northwest corner of the National War College building, Kennan could look out the window and see both the Pentagon and the Capitol, the two bastions of influence on US national security policy. Kennan later acknowledged that here "some of the ideas were conceived that have been basic to my views on American policy ever since."<sup>4</sup> Working daily in an academic environment, Kennan was closely associated with other emerging strategic thinkers and scholars assigned to the National War College. For example, one of the civilian faculty members, Bernard Brodie, had not yet produced his classic treatise on nuclear strategy, but the role of atomic energy in national security policy was central to the curriculum. Kennan's early academic exposure to what were, in 1946, called "atomic" weapons influenced his initial thinking on nuclear issues, a matter that has concerned him deeply ever since.<sup>5</sup> In April 1947, Kennan began work in his new assignment as the first Director of Policy Planning at the State Department. He continued lecturing at the War College, however, and continued to reside on post until July 1947.

During the ensuing years, Ambassador Kennan returned regularly to the National War College to lecture on international

affairs. His later lectures reflect the enrichment and flavor of his experience as Director of Policy Planning at the State Department between 1947 and 1950. The last four lectures in this volume, delivered in the fall of 1947, illustrate the evolution of Kennan's thinking.

Thus Kennan's year at the National War College not only furnished him the opportunity to help shape future American foreign policy, but also provided a stimulating environment which influenced his own thinking for years to come.

## THE AUTHOR'S INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTION

To understand more fully the import of these War College lectures, the reader should bear in mind that the lectures were produced at a transitional stage in Kennan's career—when he moved from relative obscurity as a Foreign Service Officer to national attention as an expert on the Soviet Union.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, George Frost Kennan was educated at St. John's Military academy and Princeton University, entering the Foreign Service in 1926.<sup>6</sup> Pre-World War II postings included Russian training in the Baltic capitals and Berlin, followed by assignment to the first US mission in Moscow in 1933. He came back to Washington in 1937 for a year, then served at the embassies in Prague and Berlin. When the United States declared war, he was interned for some 5 months by the Germans before the exchange of diplomats took place. After wartime service in Lisbon and London, he was again assigned to Moscow in 1944. Two years later, in February 1946, as *Chargé d'affaires*, he sent to Washington the now famous "Long Telegram," his first statement of what later became known as "containment." Before Kennan reported to the National War College at Ft. McNair in the late summer of 1946, the State Department had sent him on a 2-month speaking tour to the Midwest and West Coast to lecture on US-Soviet relations. Thus, when he reported to the War College, Kennan had spent 19 of his 20 years in the Foreign Service in Europe. Although his Russian expertise and reputation were well established in the Foreign Service, he had not written for public consumption or academic audiences, and was by no means a public figure.

At the National War College, Kennan became recognized as a foremost Soviet expert; Kennan was instrumental in the development

of a curriculum that continues to provide graduate-level, professional politico-military education for future high-level government policymakers. Professor Kennan's extensive prewar and wartime diplomatic experience, particularly in the Soviet Union, superbly qualified him to be the first State Department officer assigned to the faculty of the newest US senior military college, setting a precedent and standard that endure to this day.

Kennan's contributions to national security were not limited to the National War College campus in 1946–1947. While a resident faculty member, he also lectured at the College of Naval Warfare, Air War College, US Naval Academy, State Department seminars, various colleges and universities, and also to business, banking, and civic groups. His prolific writing and lecturing influenced the media and public opinion as the nation sought to re-evaluate the aims of its wartime allies. By such broad exposure to the American public and its opinions, Kennan began to overcome what he described as his previous inability to “influence my own government behind the scenes because my government papers continued to glide off the back of Washington's official consciousness.”<sup>7</sup> This frustration had been a recurring theme in his earlier writings, and is alluded to in these lectures also. Thus the National War College tour provided an excellent opportunity for Kennan to redress his lingering concern about not being in a position to write for a broad audience.

Penetrating, colorful, perceptive, and at times prophetic, these fourteen unpublished papers offer a coherent picture of Kennan's thoughts concerning the conduct of American foreign policy immediately following World War II.

Kennan's ideas were not universally accepted by the policymakers, media, and elite opinion-influencing communities. His analysis of Soviet affairs was so complex and farsighted that he was frequently misunderstood. Noted columnist Walter Lippmann was a stern critic of Kennan's policy pronouncements. Although Kennan and Lippmann disagreed on fundamental issues, Kennan heard him out and later incorporated some of Lippmann's ideas in his lectures. On at least one occasion, Kennan invited Lippmann to the National War College to discuss their different views on foreign policy.<sup>8</sup>

The War College lectures, delivered inside as opposed to outside of government, increased Kennan's visibility at the policymaking level within the US government. His perceptive views and penetrating lectures came to the attention of, among others, James Forrestal,

Dean Acheson, Robert Lovett, and George Marshall. In April 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall selected Kennan to be the first head of Policy Planning in the State Department.<sup>9</sup> While still assigned to the National War College in the spring of 1947, Kennan began to devote more and more of his time to policy formulation at State. This may explain why his later National War College lectures reflect a broader global focus than did the earlier presentations, which dealt mostly with US-Soviet affairs.

In the fall of 1946, while Kennan was lecturing and writing at the National War College, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal asked him to write an analysis of Soviet foreign policy. A first draft was initially returned by Forrestal, but Kennan resubmitted it on January 24, 1947. The paper was never delivered as a lecture nor published as written, but is included here because of its origin at the National War College. Another version of this paper became the famous article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," published under the pseudonym "X" in the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. In early 1989 Kennan commented to the present editors that in some ways this preliminary paper presented his thinking at the time better than the final published version of the "X" article.<sup>10</sup> It is clearly the nucleus for his analysis that gained such great acclaim when published in *Foreign Affairs*.

Kennan himself has recalled that his ideas for containment of the Soviet Union were "brought to expression hacking away at my typewriter there in the northwest corner of the War College building in December 1946."<sup>11</sup> "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" was a far-reaching treatise, and generated a wide-ranging debate on American foreign policy. Walter Lippmann, though an early critic of Mr. X, called the Kennan article "a document of primary importance on the sources of American policy."<sup>12</sup> The intellectual and conceptual seeds that were germinated in the northwest corner office in the National War College building in the winter of 1946 have been rooted in American foreign policy for over four decades.

Although the "X" article has been much quoted, and many volumes have been written supporting and countering it, Kennan's biographer, John Lewis Gaddis, describes the National War College lectures as a "clearer and more coherent view of his strategy" than the "X" article itself.<sup>13</sup>

In his role as Deputy Commandant, Kennan, like the rest of the small civilian faculty, attended most of the War College lectures and

other academic sessions. Along with the students, he became involved in the study of Clausewitz, Mackinder, and other classical military strategists. Kennan's lectures reflect an excellent grasp of grand strategy, particularly the historical Russian experience.

Many critics who disagreed with George Kennan's views have had second thoughts about their reactions to his 1946–1947 pronouncements. He steadfastly maintained—and these lectures demonstrate—that he did not regard Communism and the Soviets as posing a military threat to the United States or the world, but that they represented a political and social danger. Over the years he has repeatedly condemned the over-militarization of policymaking and reliance on nuclear weapons as having produced an excessively military response to the political problems of the world. Historical perspective is beginning to confirm his perceptive analysis, developed over forty-five years ago.

## THE LECTURES

The source manuscripts of the thirteen lectures and one unpublished paper comprising this volume were the declassified, yellowed onionskin copies in the National War College archives; most of the original texts can be found in the George F. Kennan papers at the Princeton University Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library.<sup>14</sup> Three of the thirteen oral presentations were not formal “lectures” as such, although we use the term here for ease of reference. These three—an unscheduled evening talk, a commentary on a student exercise, and a briefing—are identified in the editors’ notes preceding each one.

The National War College lectures are only a small portion of the writings and speeches Kennan has produced during the past half century. These are significant because they are among the earliest, documented expressions of many of the basic concepts upon which he has based his thinking. Kennan's other formal lectures have been published and have gained literary acclaim.<sup>15</sup> Although he modestly describes a 1951 series of lectures at the University of Chicago as his first academic lectures, these National War College lectures predate them. These lectures were not presented in a series as such; some were given while Kennan was assigned full-time at the College, others while he was at State, and still others while he was working in

both positions. They were intended for academic audiences, not for publication; some were prepared, formal speeches, while others were given, in Kennan's phrase, "off the cuff." Yet the War College lectures—occurring within a relatively brief period of time and on similar topics—represent, in their entirety, a coherent trail of Kennan's thinking. The Chicago lectures, also referred to as the Walgren Lectures, are an historical treatise analyzing American diplomacy during the first half of the twentieth century; their publication produced a classic volume in the field.<sup>16</sup>

Kennan delivered three other major formal lecture series in addition to the Chicago lectures. During 1954, he presented the Stafford Little Lectures at Princeton while in residence at the Institute for Advanced Study; these lectures were published as *Realities of American Foreign Policy*.<sup>17</sup> During 1957, he was a visiting professor at Oxford University. In the fall of that year he delivered the prestigious Sunday evening Reith Lectures, sponsored by the British Broadcasting Corporation; at the same time, he also lectured at Oxford on Soviet-American relations. These lectures, together with ones subsequently delivered at Harvard, were later published under the title *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*.<sup>18</sup> In 1984, Ambassador Kennan delivered a two-lecture series at Grinnell College in Iowa, later published with an updated volume of his earlier Walgren Lectures.<sup>19</sup> Publication of Kennan's earliest works in *Measures Short of War*, then, completes the public record of his major, formal lectures.

Changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s appear to validate the assessment of John Gaddis that these War College lectures are "remarkable for their prescience."<sup>20</sup> George Kennan's early, singular contribution to the new field of national security was so intellectually significant that in later years a school of Cold War scholars evolved to debate and interpret what they believed Kennan really meant to say. Professor Stanley Hoffman characterizes the abundant writings during the late 1980s about Kennan as "Kennanology."<sup>21</sup>

Kennan's first lecture to the National War College on September 16, 1946, sets the tone for this series. Addressing "Measures Short of War," he stressed diplomacy but emphasized that "the price of peace has become the willingness to sacrifice it to a good cause and that is all there is to it." In summation, he said,

My personal conviction is that if we keep up our strength, if we are ready to use it, and if we select measures short of war with the necessary wisdom and coordination, then these measures short of war will be all the ones we will ever have to use to secure the prosperous and safe future of the people of this country.<sup>22</sup>

Professor Kennan's second lecture, on the "Structure of Internal Power" in the USSR, delivered on October 10, 1946, became a War College classic and was repeated in updated form several times in years following. Kennan was not only perceptive about the inner workings of the Soviet political structure but was, as events later proved, quite prophetic regarding the succession to Stalin. In this second lecture, he gave a very cogent assessment of the likelihood that collective leadership would emerge.

A third lecture discussed "Contemporary Soviet Diplomacy." Drawing on his knowledge of the inner workings of the Soviet system, he elaborated upon the idea of peaceful coexistence among sovereign states and its Russian application. By December 1946, Kennan was so well regarded by the College and so much in demand that his fourth lecture was an unscheduled evening talk, to which students, faculty, and their wives were invited to hear his insights into the "Background of Current Russian Diplomatic Moves." Remarking that he had delivered "some twenty or thirty lectures about Russia in the last half year," Kennan discussed the world as seen from the Kremlin based on his service in Moscow during the previous two years.

Kennan's rapport with his State Department colleagues enabled him to draw upon many experts throughout the Government for specialized presentations. On January 10, 1947, for example, he invited two regional experts to share the podium with him to discuss current events in Indo-China and France. Kennan's comments on communist influence in both regions were prescient as he stressed the need for a US policy to address the problems.

The next paper is not a lecture, but Kennan's unpublished commentary, "The Soviet Way of Thought and Its Effect on Foreign Policy." Dated January 24, 1947, this precursor to the "X" Article is discussed on page xix.

On March 7, 1947, Kennan delivered an insightful personal narrative of his involvement in the "Problems of Diplomatic-Military Collaboration." During his wartime service in neutral Lisbon, he had

been at the crossroads of various Allied-Axis activities. His personal participation in Anglo-American negotiations over the Azores is a colorful tale of political, military, and diplomatic interaction—or the lack of it. He tells entertaining tales of his relationship with the Prime Minister of Portugal and the sometimes blundering and disjointed coordination between Washington and US representatives in the field. When telegrams failed to solve a problem he was summoned back to Washington to confer with the Secretary of War and Joint Chiefs of Staff. Since the official bureaucracy could not resolve the issue, Kennan consulted Presidential adviser, Harry Hopkins. Kennan ended up personally briefing President Roosevelt on the matter, who instructed him, “Now don’t worry about all those people over there [in the Pentagon]. This is very simple . . . I will sit down and write him [Dr. Salazar] a letter. Don’t you worry about these other people in Washington—you take the letter right back to him.”<sup>23</sup> This amusing and uniquely personal Kennan vignette was later recounted in his *Memoirs*.<sup>24</sup>

As a professor and resident diplomat, Kennan was periodically called upon to comment on various blocks of the College curriculum. On March 28, 1947, at the conclusion of a National Security exercise involving the student body, he made an end-of-course presentation on Greece, Turkey, and the Middle East. His remarks came during the time the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine were being formulated. Kennan stressed:

Today you cannot even do good unless you are prepared to exert your share of power, take your share of responsibility, make your share of mistakes, and assume your share of risks. And at the moment we have digested that unpleasant and unaccustomed cud, our military situation will be sounder than it has been for years. For we will then have, at long last, a tangible goal to our foreign policy, an organic connection between military strength and political action, and a strong hope that our armed establishment may play its true role as a deterrent to aggression and as a nucleus of national and international confidence, rather than the sorry one of the fire department called too late, and with inadequate equipment, to extinguish conflagrations which never should have broken out in the first place.<sup>25</sup>

On May 6, 1947, Kennan lectured on “Problems of US Foreign Policy after Moscow,” referring to the recently concluded

Conference of Foreign Ministers in Moscow. At this time the world was deeply involved in postwar economic recovery and transition. Kennan presented his view of the Kremlin's future economic plans based on perceived economic conditions in the US and Western Europe. Clearly Kennan's focus had broadened as he began to deal with US foreign policy on a global basis. This lecture, like others, also had US senators in attendance.

In his final lecture of the academic year on June 18, 1947, given after he had departed for full-time assignment to the Policy Planning Staff, Kennan reflected that his War College assignment "has given me much more than you suspect." He summarized the period with a cautionary note:

In retrospect, those days at the National War College were the days of youth and innocence. Everything seemed very simple. I could sit here in my office and look out at the elm trees and the people playing golf in front of the building and divide the world into neat, geometric patterns, and fix those patterns into lectures which—as it seemed to me, at least—had some logical sequence, some beginning, and some end.<sup>26</sup>

Although Kennan's many other direct contributions to the National War College are largely undocumented, he influenced the ideas that would be employed in defending our nation for decades to come. Time to think, write, and study proved to be a luxury that would not be his again until he left government service and returned to Princeton in 1953.

Despite his demanding schedule at the State Department, Kennan returned to lecture at the National War College in the fall of 1947. The last four lectures in this volume—three of which Kennan gave "off-the-cuff"—are from this period. His assessments, updated by his State Department experience, were cogent and insightful. In his lecture of October 6, 1947, on Soviet diplomacy he said:

I think [the Soviets] realize that if the Communist movement ever began to collapse in the satellite areas, the infection might spread into Russia itself, and that in any case it would deal such a blow to their prestige that they would be put back into the same position of relative isolation they were in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>27</sup>

Collapse of the Communist systems in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary in 1989 indeed challenged the basic political structure of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

## THE LITERARY STYLE

Kennan's National War College lectures are significant not only for their content, but for their literary style and rhetorical merit. Recall that when the lectures were written—late 1946 through 1947—George Kennan was not yet the award-winning author whose name is instantly recognized today. His first book would not be published until four years later.<sup>28</sup> Yet Kennan's characteristic, powerful literary style, or at least the early flowering of it, sounds clearly in much of this prose.

The lecture manuscripts in the War College archives, which are the basis for this book, were verbatim transcriptions of the lectures as spoken by Kennan (with the obvious exception of the one unpublished paper). They required little editing in preparation for this collection. The fact that they generally read so smoothly and persuasively is a tribute to the literary ability of their author. Because the lectures, and especially the post-lecture discussions, were spoken communication, a modicum of stylistic editing was required to rein in the sometimes rambling language common to speech. However, wherever possible, we preserved Kennan's original words and phrasing.

Because they were all spoken and generally unedited in the manuscript form we found them, the lectures are all the more remarkable for their well organized, lucid, and often powerful prose. Kennan usually spoke from prepared scripts or notes, but question-and-answer exchanges after the lectures were spontaneous; and we know from Kennan and the transcriptions themselves that five of the lectures, mostly later ones given after he had left for his State Department post, were given "off the cuff," in Kennan's phrase. For example, in his lecture of September 18, 1947, Kennan remarks that he was speaking from notes "jotted down on an envelope" late the night before when he got home from the State Department. Given his busy schedule—teaching at the War College and directing a staff at

the State Department, while maintaining an active speaking schedule—we can imagine that Kennan had little chance to go back and polish the lecture transcripts; his editorial changes, in point of fact, appear on only a few pages.

From his *Memoirs* and our conversations with him, we know that Kennan's Foreign Service assignments had not, at that time, permitted him to write for a broad audience. At the new National War College, Kennan had the chance to reach a larger audience. As Kennan told us, he did not know how good (or bad) a writer he was when he arrived at the War College in the late summer of 1946.<sup>29</sup> Most of the writing he had done in the Foreign Service—official cables and memorandums—was intended for just a small number of readers; further, responses to such writing were presumably more concerned with content than writing style. Kennan laments here and there in the lectures, mixing humor with resignation, that his cables usually received little or no response from Washington. For example, a dispatch sent from Portugal to Washington "produced the peculiar and profound sort of silence that is made only by the noise of a diplomatic dispatch hitting the Department's files."<sup>30</sup>

Despite the limited audience and lack of feedback, Kennan's writing style was quite developed by this time. Many of his cables were quite distinctive, for example, dispatches written from Prague in 1938–39.<sup>31</sup> The Long Telegram is notable for its persuasive style. And we know from recent publication of Kennan's *Sketches from a Life* that his private writings were quite sophisticated.<sup>32</sup> Further, Kennan commented that some of his papers written privately for Ambassador Harriman elicited comments on their style.<sup>33</sup> Thus, by the time of his War College writings, Kennan was already a polished writer.

At the College Kennan was tasked to articulate his thoughts and experiences into formal lessons for presentation to a bright, inquisitive audience. As he recalled in an interview, this experience provided the discipline for honing his ideas on foreign policy.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps it also provided the discipline for fine-tuning his already sophisticated writing ability. In the classroom environment, Kennan could use the students as sounding boards for both his thinking and writing. Such speculation aside, his voluminous writings at the War College were impressive, and, given the time and opportunity, he would soon produce a classic work on American diplomacy.

To read Kennan's prose is infinitely better than reading about it, but a few comments here may help the reader more fully appreciate his style.

It has a style that one might call "old-fashioned"—but in a grand and eloquent manner, a quality readers rarely find today. The writing is usually formal and sometimes complex, but always comprehensible. Kennan's prose reflects his thinking, for it is always logical, well organized, parallel, and most of all, crafted. The grammar and syntax, often consisting of compound sentences and multiple, subordinate clauses, are nevertheless balanced, precise, and correct. And the prose by no means consists entirely of such complicated forms. Kennan explains abstract concepts by generous use of concrete, Anglo-Saxon language; long sentences are offset and complemented by short, punchy ones.

As represented in these lectures, Kennan's writing style is also distinctly rhetorical—rhetorical in the positive sense of the word. Throughout, the reader will find ample use of illustration, example, classical literary allusion, analogy, metaphor, rhetorical schemes, and other figures of speech employed to drive home points. These techniques range from the extended anecdote—the frustrations of managing his Pennsylvania farm compared with the problems of planning foreign policy for the State Department—to the simple visual image—an errant Party member is disciplined indirectly by his superiors, not by being "hit on the head from the top," but by being "kicked on the shins from below," or, explaining the motives for some Soviet demands on the West as "little more than a boyish curiosity to see what will happen if you poke the animal in that particular place."<sup>35</sup>

The oratorical quality of these lectures is another striking characteristic. They were, of course, delivered as spoken lectures, and the reader might read some passages aloud to hear this oratorical quality. Even if only sounded out in one's mind, much of the text exudes a power, pace, and rhythm which is oratorical, even poetic and occasionally philosophical:

The war also revealed the Kremlin leaders not as supermen, but as very ordinary people, fallible, mortal, fearful for their own power and their own safety, able leaders to be sure in a war of survival, but ordinary men nevertheless, susceptible like the rest of us to the ravages of disease and old age, and with no answers to any of the great riddles of humanity, the riddles of birth and

love and ambition and death which have accompanied man from the beginning of civilization.<sup>36</sup>

Kennan achieves effective results by frequent use of devices such as repetition, questions, indirection, audience flattery, humor and self-depreciation, illustration. The endings of lectures, for example, often use the device of repetition to build to a climax and finish with a flourish. He repeatedly uses an "If we do this . . . Then this follows" technique to great rhetorical effect. For one who had limited public speaking experience prior to this time, Kennan shows a deft command of rhetoric and oratory. Kennan's ability to persuade with words—surely a key factor behind the influence he has wielded over the years—is previewed here.

Kennan makes few explicit comments in the lectures about language or writing itself. His immersion in a military environment apparently had no adverse effects on his language, even though there must have been an abundance of military jargon in use. In his January 24, 1947 paper, he discusses how Soviet leaders are constrained by the jargon of Marxist ideology. He did, apparently early in his career, delight in the use of language; in a lecture recounting his early days in the Russia, he tells how he and his colleagues passed the time (and improved their Russian language skills) by composing hypothetical *Pravda* editorials.<sup>37</sup> And he does express an explicit sensitivity to word meanings and connotations in two lectures:

People have different ideas of what policy means. I don't like the word myself as one who heads a staff which contains policy in its title. To a lot of people in this country it means something defensive. It means a question of principle, a question of what you do if the other fellow does something else.<sup>38</sup>

Kennan reaffirmed a sensitivity to word connotations in our interview with him. Discussing the title of this book, *Measures Short of War*, he felt it quite adequate, but then expressed a dislike of titles in general. All titles, he said, were in a sense insufficient, a type of necessary evil; because words are only approximations of ideas we wish to express, titles, while they convey an idea, also limit that idea.

One wonders what effect the tag that Kennan used and came to be applied to his thinking on the Soviet Union—"containment"—had on the controversy surrounding the meaning of that idea. While quotable and handily summarizing Kennan's thinking, the term also

grossly oversimplified the complexity of his concept, a complexity evident throughout these lectures. Like all words, no single word could exactly capture all the shades and breadth and depth of meaning Kennan intended. And, like all words, "containment" suggested some connotations that actually misrepresented his ideas; the word conjures up physical, geographical, military, and even sports connotations. These associations were not intended nor are they appropriate for this complex concept. The word caught on perhaps because it appealed to the American character, with our predilection for simplicity, directness, the "quick fix." (For a recent example, recall the sports terminology that pervaded reporting and discussion of the 1990-91 Persian Gulf conflict.) "Containment" lent itself to political abuse as a pat solution to a complex problem. So the term was a mixed blessing: while it was a graphic, catchy title, it also imperfectly described and ultimately did an injustice to the complexity and subtlety of Kennan's ideas.

Without exaggerating the importance of the term itself in the continuing debate over what containment meant, one can not help but wonder what might have happened if this particular term had not become identified with Kennan's thinking.

These lectures—deep, complex, and subtle in their substance and literary style—stimulate the imagination. Occurring as they did at a seminal point in Kennan's intellectual career, they are a fascinating glimpse into the early writing that would evolve to earn acclaim for its author.

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We hope this brief introduction sets the following lectures in useful historical context. Given the recent revolutionary changes in US-Soviet relations, the reader must constantly remind himself of the immediate postwar context of these writings. We also call attention to the explanatory notes that begin most of the lectures: these notes contain recent and uniquely insightful comments by Professor Kennan himself. We leave the task of critical analysis to the historians and Kennanologists. The debate about what Kennan meant, which has continued for over four decades, has actually intensified; at least three unofficial biographies have been published within the past three years.<sup>39</sup>

This volume is designed to help complete the fabric of George Kennan's prolific writings, not all of which are accessible to scholars and the public at large. Scholars await the availability of his private papers for their as yet unknown revelations. We hope *Measures Short of War* will stimulate readers to delve further into the study of the ideas of George F. Kennan, a complex, sometimes misunderstood, but perceptive intellectual and shaper of American foreign policy.

THE EDITORS

## NOTES

1. George F. Kennan, "Origins of Containment" in Terry Deibel and John Lewis Gaddis, eds., *Containment: Concept and Policy* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1986), p. 23.
2. An indication of the prestige and reputation accorded to the new National War College lectures was the unannounced attendance of President Harry Truman at an afternoon lecture on 28 February 1949, less than three years after the inception of the college. Truman was no stranger to the National War College. As a US senator he had attended lectures at the old Army War College. See the *New York Times*, March 1, 1949.
3. In a typical news account, *Time* magazine reported, "Because of the level from which they are picked, the graduates . . . will be the generals, admirals and ministers of tomorrow—the Marshalls, Kings, Arnolds, Eisenhowers and ambassadors of decades to come." (February 18, 1946, p. 24) The Baltimore (Morning) *Sun* stated the war college "promises to do more than anything else on the horizon to bring into being the composite type of warrior—informed on matters of land, sea, air, combat, supplies, training, and on diplomacy as well." (See "Select Army-Navy-Air College Being Organized," March 6, 1946.) The innovative nature of the endeavor was recalled many years later by Kennan himself, who wrote that "the entire enterprise, particularly in that first year, was largely experimental . . . we would have to work out many of the problems by trial and error." (Letter from George F. Kennan to Colonel Andre, National War College, October 24, 1984. National Defense University Library Special Collections)
4. George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925–1950* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), p. 307.
5. See, for example, George F. Kennan, *The Nuclear Delusion: Soviet-American Relations in the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon, 1982).
6. Kennan's life is well documented. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for the first volume of his autobiographical *Memoirs 1925–1950*, which contains a chapter on his tenure at the National War College. (He had been previously awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his first volume of *Soviet-American Relations, 1917–1920: Russia Leaves the War*.) Volume II, *Memoirs 1950–1963*, was published in 1972.
7. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925–1950*, p. 309.
8. Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 423. For analysis of the Kennan-Lippmann dialogue see Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 101–109, 136–137. Also, see David Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 113–119.
9. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925–1950*, p. 325. See also John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 25–26.

10. Interview with Professor Kennan, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, March 2, 1989.
11. Kennan in Deibel and Gaddis, *Containment*, p. 31. See also *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1987), p. 890.
12. Walter Lippmann's critiques of Kennan's Mr. X article, originally in a series of columns in the *New York Herald Tribune*, were later published in an article in *Foreign Affairs*. Lippmann's article on "The Cold War" was reprinted in the spring 1987 *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 869-884.
13. Deibel and Gaddis, *Containment*, p. 722.
14. The collected George F. Kennan papers at the Seeley Mudd Library, Princeton University, contain the National War College lectures in boxes 16 and 17. They are listed in the 79-page "Bibliography of Published Writings and Unpublished Addresses and Lectures of George F. Kennan" (May 1974) with a supplement.
15. For a comprehensive list of Kennan's literary and academic honors see Barton Gellman, *Contending with Kennan* (New York: Praeger, 1984), p. 15.
16. George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy 1900-1950* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951), which won the Freedom House Award for 1951.
17. George F. Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).
18. Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown and Company, 1960, 1961.
19. Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, University of Chicago Press, 1984.
20. Deibel and Gaddis, *Containment*, p. 722.
21. Stanley Hoffman, "Mr. X," *The New Republic*, 2 October 1989, pp. 35-38.
22. "Measures Short of War," NWC Lecture, September 16, 1946.
23. "Problems of Diplomatic-Military Collaboration," NWC Lecture, March 7, 1947.
24. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, pp. 142-163.
25. "Comments on the National Security Problem," NWC Lecture, March 28, 1947.
26. "Planning and Foreign Policy," NWC Lecture, June 18, 1947.
27. "Soviet Diplomacy," NWC Lecture, October 6, 1947.
28. George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy 1900-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).
29. Interview with Professor Kennan, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, March 2, 1989.
30. "Problems of Diplomatic-Military Collaboration," NWC Lecture, March 7, 1947.
31. Letter, John Lewis Gaddis to Giles Harlow and George Maerz, May 24, 1990, p. 22 of inclosure.
32. Kennan's *Sketches from a Life* (Pantheon, 1989), based on some sixty years of his diary entries, was widely and favorably reviewed for its literary quality. See, for example, "The Last Wise Man: Sketches from a Life," the cover story in *The Atlantic*, April 1989. Charles Truehart called the sketches

"shards of a literary calling renounced, repeatedly, over a lifetime. Like his prize-winning memoirs, which also drew heavily from Kennan's diaries, "Sketches from a Life" even includes snatches of poetry and fiction." ("George Kennan & the Heart of a Wise Man," *The Washington Post*, April 4, 1989, p. E1)

33. Letter, George F. Kennan to Giles Harlow, May 24, 1990, p. 22 of inclosure.

34. Interview with Professor Kennan, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, March 2, 1989.

35. "Planning of Foreign Policy," NWC Lecture, June 18, 1947; "The Structure of Internal Power in the USSR," NWC Lecture, October 10, 1946; and "Contemporary Soviet Diplomacy," NWC Lecture, October 22, 1946.

36. "The Background of Current Russian Diplomatic Moves," NWC Lecture, December 10, 1946.

37. "Formulation of Policy in the USSR," NWC Lecture, September 18, 1947.

38. "Formulation of Policy in the USSR," NWC Lecture, September 18, 1947. Also, see "What Is Policy?" December 18, 1947.

39. See, for example: Walter L. Hixson, *George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); and David Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

**MEASURES SHORT OF WAR**

**THE GEORGE F. KENNAN LECTURES  
AT THE  
NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE, 1946–47**

*September 16, 1946*

## **MEASURES SHORT OF WAR (DIPLOMATIC)**

THIS MORNING WE CONSIDER THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SOVEREIGN governments and the measures that they employ when they deal with each other. The main devices with which states deal with each other are divided into two broad categories: *measures of pressure* and *measures of adjustment*. "Adjustment" ought to come first and "pressure" afterwards, because that is the order which predominates when governments try to influence each other. Our task this morning is to examine the means governments have to pursue these purposes short of reaching for their weapons and shooting it out.

I don't know whether the full importance of this question will be immediately apparent to all of you. For that reason, I would ask, in the light of recent events and diplomacy since the termination of hostilities, what might be the most important subject for study by this government in the field of foreign affairs? We need a very, very careful appraisal of the means short of war which this country has at its disposal for meeting the problems it faces today. Obviously, the success or failure of our efforts to meet those problems in a peaceful way depends on the weapons with which we are equipped. I mention that in order to show you that this is not an abstract problem of textbook international law, but is really a crucial point in our foreign policy today.

The standard textbooks on international law invariably contain a section devoted to this very subject, under various headings. Sometimes they are called "measures short of war" or at other times, "modes of non-hostile redress" (the redress of grievances that may arise between states) or "measures for the amicable settlements of disputes." The measures are fairly uniform as shown in this list of traditional "measures short of war."

The headings are self-explanatory. You all understand the amicable ones without any further discussion: negotiations, good offices, mediation and conciliation, and international commissions of inquiry. The general idea was, when a country got into trouble in its foreign relations, it tried out the amicable measures first, then went on to the non-amicable measures. There is some confusion about this whole subject which I am going to try to straighten out. The main thing to note about these traditional "measures short of war" is that the lists

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DIPLOMATIC MEASURES OF ADJUSTMENT  
FOR THE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES  
OR FOR THE  
PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

*AMICABLE*

Non-Judicial  
Negotiations  
Good Offices, Mediation, and Conciliation  
International Commissions of Inquiry

Judicial Means  
Arbitration  
Adjudication  
Charter of the United Nations

*NON-AMICABLE*

Severage of Diplomatic Relations  
Retortion and Retaliation  
Reprisals  
Embargo  
Non-Intercourse  
Pacific Blockade

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were drawn up with the idea of the *adjudication* or the *adjustment* of disputes, and not primarily with the idea of exercising pressure on other states. That is not to say that certain amicable measures have not been used for purposes of pressure at one time or another. In general, the international law authorities who drew up these lists thought they were drawing up lists of measures which you could use to *adjust* disputes. They had in mind a whole set of international relations which prevailed in the days of our fathers and our grandfathers and to a large extent before the war, but which unfortunately prevail to a lesser extent today.

The problems we are faced with today in the international arena are not problems just of the adjustment of disputes. They are problems caused by the *conflict* of interests between great *centers of power* and *ideology* in this world. They are problems of the measures short of war which great powers use to exert pressure on one another

for the attainment of their ends. In that sense, they are questions of the measures at the disposal of states not for the adjustment of disputes, but for the promulgation of power. These are two quite different purposes. Governments are absorbed today not with trying to settle disputes between themselves, but with getting something out of somebody else, so they often promulgate a policy which goes very, very far. Governments have to use pressure on a wide scale; and therefore these traditional categories are not often applicable to conditions today.

There has always been a question whether some of the measures were applicable anyway. Some of the non-amicable means were regarded by many people as useful depending on who took the measure and against whom it was taken. Thomas Jefferson, for example, called into question very strongly the institution of reprisals, saying reprisals never failed to start a war against any state that was strong enough to resist them. Measures like these remind me of some of the things we used to do to each other when we were kids. I remember one trick was to get your finger under a fellow's tie and yank it out around from under his vest. If the fellow was smaller than you, it was funny. But if he was bigger, it was another matter; it was neither funny nor a measure short of war. It led immediately to hostilities. That is true to a certain degree of all these so-called non-amicable measures. You have to watch your step. Many people in the past have wondered whether they could properly be classified as measures for the adjustment of disputes.

These diplomatic measures are not applicable to the world climate created by the emergence of the totalitarian state. I want to emphasize that this is not just a thesis of mine. It could be challenged—and you will probably find it challenged—by professors of international law and some students of Soviet affairs. They would say that we *can* settle our affairs and we *can* handle our dealings with the Soviet Union on the basis of traditional international law. These people disagree not only with me but also with the foremost Soviet authorities on international law. To demonstrate that point, let me quote one or two passages from the works of prominent Soviet jurists.

The first passage is from what I believe was the first major Soviet textbook of international law. Written long ago by a man named Korovin, it set forth the basic Soviet structure for traditional

conceptions of international law as we have known them in Western countries. Korovin wrote:

The creators and theorists of the Soviet structure have involuntarily been inclined to a highly skeptical estimate of the modern juridical standards of international society, seeing in them at best the platonic aspirations of bourgeois wishful thinking and at worst the juridical primer of international coercion.

That plain statement of skepticism shows the Russian view of our international law from the beginning. Of course Korovin did admit that they had to accept the existence of a certain modicum of international law in Russia, because, he said,

Socialism is not yet prepared to conquer capitalism completely. We are not yet strong enough. We must therefore look forward to an interim period of some years in which we have to live side by side with capitalists. During that period, our dealings with them will have to be governed by some norm, and we will acknowledge that international law has some part to play.

In his treatment of that modicum of international law which he thought they were going to have to observe, Korovin didn't make any mention of measures short of war. Why? Because in his view, all measures of the Soviet State, internal or external, were part of the struggle against capitalism. You couldn't distinguish any given set of them from any other set and say these were measures short of war and those others were not. "The very existence of the Soviet State is the strongest possible denial of the whole bourgeois structure as such and a constant threat to its peace of mind." There he didn't exaggerate, in the light of experience. In fact, he said—and this is a characteristic communist phrase—"It begins to look as though the Babylonian tower of a single world had crashed to the ground." (He was in agreement with Mr. Wallace on that.) He continued: "... The tongues had become confused and the key to mutual understanding had been lost irrevocably." And he came to the following conclusion: "All the association on the basis of intellectual unity (that is, of a solidarity of ideas)"—by that Korovin meant between agencies within the socialist world of the Soviet Union and the capitalist world

outside—"must be considered as out of the question and the pattern of juridical conceptions which corresponds to such association becomes null and void. . . ."

This major Soviet theory on international law lasted for some years, but by the middle 1930s there was a completely changed set of conditions. In the first place, Nazi Germany had appeared on the horizon. The minds of the people in Moscow became absorbed in how they were going to protect their own skins. The Soviet Union joined the League of Nations and Litvinov was in Geneva putting forth one proposal after another for the definition of the aggressor nation, implying by his whole policy there could be effective measures short of war. So for that reason, there had to be a thorough purge in the Soviet legal world.

Mr. Korovin was replaced by a Mr. Pashukanis. In his own book on international law Pashukanis grudgingly recognized that measures short of war did have a certain position in the relation between states, although he couldn't find much to say for them. "The arsenal of means for the prevention of armed conflict," he wrote, "is scanty in the highest degree and little effective; the practice is poor and offers no comfort." Now all this he attributed to the classic Soviet thesis that the cause of war is inherent in the capitalist system. "If capitalism is retained," he wrote, "there is—and can be—no means of preventing war."

I will quote Pashukanis at length because this is the meat of the current Soviet view on the question of measures short of war.

However, the inevitability of wars under capitalism does not at all mean that every specific dispute between imperialist powers must necessarily be decided by war. Not all imperialistic states seek a solution by war in every concrete instance and at every given time. War is attended by no small risks, both external and internal. A serious war calls for prolonged economic, financial, diplomatic, and purely military preparation. As long as this preparation is in progress, the most aggressive state is obliged to resort to non-military methods of solving and adjusting conflicts even with its intended adversaries. And finally, the active search for non-military means of solving conflicts and of demonstrating their love for peace is essential to imperialist governments as a means of quieting the popular masses, disarming their vigilance, and thus catching them unaware at the moment when the imperialists decide to unleash the war. . . . Even in those cases

where the ideological preparation of war bears an openly aggressive character, when bloodshed and coercion are highly recommended in pamphlets and newspapers, when a zoological nationalism is announced to be the highest virtue—even in these cases the imperialist governments cannot dispense with the mask of devotion to the cause of peace and with the corresponding maneuvering in the international arena.

All this shows you that the totalitarian states themselves (I could cite similar passages from the works of Nazi jurists) repudiate the traditional measures short of war. At least they repudiate them as bona fide means of easing the relations between countries. In the totalitarian view, all imperialists harbor designs on the happiness and independence of other peoples and these measures short of war are only cynical tricks, devices of deceit, designed to throw off other governments and their people while they prepare for ugly operations. While Pashukanis didn't say so, he leaves us no choice but to conclude that, in his opinion, the Soviet State too would be naive if it failed to take full advantage of the rosy prospects which these measures hold out as a means of deceiving the enemy and disguising your own preparations.

Now let's go on to measures of pressure, as distinct from adjustment, which can and are being used in the world as we know it today.

The first thing that strikes me about measures of pressure is that they differ significantly in the case of totalitarian and democratic states. It seems to me it would be ludicrous and almost indecent to try to list the things the totalitarian states do. In the first place, it would take a very rash man to try to fathom the bag of tricks that any normal dictator had at his disposal and it would take a rather low mind to enjoy it. The varieties of skulduggery which make up the repertoire of the totalitarian government are just about as unlimited as human ingenuity itself, and just about as unpleasant. For, as you know, no holds are barred. There are no rules of the game. They can do anything that they think is in their interests. If you want some examples of measures that they are capable of taking, I can only mention from my own personal experience that they include persuasion, intimidation, deceit, corruption, penetration, subversion, horse-trading, bluffing, psychological pressure, economic pressure, seduction, blackmail, theft, fraud, rape, battle, murder, and sudden death.

Don't mistake that for a complete list. Those are only a few stray suggestions.

Totalitarian governments have at their disposal every measure capable of influencing other governments as a whole, or their members, or their peoples behind their back; and in the choice and application of these measures they are restrained by no moral inhibitions, by no domestic public opinion to speak of, and not even by any serious considerations of consistency and intellectual dignity. Their choice is limited by only one thing, and that is their own estimate of the consequences to themselves.

The question then arises as to what measures the *democratic* states have at their disposal for resisting totalitarian pressure and the extent to which these measures can be successful. That is a tremendous question, not one on which I can give you a complete answer. I don't have a complete answer. But I do want to indicate the main categories of the measures which democratic states do have at their disposal. I will then indicate the extent and under which conditions the measures can be adequate.

The first category of measures lies in the *psychological* field. Tomorrow morning you are going to hear Joe Barnes, the foreign editor of the *Herald Tribune*, who had a prominent position in the Office of War Information (OWI) during the war. There is, though, one point I'd like to make about the psychological category: it would be a mistake to consider psychological measures as anything separate from the rest of diplomacy. They consist not only of direct informational activity like propaganda, or radio broadcast, or distribution of magazines. They consist also of the study and understanding of the psychological effects of anything which the modern state does in the war, both internal and external.

Democracies—ours especially—were pretty bad at psychological measures in the past, because so many of our diplomatic actions have been taken not in pursuance of any great overall policy, but hit-or-miss in response to pressures exercised on our government by individual pressure groups at home. Now those pressures usually had little to do with the interests of the United States. They weren't bound together in any way. The psychological effects of the measures we have taken in response to individual pressure groups have been mostly contradictory and confusing, and have been inclined to cancel out each other on many occasions.

It is only recently and probably in consequence of the experiences of the last 8 or 10 years that our government has begun to appreciate the fact that everything it does of any importance at all has a psychological effect abroad as well as at home. It is only recently that we have begun to try, although not always very successfully, to group these psychological factors into a pattern which will prove a point and serve a purpose.

The second category of weapons short of war that we have at our disposal today is *economic*. Here, I'd like to give you a word of warning: it would be a mistake to overrate the usefulness of the economic weapons when they are used as a means of counterpressure against great totalitarian states, especially when those states are themselves economically powerful. This is particularly true of the Soviet Union, because the Soviet leaders consistently place politics ahead of economics on every occasion when there is a show-down. The Soviets would unhesitatingly resort to a policy of complete economic autarchy rather than compromise any of their political principles. I don't mean they are totally unamenable to economic pressure. Economic pressure can have an important cumulative effect when exercised over a long period of time and in a wise way toward the totalitarian state. But I don't think it can have any immediate, incisive, or spectacular results with a major totalitarian country such as Russia. Russians are aware of the dangers if they let themselves fall into a position of economic dependence on other countries. I assure you they are not going to be caught on that hook if they can avoid it.

Economic measures *can* be of value with relation to the satellites of the totalitarian state. Those satellites, as it happens, are usually countries which are not capable of advancing very far by themselves. It also happens that totalitarian powers as a rule seem to be absorbed with the mobilization of their own resources for military purposes. They have relatively little to offer in many cases to the satellite countries economically. As long as the democratic powers continue to possess by far the greater part of the world productive capacity, they can make it highly uncomfortable, if they want to, for any smaller power to be outside their economic orbit. To the extent that they exercise economic pressure against such smaller powers, they ought to be able to produce discontent, trouble, and dissension within the totalitarian orbit.

But economic pressure is very tough on the satellite country in question. That brings up a difficult, almost philosophical problem, to

which I have not yet heard a full answer. The problem appears every time a big state dominates a little one. What do you do to the little one? Do you try to help it or damage it? If you help it, you run the risk of helping the totalitarian state which controls it. If you damage it, you run the risk of psychological repercussions in the little country and of throwing it politically into the arms of the big state trying to control it. We had the problem during the war in Lisbon where I was in charge of our Legation. The sending of food parcels to Belgium and countries under German domination posed many questions and we argued them all through the war. We knew, on the one hand, sending food parcels would help the Germans correct the balance of their food supply. On the other hand, sending food might have an important psychological effect on the Belgians.

The same problem occurs all over again with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). The heart of the UNRRA problem is whether we should help people who are in the Russian orbit. I believe you cannot help anyone within the power orbit of a totalitarian state without helping the whole political program of that totalitarian state. If you don't want to help the totalitarian state, you should not extend any aid within its orbit. That is a personal view, and one upon which Mr. Truman has not passed, in case any of you are in doubt.

On the strictly political measures short of war, I only mention one category because it, in my opinion, is our major political weapon short of war. That measure is the cultivation of solidarity with other like-minded nations on every given issue of our foreign policy. A couple of years ago, when we first had discussions with the Soviet authorities in Moscow about the possibility of setting up another United Nations Organization, I'll admit that I was very skeptical. I was convinced the Russians were not ready to go into it in the same spirit we were. I was afraid the United Nations might become an excuse rather than a framework for American foreign policy. I was worried it might become a substitute for an absence of a policy. But I am bound to say, in the light of what has happened in the last year, I am very much impressed with the usefulness of the UN to us and to our principles in the world. There are advantages to be gained for us working through it.

Several issues in this last year have been sheer power issues and have vitally affected the strategic interests of this country. Fortunately, they also affect the moral feelings of people everywhere. If

we had attempted to fight these issues out alone, without any organization such as the United Nations through which we could group other people around us in that fight, there is no doubt that this government would have been charged time and time again with power politics. We would have been charged with opposing one imperialism with another. Everyone would have said a plague on *both* your houses. But we are not interested in just American power politics versus Russian power politics. We are seeking and winning the support of the other United Nations. We have been able to clear our own policies with our own people and with people everywhere and to build a record for good faith which anyone would find hard to challenge. And for that reason, I maintain that the cultivation of such solidarity is one of our strongest and most powerful measures short of war. The United Nations Organization can be used for adjustment—which can also be used as a means of counterpressure—and we should cultivate it very well.

All the measures I have been discussing—economic, psychological, and political—are not strictly diplomatic. Remember that diplomacy isn't anything in a compartment by itself. The stuff of diplomacy is in the entire fabric of our foreign relations with other countries, and it embraces every phase of national power and every phase of national dealing. The only measures I can think of which are strictly diplomatic in character are those involving our representation in other countries. Those can be used for adjustment as well as pressure. For example, the severance of diplomatic relations, one of the non-amicable measures of adjusting disputes, can also be used as a means of pressure. But you don't have to break relations altogether. You can withdraw the chief of mission, reduce your representation, or resort completely to non-intercourse. You can forbid your people to have anything to do with the other country.

The measure which is most usually considered and used is the severance of diplomatic relations. The press often advises our Government to break relations with this government or that government. I am very, very leery of the breaking of diplomatic relations as a means of getting anywhere in international affairs. Severing relations is like playing the Ace of Spades in bridge. You can only use it once. When you play it, you haven't got any more, so your hand is considerably weakened. Breaking relations has the direct disadvantage of sometimes redounding to your own discomfort, because the maintenance of relations between governments has been found to be

generally advantageous to both parties. If you break off relations with another government, the chances are, over the next few years, you are going to find you need relations with that country. Now the other fellow, as the aggrieved party, is usually not in a position to take the initiative in resuming relations, and that means you have to swallow your pride and go to him on your hands and knees and say, "Come on old fellow. Let's make up." That is not anything a government likes to do.

A great deal of confusion has been thrown into this subject today by the distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* recognition. *De jure* means you not only recognize that the other fellow does actually hold power in the country, but you recognize he deserves to hold it. He is the legitimate bearer of power. He belongs in the place of responsibility where he is. By he, I mean the other government. *De facto* relations, on the other hand, are almost an insult. When you recognize someone *de facto*, it means you look at him with a very jaundiced eye. I can't deny, you say to the other government, that you are there, but I am not committing myself on how you got there. A number of us in the State Department feel that this distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* recognition is an invidious one, stemming from the days of monarchs and dynasties. We wish the United States would dispense with it once and for all in its dealings with other countries. We ought to make plain to the world from now on that no American recognition—no American diplomatic relations with *any* regime—bears any thought of US approval or disapproval; we are not committing ourselves, when we deal with anyone, on the legitimacy of their power. We would deal with the devil himself if he held enough of the earth's surface to make it worthwhile for us to do so.

Once we had made that clear, we'd be in a better position. And I'd be very chary of using the severance of diplomatic relations as a means of putting forth American policy. Severance of relations is used by totalitarian states, but only, I have noticed, when they think the other fellow is on the way out. They are giving him the last kick and there is no chance of his getting up again. The Soviet Union broke off relations in 1940 with Norway, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, and France in the belief that the Nazis had the upper hand. There was no chance of those countries coming back and the coast was clear for them to break relations. That time they were wrong about it. They also broke relations in 1943 with the Polish-London

Government which they figured was out for good. And this time they guessed right.

A few other measures which democratic states can take involve control of territory in one's own country, namely the facilities granted to a foreign government. We can limit the number of representatives of a foreign government in this country. We can deny its citizens the right to sojourn here for purposes of business or pleasure. We can deny them our collaboration in cultural or technical matters. They do these things to us all the time; and we can do them ourselves, although these measures are more difficult for us because our controls are not so complete. I know respected colleagues here in the government who would maintain very strongly that we never should take such measures and who would even have us conclude a treaty with the Soviet Union now—a treaty of commerce, navigation, and consular rights—in which we would promise unilaterally not to use such restrictions even though the Russians do on their side. They hope we would impress the Russians with our own good will to such an extent that their behavior would become more civilized. I believe this is just baloney and I cannot go along with it. I would like our government to take the maximum amount of control of all facilities in this country which can benefit foreign states. In the case of those foreign states which we regard as rivals to our power, I would like to see us turn those controls on and off like a faucet, exactly in proportion to the treatment we ourselves get abroad.

These are, in general, the categories and measures I think we have at our disposal.

Now comes the real question. To what extent are these measures adequate to our purposes in the world today? Are they enough to get us what we want without going to war? My own belief is that they are, depending on two main conditions.

The first of these conditions is that we keep up at all times a preponderance of strength in the world. You, as soldiers, realize this necessity as well as I do, so I call your attention to just two points in this respect. First, it is not by any means a question of military strength alone. National strength is a question of political, economic, and moral strength. Above all it is a question of our internal strength; of the health and sanity of our own society. I recall that the game of chess was invented by ancient philosophers to demonstrate to kings they could be no stronger than the subjects whom they ruled. There is a lesson in that for us today. We who are concerned with the devising

of policy in this country should never forget that, in a diplomatic and military sense, we are no stronger than the country we represent. We would be mistaken to start thinking of military factors and diplomatic factors out of context with the country itself. The danger of thinking this way may not seem real, but I have seen that happen in other countries, and I have never seen people fail to suffer from making that mistake. The United States is not strong to the extent that its armed services are strong, or that its diplomacy is brilliant, but to the extent that strength goes beyond the armed services to the root of our society. For that reason, none of us can afford to be indifferent to internal disharmony, dissension, intolerance, and the things that break up the moral and political structure of our society at home.

Another characteristic of strength is that it depends for its effectiveness not only on its existence, but on our readiness to use it at any time if we are pushed beyond certain limits. This does not mean we have to be trigger-happy. It does not mean there is any point in our going around blustering, threatening, waving clubs at people, and telling them if they don't do this or that we are going to drop a bomb on them. Threatening in international affairs is about the most stupid and unnecessary thing I can think of. It is stupid because it very often disrupts the whole logic of our own diplomacy; brings in an element that didn't need to be there; causes the other fellow to adopt an attitude which he needn't adopt; and defeats your own purposes. It is also unnecessary because totalitarian governments—and they are the ones we have in mind—are very apt at making it their business to know exactly just how ready the other fellow is to resort to force and when. There is nothing that interests them more than this one point in the whole pattern of international relationships. They know when we are ready to use force almost sooner than we do. No gestures and no threats are needed on our part to enlighten them on that subject. Therefore, all we really have to do is be strong and be ready to use that strength. We don't need to talk about it. We don't need to broadcast it. The mere fact is enough. Strength is only a question of having the courage of our convictions and of acting accordingly. There is nothing that can equal or replace strength in international relations. Strength overshadows any other measure short of war that anybody can take. We can have the best intelligence, the most brilliant strategy, but if we speak from weakness, from indecision, and from the hope and prayer that the other fellow won't force the issue, we just cannot expect to be successful.

This thought is a hard point to get across with many Americans, so I found out in talking to American audiences. A lot of Americans have it firmly ingrained in their psychology that if you maintain your strength and keep it in the immediate background of your diplomatic action, you are courting further trouble and provoking hostilities. They say, "Don't play with that gun. It might go off." And they insist it is the actual maintenance of armaments that leads to their use. I know few of you have any illusions on that score. I bring it to your attention for use in your discussion with people. I can only tell you that the falseness of that outlook is demonstrated not only by the experience of the military but by the experience of diplomats as well.

Our pacifists are incapable of understanding that the maintenance of strength in the democratic nations is actually the most peaceful of all the measures we can take short of war, because the greater your strength, the less likely you are ever going to use it. They fail to understand that in the world we know today, the question is never whether you are going to take a stand; the question is when and where you are going to take that stand. If I had anything to say about the current debate, I would ask the American liberals who want us to go easy on the Russians this question: "Where do you expect us to draw the line? Is it not better that it be drawn at a point where American emotions are not too violently engaged, rather than at a point nearer home where you are going to get a more violent reaction on the part of our people which nobody can control?" The fact is that no totalitarian dictator will rest unless he has satisfied his own totalitarian conscience that he has prodded you right to the limit of the danger zone of your patience. What this boils down to, I am afraid, is that for great nations, as for individuals today, there is no real security and there is no alternative to living dangerously. And when people say, "My God, we might get into a war!" the only thing I know to say is, "Exactly so." The price of peace has become the willingness to sacrifice it to a good cause and that is all there is to it.

A second condition must be met if our measures short of war are going to be effective: we must select measures and use them not hit-or-miss as the moment may seem to demand, but in accordance with a pattern of *grand strategy* no less concrete and no less consistent than that which governs our actions in war. It is my own conviction that we must go even further than that and must cease to have separate patterns of measures—one pattern for peace and one pattern

for war. Rather, we must select them according to the purpose we are pursuing and classify them that way. We must work out a general plan of what the United States wants in this world and pursue that plan with all the measures at our disposal, depending on what is indicated by the circumstances. It simply means that we have to learn to reclassify our weapons not primarily by whether they are military in nature or measures short of war, but by the purposes for which we are going to use them. Once we have learned to do this, then we can select a whole arsenal of measures for dealing with those states which treat us as good neighbors in a friendly and respectful way. That category of measures will consist solely of measures short of war much like those I have discussed. For the other states which do not choose to treat us that way, for governments whose aspirations insist on striking at the heart of our society, we have to select a different arsenal of measures short of war and otherwise.

My personal conviction is that if we keep up our strength, if we are ready to use it, and if we select the measures short of war with the necessary wisdom and coordination, then these measures short of war will be all the ones that we will ever have to use to secure the prosperous and safe future of the people of this country.

*October 10, 1946*

**STRUCTURE OF INTERNAL POWER  
IN THE U.S.S.R.**

**A**NY DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE STRUCTURE OF INTERNAL POWER in the Soviet Union must bear in mind the main geographic and administrative breakdown of the Soviet Union. In the federal state of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the central government is at the top. In the USSR there are 16 constituent republics, of which Russia is the largest and the Ukraine certainly the next largest.

The central government is the first level of administration. The constituent governments consist of 45 units known as "oblasts," 25 of which are in the Ukraine. Oblasts, similar to American states in size and in population, constitute really the third important level of administration in the Soviet Union. Oblasts are actually more important than the governments of the constituent republics, which are mostly for show. The oblast governments are the real thing.

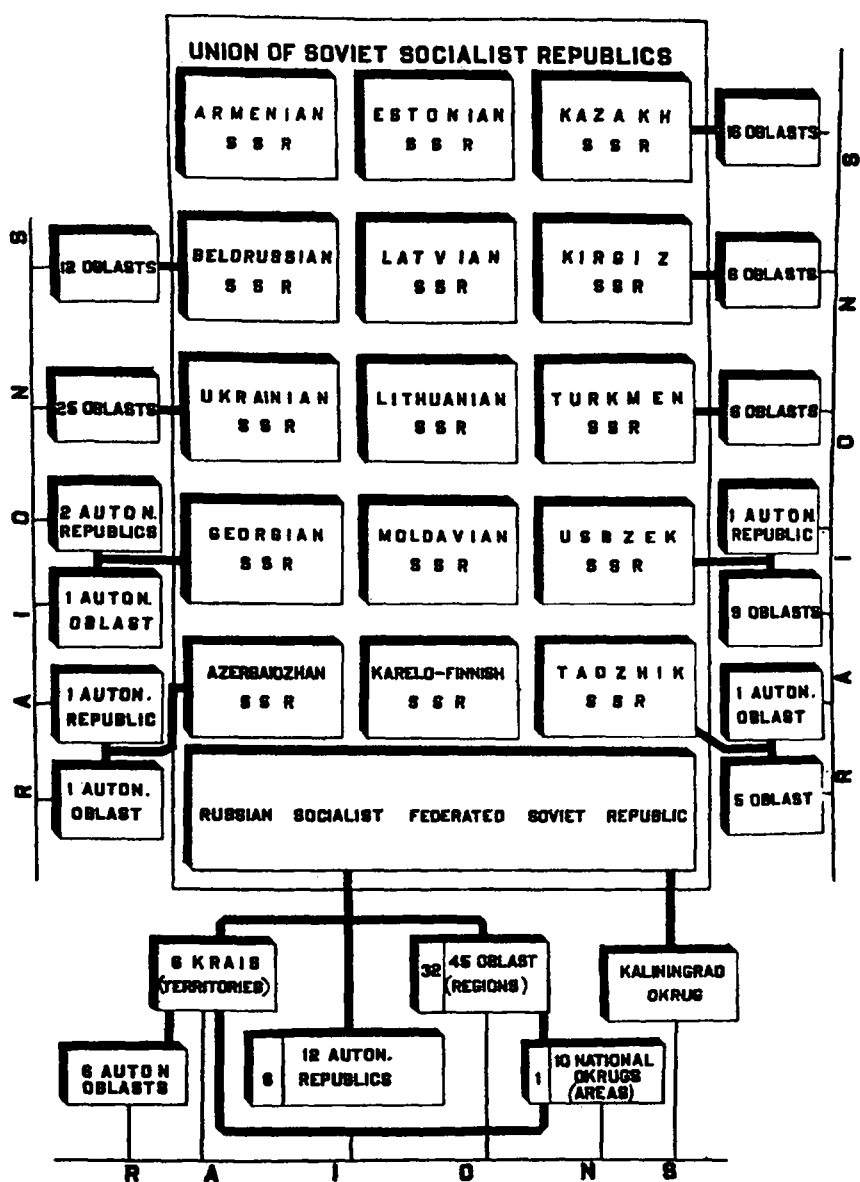
Certain other units, known as "krais," are autonomous republics. There are special reasons why they are called "autonomous," but those reasons are not of importance and you can think of them as belonging on the oblast level.

The fourth level of administration consists of the counties and the towns called "raions." The raions are only the rural counties, but the towns are also on the same status.

Those are the four levels—the central government, the constituent republics, the oblasts, and the raions or towns—to keep in mind when you turn your attention to the details of the structure of the government and party.

With that background I will go right into the structure of the Soviet Government as distinct from the Communist Party and other agencies of power. First, I want to take a glance backward at the development of the Soviet governmental structure. Before the revolution, it was one of the tenets of Leninism—one of the things that Lenin preached to his followers—that when they finally succeeded in overthrowing the power of Czardom in Russia, they would have to smash to bits the Czarist apparatus of power. Some of his followers said, "No, let's take it over and put communists in where Czarist officials were before." Lenin said, "No, that won't work. You can't just put new oil in the old bottle. You have to smash the old bottle and put something entirely different in its place."

The revolution rather crept up on these people. It came faster than they thought. And when they did succeed in seizing power in



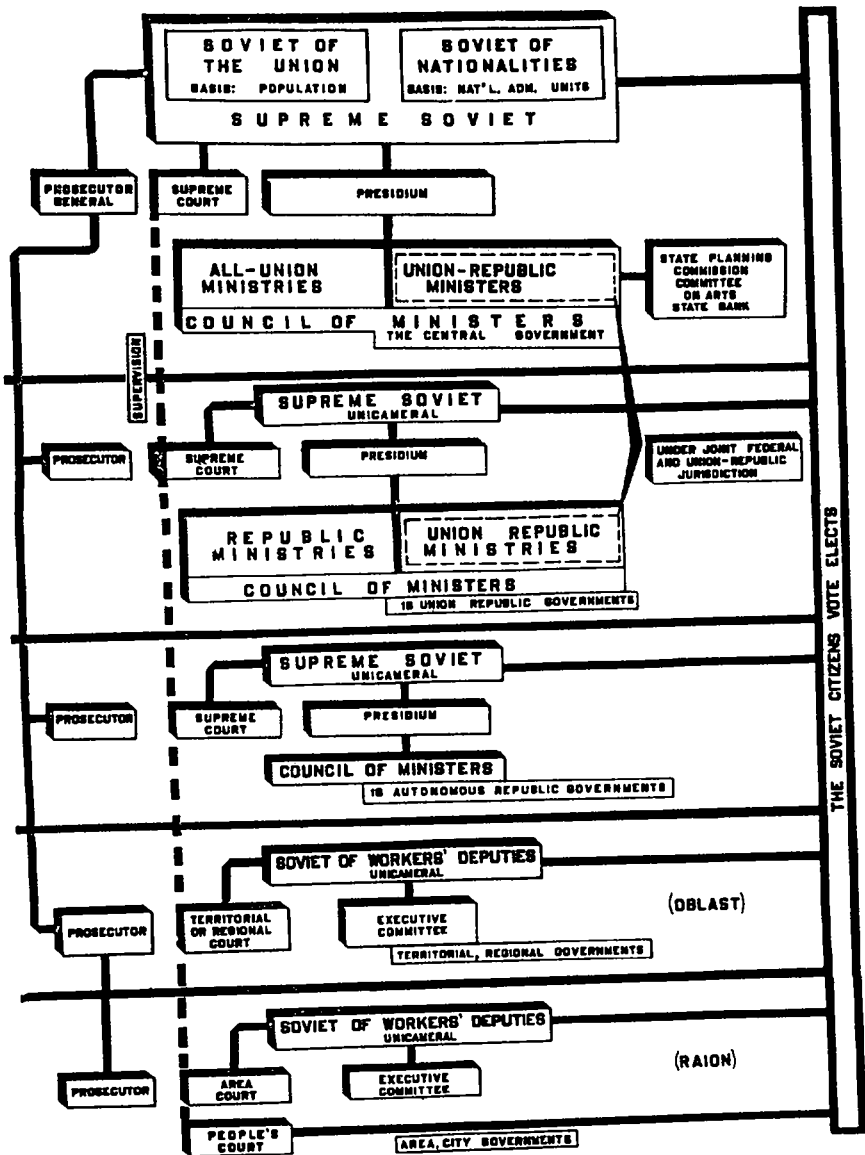
Source: This and the other three charts in this lecture are photocopies of the original briefing charts used by Kennan in his presentation. Copies are from the National Defense University Library, Special Collections.

Russia, they weren't prepared to face the question of what should be put in the place of the Czarist governmental apparatus. They had considerable debate about it and some of them said, "Why should we set up a government apparatus at all? According to communist theory the state is supposed to wither away. We have the Communist Party—the vanguard of the proletariat. Why don't we make the Communist Party the government and let it go at that?" The answer is simple: for the government of a country like Russia, and particularly a socialist government which was going to run the economic life of the country, you need several hundreds of thousands of millions of people. The Communist Party at that time numbered less than two hundred thousand and obviously couldn't fill the bill. So they had to set up a governmental apparatus, and they decided to set it up on the basis of the soviets, the councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers deputies which had sprung up around the country, the most important of which were the soviets in St. Petersburg and Moscow. During this period of chaos following the February revolution, the Bolsheviks had seized the power, or most of it, in the soviets, and it was the seizure of power which constituted the Bolshevik revolution.

So the revolutionaries proceeded to set up a governmental structure based on these soviets. This is where the word "soviet" comes into the nomenclature of the Soviet Government today. Central agencies were established on the same principle as the soviets. So you have the governmental structure as it has emerged and as it looks today, under the 1936 constitution which is still in force.

There are several things I want to point out about the governmental structure. First of all, it was complicated. You may wonder whether there is a reason for the complexity. Is there a need in the requirements of Russian society for complex government? I think not. It is my own opinion that the complicatedness of it suits the purposes of the communist leaders very well. It is practically impossible even for a careful and attentive scholar to understand the governmental structure. Even more so, it is really impossible for the average Soviet citizen to have any clear idea of where he fits into it or what sort of a government organization he is dealing with at the moment.

Note that the soviet electorate goes from the bottom to the top of the Soviet Government structure. Theoretically, the whole system derives its importance from the Soviet voter. The electorate is broken down into five levels. The autonomous republics are pure fiction so



Source: Photocopy of original lecture chart. National Defense University Library, Special Collections.

we can dismiss that level as though it were not there, since it plays no role. Both the constituent republics and the central government have soviets theoretically elected by the electorate of the Soviet Union.

What truth is there in this electoral concept? There is a certain amount of truth qualified by several "buts." The Supreme Soviet is the most important body. The Supreme Soviet is divided into the two chambers, the Soviet of Nationalities and the Soviet of the Unions, which are related on the same principle as our Senate and House of Representatives. The supreme organ of power in Russia is the Supreme Soviet, and in it reposes the sovereignty of the Soviet State, just as sovereignty reposes, in a monarchy, in the king.

How is this Supreme Soviet elected? There have been only two elections. Let me tell you how they occurred. The constitution of the Soviet Union provides that candidates for Supreme Soviet may be nominated by two categories; first, by meetings of the toilers at their places of work, meaning that wherever they work they can get together and nominate someone. Otherwise, they may be nominated by the public organizations of the toilers, namely the Communist Party, the labor unions, the cooperatives, and so forth. Actually these nominations appear to have been made only by gatherings of people at their places of work.

Although a great deal of attention had been given to the elections, not a word about nominations had been stated or mentioned. Suddenly on January 1st—the elections were scheduled for February 12th—on January 1st, a day on which few of us in Moscow were at the height of our powers as far as alertness and mental agility were concerned—the workers in the various enterprises were suddenly called from their benches without any prior warning, as far as we can find out. There they found great placards, pictures of Stalin. They found the Party bosses, the local Party bosses, assembled on the tribune. The Party bosses proposed one candidate for the Soviet of Nationalities and one for the Soviet of the Union. One candidate was all they had any right to elect from each district. Those proposals were simply made after thunderous applause at the mention of Stalin's name. The proposal was slipped in and the Party bosses asked, "Do I hear any objections? I hear none," and the motion was carried.

The strange thing, which we discovered after some rather difficult poking around, was that in each district there had indeed been several such meetings, but they had all unanimously nominated

precisely these same candidates and only one in each given district. The result was that when election day came there was only one candidate for each position. They had a polling place, and Soviet citizens were very strongly encouraged to go there—encouraged is a mild word. When they got there, they were handed two little ballot slips: one with the name, picture, and biography for the candidate of one of the chambers, and another for the candidate of the other chamber. There was a little booth into which they could retire; but the only thing they could do in there was to invalidate the ballots by tearing them up or by marking them in some way to show they were invalidated. Most of the voters were a bit bewildered and didn't know what to do, so they went into the booth and sort of sat in meditation for two or three minutes and came out with their slips again. Many held the slips conspicuously so the officials would not be in any doubt about their action and walked across the room and deposited them in the urn there for the purpose. I think after that most of them went out and crossed themselves and gave thanks to Divine Providence that they were safely out of that.

That was the way the Supreme Soviet was elected. You should not conclude, however, that it is a matter of no importance to belong to the Supreme Soviet. It is regarded as a great honor by most Soviet citizens, and for that reason the composition of the body is perhaps not without some interest. The Supreme Soviet comprises some thirteen hundred people from all over the country. About 60 percent are high officials of the bureaucracy of the government, Party, army, or secret police. Roughly 10 percent are cultural intelligentsia, singers, actors, or writers. Ten percent are technical intelligentsia, engineers, or heads of industrial plants. Workers, actual industrial workers, number less than 10 percent, although the Soviet Union is nominally a workers' state. Although Russia is the world's greatest agrarian country, the peasants on the Supreme Soviet number considerably less than 10 percent.

