

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Sean Jones for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in History, History of Science, and Philosophy presented on November 28, 2016.

Title: “Peace, But Not at Any Price: The Effects of Rapid Military Demobilization on US Foreign Policy and the Progression of the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-1953”.

Abstract approved:

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The research conducted here originated with the question of what caused the massive build-up of nuclear arsenals, which included ever larger and more powerful bombs and delivery systems from them, in the United States and the Soviet Union, even though the consensus beforehand was that nuclear energy should be prohibited from being used for military purposes. The results found show a parallel progression between the ever increasing sense of paranoia in United States foreign policy towards their former ally, the Soviet Union, which led the Truman administration to expend more resources into developing more advanced nuclear weapons. This eventually made nuclear deterrence the forefront of the American strategy. Several historians, including Michael D. Gordon and Morton A. Kaplan, trace the behavior of the Truman administration to a growing concern that United States military forces would be inadequate in countering a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. The origin of this was the Truman administration's decision to demobilize American forces at a rapid pace from May of 1945 to the spring of 1946. The administration had originally put their hopes in the newly chartered United

Nations to settle all international disputes and a campaign for volunteers to replace the veterans being discharged. However, the rate of new enlistees into the American military fell sharply as the country settled into peacetime. This came at a time when American policy makers began to view the Soviet Union as a new threat after an incident in Iran showed that they were willing to undermine allied post-war policy for the sake of spreading Communism. At the time, though, it was seen as being immoral and expensive to begin drafting millions of Americans back into the military for what was, at the time, only a possible threat to national security. Alternative measures were then taken to supplement American forces in case the Soviet Union became openly, and overtly, hostile towards the west; these measures were also meant to deter a Soviet attack just as much as they were meant to prepare the west for it. One of these was to utilize nuclear weapons as an alternative to maintaining the American military at 12 million, the size that it had been during the war.<sup>1</sup> Included in these measures was the supporting of democratic countries against Communism, which ultimately resulted in the Marshall Plan, which Stalin and the Bolsheviks interpreted as a hostile gesture by the West towards the Soviet bloc. Thus, insecurity caused by the rapid demobilization of the United States military following the end of the Second World War caused American military planners and policy makers to enact measures that they believed would strengthen their declining military and deter Soviet aggression, but instead provoked the suspicions and contempt of the Soviet Union which caused a break down in international cooperation and culminated in four decades of heightened tensions and the build-up of massive nuclear arsenals.

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<sup>1</sup> Harry S. Truman. State of the Union Address. January 14, 1946. Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 113-114

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"Peace, But Not at Any Price: The Effects of Rapid Military Demobilization on US Foreign  
Policy and the Progression of the Nuclear Arms Race 1945-1953"

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Sean Jones, Author

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## **Introduction**

The escalation of the Cold War, along with nuclear deterrence, has been a hotly debated topic among historians for the last two and a half decades. During the period following the surrender of Nazi Germany in early May 1945 until the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, and the onset of the Eisenhower administration in 1953, tensions rose between the Soviet Union and the United States and relations between the two powers became irreconcilable. Several events in this period are well-known and widely discussed including: George Kennan's "Long Telegram"; Winston Churchill's 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech at Fulton, Missouri; the Berlin Blockade; and finally, the Soviet Union developing and testing their own atomic bomb in September 1949. One of the factors that initiated the process that would lead to a division of the world between east and west was the demobilization of the United States military by the Truman administration from mid-1945 through mid-1946. By the time Germany surrendered, in May 1945, the administration was eager to begin decreasing military expenditures and bring the United States down to a peace time footing militarily and economically. This reflected the American public's desire to have Americans then in uniform finally come home after what had been a very destructive conflict. It also reflected the "tight book keeping nature", as Michal D. Gordon refers to it, of the Truman administration to be so concerned with the United States' massive wartime expenditures, which had been \$341 billion for the entire war, and their desire to reduce it to something more manageable; this resulted in a rapid reduction of the United States armed forces to the point that several figures in the government and military felt that the country was ill-prepared to deal with any new threats to its national security.<sup>2</sup> The most prominent of