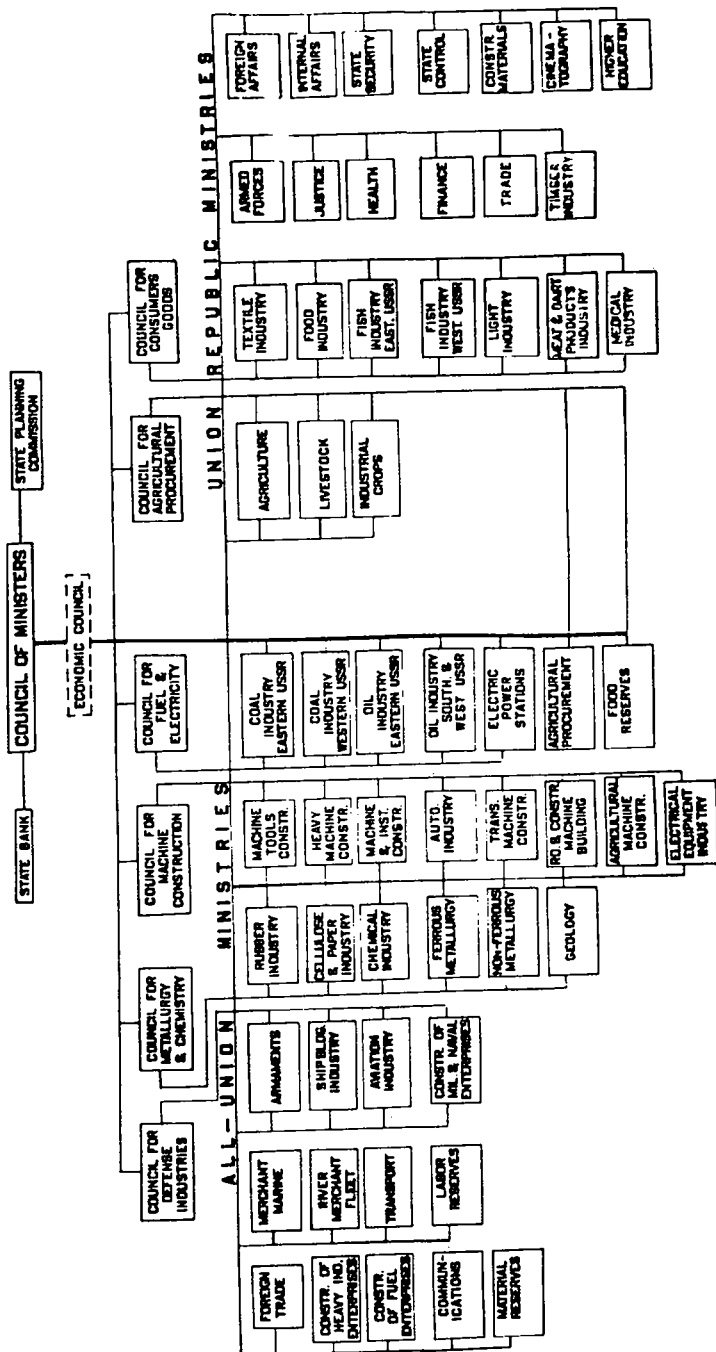
The Supreme Soviet meets at rare intervals to approve actions taken in its name (while it wasn't meeting) by its own Presidium, and to approve importance acts of legislation, such as the state budget or the five-year plan, sometimes. (Some of these plans have never been approved by the government.) The Soviet also ratifies treaties. It does these things with a clockwork precision that would be possible only in the Soviet Union. Everything goes off with perfect unanimity, with never a jarring note. The only exception to that rule which I recall

was back in 1936 when something unheard of occurred. A poor little deputy in the back of this long hall, a fellow with drooping mustaches, from Central Asia perhaps, suggested the meetings might end a little earlier so that they could go to the movies, because they would never see the movies otherwise. That caused a considerable commotion at this gathering because it was probably the only speech given without prior arrangement in the history of the body. So much for what we might call the legislative branch.

Under this Supreme Soviet comes the Council of Ministers, which is the administrative apparatus of the Soviet Government. The Council, in a general way, is usually treated in the press as though it were similar to the cabinet in other countries, and the ministries were similar to ministries in other countries. For that reason, I would like you to have a look at the real picture of that apparatus.

In the actual administrative apparatus of the Soviet Government, there are the Council of Ministers and the various ministries. Of some forty ministries, many are in no sense ministries as we know them. They are purely economic administrations. You have a ministry for the auto industry, and a ministry for the oil industry of the eastern part of the USSR, and a ministry for the oil industry of the western part. On the other hand, some of them that look very innocent are everything else but. They are very, very important organs of political power in the Soviet Union's foreign affairs, internal affairs, state security, state control, the armed forces, and justice. Those are the real ministries of importance, although they are just lumped in the same general framework as the administrative ministries.

What connection has this whole administrative apparatus with the Supreme Soviet? Frankly, in theory of course, it is subordinate to it; in actuality, it has no connection at all. The *administrative* apparatus is entirely real; the *electoral* apparatus is fictional. The administrative apparatus is subordinate in reality not to any government organ at all, but directly to the Central Committee of the Party. I suspect—I cannot prove it—that the apparatus of the Council of Ministers (that is, the actual cabinet) forms only a part, even geographically, of the offices of the Central Committee of the Party, and is a sort of executive division of the Central Committee's office. The Central Committee approves the policies. When it has approved a policy, the Committee turns it over to the Council of Ministers to be put into effect. All of this is not run by the Supreme Soviet, but by the Party. The proof of this lies in a little detail which you can find in



Source: Photocopy of original lecture chart. National Defense University Library. Special Collections.

the bylaws of the Party. In the rest of the government, in every government organ, there is a Party cell (that is, a small group of Party members in that organ who have very definite functions and who usually prescribe or dictate at the same time the actions of that organ). In these Commissariats, in this whole ministry apparatus, the Party cells are forbidden to make comments or criticism. This is all being run directly by the central organs of the Party; and the big shots in the Party don't want any ten-penny, rank-and-file communists messing around in the decisions they have taken on administrative matters. The rank-and-file communists in these organizations are told to shut up, to see that the factory is clean, and to perform a few other tasks like that.

So much for the government apparatus. Now to the real McCoy, which is the Party. Again I want to glance backward at the origin of the Party.

Remember the Communist Party of Russia was designed for militant purposes. It was designed for the purpose of overthrowing Czardom, overthrowing the capitalist system in Russia. Nobody in the Communist Government in Russia thought that Czardom or the capitalist system could be overthrown without a fight. It was set up for bitter, desperate struggle against deadly enemies. It was never designed as a normal political party for influencing the government in a stable, peaceful society.

With this in mind, Lenin fought some bitter battles in 1903 and 1904 within the Party over the question of the organizational principles on which the Party was to be founded. In these battles there were several things he insisted on. The first was that membership in the Party should be restricted to highly disciplined, professional revolutionaries. He did not want to see in the Party any fair-weather friends or any people who were not willing to join one or another of the Party's basic organizations at the bottom and accept the responsibilities of what we call here ward membership—only they were greater responsibilities than in any American ward. In making this decision, Lenin was aware that he was forgoing the possibility of the Communist Party ever being a mass organization or a majority party. He recognized it would have to be a hard-hitting, incisive minority within the greater group, even among the proletariat of Russia. He knew he was excluding from the Party's ranks many people who might be induced to call themselves communists, but he felt it necessary to insist on this principle and he did so with great vigor.

Now there is a very interesting angle to bear in mind. The people whom Lenin's opponents wished to see in the Party and whom he wished to see excluded were very largely what are called in Russia the intellectuals: the white-collar intellectual class. Lenin had no use for these people in the militant organization and he said so bluntly. He wrote in 1904:

No one would dare to deny the intelligentsia as a special strata of present day capitalist society, is characterized by and large by the particular traits of individualism and of incapacity for discipline and organization; in this, incidentally, lies this social strata's unfavorable difference from the proletariat; in this we have one of the explanations for the flabbiness and lack of firmness of the intellectual which the proletariat is so often given to feel; and this quality of the intellectual stands in intimate connection with the ordinary conditions of life, with the conditions of his way of earning a living which is in many respects similar to many conditions of petty bourgeois existence. . . .

Lenin rejected for the purposes of the revolutionary movement a whole category of Russians who had indeed not proven themselves to be very effective political figures in Russian history, but who were nevertheless an important element in the Russian population and who had contributed enormously to the impact of Russia on the outside world. He took all the Trotsky's, the Dostoyevski's, and the Chekhov's, people of that sort, and thrust them into the opposition where they have found themselves ever since, no matter how hard they tried to work with the Soviet Government.

Lenin insisted the Party should be organized on principles of iron discipline. I cannot overstate that. The conspiratorial nature of the Party was very important to him and he insisted it be observed by all Party members. The Communist Party is in Russia today, by its own description, a conspiratorial party. Members were supposed to be ready to sacrifice their lives for Party purposes. The Party was to make decisions only collectively and it was to rule out any inordinate influence of individual prestige and individual likes and dislikes. Before a decision was taken collectively, it could be discussed in a Party gathering; but once it had been taken collectively, it became not only the opinion but the *conviction* of every person in the Party, every member of that gathering, even though he had been violently opposed to it before it was taken. In the Soviet Union there is no

saying "I told you so" afterwards. When a decision is taken you, too, approve it. And that has endured to this day.

It was over these organizational disputes that the Party split into the two factions of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The name of the Party to this day, "Bolshevik," stems from this organizational dispute and shows how deeply the organizational disputes are rooted in the Party's history and psychology.

There is one thing I want to point out from the early life of the Party. During the years that elapsed between these disputes in 1903 and 1904, and 1917 when the Community Party took over, it was an opposition party fighting for its life, fighting a bitter, long-term, never-ending battle with the very able officials of the Czarist secret police. It was working conspiratorially and the police were very much interested in it.

This battle between the Communist Party, between Lenin, and the Czarist police was an interesting one, and was fought out with a refinement of cruelty, subtlety, and deceit which is incomprehensible to our mind. The Czarist police penetrated the organization and played along with it all through those years. Why they did so is very interesting. The police considered the Bolshevik leaders to be such intolerant, fanatical people, such hard people to work with, so deeply inclined to factional jealousies and disputes, that as long as the Bolsheviks continued to carry on as an active component of political life in Russia, the police were sure there could be no unity in the left-wing forces. For that reason, they gave considerable encouragement to the Bolsheviks, and the Bolsheviks used this encouragement at that time. For a period of 2 or 3 years the Bolsheviks even appeared as a legitimate party in the Duma. The head of the Bolshevik faction in the Duma, the most prominent Bolshevik in Russia, Malinovski, was a police agent the whole time and was turning in reports to the police. The strange thing is that most scholars think, today, that Lenin knew about it. Lenin would never admit that he knew it, even though many communists said they didn't trust Malinovski. Lenin permitted him to stay in because he knew doing so made it impossible for the police to crack down on some of the most important activities of the Party in Russia, and Lenin rated the advantage higher than the disadvantages.

I pointed out these things merely to show you that the Party grew up in intimate connection with the Czarist police. It took over many of their ways of thought and has remained to this day a highly police-minded organization.

Now a few things about the way in which the Party is organized and functions. The Party organization is where real political life takes place in Russia. First, in the Party organization as in the governmental apparatus, lip service is also given to the electoral principle. For example, if this college were the Soviet War Academy, those of us here who were Party members would constitute a so-called primary Party cell. These are the lowest forms of Party organization, and there are, of course, hundreds of thousands of them scattered over Russia. They elect their own executives and from time to time elect delegates to a raion or city conference. These delegates, indirectly elected, finally elect delegates up to the All-Union Congress. Thus, in theory, the electoral principle permeates the Party; and even the Central Committee. Finally, the political bureaus derive their authority theoretically from the rank and file of the Party.

As I stated earlier, there are a great many "buts." In the first place, many of these political organizations are not permanent organs. They only meet at very, very rare intervals. Incidentally, the All-Union Congress of Soviets is supposed to meet not less often than once every 3 years. Actually, it has met twice in the last 12 years—once in 1934 and once in 1939. There has been no meeting of it for 7 years. They are not in session most of the time, except for the permanent bureaus. These are the boys who really sit there, sometimes years on end, and run the Party's affairs.

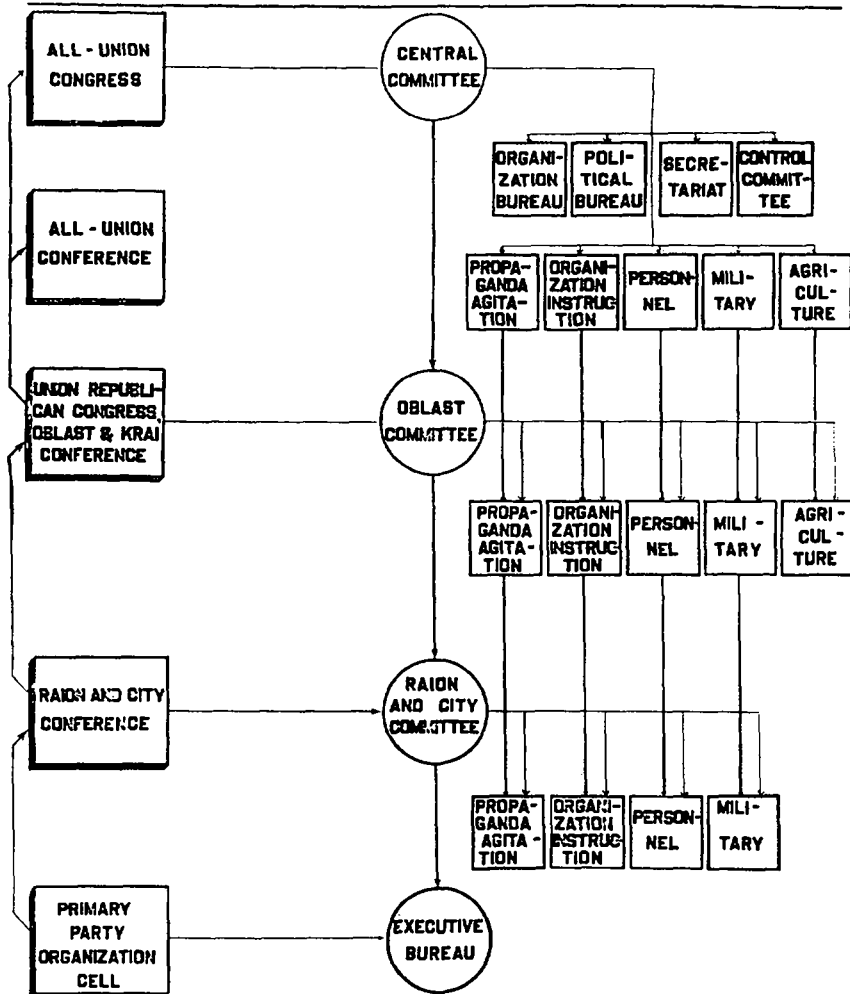
Not even the committees are in session continuously. Each of these committees elects its own officers, such as officers for the raions and oblast committees, equivalent to the officers in the Central Committee and those bureaus, who sit in an office and actually run things.

The elections are run by secret ballot and again there is only one candidate. However, when these committees come to elect their permanent officers, the ballot is by show of hands. That is very important, since it changes everything.

Another "but" is that in each higher organ the permanent officers can exercise a veto power over any of the officers of the lower organ. If the raion committee elects as its first secretary, meaning its main boss, a fellow who is not agreeable to the oblast committee, the oblast committee can say, "Nothing doing, you have to get somebody else."

These are only some of the ways in which the electoral principle is handled in the Party. It is done in such a way that discipline can be

# **COMMUNIST PARTY: ORGANIZATION, PARTY ELECTION AND CONTROL**



Source: Photocopy of original lecture chart. National Defense University Library, Special Collections.

exerted from above. The fellows in the Political Bureau, known as the Politburo, really exert Party discipline. They are supposed to be elected by the Central Committee, but in reality they haven't been appointed by the Central Committee for years. Actually the Central Committee has been appointed by the Political Bureau members, who simply decide when they want to let somebody else in the Central Committee.

It would be a mistake to think that the discipline over the Party exercised down through this professional apparatus of Party organs was exercised in any indelicate or too obvious way. The Party is run with very great subtlety, which is not easy to explain. There are two expedients which are used by the fellows at the top to avoid taking disciplinary responsibility when they can work in any other way. One expedient is the so-called institution of self-criticism, which you can read a good deal about in the left-wing press of foreign countries. Another expedient is the business of the elections. The rank and file in the Party can criticize—but within certain very definite limits. Now what are those limits? If you are a member of a raion committee, you can criticize your own officers but you had better be very careful about criticizing anybody on the level higher. Even when you criticize your own officers, it is an interesting kind of criticism. It reminds me of the ancient republic that Gibbon tells about in the *Decline and Fall*, where anybody had the right to propose a law. But if he proposed it, he had to stand in the marketplace with a noose around his neck, and if the law was not approved by the acclaim of the populace, he was hauled up.

In the Communist Party you can criticize; but if you come forward with any serious criticism spontaneously you put a noose around the neck of the fellow you criticize and a noose around your own neck. As a result, within a short time an investigating committee comes down and looks into the matter, and one of those two nooses is pulled up. You can criticize in the Communist Party, but you criticize for high stakes.

On the other hand, criticism is one of the few really good ways of advancing in the Party. If you criticize successfully, you get ahead, you win friends and influence people. If you don't, you are apt to get in trouble.

The people at the top use criticism very cleverly. When somebody makes himself unliked at the top, I suspect very strongly that they go around to someone else or someone in his own committee

and hint in a very delicate Russian way that it would not be out of order if a word of criticism were to be heard from the people underneath. Usually that happens.

For example, Mr. Wallace says in his book that he was shown about by the head of the Novosibirsk oblast committee. Wallace gave him great praise. I noticed after Wallace's visit that in the local Novosibirsk chapter meeting, one of the little fellows got up and subjected the committee head to the most scathing criticism for overstepping the bounds of communist modesty and throwing his weight around too much in the Novosibirsk oblast. I am sure he knew the score: the head of this committee was normally the object of the most extreme servility in the neighborhood. When the chairman heard the criticism he did some fast thinking and reasoned, "This fellow wouldn't criticize unless he had sanction on high and I had better be careful and admit I am guilty of all these things or I will get in trouble." In that way the higher Party members use self-criticism and the electoral principle in the same way to bring pressure on the fellows in the middle echelons of the Party to keep a balance of power in the Party going all the time. A lot of fellows in the lower echelons are watching for a chance to get away, while their superiors are trying to stop them. It seems to work very well.

The upshot is that anyone who offends or does anything indelicate which higher level people don't like, does not get hit on the head from the top; as a rule, he gets kicked on the shins from below and he can only conclude how and why it happened.

There is only one more thing I will say about how the Party is run. The Party dominates not only the government apparatus but similarly complicated apparatuses for the labor unions, for the army, for the Communist League of Youth, and above all for the Soviet secret police. Now we don't know a great deal about the relations between the secret police and the Party. We believe that the Party undoubtedly has the upper hand, but only at the top. I think the secret police take orders only from the Political Bureau and no other Party level can touch them. But we also know the secret police has, by the very nature of its profession, a tremendous nuisance value and can exert great influence in Party circles.

Enough of the actual structure of government. In summary, some final thoughts. First, the government apparatus is not a democracy and is not animate. It has no life of its own. The government apparatus is like a handsome bearskin in which somebody else, not

the bear, is inside. The bear is not moved by what appears to be the animal. It is moved by something else within, which is the Communist Party.

Second, the Party is the only real, living political force in Russia with the possible exception, to a limited extent, of the secret police. The Party is not only the inspiration of all political policy, but also a channel of administration. As a matter of fact, the Party secretaries and Party officials are not supposed to administer directly. They are supposed to work through the government apparatus, through their respective counterparts. For example, the head of the raion committee of the Party is not supposed to administer locally in his county. He is supposed to tell the head of the raion executive committee what to do. For twenty years, the government has been scolding these fellows for not recognizing that rule and bypassing the executive committees and administering things themselves. For twenty years they have continued to forget it, and they are going to continue twenty years hence. So the Party is not only the inspiration of political policy, but it is also an important direct channel for carrying that policy to the average Soviet citizen.

Finally, remember that the Party is a fanatically disciplined organization. The party is based on principles of conspiracy, deliberately designed to offset any aberrations of the individual and make it as hard as possible for individual predilections or prejudices to interfere with Party policies. And in that way, the Party is not really very responsive to any stimuli that don't affect the ultimate advantage or disadvantage of the communist movement itself. It is hard to influence the Communist Party by influencing individuals in an individual way.

Those are the main facts that should be borne in mind, but I want to say two or three words by way of my own interpretation. You may wish to consider them in the remaining period of this course.

First, in my opinion, this structure of power in Russia which we have just examined is not one which is completely expressive of the Russian national will. Here I revert to the question of the intellectuals. Many of the finer people in Russia, the more sensitive people, the more imaginative people, have no place in this structure of power. For that reason I do not think that the Soviet Government can be considered a perfect or a wholehearted organ of the political will of the Soviet people.

Although this discrepancy is a weakness of the Soviet Government, it would be dangerous to draw too extensive conclusions from it. The apparatus of power is magnificently conceived organizationally. It is so subtly drawn up, in such a masterful way as a means of expressing the political will of a few individuals in the Political Bureau, that I think it out of the question to hope that it can be overthrown by any revolt of importance inside Russia. One of the facts about the totalitarian state is that it has in its possession modern weapons and is ruthlessly and consistently determined to use them if necessary.

Second, while this regime is not entirely expressive of the national will, it would be a mistake to think that it is without roots in Russian tradition or Russian psychology. I suspect that it has many features which are responsive to demands of the Russian people, and which the Russian people would always demand in any regime. We don't know to what extent it responds to those demands. We don't know where to draw the line. We find ourselves in the same position as foreign diplomats have found themselves in Russia since the beginning of time. About the time Russia was being discovered, the first ambassador from the Austrian court of Emperor Maximilian wrote the first book about Russia. In it he said, "In faith I know not whether this pitiless people requires such a tyrant for its ruler or whether it is through the tyranny of the ruler that the people have become so unmild and so cruel." We have not decided the answer to that question today. It is still as valid as the day it was first stated. This type of government does seem to stem from certain basic needs which the Russian people have not yet overcome.

Thus, I think it would be a very dangerous thing for any outside force in the world to contemplate trying to overthrow the Soviet Government, for two reasons. First, if you did it you would be very apt to rally the support of the Russian people wholeheartedly around the Soviet Government. It is one of those things like families. You all know the way in which a family will rally around even its most unpopular member the moment other people outside the family begin to criticize and attack him. That is what the Germans achieved when they tried to overthrow the Soviet Government.

Second, it would be dangerous to overthrow the Soviet Government because if you were to succeed, I frankly don't know what you would replace it with. That would then be your problem, and I don't know how you would solve it. I don't see any other political force in

Russia at the moment even remotely capable of making a bid for the power which the Communist Party now has. I don't think any foreign state could ever handle that power itself.

Consequently, I think our government officials concerned with policy should ask themselves very seriously what we really want from the Soviet Government. Do we want it to be destroyed or do we want it to alter its behavior? And I am personally inclined to think that there is no possibility of bringing about any sudden or radical change in the political personality of the Soviet regime as seen in this existing structure of power. I say that our best chances are in trying to create a pattern of conditions in the world which will be so persuasive and so unmistakable in its implications for the foreign policy of Russia and behavior of Russia as a member of international society, that the logic of this pattern will eventually eat its way into the heart of the Soviet system, and will effect changes which will be in the interest of the security of this country and the security of the United Nations as a whole.

## DISCUSSION

I have been asked to say a few words on the question of personalities at the top in the Communist Party, about the members of the Political Bureau and their relation to each other, and also about what might happen if Stalin died.

There are some fifteen members of the Political Bureau. All these men have been very carefully chosen by Stalin or by his immediate associates, because the Political Bureau itself is divided into two groups. A sort of inner group—composed of Stalin, Molotov, Beria, Malenkov, and probably Mikoyan, probably not more than those five men—is a conspiracy within a conspiracy. The other group consists of the remaining members who are let in on most matters but not all. That would only run true to form because it was the case before the revolution. Lenin had such an inner group within his top group.

The question of the succession of Stalin would lie within those top five men, I think. You could eliminate Mikoyan although he is an able man, a powerful man. That leaves Molotov, Beria, and Malenkov. Molotov is Stalin's most intimate executive officer in the whole Communist Party and the Soviet Government. He is probably

the man closest to Stalin, works most closely with him, and always has. Beria and Malenkov are two upstarts in the Party, who emerged on top after all the fermentation of the purge in the 1930 period. Beria has emerged at the head of the entire police apparatus of Russia, which includes even the local police, the entire secret service, all the secret police. The secret police, incidentally, includes a crack army, the border and internal guards. Known as the "N.K.V.D.," these troops number somewhere between five-hundred thousand and a million—but it is the only army equipped and armed for action within the borders of the Soviet Union. They are under the control of Beria.

Beria's sidekick is Malenkov. The two are always seen together. They are chubby-faced individuals, and the Russians refer to them facetiously as the "two eunuchs." Malenkov is the head of the personnel section in the Party and in the Secretariat he controls, with Stalin's sanction, the Party apparatus. So those two boys have between them just about all the power there is to have internally in Russia. Of course, Molotov heads foreign affairs.

Stalin undoubtedly permitted them to come up into those positions in the 1930s because he had implicit confidence in their personal loyalty to him. I think their loyalty is real and genuine and Stalin knew he could count on it, and he can. They have a tremendous nuisance value to him because they are not stupid by any means, and for a long time I am sure they have been lopping off the heads of the tallest poppies who began to grow out of the subordinate organs of the Party and who showed signs of being competent enough to take over their own jobs.

Stalin is older than he was before the war. He is tired. He isn't as ready as he used to be to meet new people. His acquaintance with the rank and file and the middle of the Party is not as extensive as it once was. It is a very, very difficult thing for Stalin today to try to brush Beria and Malenkov aside and to reach into the Party apparatus and pick out people in whom he could have sufficient personal confidence to replace them. You see his predicament. If he gets rid of Beria, Malenkov, or Mikoyan he has to find somebody to take their places. Those are jobs which could be very dangerous to Stalin if they fell in the hands of a disloyal person. Beria could order the Kremlin guards to do things which would make it impossible for Stalin to run the country. Malenkov in his position could build up a conspiracy within the Party that would be difficult for anybody to

spot. For that reason I think those fellows have enormous power. They bow to Stalin as the principal figure and submit to his authority, but I don't think he can dispense with them very easily, and they know it.

It is practically impossible to say what is going to happen when Stalin dies. The best answer is given by Lenin, who wrote that "Russian history is a series of incredibly swift transitions from wild violence to the most delicate deceit." If Stalin's death is apparent some time before he dies, as was the case with Lenin, this battle will probably be fought out in a very dirty but delicate way in the Political Bureau, and somebody will try to get it rigged so there will be no question of who takes over. Mind you, there is nothing formal to take over. Stalin is only one of fifteen or sixteen men in the Politburo. There is no formal position to be filled that counts. All of Stalin's authority in the Politburo consists of the fact that he comes in and walks up and down and smokes his pipe and listens to the rest of them discuss a situation until he has had enough, and then he turns around and points his pipe and says, "Molotov is right," and that settles it. The only question is: after Stalin dies, who is going to get up with his pipe and walk up and down in the Politburo and say so-and-so is right?

So there is no position that has to be filled. For that reason the crisis doesn't have to come immediately. The boys in the Politburo could still juggle for position for a while, but it is going to be a very, very tense situation. What you really have today in terms of Russian history is the same system that prevailed throughout the 18th century. Peter the Great laid down the rule that each Czar should appoint his successor before he died. Peter, incidentally, appointed his mistress who wasn't a Russian, and got away with it. But otherwise the moment the Czar was dead nobody respected the appointment he made while he was alive, and there was always a sort of a palace revolution.

Now it is possible there will be some brief movement of what Lenin called wild violence when Stalin dies, right at the top. There may be a furious struggle to see who obtains control of the police apparatus, and especially the Kremlin guards and the internal army, which has the real power in Russia. There may be such a thing. This is my own estimate: If the struggle for power, the cleavage among the members of the Political Bureau, happens to coincide with any wide cleavage of feeling within the Party, down through the rank and

file, it can split the Party. The struggle could split the state from top to bottom, and you might have a return of the conditions of 1917 and 1918. But if it does not happen to coincide with any real issue among the Party members, it would pass off as most of those things did during the 18th century. Somebody might get murdered, there might be some violence, but within a short time somebody would seize the reins of power, the control of the police and the Party, and the good old lid would be clamped down. That would be the first stage.

Whether the successor could hold the top spot is another question. Stalin is a master of control. It is a question of whether any of these other fellows could hold together a system of government of that sort. I can't conceive that any of them could be as good as Stalin or Lenin, who were a really outstanding pair.

QUESTION: Mr. Kennan, are there any more vulnerable features of the Party system or the political system which we might exploit by propaganda methods?

KENNAN: Yes. There is one tremendously vulnerable feature of it all, which is that the Party today has lost its emotional appeal to the Soviet people to a very large extent. We get the most amazing reports from Russia from those who do manage occasionally to get out and travel in the provinces and talk with the rank and file Party members and even with the people themselves. There is no doubt that the Party's power today rests strictly on fear. That fear is real and it is a powerful foundation for the Party's authority. But it does not rest on enthusiasm. The Party is aware of that, as are the Party leaders. They are very worried about it, in my opinion, particularly worried about the enormous religious feeling that sprang up in Russia the moment they gave it a little leeway. Party leaders can no longer evoke such feelings from the people. They can order the people out for a political demonstration. They will come out with complete deadpan expressions and do precisely what they are asked to do, and anything they are asked to say they will say. They do it and keep their mouths shut and comply with orders.

On the other hand, just have the church, which has no means of approaching public opinion and which has no access to a newspaper, let it be known by word of mouth that there is going to be a religious festival in Moscow on a certain evening at a certain cathedral, and tens of thousands are apt to be milling around that cathedral in a state of obvious emotional excitement. The Government has noticed that, and I am sure they are worried about it. They know it is not a source

of danger to them as long as it is not exploited by any outside forces, and that is the reason they are so determined to keep up the Iron Curtain.

Anything we can do to keep on bringing home to the Soviet people that the propaganda of their own government is false, that the outside world is not hostile to them, that it is only their own leaders who stand in the way—everything along these lines just increases the strain on the system, and is all to the good in the end. But mind you, then, let it do its work in Russia and let us not try to do the work for it. We must do our work through Soviet public opinion and not try to do it directly in influencing the Soviet Government.

QUESTION: I have noticed in the press recently that certain republics have been removed, that is, their autonomy has been removed. What is the machinery of the government or of the Party which causes it to change the status of a republic like that?

Secondly, in spite of the system of close control and criticism you have outlined, there have been indications of unrest which have come out of certain republics such as the Ukraine. I wonder how that can be expressed and get out of the Soviet Union with this system of close control.

KENNAN: As for the first question: those republics which have been eliminated, if my impression is correct, were not constituent republics. They were autonomous republics set up to take care of language minorities, little linguistic groups. Two of those were the Volga Germans and the Crimean Tartars. The Russians did to the Volga Germans in effect just what we did to the Japanese on the west coast during the war. They uprooted them completely. But they didn't take them out to relatively decent places; they just dispersed them throughout Siberia, so far as we know.

The Crimean Tartars are another story. The removal of the Volga Germans was done before the German troops ever got in. The Crimean Tartars—maybe those of you who were in Russia can correct me—were not moved before the Germans got there. The trouble was that when the Germans got into the Crimea, the Tartars were so glad to see them that it was a scandal in the Soviet Union. There was general relief throughout the Tartar population and there was no attempt to conceal it. Naturally after the Germans had gotten out, the Soviet Government clamped down and moved those people out completely. There were quite a number, at least a million or close to that, who were moved out. They were probably dispersed in Siberia. You can lose more people there than any place else in the world.

The other question is how they can do that. That can be done very neatly by a decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, which is sanctioned at some later date by the Supreme Soviet. That is accomplished in about three minutes—the sanctions—when the time comes. Actually, of course, it represents a Party decision.

You hear the most fantastic stories about the question of the unrest in the Ukraine. I read something two or three days ago written by a friend of mine who made a trip there. He said that in Kharkov most of the people talked about the German occupation as the good old days. It was the best time they had known. Now that sounds incredible, but it is apparently true with a large part of the population down there. It is also true that the Germans executed many people in Kharkov; but these were mostly Jews and there is a good deal of anti-Semitism there still. The ones who weren't Jews were Soviet officials, and there was a certain popularity in that. The reports we get are really quite astonishing. It would be an exaggeration to say they liked the Germans. The Germans treated them stupidly. There were people in Kharkov who look back on it favorably, though. The Ukrainian population in general in the beginning was relieved at the entry of the Germans. Later they became disgusted with the Germans and later profoundly irritated—that is a mild word—with the treatment the Germans gave them. Especially in the western districts of the Ukraine a lot of men, partly to avoid being forced into labor service, ran away under the German occupation and went to the woods and formed gangs. They became partisans, as they are called in Russia, and they stayed out in the woods harassing the Germans plundering the villages, until the Germans were kicked out and the Russian troops came in.

The Russians knew about them, got in touch with their leaders and said, "Come out, we are here now," and these fellows said, "No, we are going to wait and see how you behave. The Germans couldn't get us out of these woods and we are not sure we want to come out for the Russians either." And some of these gangs are still there, causing the Russians trouble. I don't think it is a great problem; the Russians can handle it. Undoubtedly the anti-Soviet feeling in the Ukraine exists. It is accompanied by what they call "sheer hooliganism," which in Odessa is almost out of control. The Soviet police can control the town during the day, but during the night they have to warn respectable people to keep off the streets. This postwar example of criminality and oppression makes the

Ukraine a restless and unhappy place. It is a problem, but I still don't see any signs that it is a crucial problem for the Soviet Government.

QUESTION: Could you give us some idea of the relationship between the Party and governmental structure and two other organizations, the Comintern and the Red Army?

KENNAN: In 1923 there was a congressional investigation of the policy of this government in not recognizing the Soviet Government at that time, and that investigation centered on the connection between the Soviet Government and the Comintern. The Department of State, in defending our Government's policy, did not take the position that the Comintern was an organ of the Soviet Government. It took the position, and quite correctly, that both the Soviet Government and the Comintern were completely creatures of the Central Committee, the Politburo of the Communist Party, and that was absolutely true. In the days when it officially functioned, it was composed almost entirely of members of the Political Bureau. Later they got a little more coy about it and saw to it that the people who were officials in the Comintern were not members of the Politburo, not officially. But there is no doubt that the Comintern was an organization of the Party. It is wrong to say a fellow belongs to the Comintern. Individuals belong only to one of the Communist Parties. The Communist Party of Russia is the leading member of the Comintern and plays a dominant role, being dominated, in its turn, by these men up at the top of the Party hierarchy. This makes them the masters of the Comintern.

The Comintern has now been officially liquidated. But I believe personally that it has only been decentralized in a very clever way. The best commentary on that was the resolution passed by the Portuguese Communist Party just after it had been informed that the Comintern had disbanded itself. The Portuguese Communist Party passed a resolution of at least three pages praising the Comintern for the infinite wisdom it had shown in voting itself out of existence, thus proving they felt it was still very much a force in the world, and one worth kowtowing to.

Now the other question was on the Red Army. I am glad you asked it. In this country there has been in our press a tendency to overrate enormously the Army, and especially the individuals at the top of the Army, as a political force in Russia. I don't think that the Red Army has been a political force since Tukhachevski and other generals were shot one day in 1937. I think that is the reason they

were shot; they were bucking the Party on certain things the Party didn't want to be bucked on. The Marshals of the Soviet Union are put in and removed by Party decision. The Party has permeated the Army, penetrated it during the war. The Party numbered only three million members before the war and it now numbers about six million. Most of that increase is the result of Red Army members taken in during the war. They were taken in wholesale at the worst and most difficult moments of the fighting. The Party used the feeling and emotional excitement of the men at that time to bring them into the Party.

A long battle has gone on for twenty years about the exact organizational relationship between the Party and the Army. Every Party level has a military section which deals with the military unit stationed on its territory. There has been a terrific back-and-forth about the question of the Political Commissars accredited to the regular military units: Should you have them, or shouldn't you have them? How is the Party going to be organized within the Army? This question has been through so many stages I couldn't possibly tell them to you. It would take much research to find out what actually went on even during the war. But one thing is certain. When the end of the war came, over half the members of the Communist Party of Russia were in the armed forces, and the Party had pretty good control of the Army setup. But I know that not one of the new Marshals, men who really fought in this last war, is a member of the Politburo of Russia. The only military man on it, the only nominally military man, is Voroshilov, and generally it is considered his incompetence was proved in the Finnish war. He never was an Army man to begin with. He was a political figure from the Donetz Basin, but he was the head of the armed forces for many, many years. He is an old-time Bolshevik and the only supposedly military man on that political committee. So you can conclude that the Army is completely in the hands of the political authority in Russia and has no will of its own.

QUESTION: With reference to Stalin and Trotsky, what happens when Stalin dies?

KENNAN: The question is about the feud between Stalin and Trotsky. Lenin had a stroke some months before he died. After that he was unable to function as the head of the government. He just lay out at his country place. People in the Party did a great deal of thinking about what was going to happen when he finally died. When his death finally came Trotsky was down in the Caucasus because his

own health was bad. On that particular day he had meant to go back to Moscow, but he didn't because he had a headache. I remember one of my professors in the University of Berlin once said that the strange thing was, on that particular day, Stalin *didn't* have a headache. He saw to it that he didn't have a headache. He was there. He grasped the apparatus of power. Trotsky never got it back. He came back and tried to regain power, but was exiled and finally died.

Now I personally don't believe there was any great ideological difference between Stalin and Trotsky. I think again that people make a mistake here about that. They say that Trotsky wanted world revolution and Stalin doesn't want world revolution. That is a tremendous over-simplification. They were both revolutionary communists of the old school. Both, of course, wanted world revolution. There might have been divisions of emphasis. Stalin might have attached more importance to preserving the Soviet State as the flagship of revolution, saying we must keep this ship afloat at all events; Trotsky might have given more emphasis to promoting revolution in other countries. But that was only a tactical difference at best. The real difference was a struggle for power within the Party, and that struggle was connected with the nature of the following. Behind Trotsky there stood as many of the political intellectuals as could get into the Party. I said before that Lenin didn't want liberal intellectuals in the Party. He let in intellectuals if he thought they were sound revolutionists. A considerable body of brilliant men, mostly from the old Polish-Jewish party, the old Bund, entered the Communist Party in the early days and were behind Trotsky. Stalin knew this. As soon as he could get hold of the party apparatus, he increased the membership from a few hundred thousand to well over two million in the late twenties and early thirties. He packed it with young, uneducated, raw-boned peasant kids who came into the new industrial communities and whom he felt he could easily control. I think Malenkov and Beria represent that element. They had no patience with the intellectuals of the pre-revolutionary period. They didn't have much use for them, and Stalin played them off against Trotsky and his followers. Trotsky was exiled; but the purge developed because a lot of Trotsky's henchmen were not sent out of the country, only to the Urals areas or Siberia, in about 1929 and 1930. In a couple of years later they were permitted to come back and take a moderate part again in public life. I once heard almost all of the members of the Politburo kidding Radek in the most uproarious way about the time he was exiled to the

Urals. That was before the purges in the thirties. He was at that time back there functioning in Russia.

But in 1934 Stalin's principal henchman, the man he had in charge of the party organization in Leningrad, was shot. Stalin became violently suspicious of all these old friends of Trotsky and the other opposition leaders and he started the ball rolling for a process of purges which swept through Russian society like a forest fire and caused tremendous devastation and brought into power a whole new outfit in the Party. And he did it by the process of egging the little people on and starting a wave of denunciation and criticism and intrigue in the Party. The incredible thing was not that he was able to start it, but that he was able to stop it. For that I consider him a great master of political maneuver.

*October 22, 1946*

# **CONTEMPORARY SOVIET DIPLOMACY**

**I**N NOVEMBER 1917, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION which brought them into power, the Bolshevik leaders sat down at a table to decide how they would divide that power among themselves and what jobs each of them was to have. When the question of foreign affairs came up, Lenin exclaimed in bewilderment: "What sort of foreign affairs are we going to have now?" Trotsky echoed that question soon after his appointment as Commissar for Foreign Affairs in almost identical words. "What sort of diplomatic work are we going to have?" he inquired. "I'll issue some revolutionary proclamations to the people and then close up shop."

That was his idea of his function as the first Commissar. This naive and simple view of the Russians' foreign relations wasn't by any means insincere. Within a short time after that, Lenin and, curiously enough, Stalin together signed an appeal in the name of the Soviet Government to the Mohammedan people of Russia and the East, calling on them "to throw off the robbers and enslavers of your countries." Persians and Turks, Arabs and Hindus were urged to rise up against their oppressors, particularly the representatives of European imperialism, to cast out those who had seized their lands, and to become the masters of their countries.

Another decree, issued about that same time, and signed by Lenin and Trotsky, is a curious document that reads as follows:

The Council of People's Commissars considers it necessary to come to the aid of the left, internationalist wing of the workers' movement of all countries with all possible resources, including money, quite irrespective of whether these countries are at war, or in alliance, with Russia or maintain a neutral position. For these purposes the Council of People's Commissars decides to allot and to place at the disposition of foreign representatives of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, for the needs of the revolutionary internationalist movement, two million rubles.

Incidentally, a document made its appearance in this country earlier this fall, a document signed and ostensibly written by a high public figure. There was an implication in this document that the hostility of the communist leaders to the US Government arose originally through the fact that American forces participated in

foreign intervention in Russia. For that reason, I would like to point out that these two decrees of the Soviet Government, and not the Communist Party, were issued several months *before* there was any thought or suggestion that American forces might intervene in Russia.\*

This pipedream of a world in which the foreign affairs of the Soviet Union could be conducted with a few fiery proclamations for the oppressed peoples lasted for only a very brief time. This idea was replaced by a rude awakening in the early months of 1918, in the final year of World War I, an awakening occasioned by the need to find some means of dealing with the German-Austrian forces which were strung out along the entire Russian frontier from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and with the aspirations of the governments which stood behind them. The reactions and decisions of the Bolshevik leaders in the course of this rude awakening are so prophetic of the future course of Soviet diplomacy that they deserve a close look here.

One of the things the Bolshevik leaders did when they came into power was to sue for peace with Germany. After all, they were now the responsible rulers of Russia; all the Russian armies then opposing the German-Austrian forces were formally under Bolshevik command. So they sued for peace and they met the German and Austrian representatives at Brest-Litovsk for negotiations.

These negotiations began in a spirit of outward cordiality between the two delegations. The German and Austrian representatives acted at first under the understandable illusion that the Bolsheviks would be amenable to a friendly and disarming approach. (I say "understandable" because they had at that time no precedents which might have taught them better.) Thus, they went out of their way to disarm Soviet suspicion, and to win the personal confidence of the Soviet representatives. They even had the German-controlled press print several rather complimentary items about Trotsky; and they began to arrange their meals together with the Soviet delegates, interspersing the members of the Soviet delegation with their own table.

This honeymoon was of very short duration. After a few days or a week or two, Trotsky came down to head the Soviet delegation.

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\**Editors' Note:* Kennan later was to author an in-depth study of America's role in what was called the Allied intervention in Russia. See George F. Kennan, *The Decision to Intervene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956.)

The first thing he did was to forbid all fraternization by his people with the members of the other delegations: no more eating together, no more personal associations with foreign diplomats. As for the compliments which had been published, Trotsky had an observation to make at an official session of the conference: "We are prepared to regret those premature compliments which the official German and Austro-Hungarian press has addressed to us. They were absolutely not required for the successful progress of the peace negotiations."

Then the Germans, in turn, became annoyed over a little matter of some revolutionary pamphlets addressed to the troops of the Central Powers and filled with abuse of the German army and the German Supreme Command. Their annoyance on this score did not entirely lack justification, because one of the most prominent of the Soviet delegates, Karl Radek, was observed tossing a number of these pamphlets out the train window along the way as the Russian delegation pulled into Brest-Litovsk.

In short, within a week or two the Germans and the Austrians were fed up with the Bolsheviks and issued a semi-ultimatum demanding those parts of the old Russian empire which the German army had at that time in its possession, amounting to parts of Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. These terms might have seemed not unreasonable to a government whose army was in a state of disintegration, and who had no possibility of carrying on the war at all. But many of the communist leaders were elated and excited by their recent internal political success and they were in no mood for realism. After long and bitter debate, they overrode the more sober counsels of Lenin and instructed the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk to stall as long as they could—which they faithfully and ably did—and if their hand was forced, to say that Russia considered the war ended but refused to sign the treaty. This is what the Soviet delegation in fact did. In the terms of the statement they made on that occasion, the Soviet delegates made it evident they had no sympathy for either side in the war then in progress. "We are equally uncompromising," they said,

in regard to the imperialism of both camps and we are no longer willing to shed the blood of our soldiers in defense of the interests of one camp of imperialists against the other. Therefore, we withdraw our army and our people from the war.

This was a bit of international insolence, and the German reply was to resume the offensive at once. After several days of an unhindered German advance into Russian territory, Lenin—who knew an important issue when he saw it—for the first and only time in his career made a personal issue of a political question and said that if the Russian delegates refused to sign the German peace terms, he would get out of the government. Thus the Russians were compelled to come to the council table again and sign new and far harsher terms, which they did without even bothering to read them. Incidentally, shortly afterward one of Lenin's discontented followers remarked to him that he hoped that at least the treaty was not being observed. Lenin's answer was characteristic: "Of course we break the treaty. We have already broken it thirty or forty times."

Now I would ask you to note the principal reactions of the communist leaders to this series of events. Note them because they are significant for the future course of Russian diplomacy.

In the first place, this episode brought home to all of them that as long as they were unable to overthrow capitalist countries, they would have to have some sort of dealings with them other than revolutionary proclamations. Two sets of views developed among the Russians as to what these dealings should consist of. Trotsky, whose suggestion had been that they get out of the war but refuse to sign the peace treaty—no war, no peace—hoped that this would affect the German internal situation, producing revolutionary developments which would make the Germans call off their dogs. Some of the communists went even further along these lines and talked of fighting a revolutionary war against the Germans, which was of course frivolous nonsense. It was Lenin who had to pull them back to earth. Russia needed peace more than anything else, he said. She needed time. Revolution in Europe would come, but no one knew when. If there was reason to believe that the German revolution were coming immediately, then the Russian revolutionists would be obliged, he said, to sacrifice themselves, because the German revolution was immeasurably more important than that of Russia; but they had no right to stake the existence of the Soviet regime on a vague possibility that revolution might break out in the near future in Germany. Germany was only pregnant with revolution, whereas to Russia a quite healthy revolutionary child had been born—a Socialist Republic which might be killed if the war were not terminated. Therefore, Lenin concluded, they had no right to play with war, and they had to

come to some sort of terms with the foreign imperialists. Right then and there, when the Bolsheviks had been in power only a few weeks, a decision was made—and a wise decision it was—to place the interests of Soviet power ahead of revolution in other countries, provided it could not be shown that such revolution in other countries was imminent.

But this crisis involved not only Russia's relations with Germany. It also involved Russia's relations with the Western powers. Here, it is interesting to note, the first reaction of the Bolshevik mind was a dark and deep suspicion that some secret agreement between Germany and the West lay behind these stiff German demands. This was also, of course, utter nonsense, but it reveals clearly the natural suspiciousness of the Soviet mind. Nevertheless, the communists were interested in getting help from the West. There was considerable debate about it among them; some of them thought it was improper to accept help from the imperialists. But after a lot of discussion, the communists finally decided that allied help should be accepted, on the condition—and note this, because you can think of it also in terms of Lend-Lease—that the Bolsheviks should retain complete political independence in foreign policy and give no political promises. Characteristic of the Bolshevik attitude on this question was the chit written by Lenin, who was not present at the meeting when the vote was taken. Lenin wrote the chit to Trotsky who was conducting the meeting at that time. There were several versions of it, but it went something like this: "I ask that my vote be added in favor of taking potatoes and arms from the bandits of Anglo-French imperialism."

There is another report, an amusing report, of the extent of Lenin's collaboration with the Western representatives. In a public letter addressed to American workers about that time, he described his first personal encounter with a Western representative. It happened to be a French officer, a specialist in explosives, who offered the services of himself and his associates in blowing up the railroad tracks in order to impede the German advance. The French officer began the conversation by saying: "I am a Monarchist and my only purpose is to bring about the defeat of Germany." Lenin liked that, and his reply was, "That goes without saying." I will read the rest from Lenin's letter:

This in no wise prevented me from coming to agreement with him about the services which French officers ... wished to

render to us. . . . This was an example of an 'agreement' which every class-conscious worker will approve, an agreement in the interests of socialism. The French Monarchist and I shook hands with each other, knowing that each of us would gladly have hung his partner. But our interests coincided at the moment. Against the attacking German beasts of prey we utilized, in the interests of the Russian and the international socialist revolution, the equally predatory counter-interests of other imperialists. In that way we served the interests of the working class of Russia and of other countries, strengthened the proletariat and weakened the bourgeoisie of all the world, and made use of the legitimate and obligatory device of maneuvering, of wriggling around, of retreating.

Note some of the implications of these early developments. First, relations between the Soviet Government and the governments of capitalist countries were originally conceived as something forced on the Soviet Government against its will, and something which bore a distinctly provisional character. They were designed only to fill the gap in time between the completion of the revolution in Russia and the completion of the revolution in countries abroad.

Secondly, this being the case, these relations were obviously to be viewed as relations between enemies, who were in a state of armistice with one another. They were based not on friendship, but on hostility inherent in the nature of the two systems, and not from any particular treatment of one system by another system.

Thirdly, Soviet thought admitted no distinction in the character of these relations as between capitalist countries. Their views on capitalist countries were unaffected by whether those countries were making war on the Soviet Union or were assisting the Soviet Union to defend itself against other aggressors.

Finally, the communist leaders even at that early date proved impervious to all attempts to influence their conduct by personal cordiality or by appeals for individual sympathy and confidence. They were actually disgusted by the efforts of individual Western statesmen who approached them in this way. One communist recounts in his memoirs how he recoiled in shame and embarrassment, as though he had stepped on something filthy, when one of the German representatives introduced into their conversation a note of personal cordiality—but what he considered to be hypocritical respect. And when the German representative at Brest-Litovsk,

General Hoffman, stated that he was obliged as a military man to express himself more forcefully than a diplomat would have done, the head of the Russian delegation answered as follows: "We, the members of the Russian delegation, do not belong to the diplomatic school. We would rather be considered as soldiers of the revolution, and for that reason we prefer the gruff speech of the soldier."

Twenty-six years have passed since all that happened. Experience and practice may have brought slightly more urbanity to Soviet statesmen. It may have made them better able to control and dissimulate their real reactions. But I do not doubt that even today many a Russian communist feels a tinge of that same sense of abuse and contamination when a Western representative, whom he really does not wish to have as a friend, and whom his government leaders have publicly repudiated on numerous occasions, still approaches him with expressions of cordiality and expects him to toss aside his ideological convictions, as he would say, for the love of someone's beautiful eyes. A communist's reactions to such individuals are summed up, I think, by the words of one famous Russian communist who said, speaking of people who approached him that way, "Such people appraise the others at a very low figure, but they also do not set a very high price on themselves."

I have cited these facts from the infancy of Soviet power because they reveal in their simplicity and naivete some of the pattern of things that were to come. You will see these patterns illustrated in the broad outlines of Soviet diplomacy as we know it today.

The Soviet encyclopedia claims that Soviet diplomacy differs from bourgeois diplomacy in its tasks, methods, and composition. This suggests a convenient breakdown for its examination, and I leave it to you to judge to what extent the Soviet encyclopedia is right.

The tasks of Soviet diplomacy flow with iron logic from the basic objective of the Soviet Government in the field of foreign affairs. What is this objective? It is the relative increase in the power of the Soviet Union as compared with the power of states abroad not under Soviet influence. I would like to repeat that. The basic objective of Soviet foreign policy is the relative increase in the power of the Soviet Union as compared with the power of states abroad not under Soviet influence.

Please note that I used the word "relative," because that has two important implications.

First of all, it means that the desired result can be achieved not only by the strengthening of Soviet power at home, but also by the weakening of the power of individual states abroad. And from this flows the broad general division of the tasks of Soviet diplomacy into two main parts. On the one hand, Soviet diplomacy must assure conditions in which the Soviet Government can proceed undisturbed with the development of Russian industrial and military potential at home. On the other hand, it must work toward the reduction of the total potential—military, economic, political, and moral—of all the other nuclei of power abroad, whether in the form of individual states or of associations of states.

But this conception of relativity has another important implication. It makes for great fluidity and flexibility; it is a long-term objective. Despite the theoretical communist belief in the inevitability of world revolution, there is no finality about any of this. No one in Moscow now expects world revolution to be just around the corner. As Stalin himself said in the course of the debates over the Brest-Litovsk Treaty: "There is no revolutionary movement in the West. There are no facts; there is only a possibility, and with possibilities we can not reckon." Similarly, no one expects the power potential of other states to be smashed overnight.

This realization does not mean therefore, that progress in that direction is of no value in communist eyes. There is no intimation that only a complete destruction of all rival power will do. On the contrary, what concerns Moscow is to maintain constant pressure in the direction of the reduction of rival power, and that there should be movement, constant unceasing movement, in that direction. In this respect the Kremlin has the tremendous advantage of all great ideological political organizations in which the role of the individual is rigidly restricted, namely, the incalculable advantage of patience and of long-term persistence in the pursuit of the final objective.

So much for the tasks of Soviet diplomacy. Now how about the methods? Here again just as the tasks flowed from the basic objective, so the methods flow from the nature of the tasks.

Perhaps the first and most important of the methods imposed upon Soviet diplomacy by the nature of its tasks is that of deceit, of dissimulation, of the disguising of purpose.

You might think that the first task—namely, making it possible for the Soviet Government to proceed at home with the development of its industrial and military potential—would not need to resort to subterfuge. After all, the right of the Soviet Union to security in its neighboring areas is one of the few pretensions of the Soviet Government which has found general agreement and recognition abroad, and there would seem to be no reason why such security could not be openly pursued and openly defended. But there is a difficulty here, a difficulty of which the Soviet Government itself is much better aware than many of the foreign apologists of the Soviet Government are. This difficulty consists in the fact that Soviet demands on other peoples, from the standpoint of the assurance of Soviet security, are so extreme that they are usually quite unacceptable to the peoples in question if they are presented in all their naked reality. Therefore, Soviet demands must be presented in another form, and here again we have the necessity of deception.

You may ask why the Kremlin does not realize this and draw the necessary conclusion. Why does it not reconcile itself—as our Government has done in relation to the governments of Central and South America—to a relationship which allows neighboring countries full expression of political feeling, restricting them only when questions of regional security are involved? The answer goes back to that basic lack of self-confidence which I feel is the reason for so many of our difficulties with the Russians. The men in the Kremlin have never learned to work, to trust themselves to work, in an atmosphere of tolerance. Animated themselves, at least in ideology, by implacable hostility to all that they do not control, they can only assume those whom they do not control are animated by a similar hostility toward them. For that reason the men in the Kremlin are convinced that their power must be absolute if it is to be effective.

In the case of the other great task of Soviet diplomacy, namely, the task of reducing rival power, the necessity of dissimulation is quite obvious. If the governments and the public of foreign countries realized how many of the Soviet moves and actions are motivated by this purpose, relatively few of those moves and actions would be effective because they would be countered. These actions can be successful only when they masquerade under other names and when they take advantage of the traditions of tolerance and freedom of political expression which exist in other countries. There is no doubt

about it: free human society is a very vulnerable thing. It labors under great handicaps. In granting liberties to its own citizens, it can not help but grant them to its enemies as well, for it can not always distinguish the one from the other and, unfortunately, they are sometimes identical.

A second quality of the methods of Soviet diplomacy—a quality which also flows from the second and more extensive of its tasks—is its divisiveness and destructiveness. As long as the outside world continues to hold the preponderance of force which it does today, any direct attempt by Russia to weaken the power of other states would invite repercussions which would be dangerous to Soviet security and thus prejudicial to the first of the two tasks. Therefore the Russian leaders can not make direct attacks. They must content themselves with manipulating and exploiting such foreign forces as they are able to influence abroad, encouraging them to attack each other, to destroy each other, or to cancel out each other. This, of course, explains the Soviet predilection for operating through various front organizations which are designed to stir the citizens of one state up against itself, or to stir smaller states against greater ones, or to stir up colonial peoples against those who bear the responsibility for their affairs. This quality also explains the obvious Soviet preference for unofficial, non-government channels in diplomacy, such as the World Federation of Trade Unions and many others.

It is a curious fact, and one which is important to note, that the Kremlin treats the rank and file of foreign communist parties pretty much the way it does any other force it is capable of manipulating. The Kremlin does not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of these communists where it will help to achieve the overall objective. The Moscow leaders must be well aware that further communist activities in this country along the lines which we have seen in recent years is very likely to promote a violent conservative reaction here, a reaction which will have most unfortunate and perhaps even catastrophic results for American communists. They must recall that it was in large part the challenge of the German Communist Party which gave rise to National Socialism in Germany and brought about the destruction of the German Communist Party. Nevertheless, the Moscow leaders cling stubbornly to the belief that what is important is not the fate of the rank and file of American communists, but that inroads should be made into the basic democratic tolerance of the American way of life, that violence should replace good-natured acquiescence

in the will of the majority, that passions and hatreds should be aroused, and that people should seek solutions in blind and fanatical partisanship rather than in self-subordination to a democratic political idea. If any of you doubt that, read Dostoyevski's novel *The Possessed*. If the American Communist Party can succeed in provoking this sort of a reaction in the American public, then the rank and file of the American Communist Party is expendable and, like the Moor in Shakespeare's *Othello*, will have done its duty and can go. For communists know that in a healthy good-humored democratic atmosphere—permeated by the spirit of compromise and give-and-take and by the basic belief that all human groups or classes which accept the laws of society are entitled to sympathy and respect—they are powerless to accomplish their purposes, and that communist charms and potions have no effect. On the other hand, communists are convinced that wherever people have lost confidence in the rules of their own society, and wherever they can be induced to turn on each other with the savagery and despair of frightened animals, *there* communistic techniques are superior, and *there* communism will eventually triumph. That is their deep-seated conviction.

Hand in hand with the essential *deceptiveness* and *divisiveness* of Soviet diplomacy goes its basic *cautiousness*. It is the cautiousness of the weaker party playing a complicated and dangerous game against an adversary superior in strength. This cautiousness finds its most outstanding expression in the Soviet predilection for *alternatives*. The Kremlin never likes to be committed to any single course of advance. It likes to hold open to itself parallel or even contradictory courses in the event that one or the other should prove unprofitable. Now our direct American psychology, at least in foreign affairs, is given to pursuing a single course of policy until it is demonstrated to be no good, and then to following something else. The Russian mentality doesn't do that. It pursues two policies at the same time, and it is confident that if a showdown becomes necessary it will be able to junk the least valuable of the two. A Russian thinks of foreign policy in terms of chase, and he likes to design his moves so that they can possibly serve two to three different plans. It is this quality which leads to so many conflicting views in this country about what the Russians really want. In the Russian mind there is rarely any absolute answer to that question. If a Russian were to ask himself, for example, who he would prefer to see hold power in those

eastern districts of Germany about which there has not yet been any final international agreement, namely the Germans or the Poles, his answer would be:

That all depends. It depends on which of them can yield the most from our point of view. If there were a communist Germany and a bourgeois Poland we would want the Germans to hold it. But if it were a non-communist Germany and a communist Poland, then it is better that the Poles hold it. We don't know which of these things is going to happen, and for that reason we encourage both.

He sees nothing unnatural in that, and when I think it through, I don't see much that is unnatural in it, myself.

In this sense there is a rather intricate but unmistakable pragmatism in Soviet diplomacy, a cheerful willingness to experiment and to see what will work and what will not. This is something we should bear in mind, for people in this country are frequently beseeching our Government to yield, in the interests of great power solidarity, to expressed Soviet wishes which are sometimes animated in Moscow by little more than a boyish curiosity to see what will happen if you poke the animal in that particular place.

I have given you a general characterization of the methods of Soviet diplomacy. I haven't attempted to recite them to you in detail because the variety is infinite. But I do want to make it clear that as far as the details are concerned, the Russians take a highly cynical view of diplomacy and the problems of diplomacy. To illustrate this fact I would like to list the section headings of the chapter on 'bourgeois methods of diplomacy' from the official Soviet *History of Diplomacy*, just published:

"Aggression Disguised by Motives of Defense,"

"Aggression Disguised by So-Called Unselfish Ideological Motives,"

"The Use of Pacifist Propaganda for the Purpose of Disorienting the Adversary,"

"The Conclusion of So-Called Friendly Agreements for the Purpose of Disarming the Vigilance of the Adversary,"

"The Masking of Aggressive Plot by Propaganda for the Struggle against Bolshevism and the USSR,"

“The Propaganda for the So-Called Localization of Conflicts with the Disguised Purpose of Making it Easier for the Aggressor to Complete the Destruction of his Intended Victim,”

“The Diplomatic Exploitation by the Aggressor of the Internal Quarrels in the Camp of the Adversary,”

“The Utilization of National Differences and Conflicting Interests in the Camp of the Enemies,”

“The Disguising of Predatory Plans by Demogogical Summons to Struggle against the Hegemony of the Imperialist Victors,”

“The Method of Systematic Threats and of Terrorization of the Adversary,” and

“The So-Called Defense of Weak States as a Pretext for Aggression.”

Now this, gentlemen, is the dim chamber of horrors in which the Soviet diplomatic mind wanders about, and I can't say that I envy it. I have only one comment to make on that list. There is nothing in the philosophy of the communist leaders to indicate that there is any reason why the Soviet methods of diplomacy should be any nicer or more delicate than what are believed to be the methods of its adversaries. You can think that one out for yourselves.

So much for the methods of Soviet diplomacy. Let us now take up the third point mentioned by the Soviet encyclopedia, namely its composition. I think we can take this in the broader sense to indicate the composition not only of the Russians' diplomatic apparatus, but the Russians' views on the apparatus of diplomacy in general.

We would do well to recall at this point that the idea of the peaceful co-existence of sovereign states, related to each other by ties of mutual confidence and respect, is a concept of relatively recent origin in world history. It could scarcely be said to have existed at all in the ancient world, and even in our Western civilization it was very late in making its appearance. Diplomacy, therefore, long remained the technique of the conduct of affairs between enemies. We have seen already that such was the theory on which Soviet diplomacy was founded. This being the case, there is something distinctly old-fashioned, almost ancient and venerable, about the quality of Soviet diplomacy. And since communists are not ordinarily communicative, you can find the best summaries of Soviet views on diplomacy if you go back several hundred years and see what people were writing about diplomacy at that time. Here is a passage written by a fellow who, my colleague Sherman Kent tells me, was the diplomatic

adviser of King Louis XI of France about five-hundred years ago. Here is what the adviser had to say about the apparatus of diplomacy and the practice of sending and receiving diplomatic envoys:

It is by no means safe to send and receive a large number of Ambassadors. Very often many bad things happen when you do that. Nevertheless, you have to send them and you have to receive them. Those who read these lines may ask what means I know to offset this? Well, here is what I would do. If secret or open Ambassadors came from rulers whose hatred for you is such as I have observed constantly between all great lords, then in my opinion this is a very dangerous thing. Of course you have to treat them well and receive them with honor. They should be met and given comfortable quarters and intelligent and reliable people should be assigned to accompany them. This is an honorable and true service because by this means it is possible to learn who comes to see them and to prevent frivolous and discontented people from giving information to them. I am for hearing what they have to say as fast as possible and then sending them away again, because it seems to me very dangerous to keep enemies around you. And for every Ambassador that the enemies might send to us, I would send two to them. And I would take care to see that their Ambassador was bored and that he would request his sovereign not to send him to us any more, because there is no better or truer spy, no better snooper or collector of rumors. And then if we had several of our Ambassadors at foreign courts they could keep an eye on each other in order that no one of them should carry on any negotiations with third parties. Of course some people will say that your enemy will make it a point of pride that he has so many representatives at his court. Well, let him do it! Just the same, you can get more information that way and that is very important, because those who keep up with the times are never without honor.

Now that was the view of diplomacy that prevailed five-hundred years ago. I find nothing in it to which any honest communist in Moscow could take exception.

There are only a few things I would like to point out about the Soviet view toward representatives in Moscow. For prestige reasons, just as this gentlemen suggested, the Soviet Government wishes to have ministers and ambassadors of other states in Moscow. It is not anxious, however, that they should be surrounded by numerous staffs, since it feels that the only real reason for the maintenance of a

large staff of a foreign mission in Moscow is to increase its capacity for observation, which is substantially correct. The Soviet Government does all in its power to isolate these foreign representatives, and as the old French diplomatist suggested, to make it boring, to say the least, for most of them to reside there. The Soviets try to see that foreign representatives are pretty well confined to their embassies, that they do not come into contact with the Soviet population, that their relations with individual Soviet officials are not overly cordial, and that it is thoroughly understood by all local inhabitants that foreign diplomats are dangerous people and not good people to have anything to do with. Diplomats are classified as official spies and treated as such.

Foreign representatives are naturally not happy about this treatment, and most of them leave Russia highly incensed, disillusioned, and embittered. In this way, it has often occurred to me, the Moscow diplomatic corps resembles sort of an academy in which the Soviet Government, as the dean, graduates a given quota of people each year, a given quota of hostile and embittered diplomats. This might seem to be bad propaganda for Russia, but Soviet authorities evidently don't rate highly the capacity of foreign diplomats for influencing people in their own countries. They are persuaded that there are better ways of getting at foreign governments than through their people abroad. They wash the diplomats off in the beginning as a bad job. This is true even of the most friendly and conciliatory of them. The Russian officials eye them all with the same chilly and baleful glance. When the exceptionally unctuous diplomat appears on the scene the Russians say to themselves, "Well, old boy, you think you're friendly to us today and you think you'll continue to be that, but we know better. We know more than you do." Sometimes they are confronted with incurable suitors, the persistent ones, whom no series of rebuffs educate to the facts of life. In that case sometimes they will consent to give those people a limited, guarded buildup if they think anything is to be gained by it, but they do so with obvious distaste and with the conviction that in the long run those people will be unable to take it, and will be obliged to turn on them eventually as so many have done in the past. The men in the Kremlin know, even if people in the West do not, that their demands are total and they cannot be met in the long run by anything less than total submission. There is no such thing as a half communist, or a half sympathizer. It is described by them as like being pregnant: you either are or you aren't.

Now I have described to you gentlemen some of the high spots of what we are confronted with in the diplomacy of the Soviet Union. I hope that what I have told you is sufficient to justify my own conviction, with which many of you are familiar, that we are not likely to influence the diplomacy of the Kremlin by any traditional approaches of American diplomacy. For our diplomatic tradition, which has grown up to meet the demands of the peaceful co-existence of maritime commercial nations whose main objective had been to trade with each other and to associate with each other to mutual profit and advantage, is as far removed as anything could be from the concept of diplomacy prevalent in the Soviet mind.

On the other hand, I certainly am not one of those who see in the diplomacy of the Soviet Union a sinister and mysterious force, the secrets of which we can not fathom and the advance of which we are incapable of stopping by measures short of war. I consider this view to be intellectually unjustified and unworthy of the courage and self-confidence which I think a great democratic state ought to have when it approaches the problems of its international environment. The diplomacy of Russia is no mystery. It is a known reality, a grim but known reality. The only mystery which it involves concerns those foreigners who insist on taking Russian diplomacy for something which it is not, and on reproaching our government for trying to take it for that which it is.

Soviet diplomacy is not anything for us to wax indignant about. When you get indignant about something you imply you expected something else from the other fellow. If we become indignant about Soviet diplomacy, the only reason can be that we have failed to face it frankly, and we have been seeking things which we have no right to seek. I would remind you that the Russians themselves, the real Russian leaders, never in my observation became really indignant over us. If things go wrong for them they blame someone in their own organization for failure to calculate the enemy's force correctly. They react more or less the way they might in war. You don't speak of getting indignant of the action of the enemy in wartime. It is taken for granted that his actions are hostile to you, and so it is with the Soviet Union.

The course which our country should follow with respect to Soviet diplomacy is fairly clear. It is a course dictated not only by the interests of the people of this country, but by the interests of people everywhere who want to lead their own lives and have national

independence. We have no quarrel with the Russians' desire for security and our only endeavor must be as it has been in recent months, to try to see that the Soviet Government's security demands are applied to other people, are carried to other people, in a manner consistent with their national independence and with the maturity of their political institutions. In its other task—that of the reduction of the potential of countries abroad—we must see that Soviet diplomacy is not successful. We can do it by introducing clarity where there is now obscurity. We can turn the searchlight of intelligent analysis and publicity on Soviet efforts to disguise Soviet activities in that direction. We can have the courage to call a spade a spade in talking with our own people, and rely on their native common sense and understanding to go with us. Finally, we can follow Shakespeare's advice and bind to our hearts with hoops of steel those other countries which we know would be at least tolerant of our existence as a great power.

Of course, these methods will not bring quick results. Nothing will. But if they are applied consistently enough and courageously enough over a long period of time, I think they can not fail to have their effect. No government policy can suffer constant repeated frustration indefinitely and continue to remain a reality. If our government has the courage to go ahead with this, the courage and the self-discipline to exercise such a policy, then I think a day must come when the realization will dawn in Moscow that the diplomacy aimed at a shattering of power in other states can not be successful. On the heels of that realization will come the understanding that in this international society of which we form a part today, the prosperity of one country is really the prosperity of all.

The task of those in the government concerned with the development of policy toward Russia is to work out a program for achieving this effect. In approaching this program, I don't think we ought to hang our heads in despair and groan about the inevitability of war. On the other hand, I don't think we should insult the diplomatic traditions of this country or the memory of statesmen like Washington and Jefferson and Hamilton, by mouthing frivolous and pat solutions toward what is a serious and deep-seated problem.

If we can avoid these extremes and apply ourselves to this new set of problems sincerely and maturely, then I have no doubt that the problem of Soviet diplomacy will eventually take its place with those other problems of foreign policy which have been solved and left happily behind in the progress of this country.

*December 10, 1946*

## **THE BACKGROUND OF CURRENT RUSSIAN DIPLOMATIC MOVES**

*Editors' Note: The War College Commandant had asked Kennan to speak to a special audience of students, their spouses, and other guests. Delivered in the evening, this lecture was not part of the formal curriculum.*

SEVERAL DAYS AGO I WAS REMINDED BY TIME MAGAZINE THAT some philosopher in the Moscow foreign colony (I am not sure it wasn't myself) had once observed that there are no experts on Russia; there are only people with varying degrees of ignorance. That is true. The only real advantage that the so-called Russian expert has over other people is that he is better able to obscure the line where his little knowledge ends and his great ignorance begins. Others may have their suspicions about where that line lies, but it is always hard for them to prove it.

Three days ago, a certain local unnamed military despot invited me to lecture to you tonight on a subject of my choice. I realized that there would be no chance for me to use printed sources to help me obscure this dividing line between knowledge and ignorance. My only hope would be to choose a subject where everyone else's ignorance would be at least as great as my own and to hope for the best.

The subject I chose has two other features which commend it to me. First, I have been asked the most questions in the last two or three weeks about it; and after giving some 20 or 30 lectures about Russia in the last half year, I have discovered that is not a bad criterion to apply in choosing the subject. Second, I am inclined to think that, while understanding of Russia has increased enormously in our Government in general during the past year, it still has some conspicuous gaps. One of the greatest gaps is the tendency to assume that the men in the Kremlin have everything neatly arranged and tucked away at home and are free to follow their own whims and caprices in the field of foreign affairs, turning any way that appeals to their fancy at a given moment. This assumption fails to appreciate that Russian foreign policy, like that of our own country, is in large measure an outgrowth of internal policy, is constantly being affected and modified by a wide variety of domestic checks and balances, and can not be fairly judged other than against the whole broad background of the interests and troubles and aspirations of the leaders of the Soviet regime.

I will not even attempt to tell you precisely why Mr. Molotov recently modified his stand with regard to the veto on questions of disarmament and control of atomic energy, or why he decided to

yield on this point or that point with respect to the future international regime in Trieste. One *can* speculate about those questions, but the variables involved are so many that I must question the value of any outside speculation, including my own. I will try to give you a picture of some of the things which the men in the Kremlin must have in mind these days when they sit down to decide questions of foreign policy and which might explain a certain caution on their part. If we can keep these concerns clearly before us as we think about current developments, then perhaps at least our own speculations on the more detailed questions will tend to become a little less remote from the narrow path of reality. In the strange wilderness of Russian thought and Russian behaviorism, that alone is a tremendous step forward.

The world, as seen from the Kremlin, falls into three main sectors: first, what we might call the inner bastion, the Soviet Union itself; secondly, the adjacent territory strategically controlled by that inner bastion, namely, the Soviet-occupied areas and the areas where Soviet political power is dominant; and thirdly, the territory behind the enemy's lines, where enemy strength has to be carefully calculated, and where Soviet reconnaissance and sabotage patrols as well as native fifth column elements are active. Let us see how each of these sectors would appear to the Kremlin today.

Let's start with the third sector, namely, the capitalist countries.

Numbers of people have pointed out the important effect of internal developments in this country on Soviet foreign policy and the avid interest with which the Russians, like most foreigners, follow the course of our social and economic difficulties. I share this view completely, as most of you know, and I would be the last to under-rate the damage done to Russian-American relations by signs of internal weakness in our country.

But there is another side to this picture. The rifts in our society appear interesting and promising to the Russians primarily insofar as they facilitate the communist effort to penetrate and dominate the leading political positions in our country. The men in the Kremlin are wise enough to understand that while we may have our strikes and our crises, we have a habit of landing on our feet and carrying on again in a pretty successful way, and that we will continue to do so unless they succeed in exploiting our difficulties in such a way as to obtain dominant influence in our political life. For that reason, their attention in this country is centered on the American Communist

Party and its efforts to get its hands on the controls which govern the machinery of American civilization. Here in the United States, despite all our internal difficulties today, the communists are up against a somewhat discouraging situation. To understand this situation, we must take a glance backward at the history of the tactics of the Communist International.

In the first decade—perhaps the first decade and a half—of Soviet power, the communist parties in Western countries constituted small, defiant groups of people who worked together as compact units. They were out to overthrow capitalist society and they made no bones of that fact. They played a lone hand. They hated everybody else and said so in no uncertain terms. They approved of no other political tendency whatsoever. They despised above all else the liberal left-wingers, with whom they had fought a family battle of twenty years' duration, whom Lenin had denounced as "the false friends of the people," and who—in their capacity as traitors to the working class—were considered, if anything, more invidious and more deserving of contempt than the capitalists themselves.

It was Stalin and his particular friends who thought they clearly saw two reasons for changing this situation. In the first place, they saw that with these tactics, the communist parties were condemned to remain, in most instances, futile minority groups, incapable of overthrowing capitalism but capable of being a constant source of embarrassment to the foreign policy of the USSR. Secondly, somewhat to their surprise, they saw that such popularity as the Soviet Union was acquiring abroad was not primarily among the working class people to whom they had originally tried to appeal, but among the liberal, bourgeois intellectuals for whom they had such contempt. It occurred to Stalin and his friends that even though they might be incapable of winning over the mass of the Western proletariat to a devotion to their brand of communism, they still had the possibility, by exploiting the vague uneasiness and sentimentality of fellow-travelers, to confuse public opinion in the Western countries, to embarrass the Western governments, and perhaps even to penetrate these governments and achieve dominion over them. This was the famous Trojan Horse technique announced by Dmitrov in 1934. In the belly of the great silly horse of Western liberalism, the communists were to ride into the camp of Western democracy and then destroy it from within.

In accordance with this theory, sweeping changes were made in the tactics of the communist parties. Instead of attacking Western liberalism openly, they entered upon a program of association with the Western liberal parties and groups, as well as with the noncommunist labor unions, with a view to penetrating and dominating all political forces except those of the right and the right center. They posed as patriots; they paid lip-service to the ideals of democracy; they tried to put themselves in the foreground of all popular grievances, just as though they really believed that liberal democratic society was there to stay, and should be improved rather than destroyed. It was reckoned that if this purpose could be accomplished, then the aims of Soviet foreign policy could be easily and rapidly achieved and the social structure in the other countries could be gradually altered in such a way that a Soviet-controlled dictatorship could eventually be introduced. You all know the nature and scope of this effort. The wartime associations gave it a tremendous boost. I need only say that in our country alone it has affected organizations probably running into the hundreds and individuals numbering into the millions.

But in the major capitalist countries of the British Empire and America, this effort now appears not only to have reached its peak, but to have started a reverse process in which the communist elements are actually losing ground. For the people in Moscow, this is a fact of enormous importance. They must now recognize that they have learned the limits of effectiveness of this type of operation; and that these tactics, even in a period of extreme social unrest, have fallen far short of decisive results. In this connection, I want to invite your attention to an item which appeared in the *New York Times* last week:

The national committee of the Communist party terminated a three-day post-election meeting last night after hearing William Z. Foster, national chairman, report that Communists no longer had influence within the government of the United States.

Mr. Foster had additional bad news for the Communist leaders assembled at a closed session at an undisclosed meeting place. He told them that the leftists and liberals to whom the Communists looked for accomplishment of their political objectives as members of a coalition with more conservative Democrats had been "seriously demoralized by the betrayals of the Truman administration."

The situation, Mr. Foster told the committeemen, "puts upon our party the responsibility for a higher type of work than we have been putting forth up to this time."

The national chairman criticized party workers for failures in the recent national election. In each case, he said, realistic goals had been given but the party fell "far short of objectives it set for itself." He said the party needed "a new fighting spirit," that its pace of progress was too "slow". . . .

I don't know whether that report is true, but it has the ring of plausibility. And don't be deceived by Mr. Foster's official optimism, to the effect that the trouble lies only with the lack of fighting spirit. The trouble goes far deeper than that. The communists are up against something much more fundamental and much more dangerous: namely, the plain, common sense of democratic public opinion and the fallaciousness of all tactics based on the theory that you can fool all of the people all of the time.

If the people in Moscow draw from this the logical conclusions, they will have to recognize that in a large part of the capitalist world, they can no longer hope to control events by burrowing from underneath. In the long run they are going to be obliged to deal with national governments in those countries, governments which they can not bypass and which will insist on representing purely national interests. This is a recognition fraught with significance both for the international communist movement, which may well be seriously demoralized and damaged, and for the Soviet policymakers, who must now think twice before they risk any open break with the West and forgo completely the benevolent predisposition of these free governments. The day may come when they will need their relations with these governments, for it is becoming increasingly evident that they will have nothing else to put in the place of such relations.

So much for the camp of the enemy. How about the secondary zone of Soviet control, the Soviet satellites? What does the Kremlin see when it looks at those areas in connection with its foreign policy?

The Kremlin sees that nowhere in all these countries where Soviet police and military power is supreme have the ideals or the realities of Soviet power become popular. It sees that in every one of those countries, those ideals and those realities are unwelcome to the majority of the people. In almost every case, they have to be supported by the familiar apparatus of totalitarianism, by all those

modern devices which allow a ruthless and determined minority to assert its will over a reluctant majority.

To the Kremlin, of course, this is nothing unusual. A similar situation prevails in the Soviet Union itself. But in these other countries, it is a little bit more delicate and more problematical. Here the machinery of oppression bears the stigma of foreign inspiration. Here it is being applied to peoples with a greater tradition, after all, of freedom and individualism than the Russian people have ever had. I am a little impatient with this easy cliché to the effect that the countries of Eastern Europe never knew or had democracy anyway. I think we should remember that democracy is only a relative term, not an absolute one. Even our own democracy is relative, not absolute; and while few of the countries of Eastern Europe have known a political system resembling that which we have seen in our own country or in France or in England, they have certainly known forms of political organization considerably more advanced from the standpoint of democratic practices than anything that has been the experience of the Russian people. More important than that, the countries of Eastern Europe have known national independence, national pride, and indigenous forms of government which, if not entirely democratic according to our standards, have nevertheless seemed natural and not always entirely undesirable to the peoples in question. Therefore, the Russians are faced with the disadvantage which has dogged their footsteps time after time when they have tried to exert authority over Western peoples, namely, the fact that they come to those Western peoples as the bearers of a more primitive and more backward political system than the systems indigenous to that area. Thus the attempt to impose Soviet concepts staggers under a heavier burden of unpopularity and opposition in the other countries of Eastern Europe than it does in Russia itself. The Kremlin can not feel comfortable in its new role as master of these peoples until it raises their standard of living to a point where they will be inclined to forget the loss of their freedom.

This being the case, Soviet imperialism in Eastern Europe could hope for success only if Russia were able to contribute economically to the rehabilitation of these war-torn and impoverished countries and to give them something in return for what she takes from them. But this is exactly what Russia can not do at this stage of her development. Russia, at the present juncture, is a taking nation, not a giving nation. It is Russia which desperately needs economic aid

from outside. All the ostentatious gifts to the Polish Government of trucks (which are actually American trucks obtained earlier via the Lend-Lease program), or of so-and-so many tons of grain (which have in fact been quietly appropriated from the Poles by the Red Army), can not conceal the fact that Russia is a drain on the meager economic resources of that area and not a fountain of productive energy from which those peoples can draw strength and assistance. In this respect Russian rule differs so profoundly and so unfavorably from the influence which the Germans exerted over those countries some five or six years ago. For Germany was able to give as well as to take. But the desperate merchandise-hunger of the Soviet Government today makes giving impossible in Russia's case, and weakens enormously the position which that government might otherwise enjoy.

Here again the Soviet Government can not dispense with the West and the Kremlin knows it. It is this fact which has forced the Kremlin to permit Czechoslovakia to join the World Trade Organization and to subscribe to its principles. It is this fact which has forced the Kremlin to permit an opposition to carry on in Poland through nearly two years of communist rule. And it is this fact which is forcing the Soviet Government today to offer concessions to us with respect to the economic unification of Germany in return for reparations out of current production from the Western zones. The Soviet zone of Germany has been picked clean. There is no more meat on those bones. There is little enough on the bones of the remainder of Germany. But there is just enough to enlist the interest of Moscow and just enough to make the Soviet leaders continue to angle for some arrangement through which they can participate in picking it, even though this may involve consequences which seem to them undesirable from the political standpoint. Here again, it is the Western world whose help is necessary if the Soviet Government is not going to suffer an increase in the political risks and difficulties which it faces in the zones of its dominant power. The men in the Kremlin have to bear that in mind when they make policy.

Now let us turn to the inner bastion of Soviet power, the Soviet Union itself. We might consider first the question which seems to be uppermost in everybody's mind: the problem of the leadership within the Communist Party. How about these stories in the press in recent days of Stalin's reputed illness and of the jockeying for position which is said to be going on in the Kremlin?

A lot of this is just unadulterated speculation, spun out of thin air. In other circumstances I doubt that I would have chosen to include it in this discussion. But since it *has* been the subject of so much comment, I will try to say briefly what I think can properly be said about the men who are most deserving of mention in this connection.

First of all, Stalin. It is possible that he is in seriously bad health, but I know of no confirmation of this. He is presently away from Moscow--at his country place in the Caucasus. While he is away, others run the show and make the public appearances. What of it? This was exactly the same last year. Yet when Stalin returned to Moscow last December, there was a great burst of official adulation from the propaganda machine, and after that his position in the leadership of affairs appeared to be just what it had been before his absence from the city.

Does this mean, then, that there have been no changes at all in Stalin's position during the years of the war? By no means. Of course there have been changes. The first of these you can guess: Stalin is now seven years older than he was in 1939. At his age, that alone is an important factor.

Secondly, during the war, his attention was concentrated on military matters. He must have lost contact with the lower and middle levels of the Party and his dependence on others for the actual administration of the Party and police must have increased. This must have led to a rise in the influence of those who controlled his "in-basket."

We are safe in concluding that today the power of Stalin's advisers is greater than it was before the war. But it would be a very rash step, on the basis of what we know today, to wash Stalin out as a major factor in internal politics and to view the people under him as preoccupied mainly with the problems of succession.

We come next to Molotov, a real riddle. Molotov is the man who has normally been considered Stalin's closest assistant and the logical candidate for succession. He has ridden through 25 years of the most fantastic ups and downs of Soviet politics without a blemish on his record of unflinching loyalty to Stalin. I think it is a concomitant of this that he probably has few friends and no compact body of personal followers within the Party. His recent long absence from Moscow for the current negotiations, and previous presence in Paris, are unprecedented in the annals of the Political Bureau. I find it hard to believe that with the cat away so long the mice are not beginning

to play in the corridors of the Kremlin. In view of this factor, I would be inclined to put a large question mark after Molotov's chances for succeeding Stalin.

Beria, who looks like a benevolent clergyman, is known to the world as a hometown buddy of Stalin, a fellow Georgian, and as the overall head of the tremendous police system which is one of the two major instruments of Stalin's internal power. In addition to overall responsibility for the two police ministries, there is some reason to believe that he has been charged with the leadership of Russia's Manhattan Project. Until recently, Beria was rarely thought of as a possible successor to power. A secret police record is not the best background for one who wants to assume the public responsibilities of leadership, even in Russia. However, we note that a few months ago, there appeared in the windows of Moscow bookshops a little volume of flattering and flowery poems in praise of Beria. Some of these poems referred to him as "the man warmed by Stalin's friendship" and portrayed him as a "knight in shining armor whose flashing sword had long protected the faithful Soviet citizen from a host of enemies." Curiously enough, although most printed literature disappears from the Moscow bookshops with great speed regardless of its quality, the paltry 20,000 copies of this little volume were not yet sold out after three months in the bookstore windows. We must take this, I think, as a characteristic example of the ingratitude of human beings toward the chivalrous figures who make it their life work to protect them from others—and from themselves.

Next, we have Mr. Malenkov, a cherub-faced individual, still young in years, who until recently at least occupied the key position of personnel chief in the All-Union Communist Party. Together with Beria, with whom he appeared to be very close, he was considered the most influential man in Soviet internal politics. There is a good deal of evidence to indicate that at present Malenkov's star is setting, and that he may even have lost this important internal party post. I have heard it recounted, and with a considerable degree of plausibility, that when Stalin was taken ill in the course of airplane travel at the time of the Tehran Conference, Malenkov made the mistake of overestimating the seriousness of the illness and of suggesting a conference of the other leading advisers to consider the question of succession. If this is true, it might well explain the cloud which is settling over him at the present time. In any case, it illustrates something of the delicacy of the problem of succession in a grim dictatorship.

Finally, we come to Zhdanov, whose picture appeared on the cover of this week's *Time*. Zhdanov is an interesting figure. He is a man who has a considerable personal following in the Party. For this very reason, probably, his career has been marked by more ups and downs than that of Molotov. He has suffered some public humiliations at the hands of Stalin, and was kept for years in the most responsible but most delicate of provincial Party jobs: the leadership of the Leningrad Party organization. It is to the advantage of the top man in the Kremlin to appoint as Party boss in Leningrad the political figure who he thinks is most dangerous to himself. This has a double advantage. It keeps that Party figure out of Moscow and consequently out of the place where he could do the most harm. And at the same time, it gives him the toughest Party assignment that exists and the one in which he is most apt to bring discredit upon himself. For Leningrad, once the glittering capital of a tremendous empire, has never forgotten its erstwhile glamour and has never entirely reconciled itself to the power of the Moscow Kremlin. Zhdanov accepted this assignment, endured it for exactly 10 years, and came out of it relatively unscathed. I would put a question mark, too, on his chances of succeeding Stalin; but I would keep a close eye on him, for he is indeed a dark horse.

What does all this add up to? Many observers, viewing today what they consider to be a Soviet diplomatic withdrawal and pondering the domestic situation I have just described, are inclined to the opinion that something is "going on" in the Kremlin, that an internal political crisis is ripening and has found its reflection in a greater circumspection in foreign affairs. I don't repudiate this possibility. I think there is a good chance that these people are right. But I can not tell you that for certain; I do not know and neither do they.

I *do* think the men in the Kremlin are seriously worried about economic and morale conditions within the Soviet population itself.

I do not have time to describe in detail the economic conditions in which a large part of the people of the Soviet Union live today. Let us content ourselves with recording the fact that living conditions today in the Soviet Union are what the Russians themselves call "extremely heavy." People are abominably housed and poorly clothed, and millions of them are very close to semi-starvation.

Instead of giving you facts and figures on this point, I am going to tell you of one little scene which springs to my mind. When I was

in Moscow recently, I kept a room in a log cabin in a little suburban settlement about 20 miles from the center of town. I used to escape there occasionally when the strains of life and work in the very crowded Embassy building got too great. I went out there one damp, grey afternoon in April when the last of the dirty snow was melting on the fields, and I took a long walk in the woods. When I came back to the cottage, I was hungry and I asked the landlady to make me a cup of tea from a little stock of tea and sugar which I normally kept there. I then asked her if she couldn't let me have a piece of bread for which I would be glad to pay her. It developed then, in the course of the conversation, that she and the other members of her family literally had not a single crust of bread or food of any sort in the house. I asked her what they expected to do about this. She said that by evening, her brother should arrive from town with his ration of black bread. I asked what else they expected to get to eat. She said that most of the time they had nothing else at all. They had bought a goat for two thousand rubles, in order to get the milk but the goat had died before it was even delivered to them. Now they just had black bread most of the time.

Then a curious thought occurred to me. I asked her, "How do you eat this black bread? Do you eat it three times a day at the regular meal hours?"

"No," she said, "we eat it only once a day, in the morning, because we are too hungry to wait and too weak to do anything until we have eaten it."

Now the sort of condition which this simple story illustrates is a source of great concern to the Soviet Government when it is widespread. Why? Because, for the Soviet Government, there is only one real budgetary problem and that is not the financial one. All the cash of the country passes in and out of the hands of the government on an average of seven times a year and the constant redistribution of that cash is in itself no real problem for the men who run the country. The budget that really worries those men in the Kremlin, the budget they really have to watch, is the manpower budget, the budget of the nervous and physical strength of the Soviet people. As long as the machinery of dictatorship is kept at the usual high level of efficiency and ruthlessness, the Kremlin does not have to worry about the possibility of popular revolt. Popular revolt against a modern totalitarian regime which has all the machinery of power and which is prepared to be utterly ruthless in its application is simply an

impossibility. But there is one thing people *can* do which really worries their totalitarian leaders, because it can lead to their undoing: people can become so tired, so weak, so discouraged and desperate, that no amount of propaganda or intimidation can keep up their productive powers. When that occurs, it is hard to balance the budget of human hope and human strength. And when a deficit develops there, then the power of the totalitarian state is in jeopardy.

An English historian, writing the story of the Portuguese people, once observed that a great expenditure of national vitality will carry the heads of the people, kings or no, into prominence, while the same expenditure of course will, for centuries after, leave the nation too exhausted to force a head to the surface at all. That observation is profound. I don't think that this process has gone nearly far enough in Russia to affect future generations. But these men who take upon their consciences the responsibility of mercilessly exploiting the physical strength and the capacity for enthusiasm of great peoples, must be very careful, in their own interests, not to be too greedy in the rate at which they draw upon those priceless resources. And I am not sure that the Kremlin hasn't finally overstepped this line.

The question arises: Why can not the government get enough food out of the fantastically rich soils and the enormous expanses of Russian agricultural territory? There was a time, after all, before the Revolution, when Russia was one of the great grain-exporting countries of the world. What has happened to change that situation? The current party line blames it on a drought. There was a drought—a convenient one—but that is not the real answer. The real answer lies in the mess that has been made of the collective farm system.

Again, I am not going to try to tell you about this in detail, but it is a tremendously important factor. I do not think that the collective farm system is itself unsound, and I do not think that the peasants would like to see it abolished. But I do think the peasants would like to see it administered in a radically different way. And I believe that collective farming does not fit very well with a dictatorial form of government, creating a dilemma from which the Kremlin leaders will not easily escape.

Today, Russian agriculture is simply failing to deliver. In the past, the government has been able to overcome such crises by driving the people just a little bit harder and whipping them along just

a little bit faster. This time, I don't think that will work. The agricultural labor fund is too depleted, the land and people are just too tired. I see only two ways out for the Soviet Government. One would be to scale down radically the size of the armed forces and the secret police. But this would mean concessions to capitalism abroad and concessions to democracy at home. The other way out would be to procure from the outside world enough consumer goods to prime the pump of the Soviet economy, and to procure them without political commitments on the part of the Soviet Government. Is it any wonder, in these circumstances, that the Soviet Government is keenly interested in United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) relief without strings on it? When our Government shows an inclination to make sure that American charity serves American ideals, the entire Soviet propaganda apparatus from one end of the world to the other is set to work to see that that idea is scotched and that uncontrolled UNRRA relief is continued. But is it any wonder, on the other hand, that here again the Kremlin hesitates to envisage a complete break with the West, from which—in any and all circumstances—these blessings must flow?

So much for material conditions in Russia. What about morale and the state of mind of the people? Naturally, it is affected by these material conditions, which are probably the main reasons for bad morale at this time. But they are not the only reason. There is something more than that.

In the first place, there is a national loneliness, an appreciation of the extent to which Russia is cut off from association with the world at large. This feeling has been accentuated by the event of the war and by the fact that millions of people who got a glimpse of the outside world in wartime wish that they could have a closer glimpse of it in peacetime. In addition to this, we must remember that during the war, the Soviet Government was obliged for the first time in its history to do lip service itself to the principle of solidarity and friendship between the Russian people and the great peoples of the West. It is true that while this line was being officially propagated on the surface, the Communist Party was kept busy behind the scenes trying to undo the effects of these admissions, and to make people understand that just because the official press spoke in terms of guarded respect for the Western Allies, that was nothing to be taken too seriously.

But this underhand propaganda could never quite undo the damage that had been done. The government had admitted for the

first time that the Russian people were, even if only temporarily, dependent upon those peoples of the West whose governments and whose forms of society the communists professed to despise. The consciousness of this sunk deeply into Russian minds. Many people half-believed the government's warning about the wickedness of the West and still experienced something of the traditional Russian jealousy of and hostility toward those who had a higher civilization and a higher standard of living. Nevertheless, there was a dim appreciation among the Russians that, somehow or other, the world could not really be brought into balance until the peoples themselves could be brought closer to one another, until Russia could begin to learn from the outside world and could offer to the world at large the benefits of the enormous talents which the Russian people have never doubted that they possess. Confused as all this was, it left in the Russian mind a dim thrill of hope and excitement, a feeling of expectation of a future that was going to bring something new, something more promising into their drab and laborious lives than anything they had ever known before. And when, with the end of the war, their government raised a stern and forbidding finger and said to them, in effect, "None of this. The outside world is not for the likes of you. Get back into the lonely isolation of your factories and farms, and leave to us the contact with the world outside your borders which is evil and which you cannot be permitted to know"—that admonition left in the popular mind a feeling of frustration and disappointment which can not now be easily overcome.

The war wrought changes not only in the feelings of people about the outside world, but also in the feelings of people about their own government. It stripped something of the aura of omnipotence and infallibility and mystery from the Soviet regime. The war spotlighted, in its initial stages, the general backwardness and even the military backwardness of Russia. It made mockery of many of the boasts of the men in power. It confounded many of their predictions. It made clear to everyone that what lay behind those grim old walls surrounding the palaces and churches of the Kremlin was not a new revelation of human or divine genius, not a new idea destined to change the ethics of man and to open a brighter page in the history of humanity, but only an improved technique of oppression, a streamlined version of a despotism as old as human society itself. The war also revealed the Kremlin leaders not as supermen, but as very ordinary people, fallible, mortal, fearful for their own power and

their own safety, able leaders to be sure in a war of survival, but ordinary men nevertheless, susceptible like the rest of us to the ravages of disease and old age, and with no answers to any of the great riddles of humanity, the riddles of birth and love and ambition and death which have accompanied man from the beginning of civilization.

These revelations did not mean that anything extraordinary happened; did not mean that people revolted; did not mean that people even said anything to reveal such feelings. But the relationship between people and government had somehow undergone a subtle change. It was like a woman who had been romantically in love with her husband and who had suddenly seen his true colors revealed by a particularly trying and pitiless crisis in which he proved to be only a very ordinary sort of a person, perhaps just a little bit more hard-boiled and callous than the others. Nothing sensational followed this revelation. There was no question of a divorce. They decided to stay together for the sake of the children. But the honeymoon was definitely over.

That is substantially what took place in the relations between the Russian people and Government. Is it any wonder in these circumstances that people turned again by the thousands and tens of thousands to the church for comfort and hope? Is it any wonder that the government became doubly afraid of the effect of outside influence on the mind and soul of the Russian people and afflicted with a pathological jealousy and suspicion of all outside forces? On the other hand, is it not equally natural that the government should hesitate to face the reaction which would probably set in if there were to be a complete break with the West and if the Russian people, desperately tired, desperately weary of war, of violence, of privation and of sacrifice, were to get the impression that Russia was once again to become the center of a world conflict?

These factors that I have described are some of the leading topographic features on the horizon against which the Soviet leaders view their foreign policy problems. I hesitate to draw any prophetic conclusions from them. Although they all point in one direction, others could be cited which point in the other direction.

I think it possible—though not yet proven—that the peak of Soviet power may have been passed. I think it possible that the immediate threat to our society, presented by the Soviet bid for power in this world, may be on the wane. I do not know for sure. But

even if this were true, I would find it small cause for rejoicing. I would warn you all against any dancing of jigs and tooting of flutes and chanting of "Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf," simply because Mr. Molotov has made some cryptic concessions in New York.

Why is there no cause for rejoicing? Because I have never really believed in any Soviet threat to our institutions? By no means. No one knows better than I what ruthlessness and implacable hostility to our way of life lie behind Soviet purposes. Is it because I see some other outside threat looming behind the receding cloud of Soviet power, preparing to attempt in its turn the overthrow of our society? Again, the answer is no. That possibility cannot be excluded; but it is not what sobers me in the face of this first faint flush of dawn—perhaps a false dawn—on the diplomatic sky. What is it then?

Well, in part, it is the reflection that Soviet policy always works with contradictory alternatives, and that no tendency in Russian diplomacy is ever final. But even more, it is a realization which I think was common, in one degree or another, to everyone of us who lived and served in Russia: the realization that the Soviet attack on us was based on a shrewd and pitiless analysis of our own national faults. Such an analysis could only come from a primitive, jealous, and intuitive people like the Russians. The Russian people are powerfully inclined to admire us. They wish in their heart of hearts that they could be proved wrong in their skepticism about us and that we would really turn out in the end to have the answers which they so desperately need. If they have been ready to destroy us, it was in reality for our failure to eradicate the weaknesses of our own society, for our failure to be what they thought we should be, to bring out the best they felt was in us.

The Russians, I can assure you, have never been a menace to us except as we have been a menace to ourselves. It is possible that today their own weaknesses may make it hard for them to be even that. But being forced to see this country for many years through Russian eyes has left with me a conviction that we cannot escape a final settlement with these failings which the Russians have detected in our society and which have enabled them, an economically weak and politically backward nation, to come so close to disrupting our society. Those failings will catch up with us some day, if we do not catch up with them. The real threat to our society, the threat which has lain behind the Soviet armies, behind the *Daily Worker*, and behind the aberrations of confused American left-wingers, will not be

overcome until we have learned to view ourselves realistically and to purge ourselves of some of our prejudices, our hypocrisies, and our lack of civic discipline. When we have done that, we shall no longer have to feel that we must stake the future of our international environment on the laconic pronouncements that fall from the lips of Mr. Molotov or any other Soviet statesman.

January 10, 1947

## CURRENT POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Editors' Note: *Although the National War College curriculum was primarily devoted to national security policy, it also focused on contemporary international affairs. This session, given under Kennan's tutelage, was the first in series of current political affairs discussions and not a formal lecture as such. On this occasion, Professor Kennan—a US-Soviet affairs expert—invited regional experts to speak at the War College on a current topic—in this case, French domestic politics and their implications for French policy in Indochina. Kennan gives only part of this briefing himself, but we have included it in its entirety as an example of this type of academic exercise. Kennan's remarks are of interest in their own right, and his participation further illustrates that Kennan the diplomat and professor was also a student, as he and the other faculty attended almost all the daily lectures and other discussions such as this one.*

**T**HIS IS THE FIRST OF THE BRIEFINGS ON CURRENT POLITICAL affairs of particular interest in the press and public opinion of the moment. My purpose is to clarify the background and the significance of these selected subjects, particularly when they relate to rather complicated and obscure situations where the press is not apt to give you a complete picture. I hope to draw on the participation of the members of the student body and on officials of other departments of government, so we can tap all these various sources of knowledge that exist around Washington on practically every part of the world.

Today's subjects are the recent flare-up of hostilities in French Indo-China, its background and significance from the standpoint of current American policy, and the question of internal French politics. For the discussion of recent events in French Indo-China, we have Mr. Robert Linn, civilian analyst of the Southeast Asia Section of the Office of Naval Intelligence, to give us first a short briefing on the physical characteristics of the country, the character of its population, and its prewar administration:

*LINN: I will give you a brief condensation of the geography, history, and background of French Indo-China. The country is on the Gulf of Tonkin and touches also on the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam; it extends north to the present Yunnan province in China and Kwangsi province. To the extreme northwest it borders a portion of Burma, and the rest of the border comprises Siam. The recent trouble was over a portion of the Chinese border.*

*The topography is shown on the map. This is rough country, malarial, and extremely difficult both for exploration or any operations. The Mekong River, one of the great rivers of Southeast Asia, flows from Tibet and marks a portion of the border. The Mekong River formation is rather interesting. Across the Mekong on the French Indo-China side the land rises in sharp, precipitous mountains which become forested and difficult for passage. Consequently, in northwest French Indo-China there are very few roads and the trails are quite difficult. The border, with very few natural lines of demarcation, is mostly artificial.*

*Let me say something about distances. For example, Saigon to Bangkok is about 300 miles, Saigon to Singapore a little over*

500 miles, Saigon to Hanoi a little more than 600 miles. The distance from Hanoi to Hong Kong is 500 miles, and to Manila about 900 miles. The area of the country comprises 285,000 square miles. The length from south to north extremes is about 1,000 miles, and the country varies in width from between less than 100 miles to over several hundred miles.

The population was about 23 million in the 1936 census. About 17 million are Annamese, 3 million are Cambodian, and the other 3 million are made up of various tribes in the hills, the Lolos, the Mois, the Thos, and other smaller tribes. There are a great number of Chinese living in the cities. Before the war, 45,000 French were there, ruling a country of 23 million people. The population is rather sparse throughout most of the country, covering about 80 people to the square mile. In the Tonkin Delta region the population runs as high as 1,000 to 1,800 per square mile. It is extremely congested; although there is usually enough food, periodic famine keeps the population down.

The topography includes a range of rather precipitous hills running down the length of the land. The country is often compared to a pole a coolie carries with two rice buckets hanging on either end. The mountains are the pole, the Mekong Delta is one rice bucket and the Red River Delta is the other.

There are three important rivers. Flowing through Hanoi and Haiphong is the River Rouge, the Red River; in the south the Saigon River, which is navigable by cruiser as far as Saigon; and south of that, the vast delta of the Mekong River.

The principal products of the country are rice, rubber, and various spices and agricultural products. In the north you find some coal and tin.

The original European settlers in the year 1517 were Portuguese. In 1602, the Dutch came and the French made their first penetration about 1777. The French conquests, however, did not become important until about 1860. Between 1864 and 1867 the French conquered almost all of Indo-China, mostly by threats and political maneuvers but also by some diplomatic means. In the past, the colonial government of the country has been under a French admiral called the High Commissioner of the Governor General. He had a seat in Saigon which may be moved to Dalat, the summer capital northeast of Saigon.

Let me say something about the various provinces. The province of Laos has an extremely poor land transportation system. It was a

former protectorate of France with an emperor under the complete domination of the French resident who actually runs the country. As long as the emperor can have his harem with fifty or sixty concubines he is quite content to let the French run the country. The same might be said of Cambodia, which had a Cambodian emperor. At Pnompenh, the capital, there is an interesting palace where you can see some of the heritage of the past culture. The emperor there conducts his kingdom with a great deal of finery. He is well received by the French in Paris and is on very good terms with the French people. However, he is nothing more than a puppet emperor.

Cochin-China was disputed territory returned to France after the war. The province was sparsely settled when the French came. The rice and rubber and other forest products from there are of extreme value throughout Asia. Much of the rice is exported to China and comprises an extremely valuable crop. Cochin-China is peopled in great part by Chinese in the metropolitan area of Saigon, but the Annamese have spread down there and every day we read of the trouble they are causing.

The province of Annam, with its capital at Hue, is an extremely rocky country; it was the center of an old mandarin culture patterned on that of the Chinese. When the French came into Annam they found an interesting civil service already set up under the government there.

A highway and railroad run from Saigon up the coast to Hanoi. The railroad is impassable now, but the road and railway system is an extremely important one.

Tonkin is one of the most important provinces, settled mostly by Annamese. The vigorous and the best educated Annamese, in fact, are found in Tonkin. There is quite an intelligentsia at Hanoi, location of the university along with many bookstores and some scientific institutions. The city of Haiphong is a port for Hanoi. Destroyers are able to go as far as Haiphong, but have to go up the river on the high tides. Just northeast of Haiphong is an extremely rough coast with interesting topographical formations comprising limestone cliffs which rise out of the sea, and innumerable islands, a seat of much smuggling in the past.

KENNAN: Against that background I want to discuss the recent difficulties in Indo-China. This flare-up of hostilities—and all the

things the press has been writing about in the past two or three weeks—have to be considered as part of the crisis in political control of the area brought about by the break-up of French power during the war. With the collapse of genuine sovereign government in France after the entrance of the Germans into the country, the French hold on Indo-China rapidly disintegrated and by the summer of 1941 the French had lost control completely. The Japanese had occupied large parts of Indo-China, and the Siamese had taken a portion of western Cambodia. The rest of the country was controlled by the Japanese.

There were still French troops left in Indo-China who were permitted to keep their arms for some time. They were actually disarmed only about a year before the Japanese collapse. There are many accusations from the Annamese side that the French officials who were left in Indo-China, and who are very conservative, had collaborated with the Japanese. The French came back with counter-accusations; but I think the Annamese accusations are stronger in this particular case.

The collapse of Japan left a vacuum which had to be filled and which attracted a number of forces. First, the Annamese, who were centered in the province of Annam, spread out into the other parts of the country. They were united into a political movement whose leaders wished to see complete Annamese independence, following the same pattern as the people in Indonesia and the Philippines. Second were the French themselves, who were not adverse to giving a considerable degree of autonomy to the people there. The French sense of prestige had been rubbed raw by events elsewhere during the war at home and in their empire. They were determined, first, to see their prewar status restored, and then to act from a position of strength instead of weakness.

Third, the Russians and the Chinese Communists would have liked, I think, to have seen an almost complete weakening of Western influence in Indo-China. They would have preferred a native regime which would be widely susceptible to communist penetration and which they could dominate without appearing to dominate. The Russians and Chinese Communists would like to have regional power there without responsibility.

Fourth, the non-communist Chinese, the Kuomintang, moved in the northern part of the province, planted both feet, and didn't want to get out. The Kuomintang have been very active in that

region. Since the Russian influence is exerted through the Chinese Communists, the Kuomintang would like to compete with them politically in that area in the same way as at home, and have.

The fifth force, not very important at the moment, is the Siamese. After a lot of trouble and the French declaration that a state of war existed, the Siamese finally got out of French Indo-China. For the moment, that conflict is cleared up, but the Siamese have a strong interest in Indo-China which, I think, they will continue to exert.

After the Japanese collapse, not enough French forces were available to take the Japanese surrender, reestablish French control over the province, and disarm the Japanese. So an arrangement was made whereby the British, under Mountbatten's general command, were to go in and take the Japanese surrender in the southern part; and the Chinese, as agents of General Chennault, were to go into the northern part and take over there in September 1945. The British did go into Saigon and the country was divided. The Chinese crossed the border into northern Indo-China. The French were not in a position to go in and take over themselves until March of 1946.

The French quickly made arrangements with the British as far as the southern part is concerned, and I think the British were only too happy to hand them that baby to hold. Transfer of control didn't work out so well with the Chinese. The French made an agreement with the Chungking government to take over from the Chinese in the north; but when the French tried to go in, complications ensued. The French sent a seaborne expedition from Saigon to go into Haiphong to take over Hanoi last March. Mr. Linn was Assistant Naval Attache in Bangkok and has been there during the past year. He went on that expedition and could tell you a tragic and comic story of the experience of these fellows when they tried to land at Haiphong. The Viet Nameese and the Annamite native government people were very displeased to see them come, but largely due to the influence of Mr. Ho, whom we will also talk about, they did not actually put up military opposition. The Chinese apparently hadn't got their instructions from Chungking and there was some dirty work afoot. The Chinese did oppose the French with guns, so there was shooting and casualties. The French finally had to land on the mud flats at Haiphong, much to the detriment of their prestige, and after a lot of trouble they got ashore and went into Hanoi and took back some of their positions.

Most of the Chinese withdrew during the course of the summer. A lot of deserters are still there and some Chinese troops are along the coast, but most of them got out.

While all this was going on the Annamese nationalists' organization, which we will refer to as Viet Nam and which had been an underground movement, emerged as a turbulent nationalist movement when the Japanese collapsed. (The names of those organizations are simply impossible for anyone who doesn't speak the language; they have about eight different names and none is spelled in such a way as to indicate anything at all, even phonetically.) The Viet Nameese made a bid for complete domination of the country, not only the traditional Annamese parts of the country, but also Laos, Cambodia, and Cochinchina.

The Viet Nam movement was headed nominally by an old Moscow Comintern figure whose present name is Ho Chi Minh. He has had a number of other names, but has used this one since the war. He has been well known as an agitator for Annamese freedom for about thirty years. Since 1923, when he first went to Moscow and stayed a year and a half as a delegate for the French Communist party, Ho has been considered as definitely one of the Moscow crowd by most people who are familiar with the Moscow scene. His career, like most individuals of that category, has been a checkered one. There was a time when he was an official of the Soviet Consulate General in Shanghai. In this country at one time he was supposedly connected with the Soviet Consulate in Boston. He has been reported dead on a number of occasions, evidently inaccurately. They say the British kept him alive in Hong Kong for fear he might become a martyr for the Annamese cause. In any case he has been closely connected with the Moscow-Stalin crowd. Ho has two songs which he sings: One is international communism, which periodically comes to the fore; and one is Annamese independence. I think they are both part of the same pattern. It is a question of expedience as far as which is emphasized at the moment.

Ho Chi Minh popped up before the Japanese collapsed. He collaborated, I must say to his credit, with us and not with the Japanese in the latter part of the war when the Japanese were still there. He is nominally or ostensibly the head of the Viet Nam movement; I say 'ostensibly' because with communists you never know, especially with Asiatic communists. There are allegations that he is only a front man today and that a sort of kitchen cabinet, a Politburo, runs things.

When the Chinese and the British forces entered to take over from the Japanese, Ho and his movement set up a terrible howl of

protest, which continued as the French moved in to take their place. When the French finally took over they were faced with the necessity of making some sort of an agreement with these Viet Nam elements. The Viet Nameese appeared to have had local control pretty well organized over all the main parts of the country in advance of the French arrival. They were, therefore, in very strong positions. When the French negotiated with them last March, they reached what they felt was a *basis* for an agreement—rather than an agreement itself—between the two powers. They arranged that the Viet Nam delegates, including Ho, would go to France in the late spring and there would work out the details of an agreement. The Viet Nam delegates did come to France, but there was a great deal of ill-feeling. They were kept cooling their heels while the French tried to settle their internal government crisis. This delay just made the Viet Nameese sore. But at the conference which did convene at Fontainebleau later in the summer, a *modus vivendi* was worked out on economic and political questions. It gave the Viet Nameese a position of virtual independence within a French union under French sovereignty, and the Viet Nameese agreed to certain concessions important to French economic interests.

It is important to note that the French and Viet Nameese did not reach any agreement on the fate of Cochinchina. The Annamese wanted to conduct a plebiscite there to see whether it should also become part of an Annamese Republic. The French agreed to that in March, but have not held the plebiscite yet. That is probably the most bitter single bone of contention between the two today, and explains a lot of the bad feeling. The French say they haven't held the plebiscite because as soon as the delegates got back a reign of terror, inspired by the Annamese, began in Cochinchina; and they say they can not conduct a plebiscite until order is restored. So each side balks the other, and they are deadlocked over it.

Although the Viet Nameese and the French have negotiated during the past summer, relations between the two have not been in any way smoothed. There has been an incredible amount of friction and violence and charges and counter-charges. They seem to be a long way from agreement. Nevertheless, they had worked out, at least formally, the *basis* for a future settlement. And for that reason, I think everyone was somewhat surprised, especially the French themselves, at the sudden and definitely treacherous attack carried out by the Viet Nameese forces at Hanoi on the 18th of December. It came as a

particular surprise because they had made conciliatory gestures, and the attack on the Hanoi power plant occurred while the French Commissioner was in Hanoi reading a conciliatory communication from Ho. A lot of Viet Nameese patients in the French hospital in Hanoi rose out of their beds and began to shoot up the hospital. The general outburst of violence made it necessary for the French to place the town under military rule. The French were practically besieged for a while, and you have read what happened since then.

The French Minister of Colonies, Moutet, and General Leclerc were both sent out—Leclerc to look over the military situation and Moutet to look over the political situation. They are on their way back to France now, and the situation has been developing fairly rapidly. The French have sent in extensive reinforcements, and according to this morning's paper have restored order in Hanoi. They have some of the lines of communication cleaned up and control the city again.

There is no doubt that this flare-up of hostilities came from the Viet Nam side and was premeditated. Beyond that point, visibility decreases very rapidly. There is some speculation whether the attack was ordered by Ho himself or whether it was ordered by his Minister of War, who is said to have personal control of the Viet Nam military forces. It looks a little bad for Ho because he removed his government from the city just four days before the attack. I think that disposes of the feeling existing in some quarters that Ho might not have had anything to do with it or known anything about it. As far as can be determined, his government seems to have broken up completely. Ho's government was a hodge-podge of native elements, of international communists, and of Kuomintang Chinese elements. Some of the members apparently are up in China now.

One question in everybody's mind is the role of Moscow's influence in these disturbances. The most plausible reason for the attack is that these Viet Nam elements were a little worried about the success of native movements in Indonesia and in the Philippines, and the more extremist elements felt they couldn't wait any longer. They would have to strike now while the iron was hot. Whether that was inspired by Moscow is another question. The channels through which Moscow's influence is directed over this Annamese movement are so devious that there are many possibilities of a slip. Apparently there is little direct connection between any of these people and Moscow, but there is a connection between them and the Chinese Communists in

Yenan. That connection is sometimes exerted, strangely enough, via Bangkok; so it goes through a tortuous channel before it gets to Hanoi. At this moment, I doubt that Moscow had anything to do with starting this uprising. Moscow has appeared to be embarrassed by the situation and has found nothing much more to say about the uprising than to scold the French for discussing it with us here in Washington and to blame the situation on unspecified French admirals and generals. This line is faithfully reflected in our own *Daily Worker* in New York, which also comes to the conclusion that the uprising was caused by the French admirals and generals and the provocative policy of the French high command.

The crux of the question may lie in the peculiar position of the French Communists, who have been recently so close to obtaining decisive power in France itself. Should they achieve such power, it obviously would be in Moscow's interests and the interests of the French Communists to strengthen French ties with the area. On the other hand, should they not achieve power, they would probably want to continue to make trouble for any other French administration by encouraging the Viet Nam elements. For that reason the French Communists have been somewhat over a barrel about it, as seen by the inconsistent way they reacted to it. On the one hand, they attack their own government's policy as being too harsh when the Viet Nameese wanted to have an agreement in good faith. On the other hand, they support the new military budget which was put forward on the understanding that larger appropriations were needed to clear up this situation in French Indo-China. Recently when the French parliament rose to their feet in tribute to the French soldiers fighting there, the Communist deputies, much to everybody's amusement, got up and stood with the rest of them.

I have my own theory about the cause of recent flare-ups: Perhaps the Annamese leaders realized that if the French Communists were to come into power in France they might have the plug pulled on them very promptly, just the way the plug was pulled on Mr. Pishevari in northern Iran by the Russians. The Viet Nameese may have found it necessary to fight their battle with the French before they were put in the embarrassing position of having to fight French Communists.

That brings us to this broader aspect of the question of Indo-China, which is really a question of France itself, of the French empire, and of political control in France. For that reason I am going

to ask Sherman Kent of the State Department to pick up where he left off in the interesting lecture on French politics he gave us last fall:

*KENT: When I had the previous pleasure of coming before this house to review the current situation in France, I said I was going to stick my neck out. I did, and my neck now bears some scars as a result of my daring.*

*Last time I said the important thing with respect to France was what France was going to do in international affairs. If France should move to the left and join up with communist-dominated Eastern Europe, it would be one of the most tragic events that could occur. On the other hand, if France moved too far to the right, we would not be very much pleased with that either. France was then sitting on the fence internationally, not jumping either way and that is still the situation. So the position of France in the world of international affairs is pretty much unchanged.*

*In November, I said France's disposition to move one way or the other was a function of two factors: First, the political situation within France and second, the economic situation within France. I regret I did not make a third point about the Russian position in the world. I should have made the point that if Russia's fortunes suffer reverses, the chances of France going to the left would accordingly diminish; and if Russia's fortunes increase, the chances of France going to the left would increase.*

*Early in November, a series of political events, a series of economic moves, and a number of possibilities for international action confronted the French. France had just ratified the constitution of the Fourth Republic. The Constituent Assembly was out of session. France was girding itself for its first national election, an election destined to create the more popular of the two houses of Parliament, known as the National Assembly. On the 10th of November the election took place. This is roughly the way party strength lined up by seats:*

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	Oct. 45	June 46	Nov. 46
Communists	148	146	186
Popular Republican Movement	141	160	162
Socialists	134	115	108
Radical Socialists & allies	35	39	63
Right	62	62	85
Not yet reported	—	—	15

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*Source:* These figures are from the *New York Times* editorial page, 17 November 1946, and are no more than roughly accurate. Anyone desiring exact figures should consult the Situation Reports issued by the Western European Section of the State Department's Division of Research & Intelligence, Europe (DRE).

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*The first political event has thus taken place. The second event, which has also taken place, was the formation of a temporary government. Remember that governments in France up until November had been provisional—caretaker governments, really, operating outside a formal constitution. France did not have a formal constitution until October of 1946. When the new chamber was elected, the provisional government resigned and one of the first jobs this new chamber had to perform was to elect a new one. The third event was the election of the upper house of the legislature, the so-called Council of the Republic, which was to be elected by a very tricky indirect process which I will not go into.*

*The fourth event was to be—is still to be—the joint session of the new upper and the new lower house, an organization which is called Parliament when it sits together. The joint session of those two bodies is for the purpose of electing the first president of the Fourth Republic, and that event is coming up on the 16th of January 1947. The last of the political events comes after the election, when the new president talks with the parliamentary leaders and tries to dope out which candidate or which combination of candidates can sustain a parliamentary majority and become—I hate to call it—the permanent premier and government of France. I do not suppose whatever emerges can expect to be permanent but it will at least be nontemporary in name.*

*My earlier general prognoses were sufficiently broad to be very safe, and I think they are still good. I said at that time that although the French Communist Party could have probably become the most strong numerically of any of the French parties, it would (1) probably never have an absolute majority of popular votes or seats in the chamber, and (2) would have greatest difficulty in pulling away from a nationalistic and essentially rationalistic French line and going to an internationalist and doctrinal Marxian line. If there is anything I am still convinced of, it is the virtual impossibility of a French Communist Party becoming an anti-French and a pro-Moscow party.*

*If Russian fortunes soar and if all of us, the British and the French along with ourselves, find ourselves backed against the wall, sure, there will be in France a Communist Party dominated by Moscow. But until that time I cling to my belief that the old, deeply rooted, conservative, nationalistic and rationalistic factors which are inherent in French civilization will never permit that wide a swing to the left.*

*On my specific prognoses, I was unduly hopeful of the fortunes of the Popular Republican Movement (the Movement Republicaine Populaire, or MRP). I thought the Communists would not increase their strength very much in the November elections, but that the MRP would increase their seats considerably. The chances for a coalition government would be strengthened thereby, in all probability M. Bidault would continue to be the Prime Minister, and it was not beyond the range of possibility that M. de Gaulle might become President. I was wrong in several respects. In the first place, the Communist Party did increase its strength considerably, but not catastrophically. The MRP made only a slight gain. The most astonishing thing was the loss of votes on the part of the Socialists. For the metropolitan French delegations the Socialists have only 93 seats. The additional 15 Socialist votes came from overseas France.*

*I was wrong and far more in error on what subsequently developed. When the new lower house met on the 16th of November there was an attempt to re-form a coalition government. This failed. Then the Communist Party stepped forward and tried to form a Communist government under the premiership of Maurice Thorez. They did get the Socialists' support but not a thorough-going, enthusiastic support. The Communist-Socialist coalition with lukewarm Socialist support was unable to command a majority, and the candidacy of Thorez was rejected on 4 December. Next, the MRP stepped forward and tried to form a straight MRP government under Bidault. On the 5th of December the Popular Republicans failed. Then on the 12th of December an astonishing thing occurred. A drive was generated in the Chamber for Leon Blum, 74 years of age, the grand old man of the French Socialist Party, who has been a dead political duck for a good many years. Blum belongs to the conservative wing of the Socialist Party, the wing which has been most reluctant to throw in with the Communists. Blum—premier of the 1930s and head of the Popular Front government, a candidate of despair—was accepted.*

Blum tried to form a coalition cabinet and was unable to do it because he wanted to take people to the right of the MRP. The Communists would have none of it, and so after about three or four days of haggling back and forth, the most astonishing compromise of despair that you can imagine took place. Blum came out with a straight Socialist government which was accepted by a very heavy majority of the lower house. Thus you have a situation where the weakest of the big three has all of the seats in the cabinet and forms a government by sufferance, government by compromise. To characterize this kind of government as a caretaker government is to do it more homage than it deserves. Blum's mandate has been very carefully outlined to him. He has been told to get out a new budget and look to a couple of responsibilities in the realm of national defense. If Blum tried anything much beyond that mandate he would be in hot water. He could not push any of his own positive legislative programs.

On 6 December the last elections for membership in the Council of the Republic were held. The Council, which should have in it ultimately 315 members, is now made up about as follows: 73 members of the Communist Party, 75 in the MRP, 44 in the Socialists, 30 in the Radical Socialists, and 26 members of the Right. There are 8 people whose political affiliations we know nothing about at the moment. There are 59 more representatives to this council in the process of being elected in the overseas areas. So at the moment the Socialist-Communist coalition is more powerful than the MRP, and at the same time the MRP has two more votes than the Communist Party. The main importance of this body will turn up on the 16th of January when it sits with the National Assembly to elect the President of the Republic.

With respect to economic matters, the Monnet plan, about which I spoke in November, has informally been on the books as an operating document. It was formally approved by the Blum cabinet. The Monnet plan, as you know, is a five-year plan. It is designed to bring France to a level of prosperity equivalent to that of 1929, which was the high point in French national income, by the year 1950. To accomplish this, France has to go in for a heavy scale of investment. France has to cut back her own use of goods which the people of France need. France has to go in for a rather heavy program of imports, has to borrow money abroad to carry out this program of imports, has to tax her people very severely, and has a whole range

of other economic problems which proceed out of this policy for the domestic economy.

The French are having difficulty accomplishing this program, which is straining the French economy. The expenses of the government are largely in excess of the intake. This is reflected in the value of the franc. The franc on the black market is selling in the neighborhood of 350 to the dollar, whereas the official rate is 119 to the dollar. This means that Frenchmen have that much less confidence in their own currency, and if given an opportunity would invest their savings abroad rather than in France. It means unless the franc is strengthened the government is likely to encounter serious difficulties all along the line, and the Monnet plan will go on the rocks. This is one of the important matters that the Blum Government is obliged to address. The Blum Government is meeting it through several directions, chiefly through a serious endeavor to balance the budget, which means reducing the budget for fiscal 1948 by some thirty billion francs. That is thirty billion out of six hundred billion, the total budget. This will mean firing a great many French civil servants and removing the subsidy from certain articles of the economy whose price is now being kept down. When those prices go up it will be another step in the dreaded inflationary spiral of which the government is so much afraid.

Lastly, let's come back to the French Communists; when Mr. Kennan said they were over a barrel, I think that is putting it mildly. In order to build up this huge party membership of a million members, and in order to poll five million votes in an election, the French Communists have had to appeal to what you might call the French nationalist group. The Communists have had to beat their breasts and say, "Internationalism—nonsense. We are Frenchmen." They also have had to make an appeal to the French rationalists. They had to say, "We are not men of the formula. We are not men of Moscow. We are not men of the doctrine. We are just as good intellectual and rational Frenchmen as any one of you." They also have had to put out all kinds of bait to catch the "leaky roof" vote, and in my opinion their membership of a million is a vastly over-inflated party figure.

Having to make these concessions out of necessity, the French Communists are trapped, particularly with respect to the whole colonial picture. One of the things that the nationalistic Frenchmen are most keen about, and have been most keen about all through the

war, is the empire. One of the things that made most trouble for us in our relations with the French through the war was that some Frenchmen thought we would try to steal the French empire. Most Frenchmen thought we didn't care whether they kept their empire or not. During the war the French Liberation movement, whenever it got a chance to think about such things, began beating the drum for a revival of the French empire, and the French empire today is a very important slogan, an important nationalistic slogan all up and down the population. The French Communist Party, if it followed straight Marxism, or for that matter if it followed straight Stalinism, would have to be doctrinally opposed to colonialism or imperialism or empire, but they can not go out and say, "We do not want an empire. We want to cut these people loose." If they did, they would lose a great deal of this leaky roof vote that represents a large chunk of their support in the party. So in the Indo-Chinese business, as Mr. Kennan has pointed out, they raised their eyebrows and said, "It is a terrible thing that we are having these difficulties with dependent peoples. It is a terrible thing we should have to use armed force with respect to our fellow men," and at the same time, "Build up the armed forces," and "We don't care whether Leclerc goes out. By all means have Moutet go out. We ought to get that situation cleared up."

*I think the very fact that the French Communist Party has not taken a strong stand with respect to Indo-China is another piece of evidence supporting my general contention that French Communism is by no means on a fair and firm footing. If the die is going to be cast in France from right or left, for my money it has not yet been cast, and I remain fairly optimistic about the outcome of that cast when it does take place.*

## DISCUSSION

QUESTION: Will you discuss the value of Indo-China to France?

LINN: It is a very, very valuable colony. I can't give you the figures, but the supply of rice that goes to China, for instance, is of great value to the French. The manufacturing carried on with extremely cheap labor—practically slave labor—in the rubber

plantations, pepper groves, and coal mines, provides the French something for which they pay out very little and take in everything.

QUESTION: You speak of the French talking over their Indo-China situation with us. What do we have to do with it?

KENNAN: The French apparently came here to the State Department to discuss this question with us, much to the annoyance of the Russians and the French Communists who belabored the French Government. Some of our people who are concerned with it, particularly the ones on the spot, think we ought to mediate the situation. They think the French colonial administration in Indo-China has been reactionary for a long, long time, oppressive and unworthy, that we should make it plain that we are not behind the French—in other words, that we should try to establish a favorable reputation with the Viet Nam, with the native movement there. Those people are looking at it pretty much from the local level, and I don't think they are looking at it in terms of the world picture. The fact of the matter, of course, is that the French who live in the colonies—this isn't the case only with Indo-China, but a general phenomenon of colonialism—are much more conservative, much more inclined to take a hardboiled attitude toward the aspirations of the natives than the people at home. That accounts partly for the communist attitude that the questions should be handled by the government at home and not the French admirals, generals, and administrators on the spot. That accounts for the fact that our people would like us to step in on the side of the Viet Nameese and help them out, but I see great difficulties in that.

So far our position has been the usual one; all we want is sweetness and light. We don't want anybody to win, we hope they will compose their differences, and we want everybody to be happy. It is as though we said we hoped neither the Army nor the Navy would win the Army-Navy game. I am afraid the time is going to come pretty soon in international politics when this government is going to have to make political choices in the world whether we like to or not. Probably we are right to hold off on this one for the moment, because we still have to size up several factors. I for one, am still to be convinced that the Annamese are far enough advanced to set up a government which will be really their own and will not be susceptible to penetration by outside forces whether from Kuomintang China or Yen-an China. I may be wrong, but I have not

seen the evidence to make me conclude these people are fit to govern themselves. I don't consider people fit to govern themselves who can't keep their own nationalist movement out of the hands of outside forces. I think we have to be careful in supporting people when that is the case.

On the other hand, we have to watch French politics and just the sort of thing Mr. Kent was talking about. If there is a communist government in France, that may change the whole picture. I think we are right for the time being. I don't see why we hold such great responsibility there in the eyes of the Indo-Chinese people. It really isn't our baby for the time being, so I expect that is what we will do. But there is nothing else I would rather do than get a policy out of the Department of State on the Indo-China situation or anything else today.

*January 24, 1947*

**THE SOVIET WAY OF THOUGHT  
AND  
ITS EFFECT ON FOREIGN POLICY**

Editors' Note: *This paper was found among the lecture manuscripts in the War College archives. It was neither delivered as a lecture nor published in this form (see Introduction, pages xix–xx). However, it is most likely the origin of Kennan's analysis that was published as the "X" article in Foreign Affairs.*

**T**HE PROBLEM OF THE RUSSIAN WAY OF THOUGHT IS AS COMPLEX and as illusive as the over-all problem of human psychology itself. Here there are no sharp outlines, no clear lines of division, no finite pattern susceptible of a two-dimensional approach. There is no national psychology more subtle, more variegated and more contradictory than that of the Russians. In the pattern of Russian thought there is no single trait which does not seem to be balanced by its own opposite. All the extremes are represented. Every rule is proved by a multitude of exceptions. And every general statement is open to challenge.

This being the case, it is idle to attempt to compress into a paper of this scope anything which purports to be a full or exact portrayal of the Soviet "way of thought." The most that can be attempted is to approach the problem from certain points on the periphery which seem to be the source of particular confusion in the public mind and to see whether here, at least, a modicum of clarity cannot be introduced.

The points which suggest themselves most readily for such analysis, and which in their aggregate undoubtedly cut deeply into the whole question of the Soviet way of thought in its bearing on foreign affairs, are the following:

- (a) The role of ideology in the official Soviet mind;
- (b) The importance of Russian history and traditional habits of thought;
- (c) The effect of the internal circumstances of Soviet power on the Soviet mental outlook; and
- (d) The psychological effect of the disciplinary principles of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks.

If these points are examined with care, it may be possible to arrive at certain general conclusions on the over-all question which is the subject of this paper.

## IDEOLOGY

The materialistic conception of history . . . did away with two of the principal deficiencies of former historical theories. These latter had taken as the object of their study at best only the

ideological motives of the historical actions of men without examining what had evoked these motives . . .

V.I. Lenin, *Karl Marx: An Introduction to Marxism*

There is no single question that causes more confusion with respect to the Soviet way of thought than the part played therein by the factor of ideology. There are some who deny that ideology plays any part at all in Soviet thought and who insist on viewing the Soviet leaders simply as cynical and hardboiled realists for whom ideology is only an insincere pretense. This view is incorrect, and those who hold it are clearly a minority among the circle of observers who have had contact with the Soviet world. But even in the majority who are prepared to recognize that the Soviet leaders are fanatics there is a wide variety of opinion as to the part that ideology plays. And there are many who are inclined to go to the opposite extreme, to conclude that ideology is the sole motive power and program of action for the men in the Kremlin and consequently to read the future in the implications of what these people accept as official Soviet dogma.

I think it may be postulated at the outset that ideology is neither the real driving force nor the real program of Soviet action. It cannot be the real driving force, for—as we shall see later—the main preoccupations of the Soviet Government have always been ones arising predominantly from the internal necessities of Soviet power and ones which were not, and could not possibly have been, foreseen by the classical fathers of Soviet thought, including even Lenin. For the same reason, ideology could hardly have provided an adequate program of action for the Soviet leaders. Clearly, Marxism could not provide a program for the execution of purposes which were utterly foreign to its world of thought. As a matter of fact, even if the Soviet leaders today were animated exclusively—which they are not—by a desire to put into effect the precepts of Marxism as they inherited them, they would find this difficult to do. Their own problems and the situation in which they find themselves today were never envisaged in Marxist philosophy. Marx's teachings related mainly to the means by which the change was to be effected from one set of what he called the "conditions of production," namely the capitalist pattern, to another set of the "conditions of production," namely the socialist pattern. He did not try to envisage in detail the administration and development of the socialist state of the future. He certainly did not envisage that the test of his ideas would come in one of the

least advanced of the great nations and that it would be imposed from above by a dictatorial minority, imposing its will over the majority of the people. And even Lenin, who slowly and regretfully came to the conclusion that it would all have to be this way temporarily, never dreamed that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was going to become a permanent institution, lasting in Russia for decades, while the economic organization of society elsewhere in the world continued to evolve in accordance with its own peculiar laws.

Thus the teachings of Marx and Lenin could not possibly provide a detailed working plan for the men in the Kremlin today, and these men are obviously obliged to play it by ear and to use their own judgment in advancing their ultimate objective.

But if ideology is neither a motive power nor a program of action for the Soviet leaders, there are certain other functions which it clearly fulfills.

In the first place, it is in the light of ideology, and in the language of ideology, that Soviet leaders become aware of what transpires in this world. They think of it, and can think of it, only in the terms of Marxist philosophy. Their own education knows no other terms. And the people on whom they are dependent for their reports of the outside world have no other terms in which to describe to them what they see. Ideology, we must remember, provides the jargon of official Soviet life. And in that sense, it pervades all understanding and discussion of objective reality. It is clear, then, that it functions in effect as a prism through which the world is viewed; or to take a more precise metaphor, as a sort of television set through which the mental eye receives and registers the impressions of objective reality.

Secondly, ideology plainly dictates the form in which Soviet decisions must be clothed and presented to the Soviet public and to the world at large. This is of vital and compelling importance. It must never be forgotten that the whole trend of Soviet policy over the past 15 years would be indefensible in the eyes of world opinion—would be indistinguishable, in fact, from many of the most disagreeable forms of fascism—if it were stripped of its claim to ideological significance. Therefore, all Soviet decisions and actions must appear to serve the doctrines of Marx and Lenin, whether they do or not. This sets severe limitations on the freedom of expression and the outward behavior of the Soviet Government. In all its words and deeds in the field of foreign affairs, it must do lip service to the interests of the working classes of the world. It must never for a moment drop the

pose of the protector of the universal underdog. By the same token, it must not be too polite or cordial in its references to other governments. It can never say or do anything to imply complete approval or acceptance of the legitimacy of governments elsewhere in the world which do not share its ideology. This means that the outward expression of Soviet foreign policy must move in a narrow and rather artificial path; and it goes far to explain the general reticence of the Soviet Government in explaining its own attitude in international affairs as well as the stilted and highly laconic form in which it phrases such grudging expressions of policy as it cannot avoid.

Thirdly, ideology has an important effect on Soviet method. Many Westerners who have lived in Moscow and pondered Soviet society from that vantage point have come to feel that the most important and fateful element in the Soviet way of thought is the theory that the ends justify the means. There is little evidence that this theory had any place in the mental world of Karl Marx. It was something born out of the dark and pagan recesses of the Russian soul itself, with its uninhibited and desperate plunges into the extremes of good and evil. It has constituted for a century the central political philosophy in the Russian revolutionary movement. In my opinion it has not yet been accepted by the mass of the Russian people, and never will be. But it was taken over into the Leninist philosophy and it has become official for the Soviet Government. Its effect is of course to give that government an absence of scruple and restraint in method which is probably unparalleled in history. As a result of this theory, the personal ethics of a host of Soviet officials and followers have reached a state where they are often distinguishable from plain criminality only by their theoretical subordination to the central discipline of an ideological movement.

In summary, then, the role of ideology in Soviet political psychology, while of tremendous importance, is not primarily that of a basic determinant of political action. It is rather a prism through which Soviet eyes must view the world, and an indispensable vehicle for the translation into words and actions of impulses and aspirations which have their origin deeper still. It colors what the Russians see and what they do. Its function is to distort and embellish reality, both objective and subjective. Within the limit of this function, its influence is enormous. It has a profound effect on the mental background against which decisions are taken, on the forms in which those decisions are put forward, and on the methods by which they are

executed. To the extent that form may really be more important than content—methods more important than motives—in determining the end product of human conduct, ideology may be considered to be a paramount component of Soviet behaviorism. But it is important to remember that its bearing is on coloration of background, on form of expression, and on method of execution, rather than on basic aim.