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<sup>2</sup> Message from the President (Truman) to a Joint Session of the Congress, March 12, 1947". Documents on American Foreign Relations Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 646-650

which, in the minds of United States military officials and policy makers, was the possibility of a conflict between the west and the Soviet Union. During the war the United States had developed and deployed the atomic bomb against Japan and the Truman administration was under no illusions that this weapon could, and would, eventually be developed by other nations, regardless of the nature of their relations with the United States. Publicly Truman sought to prevent this by campaigning for the international control of nuclear energy, with the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, but at the same time he devoted resources to develop them further from the initial prototypes to make them more potent and efficient weapons. Truman's policy was centered on the use nuclear weapons as a deterrent in place of a large standing army to prevent a conflict from breaking out; this was preferable given weariness of the United States, and Western Europe, towards another war. However, his administration also sought to find other means of dealing with the threat of overwhelming Soviet manpower, and securing peace for the foreseeable future, which would allow the United States to forego its nuclear arsenal. However, they were unaware of how the Soviets would have viewed these measures or the reactions that would come as a result.

After the war, the Soviets were concerned with preventing future aggression against themselves while at the same time hindering American efforts to dominate policy making in the international community. George Kennan had predicted this sort of behavior from the Soviet Union in his "Long Telegram" of 1946 in which he stated that the Soviets would return to their old dogma of distrust and paranoia of the outside world; this would prevent a "*modus vivendi*" between the United States and Soviet Union that might allow for a successful era of peace.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Attaché George F. Kennan Critiques Soviet Foreign Policy in His *Long Telegram*, 1946" *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, vol. ii (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage; 2005) 192-195

Their first step was to negate the American monopoly on nuclear weapons. The Soviets had been working on their own nuclear program during the war, but it was only after Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945 that the Soviet leader, Josef Stalin, stepped up his country's efforts to develop the bomb. They would conduct this project in secret while pushing back against a call by the Truman administration for disarmament and reduction of conventional military forces; which would have left the Soviets with a weakened military and no nuclear weapons, a result that Stalin would not, and could not, allow. With relations having been degrading since the end of the war, the two sides began to grow even more suspicious of each other's intentions and this eventually caused international cooperation to break down. In response, the Truman administration would put more effort into containing the Soviet Union's influence and prevent Communism from spreading further throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

In Greece, communist guerrillas were waging an insurgency against the Greek government, which was ill equipped to deal with the situation. Truman responded, not by sending troops, but with financial and material aid, which the Soviets felt should only have come through the United Nations where they had the authority to stop any such measure. Aid sent to Greece helped reinforce the Greek government against the communists. This would lead American policy makers to formulate the Marshall Plan, which was aimed at assisting all the democratic nations in Western Europe against aggressive communist actions following the war and keep them, and their resources, from being absorbed into the Soviet sphere of influence. Seeing the Marshall Plan as an attempt by the American's to dominate Europe economically, Stalin prevented the nations of Eastern Europe from taking part in the recovery plan and, as a result, Europe was left effectively divided.

Finally, in February 1948, Czechoslovakian communists, assured that the United States would not intervene to assist their opponents, took power from the post-war coalitional government in Prague after Stalin's prevention of the country from receiving American aid caused them to lose support from the Czech public. In response, the Western European nations aligned together to consolidate their resources and prepare for the next aggressive move by the communists, forming the Brussels Pact to ensure mutual support and defense. In June 1948 when, to try and stifle American and Western European plans to create a West German state, Soviet occupation forces put a blockade on Berlin to force a settlement from the west that would prevent Germany from being incorporated into an anti-Communist bloc. After this event the United States joined the Brussels Pact, in April 1949, to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization with the hopes of building a united European army to both deter and counter the Soviets in Europe. Six months later, the administration would witness the day it had tried to prepare for, when it was confirmed that the Soviets had detonated a nuclear weapon in Kazakhstan. All discussions of nuclear prohibition broke down as the United States now prepared for an arms race having scaled back its military beyond the point that military planners believed American forces could not challenge the Soviets in a conventional war and so was not a reliable means of deterrence on its own.

In 1949, with the bomb now in his possession, Josef Stalin, having seen the United States responses to communist encroachment in the last five years, decided to support an ambitious takeover of South Korea by Kim Il Sung's communist North Korea. This was supposed to have been as quick and decisive as the Czechoslovakian coup was; generating little physical response from the Truman administration. However, by 1950, the United States had taken a new hardline policy of halting communist aggression wherever and with whatever means possible. This was