## NATIONAL TRADITION

There is a strong anti-foreign party in Russia whose policy would exclude all foreigners, except for mere purposes of transient commerce. . . . No nation has more need of foreigners and none is so jealous of them. . . . A strange superstition prevails among the Russians that they are destined to conquer the world.

from American diplomatic dispatches from the  
Court of Tsar Nicholas I in the years 1850–54

The importance of the element of national habit and tradition in Soviet thought has been generally under-rated in this country. This is particularly true with relation to the Soviet attitude toward the outside world: the Soviet analysis of its nature and significance and the Soviet concept of the basic relationship between Russia and the remainder of world society.

It has often been pointed out that the early history of the Soviet state (and states, like people, are most deeply impressionable in their early childhood) knew no instance of a friendly and peaceful neighbor. Russia found herself obliged to fight wars periodically with every political entity which touched the fringes of her power. It is idle to speculate whether this was Russia's fault or the fault of the others. Human nature being what it is, it was undoubtedly the fault of both. The fact remains that the outside world came to be generally viewed in Russia with suspicion and antagonism as a hostile force with which there could be no possibility of peaceful co-existence.

Intertwined with this concept was the strong vein of official xenophobia which runs through all of Russian history. It is characteristic of the contradictory quality of all Russian reality that this official resentment of the foreigner existed side by side with, and doubtless constituted a reaction to, the most slavish curiosity and

admiration for foreign things among the people. This detracted nothing from its validity. You will find it all through Russian literature. You find traces of it in Griboyedov, in Lermontev, in Gogol, in Turgenyev, in Leskov, and above all in modern Soviet literature. You find it in the attitude toward Moscow's "German Village" of the 17th century, in the lynching of the Frenchman in Moscow during Napoleon's invasion, in the mob attack on the German Embassy in St. Petersburg during the First World War, and again in incidents which have occurred during the Soviet era. It still plays its part in the love-hate complex which obviously dominates the heart and mind of the Russian intellectual in his attitude toward the cultural life of the West.

Finally, the whole messianic quality of the Russian conception of the relations between Russia and the world outside Russia's borders is as old as the Russian state itself. The original concept of "Holy Russia" was an ideological concept, not a territorial one. It extended as far as Russian Orthodoxy extended. It stopped where the infidel began. This was a constantly shifting, moving line. There was no permanence about it. There was no definiteness about it. There were no visible geographic barriers: no mountains, no seas, no fast-flowing rivers, to mark it. It was as limitless as the horizon of the Russian plain itself. And it is no wonder then that Russians saw no final limit to the possible extension of their power. It is no wonder that as far back as the days of Ivan III and Ivan IV people in Moscow liked to think of their capital as "the third Rome." And it is no wonder that even in the 19th century an American envoy was constrained to report from St. Petersburg that "these people are obsessed with a strange superstition that they are destined to conquer the world."

Now it will be noted that all of these points are ones which dovetail very neatly with Soviet ideology of today. The view that the outside world is a hostile force finds ready confirmation in the communist insistence that there is an inevitable conflict between the socialist state and its capitalist environment and that the great countries of the West are united in an evil conspiracy to overthrow the socialist state and to enslave the Russian people. The traditional xenophobia of Russian officialdom finds natural expression in the Soviet view of the foreigner as a dangerous "spy, wrecker, and diversionist." And the conception of the Russian state as an ideological entity destined eventually to spread to the utmost limits of the

earth is reflected with almost baffling fidelity in the communist belief in the ultimate triumph of world revolution and in the resulting tendency of the Kremlin to the quiet infiltration into, and domination of, outside centers of military and political power beyond the borders of Russia itself.

Thus there is a highly intimate and subtle connection between traditional Russian habits of thought and the ideology which has now become official for the Soviet regime. And this is important to remember. For it means that when people speak in terms of overcoming or altering these ideological convictions which animate Soviet thought, they are in reality speaking of overcoming or altering some of the most basic and deep-seated traits of traditional Russian psychology.

## THE INTERNAL NECESSITIES OF POWER

The organs of suppression, the army and the other organizations, are necessary today, in the period of reconstruction, just as they were in the period of the civil war. Without the presence of these organs no halfway secure construction work of the dictatorship is possible. It should not be forgotten that the revolution has thus far been victorious only in one country. It should not be forgotten that as long as there is a capitalist encirclement there will be danger of intervention, with all the consequences which flow from that danger.

J.V. Stalin, *Questions of Leninism*, 1924

The objective student of psychology must question whether, even in the years before 1917, when Russian revolution (to say nothing of world revolution) was still a distant and uncertain dream of the future and when the members of the Bolshevik faction plainly pictured themselves as the devoted prophets and servants of the tenets of Marxism, ideology was really the force by which most of them were animated. It must be asked whether it was not rather the negative imprint of individual experience: the personal insults and restrictions and the frustrations of personal life under a semi-feudal despotism, which drove so many Russian intellectuals into the revolutionary camp. Only the greatest of these intellectuals, such as Lenin himself, were men of such great mental and spiritual power

that they could be said to have become the genuine servants of an ideal. For the rest, that ideal was a convenient rationalization and cover for the pursuit of impulses which had their origin in the normal workings of the good old human ego.

But whatever the motivation of the revolutionists in the tsarist era, their advent to power produced a new set of compulsions which came to determine to an important extent their actual political behavior. The victory of the revolution in Russia and the failure of communist revolutionary efforts in the other great countries at the close of the last war created for the Russian communist leaders an unexpected and somewhat puzzling situation. They realized that Russia was not yet economically or politically ready for socialism in the Marxist sense. It became evident to them at a relatively early date that socialism could be imposed upon Russian society only by dictatorial, strong-arm methods carried out by a highly disciplined and conspiratorial minority movement. It is doubtful that Lenin wished to see it done this way. He was perhaps the only of the communist leaders in the early 20s whose integrity as an international socialist was complete and the sincerity of whose beliefs in socialist principles rose above petty egotism. It was part of this same pattern that it was principally Lenin who appeared to doubt the efficacy of a program of socialism forced onto Russia by dictatorial means. It is questionable whether, if Lenin had lived, the New Economic Policy, which he had put into effect before his illness and death, would not have been retained for many years afterward, with a corresponding moderation and democratization of Soviet power. But in any case, his death and Stalin's accession to power brought a complete renunciation of this line. Stalin and his associates not only shared the quality of all Soviet power as a parvenu force on the national and international scene, but were themselves to a large extent parvenus within the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement. For this reason their sense of insecurity was doubly strong. They could not accept the risk of sharing power with any other elements in Russia or of tolerating the free activity of people who might oppose them, either within or without the Party. Further delay in the rapid and forced socialization of Russia would have meant the continued existence of a whole sector of Russian economy, namely the capitalist sector, which was unamenable to the authority of the Stalin regime. For this reason, Stalin set about at an early date to liquidate this sector and to achieve unchallenged power over the economic life of

the country. This also entailed collectivization of the peasantry. And in order that he and his regime might be economically independent of foreign, as well as domestic, influences, he also set about to build a war industry.

Now it will be observed that these basic measures all arose from a feeling of insecurity in the regime itself and from a desire to secure its independence from all forms of outside pressure. But they carried with them very important implications for the future development of Soviet power. Since they could be carried out only in opposition to the wishes of the mass of the inhabitants of the Soviet Union, they implied the continued existence of a strong internal opposition to the regime: an internal enemy which could be held in check only by an elaborate and skillfully operated police apparatus, and by all the other paraphernalia of totalitarianism.

In time the entire nature of the regime became shaped to the end of internal security. Organs of power and administration which did not serve this purpose withered on the vine and had a tendency to become atrophied. Organs which did serve this purpose became vastly overdeveloped and swollen. The whole character and personality of the Soviet regime were thus gradually conditioned by the existence of this internal danger. And today the most important features of the regime are ones whose basic function is to assure the security of its internal power and the validity of its dictatorial authority.

Now this is a fact—and a very basic fact—which the Soviet Government cannot for a moment admit. Men whose entire claim to virtue and greatness lies in their pretense to be the only government truly devoted to the interests and prosperity of the masses cannot possibly admit there can be any serious and widespread opposition to them among those masses in their own direct sphere of authority and that the basic function of their apparatus of power is to secure them against this danger. For this reason, the real internal danger which they face, and with which they are so preoccupied, has always been officially portrayed by them not for what it is but as a reflection of something outside of Russia: a reflection of a hostile external force, namely the "capitalist encirclement," by which Soviet society is threatened. The people who oppose Stalin within Russia are never—you will note—portrayed as acting in their own name. In the light of government propaganda they are always the agents of foreign powers. There has not been a single important phase of the purges

over the past 15 years in which hostile foreign forces have not figured as the real *deus ex machina*. The external enemy is thus the official pretext and explanation for the measures taken against the internal one.

Now what about the reality of this external enemy: the real danger of the "capitalist encirclement"?

This is a very important point and one on which it is essential to avoid confusion. Sometimes, as in the case of the Germans and the Japanese during the 1930s, the external enemy has been real. At times, Russia has indeed been threatened, whether or not this justified the preservation of an internal state of terror. At other times, there has actually been no organized and serious hostility to the Soviet Government abroad which could have caused legitimate worry to any objective person in Moscow—at least nothing which could not easily have been countered and offset by the most elementary evidences of a conciliatory attitude and of good faith from the Russian side. But the important thing to note is that these real changes and variations in the degree of the foreign menace have never had any effect on the aspect which that menace has assumed in official Soviet propaganda. This aspect has been uniformly horrific, regardless of changes in the real situation abroad. In the "Promparty" and Metropolitan-Vickers Trials of 1930 and 1933, respectively, the French and British appeared as no less sinister threats to Soviet security than the Nazis were later to appear in the major purge trials of 1936–37. It is clear from this that it is not the real degree of foreign hostility with which the Russians are concerned when they talk about the "capitalist encirclement." What we are dealing with here is a logical element of the Soviet system of thought: something that has been constructed in those times and conditions when it did not exist—a thesis indispensable to the structure of Soviet power. And from that standpoint it is immaterial to the people in Moscow whether it is, objectively speaking, a fiction or a reality. Subjectively, it is for them a reality, and must remain a reality.

Let me point out that what I have just said relates not only to the Soviet leaders. Since the character of the Soviet state has been shaped toward the function of assuring its own internal security, and since this phenomenon can be explained and justified only in terms of the foreign menace, the concept of this foreign menace has become an essential to every minor official of the whole great Soviet

bureaucracy. If this factor loses its validity, then so does he. Training, habit, and political choice have fitted him only for this role that he is playing. If the outside world is not hostile, he has, as a political phenomenon, no excuse for existence. Thus Soviet officialdom has become one great vested interest committed to the principle of a hostile outside world. And the closer you get to the center of power, the more influential the individual concerned, the keener his appreciation of this state of affairs, and the more violent his attachment to this concept of international life.

It will be seen, therefore, that the basic motive power of Soviet policy lies in the assurance of the internal security of the regime itself and particularly in the fact that the Soviet leaders have seen fit to seek such assurance through the maintenance of a vast apparatus of repression rather than through an effort to attune themselves to popular will and to compromise with its various manifestations. And it is further apparent that this in turn necessitates the maintenance of a fiction, namely the fiction of a hostile capitalist encirclement, which again dovetails neatly with basic ideology and makes it impossible for the Kremlin to speak officially in terms other than those of ideology.

The real tactical aims of the Kremlin leaders may vary from one period to another. At one time they may run toward aggressive military action. At another time they may be directed solely toward the preservation of the Soviet state from outside attack. At one time they may be concerned with countries which are the declared enemies of the security of the Russian people. At other times they may be concerned with countries which are in alliance with the Soviet Government and fighting side by side as allies with the armed forces of the Soviet Union. But for the basic orientation of the Soviet Government toward the outside world, all this can make no real difference. The theory of the outside world as a hostile force must at all events be preserved and must underlie all other outward manifestations of Soviet foreign policy.

We have in this fact a brilliant demonstration of the truth of the thesis that ideology is a product and not a determinant of social and political reality. The last people who should challenge this thesis are those who cling today with such religious fervor to what they call the doctrines of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin. For Karl Marx, in his "Introduction Concerning the Criticisms of Political Economy," had the following statements to make:

With the change of the economic foundation, the whole enormous superstructure changes sooner or later. In studying such changes one must always distinguish between the material change in the economic conditions of production which can be accurately observed in the natural sciences, on the one hand, and the juridical, political, religious, artistic, or philosophical forms, in short the ideological forms, through which people become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.

Thus the father of Soviet ideology gave in advance his blessing to our realization that the Soviet ideology of today flows with iron logic and with irresistible force from the inner necessities of Soviet power.

## PARTY DISCIPLINE

There are moments when a party or an army has to retreat because it has suffered defeat. In such cases the army or party retreats in order to preserve itself and to preserve its personnel for new battles. But there are moments when a victorious party or army reaches too far forward in its offensive and fails to secure its own rear base. This creates a serious danger. In such cases the experienced party or army usually finds it necessary . . . to retreat a little nearer to its base in order to strengthen the connection with its rear, to assure its supply and in order then to renew the offensive with greater assurance and with the guarantee of success.

*History of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks),  
Chapter IX, Part 2*

We now come to the last of the four factors selected for discussion: the internal discipline of the Communist Party.

While the responsibilities of administration are often laid on the shoulders of the individual government official, the responsibility for the formulation of policy lies solely with the Party, not with the Government, and is a collective, not an individual, responsibility. Policy is determined by the Party committees or bureaus, on the various levels of the Party hierarchy, depending upon the nature of the question involved and the scope of the policy decision. With respect to foreign affairs, most decisions of any importance are taken either

in the Politburo itself or in some sort of a sub-committee of the Central Committee of the Party, the exact designation of which and character of which is not known.

Before a decision is taken on any particular question of policy in a Party body, the individual member of that body is at liberty to state his views freely on the subject under consideration. If the decision of the committee later runs counter to the views which he has expressed, he is not penalized for that fact, provided that he accepts in good faith the committee's final decision and drops every vestige of opposition to it.

But in stating his views to the committee in advance to the taking of a decision, the committee member must be careful about the motivation of his arguments. He must take care to see that his arguments are based solely on the interests of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. No other motivation of any sort can be admitted. Above all, he must not say anything which would indicate that he was swayed in his thoughts in any way by a predilection for any foreign state or for any of its representatives or by any sympathy for their point of view. Here ideology steps in to do its part. A Soviet committee member must at all times do lip service to the principle that the outside world is hostile to the Soviet Union. He is not at liberty to impute to any foreign government or to any individual representative of a foreign government any natural generosity or honesty or good will.

It is important to remember at this point that the internal discipline of the Communist Party is based on a cruel and ruthless system of playing individuals off against each other. Thus within the Party everyone is in a sense everyone else's enemy. The advancement of one member is usually the ruin of another. Yet to struggle for advancement is something that everyone must do: for not to struggle means to acquiesce passively in one's own ruin. The internal life of the Party is therefore characterized by a curiously impersonal but deadly sort of individual rivalry, in which everyone must be on his guard lest he provide openings for the other fellow. Not to depart, therefore, from the posture of utter devotion to the interests of the Party and utter cynicism as to the worthiness and good faith of every other political force in the world is a compelling obligation of every Party member, and the proceedings of Party bodies which deal with questions of foreign affairs faithfully reflect this basic situation.

This means, in turn, that such Party bodies can be impelled in the direction of caution and restraint in dealings with the outside world only when it can be demonstrated by individual members that any other course would be contrary to the interests of the Soviet Union. (By which are meant, in reality, the interests of the Party.) If it can be shown that Soviet power would stand to suffer by an arrogant or aggressive policy in a question of foreign affairs, then, and only then, would the committee feel itself justified in observing a degree of restraint and moderation. Thus foreign representatives who wish to see the Soviet Government take action along lines agreeable to the interests of their countries must make sure that it can be argued in the Party councils that action along these lines would be in accordance with the most cynical and hardboiled interpretation of Soviet interests. For no other arguments could be effective.

Once the committee has made its decision, it is incumbent upon the individual member to support that decision with every evidence of conviction and enthusiasm, no matter what may have been his feelings before the decision was taken. As a matter of fact, if he has opposed the decision prior to its adoption, it is better for him to forget forevermore that he did so oppose it. For him, from that moment on, the decision was right; and it must acquire in his thoughts and in his words all the attributes and all the validity of truth itself. Above all, if it brings results which are not entirely desirable, the last thing he must ever do is to say, "I told you so." As a member of the committee, he bears collective responsibility for the decision taken, whether or not he opposed it before its adoption. In the form that it finally emerges from the resolution of the committee, it must enter into his psychology and it must replace any feelings he may previously have held on the subject in question. It may seem difficult for Western minds to envisage this mental evolution. But they may rest assured that it is not a difficult one for the Russian to encompass. In most cases, he finds it relatively easy to assume that the wisdom of the committee was greater than his own wisdom—particularly because he usually suspects that the final decision of the committee may have been the result of mysterious suggestions from on high of which he himself was not entirely aware. That would apply everywhere up to the inner circle of the Politburo itself. And it is not certain that even the men in the immediate environment of Stalin are always sure that they know exactly why Stalin favored one decision or another and that there was not some mysterious reason

beyond their ken which impelled him to such a position. It is part of Stalin's technique to keep everyone guessing as to the real background of his decisions.

But with this heavy responsibility which the individual Party committee member bears to the decision of his collective body, there goes a corresponding privilege for which he may be sincerely envied by anyone who works in the more individualistic atmosphere of Western government. This is the happy—and psychologically healthy—privilege of feeling no worry about that which has been done, and of being free to direct attention solely to the problems of the future. If the decision, collectively taken, turns out to be unfortunate, even though the individual may have supported it prior to its adoption, he bears no greater individual responsibility than anyone else if it turns out to have unfortunate consequences. The collective principle absolves his political conscience as a confession might absolve the personal conscience. If his is a subordinate Party body and if the decision is later found by higher authority to have been unwise, then there is indeed a possibility that the collective body as a whole may be made to answer for what is declared to be an error. But most decisions on foreign affairs are taken in the Political Bureau itself, and here, in the highest organ of Soviet power, no mistakes are ever made. The Politburo is infallible. The men who participate in its deliberations may sleep the sleep of the just and upright. No decision which they take will ever turn out to have been wrong.

Now, this is of course not to say that the members of the Politburo do not in reality make mistakes, and very serious mistakes at that. The principle that "to err is human" applies in the olympian spheres of the Kremlin in only slightly less degree—if any at all—than elsewhere. But such mistakes are never recognized for what they are. If things go wrong, the worst that can happen is that the members of the Politburo may have to face the fact that "the situation has changed" and that a new directive is in order. They may then proceed to evolve the new directive in a spirit of complacent good conscience. The fact that unfortunate events have followed their previous decision need not be to them a source of personal embarrassment or humiliation. This is important to remember, for it goes far to explain how Soviet policy, after a long spell of almost ferocious insistence on a certain line of policy, can suddenly, without explanation and with no apparent ill humor, depart from such insistence and strike out on a new and much more conciliatory line, even when this appears to

involve an outward loss of face for the Soviet Government. We see here a reflection of the mechanical impersonality which pervades the whole Soviet regime and the fact that personal dignity and personal prestige play by no means the same part in important decisions of policy as they do elsewhere.

In consequence, then, of the internal disciplinary rules of the Communist Party, we have a situation in which Soviet officials find themselves obliged to defend with fanatical obstinacy and loyalty any policy position which has been evolved by the competent collective organs of the Communist Party. Their views on the subjects covered by these decisions cannot be altered by the reasoned arguments or personal persuasiveness of individual representatives of other states; and in no event would the Soviet statesman be at liberty to cite such arguments or such persuasiveness in support of a more moderate and reasonable policy on the part of his government. The only argument with which a change of policy may be invoked in the councils of the Communist Party is an argument based squarely on the interests of the Party and of the Soviet Union, in the most narrow interpretation. But on the other hand, we see that when it can be demonstrated within the Party that a given line of policy has proved unfavorable to the interests of the Soviet Union, the disciplinary rules of the Party permit the organization to adjust itself to that situation with relative ease and good cheer and without personal embarrassment or humiliation to any of its members. In this way we obtain that curious mixture of outward obstinacy and inward flexibility which characterizes the Soviet approach to international affairs and understanding of which is basic to an appreciation of Soviet diplomacy and its significance for the future.

## CONCLUSION

I am perhaps the most guilty of all; I have perhaps treated you too harshly from the beginning; perhaps I have, by my excessive suspiciousness, repelled those who sincerely wished to be useful to me. But if these latter really loved justice and the good of their country, they should not have taken offense even at the arrogance of my treatment of them, they should have conquered their own vanity and sacrificed their own egos. I could not have failed to notice their self-sacrifice and their high devotion to all

that is good, and I could not have failed to accept in the end their useful and intelligent advice.

Gogol, *Dead Souls*

The factors discussed above do not exhaust the list of those which bear on the psychology of the Soviet Government as a member of the world community of nations. But their importance in this respect is so great that from them there emerges a reasonably clear pattern of the foreign political personality of the Soviet regime. We are dealing here with a political entity animated primarily by the desire to assure the security of its own internal political power. History and environment impel it to seek such security in the pursuit of military-industrial autarchy and in the maintenance of a great internal apparatus of repression. The impossibility of admitting the real reason for the maintenance of this apparatus of repression and the necessity of justifying its inevitable excesses by references to evil forces beyond the scope of Soviet power compel the Kremlin to cling desperately to certain basic features of the ideology which is described in Moscow as Marxism-Leninism.

This is an ideology which coincides closely with deep-seated national traditions of thought. It requires that the relations between Russia and the outside world be treated rather as the relations between hostile powers which are in a state of armistice than as the relations between friendly international neighbors. It affects strongly—and must continue to affect—the vision, the language, and the method of Russian Communism. It means that the pressure of Russia on the outside world, in the sense of militant and persistent efforts toward the acquisition of a maximum of power with a minimum of responsibility, must be expected to continue for a long time to come. By the same token, the outward aspects of Russia's relations with other countries cannot be expected to attain during this period anything resembling even that modicum of cordiality and ease of association which usually prevails in the relations between great states. Relations will continue to be marked by a series of disturbing and irritating features which flow inevitably from such a philosophy of basic antagonism and intolerance. But all this should not blind us to the fact that the functioning of the Soviet system allows, in its impersonal and mechanical way, a wide latitude of basic flexibility—a flexibility little hampered by the usual strictures of personal vanity and prestige.

Where the cautious eye of the Kremlin sees itself confronted with superior force it records this fact realistically and without indignation and sets about to adjust its tactics and, if necessary, its strategy to this new state of affairs. In such a situation, the dictates of Soviet conscience are satisfied and the men who bear the responsibility of decision can truthfully say to themselves and to their skeptical associates that they have gone as far as the interests of the Soviet cause permitted them to go at that particular juncture. But the vigilance of their own consciences and—more important still—of their jealous rivals within the Party is there to assure that they do not stop short of that point; and foreigners who urge them to do so are wasting their breath.

The problem of meeting the Kremlin in international affairs therefore boils down to this: Its inherent expansive tendencies must be firmly contained at all times by counter-pressure which makes it constantly evident that attempts to break through this containment would be detrimental to *Soviet* interests. The irritating by-products of an ideology indispensable to the Soviet regime for internal reasons must not be allowed to become the cause of hysterical alarm or of tragic despair among those abroad who are working toward a happier association of the Russian people with the world community of nations. The United States, in particular, must demonstrate by its own self-confidence and patience, but particularly by the integrity and dignity of its example, that the true glory of Russian national effort can find its expression only in peaceful and friendly association with other peoples and not in attempts to subjugate and dominate those peoples. Such an attitude on the part of this country would have with it the deepest logic of history; and in the long run it could not fail to carry conviction and to find reflection in the development of Russia's internal political life and, accordingly, in the Soviet concept of Russia's place in international affairs.

March 7, 1947

## PROBLEMS OF DIPLOMATIC-MILITARY COLLABORATION

*Editors' Note: This narrative is an example of a presentation described as "off-the-cuff" by Professor Kennan. It is recounted somewhat more succinctly in his Memoirs 1925–1950. We have chosen to include this original version because it is an excellent example of the use of personal experiences to illustrate important points. Further, its theme speaks directly to the rationale behind the founding of the National War College: the importance of cooperation and coordination between the diplomatic and military branches of government in forming and executing national policy.*

**T**HIS IS NOT A LECTURE, BUT A PERSONAL NARRATIVE. IT DOESN'T deal with current affairs but with things that took place three years ago during the war. It doesn't deal entirely with political affairs, but with ones rather military in nature. It is simply an account of certain negotiations and international dealings that I had to go through personally. I thought it might be of interest because it provides a rather striking test-tube example of the dangers of lack of coordination between governments, between agencies within governments, and between people at home in Washington and people in the field.

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In the summer of 1942 I was sent to Portugal as Counselor of the Legation. My real mission was not connected with normal diplomatic duties, but was the coordination of American intelligence in Portugal. Intelligence activities had gotten rather fouled up at that time and it was necessary that someone who could operate under an effective cover should take the responsibility for trying to disentangle things. But for the very reason that the cover had to be preserved, I had to accept the normal responsibilities of a Counselor of Legation, including the political ones.

The Minister at the US Legation in Lisbon at that time was an old bachelor gentleman, a political friend of Senator Pepper, and an orange grove owner from Florida. He was a very charming old gentleman, but not very active, who sat up in his bedroom most of the time listening to the radio. On several occasions I tried to get him to talk to the Prime Minister, Dr. Salazar. During the war nobody had ever talked to Salazar authoritatively about American-Portuguese relations, and I thought it was time somebody did. Our Minister was reluctant because he had a high respect for Dr. Salazar's mental agility: "Kennan," he said, "I ain't goin' down there and get my backsides kicked aroun'."

Meanwhile things were happening that disturbed me a little. I happened to know—not from the Department, because the Department had never come through with any confidences of this nature, but from other sources—that the Combined Chiefs of Staff were extremely concerned that the situation in the Iberian Peninsula not

be upset in any way. Remember the situation: The North African landings were just being planned and about to be staged. Spain really hung by a hair. The Germans had penetrated Spain very extensively but they had not taken over. Anything might have caused them to do so because they were in great doubt as to whether they should or should not. As a result, our Combined Chiefs had only one desire about the Iberian Peninsula, which lay on the flank of the North African operation. It should be like a good and well brought-up child: seen and not heard. We were to observe Portugal and Spain and make sure that nothing went on there that could cause undue alarm with respect to the planned North African operation.

A number of things were happening which made it plain to me that there was lack of understanding and coordination in our Government and in the British Government about this situation. I soon found out, for example, that our OSS agents were busy planning a minor revolution in the Azores for their own reasons. That didn't seem to tie in with the Combined Chiefs' decision. The OWI officers were equally busy trying to undermine Dr. Salazar and prove he was a dangerous Fascist who ought to be overthrown. They may have had their own reasons for that, but that sort of thing wasn't inclined to increase Salazar's desire for a United Nations victory or to promote stability in the Iberian Peninsula at that moment. Similarly, we had many other very peculiar reports that disturbed us. The British, for example, were unloading cans of aviation gasoline marked "RAF" in the Azores, in quantities far exceeding anything the Portuguese Air Force could ever use. Nobody, including the British Consul out there, had the faintest idea of what this was about or why the stuff was coming in. It was evident that nobody knew what was being done and that there was no single Allied plan.

In February 1943 I drafted, and persuaded the Minister to sign, a dispatch about our relations with Portugal and the Azores question; this was the first message of that sort written from the Legation during the war. I pointed out the situation just described to you, and went on to describe the position of the Azores, mentioning among other things that of the 470 flora and fauna of the islands, 400 were native to the continent of Europe and only 4 to the continent of America. My description of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance and its importance pointed out how the stability of the Portuguese homeland really rested on the stability of the Portuguese Empire. If the Allies were to seize portions of the Portuguese Empire by violence, that

very likely would have led, in the first place, to the overthrow of Salazar at home. This, in turn, would have led to intervention by Spain because the Spaniards would not have wished anybody else to be in power in Portugal at that moment. And if Spain had intervened in Portugal, I think it is very probable the Germans would have figured, "Too much is going on down there. We had better go in and take over with a firm hand." For that reason the Legation felt strongly it would be a great mistake to try any sort of violent action in those islands before every effort had been made to obtain facilities in the Azores for the Allies through normal channels.

Remember: up to this time no one had made requests to the Portuguese for facilities in those islands. Nobody wanted to raise that issue up to that time (February 1943). So we made the following recommendation, which was underlined for sake of greater emphasis:

In view of what has been set forth above, I think it should be clearly stated that if, during the course of the present war strategic necessity should make it necessary for any of the United Nations to seek facilities in the Azores, the granting of which would not be consistent with the neutral position occupied by Portugal, there is only one sound process by which this end should be sought, namely, the invocation of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance with a view to bringing about the abandonment by Portugal of its position of strict neutrality.

In conclusion we said:

... the British should be given an opportunity to make the most of this card [namely, their old alliance with Portugal] the only one consistent with the Portuguese passion for form and legality, before any other expedients are considered. Any other course would not only place an ineradicable stigma on the Allied cause, but it would quite likely saddle our people with responsibility for the collapse of an old and friendly nation—itsself one of the fountainheads of Latin-American culture—and for all the unpredictable repercussions which would ensue in other parts of the world. ... Once a proposal for the invocation of the Alliance has been duly presented to the Portuguese Government and the latter have thus had an opportunity to make the facilities of their possessions available to the United Nations in a manner compatible with their national dignity, then, if they decline the invitation, the field is clear for another approach. ...

In short, we felt the Portuguese must be asked decently.

Remember that in World War I the Portuguese had come into the war when the British asked them to do so in the name of the Alliance, and it was wrong to assume they would not do the same thing in this war if their assistance were requested properly.

In Washington, that dispatch produced the peculiar and profound sort of silence that is made only by the noise of a diplomatic dispatch hitting the Department's files. And we heard nothing more from it.

In the spring of 1943 I wrote another long dispatch on Portugal's position and on developments, stating in our opinion Salazar would be inclined "increasingly to the idea of seeking safety in an alliance with the Western Powers." This was true; and so we thought it might be the note that would lead the Department to come out of its silence and tell us what it had up its sleeves. But that dispatch produced more silence and nothing more happened until summer.

I went on vacation in the early summer and came back in July. When I got back to Lisbon I found two things that had changed the situation. In the first place, the Minister had died three or four days before. This left me in charge of the Mission. In the second place, I discovered that the British had sent down a high-powered secret negotiating mission to get the Portuguese to give them certain airports and naval facilities in the Azores. They were already negotiating with the Portuguese Government. In the course of these negotiations Salazar was bringing up the question, "Suppose I do this and suppose the Germans begin to sink my ships. How does my country get fed? Will you promise me food? Suppose the Germans attack the homeland" (which they could have done) "will you give me arms and that sort of thing?"

It happened that we had been engaged for some time in a very intensive and elaborate economic warfare program on the peninsula, in the course of which we were using food, arms, and all the other items the Portuguese wanted. We were withholding these things to a large extent as levers to force the Portuguese to stop sending wolfram and other strategic materials to Germany. Now we found out that the British, who were perfectly frank and told us what they were doing under instructions from their own Government, were promising the Portuguese these same materials in return for facilities in the Azores. Thus it was evident that our economic warfare program was going down the river. Yet we had not a single instruction from our

Government to stop the program. We in the Legation were, therefore, somewhat on the spot. It was not the fault of the British delegation, who were very decent, very loyal. They put their cards on the table at every turn and were acting solely on instructions from their own government. We didn't know what to do about this situation. The operation of landing British forces on the Azores, planned for the end of the summer, had to be kept absolutely secret. There is no protected harbor on the islands. The vessels from which these troops and supplies were to be landed had to lie offshore. These ships would have been sitting ducks if the Germans had known about it. It was absolutely essential, and especially in the city of Lisbon where eleven different intelligence services of the warring powers were operating, that we keep this entirely to ourselves. We did not feel free to wire about it in our own codes to Washington and obviously only two or three of us in the Legation could know about it.

So I did the only thing I could do. At each stage of the British negotiations I wrote a personal letter to the Secretary of State telling him what had been going on. I pointed out how it was affecting both our general position and our whole economic warfare program, and that we in the Legation really ought to know what was up. Nothing more happened. The end of the summer came along. The actual date of entry of the British forces into the islands was scheduled for Thursday, October 7. The announcement of it was to take place five days later, by which time it was hoped that the initial supplies and forces would be ashore and that aircraft would be operating from the islands, making it safe to let the Germans know about it.

Sometime before this, in September, the British came to me in considerable concern and said, "The way this is being worked out is going to have a most unfortunate effect on your Consuls in the islands." I asked, "What effect is that going to be?"

"They are going to be arrested together with the German and Italian Consuls, held incommunicado for several days for security reasons, and then deported from the islands."

"That is a hell of a note." I said.

"It is. That is why we are telling you. You had better take it up with the Portuguese and see if it can be done differently."

Unable to communicate with our Government from Lisbon, I sent a man to London to communicate through Army channels, and got back a cryptic message from Washington saying, "We see no necessity for taking action in the matter, and in the future please don't communicate with us about it."

Growing a little desperate, I wrote a letter to the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of European Affairs, saying, "Look, you may think we out here don't need to know anything about what is going on, but I can assure you not a day passes but what it affects the work of this Legation in one way or another, and if we don't take it into account the Government's interests are going to suffer. I want some indication of whether our Government knows about what the British are doing, what its policy is, what our relation is to this British operation that is being planned."

The date of the actual operation approached. Still, nothing more was heard from Washington. On the day that I knew the secret operation had started, I sent a long historical dispatch to Washington on this new implementation of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance. The Portuguese had undertaken in the name of the Alliance to give these facilities to the British. They had done it reluctantly. They were very scared of what the Germans might do to them as a result. They had spent all summer bickering over it. It had taken all the diplomatic power that England had, and the full invocation of the Alliance which had existed for 600 years, to obtain these facilities for the British. It had been a whole summer's work. So I wrote this long dispatch, pointing out something the people in Washington seem to have ignored: namely, that we ourselves, as a leading member of the Atlantic community, had at this stage of the game, and would have from now on, as much interest as did England in the Azore islands, in the stability of the Portuguese Empire in general, and in seeing that this particular bit of territory right here at the entrance of the Mediterranean, or very close to it, did not fall into the hands of a continental land power. I pointed out that, in effect, we were *already* bearing many of the traditional wartime responsibilities of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance insofar as we were partly responsible for the security of the Atlantic. For that reason, I thought we ought to take a greater interest in this issue and give some evidence of a policy. I concluded this long, basic dispatch on American-Portuguese relations on a rather plaintive note:

For over a hundred years, American diplomats have resided as passive and frequently bored observers in this remote capital of a languishing but long-lived empire. Their role as observers could have been justified only by the thought that they should some day be available to report to our Government a turn of events

which might finally engage its interests and enlist its activity. This day, I believe, has at long last arrived [this was the day of the entry of the British forces] and we should be lacking in perspicacity if we failed to perceive it. It should have its connotations not only for our Government, but also for those who represent it. And as Chief of the Lisbon Mission at the moment of this latest—but not last—invocation of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, it is my personal hope that I may consider myself among the long succession of predecessors and successors—if not the first of the participants, then at least the last of the observers.

I didn't have very long to wait because that same day a telegram arrived which, in one sense, relieved me because it was the first thing I had heard from our Government about this subject. Rather cryptic, it said, "If asked, assure the Portuguese Prime Minister that this Government guarantees the sovereignty of Portugal in all Portuguese possessions." I looked at that again—"if asked"—all right, and put it in the safe. That was Thursday, the day after the British troops had landed in the Azores. The following day another telegram came and it said, "Whether asked or not, go ahead and present this assurance to the Portuguese Government." Well, the message was all to the good; and I thought that a good way to do it. So I asked for an interview with the Portuguese Prime Minister, Dr. Salazar.

I must go back a minute and tell you something that happened before. The previous year, on the night of our landings in North Africa, we had received a similar message, telling the Minister and myself to see the Portuguese President at the hour the landings were to begin and to assure him we weren't going to infringe on Portugal's sovereignty in this connection. It had been a hard assignment because the president of Portugal (not Dr. Salazar—President Carmona) was an old man in poor health. He lived far outside town and did not normally receive diplomats. The landings in North Africa were to begin at one a.m., Portuguese time. If we had gone down several days before and said that at one a.m. on the night of November 6 we were going to have to see the President, the news would have gotten all over Lisbon and the Germans would have had a tip-off that something was in the making. So for security reasons we couldn't ask for the meeting until that same evening.

In the evening I went to the home of the Chief of Protocol, Dr. Viana, who was a fine but somewhat sticky gentleman, and said

to him, "The Minister and I want to see the President of the Republic at one o'clock in the morning." He almost dropped in his tracks and turned pale. When he asked *why* we wanted to see him, I could only say, "I can't tell you. My instructions are to transmit a message to him and not to you." He looked at me and got even paler and asked, "Is this IT?" I could see that we were going to upset the Portuguese terribly and even give rise to rumors, so I replied, "I will tell you this much: it is nothing the President will be sorry to hear." On that basis, we got the interview.

Now, in 1943, being instructed again to transmit another guarantee of the Portuguese Empire to the Portuguese Government, I had to get in touch with the same Chief of Protocol. "I want an interview right away," I told Dr. Viana.

"I am sorry I can't arrange it. Dr. Salazar is out of town."

I knew he was. He had gone from Lisbon to the Spanish frontier to tell Franco what the British were doing. They had all kept Franco in the dark up to that time. So Dr. Salazar was several hundred miles away and wasn't planning to come back before Monday. "I have to see him," I repeated.

"What do you want to see him about?"

"I can't tell you; I can only tell him."

"Well, I can't ask him to come back from the frontier. Suppose you don't have anything important. I will catch it for getting him all the way back here."

"Remember the night of the North African landing?"

"I do."

"Remember I insisted on seeing the President of the Republic? Well, it is something like that. You go ahead and get him back here."

So Dr. Viana persuaded the Prime Minister to make the trip back on Saturday night, a couple of hundred miles, and Salazar agreed to receive me in his home in Lisbon at eleven o'clock Sunday morning. I went to our Legation on Sunday morning at ten-thirty and looked in at the code room. An urgent message was coming in. When uncoded, it instructed me to "under no circumstances transmit the message" guaranteeing Portuguese sovereignty. That was at five minutes of eleven, just as I was leaving to see Salazar.

I had to do some pretty fast thinking. When I thought it out I realized there wasn't much to do about it. I went to see the Prime Minister, which was the first time I had seen Dr. Salazar officially

alone. He was a very hard man to see. He used to keep ambassadors waiting half a month to see him. So I felt pretty much ashamed about what I had to tell him: "Dr. Salazar, I have just received instructions from my Government which make it unnecessary to bring up the matter I came to see you about." I felt I had to do *something* to lend dignity to the situation, so I added, "But I know that over the course of many years no one in authority in our Government has really discussed with you the question of American-Portuguese relations, and I think it is high time we did." Thus I raised this topic on the highest level I could. It was an act of desperation, but I felt I had to do something to rescue the situation. I did get him interested in the subject. We talked for half or three quarters of an hour, and he seemed very much interested, but I could see that when I left he was frankly puzzled.

I went back to the Legation and telegraphed Washington: "This" I explained, "is what I have done, but I think you had better cook up some sort of excuse and give it to the Portuguese right away to satisfy their curiosity. They are going to be wild over this." A telegram came back from Washington: "We see no necessity for any such action." And that was that.

On the following day the actual notification was made of the landings in the Azores. When it was made public, the Portuguese waited anxiously for the German reaction. They had many reasons to expect one. It was a crucial situation. But nothing happened immediately. The German Minister delivered a threatening note which left open whether the Germans were going to take military action against Portugal or not. The only other thing that happened was that in the middle of that week I got a reply from the Assistant Secretary of State, to whom I had written, and he said, "I have received your letter but I don't know what you are talking about. Our traditional policy toward Portugal is to promote our trade and have pleasant relations with the Portuguese people, and beyond that I don't know what it is you are speaking of." That didn't help me at all. So I put that reply in the safe.

Three days went by. The Germans didn't do anything, but the Portuguese were still not entirely relieved in their own minds and didn't know whether the Germans would start something soon. On Sunday an officer called me over to the Legation in the evening to read a long telegram, which began as follows:

The following instructions are given to you by direction of the President to be executed on October 18 or as soon thereafter as

possible, if at such time no military action has been taken by the Germans against Portugal.

You are aware we have held in suspense certain negotiations in order to avoid interference with the negotiations leading up to the Anglo-Portuguese Agreement of August 17. [That was a misstatement. I was not aware of that.] Our negotiations were designed to make available for us certain facilities in the Azores for our Army and Navy. You are now directed to seek an interview with Dr. Salazar and request the following facilities.

Then followed a list of military and naval facilities which constituted easily four times everything that the British had originally asked for and about six times everything they had finally received in their negotiations. Continuing,

... The request for these facilities should be based on the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance of 1373, and particularly upon the "friends of friends" phrase therein. [The original Anglo-Portuguese Alliance had said Portugal would be friendly to England and the friends of England.] We may require British support in gaining these objectives, and if so we have the assurance of the British Prime Minister that this support will be forthcoming to the fullest extent. It is intended, however, that you will take the lead in these negotiations.

I read that thing about sixteen times, and I just couldn't understand what really had happened back in Washington. I knew that the Portuguese had never dreamed anything else of any importance was going to follow after they got through with their negotiations with the British. I suspected they knew we would want to come in on the use of the British facilities, but I was absolutely positive they did not know, had no idea, we were going to ask for further facilities for ourselves.

I went over in the morning to see the British Ambassador, who turned pale at this information, because he was put on a terrible spot. Having carried on the negotiations all summer, he had never warned the Portuguese that anything like this was coming. He and his Government had asked for facilities in the name of the Alliance, and allowed the Portuguese to conclude that when they gave them, they would have acquitted themselves of all their obligations under the Alliance. Furthermore, we had this guarantee hanging over them; for

I was sure the Portuguese knew what it was I had come to see them about. The British Ambassador and I agreed that if we tried to force their hand on American facilities with the denial of that guarantee hanging over them, Salazar was exactly the sort of man who would have picked up his hat and gone back to the University of Coimbra (where he had once been a professor) and said, "If I have brought my country to a place where it is necessary to negotiate under the threat of violence, I am not the man to handle its affairs. Somebody else will have to do it." And there would have been a great deal of trouble.

I felt if I went down to negotiate that program, the Portuguese either would be panicked into revolution or would refuse to give us anything whatsoever. There would be bitter recriminations from them and the British and between the British and ourselves. For that reason, with heavy heart, I drew up a telegram to the Secretary of State:

There are in my opinion compelling reasons why we should not advance these requests in the prescribed scope and at this particular moment. I believe that to do so would prejudice rather than benefit the chances—which are otherwise not unfavorable—of our ultimately coming to share the use of the facilities already granted to the British, and that it might cause complications in British-Portuguese relations not to mention our own.

I am reluctant to enter into a discussion with the Department or to ask the Department to do so with the President, over an instruction given me by the President. For this reason, I shall not cite here the various reasons for these opinions; but I should like to make it plain that I am willing to take full personal responsibility for this position; and I should welcome it if the Department instead of requiring me to proceed at once with the execution of the instruction would permit me to return immediately to Washington and to explain, if necessary personally to the President, the reasons for my views. . . .

I got back a telegram saying that my message had been shown to the president, "who has directed me to state a brief delay will have no damaging effect on our negotiations and asks you to submit your views in full by cable." So I sat down again and wrote a long telegram to Washington spelling out in detail why I thought this shouldn't be done. I listed a number of points and elaborated on each of them:

*One.* Salazar is not prepared for anything of this sort. No mention of it was made to him during British negotiations . . .

*Two.* He feels that he has strained his relations with the Germans to utmost already and that he will be lucky if he gets by with sinking of a ship or two and possibly some reprisals in Azores area . . .

*Three.* Salazar who fears association with us only slightly less than with the Germans [that was partly the doing of the OWI] has made great point of argument that in dickering with British he was only honoring an agreement which existed long before this war began and that his concessions were not to the United Nations as such, as a temporary anti-Axis constellation, but only to Portugal's historic relationship to England. This was one of the arguments on which he relied to keep the Germans quiet . . . [And which he used in talking to the German Minister.]

*Four.* German propaganda directed to Portugal has recently plugged the line "now you'll see what you've gotten yourselves in for; the British agreement was only the beginning, other demands will follow". . . .

*Five.* What we are asking is not only much more than what the British got: it considerably surpasses everything they originally requested . . .

*Six.* I have no *quid pro quo* to offer to Salazar. . . . [That was the most important thing. Many of the other potential quids pro quo had already been used and exhausted.]

*Seven.* The British Ambassador here has no instructions which would enable him to support us in these requests. . . . [That was terribly important. Remember the British had said they would support it. But the British Ambassador had no such instructions.]

*Eight.* A number of the facilities we are asking for are ones which were flatly refused to the British all through the summer's negotiations. . . .

Moving from the negative side of it I went on to the positive:

My suggestion would be that instead of calling upon him to make another anti-German demonstration on the heels of the first one—which was quite enough for his nerves—we now endeavor to slip quietly and gradually through the gap which the British have succeeded in opening for us. The Portuguese are allergic to

theory but relatively impervious to practice. They can tolerate all sorts of things as long as they are not required to give them formal approval. A hundred American planes which landed at Terceira without their official knowledge would disturb them less than one landing which they were asked to approve in principle.

I think that for the moment we should proceed in the most disarming and inconspicuous manner possible to work in an occasional American ship and plane to the use of the facilities, gradually increasing this practice, according to the degree of resilience we encounter.

Once the Portuguese have been conditioned to the presence of American planes and ships around the islands and we have thus gotten our foot in the door, I think we could well approach Salazar with the proposition that the intertwining of our war effort with that of England makes it impossible for our armed forces to be excluded from bases used by England but that administrative considerations require in some cases that the physical facilities used by our forces at those bases be kept separate from those of the British; that for this reason we must ask Portugal to permit us to set up certain separate establishments of our own in the islands. . . .

That telegram was the general plan of campaign I wanted to follow. I received from Washington along about Friday of that week about the best instruction that I have ever received from our Government. It was a complete endorsement of my point of view on this:

In the light of the considerations you advance, the President desires to leave to your judgment and discretion the manner of approach to these negotiations and the extent to which our desiderata should be presented to Dr. Salazar. You should bear in mind, however, that our need for certain air and port facilities in the Azores is imperative and urgent. With your knowledge and understanding of the local situation, the possibilities of German reactions and the Portuguese psychology, the Department has confidence you will know the practical limits to which you should go in requesting the aforesaid facilities. . . . You said in your telegram that you have no *quid pro quo* to offer Salazar. It is the Department's feeling that there are several important considerations to which you may in your discretion wish to draw Dr. Salazar's consideration. First among these in importance is

the assurance to respect the sovereignty of Portugal and its entire colonial empire, assurances that have thus far been withheld.

Then the Department went on and said I could promise them arms and certain other things.

Of course, I was absolutely delighted with that and thought, "Now I have clear sailing," and went ahead to request another interview with Salazar. A day or two went by and I heard no response. Then I received a phone call asking me to come down and talk to the Secretary General in the Foreign Office, old Dr. Sampaio, who was really the Foreign Minister there. I went down and Dr. Sampaio said, "You know you came here some two weeks ago to see the Prime Minister. We are aware that what you had in mind when you came to see him was a question of political guarantees for the Portuguese Empire. We learned some days ago from the Portuguese Ambassador in Washington you had been about to give such guarantees and you had been instructed not to do it. Now," he said, "I would like some explanation of this."

You see, they weren't going to grant the interview with Salazar. They knew what was coming about and they wanted the question of the guarantees clarified.

That, again, was a terribly difficult position, because if I hedged at all on the guarantee they would smell a rat and if they felt we were asking them to deal under the pressure of intimidation, I might never get the interview with Salazar at all. On the other hand, the instruction still stood. "These assurances," I had been told, "have not yet been granted." I thought as fast as I could, and proceeded to tell a whopping lie. I'll quote from my own telegram sent to Washington later which reported my response:

... that while I had no official information I believed the thought had occurred to people in our Government that it might be better if date of presentation of such assurances was not to be too close to publication of Anglo-Portuguese Agreement and that consequently action had been postponed in order not to embarrass Portuguese Government in any way. I said that I had now received instructions which would permit me to transmit assurances in question and I invited his opinion as to form in which I should do so. I said that I had recently been fortunate enough to receive instructions which made it possible for me to undertake in most constructive spirit a general discussion of Portuguese-American

relations and that happily I thought I might be able to remove many of past as well as future causes of difficulty between our governments. For this reason I added I would like an early opportunity to talk to the Prime Minister; ...

Then I went home and wrote out, on my own typewriter, in defiance of my written instructions, a guarantee of the Portuguese Empire and sent it down to the old gentleman and reported to the Department as follows:

... it was obvious to me when Secretary General introduced this subject that any temporizing or half-measures at that point might ruin value of assurances both as a gesture and as a bargaining factor. Since I could see no certainty of saving them successfully for latter purpose, I felt obliged to exploit them to utmost for former. ...

I realized this was a gamble, but I felt I had to take it. I was under instructions to obtain the facilities. I had been told they were urgent and imperative for our Government, and I had been told to use my own judgment in trying to get them.

That telegram went out Saturday night; and nothing further came until Tuesday, when a curt message came in of the following tenor:

After further consideration and in line with your suggestion you are now instructed to return at once for consultation. This is considered extremely urgent and you should endeavor to proceed immediately. ...

It took five days at that time to get home. Fortunately there was a Pan American clipper leaving that night. As you remember, those clippers flew down to Africa and South America, back to Bermuda, and then to the United States. It was a five-day-and-night trip and rather wearing. I was sure my days as a public servant were over. I was thinking about what I would do in the future. The British provided me (unofficially) with a very charming traveling companion, an elderly gentleman who knew I liked to sketch, and who sketched very well himself. We sat in the various harbors along the way and sketched boats and things. He was along to observe, because the British were extremely interested in this whole business.

When I arrived in Washington I was taken in tow in the State Department by the Acting Secretary of State and the head of the

European Office. Without a word of explanation, I was put into a taxi and taken over to the Pentagon Building, where I was brought into a room where I recognized (from newspaper pictures) among others, Mr. Stimson, Mr. Knox, General Marshall, General Arnold, General Kuter. The Under Secretary of State was there. I couldn't figure out for the life of me what it was all about. There seemed to be great confusion among them about some message. I didn't come in on the discussion for the first hour, and then when I did the questions that were thrown at me were rather disjointed ones, which I know I must not have answered very well. I didn't really understand what it was they were driving at, and I kept expecting, but they never did, bring up the question of the guarantee.

The questions were along the line of "Why wouldn't the Portuguese give us this?"—the same question I thought I had answered in the telegram—and "Who is this guy Salazar and what does he think he is anyway?" Finally they ended this up with what was in effect a rather scathing vote of no confidence in me. Mr. Stimson said, "Obviously it is time we sent a real Ambassador to Portugal to handle the matter." The Under Secretary of State gloomily agreed. I was then told to leave.

Well, I went back to have lunch at a cafeteria on 17th Street, and the more I thought about what occurred I realized I hadn't played my own cards well. The more I thought about it, the madder I got. So I decided I wasn't going to let it go without a fight. In despair I went to the State Department and said, "Do you mind if I go over to see Admiral Leahy?" They said no, they didn't mind anything. I went over to see Admiral Leahy and told him the story from beginning to end as I have told it to you. He said, "You had better see Harry Hopkins about this."

He took me to the other end of the building and I told it to Harry. Harry paced up and down, placed some very penetrating questions, and said, "Well, I am really not sure that we don't want to sock the Portuguese, but you have pretty good reasons why we shouldn't, and you had better see the President." So he arranged a meeting and that afternoon took me in to see the President. He had told President Roosevelt about the subject beforehand. I began to amplify it, but the President didn't let me talk very long. He just said, "Now don't worry about all those people over there in the Pentagon. This is very simple. During the last war I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy and I personally was in charge of dismantling

the bases in the Azores which we had during the First World War. There is no reason in the world why Dr. Salazar should object to this if I ask him. I will sit down and write him a letter. Don't you bother about all these other people in Washington. You take the letter right back to him."

He asked me to come back the next morning. I did and he gave me the letter, which I will read to you.

Mr. George F. Kennan has been here for a few days and I have seen him prior to his departure. He will tell you what I have emphasized to him in regard to shortening the war and saving lives by American, as well as British, use of Terceira and Horta facilities.

May I take this opportunity to remind you of a story with which you are familiar. In 1918, when I was the Under Secretary of the Navy, I went to Horta and to Ponta Delgada, [those are the two big ports in the Azores] . . . in both of which ports the Allies were using repair, fueling and anti-submarine facilities. In fact, in Ponta Delgada the American Navy had a full-fledged base of operations—and very many of our ships used the harbor at Ponta Delgada for our fueling and repairs.

In those days there was never any question about the good faith of the United States in carrying out their pledge that as soon as possible after the war the bases would be dismantled and the shore batteries abandoned. I personally inspected everything, and the relationship at that time between Portugal and the United States was on a basis of mutual confidence and great friendship. In 1918 all of our forces were withdrawn, and I am inclined to think the use of these two places by us did much for the economic good of the people of the Azores.

I do wish that I could have a chance to come to see you one of these days, because I want to talk to you about another matter—the furtherance of cultural relations between the United States, and Portugal and Brazil. [That was my idea.] In other words, a closer association between the three nations in regard to an improved status after the war is over. I do not need to tell you the United States has no designs on the territory of Portugal and its possessions. I am thinking in long-range terms because I do not think our peoples have been in close enough touch in the past.

I went back with that letter and opened negotiations with Salazar, which I won't describe to you in detail. I conducted them alone. We spent many hours in conversation. He agreed, finally, but with reservations. He was a cautious man. He agreed to our use of the British facilities, and eventually some more. During the negotiations, however, there arrived the new Ambassador the Pentagon wanted to send. But I finished the first stage and got the camel's head under the tent. And I then left it to the other people there.

I only want to add one point to the story. It had a curious little finish. Just before I returned to Portugal with the President's letter, I was sitting in the Department of State in the office of the Chief of European Affairs. While I was sitting there, the Under Secretary of State, Mr. Stettinius, stormed in and, not seeing me, addressed himself to the head of the European Office. He said, "Say, Doc: the Portugal Ambassador was in to see me, and he thanked me for some God-damn guarantee, and said he always knew the United States would want facilities in the islands. Now what in the name of hell did he mean by that?"

## DISCUSSION

KENNAN: Gentlemen, I think first I ought to say two or three words in all seriousness about the reasons for this confession and the morals that can be drawn from it. Why did all that happen? I can see several reasons of interest because they show you the pitfalls. First: there wasn't proper liaison between ourselves and the British, and some of the most extraordinary misunderstandings resulted. At Quebec in August, about a month before that was to occur, the matter was discussed, and there evolved from that discussion an understanding, or what people thought was an understanding. But each side wrote it down as they understood it.

The British understanding was this: It was agreed after the British got the facilities in the islands the Americans should have the right to send convoys through the islands, and that they would get that right from the Portuguese. They meant that American convoys enroute to the Mediterranean or to Europe could stop in the islands with escort vessels, and, if necessary, refuel. I don't know what they had to stop for, but they did.

Our people understood it this way: We could send convoys to the islands, not *through* but *to*. We also understood that we could send a convoy for airport construction. Our people came home thinking the British would arrange it so that we could have airports in the islands as soon as the British had acquired the facilities. The British thought they had given us permission for our convoys to pass through, which they did.

Secondly, there was lack of liaison in our own Government of which everybody was guilty. I think the Department of State was probably most guilty, but other people were also. Our air authorities assured the President on the basis of information from their own people who had not been in Portugal during the war at all, that Salazar would be glad to give us these facilities. When this information was used in correspondence between the President and Prime Minister, the Prime Minister came back and said, "If you know this information is true, that is fine. We didn't know it, but so much the better." So again the misunderstanding grew. If they had checked with us on the spot in Lisbon, they never could have fallen into that sort of error.

Of course, the State Department was at fault not only in its lack of liaison on the subject with the other offices of the Government, but also in not keeping its own people informed, because that is a dangerous thing to do. The people in the Department thought they were playing safe and secure not letting us on the spot know what was going on, but it might have had dangerous consequences. If we had forced the Portuguese hand at that moment, as some of our people here were willing to do, just imagine for a moment what the course of events would have been after that. Less than ten days before, the Portuguese, at the request of their British allies, had honored an alliance of 600 years' standing, and had jeopardized their national security in doing so. They had done all, in effect, that was asked of them. If we had then gone with violence in to the islands, the Portuguese would have turned around and appealed to the British in the name of the alliance to protect them, and look what a position the British would have been in. It would have been one of the most impossible positions; every dictate of honor and loyalty would have said they could not themselves violate the alliance which the other party had honored only ten days before. It would have put them in a most incredible spot.

Finally, the last moral of that tale is that small fry, when they find themselves in the presence of their superiors, ought to find

the courage to speak up and speak their minds, and not be so damn bashful as I was about it.

There is one more thing I ought to add. I may have sounded unjust to the high military and naval leaders I had to talk to here, but it was not their fault, because due to poor liaison in the Government they hadn't received my second telegram giving my reasons why we shouldn't proceed as they directed, nor the message about the guarantees. They were two steps behind and still talking only about the first telegram in which I said I didn't think this ought to be done and I would be glad to come home and explain why. Therefore, we were completely bewildered. I didn't know what they were talking about and they didn't know what I was talking about.

I have told the tale not just because it is amusing, but because it is a good example of the absolute necessity for low-level and high-level coordination on anything to do with a political and military matter of this sort.

QUESTION: Will you tell us about your interview with Salazar and his interest in the Fascist view?

KENNAN: The negotiations with Salazar took a rather strange course. He is quite a fellow; everybody who has ever dealt with him will tell you that. He is one of the most able men in Europe and a man of high moral principle. He is not afraid of anything and he sticks by his principles. I went in there on this matter and he was very friendly and kind. The Portuguese had the guarantee by that time. I started to bring it up and he interrupted me and said, "Wait a minute. I want to ask you some questions. You are an American. Tell me something. You people are against Fascism, aren't you?" I said yes. He said, "What do you mean by Fascist?" He wanted to see whether he was a Fascist in our view, before he got into any political association with us. There again it wasn't so easy to handle that. But I knew he had a great respect for law and he considered his rule in Portugal the rule of law. The role of law in human psychology was firmly fixed in his psychology.

I said we regarded one of the attributes of Fascism as its being a system that doesn't recognize law but works completely on arbitrary government. I also knew he was a deeply religious man, and so I said we viewed as one of the attributes of Fascism the persecution of the Church, and I brought out several things he would sympathize with. I don't think he *is* a Fascist in our concept, and it was not hard to put this forward in a way that suited him. After that he was satisfied and amenable to letting me talk about the islands.

Salazar was a cautious man. All Portuguese are. They are the damnedest traders in the world. They can think of more reservations and little details. But he was agreed we should use these facilities and we could go ahead and develop our own. He wanted it done in such a form the Germans couldn't accuse him of a completely unneutral act.

QUESTION: Mr. Kennan, I would be the last one to deny the conclusion to be reached from your story that that is a hell of a way to run a railroad. On the other hand, I think there is one point that you might carry a little further. I am speaking of organization and administration in command. It strikes me that one of the difficulties here was: where was command? One idea is that the commander of a theater or of a joint operation should not also be the commander of one of the component forces. Wasn't that one of the difficulties here? I would emphasize the control of foreign relations at this particular time because I don't think it is a problem at the present time. The real command for foreign relations was not in the State Department but across the street in the White House. In other words, the Commander-in-Chief was also commanding one of the components, and poor old Secretary of State Hull and later Secretary Stettinius had really very little information of things of this kind which very often were kept in the President's pocket. Your criticism is entirely just as it applies particularly to that period.

KENNAN: You are absolutely right, and I am not sure the Department wasn't completely sincere in writing me and telling me "We don't know what you are talking about." I don't think they knew. That was handled completely by the President and the Joint Chiefs, and I can't find it in my heart to attach any blame even there. The Joint Chiefs were tremendously busy at that stage of the war. This was only small potatoes in their general scheme. It was essential because it relieved something like 18,000 men of the air force personnel whom we were having to keep on this southern route. We could not have flown the Air Transport to Europe in the necessary quantities if we hadn't been able to supply it through the Azores or by an alternative route to Iceland in the preparation for the landing in Normandy. Nevertheless, it was only one of many, many details they had to handle. They had to do it with great secrecy and security had to be maintained. It was handled only at the big conference and it was done there quickly. They had what they thought was an agreement and then everybody barged ahead on his own way. Nobody thought of diplomatic preparations for it, or our own people thought

the British would do it, and the British had quite a different understanding. That is the way it was. I don't think it was anybody's fault. It only shows in another war we simply must have better unified command and cooperation on these things.

QUESTION: Let's pursue the question of a future war. You have indicated it took about 18 months from the time you were present until negotiations were completed in some form or other. Would you care to draw any conclusion from that with respect to the next war? I don't believe we will have 18 months to negotiate. Unless the groundwork is laid before the war, we may be forced to go into the seizure business.

KENNAN: That is absolutely true. In case of another war we ought to outline to ourselves right in the beginning anything that we are going to be apt to want from any of the neutral countries, just how we feel about it, and whether we are going to violate their neutrality or slip in under some subterfuge. The real trouble was that—up to the moment those instructions reached me—nobody had ever discussed American-Portuguese relations with the Portuguese Government all during the war. We had ignored them completely. Discussions would have been a very easy thing. Everybody who traveled at that time between England and the United States, almost everybody of the civilian category, had to pass through Lisbon on these clippers. Many important people came through there, members of the Cabinet of our Government, all sorts of people. It would have been a very easy thing to have some of them call on Dr. Salazar, talk to him, explain how our country felt about the war, and tell him we didn't want to violate Portuguese neutrality, but at some point the war might make it necessary for us to use those facilities. We could have conditioned him to it if we had thought of it in good time.

In case of another war, with relation to this particular region, I think we must have the use of facilities from the beginning. We can't be bothered to negotiate again. It is fair to the Portuguese, to the British, and to ourselves for us to insist on and be ready to fulfill some of the responsibilities of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance. The basis of that alliance has simply been this: Portugal is a small, weak country which is helpless in the face of a continental land power. It does not have the naval strength to maintain its large empire which it has held from past time, that is the Azores, her other colonies, and Timor and Macau on the coast of China. That empire has been maintained for hundreds of years through an arrangement with the British

and Portuguese whereby the British have given their naval strength for its maintenance; and the Portuguese, on their part, have taken a benevolent attitude toward the British, usually after considerable dickering, in wars between British seapower and continental land power. That has happened time and time again. It is uncanny to see the way this has worked out in about four different cases. First it was against Spain, then France, then Napoleon, and finally the Germans, and you can carry it further if you want to. In each case there has been the question whether the British could let a continental land power come in and occupy this area, and the general dicker has been in return for British protection the Portuguese have permitted the British to use the islands.

In the next war, we have to go right at the beginning and say this has been tried enough times for everybody to know that it is a pattern, and you just have to give access. The reason that wasn't done in this war—the Portuguese would have given those facilities sooner—was the British didn't want them to. The British were afraid in the early stages of the war that if they took the islands the Germans would immediately go in and take the mainland. The Germans were sinking ships off the harbor of Lisbon by air during the war. Where the German planes came from I never knew. I don't know whether anybody did. Big four-motor Fokker-Wolfe bombers would appear off the harbor of Lisbon and sink British ships coming and going. Portugal was open to them really. There was nothing to stop the Germans, and it would have been hard for the British and ourselves to try to land and root them out. So long as the Germans didn't try to get into the islands, the British were quite content not to attack them as long as they didn't have to.

In another war I hope that our position at the outset will be favorable enough so that we can solve that problem at once and say we want the use of the Azore Islands and we will help you to protect the mainland.

QUESTION: The foreign news correspondent in Spain, Constantine Brown, has been writing daily articles about Franco. Apparently the articles are trying to say that Franco isn't such a bad man. Yesterday Franco told him that he was friendly to America throughout the war because he could have told Hitler about the protected North African landing. Do you know whether he knew in advance? I gathered from the discussion today we didn't tell people until the time of the landing.

KENNAN: No, there was the same situation in Spain. Just last night I read the book of Sir Samuel Hoare, who was the British Ambassador in Madrid during that period. He said that it was absolutely impossible to keep the Germans and the Italians from knowing what was going on in Gibraltar. They sit right over the whole airport and the whole port. They could see everything going on. As a matter of fact, when the Italians were going to raid Gibraltar, the Italian Consul across the way invited people to a cocktail party to watch the raid. You could see everything there. There was no concealing from the Spaniards that something was up, but a very good job of deception was done to make them think it was an operation that was going to take place farther east and not something in North Africa. There is no indication that the Spaniards and the Germans stumbled onto what was really going on. If they had, I don't see why they would have let it go ahead.

COMMENT: Was Franco told of the operation in advance, as he indicated?

KENNAN: No, he was told the same as the Portuguese Prime Minister was told.

COMMENT: So all he could have told the Germans about was the build-up on Gibraltar. It was a question which the Germans didn't undertake to interpret.

KENNAN: Sir Samuel Hoare, in analyzing the question, "Why didn't the Axis stumble onto that," writes that they had too many competing intelligence services, and between them all they gave so many answers the Germans didn't know which to believe—which is a very interesting thing. Incidentally, the claim of Franco that he was friendly to us during the war is not true. He was anything but that. For a good deal of the time some of the Spaniards were hostile. Other Spaniards, such as two of the Foreign Ministers, Beigbeder and Jordana, were very decent to us and practically told us they didn't agree with Franco. The difficulty was that we had two camps in Madrid, and what our people were trying to do was encourage the camp favorable to us and discourage the others in the face of a good deal of criticism back home. I have no sympathy with Franco, but it would have been a great mistake and directly against our wartime strategy to have tried to upset him at that moment, just as it would have been to unsettle Salazar.

QUESTION: Do you think Franco held a sickle to Dr. Salazar? Do you think he was on top of him?

KENNAN: Not in the Azores negotiations because I don't think Salazar told him. It was perfectly amazing under those circumstances that we were able to get away with that ploy. The way the British did this was a good bit of deception. The story was launched in Lisbon—it was rather a daring thing—that on October 5 or 6, which was the day the landings were to take place, something was going to happen: specifically, that Portugal was going to announce itself in a state of war with Japan because the Japanese had seized Macau on the Chinese coast and also Timor, and had raised hell with the Portuguese there. So this rumor was launched in Lisbon and of course the Japanese were a very jittery outfit. The Japanese took it up with the Portuguese, got tremendously excited and kept buzzing around the German and Italian Embassies saying, "Do you know what is going to happen? On the 7th of October the Portuguese are going to declare war on us." Salazar gave a speech about Japan at that time and that fooled them, and they didn't realize what was up. I really regard that as a triumph for wartime security, and perhaps you may say that the confusion I described earlier today was justified by the fact that security was maintained. That is one way of looking at it. It was just hard on some of us.

March 28, 1947

## COMMENTS ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY PROBLEM

*Editors' Note: This paper was not a formal lecture per se, but Professor Kennan's response to questions posed to the students as part of a practical exercise in current affairs. Note the use of the term 'national security,' at the time a new concept embodying political, military, and economic considerations.*

*Professor Kennan commented to the editors concerning the significance of this lecture: "This paper dealt with the Greek-Turkish crisis, the climax of which had been passed only a fortnight earlier. I myself had been involved in confronting, at the State Department level, some of the policy decisions this crisis had involved. For this reason, and because some of the considerations involved would also shortly play a part in the thinking that went into the Marshall Plan, this paper strikes me as being of more than negligible historical importance."*

*QUESTION A. In the event we decline to accept the responsibilities which the British are relinquishing with respect to Greece and Turkey, what would be the probable consequences in that immediate area and elsewhere on the Eurasian and African land masses?*

## 1. IN GREECE

THE REPORTS RECEIVED BY THIS GOVERNMENT FROM ITS REPRESENTATIVES abroad leave us no choice but to conclude that if nothing were done to stiffen the backs of the non-communist elements in Greece at this juncture, the communist elements would soon succeed in seizing power and establishing a totalitarian dictatorship along the lines already visible in other Balkan countries.

The ensuing period would unquestionably be very difficult all around. Economic conditions in Greece would doubtless be even more deplorable than they are at present. There is no reason to assume that the Russians would find it any easier to effect the rehabilitation of the Greek economy than we would. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that they would find it harder. They themselves lack the food, transport, machinery, and qualified personnel necessary to carry out such a program. Thus the first months and years of communist rule would probably lead to a further deterioration in the Greek economy, to increased misery and bitterness, and—as in the other Balkan countries—to a crystallization and hardening of majority sentiment against the communists. This sentiment would have no means for asserting itself in terms of power, and the mass of the population would have no choice but to submit to communist minority rule.

The conditions described above are now present to one degree or another in all of the communist-dominated countries of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, excepting Czechoslovakia, but they would probably be worse in Greece. If so, Greece might present a particularly favorable objective for non-communist counterpropaganda on a world scale, and the disadvantages of responsibility for the

Greek people might come very close, from the communist standpoint, to overbalancing the advantages, particularly in the initial period. It is probably for this reason, among others, that the Russian communists have taken care to shove forward Balkan communists to do their dirty work for them and to disguise as far as possible their own hand in Greek affairs.

But it would be dangerous to jump to the conclusion that we could therefore sit by and witness a communist conquest of Greece with equanimity. There is no reason to believe the communists would not be successful in imposing and maintaining their power in the area in the long run. The operation might be costly in Greek lives, but that would not matter to the communists. From the moment their control was established, the communists—sheltered from popular indignation by the familiar organs of dictatorship—would concentrate on altering the basic social and economic structure of the country in such a way that a return to liberal representative government would be difficult if not impossible. They would see to it that the property-owning class was either physically liquidated on one pretext or another, or was at least dispossessed and proletarianized. Thus its members would lose their civic independence, their capacity for leadership, and their stake in orderly government, and would become totally dependent on the favor of a central authority. The communists would then contrive by similar methods to disrupt all local nuclei of public authority and respect. Priests, mayors, teachers, lawyers, and even successful farmers who might have had local prestige throughout the country would be discredited, corrupted, or liquidated. If necessary, whole sections of the population would be deported and replaced by duly-conditioned Slavs. Within two or three years, the communist leaders would be able to reflect with satisfaction that even if they themselves should be overthrown, it would be decades, at best, before their handiwork could be undone. For by that time, the population of Greece would have been deprived of its traditional structure, would have lost all confidence or interest in self-government, and would have been ploughed back into that state of insecurity, anxiety, and pitiable dependence on central authority from which only some form of despairing totalitarianism can grow.

There remains the strategic picture. Russian resources in naval and certain types of air equipment, and in construction facilities, are today so limited that it is doubtful that Russia could make very effective or far-reaching *immediate* use of Greek bases. It is a

question, however, how long this will continue to be the case. Meanwhile, Russian military penetration of Greece and the Greek islands, such as it might be, would present a serious complicating factor for the Western world in the event of any military conflict. And with time, the Russian position in the Eastern Mediterranean might grow, like that of the Germans in the last war, into one that could not be assailed with reasonable chance of success except by a major military effort.

On balance, a communist conquest of Greece, while involving serious responsibilities and even some disadvantages from the Russian standpoint and while not threatening to constitute *in itself* any immediate and catastrophic setback to the Western world, would probably be successfully consolidated in the long run and might some day have most unfortunate strategic consequences from the standpoint of any military adversary of the Soviet Union. In addition to that, there is the highly important question of its probable by-products in other areas, which will be discussed presently.

## 2. IN TURKEY

Turkey's present position, while indeed an exposed one, is fundamentally different from that of Greece. Turkey is indeed in the situation of one who has nothing to fear but fear itself—for the moment. Thus far there has been no serious Soviet penetration of Turkey. If the Turks keep their nerve and their confidence, there will be none. If there is no penetration, there will be no immediate materialization of the Soviet threat.

The Russians are not yet in a position to undertake any direct aggression against Turkey or any other country. To do so would spell the end of great power collaboration in the United Nations, and probably would cause another World War. The Russians are not yet prepared to face this eventuality.

On the other hand, they badly want control of Turkish political life.

It is essential to them to confuse the issue so that their moves toward establishing such control can not be stamped as direct aggression. In general, the most favored means for accomplishing such ends is political penetration, through use of communist parties and other stooge groups. But this is not the only means. If Russia could

manage to involve the Turkish Government in some sort of a complicated dispute which would appear to the outside as two-sided, then she might eventually be able to take military action on the pretext that she was the offended party. Another possibility would be some sort of civil disorder in Turkey, giving Russia the excuse for going in to "restore order." It is unlikely, however, that this situation would occur unless there had been prior successful political penetration.

If, therefore, the Turks do not lose their nerve, if they keep their internal political life relatively clean and orderly, and if they refuse to become involved in negotiations with the Russians on a bilateral basis over complicated questions such as that of the Straits, they will probably continue to enjoy a temporary and precarious immunity to Russian pressure. Should they become increasingly encircled by communist-dominated entities, it is important that everything be done to support Turkish self-confidence and will to resist. A communization of Greece would have precisely the opposite effect; and while it might not spell a complete collapse of Turkish morale, the problem of helping the Turks to hold the line would be greatly complicated by such a development.

### 3. IN THE REMAINDER OF THE MIDDLE EAST

There is no question that the Middle East, outside of Turkey, is in a delicate and precarious situation. Nowhere in the region, except in Arabia itself, can the conditions of government be said to rest on anything like a sound foundation. The political structure in Iran has been perilously close to catastrophe more than once since the Tehran Agreement in 1943. In Iraq, the Kurdish problem is unsolved, as are profound problems of public health, reclamation, education, and economic development. In Syria and in Lebanon as well as in Egypt the recent progress in the elimination of foreign influence has left native regimes carrying responsibilities for which they are only imperfectly prepared. In the capitals of these countries, as in Baghdad and in Tehran, the communists will continue to make every effort to exploit for their own purposes the inexperience, inefficiency, and corruption of the existing regimes. They will find particularly fertile soil for their efforts in the unhappy native intellectuals of the main population centers, caught between the ignorance and apathy of the masses and the selfish arrogance of wealthy indigenous elements.

The converts to communism will be those whose education has spoiled them for the darkness and squalor of life among the underprivileged, without giving them the wherewithal to share the life of the wealthy few. Semi-educated, restless, and neurotic, seeing little to lose and much to gain from social change, these people may come to constitute an energetic and incisive instrument of initial communist penetration.

But we must ask ourselves whether this alone can be sufficient, and whether Russian resources are generally great enough to constitute a real threat to the Middle East. In the first place, there is the question of the extent to which communism is capable of maintaining domination over Moslem peoples except by the direct exercise of Russian military power. Thus far, we have seen this tested only in Central Asia and in Northern Iran. In Central Asia, geographical factors and the absence of any vigorous political traditions on the part of the Mohammedan element have facilitated communist domination. But even here the process of subjugation has been long and difficult and the Russians have had to use non-Moslem police forces on a scale which they could scarcely hope to duplicate for any length of time anywhere far from the present borders of the Soviet Union. The experiment in Northern Iran revealed the Russians to be noticeably short of competent personnel for the purpose of administering a subject Moslem population; and the rapidity and completeness with which Russian influence collapsed when Soviet military protection was withdrawn was a startling revelation of the thinness with which Soviet power was spread in that area. The history of Soviet intrigues with the Kurds, the problem of whose domination constitutes only a drop in the total bucket of Middle Eastern politics, does not indicate that Moscow has any great resources in competent personnel for purposes of that sort. To all this must be added the consideration that if Russian influence were to expand still further in this area, it would soon encounter the far more vigorous political society of Arabia itself and contiguous areas, where the fire of Moslem ideology burns with a purer and fiercer flame, and where resistance to communist political pressure would be of a far sterner quality than in the lands to the north and east.

Then there is the question of Palestine. The communist program for Palestine has crystallized in recent months. A communist party organization has emerged among the Jewish population of Palestine. This communist organization, obedient to Moscow instructions,

opposes Zionism, blames the trouble on 'reactionary elements' among both Arabs and Jews, as well as on the British, and advocates "the setting up of a democratic Arab-Jewish state, based on an internationally-guaranteed democratic constitution which provides complete equality of national rights for both Arabs and Jews." This organization has had little success and according to recent reports its members have been physically attacked by the Jewish terrorist organizations. This being the case, it does not look as though the Russians would find it easy to persuade either Arabs or Jews that the social doctrines of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin are more important to them than their own national aspirations.

On balance, I find it difficult to believe that an attempted ideological conquest of the Middle East by the Russians, effected without the use of large Russian military and police forces and by reliance principally on local elements, could prove successful or enduring. The native elements whose loyalty and services the communists would require for such a conquest, are either too corrupt and demoralized to make good servants and satraps of Soviet power, or they are already too far committed to other ideologies which are quite capable of competing on a purely emotional and disciplinary basis with that of communism. The internal conflicts of the area are too tragic and too bitter to be solved at once by any ideological common denominator. If I ask myself in all honesty whether the Russians at the present stage of their development would be capable of changing the whole political character of that area, a character anchored in the experiences of so many centuries and milleniums, I am forced to answer that question in the negative.

But again we must not conclude that because a Russian attempt to dominate the Middle Eastern area would probably be unsuccessful, it would thereby automatically be something we could view with equanimity. It would be a long and bloody process. A great deal that is useful and valuable would be lost in the course of it. And for an intervening period of indefinite duration, Russian military power would command the strategic points of that area. Russia might be able to garrison key points even though she had failed in her efforts to police the area as a whole. Supplemented by the control of Greece, Russia's control of the Eastern Mediterranean, of the Suez Canal, and of the Persian Gulf would then be complete. Russia's strategic position for the contingency of a possible major conflict would be so improved that the Kremlin would be able to pursue aggressive and

expansive policies elsewhere with far greater impunity and self-assurance than would otherwise be the case.

It is evident from this that we must take into consideration not only the direct effects of an abandonment of the Middle East to Soviet penetration, but also the by-products it would yield in other areas. And those by-products would not be limited to the enhanced sense of general military security which the Russians would derive from the occupation of strategic positions in the Middle Eastern area. Of equal, if not greater, importance to them would be the psychological effects in other countries, and particularly in Western Europe. Any large-scale development in the Middle East would tend to confirm the impression that the Western Powers were on the run and that international communism was on the make.

#### 4. IN WESTERN EUROPE

One of the vital facts about the international communist movement in the parts of Europe not yet under Soviet military and police control is the pronounced "bandwagon" character which that movement bears. By that I mean a given proportion of the adherents to the movement are drawn by no ideological enthusiasm, indeed not even in many instances by any particular illusions about its real nature. Many followers to communism are drawn primarily by the belief that it is the coming thing, the movement of the future—that it is on the make and there is no stopping it. They believe those who hope to survive—let alone to thrive—in the coming days when it will be the movement of the present will be the people who had the foresight to climb on the bandwagon when it was still the movement of the future.

We see the bandwagon phenomenon reflected all over Europe. It affects the actions of individuals and of governments. It is this which explains the recent report from Czechoslovakia that a large percentage of the communist party members in that country have no ideological stake in the movement. It is this which causes prominent Frenchmen, in whose intellectual makeup there is no shred of communist conviction, to set about quietly making their peace with communism by making themselves useful to leaders of the communist party. Because of this factor we read of Slovene priests in Carinthia signing petitions to transfer their province to Yugoslavia

and then admitting quite openly to foreign journalists that they abhor the thought of such a transfer, but believe it inevitable and therefore can not afford to place themselves in the opposition. It is this same factor which causes Swedish statesmen to loan a billion crowns to Russia and then to admit with sorrowful cynicism that this is merely a form of tribute, of "protection money," designed to buy off Soviet pressure and to divert Soviet expansionism to other directions.

I believe that to deliver up the Middle East to Russian political penetration, even though that penetration might itself be inconclusive and eventually unsuccessful, would have a highly unfavorable reaction in Western Europe itself. It would render a tremendous impetus to "bandwagon" adherence to the communist movement at precisely the moment when that has become almost the only type of further adherence the communists can hope for. Russian penetration of the Middle East might well be sufficient to push both Italy and France across that fateful line which divides the independence of national life from the catastrophe of communist dictatorship. It might mean the final loss of our positions in North Africa; and then the Iberian peninsula could not hold out long. It might make hopeless the position of other non-communist countries in northwestern Europe. As for England, the resulting situation would present a cruel and crushing dilemma. It would necessarily paralyze the political will of that country and would probably make it impossible for England to do anything but cling to a precarious and unhappy neutrality in the hope that times would eventually change. And to this would have to be added the shattering blow which American prestige would suffer in the Far East; a blow which would certainly complete the dissipation of United States influence in all areas other than those which we were prepared to hold and to police by force of arms.

Let us not be thrown off by the comforting reflection that the physical and spiritual resources of semi-barbaric Moscow would probably be insufficient for the permanent domination of the Eurasian landmass and the north of Africa. I think that proposition is true, but I don't think that is any reason why we should feel we could risk the experiment. Because flood waters must—by the laws of nature—some day subside is no reason one should welcome them. The damage they can do may take years to repair. Let us remember that the barbarians who first sacked Rome were also not strong enough to consolidate their conquest of Italy. Nevertheless, their advent spelled

the virtual end of the Roman Empire—and the beginning of many centuries of ignominy for the city which was its heart and soul.

Thus we can well conjecture that Russian dominion over Europe and the Middle East, measured against the full sweep of human history, might prove short-lived. But we have no cause to assume that Europe as we knew it—and as we need it—would ever recover from the blow which even a brief period of Russian control would deal to Europe's already weakened traditions and institutions. And though the flood waters of communist authority might some day recede, we could have no reason to expect that American prestige and influence could easily re-enter the territories thus liberated from non-European rule.

*QUESTION B. What would be the implications of the consequences outlined in answer to QUESTION A for the grand strategy of this nation, including its foreign policy program? What would be the logical effect on United States security policy?*

We have seen earlier that our failure to accept the responsibilities currently thrust upon us with respect to Greece and Turkey would threaten to restrict the sphere of political and military influence of this country to an area which would at best include the New World, the islands of the Pacific, and Africa south of the Sahara.

I am not qualified to judge the extent to which that constitutes a strategic area suitable for the defense of this country—or what the cost of national defense would be, if measured in that framework. One thing is clear to me, as I am sure it is to you: the military-economic potential of the area of the world which we had abandoned to hostile forces would be several times greater than that of the area which would be left to us. Beyond that, you must do the calculations yourselves, for they are then purely military ones.

I would like to point out one subtle possibility which might escape you. In the event of such an abandonment of Eurasia to whatever the future might spell for it, the resulting security problem for this country might not be one of external security alone. Remember that in abandoning Europe we would be abandoning not only the fountainheads of most of our own culture and traditions; we would also be abandoning almost all the other areas in the world where progressive, representative government is a working proposition. We

would be placing ourselves in the position of a lonely country, culturally and politically. To maintain confidence in our own traditions and institutions, we would henceforth have to whistle loudly in the dark. I am not sure that whistling could be loud enough to do the trick.

I know that there are many people—and probably some among you—who will reply indignantly that I am selling short the strength and soundness of our institutions, and who will maintain that American democracy has nothing to fear from Europe's diseases and nothing to learn from Europe's experiences.

I wish I could believe that were true. I wish I could believe that the human impulses which give rise to the nightmares of totalitarianism were ones which Providence had allocated only to other peoples and to which the American people had been graciously left immune. Unfortunately, I know that is not true; and you know it is not true. After all, most of us are only Europeans once or twice removed; and some of us are less removed than that. There are openly totalitarian forces already working in our society. Do you think that they could fail to derive new confidence and new supporters from such a series of developments? And it is not even with these small existing groups of extremists that the real danger lies. The fact of the matter is that there is a little bit of the totalitarian buried somewhere, way down deep, in each and every one of us. It is only the cheerful light of confidence and security which keeps this evil genius down at the usual helpless and invisible depth. If confidence and security were to disappear, don't think that the totalitarian impulse would not be waiting to take their place. Others may lull themselves to sleep with the pleasing assumption that the work of building freedom in this country was accomplished completely and for all time by our forefathers. I prefer to accept the word of a great European, the German poet, Goethe, that freedom is something that has to be reconquered every day. In that never-ending process of re-conquest, I would hate to see this country lose all its allies.

*QUESTION C. If we accept the responsibilities which the British are relinquishing with respect to Greece and Turkey, to what extent would this constitute a precedent for similar action in other areas? In other words, to what extent would we be obliged by the same logic to accept similar responsibilities in other parts of the world? What might these responsibilities be, and what would they demand in the way of action by our Government?*

We must first ask ourselves precisely what considerations lead us to contemplate taking this action in Greece and Turkey. Before we have determined those considerations, we can not decide to what extent they might be applicable to other areas.

I see three considerations:

*The problem at hand is one within our economic, technical, and financial capabilities.*

Our capabilities of this description are naturally relative, and are in large measure simply a question of our national will. However, no one will deny that the quantities of money and effort envisaged in our program for Greece and Turkey involve only a very small—indeed almost insignificant—diversion of our total national effort, and are not going to call for any great readjustment by the individual citizen in our country. This is certainly a factor we would expect to take into consideration in determining our action with relation to situations in other areas. And naturally we would not consider ourselves bound by any precedent to undertake similar programs in areas where the necessary outlay would be out of all proportion to the prospective results.

*If we did not take such action, the resulting situation might redound very decidedly to the advantage of our political adversaries.*

We have just seen in the answers to QUESTIONS A and B how that could occur.

*If, on the other hand, we do take the action in question there is good reason to hope that the favorable consequences will carry far beyond the limits of the region itself.*

I wish to direct your particular attention to this last point and remind you once again about the bandwagon quality of the present strength of the international communist movement. It must be evident to everyone that this is a source of strength to the communists as long as they can make people believe that they are on the make, but it would become a source of weakness the moment people began to doubt that their program was going to succeed. The moment that doubt began to gain currency, supporters would begin to jump off the communist bandwagon in droves, and there would be panic, demoralization, and disloyalty among many of those who could not or did not care to jump.

This is a tremendously important factor. Indeed, it is the vital factor in this whole question of what we do about Greece and Turkey. The people who become frightened and discouraged over the

question "How far is this going to carry us?" would do well to remember that a resounding setback to international communists in Greece would have a great deal of carrying power of its own. That is what we mean when we say that Greece is a politically key area. Any military man will understand that a hard-fought military campaign often hangs by the issue of engagements on a relatively narrow but critical sector of the front. For that reason, if they can, commanders will concentrate their forces and their attention on such a sector. If someone were to come to his commander with wails of foreboding and say "How can we put such a concentration in here? To do that would logically oblige us to concentrate similar forces on every other sector of the front and we are not able to do that," he would be written off as a military ignoramus who did not understand the first elements of military science. Why that same principle is so hard to understand on the political plane remains a mystery to me.

There is a very fair possibility that with the expenditure in Greece and Turkey of a relatively small amount of American funds, personnel, and above all of that latent American capacity for sensible and just administration (which seems, unfortunately, to manifest itself principally in moments of crises), we might turn a critical tide and set in motion counter-currents which could change the entire political atmosphere of Europe to our advantage.

Now if we take these three considerations and apply them to other areas threatened with communist political conquest, I doubt that you will find very many places where all three apply in the same degree. Outside of the areas under American military occupation, where the responsibilities of this country are already defined and accepted, I would know of no such country that could satisfy this test except possibly France. Perhaps it would be high time for us to undertake a serious study of the possibilities and probable cost of undertaking a similar action designed to stiffen France against communist penetration. As for China, I doubt whether any one of these requirements would be met by the circumstances prevailing in that area.

I wish to emphasize, however, that in all of this I am not thinking of any American action in purely financial or economic terms. If I have one firm conviction with respect to these problems, it is that money and goods alone will not do the trick. What we are dealing with here is no mere evil spirit that can be exorcised by a straight financial tribute. If our money and our goods are going to go

anywhere else but down the drain, and if the confidence of foreign peoples is to be restored, it will require from us a generous application of our people's genius for practical organization and construction and a genuine readiness to accept responsibility on American shoulders.

*QUESTION D. Does acceptance of this commitment in the form in which it is being considered constitute a radical change in our method of conducting international relations? If so, what is its military significance?*

The answer to this question lies in what we take as a point of comparison. What do we mean by "our method of conducting international relations"?

If we go back to the traditional school of American foreign policy, to the school of strict isolationism, there is no doubt that this program for Greece and Turkey is in conflict with it. The Monroe Doctrine, as finally phrased, contained no justification for the type of action we are contemplating. It is a curious coincidence that when President Monroe's message to Congress was being drafted, one of the questions involved was whether the United States should come out in that message for the cause of Greek independence. In his original draft of the section dealing with foreign affairs, Monroe had actually included a sympathetic acknowledgment of the right of the Greek people to independence and a recommendation to Congress to make an appropriation for sending a Minister to Greece. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams objected to this. To use the words of Professor Dexter Perkins:

Adams . . . deprecated a line of thought and action which drew no distinction between republicanism in Europe and republicanism in America. The message, in the form in which the President had written it, "would," he declared, "be a summons to arms—to arms against all Europe, and for objects of policy exclusively European—Greece and Spain. It would be as new . . . in our policy as it would be surprising." It was not for America to bid defiance in the heart of Europe. "The ground that I wish to take," he declared, "is that of earnest remonstrance against the European powers by force with South America, but to disclaim all interference on our part with Europe; to make an American cause, and to adhere inflexibly to

that." The President saw and accepted the point of view so cogently stated; on November 24 he showed Adams a new draft which was "entirely conformable to the system of policy" which he had recommended.\*

Thus at the time of the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine, the question of America's interest in Greek independence was already to the fore, and the President's own proposal for American intervention in that question by public declaration was dropped after due deliberation. However, this could be cited as a valid precedent for action today only by someone who viewed the wording of the Monroe Doctrine as the literal expression of some absolute Higher Truth, unrelated to the strategic realities of the era in which it was first formulated and therefore not subject to re-interpretation in the light of the changed realities of another age. Others will have to ask themselves whether the spirit of that Doctrine, which even 125 years ago came so close in President Monroe's mind to giving his country a legitimate interest in the independence of the Greek people, should not find a logical geographic extension in exact proportion to the extension of the security interests of this nation.

If, on the other hand, we take our own recent postwar policy as a model, we have to deal first of all with the United Nations. I personally see no conflict and indeed no connection. The United Nations Charter clearly made no provision for common action against the type of ideological and political penetration we are encountering in Greece. Nor could the United Nations, as a body, conceivably supply the leadership for the restoration of internal economic stability necessary to give the Greek people confidence in themselves and in the future. For that, the United Nations would require some accepted prescription for human society: for its forms of economic organization, for the ethical principles by which it should be governed. But the United Nations has no such accepted prescription. On the contrary, we live in an age which must be characterized, as Mr. Molotov has only recently reminded us, by the "peaceful competition of states and social systems." In such circumstances a United Nations organization embracing both communist and non-communist states can not come up with a social system of its own, and has, if I may say so, no business trying to do so. And human situations which call for strong

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\*Dexter Perkins, *Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1941), pp. 43-45.

outside material support and guidance, applied according to *some* sort of system, will jolly well have to be met by one or the other of the two competing ones; for it is only in rare circumstances that you can have a mixture of the two. Either our system is applied, or the other one is. And if we are too timid to apply our own when we are asked to do so, we must be prepared to admit the application of the other. This is nothing that was new as of March 1947. It is something which has existed ever since the United Nations was founded. The only result of a reference of this problem to the United Nations would be to confront that delicate organism with an insoluble problem and to produce a delay which would give the forces of dissolution in Greece time to accomplish all that they hope to accomplish.

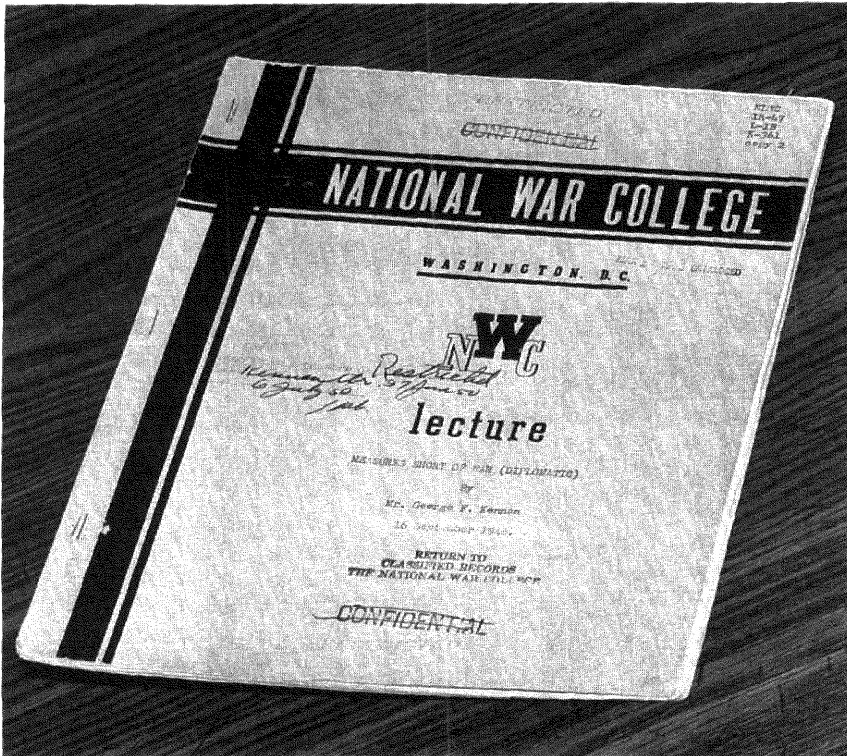
If there is anything new in what we are considering for Greece and Turkey, it is the thought that we are being asked here to go beyond a policy of rhetoric and to give flesh and blood for the first time to principles which we have long acknowledged and admired on the comfortable plane of generality. Here we can no longer hide behind language, behind any international pooling of responsibility, or behind that smug sense of disentanglement that animates us whenever we dispense pure charity. Here we have to bite and chew on the bitter truth that in this world today you cannot even do good unless you are prepared to exert your share of power, to take your share of responsibility, to make your share of mistakes, and to assume your share of risks.

And the moment we have digested that unpleasant and unaccustomed cud, our military situation will be sounder than it has been for years. For we will then have, at long last, a tangible goal to our foreign policy, an organic connection between military strength and political action, and a strong hope that our armed establishment may play its true role as a deterrent to aggression and as a nucleus of national and international confidence, rather than the sorry one of the fire department called too late, and with inadequate equipment, to extinguish conflagrations which never should have broken out in the first place.

If we undertake this action in Greece as we should, as an energetic, imaginative program for which we gladly shoulder responsibility, it will indeed be the first time since this recent war that we have taken a really constructive step to influence the course of events in a positive, tangible way, not by *saying* but by *doing*. Measured against the habits of our age—*not* against the spirit and traditions of

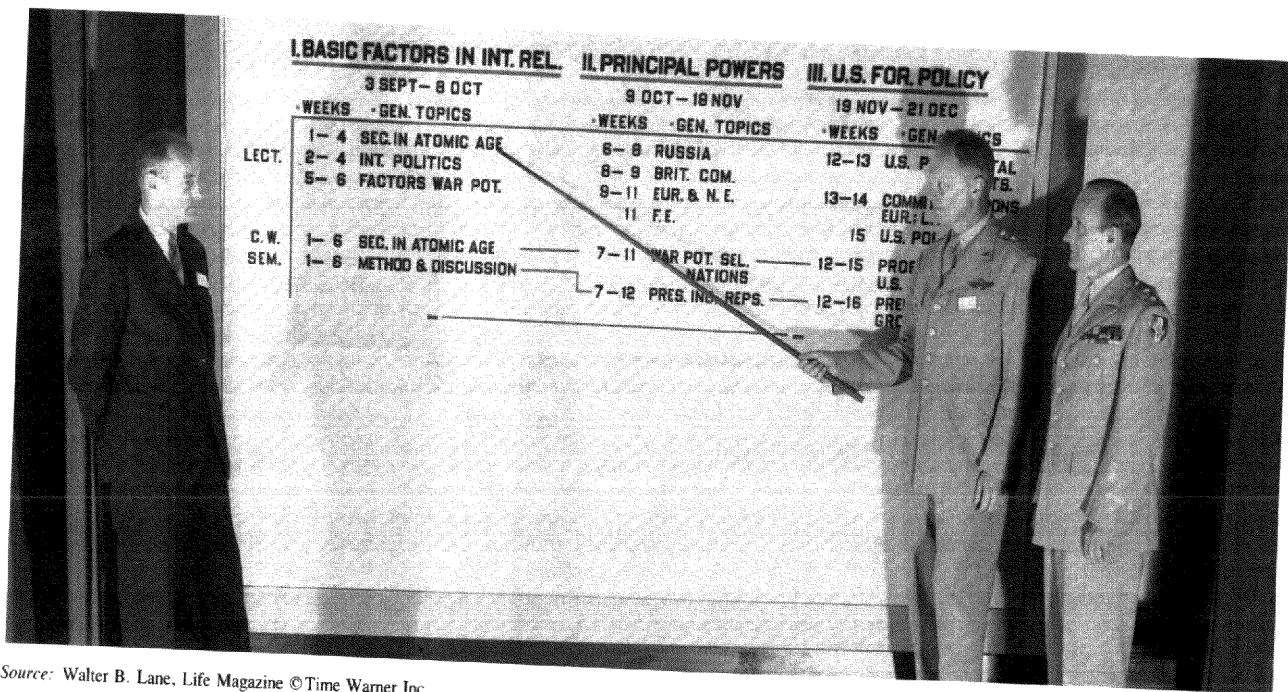
our people—I am prepared to concede that this is a departure from precedent. And if this is so, then my only comment would be to recall a story from the history of the Foreign Service.

Just after the First World War, there was an American Consul in Finland during the battles between the Reds and the Whites. In a particularly complicated set of circumstances he wired the Department of State and requested urgent instructions as to whether he should raise the American flag over the premises he was occupying. The Department, after due deliberation and consultation of the records, came back with a two-word instruction: “No precedent.” A day or two later another cable was received in Washington from the Consul. It was also only two words. It read: “Precedent established.”



Source: National Defense University, Library Special Collections, Archives and History (copy of lecture) and Visual Communications and Printing Division (photography)

Original copy of lecture transcript, "MEASURES SHORT OF WAR (DIPLOMATIC) By Mr. George F. Kennan 16 September 1946." This and most of the other lecture manuscripts edited for this volume were originally classified for national security reasons; all have since been declassified. Lectures and discussions that followed were conducted at a highly authoritative level, reflecting not only Kennan's knowledge but also the experience of the other faculty and the students themselves.



Source: Walter B. Lane, Life Magazine ©Time Warner Inc.

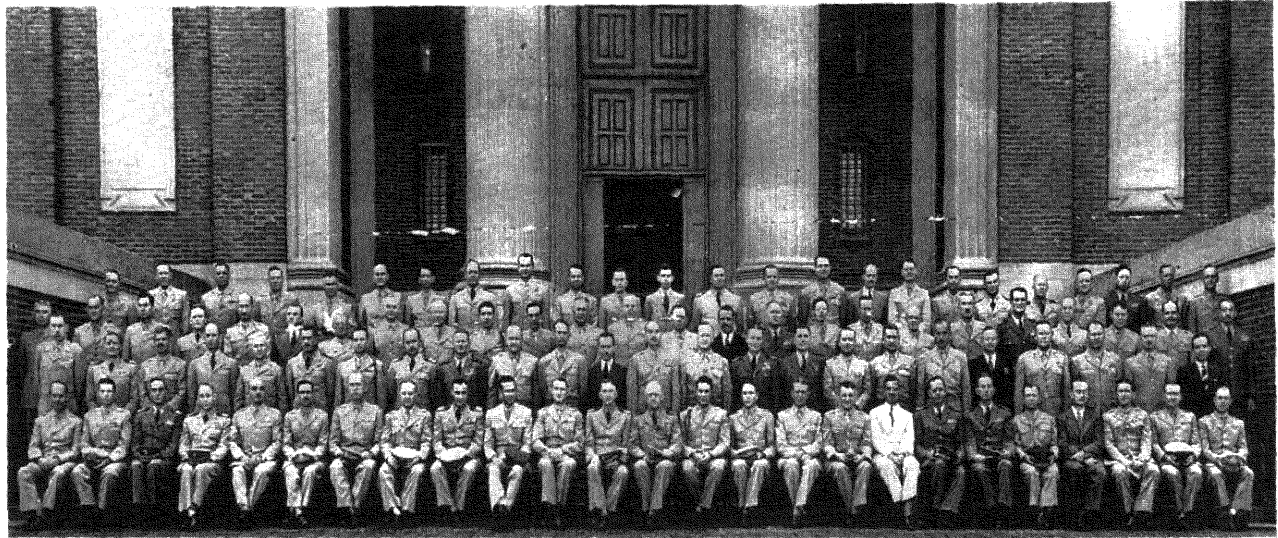
George F. Kennan, at left, and other faculty review an outline of the first 16 weeks of the curriculum. Kennan had a major role in helping to shape the course of study. Pointing is Brigadier General Truman H. ("Ted") Landon, Deputy Commandant, who later commanded US Air Forces in Europe. Next to him is Major General Alfred M. ("Al") Gruenther, Deputy Commandant, who became Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces and, later, head of the American Red Cross.



Source: Copyright Princeton University. Published with permission of Princeton University Library, The George F. Kennan Papers.

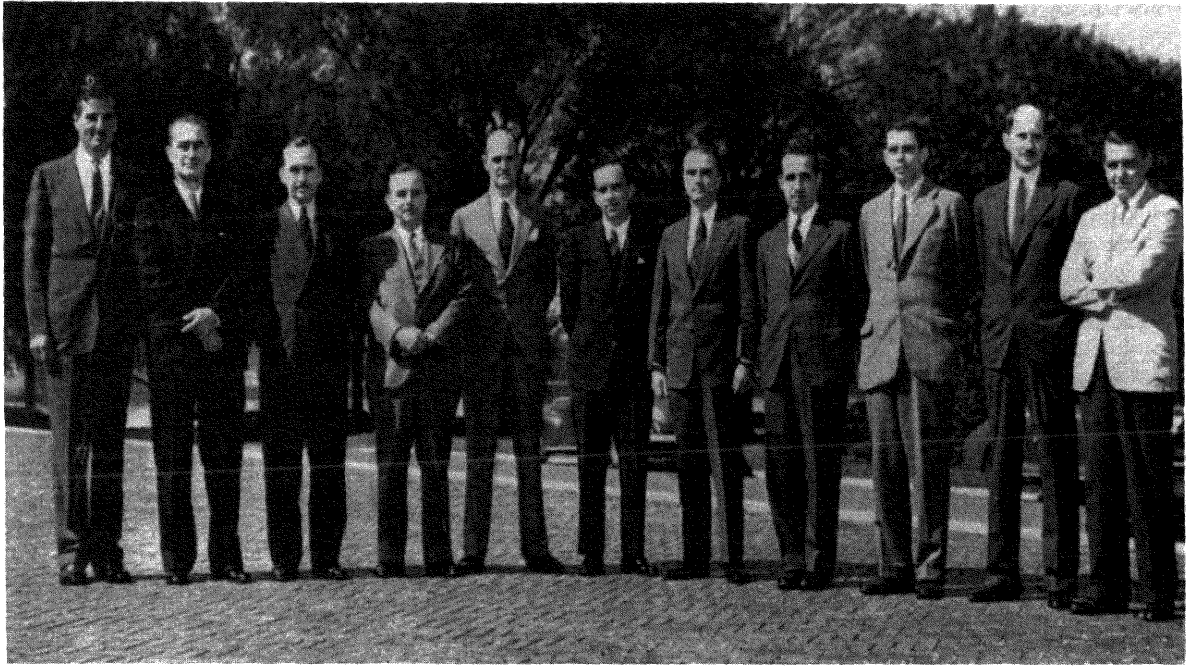
The first class and faculty of the National War College on a cruise aboard the aircraft carrier *Randolph*, 1947. This was one of the first field trips; later, visits by smaller groups to military installations and foreign countries became a regular part of the curriculum. Kennan sits in the middle of the second row from the bottom, eighth from the left. Major General Alfred Gruenther, then Deputy Commandant and Executive Officer of the College, is on Kennan's left. On General Gruenther's left is Vice Admiral Harry Hill, first Commandant of the War College.

## FALL CLASS AT THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE



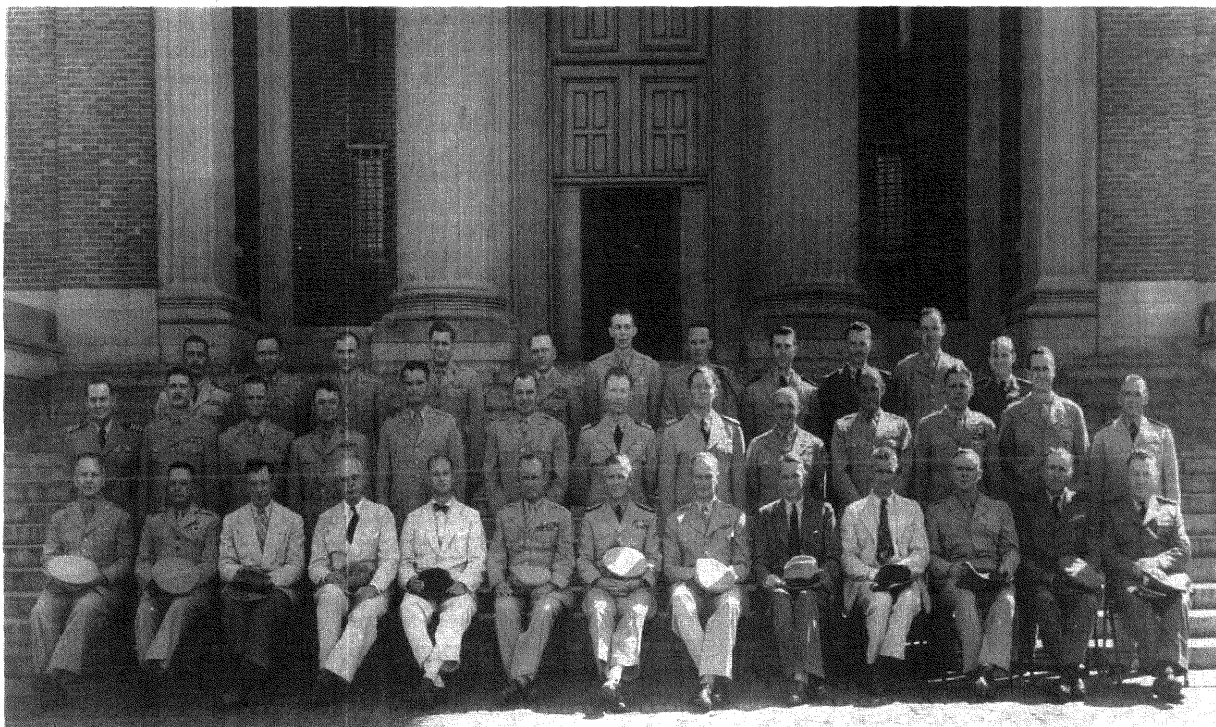
Source: *The American Foreign Service Journal*, January 1947, p. 9. Used with the permission of the American Foreign Service Association, Washington, DC.

The entire first class of the National War College in front of the College building. The students were select Army, Army Air Forces, Navy, and State Department officers studying a curriculum focused for the first time in the US Government on both military strategy and diplomacy—what is termed “national security policy” today.



Source: Photo by Ralph Duter, *The American Foreign Service Journal*, January 1947, p. 9. Used with the permission of the American Foreign Service Association, Washington, DC.

George F. Kennan, Deputy Commandant for Foreign Affairs, poses with the Foreign Service Officers who attended the first class of the National War College—the first such civilian officials to attend a senior military college. Left to right: John Cabot, William P. Cochran, Jr., Raymond A. Hare, Perry N. Jester, Kennan, Foy Kohler, John J. Macdonald, Carmel Offie, Charles W. Thayer, William C. Trimble, and Newbold N. Walmsley, Jr.

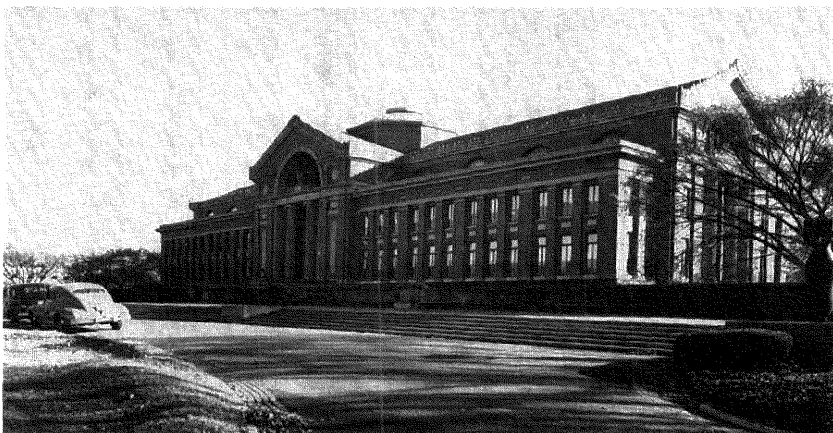
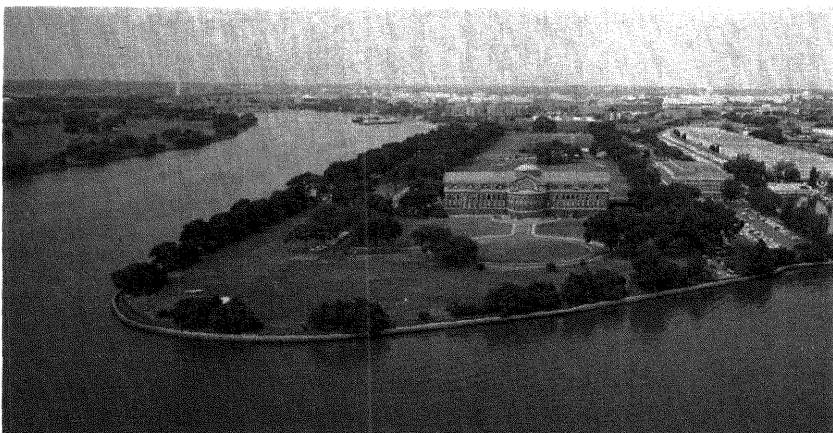


*Source:* Copyright Princeton University. Published with permission of Princeton University Library, The George F. Kennan Papers.

The first faculty members of the National War College, 1946-47, in front of the War College building. George F. Kennan, Deputy Commandant for Foreign Affairs, is seated in the first row, fifth from the left. Moving from Kennan's left: Major General Alfred M. Gruenther, Deputy Commandant; Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill, Commandant; and Brigadier General Truman H. Landon, Deputy Commandant.



*Source:* US State Department photo courtesy of the National Archives (photo 59-JB 685-2)  
**George Frost Kennan circa 1946-1947**



*Source:* Courtesy of the National Archives (photos 111-SC-612890 and 111-SC-331048)

The top view looks directly north toward the National War College (right of center) and beyond to the monuments and government buildings in the central part of Washington, DC. In this aerial photo, the Capitol dome is visible on the right horizon, with the Washington Monument and Jefferson Memorial discernible as one moves left (westward) along the horizon. From the actual War College building, these symbolic structures, as well as the Pentagon and other landmarks, are clearly visible. This view also shows the College's strategic location: off the beaten Washington paths, yet within easy reach of Washington policymakers, who often attended War College lectures unannounced.

The bottom photo is a front view of the National War College building, circa 1946-47. Kennan's office was in the northwest corner of the ground floor, the right-hand corner office in this photo.

May 6, 1947

## PROBLEMS OF US FOREIGN POLICY AFTER MOSCOW

*Editors' Note: This lecture was delivered shortly after the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, April 23–25, 1947. Reviewing the lecture more than forty years after delivering it, Kennan commented: "This paper gives a good idea of the way things looked to me at the very moment of the establishment of the Policy Planning Staff and on the eve of the work that Staff laid for the foundation of the Marshall Plan. The talk was delivered only one week after General Marshall had ordered me to leave the War College and to set up the Staff, one day after the Policy Planning Staff was established, and two and a half weeks before the Staff's recommendations were submitted to General Marshall." (Kennan also mentions this lecture specifically in Chapter 14 of his Memoirs 1925–1950.)*

IN THE REMARKS WHICH SECRETARY MARSHALL MADE TO THE public over the radio last Monday night, he pointed out that the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers "dealt with the very heart of the peace for which we are struggling." Those words, like all of General Marshall's words, were carefully chosen. The German question must be the center of any overall European peace settlement and of any future ordering of the world's affairs based even nominally upon wide international agreement. Without an agreement about Germany, no such general European settlement and no such ordering of the world's affairs are thinkable. All the parties to the Moscow discussions were well aware of this: the issue of their deliberations was a considerably greater one than that of the future of Germany itself.

In the face of this realization, the Soviet leaders exhibited no serious desire to reach agreement on the questions discussed at Moscow. Their demands were ones which called in effect for the assent of the Western powers to the establishment of unlimited Russian hegemony over Germany and Austria. If the Western powers had met these demands, the result would not have been an agreement; it would have been a capitulation. It would have indicated a readiness on the part of the Western powers not to *agree* with Russia on the German problem, but to turn Germany over to Russia and to permit Russia to decide Germany's fate unilaterally. The Russians knew that none of the Western powers had any intention of doing this; that none of the Western governments would even have been permitted by its own public opinion to do this. Yet they clung to this position.

There is only one conclusion that we can draw from these facts. The leaders of the Soviet Union did not consider the present time favorable for the conclusion of a general arrangement with the Western powers concerning the future of Europe.

The Soviet leaders *do* expect to meet us again in negotiation on these questions, and they expect that when that time comes they will be in a better bargaining position and we in a worse one than today. In other words, their analysis of the situation has led them to conclude that they stand to gain and we stand to lose by a further delay in the negotiation of a European settlement. That realization alone could explain the attitude they adopted at Moscow.

Now what has brought the Russians to this conclusion? In asking ourselves that question, we are fortunately able to reflect that it is not at all certain that the Kremlin is capable of viewing realistically the world beyond its borders. The Soviet leaders, like most fanatics, have taken so many liberties with objective truth, over so long a period, that it is entirely possible their capacity for objective judgment has been dulled and they have become the victims of their own propaganda.

Thus we need not assume that the Soviet analysis of the world situation is necessarily founded in reality. It represents what the heads of the Communist Party would wish reality to be—or what they would interpret it as being. And that, in the peculiar mental world of fanaticism, is apt to be decisive for their course of action.

Two factors loom uppermost in the Soviet appraisal of the non-Soviet world today. The first of these is the certainty—in Soviet eyes—of an economic crisis in this country. I cannot overrate the importance of this. It has provided the central theme of Soviet thought about the Western world ever since the latter phases of the recent war. It has been treated as a foregone conclusion in all Soviet literature. From it the Russians have been taught to expect not only a general weakening of our prestige and our bargaining position in world affairs, but also the rise of a domestic economic compulsion which will force our government to unload great quantities of American goods on the outside world at our expense and on anyone else's terms, in order to ameliorate the unemployment and overproduction which the economic crisis will have brought to this country. That situation, in the Soviet view, spells huge credits to Russia with no strings attached: no bothersome questions about the settlement of prior obligations or about capacity to pay, no boring clauses about justification of requirements or supervision of the spending of American money, and no irrelevant queries about Soviet participation in such things as international arrangements for civil aviation. This expectancy is the cornerstone of Soviet strategy today. No besieged garrison ever watched with more breathless eagerness for the first faint dust clouds of the relieving army on the horizon than the men in the Kremlin today watch for the first harbingers of that economic disaster in this country. Our economic crisis will constitute, they believe, the beginning of their final triumph.

The second factor which looms large in Soviet strategy is the strong probability—as they see it—that we will not be able to muster,

as a nation, the leadership, the imagination, the political skill, the material resources, and above all the national self-discipline necessary to bring material stability, confidence, and hope for the future to those areas of Western Europe which have been brought low by the war. I am thinking here of Italy, France, Austria, Germany, and even England herself, and of course of the other small countries whose fate is bound up with that of the ones I have mentioned. The Russians consider that the economic problems of these countries cannot be solved without the aid of the resources of those areas of Eastern and Central Europe which they now control; and for this reason they feel that they have only to continue to deny those resources for a while longer in order to put themselves in a position where they will be able practically to name the political price on which they will make the resources available. They feel that the nations of Western Europe will eventually be forced to pay that price in order to obtain the food and the raw materials they need. They also feel that we will be willing to suffer that price to be paid, because there will simply be nothing else for us to do.

The Russians feel they have already woven an invisible network of economic dependence around those proud nations of the continent which still fancy themselves to be free; and they have only to await patiently the day when American failure to relieve the intolerable economic conditions of those areas will allow them to begin to draw tighter the cords of that invisible network and to bring the West of Europe into the shadows which have already enveloped the East. When that time comes, they feel we will have less to say at the next meeting of the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

These are the hopes upon which Soviet strategy is based; and we must admit that whatever the facts, the logic of this set of ideas is challengeable.

It seems to me, therefore, that it must be the task of American policymakers to chart a course, if possible, which would prevent these hopes from maturing.

I am not going to talk in detail about the avoidance of an economic crisis in this country—not because the fate of our internal economy is purely a domestic matter (it is *not* purely a domestic matter, and the sooner that is realized in our country the better it will be), but because it escapes the competence of those of us who deal with foreign affairs. In this question, we can only hope for the best; and my own best hope is that while we may indeed have some sort of

a recession, it will not be severe enough to be called a crisis and will not cause us to take steps in the field of foreign trade and finance which would be contrary to our own national interest. If this hope proves to be well-founded, then at least one of the assumptions of current Soviet strategy will have proven unsubstantial.

Now how about the other assumption? What is the situation with respect to Western Europe?

First of all—Italy. On the face of it, Italy's economic problems do not look too discouraging. The exchange situation is not so bad. Both imports and exports have been much lower than pre-war, but exports have been ahead. Industrial production has come back—to my mind—surprisingly fast, comprising now about 50 percent of pre-war levels and that is a good percentage, considering circumstances. But this has been accomplished at the cost of internal reconstruction; capital has not been available for new machines, new processes, new tools of trade within Italy. Public confidence has not been restored; and this has aggravated the dearth of capital. The result is that while the Italian Government has done relatively well at balancing its foreign exchanges, subsistence levels for the Italian population have remained critically low, and there is serious unemployment. What Italy apparently needs most in the economic field is, first, a normal long-term loan for the renovation of capital plant and equipment; and, second, stringent measures of financial discipline, designed to prevent inflation, to stop the flight of capital, and to provide jobs, if necessary through a public works program. That doesn't sound too formidable.

I can conceive that the loan might come, at least in part, from the Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In any case, the burden on our Government should not be inordinate. But the achievement of greater economic discipline is another problem. The Communist Party has over two million members in Italy and controls 19 percent of the seats in Parliament. In addition, it has substantial control of the key positions in the labor movement. From these strong positions, the Communist Party has the capacity to interfere seriously with any measures for stimulating confidence in a noncommunist future for Italy. For there are always effective demagogic slogans which can be invoked against any really constructive economic program; and communists everywhere are virtuoso in the selection and use of these slogans when they need to use them.

There are two ways in which we could try to offset this probable communist interference. One is by seeing to it that any financial aid given to Italy is conditioned on the undertaking of the Italian Government (and possibly of Italian labor as well) to carry out an effective economic program to ensure that the money will not be wasted. Since promises are a penny a dozen in this post-war world, the money loaned should be dished out only as needed, and the credit made revocable in case the undertakings of the Italian Government are not lived up to. Honest Italians might feel themselves obliged to squawk publicly at such harsh terms, in order not to be outdone by others. But it would stiffen their backs in dealing with the communists; and I think that, secretly, they would be grateful for this support.

The other line of approach would be to weaken communist influence. I can give you no sure prescription for how this can be done. We have to watch for the openings. I might mention, as an example of the possibilities, that the question of the Italian colonies is still open. I think our Government, before adopting a final position on this question, should do some sound and unsentimental thinking on the strategic realities and the political possibilities of this situation, designed to make sure that Uncle Sam cashes in politically on at least this small item of the spoils of war. He has not cashed in on very many; and the days have passed when he can afford to indulge in further gestures of political largesse.

We come next to France. The task of gauging France's economic needs is simplified by the fact that France alone of the countries we are dealing with has an overall economic program: a four-year plan known as the Monnet plan, around which she is endeavoring to orient her economy. This plan is designed to put France by the end of 1950 in a position where she will no longer require any special sort of assistance from the outside world. The plan centers around certain production goals for basic items in the French economy—namely coal, electric power, steel, cement, agricultural machinery, and transport. It is based on the calculation that when these goals are reached, France will be able to look after herself. The plan involves outside financial assistance to the amount of about one billion, five hundred million dollars, of which some five hundred and fifty million are already available or promised. The rest could conceivably be made up partly by the International Bank. The existence of this program simplifies the problem of making these

further funds available, for it presents a concrete and satisfactory goal to shoot at, and gives assurance against the necessity of further financial demands once this goal has been reached.

But here again, the completion of the program is by no means dependent on foreign financial assistance alone. It involves a number of other important prerequisites, including increased coal imports from Germany; an increase and redistribution of the labor force, which again probably involves Germany and Italy; an increasing investment in plant and equipment; and—what is probably most important of all—a system for financing the investment program which will prevent inflation.

The period covered by the Monnet plan began with the present calendar year. Thus far, the results have not been impressive. Coal imports, for example, have been some 20 percent below plan. The index of industrial production was about 90 percent of the 1938 level as against the 100–105 percent which the plan had envisaged. And the danger of inflation has been so acute that the government has apparently not dared to make available for the investment program the funds earmarked for this purpose.

If all important factions in French political life were unanimous and unshakeable in their determination to see this program succeed in the end, this slow beginning would not be a serious cause for concern. It is not vitally important whether the French economy is brought into balance by 1950 or 1952. But again, the real question is the French Communist Party. The situation is similar to that which we have just seen in the case of Italy. With 28.5 percent of the votes and with control of the French labor movement, the French Communists, whether in the government or out of it, probably have a decisive capacity to influence the fulfillment of the Monnet plan. Will they throw that influence behind the plan's completion, even if this should contribute to the stability of a Western Europe independent of Russia? Or will they sabotage its fulfillment?

The communists have to be very circumspect in such questions. After all, they have been competing for political power in Western Europe. The French people want better economic conditions, and they want them urgently. The communists cannot afford to put themselves openly in the position of opposing economic rehabilitation of France; that is their weakness. Up to this time, they have indicated a readiness to support a governmental program designed to hold the line against inflation. But important events in the past few days have

thrown doubt on their willingness to continue to give this support. It looks as though the communists are now more concerned about currying favor among the most radical sectors of the French labor movement for obscure purposes of their own, than they are concerned about preserving their general parliamentary position in France. This is a very important development. Bear it in mind; for we are going to return to it later.

Again, in the case of France, we see that financial assistance is not enough. Unless the line is held against inflation, the coffers of the French Government may prove to be a rathole. And again, a strategic position in the battle against inflation is held by the communists; and the communists are unreliable. What is the moral for us? It is the same as in the case of Italy. Any assistance extended to France by us, directly or indirectly, must be anchored in some sort of undertaking which will bind at least the French Government, if not French labor as well, to see that there is no dirty work at the crossroads. But better than that would be a reduction of communist influence in France to apoint where it no longer had the capability of impeding economic rehabilitation. And to that, too, we will return later.

We come now to the western zones of occupation in Germany and Austria. Let us take Austria first. Before we can assess the dimensions of the problem of restoring decent economic conditions in Austria, we should logically know whether we are talking about Austria as a whole or only about the western zones. Now the Austrian treaty is still a subject of negotiation between the Russians and the Western Powers. A special commission is meeting in Vienna in a few days to discuss the question further. It might initially seem better to await the outcome of those negotiations before trying to face the problem of Austria's rehabilitation at all, but I am not sure that that procedure would be sound. We have been, in effect, waiting for the last two years. It has not helped us much. It has certainly not helped the Austrians. I am not particularly optimistic about the forthcoming meeting of the special commission. Of course, anything is possible. It may be fairly stated, as a working rule for dealing with the Russians, that the only people able to get along with them are those who have proven their ability to get along without them. It would not be misplaced effort if we were to plan now for the rehabilitation of the three western zones alone, leaving out the Soviet zone. I cannot find much thinking being done along these lines in our government. This approach undoubtedly presents greater problems

than planning for Austria as a whole. But the problems do not appear insuperable to me. The cost of such a program of rehabilitation ought to be well under the half-billion dollar mark which does not seem exorbitant. The day may come when the price of a firm position in Central Europe will run much higher.

Now for Germany. We carried the war to completion and accepted the unconditional surrender of Germany in accordance with a set of arrangements which left us with sole responsibility for a section of Germany which had never been economically self-supporting in modern times. The zone's capability for self-support had been catastrophically reduced by the war and the German defeat. When we accepted that responsibility, we had no program for the rehabilitation of the economy of our zone, preferring to leave all that to later settlement by international agreement. We also had no agreement with our Allies on any program of rehabilitation of the German economy on a national or even regional scale. In our own minds we were not even clear whether we wanted the German economy rehabilitated. Sometimes we thought we did; sometimes we thought we didn't. Sometimes we just agreed to disagree among ourselves.

In these circumstances we let the economic situation slide for 2 years, refraining from drawing up any real program for the rehabilitation of our zone. By "real program," I mean one that had a visible, definite goal connected with the interests of this country. We gave precedence in our occupational policy to a political program designed to accomplish the denazification and democratization of German public life. Since we were unwilling to let people starve entirely, we made up from the pockets of our own taxpayers the very considerable costs of keeping the Germans in our zone barely alive. But in the absence of international agreement with the Russians, we made no serious effort to restore the German economy to a point where it could play any appreciable role in solving the general economic problems of Western Europe and removing from our shoulders any important part of the burden of keeping life going in those areas.

Today we find ourselves recognizing that the economic rehabilitation of Western Europe is of urgent and primary importance; that the restoration of German productivity, if only in a part of Germany, is essential to that rehabilitation; and that we cannot wait for Russian agreement to achieve that restoration. For this reason, we may now suppose that the decks are cleared for an intensive program

to restore a high level of productivity as far as possible throughout the west of Germany. For the first time we now have indications that even the French might go along with us on such a matter. We have indeed taken certain steps in that direction. The chief step has been agreement in principle with the British on the economic unification of our two zones. The joint development should make both zones no longer the object of charity from the Big Three within two or three years.

I still have not seen convincing evidence that we have yet allotted to this program the priorities which it needs to have any chance of cutting through the obstacles in its path. Many of these obstacles are found in the political concepts with which we have been working in Germany. I do not see that any of the political considerations has been substantially modified in deference to the needs of the economic program.

The press reports that General Clay has worked out some new directive for our military government which seems to deal exclusively with political, not economic, questions. I note that not much seems to be happening with respect to the revival of foreign trade between the western zones of Germany and other countries in Western Europe. I know that certain beginning steps have been taken in this direction; but there has hardly been any evidence of enthusiasm on the part of our military government authorities in Germany for the revival of these exchanges. Finally, while we have agreement with the British in principle on the economic unification of our two zones, we appear to be deadlocked in disagreement with them at the moment over the channels whereby that program should be implemented.

I do not blame any of our people in Berlin for this failure to agree. I hope I will never be one of those who assume that whenever an American fails to agree with somebody else, it is the American who is wrong. But in this case, an economic program of crucial urgency is at stake: a program which tens of millions of people are awaiting as a matter almost of life and death, a program which may prove decisive for the balance of power in Europe. The achievement of agreement with the British on this issue deserves the highest attention of our Government. If such agreement cannot be achieved promptly by the best goodwill and the broadest view on our part of the factors involved, then it is high time we drew some far-reaching and very unpleasant conclusions for the future of our whole occupation of Germany and of our policies in Western Europe.

In my opinion, it is imperatively urgent today that the improvement of economic conditions and the revival of productive capacity in the west of Germany be made the primary object of our policy in that area and be given top priority in all our occupation policies. This principle should be adopted as a general line of procedure of this Government, binding on all of its departments and agencies.

If this policy is followed, the economic problem before us is not insoluble. Although the task is harder than any other we have discussed, the figures still do not run into impossible dimensions. But unless it is done, we must inevitably continue to founder, and our chances of proving the Russians wrong in their calculations about Western Europe will be very much diminished.

The *New York Times* correspondent in Berlin, who opposes giving top priority to economic subjects at this time, had the following to say in this morning's *Times* on this subject.

Despite all charges to the contrary, Americans at the top level here are apparently not placing economic recovery for the Germans ahead of world peace and security and refuse to go along with the British theory that an important objective is to "get the Germans on their feet."

I don't know what the *Times* correspondent means by "world peace and security" as an objective separate from the revival of economic life in Western Europe at this time. But whatever he means, if it is allowed to continue to take precedence in his mind and in the minds of other people who are handling our affairs there, I would hazard the prediction that in a short time they will have a chance to reflect on that somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean and not amid the ruins of Berlin.

Now in any scheme for economic rehabilitation in Western Europe, there is one very important condition. The problems of Western Europe should be approached as a whole and the maximum degree of economic collaboration and exchange should be assured among the various countries. As in the case of Germany, collaboration applies in no less degree to France, to Italy, to Austria, and to the Low Countries. Unless a high degree of division of labor and of international trade can be developed within the Western European area, I question whether any amount of capital expenditure on our part can be effective. I reiterate: we have not shown much concern

about this in the past. The fact, for example, that there is practically no trade between Austria and the western zones of Germany seems still to be of relatively little importance to us compared to the political benefits which we conceive ourselves to be reaping from this stagnation. Yet the amount which our military authorities in Austria would like to import, if they could, from Germany are such that, if actually imported, would bring about a sizable reduction in the amount of aid Austria will require from the US Government to finance Austrian rehabilitation.

For the other countries of Western Europe, we are doing the best we can along traditional lines with our proposals for free trade and tariff reduction. I am not prepared to say we could do any more but I think we could reexamine our ideas about foreign trade very carefully from the standpoint of the immediate problem we face in Western Europe. Perhaps the concept of regionalism should find some place in our economic thinking. And perhaps some of the forms of trade we have been opposing so stoutly might be better than a sequence of events which would finally remove the respective countries from our sphere of international trade entirely.

In the light of all this, we must question whether any financial assistance we may extend to these countries should not have, in addition to the other anchors I mentioned above, another anchor in the form of an accepted overall plan for economic, financial, and manpower exchanges among the countries of Western Europe. This presents a really ticklish problem of foreign policy planning. We cannot cram such a plan down the throats of Western Europeans. Nor is our public apt to support it unless it bears the sanction of some international approval. We like to do things in company with other people, not alone. If such a plan for Western European collaboration could be cleared through the UN, we would feel much more comfortable about it. The machinery for this happens to exist. The European Economic Commission established in March by the Economic and Social Council is now convening in Geneva. It is beginning to absorb several of the ad hoc organizations for dealing with various phases of European economic problems. In some of the ad hoc organizations the Russians participated; in most of them they did not. If they had similarly refrained from participating in the new overall European Commission, there might have been a relatively good chance of clearing through it such a plan for general Western European collaboration. Perhaps it was for precisely this very reason that the

Russians surprised everyone by showing up unannounced at the last moment with a delegation of 23 members when the session began. We will probably never know why, but in any case the Russians are there and we have to reckon with them. Any proposals for the ordering of the economic life of Western Europe will have to undergo their minute and suspicious scrutiny. I do not think they can afford to blackball outright any effective and promising scheme if people understand that the economic future of Western Europe depends on that scheme. They may try to worm themselves in on the administration of the scheme, and then they will drag their feet so that the thing will never work at all unless it works to their benefit.

What does all this indicate in the line of a program for American policy in the forthcoming period? As far as the purely economic problem is involved, it is not difficult to chart out a likely line of procedure. I could imagine that it would run something like this:

- We decide to our own satisfaction here that questions of further aid to Western Europe be considered by us on a comprehensive, regional basis and not on a country-by-country basis.

- We then begin by drawing up a rough blueprint of general Western European rehabilitation designed to ensure that all the countries of that area, including our zones of occupation, render their maximum contribution to such a program and make up the maximum amount of the costs from their own resources.

- We then calculate roughly how much in the way of remaining capital investment will still be required from outside resources and how much of this could conceivably be supplied by sources other than the US Treasury.

- Having thus ascertained the residue of what we might be required to meet directly, we explain the problem fully to representatives of the legislative branch of our Government and try to obtain some reasonable assurance—I realize that no definite assurance can be given—that such a program would have their support.

- We then take the program to some of our recent Allies in Western Europe, advise them that this is the sort of thing we would probably be inclined to support, and suggest that some such program (we have no pride of authorship) be submitted by them to the European Economic Commission. I think it better that the initiative come from a European power than from us.

In the discussions in the commission, we would stipulate the following as requirements of American support: first of all, that the European governments concerned undertake firmly to back up the program by their domestic policies; and secondly, that the program's administration be so ordered that execution of it would not be impeded or distorted by any outside party.

If the program found acceptance in the European Commission on these terms, then the Commission could proceed to sponsor it as a United Nations project and the United Nations could approach this Government for the required financial support in a formal way. In this way we could avoid the allegation that we were bypassing the United Nations.

But what if such a program could not be cleared in the European Commission? What if the Russians "spiked" it by bringing in a plethora of extraneous questions or by trying to link it to Russian participation in the administration of the Ruhr or to put themselves in other ways in a position where they could control the execution of the program and exploit it for their own political purposes? What do we do then?

In that case, I think we can only say "no" to the whole business as pleasantly and as firmly as we know how, and proceed to deal with the countries individually or severally outside the United Nations, laying down essentially the same requirements as we laid down in the European Commission.

If they were not willing to meet those requirements—if communist influence within those countries was strong enough to cause them to hold back—if they were not willing, in other words, to guarantee that our money would be spent carefully and economically to achieve the purposes for which it was granted, then there would be no use in our giving it at all. If the peoples of Western Europe were to reject American aid on those terms, then that in itself would be equivalent to a final vote for Russian domination. And then there would be nothing more that we could do except to make crystal clear precisely where the responsibility lay for the hardships which still lay ahead.

If, on the other hand, we could reach agreement to such a program among the Western allies, find support and understanding for it throughout all levels of our Government, civil and military, and put it into execution, then we would refute the second foundation of current Soviet strategy and have placed ourselves in an advantageous position

to meet the Russians again at the council table for the discussion of the future of Europe.

But the question of whether European countries would agree to such a program is not going to be an economic one. It is going to be a political one. And it is going to be fought out on political grounds. Unless the communists get key positions in the administration of such a program, they will fight it everywhere, tooth and nail. They will portray it as a sinister effort to fasten American hegemony on the peoples of Western Europe. The only thing which can silence them and force them to acquiesce in the program's acceptance will be public opinion—enlightened public opinion, a public opinion which understands that this is the only way Western Europe can be saved from disaster.

Will such public opinion be in existence? I do not see any reason to hope too strongly for that. Why should there be? In Paris today there is not, as far as I know, a single newspaper in the French language which defends the American point of view. There are a number which defend the point of view of the Soviet Union. There are three thousand communist reading rooms scattered over the face of France. How many of ours are there you can imagine yourself. In the face of that, the intent of the House of Representatives seems to be to silence the "Voice of America" and our entire informational program. Normally, I think that in matters of foreign policy, it is a wise principle to let bygones be bygones. But in this case, a decision to cut off the funds for American informational work flies in the face of the sober and considered advice of practically every figure of outstanding experience and knowledge in the field of foreign affairs in our country. The reasons why this program should be maintained have been carefully and patiently explained from very high levels on numerous occasions. In these circumstances, I hope that the American people, when the course of events some day causes them to reflect on the decisions of this period, will judge fairly but severely the wisdom of those who insisted on depriving American diplomacy of its tools of trade at a highly critical moment in world affairs.

Now we have dealt here with the means for plugging the holes which the Russians expect will develop in our own armor. We have talked only about how we can correct these possible weaknesses. But what about Russian weaknesses? Should we exploit them? Do they not exist? Or does the Kremlin think that it has effectively concealed them from our observation?

Russia's own position contains many weaknesses and many dangers. Her internal economic position is a serious one; but other things being equal, I think she should be able eventually to ride out her difficulties. It will just take a good deal longer than was hoped and expected in Moscow. At any rate, there is little we can do to exploit these difficulties, and I am not sure that we would wish to do so if we could, for the burden would fall more on the Russian people than on the Kremlin. On the other hand, I see no reason why we should rush forward to assist the Kremlin, which bears responsibility for these difficulties.