not a new policy. It was the same attitude that the United States had adopted during the Second World War in which Nazi Germany was the undisputed evil of the world and the United States was placed in the position of being, in the words of Reinhold Niebuhr, “in defense of those citadels of civilization of which destiny [has] made [it] the defender”.<sup>4</sup> So, seeing Communism in this sense, the United States not only aided South Korea militarily, it also sought to begin breaking down the communist bloc by absorbing the north into the Republic of Korea. This was stifled by Mao Zedong’s Chinese intervention aimed at removing American influence in Asia. The war had two major repercussions for United States foreign policy. First, it seemed to confirm the need for tactical nuclear weapons in a war against superior communist forces. Second, that Communism could not be stopped by aid alone and that intervention, or the threat of it, was the best strategy to the success of containment. Dwight D. Eisenhower’s administration would take both lessons to heart and lay the foundations for the conflict that would continue for the next 39 years. The process that led to this result having begun with the fear caused by the reduction of American forces.

The events and policies listed here and throughout show the effects that rapid demobilization had on the decision-making process of the Truman administration. Starting with the uneasy nature of the wartime alliance between United States, along with the western allies, and the Soviet Union and then leading on into the post war, in which we begin to see the measures and other proposals that were taken in order to supplement, what American military planners and policy makers believed was, a degraded military force. These measures had to take into consideration budgetary constraints and the attitudes of the American public, who were then

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Habernski Jr. *God and War: American Civil Religion Since 1945*. (New Brunswick; Rutgers University Press: 2012) 16-17

settling into a peacetime routine and had no desire to be engaged in another global conflict, thus there was a slim margin of error in which the administration could act. This in turn led to a search for alternatives that could satisfy both criteria. It is also important to understand how the Soviets, especially Stalin, interpreted the actions of the United States throughout this period and how it led to the breakdown of cooperation between the communist bloc and western democracies. Another consequence was the Soviets interpretation of the American response to the spread of Communism, which they believed, would never involve direct intervention to impeded it. This would eventually lead to direct hostilities between east and west in Korea which in turn would lead a permanent break down of international cooperation and a new strategy of deterrence centered around the threat of intervention and nuclear weapons in order to contain and degrade the communist movement by the Eisenhower administration following the end of the Korean conflict.

The rapid demobilization of the United States military at the end of the Second World War led the Truman administration to enact measures to supplement the declining troop strength of the American military. These measures included expanding the role of nuclear weapons to avoid the costs and moral constraints of drafting millions of Americans back into uniform now that the war was over. Other measures included building up the remaining democracies of Western Europe in order for them to resist communist influence politically and militarily. These measures incited suspicion and distrust from the Soviet Union leading them, and Eastern Europe, to become more isolated and hostile towards the United States and the West leading to the Korean War in 1950, a breakdown of international cooperation, and the onset of the nuclear arms race as both sides sought superiority in nuclear weapons over their rival.

The role of the demobilization in the early years of the Cold War has been, for most part, overlooked in comparison to other decisions and events that took place in the this period. It seems overshadowed by other policies that also shaped the foundations of the conflict that followed, such as the allies allowing the Soviets to dictate the political futures of the states in Eastern Europe, even reshaping their borders, to better suit their own intentions. Some historians see it as simply one of several mistakes the Truman administration made that led to the United States and Soviet Union to becoming unreconcilable. It is also seen as a key event by some historians, such as Michael D. Gordon, of nuclear history as it led the United States to rely more and more upon nuclear weapons to supplement its degraded military and deter Soviet aggression, but otherwise it is usually kept within the confines of that topic. The effects of demobilization are in fact much more resounding, in that many of the major events of the early Cold War period can be traced back to it or are in some way related to the concern it espoused in the Truman administration that led them to make decisions that shaped the history of the world for the next four decades following its initiation. Although it is not the decision that started the Cold War, it was one of the major catalysts in the breakdown of international cooperation; other examples of this included the Soviets over using their veto authority in the United Nations in order hinder American domination of postwar international policy. It also transformed the concept of nuclear weapons from being a necessary evil to an invaluable instrument of deterrence. An analysis of its effects can help to understand better the intentions and thought processes of world leaders during this time that allow for a clearer perspective on the Cold War to develop.