In the Russian-occupied areas—the satellite areas of Eastern and Central Europe—there are also dangers and weaknesses for the Soviet position. But alone, I doubt that they are critical, from the Soviet standpoint. And here again, there is not much we can usefully do, except to reiterate our position and to continue our public pressure for removal of Russian forces and for greater concessions to national independence and popular government.

But in the position of the communist parties in countries beyond the shadow of the power of the Red Army—in other words, in Western Europe—we have a different sort of picture. Here we have the weakest and the most vulnerable points in the Kremlin armor. These communist parties do not yet have behind them the bayonets of the Soviet secret police power or any of the other supports of the totalitarian state. They stand or fall on the political developments of a relatively free world. Their fate may still be influenced by the electorates of those countries or by the governments there in power, or by the actions of other free governments such as our own.

For the last few years, these communist parties have been carrying water on both shoulders: trying to retain the advantages of militant conspiratorial groups prepared to seize power by the violent overthrow of existing authority, and at the same time trying to exploit to the full the normal parliamentary advantages granted to any serious political faction in a modern liberal democracy. This had led to a strange duality not only in the personality of the communist parties as political bodies, but also in the character of their membership. It has resulted in a situation where we have in some of them two kinds of communists who are quite different—a hard core of violent, fanatical extremists and a wide circle around them of muddled, discontented, embittered liberals. The Kremlin has not wanted to be forced to choose between these two groups; because to do so would weaken the

communist parties as entities and force Moscow to forfeit the advantage of one or the other of the two approaches—and the Kremlin always likes to have alternatives. It never likes to be forced to get down to its last card.

In France, it looks as though circumstances were now forcing Moscow to make this choice and as though the choice had fallen upon the hard core of extremists and against the liberal parliamentarians. We had an interesting forewarning of this development only a short time ago, when the Moscow *Pravda* stressed the great current significance (that is, it said there *is* a great present-day significance) of the so-called April thesis—namely, of what Lenin said to the Russian workers of St. Petersburg in 1917 when he came back on the sealed train through Germany from Switzerland. At the time the February Revolution had occurred, Russia for the first time had something like a free parliamentary regime, in which the communists were really able to function with no restrictions at all on their activities. That had confused them; and some of them were saying, “Why should we continue to be a revolutionary party? The lid is now off. The road to political success lies ahead of us. We only have to make a bid for a majority. Like everybody else, we will work our way up, we will become the majority party and take over the government.” Lenin said no. He urged them at that time not to be misled by the parliamentary freedoms which they enjoyed under the Kerensky Government—to remember that their future lay not in becoming a majority party in a bourgeois parliament but in penetrating and capturing the local councils of peasants, soldiers, and workers’ deputies, the original soviets (little non-governmental bodies which had sprung up around the country) and using them to overthrow the existing government entirely. Remember: *Pravda* fished this out of the past a few days ago and said it had great current significance. Today there is no doubt but that the labor movement has taken the place in communist thought which the early soviets occupied at the time of the Revolution. What we are witnessing today in France, and possibly in Italy too, may therefore mean that the communists, having failed to seize all governmental positions by parliamentary means, are about to apply their enormous influence in the labor movement to disrupt progress under the existing regimes, to throw life into chaos, and eventually to effect the actual overthrow of existing authority and the establishment of workers’ governments.

If so, then we are facing the most precarious moment of the postwar era. But it will be precarious for Moscow as well as for us. If

this is what is really coming, it is not because Moscow willed it that way. It is because Moscow's hand was forced, not by ourselves but by circumstances—perhaps by the inability to hold together any longer the conflicting interests and aims of these two types of communists—and because the Kremlin was no longer able to continue the policy it would have wished to follow.

I think that there is a moral to this. If the cards in the Kremlin's hand are so tightly arranged that even circumstances can force a discard, we should examine very carefully the possibility of a calculated "squeeze" play on our part. If the Kremlin has really been forced to stake the future of its position in Western Europe on violent action through the labor elements in opposition to parliamentary government, then it is playing a very powerful and very dangerous card, but one of its last ones. This move would admittedly present great dangers to the peoples of Western Europe and to us; but they would be the dangers which threaten in reality from an animal at bay. And if these dangers could be withstood, then international communism in Western Europe would be brought far closer to failure, would be brought into a far more vulnerable position, than we have recently been able to hope. For this reason, we should give most careful scrutiny to this situation. And we should see to it that no action of this Government in the field of foreign affairs is taken without attention to the effect it might have upon this situation within the international communist movement.

There gentlemen, you have a rough picture of some of the international political problems of the immediate future in the Western European area, and perhaps a hint or two as to a possible approach. This is, of course, not the only approach which could be discussed, or which could be advocated. But I can assure you that any program which is going to be effective will have one important thing in common with that which I have outlined to you today: it will call for far greater coordination and consistency of action within the Executive branch of this Government than anything we have been able to muster since the termination of hostilities, and for a considerably higher level of understanding and confidence in our policies outside the Executive branch. Unless these things are forthcoming, I am afraid that history, examining the calculations of the Soviet leaders in the Spring of 1947 and measuring them against the subsequent course of events, will declare that these Soviet leaders were wise and realistic men.

## DISCUSSION

**QUESTION:** Please elaborate on the statement you made about the military view concerning the economic policy with respect to Germany and Austria. I would like to have you defend it further.

**KENNAN:** Unfortunately in the State Department we don't always have the complete documentation that we might like to have on the exact nature of the military view on Germany and Austria, and we sometimes have to derive it from secondary sources. But unless I am very far wrong, I think it runs something like this: Our people in Germany do conceive that there are political objectives involving the democratization of the German people which are more important than any economic ones. In the question of implementing the unification of the two zones, as between ourselves and the British, I understand the British would like to run economic life in the two zones in a centralized way in exactly the same pattern which had been outlined and accepted by both of us for the whole of Germany had the unification of Germany been accepted at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers. We say no, we are not yet ready to put into effect in the two zones a type of economic control which we will be ready to put into effect if Germany is entirely united. We have already turned over to the "Länder" governments certain powers, and we insist that economic life for the time being should be administered in these zones by the Länder governments and not centrally. The British feel the other way about it. They want to put the economy in the hands of competent Germans (who are not always politically clean from our standpoint) and have it centrally run. As I say, we don't like that. In the first place, to our people in Germany it smacks of socialism, and it seems to be sacrificing what they conceive to be the political objectives, namely building up a democratic federal government, to the needs of economic revival. They place those objectives higher.

**QUESTION:** "They," meaning who?

**KENNAN:** Our people in Germany.

I simply do not agree with that. The question of German federalism is all right if we want to go along with it, but to me it seems a halfway measure which in the end is bound to be overcome by the trends of the times. Look at what the trend has been with regard to state government in this country in the last hundred years in its relation to federal government authority. The same has existed practically everywhere. We can set up a mildly federalistic system in

Germany, but I don't think that when Germany is independent again this is going to prevent at all the centralization again of economic processes, nor do we envisage that. We have conceded that when Germany is unified, there shall be this centralized role. We are not willing to admit it in the interim period as between the British and ourselves. I don't think our objections there are very important ones; but even if they were, we ought to be bending every effort to overcome them. And I do not agree these political objectives would be more important than the economic angle.

There is another point and that is the democratization of Germany. That is a very dubious point, and I am not sure the Germans can ever be democratized within our time. They lack the instinct for it, and it is going to have to be built up slowly, and we may be doing much more damage to any thought of democratization by the continuance of the economic misery and the idleness of German youth than we could do good to it by the Länder government.

QUESTION: Where is our policy in Germany determined today?

COMMENT: That is the point. Certainly not by the military.

KENNAN: Yes, it is, I think.

COMMENT: I don't think so.

QUESTION: What about your State Department group here? I thought everything had to be referred to Washington. That is what General Lucius Clay told us.

KENNAN: I think where our policy is determined it is going to be decided very quickly; but in the past, it has been decided pretty much on the spot in Germany. I was talking yesterday with an official of the Department of State who deals with German affairs, and he had not seen this new directive which General Clay issued on political matters there—except in the newspapers. So there isn't a meeting of the policymakers' minds; something goes wrong somewhere.

COMMENT: After close association with the administration of Austria, I am confident that the military does not formulate our foreign policy. We who were there—and I am sure it must be the same in the case of General Clay—were always seeking guidance as to what the US policy should be, on the theory there was no such thing as a purely military policy. It was only when we failed to have that guidance that we made policy decisions on the spot, and then we cabled our action immediately to Washington.

KENNAN: I think the situation has been different in Austria, and I have never noted on the part of General Clay that same yearning for guidance.

COMMENT: May I suggest that General Clay was here last October and he testified it took him four months to get an economic decision out of the State Department, and he got tired of it. The question was bearing on the most important issue of currency and exchange.

KENNAN: Yes, the Department of State has always been a house divided against itself, and I cannot associate myself with all of it, either, on that subject; but I am not trying to go back to the past. I think we have missed numbers of boats in Germany in the past; but it seems to me we have to pull ourselves together and do something about the economy in Germany very quickly or I don't see how we are going to solve the question of France. France cannot get along without considerable injections of German coal and manpower.

QUESTION: Assuming your position about the significance of German recovery, you envisage selling this policy either through US influence or through unilateral action of the United States. Is there not a middle ground which we must at least consider, namely, the United Nations exclusive of Russia and its satellites, which shall mobilize world opinion and save us from being isolated in unilateral action? Has that been considered?

KENNAN: I don't think it has. To abandon the present United Nations is a very, very great step. I think if that ever does occur, it has to be caused by the Russians getting out of the UN, and getting out on an issue which will leave it absolutely clear to our public that the Russians were wrong and the United Nations was right. I don't think we, having taken the responsibility we have for the United Nations, can ever take the initiative in breaking it up.

QUESTION: Even though the Russians can continue to sabotage every effort to make it function?

KENNAN: It looks that way to me, and I have always regretted we did not consider earlier the possibility of restricting the international organization to the countries which really did agree with us fundamentally on the basis of foreign affairs. I think that has been an unfortunate thing.

QUESTION: What in your opinion is the timetable for the worst that can happen to us in Western Europe, that is, for Russia and Germany?

KENNAN: The worst that can happen along the lines of the Russians taking it over?

QUESTION: Yes. How quickly do you think that will come about?

KENNAN: I find it hard to answer that question until I see what they are really up to in France. Something is happening that is very strange, and we have to see whether the French Government can function without the communists in it. If we look at it from the standpoint of what is going to hit this government in the field of foreign affairs, Italy is going to need more assistance this year or conditions will develop there that will cause us to lose all vestiges of prestige in that country. France is going to need more assistance, I believe, in the latter part of the year, on a pretty large scale. Austria is a very complicated situation today, and a very precarious one, because unless some new arrangements are made for feeding the place, there will be a very ugly situation in late summer and fall. That is nothing new. You could have said that at any time within the last two years. But more money is going to be required. Whether that can come out of the current two-hundred-million-dollar appropriation, I don't know. I have not quite been able to find out what that appropriation was earmarked for. If money is not given to the countries of Eastern Europe, I should think that amount ought to be just enough to tide over the Austrians and the Italians for a little while.

QUESTION: Do you mean that, with this situation coming to a head, it would be better if we didn't put through the treaty on Italy?

KENNAN: I don't think the treaty affects this so strongly. I am inclined to think, on balance, it would be better to put through the treaty and get the other treaties signed so we have a talking point for getting Russian troops out of that area. But I do feel that if any of those areas is allowed to drift into greater distress and hardship, the communists are going to capitalize on it politically, and that worries me.

The reason that I have brought up and outlined this sort of program is to avoid the element of relief as opposed to rehabilitation. I don't want to see any more American money go anywhere for purposes which do not give us some assurance that it is not going to be necessary forever. In other words, no more pouring money down ratholes. That is why a fairly comprehensive and pretty far-reaching program has to be drawn up, or else we might as well let go of that area right now. But the consequences would be very serious ones,

costing us, I dare say, a great deal more in national defense than what it would cost us to shore up those people.

QUESTION: Does the Greek-Turkish policy comport with your view which you just expressed?

KENNAN: Yes, it does. The problem has already been faced in Greece and Turkey, in the sense I am facing it, or discussing it, in Western Europe. And the legislation is already in Congress.

QUESTION: In other words, does the US have to do in Western Europe what is half done in Greece and Turkey?

KENNAN: Yes, but I would like to add something. I don't think that, except possibly for Korea, it will be necessary for us to grant assistance on any grand scale anywhere else. I don't feel that, because we do so in Greece, Turkey, France, Italy, and Central Europe, that we are necessarily committed to any enormous program for the whole world.

COMMENT: You say you are not committed, but there is a global policy in which we are opposing communism every place in the world. We are thereby putting ourselves under the control of Russia because wherever Russia stirs up a minority or acts aggressively, at that point we must go in or abandon the policy and make ourselves the laughing stock of the world. So actually you don't say when we will have to go in, you say it is up to Russia whether we have to go in.

KENNAN: I don't think we have to go in with financial support everywhere. If we have given that impression in advancing the Greek and Turkish program—I say “we” because I am associated with the State Department; I have had nothing personally to do with that advancing—I think we have given the wrong impression. There is a great difference in the danger of communism in areas which are contiguous to Soviet military power and the danger of communism in areas remote from it, as for example, in South America. There is a difference in the danger of communism in highly strategic areas such as Greece or Austria or Germany—where a communist victory might have very, very serious results for us and for our allies—and a communist victory in other places where it is not apt to have those results. Take China, for example: If I thought for a moment that the precedent of Greece and Turkey obliged us to try to do the same thing in China, I would throw up my hands and say we had better have a whole new approach to the affairs of the world. China could take all of the national budget we could divert to it for the next

25 years, and the problems would be worse at the end of that time than they are today. But I do think there is a good chance that if you let the Russians alone in China, they will come a cropper on that problem just as everybody else has for hundreds of years.

I remember one time somebody asking Stalin what the Russians were going to give to the Chinese when the war was over. It was somebody I took up to see Stalin in the latter days of 1944. Stalin scoffed and said, "What the hell can we give to the Chinese? We haven't anything to give to them. We have a hundred cities of our own in the Far East. If anybody is going to give them anything it is going to be you Americans." And I don't think in that case he was hypocritical about it. I think he was impatient with what he thought was a dumb question.

I don't think the Russians have very much to give to the Chinese. They may mop up with the Chinese Communists, but remember one thing about those Chinese Communists: I believe they are dependent on Moscow today. They have to dance to the Moscow tune, whether or not you can prove how they do it, or why. The reason is they have no other form of support. If Moscow and the Chiang Kai-shek government should reach an agreement over the heads of the Chinese Communists, they would be caught between the hammer and the anvil and there would be nothing left of them at all. They have to keep on the good side of Santa Claus because they have, remember, ruined their relations with Chiang. They will never get much charity at the hands of Chiang Kai-shek, so they have to keep on fairly good terms with Moscow. But remember: this is the case only as long as the Chinese Communists remain a little minority movement fighting for its life. If they were to become a majority, if they were to come to control, let's say, a large portion of the territory of China, I am not sure their relations with Moscow would be much different than those of Chiang today because they would be much more independent, much more in a position to take an independent line vis-a-vis Moscow. That applies elsewhere. It applies in France. It applies in Brazil. I am not sure that it would necessarily be a catastrophe for us to have the Brazilian Communists come into power. If they came into power their bluff would be called. For the first time they would have to put up, and they might discredit themselves. And if they did, the Red Army would not be able to save them in Brazil, thank God not yet, and that might be the best thing that could happen for us regarding communism all around South

America. The same thing may apply to China, but I don't think it applies in Greece.

In the case of Greece, you have a miserably weak country, sustaining over a billion dollars of war damage, its manpower wrecked, the self-confidence of the people shattered. And right in Bulgaria you have Russian military power, whether in Russian uniform or Bulgarian uniform. If we let Greece go, it can be immediately absorbed and utilized by the Russians. But we have to draw a big distinction between Greece and the situation in China, Brazil, or even in France.

QUESTION: Do you suppose the failure to get any agreement out of the Russians at Moscow was due in any part to our new policy with respect to Greece and Turkey? For example, before the Moscow Conference, some expressed the opinion that we have made bargaining with the Russians more difficult. Do you think the Soviets refused to agree on any point in order to show their disfavor or to wait for a bargaining point exchange?

KENNAN: No, I don't think so. From my recollection of bargaining with the Russians, they couldn't be any harder to bargain with as a result of our assistance to Greece and Turkey. They have behaved in this conference in exactly the same pattern of behavior I have seen for two years. I don't feel they will ever allow themselves to be influenced by pique or irritation. When they talk the loudest they are usually the calmest underneath. They may shout and call you every name under the sun, but that doesn't mean they are really indignant. They have decided it is advantageous to turn the heat on.

QUESTION: Do you anticipate any agreement in New York on the atomic situation?

KENNAN: Not for a long time.

QUESTION: You mean when the Soviets get the atomic bomb?

KENNAN: No. I don't think they will get it as early as is generally assumed here. I think they are waiting to see whether their general diplomatic position in the world will improve. As we were discussing earlier in the lecture, they are waiting to see whether they will be able to wait us out on Western Europe and on the economic conditions in this country; whether they someday will be in a more favorable bargaining position, where they can force us to agree to something they like better than this situation. They are determined, if they can help it, not to let anybody come in and wander around their country looking for atomic energy plants. They will talk of international control, but when you water down their talk with reality, you will find a monkey wrench in it somewhere.

QUESTION: I understood you to say we had shied away from any economic exchange between our zone and Austria and Germany because of some mythical political advantage we might eventually want. Would you elaborate on that? What possible political advantage could eventuate from such a denial?

KENNAN: We don't want to encourage the idea of an Anschluss between Austria and Germany again. As far as I know, that is the only thought behind it. I can find no other. I might add I believe there has been considerable interest in reviving such economic exchanges on the part of our military government in Austria, but not on the part of the American military government in Germany.

QUESTION: Isn't the aid to Greece and Turkey going to have to be repeated unless there are radical changes in the whole situation?

KENNAN: I don't think the aid we are giving to the Greeks is going to be enough to put their economy on a self-supporting basis. In the case of Turkey, it should be. I am sorry the way the aid worked out in the case of Turkey. The Turks had enough money to put either the military establishment or the economic establishment on its feet. I think it would have been better if we had left to them the burden of the military establishment and concentrated on the economic one. But if we help them out with the military expenditures, they ought to be able to handle the economic problem.

I doubt that the Greeks are able to do that. The amount of damage done in Greece exceeds a billion dollars. You don't make that up right away with three hundred million, of which a great deal is going for military expenditures. We might hope that if, by the wise application of the money we have in mind to allot, we are able to restore enough stability and confidence to Greek life, then the Bank for Reconstruction and Development might find itself in a position to make up the rest. And it ought to do so, for that is the purpose of the bank. The United States shouldn't have to do it.

QUESTION: You said it was too soon to realize the implications of the withdrawal of the French Communists from the government. Could you hazard a guess about what would happen? Will it be physical violence or further infiltration of communists?

KENNAN: I would say if the French try to get along with a government without the communists, you will see the communists are really capable of making trouble. The situation will just bring about another crisis in France: deadlock and confusion. The communist

press will say, "This is what you get for trying to do without the communists and there is only one solution: elect the communists all the way into power so they aren't bothered with the other parties." But there may be more in it than that. They may through the labor unions simply create conditions so they can practically insist on a change of regime. I can't envisage myself what the communists are after. It is hard to believe they are going to try to stage a revolution in France. I certainly don't think they are going to try to start a revolution immediately, but they may have started on that path, and if they have, it shows they are weaker than we thought.

QUESTION: Last fall when the Russians introduced their disarmament proposal, we came to the conclusion they were going to push disarmament all the way, getting rid of our ability to intervene in Europe. We all expected a full-blown provision similar to the Litvinov proposals of the 1920s and 1930s when the convention for armaments met in March. But when the commission met, Gromyko had nothing on his desk to put forward. Since that time, the Russians have shown as much willingness to delay as the rest of us. Would you comment on why the change may have taken place? Was it the Moscow Conference—the Greek-Turkish program?

KENNAN: I think your judgment on that ought to be as good as mine. Wasn't their interest at that time in general disarmament the result of a desire to get away from being pressed on the atomic energy program, and to bring it out into a wider field where they could maneuver more easily?

COMMENT: That was one of the factors of it. Knowing the history of the Soviet attitude on disarmament, I wonder.

KENNAN: If that was it and they succeeded, they might have given a sigh of relief: "Boys, we are out of that. It was a close escape. We pretty nearly had to talk on this subject, but as long as nobody else brings it up, we will let it ride." It is a card to be played in the future.

QUESTION: When they play it next time, don't you think we ought to say, "Look here, we have one disarmament conference going on right now and that is the most important one. When we get through with that conference and get some good results, we will start on others." Perhaps the United States moved in the wrong way in order to capture what we thought was the good opinion of the world.

KENNAN: I think you are absolutely right. We moved the wrong way. I don't see why we should have been afraid to say that

we do not consider this time before a German peace treaty has been concluded a suitable time to discuss general disarmament, because we don't know what the problems of our security are going to be. There hasn't been a Japanese peace treaty or a German treaty, and we don't know what the occupation commitments are going to be. I think we had a logical reason for holding out against this situation.

QUESTION: On a moral basis, we had a stronger case which was: here we are trying to give up a weapon which apparently has some good. We have something to give you. You have nothing to give other people by sinking your own battleships.

KENNAN: Yes, I think that could have been brought out too.

COMMANDANT: Mr. Kennan, I think I can say for everybody who has been listening this morning you have done a swell job. It has been greatly appreciated by us all. I think you have given a very clear and logical picture of the problem that we are faced with, an extremely interesting one. And I want to thank you on behalf of all present for a job well done.

*June 18, 1947*

## **PLANNING OF FOREIGN POLICY**

*Editors' Note: This final lecture of the academic year was actually given after Kennan had departed the War College for the Policy Planning Staff. Another of his off-the-cuff addresses, it reflects Kennan's farewell thoughts to the National War College assemblage. Kennan commented about it in 1990: "The lecture was delivered while we were still in the midst of the Marshall Plan effort. It throws further light on the thinking that went into that effort from the Planning Staff side and therefore, as I see it, has real historical significance."*

IT IS NOT MANY WEEKS SINCE I LAST SPOKE TO YOU FROM THIS platform, but it seems like centuries. It was just before I took over a new job as Director of the Policy Planning Staff in the Department of State. In retrospect, those days at the National War College were the days of youth and innocence. Everything seemed very simple. I could sit down here in my office and look out at the elm trees and the people playing golf in front of the building and divide the world into neat, geometric patterns, and fix those patterns into lectures which—as it seemed to me, at least—had some logical sequence, some beginning, and some end.

I think there could have been no better punishment for the glib talking that I did here and elsewhere in the country during the earlier months of this academic year than to be plunged into a job of policy planning. It was justice, if not poetic. As one of my southern friends said to me, “George, you just talked too much. It’s your big mouth that got you into this.”

This morning I will try to tell you something of what policy planning is like I find that very hard. A friend of mine says that to try to describe what life is like in Russia to someone who has never been there is like trying to describe the mysteries of love to a person who has never experienced it. It just can’t be done, and despite your best efforts, he or she is apt to fail completely to get the point and to reply to you in utter *non sequiturs*.

When you are stuck trying to describe things in direct terms, perhaps the best way to describe them is in parallels. I have a largish farm in Pennsylvania. The reason you never see me around here on weekends (or rather, the reason you *would* never see me around if you were here weekends) is that I am up there trying to look after that farm. The farm includes 235 acres, and a number of buildings. On everyone of those 235 acres and in every one of those buildings, I have discovered, things are constantly happening. Weeds are growing. Gullies are forming. Fences are falling down. Paint is fading. Wood is rotting. Insects are burrowing. Nothing seems to be standing still. The days of the weekend, in theory days of rest, pass in rapid and never-ending succession of alarms and excursions. Here a bridge is collapsing. No sooner do you start to repair it than a neighbor comes to complain about a hedge row which you haven’t kept up half

a mile away on the other side of the farm. At that very moment your daughter arrives to tell you that someone left the gate to the hog pasture open and the hogs are out. On the way to the hog pasture, you discover that the beagle hound is happily liquidating one of the children's pet kittens. In burying the kitten, you look up and notice a whole section of the barn roof has been blown off and needs instant repair. Somebody shouts from the bathroom window that the pump has stopped working, and there's no water in the house. At that moment, a truck arrives with 5 tons of stone for the lane. And as you stand there hopelessly, wondering which of these crises to attend to first, you notice the farmer's little boy standing silently before you with that maddening smile, which is halfway a leer, on his face, and when you ask him what's up, he says triumphantly, "The bull's busted out and he's eating the strawberry bed."

That's the only way I know to tell you what policy planning is like. The world is a big world. It has at least 235 big acres on it. On each of those, something is apparently happening. A nimble and astute person, working furiously against time, may indeed succeed in getting himself to a point where he thinks that with respect to 1 of those 235 acres, he is some 3 or 4 months ahead of events in his planning. But by the time he has gotten his ideas down on paper, the 3 or 4 months have mysteriously shrunk to that many weeks. By the time he has gotten his ideas accepted by others, the weeks have become days. And by the time others have translated those ideas into action, it develops that the thing you were planning for took place day before yesterday, and everyone wants to know why in the hell you didn't foresee it a long time ago.

Meanwhile, other things are occurring with maddening persistency on every one of the other 234 acres, and throngs of people are constantly plucking at your sleeve, looking knowingly in a certain direction, and saying in effect: "Say, do you know that the bull is out there in the strawberry patch again?"

But this is only the beginning. You brush these persistent inquiries away and say to yourself, "After all, one must make beginning somewhere. Let's not lose our heads. Let's do things in an orderly fashion." When you sit down to explore the problems of one particular area of this harried globe, then a babble of tongues and opinions begins which would shake the mental equilibrium of an oracle. Let us assume, by way of example, that we are examining the plight of a friendly European country which has not been

able to revive its economic life on its own steam in the wake of the war.

You say, this shouldn't be so difficult. Why don't we tell these people to draw up a plan for the reconstruction of their economic life and submit it to us and we'll see whether we can support it or not.

That starts it off. Then someone says: "That's no good. They are too tired to draw up a plan. We have to do it for them."

Someone else says: "Even if they do draw up a plan, they wouldn't have the internal economic discipline to carry it out. The communists would spike it."

Someone else says: "Oh, it isn't the communists who would spike it; it is local business circles."

Then someone says, "Maybe what we need isn't a plan at all. Maybe we just haven't given them enough in the past. If we just give them some more, things will work out all right."

Another then says: "That's probably true, but we've got to figure out how the money is going to be spent. Congress just won't pour money down any more ratholes."

Then somebody says: "That's right; we need a program. We've got to figure out just what's to be done with the money and make sure that it does the whole job this time."

To that someone else replies: "Ah, yes, but it would be a mistake for us to try to draw this program up all by ourselves. The commies would just take pot-shots at it and the European governments would shrug off the responsibility."

Then someone says: "That's absolutely right. The thing for us to do is to tell these Europeans to draw up a plan and submit it to us and we'll see whether we can support it or not."

And then you ask, "Didn't somebody say that before?"—and we're off again.

The complexity of these things is staggering. Sometimes it seems the only way we could ever hope to solve them would be if we could persuade the world to stand still for 6 months while we sit down and think it over. And even then I bet it would be 5 months and 28 days before we would get down to the drafting stage. But life does not stand still, and the resulting confusion is terrific. Sometimes I remind myself of the cub reporter who was sent out on his first assignment to cover a flood story and was so overwhelmed by what he saw that he could think of nothing else to write than this: "I sat on a mountain top with God last night and watched the tempest which

he had let loose upon His people." Now that reporter, as you will recall, received a return cable from his editor saying, "Drop flood assignment. Get exclusive interview with God." And sometimes I rather envy that reporter his change of assignment. It seems relatively simple.

Now the essence of planning is keeping yourself free of trivialities and concentrating on pure thought. The theory is that all you really need for the job is a good quiet stump and something to whittle. If everyone had this same conception of a planner's role, that too would make things easier; but the number of people who lay claim to your attention and your time surpasses belief. And the worst part is you can never explain to your bosses the nature of your distractions and get any sympathy from them; they say it is all your own fault. Sometimes when people expect me to come up with bright ideas about this or that, I have to remain silent and say nothing at all. Other things have simply prevented me from thinking of this or that. Then I remind myself of a story, told to me by a symphony orchestra director, about an unfortunate French horn player during a concert being given in Pittsburgh. There was a certain symphonic composition which called for a horn solo off stage. This was rather a tricky matter to arrange and the orchestra rehearsed it many times. The horn player stood out in the wings by himself and at a certain point in the music, the orchestra stopped and he was supposed to play his solo. When the night of the concert came, the conductor stopped the orchestra and held up his baton in a gesture of suspense and waited for the horn solo. Nothing was heard. There was dead silence. The conductor finally started the orchestra again and finished the concert. Then he rushed out in the wings and found the poor horn player sitting disconsolately on a box with his horn. The conductor said, "Now what in the hell was the matter with you?" And to this the musician replied, "I was following the music all right, but I was just raising my horn to play the solo when a fellow came along and knocked it out of my hands and gave me an awful shove, and said, 'You damned fool, don't you know that's a concert going on out there?'" That is the kind of excuse which a planner has to make for his failure to play his solos on schedule, and the sympathy he gets is roughly proportionate. One more thing about planning. Without any shadow of a doubt, it is going to become the lightning rod for criticism of the Department of State.

So much for planning, in the abstract. Now for a few words about the substance of it.

Problem Number One is, of course, the restoration of hope and confidence and tolerable economic conditions in Europe. I think all of you will have read Secretary Marshall's speech given at Harvard. You will have noted the approach which that speech indicates to European problems. There are certain questions about that approach which I might be able to clarify to some degree, for I notice they seem to have caused some confusion.

In the first place, why must the initiative come from Europe? The reason is that the communists are not going to like all this; they are going to use every means at their disposal to spike and frustrate any workable scheme. If the initiative comes from Europe, they will be forced to declare their position on it before it becomes openly an American project. At that stage, they will not be able to claim it is the product of American imperialism. Therefore, it will be harder for them to confuse the issue, and they will have to come out openly against European, not American, projects for the revival of European economy.

Secondly, why do we urge the initiative should be a joint concept embodying the needs of several nations? The answer is: we do not wish to encourage a one-sided orientation of the economies of individual European countries toward this country, and we want to bring home to European statesmen their responsibility for making the maximum use of Europe's own resources before drawing on our resources. We feel that the American people are entitled to the assurance that this has been done before they are called upon to help. We do not see how such assurance can be obtained other than by forcing the Europeans to get together before they submit the bill to us for American aid.

Third, is the rebuilding of Europe going to be successful? We don't know. Many disconcerting factors are involved in his problem. For one thing, the crisis in Europe today is largely a psychological one. In many instances, it is more psychological than economic. In some cases, the economic resources are there, but they cannot be brought out into the open because of the general sense of nervousness and insecurity. Resources are hoarded or exported or used in uneconomical ways, because people do not feel safe doing anything else. The preservation of this state of uncertainty is largely the work of the communists. It serves their purpose. It represents the triumph

of their efforts. And what is most disconcerting of all is that their strong position in Europe, so immensely superior to our own, was won not by economic means. The economic aid given to Western Europe by the Russians has been negligible and mounted to only a few shiploads of grain unloaded from Soviet vessels, with great propaganda whoopee at Marseilles. meanwhile, American vessels were still pouring UNRRA food on a far greater scale into the very port of Odessa from which the Russian grain was shipped. So the Russians have not won their political victory with economic aid to Western Europe.

They have won those victories in the field of ideas, not real or sound ideas having some foundation in fact, but ideas spun out of nothing more than their own sordid and bitter imaginations and sold to people on a mass basis, as you might sell chewing gum or sauerkraut juice by an intensive campaign of advertising. The communists have won these positions, in other words, through the unabashed and skillful use of lies. They have fought us with unreality, with irrationalism.

Can we combat this unreality successfully with rationalism, with the truth, with honest, well-meant economic assistance? Perhaps not. But these are the only weapons we possess, short of war. We hope that at least these weapons will serve to strengthen the resistance of other people to the lure of unreality, so powerful in its effect on those who are confused and frustrated and who see no escape from their difficulties in the formidable mass of reality itself.

There is no use blinking at the seriousness of our position. We have won a war in Europe—on the battlefield. But that war has cost us far more than we realized. It has cost us the lives of our men, the labor of our people, and the depletion of our national resources. It has also cost us the stability of our international environment and, above all, the vigor and strenght—temporarily—of some of our real and natural allies.

Worst of all, it was not a complete victory. We of the Anglo-American world were not strong enough—at least not when we needed to be—to put down all of the forces which threatened our existence. We were forced to ally ourselves with a part of them in order to defeat the other part. That alone would not have been too unfortunate. But we were unable to encompass that without deceiving ourselves and our peoples as to the nature of that alliance.

Great modern democracies are apparently incapable of dealing with the subtleties and contradictions of power relationships. You men have examined here the crucial decisions of the war. I should say that the greatest error of the war on our side was the failure to distinguish clearly the personality of our Russian allies and to recognize and to explain frankly to our peoples the nature of our wartime association with them. This failure, this lack of preparation for the aftermath of war, has caused us to suffer setbacks since the termination of hostilities—setbacks which come close to balancing out the gains of our military victory over Germany.

Today we Americans stand as a lonely, threatened power on the field of world history. Our friends have worn themselves out and have sacrificed their substance in the common cause.

Beyond them—beyond the circle of those who share our tongue and our traditions—we face a world which is at the worst hostile and at best resentful. A part of that world is subjugated and bent to the service of a great political force intent on our destruction. The remainder is by nature merely jealous of our material abundance, ignorant or careless of the values of our national life, skeptical as to our mastery of our own fate and our ability to cope with the responsibilities of national greatness. Left to itself, that remainder would not threaten us, at least not at this stage, for its aims are basically national, parochial ones; and it embraces no national unit endowed with such human and material resources as to permit it to dream of world domination. But the towers of the Kremlin cast a long shadow on many of these countries, who are otherwise content to tolerate if not to welcome the existence of this country as a great power. Those shadows have already fallen. That, gentlemen, is a dangerous thing; for the more I see of the life of this international society, the more I am convinced that it is the shadows rather than the substances of things which move the hearts and sway the deeds of statesmen.

In these circumstances, it may well be that we are overextended. In the foreign field, we may have undertaken too much; there may be a serious gap in peacetime policy between the things we have set out to do and our capabilities for doing them. Perhaps all our plans have been too ambitious. Perhaps we should never have tried to organize all the world into one association for peace, but should have been more modest—should have begun with establishing more solid relationships first with our friends and neighbors, our immediate neighbors of the Atlantic community. Perhaps the whole idea of

world peace has been a premature, unworkable grandiose form of daydreaming; perhaps we should have held up as our goal: "Peace if possible, and insofar as it effects our interests."

Many of you may say: "How can you talk of our being over-extended as long as we still possess the latent military capability of defending ourselves against any and all comers? Our trouble lies only in lack of appropriations from Congress for national defense." But there are two things to remember about military victory. The first is the political responsibilities into which it carries you. In the problems with which you have been dealing in these past weeks, you must have seen clearly what those responsibilities would be in the event of another great war. In any case, you have good test tube examples in Germany and Japan. To impose your will on a rival people is today only the beginning and not the end. It means eventually that you fall heir, unless you are very careful, to all of the problems and responsibilities of that people. It is for this reason that I have pleaded with you on many occasions not to take it for granted that war in our time must necessarily be total and not to leave out of your thoughts the possibility of limited military action and limited post-hostilities commitments. For I doubt the ability of any country so conceived and so organized as our own to handle successfully for any length of time the problems of great peoples other than our own.

The second of the two points about military victory is the gap between the exertion which is called for by modern war and the spiritual and social potential of our own people here at home. It is true, we have fought two wars with this form of government, and gotten away with it; but I am not sure that we can fight a third. I am not so sure that we are even organized domestically to cope with the aftermath of the second war. I am not suggesting any change in the fundamentals of our system. But I am suggesting that many of our ideas about democracy may have to be modified and changed, and that we may have to get back more closely to some of the concepts of the Founding Fathers of this country if we are to cope with the problems of modern times. Your failure to get from Congress the funds you feel you need is a symptom, not a cause. Before this Government can function effectively in foreign affairs, there will have to be a great spirit of organization and discipline throughout it, a greater readiness to recognize and submit to constituted authority, a more courageous acceptance of the fact that power must be delegated and delegated power must be respected. I believe that there can be far

greater concentration of authority within the operating branches of our Government without detriment to the essentials of democracy. I repudiate the suggestion that to advocate such concentration constitutes fascism and in this I find myself in agreement with one of the greatest of the early Americans, with Alexander Hamilton, who wrote:

An enlightened zeal for the energy and efficiency of government, will be stigmatized as the offspring of a temper fond of power, and hostile to the principles of liberty. An over-scrupulous jealous of danger to the rights of the people, which is more commonly the fault of the head than of the heart, will be represented as more pretence and artifice . . . the stale bait for popularity at the expense of public good. It will be forgotten, on the one hand, that jealousy is the usual concomitant of violent love, and that the noble enthusiasm of liberty is too apt to be infected with a spirit of narrow and illiberal distrust. On the other hand, it will be equally forgotten, that the vigour of government is essential to the security of liberty; that, in the contemplation of a sound and well informed judgment, their interests can never be separated; and that a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people, than under the forbidding appearances of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government. History will teach us, that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism, than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career, by paying an obsequious court to the people . . . commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants.\*

Now this set of ideas is still not popular among us today. Few would subscribe to it if it affected adversely their interests. I am sure that some day the strains and reverses of national experience will bring home to all of us the wisdom of these words.

Gentlemen, this is the last time that I will have an opportunity to talk to all of you together. I want to take this occasion to thank you in all seriousness and sincerity for the confidence that you have shown in me in the course of the work we have done here. I thank you for the patience, the courage, and the good will with which you have gone into the questions which plague the people of my profession.

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\*Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist Papers*, "Introduction" No. 1.

This experience has given me much more than many of you suspect. And it has left in my mind no shadow of a doubt as to the community of responsibility which joins the professional services of this country, both armed and civilian, and as to the necessity and advisability of our approaching these problems together and on common terms of reference. I consider that in this work here, you have all made a solid and successful contribution. Let me wish you all success and good luck in the tasks to which you will now be turning.

*September 18, 1947*

## **FORMULATION OF POLICY IN THE U.S.S.R.**

*Editors' Note: This is one of Kennan's off-the-cuff addresses made while he was preoccupied with directing the new Policy Planning Staff. In fact, the transcription manuscript indicates that he had prepared for the talk by "jotting down on an envelope" his remarks late the previous night. Understandably not as polished as his prepared lectures, it contains numerous points of interest.*

*INTRODUCTION: Our speaker this morning is Mr. X, the man who made Walter Lippmann famous. All of us have heard a great deal said about Mr. Kennan and his knowledge of American-Soviet relations. Invariably the questions asked the speakers at this college get around to this point: what has your talk to do with respect to Russia? Most speakers have begged off on the basis of incompetence. I can assure you today's speaker is competent to consider matters dealing with the Soviets. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to the assembled colleges and our guests, Mr. George Kennan, who last year was Deputy for Foreign Affairs in the National War College and this year—between writing articles and making speeches—is the Chief of the Policy Planning Section of the State Department:*

**L**AST YEAR WHEN I SPOKE FROM THIS SAME PLATFORM ON SIMILAR subjects I used to complain bitterly inwardly at what seemed to me to be the wholly inadequate time I had to prepare lectures of this sort, and I used to go around grumbling under my breath at the despotism of the military tyrants like General Gruenther who expected me to produce these things on such short notice. When I look back *now* from my present duties on that period, it seems that I was about as strapped for time then as one of these fellows you see fishing off the docks in the Potomac. Thus I could begin only last night to organize today's talk, which includes the following points: By whom is policy formulated in the Soviet Union? What does it consist of, that is what is national policy in Soviet terms? How is it regarded? What are the advantages of this system? What are the disadvantages? What do we do to cope with it?

First of all, by whom is policy made? In discussing this, I must emphasize that all of public life in the Soviet Union is divided into two apparatuses, that of the government and that of the Communist Party. Policy in Russia is formulated by the Party and not by the government apparatus. In the charter of the Soviet Foreign Office, which has been published, remarkably enough (those things usually aren't) the prescribed functions do not include the making of policy.

Policymaking in the field of foreign affairs is left exclusively to the Communist Party.

The Soviet Government and Communist Party are parallel organizations. The constitution of the Soviet Government recognizes the Party as having a monopolistic position in the life of the nation and the Communist Party constitution makes mention of the government. We must remember the Party, in theory, is not responsible to the people of the Soviet Union as a whole. Therefore, policy is made by an organization which—whatever the degree of democracy within the nation—is responsible in theory only to the six million Party members.

The constitution does not say specifically that the government apparatus *cannot* make policy, and as a matter of fact, in theory it could easily be interpreted to indicate that the Supreme Soviet, which is the supreme government body, would find it entirely within its competence to pass on policy questions. It could do so constitutionally. If it were to do so, if it were suddenly to emerge with a policy decision, that would be a highly embarrassing thing for everybody around the place. Everybody in the party, even the high-ranking members, would have to do lip service until they could get it changed. The Supreme Soviet is the supreme body of the land, but it has never made a policy decision yet. And I don't think it ever will happen in present circumstances, because the Party would never permit itself to be led that peaceably to the brink of disaster, and would resort to precautionary measures long before such a state of affairs could be made possible.

For this reason we have to look to the history, traditions, and the rules of the Communist Party organization to see how policy is formulated, not to the practices of the government. The Communist Party is governed by a principle which is referred to as democratic centralism. That means, in theory, the higher organs of the Party are elected, although indirectly, by the lower ones. That is the democratic part of it. The centralism part is that having been elected, their authority, then, over the remainder of the Party, during the period they hold their office, is absolutely ironclad and dictatorial and may not be challenged. In theory you may elect a person, you may elect a whole body, but once you have elected them you have to submit to their authority unquestioningly.

The democratic part of it, the election from down below to up above, has never been a reality for various reasons. Before the

revolution it was not a reality because the circumstances of being an underground, illegal operation did not permit it to be a reality. Since the revolution it has not been a reality because the people at the top have not wanted it to be, and it has become less and less of a reality as time goes on. I need only mention that the supreme body of the Party has not had an election for 8 years or met for 8 years.

The question of how policy is formulated and who has a hand in it, really narrows down to the people within the top bodies. The rank and file are cut off from influencing the higher authorities and always have been. So how is policy formulated in those top party bodies? The communist movement was active and going through very important stages of development for a full 15 or 20 years before the revolution. At that time, the principle of majority decision in the top Party bodies was given full recognition and has always been the theory underlying decisions in the Party bodies.

In the early days the Communists used to meet either in the underground in Russia or in Western European capitals. They were often chased from one Western European capital to another by the police and always resumed their gatherings and proceeded as though nothing had happened when they got to the next place. In those gatherings this question of majority rule among those top officials was taken very seriously. We only have to recall that the name "Bolshevik" or "Bolshevism" stems from the Russian word "Bolshinstvo" meaning the majority; and it emerged from an incident which occurred in the years 1904-1905, when there was a serious division in the party over important points of organizational principle. Lenin's faction, after a lot of to-and-fro, finally emerged with a majority of two votes, and henceforward called themselves the "majority-ites," the "Bolshiviki," as opposed to their opponents called the "Mensheviks" or the "minority-ites."

When the revolution came, a new situation arose with regard to the formulation of policy. In the first months after the revolution the Communist Party was not the only party that participated in the Soviet government. The Communist Party had not achieved a completely monopolistic position. There were two other parties, the "Mensheviks" and the Social Revolutionaries, that participated in the first Soviet organs of the government. Therefore, in theory, at that time, and to a certain extent in practice, national policy had to be formulated in the government.

It is very interesting to see how the communists behaved during the revolution. They entered into that pluralistic arrangement with the obvious intention of getting rid of it as soon as they possibly could and getting the other elements out. They had by far the strongest position. As you read the records of those days there was nothing like normal policy deliberation within the government between the communist faction and the other parties participating. The communists functioned as a tight little group who never discussed anything before the others. They always went into a back room to make their decisions, came out and announced the decisions, and fought for them with every method they had. They rarely discussed a point frankly with the others on the assumption that they and the other parties had a common interest. I ask you to note this point, because it has been a feature of Soviet political policy ever since and applies to any sort of coalition in which they are obliged to enter.

Soviet political policy is based upon their whole attitude toward coalition with other political groupings. They consider such coalitions undesirable and only go into them if they can neither ignore nor defeat the other group at that particular moment.

The pluralist arrangement did not last very long. It was only a matter of months before the Bolsheviks forced the other parties out of government and liquidated them. From then on they had a monopolistic position, which they have had to this day. All questions of policy revert to the organization of the Communist Party.

What has been the development since then? Initially, for the first 2 or 3 years while Lenin was alive, the principle of majority rule was still observed and policy decisions were made at that time in the Central Committee of the Party, which was not a large organization. It comprised about twenty members. (Today there are one hundred and twenty, and it is no longer the policymaking body). Within that Central Committee there was majority rule; and although Lenin's influence was enormous, he did not really make an issue of his personal influence except on one occasion. That was when he could not get the others to come to a realistic decision about making terms with the German armies invading Russia at that time. He realized that it would be a complete catastrophe if the Russians did not make terms with the Germans. The Germans were in a position to come in and do what they pleased. On that occasion, and on that occasion alone, Lenin said, "Either you do as I tell you or I will get out of the government and you can get along without me from now on." That was sufficient

to win the day. His personal authority was enough. But otherwise he showed a complete readiness to submit to the majority of the Central Committee.

Lenin was a brilliant man, with enormous prestige and authority. They loved him, admired him, respected him; so naturally his word carried far, but they were not afraid to argue with him.

The men included on the Central Committee at that time were, in my opinion—and I have known a few of them personally—among the best educated and most brilliant men of Europe of the day, and the arguments they used to have there were really scintillating and penetrating and fought-out with great intellectual passion and conviction.

I recall a story somebody told me in Russia. The Central Committee had argued all night about a certain point, and the argument had proceeded principally between Lenin and Nicholas Bukharin, who was the second most brilliant member of the whole group. Toward morning Bukharin finally gained his point and forced Lenin into a corner and made him admit he had been wrong from the start. In his exuberance, he let out a whoop and went over and picked Lenin up bodily and carried him downstairs and deposited him out on the sidewalk, to the hilarity of the whole Central Committee. Such was the pep that went into the intellectual give-and-take in the Central Committee in those early days.

That changed with Lenin's death and with the emergence of Stalin as the dominating figure. It changed in two principal ways. In the first place, Stalin very quickly got policymaking functions turned from the Central Committee itself to two of the smaller organizations which were theoretically subordinate to it: to the political bureau, the so-called Politburo, and to the Secretariat, which he used interchangeably and both of which he controlled.

It is an interesting commentary on the spirit of the times to note that this change didn't by any means go unprotested. There was still sufficient freedom of speech and thought in the movement so that people complained loudly over that development. I find that one of the early Bolsheviks at that time gave a speech of protest in which he explained the situation this way:

The plenary session of the Central Committee is to meet only twice a month and, as Comrade Zinoviev put it circumspectly, is to discuss questions of general policy. . . . In other words, the plenum of the Central Committee merely discusses. What it all

comes down to, is that the Political Bureau of five people decides all the important questions, while the plenary session meets for general conversation, for discussion. All of the other fourteen members [at that time the ones who were not members of the Politburo] are thus reduced to the status of second-rate members.

Commenting on this complaint in his *Life of Stalin*, Trotsky, who was one of the members and one of the few remaining witnesses at the time, had this to say:

Ossinsky was right of course. That was precisely what eventually did happen. The Politburo came to pass not only on *urgent* questions but on *all* questions, and merely informed the Central Committee of its decisions. . . . Moreover, after the Tenth Congress in 1921, the relative share of the Central Committee in the function of governing was further limited by statute: that Congress decreed that the Central Committee was to meet no longer semi-monthly, but bi-monthly; moreover, the All-Russian Party Conferences, instead of meeting quarterly were to meet semi-annually. This made the Politburo the actual governing body of the Party and ipso facto of the Soviet government and the Communist International.

The second change that occurred under Stalin's leadership was, of course, the concentration of dominant authority within these two little bodies in his own person. That was completed by the year 1929 because, it was in that year that Stalin casually remarked to some outsider who had a chance to see him that decisions in the Politburo were then being taken unanimously, that there was never any decision that wasn't unanimous. That was a way of saying he had brought things to a point where his final word was valid for the decisions of that body; and it is characteristic of his psychology that he finds it an impossible and an intolerable thing that any minority opposition to a decision of the body should remain on the record. Therefore, after they thrash the thing out, the vote always has to be unanimous. And I dare say that has had a considerable influence on Stalin's thinking and on the thinking of the whole Soviet Government with regard to the question of the veto in the UN Security Council.

We don't know, exactly, how decisions are taken today in the Politburo. But according to plausible accounts, the procedure works

somewhat as follows: there are today fifteen members of the Politburo. They don't all attend all the meetings nor are they all in on all the policy decisions. There is evidence of an inner group within the fifteen members. Whatever the membership of the group may be, a question is thrown open for discussion. Stalin does not participate in the discussion in the early stages. According to some people, he walks up and down and smokes his pipe and listens. He notes carefully the views that are brought out, the differences of opinion that develop, ponders the motives of them, and when he has heard enough of the pros and cons—and there usually are pros and cons—he turns around and points his pipe at the fellow whose ideas he approves and says, for example, "Molotov is right. Molotov is correct." Molotov then, according to an unwritten rule, proceeds to draft the resolution which the Politburo is going to pass and it goes through unanimously.

The whole Politburo is then responsible for the decision, not just Molotov, and Stalin no more than anybody else. There is only this trick about it: if that decision turns out to be one which is successful, which gains a great deal of kudos in the public eye, it invariably turns out within a matter of some weeks or months, as soon as that is apparent, to have been taken "at the personal initiative of Comrade Stalin." If it is not successful, it is usually the personal initiative of someone else or is not mentioned.

It is dangerous for the members of that group to get their names associated with a line of policy that turns out to be successful. If they know it is going to be successful they have to duck it. A very good instance of this was the situation of Zhdanov. During the war Zhdanov was head of the Party organization (actually the oblast committee and the city committee) of Leningrad, which is regarded as probably the most important single local job in the Party. He was in full charge of the Leningrad district politically and in other ways; at the same time he was head of the military council and responsible for the conduct of military operations on the Leningrad front. In those capacities he doubtless bore a more direct share of personal responsibility than any other single person for the defense of Leningrad, which was admittedly a tremendously heroic and difficult and successful operation. It was Zhdanov who was responsible for maintaining civilian morale and the overall guidance of military operations on that section of the front. He stuck with the city during this whole long nightmare of the siege and went through all of this with the people of Leningrad. Naturally his name became closely associated

with it in everybody's mind. The defense of Leningrad was regarded as Zhdanov's operation.

In 1945, a few months after the termination of hostilities, the Soviet Government decided to make a ceremonious presentation to the city of Leningrad of the Order of Lenin for its heroic defense during the war. Two days before that ceremony was to take place, Zhdanov was removed from both of his jobs in Leningrad, sent away to another part of the country, and was scarcely mentioned by name during the whole two days' ceremony. Moscow *Pravda* took occasion to stress in an editorial that Molotov and Zhdanov's enemy, Malenkov, had proceeded to Leningrad during the war to set things right on the Leningrad front. As it so happens, quite recently the tables are turned again and Zhdanov has had his revenge on Malenkov. That is a good example of the way the machine operates if anybody gets too conspicuously identified with a successful policy.

The next question is: what does Russian national policy consist of? I would only like to make the point that it is not entirely policy as we understand it and it is not entirely national.

People have different ideas here of what policy means. I don't like the word myself, as one who heads a staff which contains policy in its title. To a lot of people in this country it means something defensive. It means a question of principle, a question of what you do if the other fellow does something else.

The decisions made by the members of the Politburo are not normally of that nature. They are much more similar to military planning on the strategic and tactical level as you know it here. They are forward-looking programs of action designed to keep the initiative at all times in the hands of the Politburo and to gain very clear-cut objectives. There is nothing defensive about them. Against this background, Soviet policy decisions usually envisage alternative lines of advance. The Russian communists are by nature and training chess players, and they like to plan their moves so they always have an alternative line of action. If one line is closed at the same time they never fail to look and see whether the other player has an alternative line of action, and if not, they try to take advantage of that to the utmost. For this reason, it is a mistake to think the Kremlin is committed for any length of time by its own policies. We here in this country can be. We get out a policy, we sell it to the country and we can't get away from it very fast. The Soviets can. That doesn't bother them at all.

You had a vivid example of that recently when Molotov appeared with eighty-five economic experts at Paris to participate in the conference for planning the reconstruction of Europe. After a few days he departed very hurriedly with his whole enormous retinue during the night without even saying goodbye, and as soon as he got home he set about on a campaign of vilification and condemnation of the whole Paris project.

Vyshinski once said to me that in politics nothing is impossible. He said it with a smile, and I think what he meant at that time — because it was what we had been discussing — was the question of Soviet policy. I can remember years ago when a number of us used to work in the Russian section of the American legation in Riga; we had to work on the basis of the Soviet press, and we had to read a great deal of the Soviet press. We used to practice our Russian and sharpen our wits by drafting *Pravda* editorials which announced the reinstatement of capitalism in Russia. We claimed it was a “tremendous triumph for socialist construction” and maintained that only the Soviet system was able to bring to the people of the world the “advantages of capitalist initiative without throwing them open to exploitation.” Today that does not seem as implausible as it did then, or as funny.

The Soviets have this extreme flexibility in what they work out, so don't ever jump to conclusions about Soviet threats or purposes from what is put forward at the moment as Soviet policy. When the Soviets are dealing with their opponents, Soviet policy is always in a sense opportunistic and designed to serve the interests of the communist movement at that time.

I have said the communist policy is not entirely national. By that I don't mean it doesn't take into account the interests of the Russian people. I mean that it doesn't stop there. The men in the Kremlin are representatives of a movement, not of a state. That movement is international, not national. It uses the Russian people and it uses the Russian state for its own purposes, but it should not be identified with them.

I am aware that Walter Lippmann has just criticized an article written by a certain Mr. X for allegedly neglecting to spell out the importance of Russian national tradition in an account of the sources of Soviet conduct. I think Mr. Lippmann was unjust in this reproach. Gauging the intentions of Mr. X by the tenor of his article, I should hazard a guess that if he did not mention Russian national traditions

more specifically than he did—and he did mention them incidentally, Walter passed that up—it was because he did not wish to lead people into precisely the pitfall into which Mr. Lippmann has fallen; namely, the pitfall of identifying Soviet policy with Russian national tradition. Soviet policy exploits that tradition for its own purposes. It is not limited by it.

In general, I urge you to beware of identifying in your own minds the communist with the human tools which the communist uses. That applies everywhere. There is nothing that delights a good Bolshevik more than to make his enemies serve his own purposes. The full beauty of this thought occurred to Lenin when Trotsky reminded him that he had twenty-thousand officers of czarist origin in the Red Army during the civil war. Trotsky pointed out how well they were doing and how much they had helped the movement. Lenin tells how at that moment he realized for the first time the full possibilities that lay in making use of your own enemies. That policy has continued to this day. You will see it working in Germany, in France. You will see it working everywhere. It exists even in our own country. I have always had a sneaking suspicion that if Moscow prevailed and the communists were to come into power here tomorrow, probably the first person they would hang would be Henry Wallace.

I reiterate: the Kremlin feels itself as the center of an international movement with universal aims, and acts accordingly. The abolition of the Comintern was an obvious maneuver which deceived no one familiar with Soviet conditions. The Comintern was not abolished. It was instructed to go underground, because it had become embarrassing to the Kremlin. It functions just as well, if not better, underground than it ever did above ground, and we must bear that in mind when we think of Soviet policy.

At this point, I have to interject a tale which was told to me yesterday which perhaps illustrates the difference between national policy and international policy. At one of the banquets given by Stalin in Moscow for distinguished visiting statesmen—in the case they happened to be Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Bevin—Mr. Byrnes took out of his pocket at one point a very beautiful, silver cigarette case, which was admired by the other two statesmen. He showed to them the inscription on the back which read “To Jimmy from his colleagues on the Supreme Court.” Bevin, not to be outdone, pulled out a very handsome cigar case which was inscribed “To Ernie from his

pals in the TUC." At that point Stalin felt that something was called for on his part, and he produced a beautiful, diamond-studded black sort of a pipe tobacco job and passed it around, and the others noticed the inscription written on the back. It was: "To Count Karoly from his friends in the Jockey Club."

I would like to add a word or two about the way in which policy is regarded in the Soviet Union. It has been an inviolable rule of the movement from the beginning that until a policy decision is taken, there is freedom of discussion and nobody shall be penalized for views he expressed prior to the decision. But once it has been taken, then that decision becomes his innermost conviction, no matter how passionately he opposed it before; and he does lip service and very convincing lip service to it from then on—or else. That rule is taken very seriously; and a person can get in trouble if he casts the slightest doubt on his complete, passionate conviction that whatever has been said was right.

Trotsky once said something about that: "Doubt is almost denial and questioning is almost doubt." The communists watch each other very carefully, and they are obliged to warn each other if they see backsliding on a policy decision. There is no "I told you so," or "I always said from the beginning it wasn't going to work out." You have to go along with what has been passed. I remember Radek at his trial in 1937 told how he had been exiled once for opposition sentiments but was permitted to come back and had been given a pretty good job in the government. He related in his testimony how after he had been back for about half a year, another very high communist friend came to him and said, "Look here, Radek, you have, appended to you, certain little tails of your prior opposition to this ideology. We know that. You cut those little tails off fast or you are going to hang on them." That is the way people speak to each other about this principle of observing completely a policy decision that has been taken. The discipline of the movement comes into full play here, and there is no fooling with it.

The result of this, of course, is felt in Soviet diplomacy and is felt in a very unfortunate way because it boils down to this: that before a policy decision is taken a Soviet official, as a rule, will not discuss the question at all with a foreigner, because he is afraid he will be quoted on it and the decision may eventually be counter to what he said. Then he will be accused of undermining the party decision in advance. On the other hand, once the decision had been

taken, the Soviet official will not do anything but repeat parrot-like the exact wording of that decision.

Those of you who have not had occasion to negotiate with the Russians cannot conceive the extent to which that applies. In the 1945 negotiations over the new Polish government, we and the British sat for twenty hours with Mr. Molotov and two or three of his advisers, trying to discuss the question of the new Polish government. And if you read the testimony of those twenty hours you wouldn't believe your eyes. It was repetition, repetition, repetition. It didn't matter how we would go at him, exactly the same words would come out. I once made this complaint to a high Soviet official, an assistant minister of the Foreign Office, and he actually laughed and said, "Well, I know what you mean. But," he said, "you people make a mistake, too. You think that just because, when you talk to us and say things, we repeat the same line, that means we didn't hear what you said, or didn't pass it on or didn't notice it. That is where you are wrong."

But this characteristic is carried to ridiculous extremes. You can see it here in Washington. You noticed the other day Mr. Gromyko gave a speech at the Security Council. It was obviously translated from the Russian, and the people who translated it were so terrified to change one comma or anything in the speech that they translated the pronoun for the word "delegation," which is feminine, as "she." They didn't dare put it any other way. "Although the Soviet delegation feels so and so, *she* nevertheless does this or that." That was done because the translator probably thought "it is better not to make any changes. If we change it, God knows what somebody is going to say."

That is as much as I can say to you this morning about the method of policy formulation in Russia. What are the advantages of this system? I would say the advantage, first of all, is in secrecy. That is obvious. These people keep things very tightly controlled. There are literally no leaks that I know about these days. They just don't occur. They have complete advantage of the element of surprise. Remember the way the German-Russian non-aggression pact was pulled off in 1939, and you can see the extent to which this advantage can be carried.

Secondly, the Soviet system produces an immediate translation of policy decisions into action. The fellows who take the decisions at the top have divided among themselves the control over the whole

government apparatus which executes policy; and they usually meet at night, take the decision, then send the decision to the operational people. The latter have it on their desks the first thing in the morning, and while the other fellows are sleeping off the effects of their night's debate, the decision is already going into effect.

There is another advantage, a curious one, we have noticed. The Soviet system itself is very easy on the nerves of the people who have to make policy. They have the advantage over all of us in that, once a decision is taken, their responsibility for it, if they have urged it, as a rule becomes absorbed into the collective responsibility of the Political Bureau as a whole. And since the Political Bureau never admits it is wrong, these people are never wrong. A fellow who takes a stand in the Political Bureau and sells it to the rest can go back home and sleep with a good conscience. Once the Political Bureau has accepted it, it was right, each member was right, and he was right. And even if it turns out to be the most ghastly misfortune, it never turns out that the Politburo was wrong—rather, the situation changed.

What are the disadvantages of this system of doing business? In the first place, while they can act very fast at the top level, it leads to a great deal of administrative inflexibility farther down. The fellows on the spot don't dare say anything before they get a policy decision; and they are absolutely inflexible in the carrying out of it; and often there is a considerable drag when they make their changes. The whole system is a little top-heavy and ponderous in the way they do business.

A greater disadvantage is the lack of live contact between the men who formulate policy at the top and the foreign countries and statesmen against whom that policy has to be applied. That has very curious consequences. All policy in the Soviet Union is formulated in a back room by men who never meet people in the outside world. They are dependent solely on advisers for the information they get; and the nature of the system is such that it operates against these men getting accurate and unbiased information. In one sense they like that, but in another sense they don't. It gives them a certain feeling of uncertainty and jitteryness which they would not otherwise have, a consciousness that they don't really know what they are talking about, that they know only what some fellow reported to them. There are in that system infinite possibilities for poisoning the wells of information as they come to the people at the top; and we have strong

reason to believe that this has been deliberately done, and done against us, three or four times in the last few years.

What, then, does this spell for us in terms of United States policy? I don't need to remind you that this is the way policy is formulated in the machinery of power which is the most important to us, the most dangerous to us, today, of any in the world. I think personally that we can cope with it by taking advantage of its weaknesses, of its administrative inflexibility, of its insensitivity, of its over-centralization, of this top-heavy, ponderous quality it has. We can force the pace; we can exploit the factor of surprise; we can do the unexpected; we can take calculated risks; we can try to wrest away from them, whenever possible, the initiative they prize so highly.

Admittedly, all that calls for an immense improvement in our own policy formulation and execution. Our action has to become, in my opinion, incomparably bolder, faster, more hardhitting, more imaginative, more flexible. It has to become in many respects more like theirs—but not in all respects. We are only beginners today at the arts of modern diplomacy. It is harder for us to get that type of policy formulation because we have, after all, a democratic system of government. But we must not fight the problem; we must find ways of improving policy formulation within this system of government. That is not going to be easy; but if our foreign policy position can stand in general the strains of the next few months—the next few weeks, I might say—and if we can proceed to make substantial progress along the lines I have indicated here, I am reasonably optimistic about the future of dealing with that setup. For we are still basically the stronger party, and I find it necessary to reiterate that again and again in talking with people about Russia. We still enjoy a sort of distinctive moral confidence of people the world over, even though they grumble at us and criticize us. They all know that we are in a sense the better party; and that sentiment stands us in good stead in the tough spots.

In conclusion, I particularly recommend to your attention in your work here the question of how American policy formulation can be improved and streamlined, because it cuts to the heart of the reasons why you are at this institution. And if the seeds of improvement in that respect are not germinated and nurtured right here in this hall and in this building, I don't know where they are going to be. Thank you very much.

## DISCUSSION

QUESTION: Mr. Kennan, in our discussions on the difficulties that are now before the Atomic Energy Commission, it has been apparent that there is not likely to be any change in the attitude by the Russian delegates until there is a complete reversal of the situation in Russia. In view of the Politburo's ability to change or reverse policy, would you care to comment on the prospects of any change in attitude by the Atomic Energy Commission?

KENNAN: I have in my own thinking been adverse to seeing us give up or close the door—let us put it that way—to further negotiations with Russia on this subject before we had made it absolutely evident to them that they do not stand to gain by delay. Put yourself in the position they have been in the last year and a half. The Russians have had to look at it this way: "These other people have a weapon which we have not got. They have indicated a readiness to discuss with us the question of an international control scheme. They are, of course, in a definitely favorable position to discuss that because they have got it and we have not. If we could only get the weapon, we would be in a much better position to make terms. We don't like their control scheme, because it calls for foreigners coming into our country and snooping around and that is highly distasteful to us. Therefore, what do we do? We want to get control of the weapon first of all and as fast as possible and, that being the case, perhaps all we have to do is stall on the negotiations. After all, our situation is not deteriorating while we stall; and that may keep the other fellow from doing anything definite about it and in the end perhaps we will get it and then we can talk."

In other words, their unwillingness to accept control of atomic weapons seems up to this time to have rested on the following factors: first of all, a genuine reluctance to let any foreigners have anything to do with Russia; second, the thought that if they do stall along they might be in a better position to bargain with us; and, third, while they talked perhaps we would not do anything really effective about national defense over here.

Before we close the discussions entirely we ought to do everything we can to make it clear to them it is not in their interest to let the negotiations drag on. I am not sure that would still bring them very far along the way to agreement with us. But that is a possibility that ought to be exhausted before we let the thing go. And for that

reason, I am not prepared to think that we ought to drop it yet. But if we *have* to let it go, if no agreement *is* possible, we would have of course an entirely separate situation which will have to be faced.

I, personally, do not see how you can have an atomic development authority along the lines we have proposed among a large group of powers but not including all nations. There is either a universal approach or it won't work at all among any large group of the powers. You have to include everybody by the nature of the problem. There is no security if you can extend a line like that to include almost everybody but not everybody; because the ones you do exclude still have the power to make it unreal in its effects. I am afraid that if it comes to that, people will have to look after their own knitting in a very hard-boiled way.

I still am not absolutely convinced the Russians cannot be brought into an arrangement for the control of atomic energy. If you can make it crystal clear to them that there is no alternative except great risk to their own system and keep at them, perhaps in the end you can get them to join. But that depends on more than just the atomic energy negotiations. It depends in my opinion on the whole political set-up in the world. If they think they are on the up and up; that their movement is gaining; that they are going to back us out of all of Eurasia; that they are going to get increased strength even on this continent—if the communists think they are doing well in all these areas, they will not be inclined to agree to such a settlement. If, on the other hand, it becomes apparent they have reached and passed the peak of their postwar success and that they are really being held and perhaps even pushed back politically a little bit all over the world, I do not think it is absolutely out of the question that they might eventually accept some tolerable scheme for the international control of atomic energy.

QUESTION: What is going to happen to the smooth-running party when the man who is now pointing the pipe is gone?

KENNAN: I came across an interesting note the other day, glancing through the *Life of Stalin*, which Trotsky was writing when he died and the publication of which was delayed during the war because we didn't want to offend the Russians. This book has now appeared in this country and it gives a pretty detailed account of what happened when Lenin got very ill and died. I think it is well worth noting today. The people who are concerned with power in Russia at the moment haven't forgotten that experience. Stalin hasn't and I am

sure the others have studied it very, very carefully. Their lives and political fortunes depend on it.

What happened at that time rather surprised me, not because there was any pushing on the part of Stalin or anybody else to take over Lenin's position; in fact the opposite took place. Everybody realized that the first fellow who stepped out and tried to assume Lenin's functions would be sticking his neck out a mile long so there was a sort of an "After you, my dear Alphonse." The question arose very soon after Lenin's death as to who should write the annual political report of the Central Committee which Lenin had always drafted up to that time. The members tried to get Trotsky to do it, and Trotsky said, "Oh, no, surely not me. I think it would be a more appropriate thing if the Secretary General of the party, Stalin, were to draft it." Stalin said it was by no means the job for the Secretary General. The person foolish enough to do it, Zinoviev, was the first one to get shot in 1936. I think you are going to find something of the same thing if Stalin gets out: that is, people will realize that it is dangerous to start right out in front of all the others. You may get shot in the back. That is a very delicate game, namely, how you maneuver yourself into power after an event like that.

There is a tale about Malenkov, who is a member of the Politburo. Until recently he was actually in complete organizational charge of the party—meaning he was the real personnel boss and had real organizational power. Mr. Malenkov has some present difficulties, however: he seems to have disappeared, not entirely from the public eye, but he has been relieved of all those secretarial functions and is obviously in the dog house. The story goes that his difficulties arise from the time when Stalin was returning from the Tehran Conference. This is a Russian story and I can't vouch for the accuracy of it. As the tale goes, anyway, Stalin became unwell in the plane and had to land. Upon eventual return to Moscow, Stalin had to spend four or five days in bed and they got the idea in Moscow he was seriously ill. They say that Mr. Malenkov made the mistake of suggesting to some of the other members that they get together and consider what ought to be done in view of Stalin's incapacity. Nobody took him up on that and he has probably lost many a night's sleep over it since. The unwisdom of that suggestion is catching up with him now.

I think, initially after Stalin's demise, there will be an allotment of functions. I don't know exactly what they will be. But no single

person will immediately take Stalin's place. Molotov will take charge of the government apparatus; Zhdanov will take over the Party apparatus; Beria will retain control of the secret police and Bulganin, control of the armed forces. It would be a very tricky situation and how it could end is anybody's guess. It might pass off very peacefully and one of the fellows might emerge as the top guy without any bloodshed and with the greatest of politeness on everybody's part. It depends on how ably he maneuvers the others into place. On the other hand, the most extraordinary things could happen and I ask you to bear in mind what I quoted last year. It is attributed to Lenin. It is to the effect that Russian history is a series of incredibly swift transitions from the most wild violence to the most delicate deceit.

QUESTION: Reverting to the first question and assuming the Russians possibly did go along on the control of atomic energy, do you believe they will honestly live up to the clauses of agreement relative to inspection control?

KENNAN: Not if they could help it, no. I recall when Lenin was reproached for having signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, he defended himself as best as he could and the fellow who reproached him finally said, "I hope to hell we aren't living up to it." And Lenin said, "For God's sake, no. We have already broken it forty times." I think there would be the same tendency with an atomic energy authority. The secret police in Russia, as you know, is an enormously powerful outfit and they hate the thought of anybody being in there and sticking his nose in their particular pudding. They would sabotage it at every turn. And if we ever did go in to inspect, we would have to be prepared from the start to make a full-fledged issue over every tiny point and settle down to about three years of the most horrible unpleasantness, fighting every single thing out. If you do that, I think sometimes you can get somewhere. But you have to make it plain that you are going to insist on absolutely 100 percent compliance and that you will not put up with any deviation at all. And you have to have an alternative plan all the way through. You have to be able to say: "If you don't do this we get out of the treaty" and then do it. But that would be a difficult one, because you would have already given up the weapon.

QUESTION: You spoke of the dependency of the Politburo upon information and the lack of any outside contact. Can you tell us how the flow of information to the Politburo is controlled?

KENNAN: That is something which puzzles us. We don't know how the information-gathering business works in the Soviet Union. It

seems to be pretty evident, for example, in the field of diplomacy that the Soviet missions here are not real sources of information. They do not report realistically to the Kremlin. If they do anything at all—and the same thing applies to the TASS representatives—they feed back or echo the Party line to Russia. That is, if the Party line says the United States is about to have an economic depression, the whole Soviet Embassy apparatus and the TASS apparatus here immediately set about sending in material to prove the United States is going to have an economic depression.

Now the question arises who, if anyone, gives them the real dope? And who writes objectively? The answer is: we just don't know. They have been so successful, after all, with their political movement, that we think they must have some objective information at the top. Now, of course, they have many other sources from which they can get it. They have the enormous undercover espionage apparatus, the whole Comintern apparatus, the foreign communist parties and their supporters. That is perhaps a preferable source of information than the official one, and perhaps they get it there. Sometimes, though, I don't think they get the information at all. We have seen evidence that highly distorted versions of reality get right to the top in the Politburo and become the basis of Soviet action. I regard that as the key question to understanding the whole system; and I am frank to say I don't know the answer to it. All I can say is that I don't think these people could have been quite so successful as they *have* been, if they hadn't had a pretty good idea of reality.

The probabilities are that the system works well for about 75 or 80 percent of the information. There is another 20 or 25 percent in which these people get fed their own propaganda back and don't know it, or are maneuvered by subordinate agencies into believing this or that. During the war we had a very unpleasant incident. We discovered that Stalin himself apparently had been sold a perfectly vicious and entirely fallacious line of reporting about what we are doing in Italy. There was obviously a deliberately ugly and hostile hand that took part in giving him that information, because it could not have been put to him in such a way just by accident. That worried me very much.

I am not sure that Stalin really understands the nature of our atomic energy proposal. We have to take that on faith. And, of course, sometimes we have this factor to bear in mind: often, when you get to Stalin and talk to him, he puts on an air of great

reasonableness; sort of "why didn't you tell me this before, I never understood this," and so on. You have to ask yourself whether that is genuine or an act. Again, we don't know. I remember in the case of the Baltic Republics, when they were taken into the communist camp in 1939 and 1940, a very revealing thing occurred. The Latvians had a foreign minister by the name of Munters. I used to know him. Munters had a pretty high opinion of his own intelligence and he had it all doped out that he would be the guy who knew how to deal with the Russians. The Estonians and the Lithuanians might get in trouble, but he was going to play it right and see they had no suspicion of the Latvians and that sort of thing. So he made a trip into Moscow to discuss with Molotov the question of giving bases in Latvia to the Russians. To his horror, Molotov asked for more in the way of bases than the whole Latvian Army had. The Latvian Army consisted of 75,000 men and Molotov wanted immediately bases and barracks for 120,000. Poor Munters was a little bit thrown off balance by this. He didn't know what to do about it. The Latvians didn't have space to put that many men and Munters pleaded with Molotov for a couple of days and, finally, got to put his case before Stalin himself. Molotov was present and Stalin rather scolded him, "Tut, tut, what is all this? What are you pressing these people so hard for? Be reasonable. Eighty-five thousand men will be entirely sufficient for us," and Munters came out feeling that he had pulled a tremendous diplomatic coup. It would have been all right except for the fact that within six months Munters was himself a deportee to the Eastern Regions of the Russian realm and Latvia had lost its independence altogether and had become part of the Soviet Union. He won his point on the bases, but the Soviet political action started right in on his country. The next time he was called to Moscow to discuss something, he left one day and the next day phoned his wife from Moscow, asking her to turn all his papers over to the Soviet Secret Police. He has never been seen since. So, obviously, there was an act put on. It wasn't that Stalin didn't know and wanted to be nice when Molotov didn't want to be nice. So we wonder, when Stalin puts on the air of surprised innocence and the reasonable manner, whether perhaps he doesn't know all the time what the score is and whether it isn't an act. All that makes it awfully hard to judge what sort of information gets up to the top: perhaps it is very good, perhaps a certain amount is sour.

QUESTION: Mr. Kennan, in connection with exploring the weaknesses of the Soviets, would you care to explore the possibility of a fundamental change in the Russian Government?

KENNAN: Point number one is this: let's all bear in mind one very unpleasant—but incontrovertible—fact about the world we live in today. The fact is that modern techniques, techniques used for the military, for communications, for transportation, and so forth, have contributed immensely to the possibilities for dictatorship. In the old days it was theoretically possible for people—and practically possible if there were enough of them—to attack a despotism with clubs and pitchforks and get away with it. Today, that is absolutely out of the question. Today, any unified, intelligent group which gets control of the things that are needed for the exercise of dictatorial power in a country and which is determined and ruthless enough to insist on retaining that control through thick and thin, can stay in control, in my opinion, as long as it wants to and as long as it retains its own unanimity. We saw that during the war. You don't have to go to the Russian experience for that. You could see it with the Germans during the war, in the technique they had for policing Poland, for example. Poland could not have had more hostile feelings for the Germans and caused a good deal of trouble for them, because Poland was on the German lines of communication to the East. It was during the war and the Germans had other things to do than look after the Poles. Yet the Germans were able to attend to that problem, in the main, quite satisfactorily. They did it by depriving people of all means of communication. Individuals didn't have cars, didn't even have the ability to ride on a train without a permit. The Germans controlled the telegraph and the telephone so the Poles couldn't communicate with each other without some check on the part of the government. Finally, they kept control of the weapons and that is all there was to it. People can't get together to discuss things to organize a movement, when they can't even travel around. So there is really nothing they can do. As long as the Soviet Government, which has these techniques down to a fine art, remains united, there is nothing that people can do about it by way of direct revolt within Russia. There is no use even thinking there is.

That does not mean, though, that the regime has not got its points of vulnerability; and one of those is the generally low productivity of a country which is run by the communist system. It just doesn't seem to work anywhere near as well as ours does. You have to maintain an enormous bureaucratic machinery, an enormous police machine. The police have to be given privileges. That means that many of the more able men drift into the police apparatus where there

is a career, good stores, good groceries, and other attractions. Your poor civilian economy is left to struggle along with what is left. There are many handicaps to such a system and it just doesn't work very well. People get tired, get fed up, get cynical about things. And that, too, is a danger.

I believe the greatest danger to the system, however, lies in the possibility of disunity at the top. It may not occur for a long time, but then again it may. There has been only one transfer of power so far, of individual power (one individual to another), in the Soviet hierarchy since the revolution and that was from Lenin to Stalin and that cost the country several millions of lives and years of trouble. It didn't take place very smoothly. The Soviets didn't get it completely out of their system until 1939. The transition didn't lead to civil war, but it did rack the Party to its foundations and caused the state to get rid of 50 percent of the higher officers corps in the Red Army in 1937. That is the sort of repercussion such a transfer of power had. Fortunately, Russia is a rich country and the common people have great reserves of talent and ability among them. Russia has been able to recruit new people to take those positions; but I think they were perilously near the edge of disaster at the time of the purge. If Stalin hadn't been the political genius that he is and hadn't been able to stop the purge at the right point, it would have carried the country into chaos. Who is to say whether the next fellow who takes over is going to be as smart, as ruthless, and as able as Stalin? I think that is the great uncertainty that surrounds Soviet life.

QUESTION: We were told the other day the difficulties experienced at the Atomic Energy Commission due to the fact they couldn't get the Russians to enter into discussion on the merits or the faults of the proposals put up by the United States. You explained this morning the reasons for that situation, the reasons why the Russians could do nothing else but state their proposals and stop at that point. We have thought of the possibility of having President Truman ask for another meeting of the Heads of State. Do you feel that Stalin at such meetings is able to enter into real discussions or does he go to these meetings with the policy decided beforehand by the Political Bureau? Does he have to go back to the Political Bureau before he can say anything or is he himself powerful enough to enter into open discussion and make some agreement himself at those meetings?

KENNAN: The answer, as so often the case in Russia, is both. He could if he wanted make a decision at those meetings. It would

probably carry. But I don't think he would because it is not his style. In the first place, it would leave him personally too much exposed if he got in any trouble. He likes to get the Political Bureau signed up behind him as a reinsurance on all these questions. Evidently he discusses it with the boys pretty thoroughly. We have generally had this experience in meetings with Stalin.

The meetings take place at night and the discussions proceed for several nights, usually three or four nights. The first night Stalin is very polite, very agreeable, listens a lot, is rather noncommittally pleasant, sends people away with the feeling that maybe things are going all right. The second night he usually comes back in a perfectly vile mood. None of it pleases him. He can't settle for anything. He advances unreasonable demands and worries the devil out of the other people. They think, "Oh gee, we have come all the way to Moscow and we aren't going to get anything like an agreement." And he lets that sink in for a day and after that the real bargaining begins.

Now to what extent that is a conscious technique, I can't tell you. It may be deliberate, and I think there is a little bit of both about it. I think it *is* a conscious technique; but I think generally Stalin, having talked to foreigners, is more inclined to see the points that they have, to see the justice or the force of their point of view, than the boys to whom he returns to in the back room. They really take a diabolic delight in stiffening their own government against anyone who tries to talk to it. You can see that all the time throughout the background. What happens is that Stalin, after that first meeting, usually goes back and tells the boys what was said, and there are these whoops: "What! Did those fellows tell you that? Don't you believe that. Here is the line, you see." And they work on him and get him all stirred up and he comes back the next night spitting fire. That would probably be the case and the pattern if you had another session on atomic energy. It might be the best way you could do business on atomic energy. We would have to bear in mind the overall effects if we were to take the initiative in sending a President all the way to Russia to talk to Stalin. I can assure you it probably would be interpreted in Russia as a sign of weakness, as a sign that we couldn't stand up against the boys and we had to come to Canossa. It wouldn't make them any easier to talk to.

QUESTION: In view of the fact that Russia is pretty much out of step with the United Nations Organization, is there much likelihood she might withdraw from it?

KENNAN: It has always been my feeling the Russians would not want to get out of the United Nations until they could take with them enough countries to make a respectable United Nations of their own, leaving us more or less in the minority. To get out of it otherwise would be to create exactly the thing which they don't want, which is a coalition of other countries legally organized against them and in such a way that they can't even complain it was done as a deliberate anti-Soviet act. This was done back at the San Francisco Conference. So there are great disadvantages in getting out and if they stick to their own rules, I don't think they will do it. If the thing gets too embarrassing, if they decide it is more of a burden than anything else, they would not hesitate to withdraw. They abide by the rule that says you must participate in the parliamentary fashion with other groups as long as you are not strong enough either to destroy them or ignore them. If they feel by getting out of the United Nations they would leave an organization which they could neither ignore nor break up, I don't think they will do it, but it is true we are pushing them pretty hard in there. Also, there is a general impression that there is a certain amount of impatience and concern on the Soviet side over their deadlock. It is not all in their interests. Remember they are terribly weak economically. Remember that the destruction they had in their country was absolutely staggering, running into the billions and billions of dollars. I imagine their losses make the Marshall Plan figures look pretty small. All that loss can not be made up by the primitive industries of the satellite countries, even if you include Bohemia and Iran. At the same time, the Russians are forgoing access to the best large-scale sources of supply for reconstruction and building-up the Russian economy. They are aware of that and it puts a considerable strain on them and raises in their own minds the question whether it is correct or wise to continue this sort of deadlock too long.

*October 6, 1947*

## **SOVIET DIPLOMACY**

*Editors' Note: This off-the-cuff lecture "repeats" the topic Kennan had covered back on October 22, 1946, in his third lecture at the War College. This address, however, is less formal and contains new insights gained from his Policy Planning perspective, while essentially unwavering from his tough, realistic view of Soviet diplomacy. Also, unlike the earlier talk, this one is followed by considerable post-lecture discussion of current issues.*

**W**HEN THE WAR COLLEGE CONTRACTED WITH ME LAST SPRING for this lecture they said, "That will be easy for you. You gave a lecture on the same subject last year and therefore all you have to do is repeat it." I reviewed the earlier lecture but have a constitutional aversion to repeating lectures. I think so much has gone over the dam since last year that the previous lecture wouldn't be suitable today.

Today's subject is Soviet diplomacy. When I think of that subject as a concept by itself my mind immediately goes back to the period of November 1917, when the Bolsheviks first took power. Only a day or so after their seizure of power they had to sit down and decide among themselves how they were going to divide the various responsibilities of government. The Bolsheviks' accession to power came as something of a shock to them; suddenly they realized they had to set up a regular government, establish ministries, and assign specific jobs and specific responsibilities to each of the leading revolutionaries. Since they had operated for thirty or forty years of their life without any responsibility at all, I don't think any of them had realized what it meant suddenly to sit there and take the consequences of their action.

In dividing the power of government, the leaders realized they would have to have someone to deal with the affairs of the outside world. But even that thought was a rather new and strange one to them. When it was first broached Lenin exclaimed in bewilderment, "What sort of foreign affairs are we going to have now?" What he meant was: "We are a bunch of revolutionists; we don't expect to have pleasant diplomatic relations with anybody." The choice as Commissar of Foreign Affairs finally fell on Trotsky several days later. When he was told to go down and take over the Czar's foreign office with all its staff of clerks and functionaries Trotsky made almost an identical observation: "What sort of diplomatic work are we going to have? I will issue some revolutionary proclamations to the people of the world and close the shop up." That was his idea of what Soviet diplomacy would be.

This naive and simple view of Russia's future foreign relations in 1917 was not by any means insincere. Only a short time after assuming power Lenin and Stalin together signed an appeal, in the

name of the Soviet government, to the Mohammedan people of Russia and the East calling on them to "throw off the robbers and enslavers of your country." Persian, Turkish, and Indian Moslems were urged to rise up against their oppressors, particularly the representatives of European imperialism, and cast out those who had seized their lands and become the masters in their own countries.

Another decree issued about the same time by Lenin and Trotsky (and it is a curious document—note that it was a decree of the Soviet government) read this way:

The Council of Peoples Commissars considers it necessary to come to the aid of the left internationalist wing of the workers' movement of all countries with all possible resources, including money, quite irrespective of whether those countries are at war or in alliance with Russia or maintain a neutral position. For these purposes, the Council of Peoples Commissars decided to allot and to place at the disposition of foreign representatives of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs two million rubles for the needs of the revolutionary internationalist movement.

I invite your attention to the timing of those two documents. The Bolsheviks came into power in November 1917. Those documents were published within the first months of the Bolshevik rule. That was a full six months before there was anything like allied intervention in Russia. When you are told, therefore, by Henry Wallace, among others, and by the American liberals in general, that a great deal of the Russian suspicion and hostility toward us springs from our unjustifiable intervention in Russia in 1918, remember that these decrees appeared six months *before* US intervention ever happened or was thought of.

The Bolsheviks' pipe dream of a world in which the foreign affairs of the Soviet Union could be conducted by a few fiery proclamations to the oppressed peoples to be followed shortly thereafter by world revolution, lasted for only a brief time. It was soon replaced in that same winter by a rather rude awakening. This awakening was occasioned by the fact that World War I was still on and that Russia, revolution or no revolution, was still a military power, a very badly battered one but nevertheless a factor that had to be reckoned with. The Russian armies were still strung out all the way from the Baltic Sea down to the Black Sea facing the armies of Germany and of

Austria-Hungary, and something had to be done about it. The first real test of Soviet reactions in foreign affairs occurred, as they faced the question of the settlement of the war. I would like to talk about this a little here, because I think Soviet behavior at the end of WWI is quite revealing of the future course of Soviet diplomacy in general.

Recall that one of the first things the Bolshevik leaders did when they came into power was to sue for peace with Germany. That happened within a few weeks; in December of that year. They sent negotiators out to a place in Poland called Brest-Litovsk to talk with the German-Austrian representatives and conclude some sort of an armistice. It is interesting to note that these negotiations were first undertaken especially by the Germans, but also by the Austrians, in a spirit of outward cordiality between the two delegations. The representatives of the Central Powers acted at first under the understandable illusion that the Bolshevik representatives would be amenable to a friendly, disarming approach. The Germans were pleased that this great section of the front was to disappear—that they were no longer to have to conduct hostilities there—and they came in a very pleasant spirit.

They went out of their way to disarm the suspicions of the Soviet delegates and to win their personal confidence. They even had the German-controlled press in Brest-Litovsk print several rather complimentary personal items about Trotsky; they arranged in the beginning to take their meals with the Soviet delegates at one table, interspersing their own personnel among the members of the Soviet delegation. This honeymoon turned out to be of very brief duration.

At first Trotsky was not there in person. There were other Soviet representatives, a rather curious lot. They sent one absolutely unspoiled sailor, one unspoiled soldier, one peasant, and one worker who had never been along on anything of this sort; and their behavior caused a certain amount of amusement and astonishment among the German, Austro-Hungarian representatives. These fellows were absolutely bona fide, and, until Trotsky organized them, they behaved the way they thought they ought to in such gatherings. Their table manners were the thing that created the greatest impression on the Germans.

When Trotsky got down there, the first thing he did was to forbid all fraternization between his people and the other delegation. There was to be no more eating together, no more personal association with the foreign diplomats. As for the compliments which had

been published about him in the papers, he had this observation to make at an official session of the conference:

We are prepared to regret the premature compliments the German and Austro-Hungarian press addressed to us. They were absolutely not required for the successful progress of the peace negotiations.

Again bear in mind that this is all long before the period of allied intervention; so that sort of thing could have had no influence on the Russians. The Germans in their turn began to get a little annoyed with the Russians. One thing that annoyed them in particular was a matter of some revolutionary pamphlets addressed to the troops of the Central Powers and filled with the most fiery abuse of the German Army and the German supreme command. There were annoyances on this score which did not entirely lack justification. One of the most prominent of the Soviet delegates, Karl Radek, was observed to be tossing pamphlets out the train window when the Russian delegation pulled into Brest-Litovsk.

In short, within a week or two the Germans and the Austrians were thoroughly fed up with the Soviet representatives and, incidentally, with the negotiations in general. They issued to the Russians a semi-ultimatum demanding those parts of the old Russian empire which the German army had at that time conquered and had in its military possession. That was mostly the Baltic states, Eastern Poland, part of Lithuania and Latvia. These terms were actually very reasonable and should have seemed very reasonable, it seems to me, to a government whose army was in a state of complete disintegration and which had no possibility, actually, of carrying on the war at all. The Russian troops were melting away all along the lines. But many of the communist leaders were elated and excited by their recent political success in Russia, and they were in no mood for realism.

After long and bitter debate in St. Petersburg, where the Soviet government was sitting, these firebrands overrode the more sober counsels of Lenin and sent instructions to the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk to stall as long as they could, which they faithfully and ably did. If their hand was forced, they were to say that Russia considered the war ended but that they refused to sign any treaty. "No peace, no war" was the slogan that they devised at that time.

The Soviet delegation carried out these instructions. And the terms of the statement which they made before the Germans at that stage in the negotiations were interesting, for the future of Soviet diplomacy; because they showed no sympathy for either side in the war then in progress. "We are equally uncompromising," they said, "in regard to the imperialism of both camps, and we are no longer willing to shed the blood of our soldiers in the defense of the interest of one camp of imperialists against the other. Therefore, we withdraw our army and our people from the war." But they refused to make any peace or sign any armistice.

This was a bit of international insolence, and the German reply was a perfectly natural one. It was to resume the offensive at once. They didn't bother any more with negotiations. After several days of an unhindered German advance into Russian territory, Lenin, who knew a real issue when he saw it, for the only time in his career staked his whole personal authority on this. He insisted the Bolsheviks come to terms and go down and make the best bargain they could with the Germans. So the Bolsheviks had to return to the council table and negotiate under far more unfavorable conditions.

In this brief history of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, you can see emerging in a nutshell the main pattern of Soviet diplomacy for the years to come. In the first place, this experience with the Germans brought home to all the Bolshevik leaders the fact that they were unable to overthrow the governments of capitalist countries—and they would have to have some sort of dealing with them other than revolutionary proclamations. Remember the people who did not want to sign an armistice with the Germans at that time said, "the thing for us to do is to see to it that the revolution comes immediately in Germany and then we won't have to sign an armistice with them."

Two sets of views developed among the Bolsheviks as to what these dealings should be. There were those who wanted to stake everything on this possibility of the world revolution and fight what they called a revolutionary war, which in a military sense was pure nonsense. It meant stirring up the workers and people behind the enemy's line and gaining power that way. Others saw this just wouldn't work. If they tried to pursue that policy Russia would be simply militarily overwhelmed and the whole revolution swept away.

Lenin argued that Russia needed peace more than anything else; she needed time. Revolution in Europe, he said, would come but no

one knew when it would come. He said, if there were reason to believe the German revolution were coming at an early date, the Russian revolutionists would be obliged to sacrifice themselves, to the German revolution. In Lenin's words:

The German revolution was infinitely more important than the revolution in Russia; but they had no right to stake the existence of the Soviet regime on the fact that revolution might break out in the near future in some other country. Germany was only pregnant with revolution, whereas in Russia a healthy revolutionary child was born to a socialist republic which might be killed if the war were not terminated.

Therefore, Lenin concluded, the Bolsheviks had no right to play with war and they had to come to some sort of terms with foreign imperialists.

Right then and there, when the Bolsheviks had been in power for only a few weeks, a wise decision was made, to place the interests of Soviet power ahead of revolution in other countries as long as it could not be shown that such revolution was really serious and imminent. That is an important point because it is commonly believed that the decision to place the interests of Soviet national power ahead of the world revolution was taken much later, ten years later, when Stalin finally removed Trotsky from the Soviet Union. That belief is not true; the principle was established back in the days of Brest-Litovsk and has endured to this day.

This crisis of Brest-Litovsk did not involve only Russia's relations with Germany. In a more remote way, it involved Russian relations with the Western Powers. The first reaction of the Bolshevik mind to this question of what relations the Soviet Regime would now have with England and France was a dark and deep Bolshevik suspicion that some secret agreement between Germany and the West had been concluded, and this explained the harshness of the German negotiators at Brest-Litovsk. This was not true but that is what the Bolsheviks believed. Bear that in mind when you recall the suspicions that were prominent in the Soviet mind during the World War II. The Soviet beliefs were attributable to nothing we did but to an innate Russian propensity for that type of suspicion.

Despite these suspicions, the Soviets were interested in getting help from the Western Powers against the Germans. Again this was some fancy bit of work. Entirely unilaterally, without any

consultation with us, they announced that they were getting out of the war and that they hated us just as much as they did the Germans. But when the Germans resumed the offensive and started after them, they immediately got busy seeing what they could do about getting arms and military assistance from the Western Powers.

This did cause a great deal of urgent debate among the early communists at that time. There were some who said they shouldn't do it, and others who said they should. After a lot of discussion, the latter ones won out. It was decided that allied help should be accepted but on the condition (and note this was significant in World War II) that the Bolsheviki should retain complete political independence in foreign policy and give no political compromises. To this day that has remained the condition on which the Soviets will accept foreign aid.

The Bolshevik attitude at that time was characterized by a chit of Lenin which has been preserved. He was not present at the debates of the Central Committee that day, but sent a chit to Trotsky in the committee room to inform the members of his position. The wording, was something like this: "I ask that my vote be added in favor of taking potatoes and arms from the bandits of Anglo-French imperialism." That was the way Lenin expressed his approval of aid from the West.

There is another rather amusing report, of the extent and the nature in Lenin's mind of collaboration with the Western Powers. In a public letter addressed to the American workers about that time, Lenin described his first personal encounter with a Western representative. He encountered a French officer, a specialist in explosives who had come to offer his and his associates' services to blow up the railroad tracks to impede the German advance. The Allies were deeply interested in trying to impede the Germans' advance and protect the resources of the Ukraine. So, no matter how badly the Bolsheviks behaved the Allies were willing to give whatever assistance they could.

This French officer came to see Lenin and began the conversation by saying, "I am a monarchist, and my only purpose in doing this is to bring about the defeat of Germany. In other words, I have no interest in helping you people for your own sakes." Lenin liked that and his reply was, "That goes without saying. I understand that." The rest of his account reads as follows, in Lenin's own words:

This in no wise prevented me from coming to agreement with him about the services which French officers wished to render to

us. This was an example of an "agreement" which every class-conscious worker will approve, an agreement in the interests of socialism. The French monarchist and I shook hands with each other, knowing each of us would gladly have hung his partner. But our interests coincided at the moment. Against the attacking German beasts of prey we utilized, in the interests of the Russian and the international socialist revolution, the equally predatory counter-interests of other imperialists. In that way we served the interests of the working class of Russia and other countries, strengthened the proletariat and weakened the bourgeoisie of all the world, and made use of the legitimate and even obligatory device of maneuvering, of shifting ground, of retreating.

You will note certain further implications of Soviet diplomacy. In the first place, the relations between the Soviet Government and other governments were originally conceived of as something forced on the Soviet Government against its will, something that bore a distinctly provisional character. These relations were designed only to fill the gap in time between the completion of the revolution in Russia and the completion of the revolution in countries abroad. It brings us directly to the central fact about Soviet diplomacy, that goes very far to explain the things that seem puzzling about it. This fact gives us the lead in trying to figure out how to respond to the Soviets. The diplomacy of the Soviet Union is, and has been from the beginning, conceived as diplomacy between enemies and not between friends, or even between countries which are decently tolerant of each other's independent existence.

This concept of diplomacy between enemies is by no means new. In fact, it probably has had a much longer history in this world than the type of diplomacy that we know today. After all, if you think back on the historical development of international relations, it wasn't until the 16th century in Europe, when the national state emerged in a condition of sufficient security so it could look with relative tolerance on the continued existence of its neighbors, diplomacy between enemies changed.

The idea of the peaceful co-existence of states with theoretically equal sovereignty and dignity did not exist during the Roman civilization. It certainly did not exist throughout the Middle Ages. It began in Europe in the way we know it today in about the 16th century.

Last year I came across a bit of advice which was given to King Louis XI of France about five-hundred years ago by one of his

principal diplomatic advisers. It is something worth bearing in mind in connection with Soviet diplomacy. He said this about the apparatus of diplomacy and the practice of sending and receiving diplomatic envoys:

It is by no means safe to send and receive a large number of Ambassadors. Very often many bad things happen when you do that. Nevertheless, you have to send them and you have to receive them. Those who read these lines may ask what means I know to offset this? Well, here is what I would do. If secret or open Ambassadors come from rulers whose hatred for you is such as I have observed constantly between all great lords, then in my opinion this is a very dangerous thing. Of course you have to treat them well and receive them with honor. They should be met and given comfortable quarters and intelligent and reliable people should be assigned to accompany them. This is an honorable and true service because by this means it is possible to learn who comes to see them and to prevent frivolous and discontented people from giving information to them. I am for hearing what they have to say as fast as possible and then sending them away again, because it seems to me very dangerous to keep enemies around you. And for every Ambassador that the enemies might send to us, I would send two to them. And I would take care to see that their Ambassador was bored and that he would request his sovereign not to send him to us any more, because there is no better or truer spy, no better snooper or collector of rumors. And then if we had several of our Ambassadors at foreign courts they could keep an eye on each other in order that no one of them should carry on any negotiations with third parties. Of course some people will say that your enemy will make it a point of pride that he has so many representatives at his court. Well, let him do it! Just the same, you can get more information that way and that is very important, because those who keep up with the times are never without honor.

If that's what the French said about the institution of diplomacy, you can see that it was not new in Russia either. But actually at that time the Russians had no diplomacy at all. Not until the 17th century was anything established in Russia in the nature of a permanent apparatus of diplomacy, foreign office, or foreign ministers. When you read over the annals and the accounts of the first Russian diplomacy during that period, it was absolutely conceived as a diplomacy between enemies in every respect.

The first Russian foreign minister who was ever appointed (by the ruler Alexius Mikhailovich in the 17th century) was executed while he was still in office for not telling the rest of the Kremlin about some dealings with the Turks. The establishment of a regular foreign office was accompanied by the establishment of a secret office, which was the NKVD at that time. Its first function was to keep up an effective system of observation of the Russian envoys who were sent abroad. They were always accompanied by somebody who saw to it that they didn't talk too much. The foreign envoys who came to Russia in that early time were treated entirely as envoys of hostile states. They were very, very closely guarded, I think worse than today. They were surrounded by spies on every occasion. Every effort was made to humiliate them in little things in order that they should understand that the Czar of Russia was greater than their particular sovereign. You had this typical pattern emerging between states who consider themselves in a state of cold war with each other.

That relationship did not die easily. After the time of Peter the Great, after the establishment of the capital in St. Petersburg, there was an increasing sophistication of Russian diplomacy. It became more worldly, more like the diplomacy of other states. Nevertheless, this concept was retained until a very late date, even under the regime of the Czars. In the time of Peter the Great it was still an offense punishable by death for a Russian citizen to have anything to do with a foreign diplomat, and even a hundred years ago the American envoy in St. Petersburg was sending dispatches home to this country from which it is quite evident that things had not changed very much. He was not so terribly cut off from the Russian population then and was allowed to go to parties and functions. His complaints were still characteristic of the century before and the centuries to come. He complained bitterly about the espionage on him, about the fact that he could not trust his servants, about the fact that no communication was safe in the post office, everybody was always breaking open his pouches and reading his mail. He complained that you couldn't get any information about anything in Russia, particularly the army, the navy, and the state of the finances. He said he didn't know a single book published in Russia which gave you any decent information about any of these things. He complained that the Russians were obsessed with strange superstitions that they were destined to conquer the whole world, that this underlay their whole philosophy. Even the prayers of the priests in the churches were intermixed with supplications to the Almighty to hasten this end.

The dispatches he wrote about a hundred years ago, were very characteristic of the Russia we knew in 1934. When we found some of these early dispatches in an old stable of a building which had once been the St. Petersburg Embassy, we were able to make a composite dispatch out of them. We sent this to the Department of State, adding only at the end that all these statements—while as true today as the day they were written—were not those of the ambassador in 1934, but those written by his illustrious predecessors, Mr. Neil S. Brown of Tennessee and Mr. Thomas H. Seymore of Connecticut, who had functioned in St. Petersburg in 1850–1854.

Therefore, a lot of the current Russian concept of diplomacy between enemies has a long historical basis. While it is theoretically justified by the concepts of the Soviet leaders today, it also fits very comfortably into their traditional national psychology and seems very natural to the people of Russia. From this concept flow things which we ought to note and bear in mind about Soviet diplomacy. If you consider the government you maintain diplomatic relations with as an enemy government, the kind of treatment you give the foreign envoy flows from that. You regard him as the envoy of the devil and treat him accordingly. You try to confine him to his embassy and to inhibit his contact with the local population. You prevent him from having a large staff so that his capabilities for observation are curtailed, and in general you treat him as an official spy. That is how the Russians have treated foreign diplomats since the revolution.

There was a certain relaxation in the early 1930s. Not very much relaxation, just enough to begin to make life reasonably pleasant and interesting for foreign diplomats. With the purges in the late 1930s all that relaxation disappeared, and since then government control has been very tight indeed. The foreign representatives in Moscow are naturally not very happy about this. Most of them leave Russia highly incensed, disillusioned, and embittered. It has often occurred to me that the Moscow diplomatic corps resembles a sort of boys' school from which the Soviet Government, as the dean, graduates a class of embittered diplomats year after year.

This poor hospitality might seem to be bad propaganda for them, but they evidently don't believe diplomats can influence the policies of their own countries. They write them off in the beginning and figure that if they weren't hostile when they came, they would be when they left. That happens to even the most friendly and conciliatory diplomats. All of us who have served there for any length of time are

familiar with the spectacle of a foreign envoy arriving full of vim, vigor, and enthusiasm, confident that he is going to be the sure fellow who earns Russian trust and confidence. The Russians are not infected by any of that spirit in the least; and no matter how enthusiastic and beaming with friendliness the foreigner is when he arrives, the Russians treat them all with the same chilly and baleful glances. If the newcomer is particularly unctuous and presses them a lot for friendship, you can see them saying to themselves, "Well, old boy, you think you are friendly to us today and you think it is going to continue that way; but we know better." Sometimes they are confronted with almost incurably persistent people who keep inviting them to parties incessantly. In some cases they do consent to play ball a little bit with these people if they think the latter might be useful back in their own home towns; but they do it with obvious distaste and with the conviction that in the long run these people, too, are bound to turn against them. The Russians know what it takes some foreign diplomats a long time to learn: that there is no middle ground between their philosophy and that of the outside world. There is no compromise with them short of complete capitulation on one side or the other. They understand that very well, even when the Western liberals do not.

To the Russian mind, being communist or being friendly to Russia is like being pregnant—you just can't be a little bit pregnant. You are completely or you aren't at all.

The same thing naturally applies to the Soviet treatment of their own envoys abroad, and you know what they go through. They themselves are probably guarded more closely than foreign envoys in Russia. When I left Russia they were building an apartment house in Moscow to house foreign office officials so that they could segregate them in Soviet society as efficiently as they segregate the diplomatic corps. Having been abroad, they are contaminated, they are suspect, and they cannot be allowed to have dealings with Soviet people at home on a normal basis.

A year or two ago we had a rather pathetic letter arrive in the embassy from the brother of a high-placed Soviet official whose name you would all know. It was an illiterate letter and it came down from Leningrad. This poor brother wrote and said, "I haven't heard from my brother so and so"—and he mentioned his first name—"for years. I have heard he is some sort of Soviet diplomat and I have written the Soviet foreign office time after time and I haven't gotten a

reply. I can't find out what has become of him and would you tell me where he is?" Everyone in this country knew where he was but his brother in Russia didn't. He was detached from the Soviet scene and not allowed to write to his people at home.

In conclusion, let me say a word or two about what this attitude spells for us in our dealings with the Soviet Union. It is quite evident the diplomatic channel, the machinery of regular diplomacy, is not the apparatus for directly influencing the conduct of the Soviet government. There is no use trying to persuade people of the justice of your point of view. They regard you as the enemy. It is absolutely unthinkable for a Soviet diplomat to come home to Moscow and say, "I have talked to these fellows and I think they have a case." It is just as unthinkable if you were commanding an army in the field and the commander on the other side agreed to hold certain conversations under a white flag, an armistice or a temporary suspension of hostilities. Can you imagine under those circumstances, the officer you send out to deal with the enemy commander saying, "You know, I have talked to our adversary and he is a nice fellow. I really think the enemy has a very good case. I don't think we ought to fight him any more." You can imagine what you would do with an officer who came back with that sort of a tale. That is the way the Russians look at their own diplomats abroad.

For that reason it does no good to try to convince Molotov or Gromyko of your point of view. There is no such thing as common purposes, no common premises between the United States and the Soviets. Therefore, talking to Russians in the hope they will be able to influence their government is useless. That applies just as much in Moscow as anywhere else. There is no use talking to the Soviet foreign office or appealing to them from the standpoint of any assumption of common interests or common aims. You can appeal to them on the basis of Soviet aims, but you must be careful not to make yourself the interpreter of Soviet aims. You can't go to them and say, "Look, I have figured out it would be in the interests of the Soviet Union to do this or that." They are immediately suspicious and say, "Obviously, this fellow is trying to trick us."

As a matter of fact, rarely can you do much by talking except to scare the Russians. If they see that you are sufficiently determined, that you are sufficiently collected, that you know exactly where you are going, you can sometimes put the fear of God in their hearts; and then they will move. But the best way to influence them is not

through the regular diplomatic channels. It is through the way in which you marshal all the forces at your disposal on the world chessboard. I mean not only the military forces you have, although those are very important, but all the political forces. You just have to dispose of your pawns, your queens, and kings in such a way that the Russian sees it is going to be in his interests to do what you want him to do, and then he will go ahead and do it. He is pretty smart. He doesn't miss any tricks, and that policy will work very well.

Given their mindset, you have to build up counter-pressures when dealing with the Russians. But our people are inclined to forget this. I don't know how many times we have gone to the Russians and asked them to do something we wanted them to do and thought they simply ought to do it because we asked them. They then have made it absolutely impossible for anyone in the Soviet Government to help us even though they might have liked to.

What you have to do is give the person in the Soviet Government an excuse for something—"What the Americans want us to do is something we had better do because . . ." Then he has to prove on the basis of Soviet interests it is this way. I might give you one brief example.

Last year we had a little difficulty about an American ship which went into the port of Murmansk with a Soviet pilot on board. A Soviet ship, also with a Soviet pilot on board, was coming out. They were in the outer roadstead, which is many miles wide, and with a visibility of five miles the two ships ran head-on into each other because both pilots had different ideas about navigation and were stubborn. The American ship was kept afloat only by pumps. It was towed into Murmansk and we had trouble getting it drydocked for a long, long, time. The Red Navy owned the drydock but claimed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade was using it. We went to the People's Commissariat for Trade and they said the Red Navy controlled the dry dock. We got the old run-around. Meanwhile, the ship ran out of food, ran out of fuel, the crew nearly went crazy in Murmansk. We couldn't get any action out of anybody.

Meanwhile the Russians came to us. They wanted to send three-hundred Red Navy men from Vladivostok to a place in West Virginia, strangely enough, to pick up some sea-going tugs. They were going to bring the tugs down the Ohio and the Mississippi and back to Vladivostok. The Russians had paid for the tugs and agreed to take delivery on May first, paying a penalty if they didn't. But first

they had to get the three-hundred naval personnel over to sail them back.

That request was duck soup for us. The Commissariat for Foreign Trade, which was financially responsible, and the Red Navy, which wanted the tugs—were the very organizations we were interested in. So we really had a field day. The US embassy sat on those visa applications and told the Russians they would have to send the three-hundred Navy men back to Moscow to get individual visas or we wouldn't let them go to the US As soon as we began to put the heat on and they began to pay the penalties for not taking over the tugs, the ship was drydocked like magic. The reason was not ill-will; but the person who had to make the decision couldn't approve the drydocking of the ship until he could show it was in Soviet interests. As soon as he could prove that by doing so they could avoid payment of penalties for the tugs, he was at liberty to clear it.

So the basic factor about dealing with the Russians is that every single thing has to be justified on the basis of their own interests and not of yours. There is no use pleading with them or talking to them through the channels of diplomacy. What you want to do in every case is to rig it so they have to do what you want them to do, or at least that they are going to find it in their interests to do it, and then everything will go along very agreeably.

That policy requires us to marshal all the forces at our command, not only the military but the political. We must keep that in mind when we contemplate diplomatic dealings with the Russians. There is a tendency among many of us to say, "We can't play with the political factors; we aren't equipped to do that; we have *never* done that. So let us view the issue from the standpoint of our military strength and make it a sheer military settlement. The hell with trying to gain public opinion in France, Italy, England, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria or any of the other countries. We don't know how to do that."

Gentlemen, the preceding approach is a dangerous line of thought. I want to conclude with a word of recommendation to all of you *not* to dismiss the political factors in thinking of how we are going to handle the Russians. Do *not* dismiss the possibility that we might defeat them by political means. It might be advisable to defeat them by political rather than military means if we can. I am not going to try to tell you why that would be desirable but merely want to leave that thought with you.

Remember, as things really stand today, it is not Russian military power which is threatening us; it is Russian political power. If the political power were removed, the Red Army—taken in conjunction with the Red Air Force *and* the Red Navy—as it stands today, would not cause us great worry for our national security. What is worrisome is the fact that the military threat is coupled with this worldwide communist movement which has been expanding and doing a good job. Since it is more than a military threat, I doubt that it can be effectively met entirely by military means. I hope one of the things this course will accomplish will be to lead you to think of other means for countering the political threat of Communism and stimulate some of us who bear responsibility for American policy to find better ways than we have found in the past for carrying out American policy.

## DISCUSSION

QUESTION: Will you explain to us the role of the Comintern in Russian diplomacy and whether the nine-partite Red front is a revival of the Comintern?

KEENAN: The Comintern was from its inception an association of national communist parties of which the Russian communist party was only one. There were three Communist Internationales, which is why the current one is called the Third Internationale. The first one broke up at the time of the French Commune. It had a short life as I remember it. The second one was an international association of Marxist parties, social democratic parties, before World War I, which was split by World War I because a lot of the Marxist parties decided they ought to stay with the national war effort of whatever country they belonged to; whereas certain others said, "The hell with that, this is an imperialist war. We have no business taking part in it. What we ought to be doing is preparing for world revolution in our own countries and not helping the war effort." The Second Internationale split up during World War I on that wartime issue, and has survived to this day only in a rudimentary form as a sort of Trotskyite organization, a combination of the milder socialists and the Trotskyites.

The Third Internationale set up at the time of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, was supposed to be an international association of

the national communist parties which were acceptable to Moscow. It functioned that way for a full twenty-five years. Actually it was completely dominated by the Russian communist party. In 1923 when there was a Senatorial investigation of our policy of refusing to recognize Russia, the State Department had to take the stand and defend our policy. State's defense was based on a thesis, which was absolutely true and sound, that both the Soviet Government and the Communist International were the agencies of the Russian communist party, not that the Third Internationale was the agency of the Soviet Government.

The Party in Russia is the top organization. As the most important communist party, it dominated the Communist Internationale, using its range as a sort of subterranean channel of Russian influence and power abroad. The foreign communist parties became fifth columns and were manipulated by the heads of the Communist Internationale in Moscow until this recent war. During World War II the Communist Internationale was officially abolished; but I think that was sheer nonsense. It simply went underground as any communist organization is prepared to do at any time. I know of no deviations to that principle in the whole communist movement. I would even hazard to guess that the Communist Party of Russia today is prepared to go underground at any time.

When the Third Internationale obviously went underground there was a certain decentralization of its administration. Instead of having the executive committee of the Communist Internationale in Moscow where they could keep a close eye on it, the Russians decided during the war it was an embarrassment to them, and they abolished the Internationale officially. They decentralized its activities in such a way that certain people abroad were made responsible for certain geographic areas. Apparently the communist parties of Northern Europe and of North America, or at least of this country and of Canada, were made subordinate to a sub-center in Paris. The communist parties in the Balkans were probably made subject to Dimitroff in Bulgaria. The communist parties in the Far East were run from Yenan, and Havana was made a center for Central America. I am not sure where the center was for South America. I think all the countries bordering on the Caribbean were run from Havana during the latter part of the war.

As proof that was the way the Internationale operated, you need only glance at a little, illegal communist sheet which I used to see in

Portugal during the war. The paper was printed in such tiny type you had to have a microscope to read its regular, straight orthodox Moscow propaganda. After the Comintern had been disbanded I looked at the first number to see whether they mentioned it and what they said about it. They had about a two-page splurge there commending the leaders of the Comintern on the infinite wisdom which they had shown in abolishing themselves. By praising them in such fulsome terms and approving every bit of what they had done, there was no question at all that they were still under the discipline of the Russians.

I believe the Internationale still continues and is the real McCoy. What has been announced in the paper this morning is not a replacement for the Comintern. For one thing, it is open, and that would make me suspicious of it right away. What is open is usually not genuine. I cannot say exactly why they have done this except they are conscious of the fact that one of their most vulnerable points, one of their greatest potential weaknesses, is the area of the satellite countries. People in Moscow are very conscious of the fact that, despite their complete police control and military control of Eastern and Central Europe, they have not been politically successful there except to some extent in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Except to some extent in Bulgaria, they have not got a majority in some of the remaining countries. They are very well aware that that is a dangerous situation because the satellite peace treaties call upon them to get their troops out. I don't think that treaty provision has been taken too seriously. The only place a treaty really binds them to get out is Bulgaria. They can justify a continued presence in the satellite countries in connection with their line of communications to Germany and Austria. Some day there may be a German or an Austrian treaty and that justification will fall away.

I am not one of those who think that the removal of the Russian troops is a highly important thing. The Russians don't have troops in Yugoslavia but they are doing all right. I think they realize that little by little the natural forces, the indigenous forces, in these countries will tend toward a reassertion of their independence. I think they realize that if the communist movement ever began to collapse in the satellite areas, the infection might spread into Russia itself, and that in any case it would deal such a blow to their prestige that they would be put back into the same position of relative isolation they were in in the 1920s and 1930s. I believe that for that reason they are behaving

in ways that seem a little strange to us whenever the satellite areas are involved.

It seems like strange behavior to run away from the Paris conference; yet what was clearly in their minds was that if they permitted the Eastern European countries to have much economic association with the West, it would be a crevice in the wall and eventually the satellites would get out through that crevice. I imagine this association of communist parties in Eastern Europe is designed to provide the framework for a general anti-American political pattern. This will cement Soviet control of that area and will provide a sort of double insurance that none of those countries gets out from Soviet domination and comes over to our side.

QUESTION: You have given us a very vivid picture of Soviet diplomatic relations. Could you describe for us the nature of the relations they, the Soviets, have with the satellite countries?

KENNAN: That creates a new and rather puzzling problem, both for them and for the satellites. They naturally dominate those regimes with the exception of Finland. Soviet-Finnish relations are a long story and I don't want to go into it now. There are certain reasons why they left the Finns fairly much alone. Everywhere the communist parties are in control, they have people there who are their people and whose real loyalty and disciplinary relationship is to Moscow. Nevertheless, they are very anxious to try to maintain the theory that these countries are independent. Therefore, in Moscow, and I suppose in the capitals of those countries, they are fairly punctilious about giving outward deference to the theory of independence.

For example, when the Romanian prime minister comes to Moscow, he is met with full honors and carefully guarded just the way General Marshall would be. They go through all that baloney every time they get one of the satellite leaders there. There is a reception for the diplomatic corps. I can only imagine how they talk to their visitors behind the scenes, but I think it is rather grim. I don't think the Russians are particularly communicative to the governments of these satellite countries. They simply tell the leaders what they want in very brief terms and leave the rest to them. I don't think they do any pleading. As far as I could observe, the representatives of the satellite countries in Moscow were thoroughly miserable. They felt themselves in a humiliating position and were always bothered about their relations with the Russians and with the rest of the diplomatic

corps. Satellite representations were afraid that if they came to the American embassy for a meal, that was going to be held against them by the Russians. They were afraid that if they didn't, that was going to be a sign that they really acknowledged they weren't independent, so they led a sort of miserable half-world existence there. There was a complete array of parties, sort of cultural relation parties, given for them in Moscow. They were always having the Society of Bulgarian-Soviet Friendship send in a Bulgarian writer or musician. In Moscow they have a society for the promotion of cultural relations with the outside world. The diplomatic corps called it the society for the *prevention* of cultural relations with the outside world, which it really was. The Russians give these formal receptions and invite some Soviet writers, Soviet musicians, Soviet intelligentsia to come. That is done more frequently in the case of these satellite states, but it is the same pattern that applies to the regular capitalist ones. There is just more of it.

Outside of their cultural relations, the satellites' representatives have a little greater freedom of association with Russians, but not much. For the most part, I would say seventy-five percent of the restrictions that apply to us in Moscow would apply to the representatives of the satellites as well.

QUESTION: We hear it said the Soviets get along better with and negotiate more effectively with the ultra-conservative foreign governments than with the labor, social democratic foreign governments. Will you tell us if that is true and if so, the reason for it?

KENNAN: I think that is true, because the Soviets have more respect for the fellow who comes to them and says, "Look here, I don't like you people politically. I am not one of your kind and I have no desire to become one. I am here as a representative of the enemy and let's have that understood between us right at the beginning." We noticed that many times. Stalin in particular seems to prefer to deal more with people who come to him with a minimum of pretense and actually are stout conservatives, than he does with the liberals. Stalin is a deeply disillusioned man about communism in other countries. I don't think he has much respect for the people whom he uses in other countries. We have also noticed that the representatives of the foreign communist parties are surrounded in Moscow with security precautions just as great, if not greater, than those of the diplomatic corps. The Russians don't trust them any

more than they trust us, and I don't think as a rule they respect the foreign communist leaders.

I can remember one time during the war when somebody told Stalin that the Laborites might come into power in England. He took a rather dim view of it and said he "didn't see what they would want those people in power for, they don't amount to much. Churchill is the only fellow there." He is extraordinarily cynical that way. The communists look at it this way: if people can be used and are willing to permit themselves to be used, they are not going to turn them down. That is one thing that ought to be very distinctly understood about the Soviet Government, namely, they do not like foreign liberals as such. They don't like anybody. If you come to them and say, "I am a foreign communist. I believe that you people are one hundred percent right. I am willing to work for you in every way, sacrifice everything in my personal life, put myself entirely at the disposal of your movement," they will look you over with a pretty cold eye and say, "All right, but watch your step. Don't let us catch you up to any monkey business." But if you come and say, "I am a foreign liberal and therefore I like the Soviet Union and all these things," they may play along with you if they think it is desirable, but they have the greatest contempt for you in their hearts. They think you are neither one thing nor the other, and they don't like that at all. They prefer that people show their true color, and they prefer a good resounding reactionary.

The other day they ran an attack on General Marshall in the Soviet press. It ended up by saying something about his being "stony hearted and austere as becomes an old soldier." That was the greatest compliment they have ever given to any foreign statesman in my experience in Moscow, and I think the greatest compliment they could give. If I were in General Marshall's position I would want nothing else, not one word, ever added to that in the Soviet press as a testimony to the success of my dealing with them.

QUESTION: What accounts for the style of Soviet diplomacy since the war, particularly with regard to the United States? They could have accomplished far more toward disarming the United States or otherwise preparing us along their lines if they had taken a much more cooperative position. During the war when they agreed to something in principle and failed to carry it out, that caused us far more trouble than when they just failed to agree to it. They unquestionably have some good motive for taking this truculent attitude. How do you account for it?

KENNAN: You have raised a very penetrating and interesting question. I agree with you. They could have made it much harder for us and done much more damage to our own foreign policy if they had played along a little more. They could have almost paralyzed us as they did during the first year after the war. The only answer I can see is that question of their relations with the satellite areas of Eastern Europe. They fear, if they admit there is anything like a reasonably good pattern of relations between Russia and the West, that those satellite countries are going to use that as an excuse for getting out from under the Russians by saying, "Well, we don't have to choose, do we?"

The danger is the greatest in the case of Czechoslovakia. I do believe that Czechoslovakia is a key country. If you look over the history of Europe, you find what goes on in Prague is significant for what is going to go on in Europe as a whole. The Thirty Years War began by an incident in Prague, and this recent war really began with the German occupation of Prague in March 1939. Today perhaps the trend of political events in Czechoslovakia is going to be very significant. If the anti-communist forces in Czechoslovakia had been able to gain precedence or hold precedence, eventually the pattern of Soviet control throughout the whole of Eastern Europe and Central Europe probably would have been infected and disintegrated. In other words, if Czechoslovakia were to throw off communist control completely (and it would, if there were a free democratic development there today, because the tide is turning against the communists) it would be awfully hard for the Soviets to hold Hungary and Poland. The spectacle of a free Czechoslovakia right next door, whereas the Poles had to tolerate a communist regime in their country, would be bitter. The Poles hate the Czechs like poison and have been madly jealous of them. Psychologically, it would have been very hard for the Poles to accept that. I believe the Russians have been much more conscious of that than we have. They have been forced into acknowledging openly the existence of two worlds rather than one, in order to keep these people on their side. Making anti-communism an issue can force the satellites to stay on the communist side.

You see, if the Russians have to admit that the United States is not a great menace after all and that we are getting along pretty well, which was the old wartime propaganda line, they have no issue on which to say to the Czechs, "You are getting dangerously far afield." If the United States is portrayed as an enemy, a dangerous

enemy, the enemy to all humanity, then they can say to the Czechs, "Watch out, you have no business flirting with those people. They are deeply hostile to the Soviet Union. You are putting yourself in the enemy camp and we cannot permit that sort of thing." I believe in that way the satellite area may be proving itself to be the Achilles heel of Soviet policy.

I have always believed that if you look at the situation on the face of it, you must ask yourself: "Is it plausible that one-hundred and forty million Russian Slavs, who already have forty or fifty million minority peoples within their own country who are not Slavs, would be able to take over an additional ninety million Europeans in Eastern and Central Europe and handle them indefinitely?" You have to answer "No, it is absurd to think they could. The Russians are too backward a people, and eventually they are going to break." That internal weakness is being proven true. Probably because the Russians are more aware of the minorities problem than we are, they have taken this domination line in their policy.

May I digress and add this one point: Remember the Czar's governments really died of indigestion on the Western minorities. The communist party in 1917 which overthrew the government of the Czar was composed of well over fifty percent of representatives of the Western minorities of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, including the Jewish elements from those countries. The Western minorities made up over fifty percent of the communist party. If they hadn't been in the movement, the communists certainly never would have taken over. Perhaps the greatest mistake the Soviet Government ever made was to go back and bite off again that bit of territory, which was a lot more than the Czars ever tried to digest.

QUESTION: Mr. Kennan, you mentioned the Moslem world at the beginning and then you spoke of the Third International going into small cells, Havana and elsewhere, but you made no reference again to the Moslems. Could you enlarge a bit on that and what the Russians think of them?

KENNAN: The Russian is dying to take the Moslem into his camp, but has had very bad luck with it up to this time. The fact is, in the Moslem world the Russian is up against another religion which is to an extent a political religion and a militant religion. The Russian is not awfully good at coping with that sort of thing. It is too much like his own system. The Moslems have the wherewithal to meet fire with fire in the dogma and the discipline of their religious movement.

It is not easy for the Russians to penetrate it, but they are trying very hard. In the Central Asian part of the USSR, they have several million Moslems, and for a long time they tried to stamp out the Moslem faith among them. Now they are trying to use it and, as you know, have sent pilgrimages in recent years to Mecca, composed of people some of whom were undoubtedly Soviet stooges. This is a very dangerous thing. When the Soviets start trying to use their local Moslems to penetrate any of the Arabian paternalistic regimes—which are at the heart of the Moslem faith—they are getting onto dangerous ground. If the Moslem chieftains or kings find that any of those fellows have a loyalty other than to the faith, they aren't very ceremonious with them. I mean they just never come back. The treatment of them is very short and simple. Of course, that is Arabia; large other parts of the Moslem world don't have the same pure white fire of the faith and of the discipline of the movement that exists there. I do think the greatest danger is probably at the extremes of the Moslem world, in North Africa and out in the East Indies. Those elements are the farthest from the center of the faith and are most easily penetrated by the communists. The communists may do damage there, but there seems to be something about the nature of the Moslem faith which makes it very hard for the communists to come in and have any success.

October 27, 1947

## THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SYSTEM

*Editors' Note: This lecture, like the previous three, was given off-the-cuff after Kennan had left the War College and was involved full-time at the State Department. The topic nominally repeats the subject of his October 10, 1946, lecture, but with much less discussion of the mechanics of the Soviet system, and more observations on the general characteristics of the Soviet system and the Russian people. Kennan commented to us that the concluding sections—his analysis of five Russian wars and his suggestions for altering the conduct of the Soviet system—were of particular historical value.*

**L**AST YEAR WHEN I ADDRESSED THE WAR COLLEGE ON THE SUBJECT of the internal structure of power in Russia, I was able to devote the whole period to a factual presentation of this question. At that time I was connected with the College and had plenty of opportunity for association with the students outside the lecture hall. We had a chance to discuss elsewhere certain of the general considerations which arise out of this internal structure of power. This year my time is limited. Today I am going to try to telescope the factual part of this lecture, and then discuss certain broader implications which I think you ought to know.

There are three levels of administration in Russia. The first level is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which corresponds to our federal government. The second level is variously described as the oblast or the constituent republic depending on the size of the unit. When the unit is very small, as in the case of the Moldavian SSR which is the size of an American state, it has no subdivisions; and in that case the government of the constituent republic is important. When the unit is a large republic like the RSFSR, which includes most of European Russia, it is broken into the oblasts. For that reason the administration of an oblast is equivalent in importance to the administration of a small constituent republic. Together oblasts and constituent republics constitute the second level of administration.

The third level is the raion, which means the counties, and should be taken to include the smaller towns. The larger towns rate with oblasts and the smaller towns compare with the counties.

We have two apparatuses of power: on one side the government, on the other side the Party. In the government apparatus it looks as though there are five levels. But three government levels can be blocked together, because the distinction between them is not important. At the top there is the federal government. At the intermediate levels, there are the oblasts, autonomous states, and the constituent republics. At the lower levels are the raions.

In the Party structure you have somewhat the same structure: The federal government; the oblast government; and the raion and city government. The rank and file of the Party, with their little organizations and bureaus, are at the lowest level of the Party—the raion and city level—and are not a consideration.

The most important point about the two apparatuses of power is that neither is democratic in activity. Both are democratic in theory. Theoretically, the Soviet citizens' vote elects the various soviets, from the soviet of the raion, to the soviet of the oblast, to the soviet of the constituent republic, and so forth to the Supreme Soviet.

Those soviets are indeed in theory elected by the citizens of the Soviet Union. The trick is that there is only one candidate for each job. That candidate is nominated by the Party bosses, not formally but in actuality. The voter has the choice of registering an affirmative vote for that one candidate or not voting at all. Many of the voters, when they go in, pick up the ballot slips which have the name and picture of that candidate and hold them conspicuously up in the air so the people in the ballot room can see they are not doing any monkey business with them, and carry them over and put them in the urn. Furthermore, these soviets to which the delegates are elected—and the only important one is the Supreme Soviet—are bodies which do not sit permanently. They convene only on rare occasions (the Supreme Soviet only twice a year); and their functions are purely those of a rubber stamp. They approve what has been done during their absence by the permanent body, in this case the Presidium of the Soviet year after year.

I recall only one time at which a fellow spoke out of turn at a session of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow. He was a pathetic little fellow from Uzbekistan with drooping mustaches and a skull cap; and he asked to have the floor. Everybody gasped. The chairman said, "All right. What is on your mind?" And he said, "You know some of us come from pretty far away, and where we come from we have never seen a movie. I wonder whether these sessions couldn't end a little earlier in the evening so some of us could get to the movies?" It shook the system. There was a sort of an embarrassed hush, and I am sure it was all settled backstage afterward.

You will hear it said sometimes by American liberals, "Well, it is true that the government apparatus is not democratic, because people are not yet ready for it; but the Party apparatus which rests only on these six million Party members—who are better educated, more responsible people—really is democratic and is governed by secret and worthy elections." That is also not true. I will try to explain a little how it works in the Party, because that is very important.

The Party is the real seat of power in the Soviet Union, and the method by which it is run is the most important single internal political fact in all of Russia. The members of the Party, the rank and file members, are united in local cells or organizations, each of which has its own executive bureau. They also from time to time elect, by secret election ballot, to the next highest electoral conference. These conferences really are electoral conferences. They don't do anything else but elect the members of the local committee.

The conferences are convened very rarely, not as often as they are supposed to be convened by the by-laws of the Party, maybe once every year or two. Their job is to elect or re-elect the Party committee on their own level. It may be on the county level or the oblast level or higher. They do vote by secret ballot; but they also have placed before them a list of candidates (because this body usually numbers from twenty to forty people). The list of candidates as a rule is either just about the exact number of people whom they have to elect or, if it is exceeded at all, it exceeds only by three, four, or five people. Party members are thus given the possibility of rejecting four or five out of twenty or thirty, but they have to include the rest.

Who makes those nominations? The bureau of the next highest organ makes them, and that is important. We will come to that later. So the election, which is eighty percent rigged, takes place and a raion or city committee is chosen. Now the committee has to elect the permanent member of their own bureau. The committee itself does not sit again permanently. It convenes, on the county level, perhaps four times a year, and is also a rubber stamp organization. It merely approves what its own bureau has done, listens to a few speeches, and goes home. It does, though, elect its own officers. Those officers are the fellows who sit all the time in the permanent bureau, and constitute the local Party headquarters.

But here is where the rub comes in. So far the elections are secret; but when the committee comes to elect its own permanent members it elects them by a show of hands. And according to the by-laws of the Party, the fellows in the next higher bureau have a veto power over anyone who may be elected to this bureau. Add to that the fact that the members of the bureau are the full-time Party careerists whose bread and butter is the Party, whereas the members of the committee are usually part-time communists, and you get the pattern. Those people cannot be elected without the consent of the members

of the next higher bureau. They are career Party officials and they know in the long run their chances of promotion, of success or failure, depend on the favor of people up the line. Their loyalties and responsiveness are at least ninety-five per cent to the people who sit in the next highest bureau, the next highest level of the Party. Certainly less than five percent of their loyalties and responsiveness goes to the members of the local committee, and practically zero to the members of the electoral conference.

As you get higher and higher in the Party, the electoral element becomes less and less. At the middle level, the oblasts or the Union Republican Congress, elections are not by the Party members directly; this level is elected by the next lowest conference. So you have a pyramiding. The All-Union Congress of the Party, from which the Central Committee is theoretically elected, is a body which, according to the Party by-laws, is supposed to meet once in three years. But now in 1947 it has not met in over eight years. So there has been no election of the Central Committee in over eight years. And that period embraces the whole period of World War II. There has been considerable mortality among the membership for one reason or another; but the world has not been told a single word about how the Central Committee has been replenished. We know how it has been replenished. It has been replenished by co-optation, that is, selection—but by whom? By the Organizational Bureau of the Party, which reaches into this professional Party apparatus and picks the people it thinks are fit for that job and puts them on the Central Committee. As a result of this, you can see the whole Party apparatus leads directly up to the Central Committee and especially to its bureaus: the all-powerful Political Bureau and the Organization Bureau.

The Central Committee, while it has a permanent secretariat, only meets about four times a year; and during its absence these bureaus carry on and run the country. The Organization Bureau is devoted to Party discipline and administration. The Political Bureau is devoted to high policy questions, matters affecting the movement as a whole. The two bureaus are largely interlocking; and Stalin has always seen to it that he had absolute control of both. So much for the democracy within the system.

What are the relationships between the Party and the government? Let me say quite simply at the start the basic relationship is one of complete domination of the government apparatus by the

Party apparatus, and of a lateral domination, which works, for example, from the bureau of the raion in the government establishment.

The Russian system does not have three branches like the US government. Legislation, in the first place, is rather rare in Russia. It exists, but it is not important. The men in the Kremlin see no reason for binding their own hands by the establishment of long-term norms of government conduct. They are, after all, the government. They are the people who can decree that a law shall become a law. They don't see any reason to do that, as a rule; because they think, "Some day we might want to do it a little differently. Why have a law? We have full administrative power, and we will not put it into legislation." There *are* codes of law, for relationships between individuals; but in the relationships between the state and the individual in Russia there is very little of this. Such as there is is initiated by the Party. It is actually given the stamp of approval by the government, but the Party is the important thing. The Party drafts the law and sends it for approval by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Later, when the Supreme Soviet comes into session, it formalizes the law by giving it the stamp of approval.

But that is done in a perfunctory and nonchalant way. Look at the first three Five-Year Plans, for example. One of them had been approved by both Party and government; one of them had been passed only by the government; and the third, strangely enough, had been passed only by the Party. The government had forgotten to do it; it just doesn't make any difference.

The making of policy is of tremendous importance in the Soviet Union, and it is carried out absolutely and solely by the Party and by no one else. That is even formalized in certain respects. For example, the Soviet Foreign Office operates under a statute which defines its duties. That statute does not include anything with regard to the making of policy. It relates solely to execution. It is part of the Council of Ministers, and it has no actual policymaking functions. In the same way the whole Council of Ministers functions only as an executive organ for the Central Committee of the Party. Its officers are in the same building and they form part of the office of the Central Committee. They are merely the executive branch of the Central Committee. The result is the Council of Ministers never even convenes. It doesn't make policy. It functions simply to carry out what policy is determined in the Central Committee. So policy execution, really in theory and practice, is a matter of the government.

But it doesn't always work out that way either. Because such immense powers have been given to the Party people down the line, there is an incurable and unceasing tendency for these people in the Party bureaus to get fed up with working through the government apparatus and to take things into their own hands and do them themselves. The pressure put upon them to get things done is very great, and often they can't wait and they consequently indulge in the administration themselves. So the Party is deeply into the actual execution as well, but it is not the main thing.

I've discussed thus far two of the great apparatuses through which state power is exercised in Russia. There is a third apparatus which should never be neglected in a consideration of this subject, and that is the police. The Communist Party of Russia is police-minded to the *nth* degree. That attitude arises from the years before the revolution when they conducted this pitiless, obscure, and highly unsavory revolutionary battle with the Czarist police. During that period there grew up a strange sort of intimacy between the Czarist police and the members of the communist movement. Deceit is a passion in the Russian soul. They love it. It becomes for them a fine art. They were so successful in the revolutionary days in penetrating the police, and the police on the other hand were so successful in penetrating the revolutionary movement, that the two were intertwined in the most curious way. It almost surpasses belief.

As things now come out which were then secrets, as we get access to the documents of that period, we really have to catch our breath and pause to wonder sometimes who were the revolutionists and who were the police. In the early days, the days of terrorism, when they were still carrying on political assassinations in Russia, three of the most famous assassinations—one of a Grand Duke, one of a cabinet minister, and the other of a governor general in the Ukraine—were organized and carried out under the personal supervision of a man who was a stool pigeon of the police in the revolutionary movement, but who played his role so well he went right through with these assassinations.

On the other hand, I have no doubt that certain of the high Czarist police officials were members of the Communist Party.

All of this has entered into the psychology of the movement. As you know, there is a police apparatus in Russia which is of immense power and size and influence. It has the only armed force which I believe would be ready to operate at any time in Russia today. I do

not know the exact size, as perhaps some of you do, but before the war it was about six-hundred thousand. During the war it rose to about one million. I believe they are the only force in Russia today whose guns normally have ammunition.

In addition, the central government has a huge secret police apparatus and controls the local police in the country down to and including the fire departments. Counties do not have local police officials. Every policeman is appointed right from the center, by the police apparatus.

The secret police is an enormous, mysterious apparatus of power which never spills its hand. It always works in the dark, and it reports, as far as I can find out, only to the Political Bureau of the Party or the Organization Bureau. (I think it is the Political Bureau). I don't think it is amenable to influence by the government or Party apparatuses at any other level. So it really should be viewed as a third pillar of state power. As a matter of fact, I have heard some people claim the only two *real* organs of power were the Party and police; that the Party was the organ of persuasion and the police was the organ of compulsion; and that their role was approximately equal. In any case you should imagine the police organization looking very much like these bureaucratic structures of power and playing a vital role in the life of the country.

Where does the army fit into this? The army is not an instrument of internal power in Russia. I do not know exactly to whom the army is really subordinate, but this is how it is run. The Minister for the Armed Services, Bulganin, is an alternate member of the Political Bureau and obviously the source of authority is right there in the Political Bureau of the Party. I doubt whether the party has any lateral authority over the army at lower levels—some, perhaps, in ideological, propaganda, and educational questions.

A much bigger and more important question is the relationship of the police to the army. If anybody could tell you the answer to that question, he could tell you the secret of a great deal that is important in the way that Russia is run. I do not know the answer, but I think it might be quite a surprising one; and it is not at all out of the question that we might find the army is run at all levels by the police. I would remind you that in Russia, by government decree, every police official has the right to wear the uniform and insignia of the Red Army with no distinction made whatsoever. Think that one through, and perhaps you can see what possibilities it gives. A parallel would be to

imagine the officials of the FBI in this country being permitted to wear the uniforms of the armed services without any distinguishing insignia. Here it wouldn't matter very much, because here we have confidence in each other. But in a country which is run in a very cruel way, and the basis of which is intrigue, you can see what it would mean. It would mean that unless you knew another officer in your own service personally, you would never know to whom you are talking.

The Russian system of government has its elements of strength and we must not ignore them. I don't need to point out the way it gives to the members of the Political Bureau and the Organization Bureau a monolithic, streamlined power and control over all phases of national life. It gives those men the ability to effect heavy concentrations of national effort, to focus national effort on specific, narrow problems in a way which we cannot do in this country. In other words, it gives them the ability to allot priorities of an intensity which we could not achieve in this country. If they decide that there is something which should be done, and that it is very important for them to do it, they can bring to bear upon that single objective a greater proportion of the effort of the people than we can bring to bear in this country.

I remember last year one lecturer spoke about industrial mobilization and pointed to the importance in this country of what he called the "squeal level." This was the point beyond which you could not depress living standards or comforts of the people, the level beyond which you could not ask them to make sacrifices without getting a very large squeal. That level is far lower in Russia than it is here. In fact, it hardly exists; the people don't squeal. If you depress them they get hungry and tired and they don't work so well, and that is where you have to stop. That is the only limitation on the priorities which the government can allot in a human sense. And that is an important factor to bear in mind when you think of issues like atomic energy or the desire to build a large armaments industry. That is a very important factor which we should never forget.

But the Russian system has its weaknesses as well, and I would like to tell you what some of them are. In the first place, the system of selection by which men are brought into the Party apparatus, to the police apparatus, and to the government apparatus, has a tendency to bring into positions of responsibility chiefly the more brutal and the more unimaginative people in Russia. The demands of the Kremlin

on these people are so exacting, the discipline so cruel, that only people of that frame of character can stand the gaff. Other people are not even wanted in it.

I remember one of our intelligence officers telling me that when he was in Romania he had a chance to spend an evening with one of the NKVD officers. They had a few drinks and a heart-to-heart talk. The NKVD officer said to him, "Is it true you people use Jews in your secret service?" The American said, "Yes, of course. Why not? They are singularly intelligent people." The Russian said, "We wouldn't do that. They are too imaginative." That remark is very revealing. It applies not only to the NKVD but to the Soviet apparatus as a whole today. In this way hundreds of thousands, and possibly millions of competent, potentially competent, intelligent, and talented people who happen to be on the more sensitive side are effectively excluded from the exercise of major responsibility. And the product that is left in the Soviet apparatus of power is the thick-skulled, obtuse, and mechanical sort of individual. This type person has his uses but they are limited and you get with this type an attendant rigidity of administration.

The communist discipline is absolutely terrific. The Soviet Government runs on the same principle that was propounded some centuries ago by Machiavelli—that if you are going to rule it is good to be loved and it is good to be feared, but if you have to choose between the two, it is better to be feared because it lasts longer. That is the way the Soviet Government looks at it, and fear is the basic motive power of the whole Soviet service. The people who sit in this apparatus of power are generally activated by the thought that terrible things can happen to them if they make a wrong move. This leads inevitably to a certain overhead of cautiousness, of desire to shrink responsibility, of inflexibility, and of inefficiency in the operation of the system.

Finally this type of government involves an immense manpower drain. The forces of the police of the state security system plus the permanent full-time party workers (several hundreds of thousands—probably close to a million today) combined run up into several millions. They are the services which attract absolutely the best of all the manpower that comes into the government. They attract the most able, the most ruthless, the most high-powered people. But all through the rest of the apparatus you get a tremendous bloating of the manpower composition through the nature of the regime. The Hotel

National in Moscow, where some of you may have stayed, was a hotel in existence in Czarist times. It has not changed its size or the number of its rooms since those days, so far as I know. Before the revolution when Russia was a capitalist and actually a relatively liberal type of state, there were four people in the bookkeeping establishment of the hotel. Today there are forty. Why is that? The answer is solely in the nature of the system. It is bureaucracy; but it is also the mutual suspiciousness that has come to prevail all through the Soviet system—the number of people who have to be employed to watch the other people and the number of people who have to be employed in turn to watch them. That is the main reason. The bureaucracy in Russia is perfectly staggering in size, and it has a tendency to deplete the really productive end of society.

The last and greatest weakness which I see in this system is that the whole immense weight of the state structure comes to rest on a tiny pinnacle of fifteen or twenty men at the top. These are admittedly formidable men. I have great respect for them. They are highly intelligent; they are cynically realistic; they are devoted to the political movement they have come to lead. They are accustomed to unceasing hard work. They are relatively selfless in their personal lives. They are unhampered for the most part by any of the bourgeois sentimentalities which bind the American official to his home and family, to his wife and children, to his golf club and to the conventional social forms of his own life which, incidentally, the Russian official would probably find more tyrannical and restricting than all the political restrictions which weigh upon him in Russia.

In addition these men have the strength that comes from an unusual capacity for self-effacement. Except for Stalin, none of them gets very much publicity in Russia. They are very little seen. They like power for its own sake and not for its external trappings. They are the purists, they are the epicures of power. They have reduced the pursuit of power to a science; and they pursue it with the passion of the true scientist. Their time is not encumbered either with the cultivation of personal popularity or with the harvesting of its outward emoluments. The time the American statesman puts in getting votes, handling the press, receiving honorary degrees, and kissing babies, they put in at their desks. That is a great source of strength for them, too. And I must say I admire those men for the realism with which they look to the essential features of power and

do not allow themselves to be carried away by the more petty sorts of human vanity.

But at the same time they are only human beings. They share many of the weaknesses that are common to all the rest of us. They are subject to the same diseases. When they get drunk, as they do, they have hangovers just like the rest of us. And they are limited by the same mysterious span of years which nature decided to prescribe for all of humanity—in other words, they die.

This pinnacle of power therefore cannot be stronger than human nature itself, and the human nature of a very small group of people. For that reason I do not think that it can prove strong enough to hold indefinitely the weight of so immense a structure of power as it is holding today. History has no precedent for that sort of thing, and I don't think that a precedent is going to be established in our lifetime.

How do people in Russia react to all this? What is the attitude of the population toward this apparatus of power? I don't know any question in the whole field of Russian affairs which is harder to answer. On the other hand, I know of no question to which the answer is more important from the standpoint of those of you who have to consider Russia as a military problem. For that reason, we must be very careful what we say and what we conclude on that subject.

There is a small element of the population in the Soviet Union which is sincerely enthusiastic about the Soviet regime, and views it as the paragon of all political wisdom and virtue. This element numbers, I should guess, not more than five to ten million people. It embraces for the most part the lower professional bureaucracy, especially in the secret police and in the party. The higher you get toward the top, and the lower toward the bottom, the greater the cynicism.

There is another element bitterly and desperately hostile to the regime. This element is composed, to a large extent to be sure, of old people who knew the days before the revolution, but also embraces a large number of other people who are not old but who have been mistreated in some way by the Soviet state, or have had an opportunity to live abroad and be disaffected by what they saw there. This element might be somewhat larger, if we were able to define it, than the element which is enthusiastic, but perhaps not greatly larger. You meet such people in Russia. They do undoubtedly exist; but the ones

who are completely that way are certainly not a great part of the Soviet population.

Between these two extremes lies the great mass of the people of the Soviet Union. There might be altogether, out of 183 million or 185 million people who make up that country, probably 160 million who would not fall into one of those first categories. They fall themselves into two categories, a large element which is too primitive, too dumb, too remote from the affairs of this world, too overburdened with purely animalistic, physical problems to know, to care, or to have judgment. I can't tell you how many those are. Remember that Russia is still a primitive country. You drive around in the country and see these poor flea-bitten peasants sitting in their little carts, plodding along the roads in winter, and they are cold and hungry and they have been through more hell than any people on the face of the earth—a great many of them don't care. What they care about is getting some place where it is warm and getting something to eat, and they don't think things out further than that.

But there is another large element, probably more numerous than that, perhaps a hundred million people (and constituting the basis and the bulk of the Soviet peoples), who have a certain political astuteness and thoughtfulness, and whose attitude toward their own government is a dual one, who react in two different ways, two conflicting ways, toward it. It is from that point that I want to take my departure in the general considerations that I want to put before you on this subject.

The mass of the Soviet citizenry have a sort of ambidextrous attitude toward the system of power by which they are ruled. In the first place, the system as such is all right with them, that is, they don't object to the Soviet system. They don't object to the Soviet constitution. They aren't yearning for a return of Czardom. They have no attachment to capitalism; they don't know what democracy is. When they are told theirs is a democratic system, they think it is probably true. They have no objections to the system.

This system is one that flows with a certain logic out of Russian history. A great deal of it is very familiar. It is not new. Apparently some of it is required by the character of the people. They apparently need something of that sort. One of the first Western diplomats to the court of the Czars, a man by the name of Herberstein, was the envoy of the Austrian Emperor Maximilian. After he had ceased to be envoy and failed to get a visa to return and therefore felt free to write

what he thought, he made this statement: "In truth I know not whether this uncharitable people requires such a tyrant as its prince or whether it is through the tyranny and cruelty of the prince that the people have become so unmild and terrible." We still find ourselves wondering that same thing today; and in any case we think there is probably a necessity for Russians to be ruled with a pretty firm hand.

I remember at one time a Soviet citizen standing in the window with me looking out over Red Square in Moscow, looking at these hordes of shabby creatures pushing along the streets down below us, and saying to me, "You diplomats are damn fools. You criticize the severity of our government. You make jokes about our secret police and our system. Don't you realize that these people walking along the street are still beasts and if it were not for the strength of the authority of our state they would tear both ourselves and yourselves limb from limb?" That is the view of a very intelligent Russian with whom I was speaking, and there is something in it. They recognize that they have to be ruled. They are a childish, primitive people. The degree of self-discipline and order which is attendant on highly industrialized, urban civilizations is still new to them, strange to them. They don't have it entirely yet, and they have to be held in hand pretty closely, on pretty close rein.

In addition there is among the Russians a latent anti-foreignism which pops its head up in many respects. In the first place, they have a certain contempt for a lot of foreign values, that is, of things which seem desirable to people in the West but which do not seem that way to them. They think our comforts in the West are largely unnecessary and foolish. They look with a certain amount of amusement and contempt on the individualism that exists in Western countries. They don't like it. They think it is a bad thing for a person to be more interested in his own individual interests, and especially his economic interests, than in the authority and the majesty and grandeur of the state. Americans who come to Moscow often disappoint them in that respect. The Russians think they have come for high political purposes; and then they discover they are there to write an article, to get an interview with Stalin and to write an article for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Many things of that sort fill them with a sense of superiority and contempt for the foreign state.

Nothing illustrates that better than their reaction to a statement made by William White in his book about the Russians which was written during the war, and which was in some ways unfortunate.

One of the things he found to criticize in Russia was the lack of toilet paper. The Russian reaction to that statement was withering: "We are fighting a war and by golly we will fight it with or without." They thought this was a bourgeois prejudice.

Another thing you have to bear in mind is the defensive reaction they have, as a primitive people, when their country is attacked. They are very curious that way. They recognize that their country has its faults; but they don't like others to come and point them out. Whenever you do that, they suddenly reach back in their past and they say to themselves, "We have been through a lot; these foreigners could never stand what we have been through; they can't understand how all this has happened and they had better shut up about this. They don't understand how it all works."

At the same time there is a conflicting element in their minds, and that is a grudging admiration for many of the other features of the Western world. Some of these features they hold, as I say, in contempt; but others they admire. They recognize the superior technological advances. They do admire that. The Russians also recognize a greater freedom. They know it exists, no matter what they say abroad. They have a rather childish tendency some times to go overboard in favor of foreign things which attract their admiration and fancy and go into transports of enthusiasm and say, "What a hell of a place Russia is! We haven't anything like this." Those feelings are admittedly conflicting.

The Russian people are difficult to sum up. If the average Russian comes to you and begins to talk about how terrible things are in Russia and you say to him, "That's right. They look that way to me too," he thinks a minute and then says, "You are not so good yourselves, back home. Who are you to be criticizing us?" But if he talks to you and you say, "Come now, don't tell me things are that bad in the Soviet Union," his reaction is apt to be "Why you don't know the half of it."

There is one more thing I would like to point out about their reaction. While they approve and accept the system in general, they are deeply conscious that there are tremendous faults and deficiencies in the way in which it is exercised by this particular regime. They know in their heart of hearts that this is the cruelest and most wasteful and most absolute regime that Russia has had since the time of Peter the Great. They know that it has ruled by a spilling of blood which has probably been on a scale a hundred times that of the

Czarist regime in the later years of its power. As I recall, in 1910 there were about six thousand political prisoners in exile in Russia. Today the figure would certainly be nearer to six million. People know that; and what is more, they know that it has not really been successful. They may not know that consciously, but they feel it subconsciously. They know that this system has boasted more, has laid claim to greater virtue, to greater efficiency, than any other in the history of the world, that it has claimed to have solved all the problems of mankind. If you take its dogma at its face value, everyone else who ever lived in the world for the past four or five thousand years was a dumbbell and it was only Marx who discovered the answers. They know that their rulers have bragged in the most shameful way. And yet they know after very close to thirty years of Soviet power they really have not advanced in the sense of a better life for people in Russia at all, and that Russia remains basically what it has been for centuries—a sea of mud and poverty and cruelty, and a colorless, depressed type of human living. The Russians don't talk much about that because it is dangerous. They don't do much about it, because that is *very* dangerous. But they know it in their hearts; and they are not happy about it. That I can assure you.

The regime does not command their emotional loyalty. That change has come about more, I would say, in the last fifteen years of Soviet power than in the first fifteen years. Fifteen years ago, at the time when some of us first went to Russia, there was still a large body of idealistic enthusiasm among people all over. They felt that after all, Russia was building things—that a better life was going to come out of it. Stalin tried to capitalize on that in 1935 when he gave out his famous slogan, "Life has become better, Comrades, life has become happier." Unfortunately that didn't turn out to be the case. Today I think there is a very deep wave of disillusionment among the people about the regime. They have come to take toward it the same attitude which they took traditionally in the days of the early Russian Christianity toward the state: the state is something evil, something which cannot be good; but on the other hand, something which you have to accept, which there is no use trying to do away with. That is the way they look at the state today, and they do not do anything about it themselves except to hope that something will happen to make it a little milder and a little more successful in its policies.

I have gone into all this detail about the feelings of the Russian people toward their government because there is a great deal of talk

among us all today about the possibility of war with Russia. I think we ought to do some very serious and careful thinking about our objectives toward the Russian state, toward the Soviet Government in general, in peace as in war. Parenthetically, I would like to say here I feel very strongly that if the objectives of national policy in this country are going to be worth anything, they should be the same in peace as in war. In other words, we should not allow the coming into existence of a state of war to alter fundamentally the objectives of state policy. To do so is a source of weakness rather than a source of strength. If we know what we want in this world, we should set out to get it by peaceful means if possible, but by warlike means if no other way is found and if we are forced to that. But they should be the same objectives.

Please note what they were and are in the case of Russia. The Soviet Government and its leaders established, in 1938, a set of immediate territorial objectives in Europe. They pursued those before the outbreak of war in 1939 during the period of the nonaggression pact with the Germans, and they continued to pursue them logically and persistently after they were attacked by the Germans and when they were in association with us. Those objectives never varied.

Our objectives toward Russia should be characterized by the same type of consistency and clarity. But what should those objectives be? What is it we want the Russians to do? Do we want them to change their personality, to become a democratic state like ourselves with the same institutions, the same outlook? Do we want them to do that within our time? If we do, I think we are quixotic fools, because that will never happen. I think perhaps what we really want from them is a change in the conduct of the Russian state in foreign affairs, because that is something which is really vital to us, and that is something which can conceivably happen in our time.

How are we to achieve that? What we are to do in a period of peace—how we are to achieve it by peaceful means—is a question for which people like myself bear a large measure of responsibility. I am not going to try to discuss it here. This is a war college. You have to deal with strategic-political problems. What I want to talk to you about is the possibility of achieving that objective by military means.

All of you have probably been warned several times from this platform about the danger of allowing the military precedents of the last war to affect your thinking about the problems of another one. I should like to extend that warning here to the political precedents of

the past. Most of you have been trained to think that total war is something that lies in the trend of the times; that no war can any longer be fought between great powers which is not total; that the end, the immediate goal of warfare must be the unconditional surrender of the enemy, the occupation of his capital, the imposition of a foreign regime upon his people; that that is as inevitable as the advance of modern technique, and that nothing can change it.

Such thinking was, I believe, the ultimate outcome of Clausewitzian military theory, and I think it has affected most general staffs in most war colleges ever since. Possibly it is true. But if it is, let us come to that by our own deductions in consequence of our own serious thought and study, and let us not accept it as an *a priori* thesis which we do not question.

Let's review briefly the outcome of five wars in which the Russian state has been involved in modern times. To go back to the Napoleonic war: We find there one of the first attempts at what could be called total war, an attempt at large-scale invasion, the occupation and military control of most of the territory and population of a foreign state. Remember at that time Russia did not extend very far east. If you got to Moscow you got a very long way. You know the outcome of that war. It was unsuccessful from the standpoint of the French. Rather than producing any cleavages between the Russian people and the Russian government, it welded them more closely together than ever. It is true that it was followed ten years later by a minor political trouble in Russia (the Decembrist uprising), which did become the spark from which the revolutionary movement developed a hundred years afterward. But that arose not from the circumstances of the war in Russia but from the fact that a number of young officers visited Paris in the aftermath of the war and became infected with the French political ideas. I would say that this first attempt was unsuccessful from the standpoint of producing any cleavage between the people and the government in Russia.

Next is the Crimean War. Here you had almost a classical example of limited warfare of the 18th century pattern. It consisted, as you know, of only one landing in the Crimea and the blockade of a few Russian ports. The landing operation produced a long, wearisome, bloody operation on the Crimean peninsula. The Russian government did not have the lines of communication to support it very well. It became for them a blood-letting operation both in terms of human life and in terms of supply. People got fed up with it in Russia. They

didn't see why their government had gotten them into it. It led to criticism of the government, lack of respect for the government; and it was followed by what was, for Russia and Czarism, a tremendous political upheaval and the beginning of the end of the system. That was the liberation of the serfs, which followed immediately after the Crimean War.

Go on to the Russo-Japanese war. Again you have limited warfare. The aims of the Japanese did not envisage unconditional surrender of Russia. They never dreamed of it. They had their aims very well in mind when they started the war. Their aims were limited, and were restricted to the Far Eastern area. They had no conditions to impose which would have meant the total subjugation of the Russian government to their will. Again, military events took the form of local operations far from the center of Russian power. Again the Russians were hampered by lack of communications. Again it was a bloody, long, miserable operation. Again it led to great discontent in Russia itself; and the revolution of 1905 actually broke out in the midst of it, weakening the power of the Russian state.

In 1914 to 1917 they were dealing with a war which I do not regard, especially as between the Germans and the Russians, as really total in its aspirations. The Germans were fighting on two fronts. In my opinion they realized that the Western front in that First World War was the decisive one. I don't think their strategy in the early part of the war indicates anything like the same desire to overrun and seize all of Russia as animated Hitler's attack on Russia in June 1941. The German WWI strategy on the Eastern front was in large measure a holding operation. Surely they wished to advance, but I don't know that they wished to advance too far, and I would doubt that the Kaiser really wished to overthrow the regime of the Czar, of his cousin Nicky, and to establish some form of total German control over Russia. Again, I point out that military operations took place on a greater sector, but after all, a limited sector of Russian territory. Again they were long and drawn out. They placed an immense strain on the supply facilities of the regime. They caused also an enormous loss of life to the Russian soldiers. And you know what happened. In 1917 in the midst of the war, the February revolution came; and within six months that had been turned into the Bolshevik revolution and a bid for a compromise peace.

We come now to World War II. Here you get the classic effort of total war. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the Nazis were

determined to clear the Soviet Government out, down to the last communist, if they could do it, to put the whole country under their rule, to make in effect slaves out of the Slavs, and, as they themselves frequently said, to make the Russian people into a slave population. What was the result? In the beginning, the Russians did not know the German intent, and the Germans were welcomed as liberators all along the front, from Leningrad down to the Black Sea, by a large part of the Soviet population. It is one of the most pitiful chapters in the history of the recent war. The facts are only beginning to come out concerning the reactions by which the Germans were greeted on their advance there. The Communist Party retained its discipline, went underground, and continued to oppose the Germans; but a large part of the population received them pretty much with open arms in the beginning. It was only when the determination of the Nazi party and the Gestapo to make a slave race out of the Russians became apparent to them that the real Russian reaction began. People said, "To hell with that. If we are going to be treated like that we prefer to be treated that way by our own people and not by the Germans. Our own people are S.O.B.'s but they are our own S.O.B.'s, and if we have to choose we will take our own." The effect of that whole German invasion ultimately was to produce a sense of brotherhood in arms, of a close association, between the people and the Soviet Government which did more politically to entrench the Soviet regime in power than anything that happened since the revolution.

The Soviet Government gave good war leadership to the Russian people. The people instinctively appreciated that and repaid them for it.

What is the moral of this tale about five wars? I think it is clear to all of you. The attempts at total subjugation of Russia, the attempts at the complete overthrow of the Russian government and the establishment of some sort of a foreign rule, have been universally unsuccessful *not only* in the *military* sense. I am not talking to you about that, although I think all of you will realize the desirability of scratching your head and figuring whether you could do better than Napoleon and Hitler in such a venture. But these attempts have been distinctly unsuccessful in the *political* sense.

The limited wars in which Russia has become engaged, on the other hand, in modern times, have all had consequences for political life in Russia which was unfavorable to the regime in power, and eventually disastrous to it.

What should we seek if we were to become engaged in military operations in the Soviet Union? I personally would not set any store by wartime objectives which called for the overthrow of the Soviet system, for the abolition of this constitution which sets up this system, and for the promulgation of some other type of constitution. There is nothing wrong with that constitution in theory. I would hazard a guess that you could take the United States constitution and the Soviet constitution and put ours in effect there and theirs in effect here, and what you would have would be a lot of people sitting around and wondering whether Mr. Truman, the chairman of the Presidium, was well advised to call a special session of the Supreme Soviet in November or whether it was a foolish thing to do. On the other hand, you would have in Russia the House of Representatives meeting for a three-day period about once a year and passing laws without a murmur. (That may sound rather attractive to some of you.)

So it is not the theory of the structure of power that we want to change. Let the Russians have that. It comes out of their tradition, out of their psychology, and I do not doubt that it answers to many stages of their development as a nation.

What we want is an alteration of its conduct. That can come, as I see it, in two ways. It can come if we weaken Russia—if the regime in power gets its knuckles sharply rapped and feels the necessity of drawing in its hands and being more modest and more careful, more respectful for the opinions of the Western powers. In that case you might get a certain modification of Soviet policy, and it might be for a good long time, depending on the amount of actual military and industrial weakness which you had been able to bring to Russia.

But there is a possibility that if such a state of affairs were to occur, the regime in power, these men who run the Soviet Union, would not be able any more to bear that immense weight of that great structure of power which rests upon them. They might be so embarrassed by the catastrophe they had brought on their country that there might be repercussions within the movement, and that is the only way that effective political opposition can come. You may get division and disputes and falling out in the apparatus, in the police, in the apparatus of the Party, and that, connected with widespread popular disgust and discontent, might lead to internal repercussions which in present circumstances could only wrack Soviet society to its foundations.

I believe that is the only way this could happen. In that case, Russia would be wrecked for a long time to come. It would be put back in its place as a primitive and still very backward country, and again the pressure would be off of us. But if that happened in that way, we would not have forfeited, mind you, the friendship of the Russian people. And the development would be a real one; because it would be one which would stem from the Russian people themselves, from the conclusions which they themselves had drawn from the logic of the circumstances which we had forced upon them, but not from any schoolmasterish advice on our part.

If you could achieve that, it seems to me that it is the best we could hope to achieve in Russia. The alternative would be to try to go in, throw out the Soviet Government by force of arms, and impose some sort of democratization of the Russian people. I have no hesitation in saying that would be fatal. I think you would be in the unhappy position of one who has an enormous Russian bear by the tail and can't let go.

The Russian people are in my opinion very valuable people. I would rate them as one of the world's great peoples. They have all the essential qualities. They are extremely intelligent. They have an enormous capacity for bearing hardship, for making sacrifices. They are courageous. They are full of a primitive eagerness to learn about things and do things. They are reproducing at a very high rate, and there can be no doubt that by the time another generation comes in this country they will be numerically the greatest single force. They won't be more numerous than the Chinese, but they will be far greater in potential, and their potential is going to increase in relation to ours.

We have not yet forfeited their friendship. We Americans have never done anything to them. They know that. It is not really their fault that they have this system. You can blame the Germans, if you like, for Hitlerism; and you can say the German was an intelligent man with a long cultural background and he should have known better than to let that type of system arise in Germany. I am not sure that even that is a sound position. But you cannot blame the Russian for the Soviet system. It has arisen out of his past. You could not expect him to avert it. For that reason he has no sense of guilt about it.

What I would urge you to do in the thinking which you have to do on this subject for the remainder of the term is not to close your

mind to anything in the consideration of the Russian problem; to think it through to the end; to make sure that any type of military operation which you would conceive as effective toward Russia takes into account these fundamental facts: that the Russian people are still potentially our friends, that their attitude toward their own government is a highly dual and complex attitude, that it can be swayed either one way or the other by what we do. If we try to tell the Russians directly how bad their government is, we will move them in the other direction. If we try to teach them how they should be governed, we will move them in the other direction. But if we create a set of circumstances which makes it clear to everyone in Russia that their government has brought them to catastrophe—if we allow them to draw the conclusions from that—I believe we still have a possibility of bringing those people over to our side and making them our friends in the world. If we have that, it is a possibility which should not be lightly forfeited; for this country can stand to finish perhaps two world wars with an unsatisfactory and inconclusive victory, but I am not sure this country can stand to finish a third world war in the same way.

*December 18, 1947*

## **WHAT IS POLICY?**

Editors' Note: *This is one of Kennan's prepared lectures given after he left the War College. In his comments to us, Kennan cited it as being of enduring value, especially the historical reflections at the end of the question-and-answer period.*

THE TITLE OF THIS LECTURE, "WHAT IS POLICY?" WAS SELECTED by the War College and not by me. I don't particularly like the word "policy." It has too many different meanings to too many different people. It also has crept into the title of the staff I head at the State Department, and for that reason it touches home with me.

Before we can decide what United States policy is, I think we have to examine what the word "policy" means.

The traditional meaning of the term "policy" in this country is really a reflection of a happier era in which we had few demands on the rest of the world except to be left alone and to be permitted to trade freely on the high seas. In this happy state we were content to mind our own business, to wish that others would do the same; and all we needed as a framework for our conduct in the field of foreign affairs was a set of guide rules as to how we would react in given sets of possible circumstances. Approached from this standpoint, policy was a matter of habit and reflex action and not a matter of forethought. It was conditional. It was conditional on the stimuli to which we were subjected. It was our policy to do such and such a thing if such and such a thing happened. It was our policy, for example, not to let our diplomatic representatives abroad wear uniforms, but to require them to go to diplomatic receptions dressed pretty much as the waiters are dressed. It still is. It was our policy to avoid entangling alliances. It was our policy after 1823 to resist any attempt on the part of any European nation to transpose its political system onto a part of the new world where it had not previously existed.

All those things were things we would do if somebody did something else, or something we would do habitually in certain circumstances. Thus policy was a matter of habitual practice and not of design. It was essentially defensive. We sat back in self-satisfied dignity and observed certain rules of prudence and restraint in the handling of foreign affairs. And that was all.

This concept of policy was so deeply rooted in our consciousness that it has endured right into our time. The remnants survive today quite strongly in the Department of State and in other places in Washington, for better or worse. And those of us today who have to occupy ourselves with some of the major problems of foreign affairs look back with a sort of wistful homesickness on the days when that

was all that was needed. How nice it was to be a government or an individual and sit back in the armchair and resolve to be guided by certain principles if certain things happened.

Those days have passed; and when we use the word "policy" today we often mean something else. We often mean *politics* on a world scale, rather than policy. I think it is perhaps significant that none of the other great power languages, if I am not mistaken, has the word "policy" as distinct from "politics." In German and in French you have just the word "politik" or "politique," and "politika" in Russian, which combines our sense of politics and of policy. It is in that sense, policy as politics, that it becomes a different thing. It becomes a matter of forethought and of planning, a blueprint of future action in the foreign field related to certain definite objectives, and, if it is to be healthy, related to the means at hand. And the more closely the relations between governments begin to assume the nature of a deadly contest for power or for survival, the more closely does the formulation of policy in this country come to resemble planning, in both the strategic and the tactical level in the armed services.

The result is we get today in this country two layers of policy which are quite different from each other in nature, one superimposed upon the other. The underlying concept is the traditional one which I have described. To understand it you have only to picture a world today in which there is no Soviet Russia and in which there had been no Nazi Germany, a world in which there were no savage forces of violence at large, a world in which no other great power aspired to the extension of its own sphere of dominance to such an extent as to endanger our security, or peeked across the ocean with irrepressible malice and envy at our independence and our national prosperity. It was this sort of world we lived in for many decades.

Initially, in the early years of our history, our policy was really one of strict non-intervention in the affairs of other countries, coupled with the vigilant protection of our thriving merchant commerce abroad. Behind it lay a general distrust of the outside world; a growing consciousness of the security afforded us at that time, much more than at this time, by our geographic situation; a distaste for the political intrigue and maneuvers of the other great powers; a feeling we had here in the United States, in the bluntness and directness and practicality of our psychology and our institutions, something superior to the elaborate game of deceit by which international affairs

were conducted elsewhere. In other words, we didn't like the outside world in the early years of our national existence and we wanted no part of it.

But as time went on, as the 19th century came to an end, having conquered our frontier and having assured, as it seemed to us, at least our own prosperity in addition to our own security, something else entered into our ideas about world affairs, and we became inclined to view the world outside a little more benevolently, with a little greater mellowness. The old suspicion of the world became tinged and often replaced with a certain sense of superiority and even of compassion for other peoples. We couldn't help but observe how miserably people lived elsewhere as compared with ourselves; and there was called into play in our psychology something which many people viewed rather contemptuously as an expression of smugness and sentimentality on our part, but which also embraced, to my way of thinking, a great deal of very genuine good will and generosity of a purely American variety, and perhaps embraced the seeds of the only possible tolerable world order of the future.

This was, in its early form, a sort of Rotarian idealism, a do-goodiness which found its expression in various ways; in the missionary movement, in large American charitable actions abroad, in our attitude toward World War I, in the hope that we were going to save the world for democracy, and finally, I think, in these universal concepts which have crept into our thinking so frequently in recent years, in the Kellogg Pact, in the International Trade Organization, in the United Nations, in UNESCO. I imagine we could think of others.

I am not speaking here at all in a deprecating sense of that aspect of American thought and policy. It embraces, I repeat, something which is immensely vital and important and worthy, something on which international life must someday depend if human progress is to be assured, and something which will come to represent a purely American contribution to the philosophy of international affairs, a contribution of which everyone here will someday be able to be proud. I sympathize with it myself. No American can travel abroad very extensively and see the filth and degradation in which large masses of the other peoples of the world live without having the feeling that, materialistic and uninspiring as our life here may appear to many people abroad, or as they claim it does, nevertheless, it is a great deal better than a lot of people have been able to do for

themselves. I feel there is a thorough justification for Americans feeling they have something to bring to peoples outside our own borders.

But this whole American approach to the field of international affairs is conditioned on a fundamental premise which has been challenged by the realities of today. It is conditioned on the premise that men everywhere are basically like ourselves, that they are animated by substantially the same hopes and inspirations, that they all react in substantially the same way in given circumstances. It requires that men elsewhere are willing to accept the law of live-and-let-live as a basic principle of international life, that they are going to refrain from attacking their neighbors, that they are going to recognize and accept a positive value in the peaceful co-existence of states as they emerge, side by side, today. It implies, in other words, that people abroad are like ourselves basically: interested in international peace and not in extending the sphere of their own power.

Where this pattern does prevail, as I think it generally does in Latin America today, you have an opportunity to see American policy working in the traditional sense and along the lines which most people here would prefer. But where these conditions do not exist, as today on pretty much the whole Eurasian land mass, where the scene is dominated by a power effort that has absolutely nothing to do with the aspirations I have described, there this traditional and old-fashioned approach and interpretation of foreign policy has to end, and something else which is politics rather than policy has to enter.

It has entered. It is this which we see today superimposed on our traditional thinking, and it is this about which all of us, I think, are most deeply interested. And so it is to this phase of policy I propose to address myself in the remainder of this period.

You all know what I am referring to. It is a situation that has been created not by ourselves. We didn't mean to bring it about. The impulse for it has come from elsewhere, at the present time principally from Russia. I sometimes think initially, too, from Russia, even before the Nazi era; and I think there is a close relation between the Fascist and the Nazi developments of the 1930s and the communist development which had taken place prior to that in Russia.

Before we discuss how we are going to react to that—which is after all the basic question of policy—we ought to review once more, even though it may seem to you territory you have gone over many

times in the course of this fall term, just exactly what it is we are dealing with, and examine very closely the nature of the Russian effort to which we are trying to respond.

What is the aim of the Soviet leaders? I would put it this way: It is to reduce rival power everywhere and to make the Kremlin the most powerful force militarily and politically in the world. Being landpower-minded, the men in the Kremlin are most immediately concerned with breaking up all other serious concentrations of power on the Eurasian land mass and gaining dominant influence over the governments of that territory. Their policies in other continents outside of Eurasia are basically subordinate to that aim at this time. Thus, with regard to ourselves, the main Soviet objective is to destroy at this time, I reiterate, our ability to intervene effectively in any way in the affairs of Europe and Asia. Soviet policy toward us at this time aims at the political, economic, and military neutralization, isolation, and, if possible, weakening of our power.

Since the turn of the tide on the Eastern front in the recent war, Soviet expansionist efforts have been concentrated on Europe rather than on Asia. This was probably because in Europe there was a greater economic and military potential and greater danger of the resurgence of forces capable of reacting against Soviet pressure if they were not immediately crushed. Europe was the greater prize if won, and the more serious loss if not won. Asia could wait; Europe could not.

This did not mean the Asiatic political front was placed in abeyance or neglected in Soviet thinking. It merely meant that priorities were allotted to Europe very much in the way our military priorities were allotted to Europe by the decision taken in 1942, although we continued military operations in the Pacific area.

The advances of the Soviet army and the post-hostilities arrangements which were concluded between the Allies enabled the Russians to consolidate their power without any great difficulty, and without international conflict, everywhere behind the Lübeck-Trieste line except in Czechoslovakia, where a complete communist clamp-down did not for a long time appear necessary or advantageous. Today that may change. It may already have changed in the minds of the Russians.

As for the other Western countries, those west of that line, and as for the completion of the job in Czechoslovakia: up to the past summer the Russians have pursued alternative lines of political

action, as they often do. They have worked on both of them simultaneously, waiting to see which will prove the most advantageous at a given time, and then finally deciding on one or the other. One of these lines looked toward the insertion into power of communist stooge factions by parliamentary means and by some form of popular mandate. By popular mandate I mean not what we would think of in this country as an election, but something resembling the vote by which Hitler's seizure of power was initially approved in Germany. The other alternative looked toward the violent seizure of power by the communist factions along the lines of the November revolution in Russia. That line was much more congenial to communist philosophy than the other; but they restrained themselves on that because they thought the parliamentary line might be more promising and therefore they ought to pursue it at the same time.

During the past summer, however, the Russians appear finally to have reached the point where they felt they had to make their choice between those two lines in a general way. And they chose the second, because the first did not seem to hold the same amount of promise which it had held initially.

Their immediate plans today probably envisage the consolidation of their power in Czechoslovakia as soon as possible, and the actual seizure of power by violent means in Greece and Italy and France. As for the other smaller countries of Western Europe, they reckon that if Italy, France, Greece, and Czechoslovakia fall, conditions will be so favorable to political action against the other and smaller European countries that they don't need to worry much about preparing for them today. There is no use in alarming the other countries unnecessarily today by the sort of tactics which are employed in Italy and France. It would be a dispersion and waste of effort.

As you know, in Greece, where we have already gotten an aid program under way, communist strategy is based on maintaining in so high degree a situation of disorder and economic paralysis that the economic aid program cannot be effective. And they hope that the resulting hardship and discouragement, combined with continued pressure from guerrilla forces and propaganda pressures, will destroy whatever confidence may remain in the non-communist leadership in Greece, and will open the field for complete communist penetration.

In Italy and France, where United States aid (at least in the form we are thinking of today) has not been granted, there is a certain difference. There, communist tactics envisage: the creation of such

disorder as to discourage us from granting aid at all, or to make the aid useless if granted; the heightening of confusion and insecurity and hardship among the population; the inducement of final despair of any other solution; and the seizure of power by communist forces.

There is no evidence—and this is important—that the Soviet Government contemplates at this time the use of foreign military force, particularly that of the Red Army, in the accomplishment of the objectives of this political offensive in Western Europe. It is possible that it envisages limited operations by satellite military forces in Greece if developments proceed in a sense favorable to the communist cause. But elsewhere I do not see any indication that the Kremlin expects to operate by overt military means. Obviously if they are successful with the *political* undertakings, they don't have to. And I am convinced they would prefer not to. If they can see success in any other way, they would prefer to get it in another way. There is no indication they want a world war, a major military conflict, with any country at this stage of their development; or that they even feel that such a conflict is going to be necessary to the accomplishment of their purposes. They have a number of tricks in their bag, and they haven't played them all yet. They have tried to design their political offensive in Europe so that no commitments for the Red Army would be involved, whether those offensives were successful or unsuccessful at this present stage. Thus there is very little likelihood of any direct military move there. But it must be recognized that the success of their political offensive—that is, any seizure of power by local communist forces subservient to Moscow—in any of those countries would mean that the strategic facilities of the area affected would be automatically placed at the disposal of the Soviet Union, in the same way that the facilities of Poland and Yugoslavia are at their disposal today.

We must view this then as being a detriment to our national security equal to that which would exist had they taken the area by military force. That is briefly what we are up against in the European theater.

I am not going to describe what the Russians are trying to do in Asia. All I can say is that there is as little likelihood of using armed force in Asia as in Europe. There is less hope of accomplishing radically important objectives at an early date in the Asiatic sphere. The people in Moscow can be quite content with the progress which is being made by the communists. I think they can be quite content with

the situation that exists in Japan, which they must figure is going to leave a Japan after the occupational period more vulnerable to their occupation than the Japan that existed before. They can be content with the situation in the colonial countries where a sort of groundswell of social revolution is doing their work for them and sweeping out the European powers, who have been there as colonial powers in the past, in a movement in which the mistakes of the Europeans will play an important part. All that, too, is down Moscow's alley; and to the Russian mind, to the Russian eye, there is no need to hurry. This is the situation we are faced with.

How do we hope to meet it? That is the real question of "what is policy?" at this time, and the sense in which I am discussing it here.

The first thing we must do is to divide our thinking into means of war, that is, military means, and means short of war. Plainly, at the present stage, we are trying to meet this problem by means short of war.

You may recall that in the early part of the lecture I referred to this modern type of policy as a forward-looking sort of planning, related to certain objectives, but also related to the existing means.

Our objective here is clear enough. Our objective is to remove Russian influence throughout Europe to an extent which would make it possible for all the European countries to lead again an independent national existence without fear of being crushed by their neighbor to the east. But what many of us often forget to do is to relate that objective to our existing means, to our existing weapons. We are dealing here in the political field; and I can only say that the weapons we have for conducting this type of operation, short of war, are pathetically weak and rudimentary.

Political warfare is foreign to our tradition. We have never done it before. We are not skilled in this. Many of our people don't understand it. I don't think I have to go into detail on that. All you have to do is to realize the enormous importance, perhaps the almost overriding importance, of the propaganda weapon, and to take a look at our propaganda apparatus as it exists today. It is pitiful. Our efforts don't even touch what the Russians are able to do in Western Europe. From one end of the continent to the other educated people, the so-called intelligentsia, are filled with the damndest ideas you can imagine of what the United States is after. It really is appalling what

people believe about us over there. That perception is the work of our enemies and we must not underrate it.

I saw an article the other morning by Sumner Welles, saying that Mr. Molotov was a shining example of how not to win friends and how not to influence people. I think Sumner Welles shouldn't be too sure about that. The Russian methods may seem strange to us, and they may not have a good effect on our public; but it is not our public that the Russians are interested in at this moment. It is the European public which is vital. It is Europe they are trying to gain at this stage of their endeavors and not the United States. And I must say that I see too many indications of success of their propaganda in the negative sense.

Why do I say the negative sense? Because they have *not* been successful in selling to the Europeans the idea that Russia is a paradise, but they *have* been successful in selling to them the idea that the United States has very sinister, ulterior motives in what it is doing in Europe, that it is in general a hell of a place and is in for a bad future.

To return to our own information service, I have seen messages in the last few days both from Moscow and Trieste, saying that the lack of funds had now come to a point where they were going to have to close down the informational activities in those two places. Now imagine that: In December 1947, in the international situation we face, of all two places in the world to have our people not operating in those circumstances—Moscow and Trieste.

Of course, somebody is going to scratch around and try to find some sort of money to send them to keep on paying people for a little while longer. Some people may say, "Well, why are you kicking? You are going to get the money one way or another."

It is not enough. You cannot operate on that type of a shoe-string. If we are ever going to build up a real information service, we have to give the people in it a sense of security so they know in May they are not going to be fired in July. It has to become a lifework, as your profession and mine is for us. That is one place where our means are pitifully inadequate today.

Another problem arises when I compare our position with the Russians. We do not have in this country any militant political movement, with universal aspirations or aims which go beyond our borders, which can be used as the communist movement is used in Europe as a vehicle for national policy. That is a gap which is very

important; and I find a lack of appreciation for it here in Washington. It pops out in many ways. Take the situation today in Greece, where we are not doing too well. What we are faced with, what we are trying to combat, is a very ably led guerrilla movement. The Greek army has not been very successful in coping with it. Probably the best way to cope with it would be a similar guerrilla movement which would be politically inspired. But to have that, which is really a counterpart of what exists on the other side, you would have to have behind it a political organization, a political thought, an animating political spirit. Just to get a lot of people who are anti-Russian and say: "You go in, because you don't like communism," is not quite enough. You can't beat something with nothing. There has to be something positive on the other side.

That is lacking in our pattern. Thank God it is. I wouldn't want that type of a party in this country. But I point out that it is a gap, from the standpoint of the way political things are fought out in Europe, and a gap we have to try to cover through other methods.

We *have* other means of influence. Of course, the one that is the most prominent in our minds is that of economic aid. That is a weapon which we are trying to utilize these days as best we can. I think many people expect far too much from it. I believe it is necessary. It has to be done. But you have to be awfully careful where you do it, and how you do it. Economic aid is not a cure-all—in fact, it is just the opposite.

If aid is used indiscriminately and not used selectively, it has an awful result, because you get a situation (which you are getting today) where everyone in the world starts coming to you with his palm out and saying, "We have some communists—now come across." You put yourself in the position of having to finance everybody who proves he has any communists working against him. That obviously won't work. Even, as a matter of fact, where it *is* desirable to provide aid, the program doesn't work if you just send the stuff over and relax. Aid has to be played politically, it has to be dangled, sometimes withdrawn, sometimes extended. Economic aid has to be a skillful operation.

Look how the Russians work in these matters, as compared with the way we work. They have sent next to nothing to Europe in the last year or two, and yet for everything they send they extract the full political flavor and about ten times more. They make sure it arrives before an election, that the ships are all painted up, that there is a

great deal of publicity in the papers. It is all a sham, but they reap the political benefits of it, and we often don't. That is one of the things that has been wrong with our Greek aid program. We passed the bill after two months' deliberation, but it was another three months before the goods arrived; and when they did arrive, they weren't of the type that was going to make a psychological impression on the Greeks. It was port reconstruction equipment, which was unloaded inconspicuously. What they needed was about three ships all painted white with "Aid to Greece" on the sides, and to have the first bags of wheat driven up to Athens in an American jeep with a Hollywood blonde on the radiator.

What I am pointing out is that, so far, our means for fighting this type of political battle abroad, against the people we have to fight, are really very poor. We are in a type of war here where our weapons are mainly inferior to those of the people who are on the other side. And we must not be over-confident, we must not be over-exacting on ourselves about the progress of our efforts. We must not get panicky or hysterical if we see we are getting licked here and there. We are in a position where it has to be expected, to a certain extent.

And that situation places all the greater importance on the Allies that we have abroad, in what we are trying to do. We ought to have those allies, and they ought to be with us heart and soul; because our basic purpose is to permit other governments and other peoples in Europe to live, and that is our claim on their confidence in us and their collaboration with us at this time. Fortunately, they are doing in some instances pretty well, and better than many of us had hoped. And the Western Europeans' effort must remain the main effort. We must see it that way. Our effort can only be subsidiary to it. Theirs are the main forces in the political struggle which is going on today, even if you look at the aid program.

I believe that what we are contemplating sending under the Marshall Plan will constitute something like three percent of the gross national output of the European people to whom it is addressed during this period. In other words, their own productive effort is going to be the real thing. Ours is the margin, sometimes perhaps the vital margin, but it is a marginal effort in any event. The same is true politically; and what we can do in France by bucking up a few French liberals, by getting the *Reader's Digest* published in French, by working to get a French edition of the *Herald Tribune* published, by that sort of thing and the aid program, is still small stuff compared to the burden the French have to bear in fighting this battle.

So much for the measures short of war which we have to use. How about our military measures? There you get into a very, very complicated question. I personally believe that armed force is a poor weapon with which to meet a political assault. Why is this? I think it is basically because of the time factor. Military effort as we have known it in the past is a one-time, sporadic activity. You can't make it enduring unless you are willing to remain in occupation of foreign territories for an indefinite period of time, and that has great disadvantages in itself and, in the end, defeats itself.

Political realities, on the other hand, are enduring and unrelaxing. We may defeat an enemy, but life goes on. The demands and the aspirations of people, the compulsions that worked on them before they were defeated, begin to operate again after the defeat, unless you can do something to remove them. No victory can really be complete unless you eradicate the people against whom you were fighting or change basically the whole compulsions under which they live. For that reason I am suspicious of military force as a means of countering the political offensive which we face with the Russians today. I think that here, too, there is need for much greater care in our thinking.

In the first place, it would be tactically very difficult to tie in by military means to the sort of situation you are trying to face today in Europe. If you think it through, you will see how difficult it is. The technique of indirect aggression that the Russians have worked out—the use of forces within a country to fight Russia's battles—presents for us a problem with which it is awfully hard to come to grips by military means. You have to think, who are you going to use those means against, and how are you going to lead into it? What are you going to demand from the people? You have to make a demand of people, before you can use military force against them. You have to give them a chance to yield.

You are up against a dilemma there.

If you try to use your military force to correct a situation and address your demands to *the communists* within a given country, you insert the United States and its military forces as a factor in an internal political situation. I tell you that is a very dangerous thing. We then find ourselves not fighting Russians but Italians. We find ourselves helping some Greeks against other Greeks. We find ourselves helping some Frenchmen against other Frenchmen. We become participants in a series of civil wars. I think you can all see

the danger of that. It puts us in a false position, and into a series of commitments we can probably never get out of. I don't see how any great nation can make itself the arbiter of civil wars of other countries and come out with a clear pattern.

On the other hand, if you address your demands to *Moscow*, then you are going to get put in your place, too. Because they are going to say, "What do you want us to do?" And if you can tell them, "What we want you to do is give orders to the communists in other countries not to do this and not to do that," they are going to say, "That is precisely what we thought you didn't want us to do. If you think Togliatti is doing what he is doing for our sakes, go and ask him. Ask him if he is doing it because we gave him orders. Ask the two million Italian communists whether they are acting at Russia's request or whether they are acting as Italians, and they will give you the answer." You will have a hard time facing that one. There is a certain element of truth in it.

Therefore, I am skeptical, as I say, of the possibility of using military techniques in this effort except insofar as the maintenance of strong military power in our country may cast a shadow over the contestants in this political struggle in Europe, and insofar as that shadow may affect the determination of one or the other of them and in that way influence the outcome.

If this political phase of the struggle should be lost, i.e., if the Russians should succeed by these means, by means of civil wars and violent action on the part of communist factions, in intimidating and in seizing power basically throughout the continent, then there is no question but that we would be up against a situation in which military force would certainly be the deciding factor. For we would then have to recognize that resources far superior to our own, industrially, economically and politically, had come under the sway of an element in world politics hostile to ourselves. Then we would have to regard our military force as the leading component of our policy. But until that time comes I do not see that we can.

This being the case, when we face today such a pattern in international affairs beyond our borders, I think we can sum up our position as follows: There is still a fair chance that we will win the initial phase of this contest. But we cannot be over-confident. Our weapons are inadequate, and much depends on our allies. If we don't win it, we are going to be thrown back on military rather than political methods. It will then be imperative for us to see that the military

methods are used with a greater political effect than was the case in our recent military efforts in the past.

Both of these phases of our policy, political and military, are inextricably intertwined. That is true today. It is you in the armed services who have to help us in many respects in the present phase of political resistance, political containment, even though your forces do not come into play directly in a military sense or constitute the main component in our effort. But if this phase of the battle isn't won, and if we have to fall back on the other, then it will be we in the political field who will have to help you to give political effect to the utilization of your forces. We are in this together, and the need for complete mutual understanding between us is absolutely vital. The task is a common one and it is not going to be easy.

It is not enough for us here to learn to see clearly the requirements of the situation and what would be needed in this country to make us capable of dealing with it. Some way or other we have to bring these appreciations to other people here in Washington and in large measure to the general public, and bring about a situation in which we can have the means we need and which we do not have today. There are times when this seems to me, and I am sure to many of you, to be a very discouraging and almost impossible task. It is hard not to let yourself be swayed by that feeling. But I think we have to be borne along by the realization that an unquestioning determination in these matters is no less necessary now than it is in time of war. We have got to fall back in many cases on the devices, perhaps the psychological devices, which stood the British and sometimes ourselves in such good stead in the darkest days of the last war, and say, since all is lost if you lose the war, you might as well keep fighting every bit of the way along the line.

That is the way in which we have to approach the bitterness of this present political phase of our policy. And if we have to make a concession here or there, or take a defeat here or there, we have to take it in that spirit, and not let ourselves become hysterical or discouraged by it.

The satisfactions which we can derive from successes along these lines should be, I think, no smaller for the fact that our battles are fought here, in the rather uninspiring and drab atmosphere of a nominally peaceful Washington, and not on the battlefields to which you people have become accustomed.

This lecture, necessarily, has been a very sketchy view of the problem of policy today. I did not intend to include all the subjects

on which I thought you probably would wish to get an opinion. I would like to leave the main burden of that to the question period, and let you come forward then with what you really want to know.

Thank you very much.

## DISCUSSION

QUESTION: Would you expand your views a little bit on the military side with regard to military aid to recognized governments? Do recognized governments which have dissident elements within their borders, particularly China, require police power to put them down?

KENNAN: That is a good point since it was not covered in the earlier discussion. When you have a government which has the will, the men, and the efficiency to operate, and when arms are the elements that are lacking, I certainly feel that that is something we can do, and it should have been included in the discussion of measures short of war. But we are often mistaken when we think that arms are the element lacking when it is really elements that are deeper. I find it hard to believe that a Greek army of one-hundred and twenty thousand men is failing to cope with a guerrilla force of somewhere around 10 or 15 percent of that size because it lacks the arms. There are probably deeper reasons why the Greek Government can't do it. I think you should send the arms, but only when you are pretty sure they are going to be used with some effect.

It is awfully hard for any of us to get it at the facts on China. The reports we get are so violently conflicting that you don't know what to make out of them. It would still have to be proven to me that arms alone will do it in China, and that arms without any other thing may not be just a waste of money beyond a certain point. I can see in the Chinese pattern certain points at which surely arms would help; but beyond that I am not convinced, especially when you get complicated arms, the form of arms that require a great degree of organization and skill and discipline if they are going to be used effectively, that require also good supply lines, good industrial background, and good technical background.

QUESTION: Would you discuss the pros and cons of military alliances? What might be the effect of a treaty of alliance between the

United States and France and Italy whereby we would guarantee to come to their assistance in the event of Soviet aggression?

KENNAN: Personally I am not much impressed with the military alliance as a means of policy. It is surprising when you look back over the annals of European history to see how little military alliances have meant, unless there were realities behind them which would have obliged the countries to go to war anyway. I think in moments of great decision in national affairs it is very, very seldom that governments operate really in accordance with a piece of paper; unless that piece of paper is backed up by certain real pressures that work upon them, it wouldn't amount to much.

We have gone to war twice in our time together with the British, although no military alliances existed. That is because the realities of the situation indicated we should. That type of relationship is stable and is one on which you can build; but alliances themselves are not apt to be very reliable, especially between democratic governments, because in democratic governments there is a frequent change of responsibility for leadership in foreign affairs. In the old days of monarchies it was possible to bind a country for a long time, because if the king didn't go on, his son usually took over and his son took over his obligations. But Americans and others like us, who are used to running their own affairs, would become extremely impatient if they were asked to be bound at one period in their history by what people at another period in their history had thought was the right type of obligation to take. I think that is why we have been reluctant to enter into bilateral alliances all through our history.

In the present situation in Europe, there is even less reason than formerly to make alliances. As far as I can see, they would not apply except in the case of direct, overt military aggression, and that is what the Russians are not going to do if they can avoid it. If you try to make such an alliance apply to internal aggression you get into the complex of problems I have described. What are you going to do in a conflict between a government and some of its own citizens? Admittedly, some of the citizens are working under foreign inspiration and guidance but that doesn't change the basic situation, and it is difficult to tie in with a military alliance. If anybody has ideas or can show me the point at which our armed forces should logically enter in case of this indirect aggression, a point that you can define as an international engagement, I would be interested to learn of it. But I am not

optimistic about finding any formulas that will cover that in a desirable sense.

QUESTION: The communist party line with respect to the European Recovery Program stresses, among other things, that this is American imperialism, that we are trying to take over the policies or governmental functions or unduly influence the European countries with respect to the policy of granting, withholding, dangling, expanding, contracting the aid which you suggested a few minutes ago. How can that be done and at the same time avoid falling into this communist propaganda trap?

KENNAN: It is a good question. I don't suppose it can be done without holding up your cheek for that type of Soviet slap. But remember, they are going to accuse us of that anyway whether we do it or not. The vital difference is really the purpose for which we do it. If we were exploiting the aid program in order to fasten some sort of American controls on those governments, in order to have them under our thumb in the future, that would be one thing. But actually the only condition we have to place on them today is that they use the aid in their own best interests and get the full benefit out of it. It seems strange you have to place that type of a condition on aid, but you do in Europe because you have these great communist elements who are committed in opposition to it and are determined to see it is not effective. I don't know of any other way that you could get at them.

I am inclined to think before the communists can be really backed into their corners and handled, we will have to create a situation where they will have to face responsibility for aid not coming to Europe. I mean if aid were withheld in such a way and if it could be played propagandistically, people in France would turn to the communist party and say, "You are the ones who are responsible for the fact that American coal and grain is not arriving at French ports; what have you to say for yourselves?" In that case the communists would be obliged to back down and shift and slow up their opposition to the aid program. But unless they can be thrust into that position of taking responsibility for their own action, I don't really see what is going to stop them.

That is the worrisome thing about what went on in France. It is true that the communists lost some supporters recently. That doesn't matter very much to them. The supporters they lost were what they considered to be the fat on the party. They feel they can lose that type

of supporter repeatedly and recover him later when circumstances are favorable. They were the fair-weather friends, the marginal, the less reliable party members who were sloughed off. But what they did succeed in doing was knocking a chunk out of French production which in terms of our aid program, which is marginal, is very serious indeed. I don't know how much it amounts to, but the amount of coal which was not mined in France as a result of these strikes ran into many weeks of possible American shipments to France. Now they have had to back down and their control on the labor movement was shattered. Perhaps that is a really hopeful factor, but I don't see any reason why they can't be good boys for two or three months, reconsolidate some of their influence over the workers' movement, and strike again in the same way and upset the gain so they can knock another chunk out of the French productive effort. If they do that three or four times a year, they will have pretty nearly nullified any beneficial effects from United States aid.

QUESTION: About a week ago General Kovacs, vice president of the Ukraine, advocated the establishment and use of a partisan international brigade. What do you think about the desirability of using American troops against a movement of that sort? That isn't direct Soviet aggression but it is aggression.

KENNAN: I am very much afraid of seeing American armed forces get involved with anything in Europe except the acknowledged military forces of a large state over there. I am afraid to see them get tangled with any guerrilla elements or anything like that. I feel somehow or other we would be committing our armed forces to the sort of thing they are not meant to be committed to, and we would be wearing them down against people who were not the real enemies. I would hate to see them used up in any way along those lines, and I doubt whether we would get anything very good out of it. I can tell you the best that would happen if we tried today to use American forces in Greece. In the first place, there would have to be a big debate in Washington before we could arrive at a decision as to whether we could commit to that enterprise forces good enough to hope to accomplish it. Everybody would know when we made that decision. Days and probably weeks would elapse before those forces were to arrive in Greece. If they really were large enough to cope with the situation, the guerrillas would melt right away behind the frontier before we got there. We would be there hunting nothing and Soviet efforts would be stepped up somewhere else along the line. If

we went in and said at least we are not going to let them come back, we would find ourselves in occupation of a large part of Greece very soon, because the requirements of our armed forces would put the normal Greek economy into the shadows, and we would find ourselves running the country and feeding the inhabitants. Is that what we want to achieve? We haven't beaten anybody. We have taken on a new commitment. And we are faced with the further and much more unpleasant decision: Under what circumstances, and when, do we get out? And what happens then?

QUESTION: Assuming that we outlawed communism in the United States, what effect do you suppose that would have on Europe?

KENNAN: I shouldn't think it would have very much. What it would mean would be that our communists here would go underground, which they are prepared to do. I don't know how successfully. I doubt whether they would do it as successfully here as in other places, but I don't quite see that it would affect people very much in Europe. It would convince them all the more, perhaps, that we are by and large pretty much of a right-wing country. The European socialists would be a little scared by it.

QUESTION: You said that military force might be important if we were to lose the political phase of this war. Don't you think it would be even more important if the Russians were to lose the political phase?

KENNAN: Yes, I didn't go into that and I am glad you mentioned it. It is my belief there is a much greater possibility of armed action on the part of the Russians if the Russians are thrust back in Europe, if they are not successful with their political offensive, than if they are successful. It is interesting to note that Stalin has not committed himself personally very deeply to their present line of policy. It probably means he is aware it may not succeed. And if it doesn't, it is probable he contemplates a gradual shift of emphasis in Soviet policy which would lead in the first place to a suspension or soft-pedaling of those efforts toward the seizure of power in European countries, to a policy of consolidation and defense along the lines of present power positions in Eastern Europe, and to increased efforts to acquire influence and dominance among the colonial peoples in Asia.

But it is not certain that the Russians have thought this thing out entirely correctly, or that that policy would be an easy one for them to follow. The Kremlin is capable of developing certain blind spots.

This may be one of those blind spots where they do not see entirely realistically. If they were to try to go over to a policy of defense in Eastern Europe, their communist parties in Western Europe would have to be pretty well smashed. There would be a strong upsurge of confidence among elements opposed to communism all though Western Europe.

Now the intellectual and psychological influence of Western Europe over Eastern Europe is very great. Europe is a continent where that type of underground intellectual feeling is much more volatile than it is on our continent. It spreads much faster, it has greater importance. And I feel a great deal of that sentiment would unquestionably thrust itself into Eastern Europe in the wake of such a development. Communists or people who were working with the communists in Eastern Europe would become a little frightened. People who were opposed to the communists would become more self-confident. I believe you would be faced there with a sort of psychological dissolution of Soviet power in Eastern Europe that would make it very difficult for them to carry on. That would first hit Czechoslovakia, which today is not entirely absorbed. But if Czechoslovakia were to remain really free, if the Czechs were to get the self-confidence to shove out a communist government, to remove the Soviet secret police from the leadership of the Czech secret police which they hold today, to eliminate the Soviet trained elements from the Czech army—then you would have a salient of free political institutions between Eastern and Western Europe which would be awfully hard for the Russians to take.

In the first place, the Poles and Hungarians detest the Czechs and their envy would be beyond description if the Czechs were permitted to be free and they had to continue under a foreign-inspired communist regime. I think that would be a constant source of friction and trouble. If the communist regimes in those countries were to slip you would have an unrest which would be untenable.

In this respect the Russians have put themselves in a very peculiar position by the extension of their border to the west, which they carried out during these recent years. If they had not taken in the Baltic states, eastern Poland, Bukovina, and Bessarabia, I think they might hope again to withdraw to the old frontiers of 1939 and carry on within those frontiers where they had predominantly a Russian problem to deal with and could handle their own Ukrainians in their own way. But I can't see a slipping of communist power in Poland

which would not affect the areas of Galicia which were previously Poland's and are now part of the Soviet Union. I cannot see any development which would not affect the Baltic states. I think the Soviet leaders have made the historic mistake which the Czarist leaders made in taking too much of Western Europe under their political control, and if they ever begin to slip they are going to regret that they ever did that. And when they come to regret it, and if they see that really exercises a danger on their internal power in Russia, then they may have to use their armed forces when they didn't expect to.

QUESTION: Isn't it a little dangerous for an overall strategist to be dead sure of what his opponent is driving at? You seem to be in the fortunate position to know perhaps better than the Politburo what their objective is. One also has to think of alternatives. You have said yourself that Stalin might prefer for a period of time a defensive position, consolidation of what he holds. I have a suspicion that was his objective in 1945, and thereafter, when the Togliatti and Thorez communists in Italy and France were lying low and playing the national game without much consideration of revolution. Now they have been drawn out of that position into an offensive which may collapse. Isn't it dangerous if we should celebrate a great victory in case the Russians should not be able to communize Western Europe and thus make a defensive position for them impossible, rather than to go on the assumption that what they really want is the consolidation of the part of Europe which they have conquered by their armies, and if we can push back their offensive in Western Europe, then look toward a situation in which we might take advantage of a defensive policy inaugurated by those elements that take Stalin's view against possibly other elements that wanted more?

KENNAN: Let me ask whether I understand this entirely. I think it has always been true that we could have had a reasonably acceptable, temporary arrangement at any rate with the Russians if we had been willing to say: "Sure, you got what you conquered during the war. You do what you please with it." Possibly today we could again arrive at that, although it would be harder today. The situation has been gummed up pretty badly on both sides for that type of arrangement. But that would involve really a division of Europe, and it is awfully hard for this country to see its way to doing that. It would mean letting down the eighty or ninety million people behind the Iron Curtain and it would mean such a departure from our whole concept of foreign policy that I just don't see that it could be sold to

the American people for a long time to come. It might be possible as far as the Russians are concerned, although they regard no agreement with a capitalist country as having permanent validity. It would remain valid for them only so long as the circumstances which gave rise to it remained valid. But I don't feel we could do it without really ruining any moral basis for our whole policy, without putting ourselves pretty much in the position of a power unit like the Russians, and without possibly having the Russians assume we would take Western Europe under our control the way they did Eastern Europe. What we are trying to do is restore a balance of power in Europe, which in this case must be as much of Europe itself as can be gotten together to balance the Russian force. That may have to be in Western Europe, but then the deal will be basically between Western Europe and the Russians.

QUESTION: If I understand you correctly, the strategic situation is not that we are sure the Russians want to take over Western Europe, but we are sure we want to recover Eastern Europe from communist influence. If that is the overall strategy, it has to be looked upon in those terms, and I don't think you can win that with the means of the cold war which you have discussed.

KENNAN: Not quite that way. I should have said I thought there was a possibility earlier; if we were willing to settle and blind our eyes to what went on behind the Iron Curtain, we would have had a temporary arrangement which would have covered the post-hostility period. They would have continued to hedge in a mild way on that, with the communist parties in the West, because they couldn't kill them. But that did not occur, and the situation has certainly taken the form today of the all-out exploitation of those parties for purposes which would inevitably mean that Western Europe would have to fall under some sort of communist control. That is what we have to reckon with.

QUESTION: You spoke with some apparent hopeful optimism of what might happen if Czechoslovakia were enabled to throw off the Russian yoke. Would it be a fair question to ask if we are directing anything especially in the way of exploiting just such a situation?

KENNAN: Do you mean what we are doing to buck up the Czechs? It is a very moot question what we should do. There are people in Washington who say we should give great economic aid to the Czechs, keep up the idea of economic trade with the West to encourage the Czechs to feel they are going to have no part of the

Soviet sphere, and show them we are their friends by sending material to them. There are other people who say exactly the opposite, that only if you withhold the aid will the Czechs realize how badly they need it: and, realizing how difficult it would be for them to get on without it, they will then insist on having some sort of acceptable relations with the West. In the present circumstances, with their having a communist prime minister, I am inclined to the latter view. I think any aid we give them will eventually be used to build up the potential of people in Eastern Europe who are opposed to ourselves. That is all I can say. It doesn't seem to me we are doing very much. It seems to me that situation is progressing in its own way.

QUESTION: I believe a Senator has proposed a bill that will limit the number of Russian visas to the same number of visas and the same treatment that our nationals are accorded in Russia. If that is passed, how would Russia react to that? Would it tend to relax their censorship?

KENNAN: Probably not, unless it happens to hit them in some point that is so sensitive they will feel they have to. But I believe in general that we should pass such a bill. Although it is probably right to do so, I think the Russians feel they can play the game as well as anybody else, and that they are in a better position than we are to take it. We have, for example, in Russia no information-gathering organs except our own foreign service establishment. The Russians have set out on a policy which is designed to force us to make that establishment as small as possible. They are charging us something like twenty-four dollars duty on an amount of paper for supplies for the office that cost here twenty-nine cents, and things of that sort. They are limiting the housing space and cutting down on us in every way. We can do that. We can retaliate here, and I think we should. I don't see why they should get away with anything better than that. But they have the whole agency of the communist party as an information-gathering agency, and what a beauty it is if you stop to think where it penetrates and where its sources of knowledge are in this country. I think they can take a game like this. They usually have in the past.

People have retaliated before. The Poles got so mad one time they put an enormous, shiny red touring car with a whole bunch of Polish secret police behind the Soviet ambassador and tooted around behind him all day long to retaliate for the way their ambassador in Moscow was followed. But the Soviet ambassador took it all right. I

guess he had no other choice. The Germans used to make very good use of retaliation against the Russians. They were a bigger power and they had it in their capacity to make the Russians feel their displeasure in very keen ways when they wanted to. They used that very well during the Nazi era, I must say. They used to extract real concessions by making life so miserable for the Russians in Germany that there would be finally a little give on the other side. Retaliation works if you can make it severe enough.

Thank you very much.

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at the National War College, 1946–47**

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**"I REGARD THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE LECTURES, IN THEIR ENTIRETY, AS PROVIDING A MUCH MORE COMPLETE RATIONALE FOR KENNAN'S APPROACH TO CONTAINMENT THAN THE 'X' ARTICLE OR OTHER WRITINGS ABOUT KENNAN'S VIEWS OF CONTAINMENT."**

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