## Allies

During the Second World War, there was a general feeling of euphoria that numbed policy makers against potential threats to peace in the post war period. American officials disdained criticisms of the Soviet Union, due in most part to the vital role they played on the Eastern Front during the war in Europe. Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle, in April 1943, tried to assure dissidents that “Soviet Russia, when she is victorious...faces a titanic job in rebuilding her own country...she will not become the victim of any urge to seize great additions to her already huge empire.” Further, he went on to say, “In her reconstruction, she will be entitled to all the cooperation we can give”.<sup>5</sup> At the time of this statement, mid-1943, it would not have been unjustified to think that this would be the case. Soviet forces had been pushed back deep into Russia and it would have seemed improbable that the Soviets would have had any territorial ambitions other than to regain their own. Having pushed the Germans back, by the beginning of 1945, it had become apparent that the USSR would be playing an enormous role in the political future of Eastern and Central Europe. This was first demonstrated by the Soviets support of the Polish communists in opposition to the Polish government in exile; which led to a communist regime coming to power in Warsaw and the acquisition of the eastern third of Poland for the Soviet Union, which was augmented with western Byelorussia and Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> Actions such as these began to raise doubts inside the Roosevelt administration toward Soviet intentions.

According to Morton A. Kaplan, an expert of political science, at the University of Chicago, suspicion of the Bolsheviks’ intentions following the defeat of Germany was still

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<sup>5</sup> Adolf Berle. “*The Tools of Future Peace*”. Speech. Rotary Club of Reading, Pennsylvania. April 4, 1943

<sup>6</sup> “Soviet Relations With Poland” *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. vi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1943) 646-647



present in the administration, who were regarded as a “lunatic fringe” during the war; being placed in the same category as those who believed that Roosevelt had allowed the attack on Pearl Harbor to happen in order to have America enter the war. In May 1945, Joseph Grew, an official in the United States State Department and former ambassador to Japan, stated in a memo that “a future war with the Soviet Union is as certain as anything in this world can be certain...unless we recognize the danger and take steps to meet it in time”.<sup>7</sup> At this point it was not clear what those steps might have been. By May 1945 the Red Army occupied most of Eastern Europe and appeared to be keeping to war time agreements, allowing each nation to decide its own political system. This was demonstrated in the case of Czechoslovakia, where the Soviets allowed the Czechs to form a coalitional government made up socialist and non-socialist parties, but communist party members would come to occupy key positions and offices. However, the newly formed Czechoslovak government had to sign over their rights to the Carpatho-Ukraine region to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in late June 1945.<sup>8</sup> This, coupled with the Soviet Union’s entry into the war against Japan in August against Japanese forces, may have been an assurance that, despite lingering doubts about the ability of the two powers to co-exist, that the threat of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe was, at the most, minimal.

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<sup>7</sup> Morton A. Kaplan. *The Life and Death of the Cold War*: (Chicago:Nelson Hall;1976) 4

<sup>8</sup> “Agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Cession of Carpatho-Ukraine to the Soviet Union. Signed at Moscow, June 29, 1945.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. vii (Princeton, 1947) 864-866

## **Demobilization**

After Germany surrendered in May of 1945, President Harry S. Truman began demobilizing American forces which were not needed for the invasion of mainland Japan. Before the invasion was to take place, the administration intended to decrease the size of the army from 8.3 million to 6.9 million by June of 1946. One reason Truman provided for the scale down was that the navy would be needing civilian laborers and technicians in its shipyards to repair ships needed for landing and support operations in Japan. Despite this scale down, Truman stated to congress, as a measure of assurance, that the United States would still be conducting the invasion with a force of around 7 million, along with other allied divisions in support, against Japanese forces numbering 4 million.<sup>9</sup> Although Truman does not mention it, this effort may have simply been a chance for administration to reduce military expenditures, which by 1945 had been predicted to reach a total of \$100,405,000,000 for the fiscal year, by reducing the number of troops in service at the time.<sup>10</sup> The administration also needed to contend with the country's nation debt, which would reach \$275 billion by January 1946, an issue that Truman felt posed "a problem that requires careful consideration in the determination of financial and economic policies".<sup>11</sup> Thus, cutting down on spending as soon as possible would have been beneficial for the administration. After the deployment of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 the Second World War itself came to an end, which caused an acceleration in demobilization efforts.

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<sup>9</sup> "Harry S. Truman. Message to Congress, June 1, 1945." *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. vii* (Princeton, 1947) 118-130

<sup>10</sup> Comparative Statement of Receipts and Expenditures for the Fiscal Years 1946, 1945, and 1944. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. vii* (Princeton, 1947) 106-107

<sup>11</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 16

The first indication that demobilization may have been premature came in November 1945 with a socialist uprising in Azerbaijan, in northwestern Iran. Iran had been occupied by Britain and the Soviet Union in 1941 to prevent it from making a possible alliance with Germany, which would have resulted in the loss of one of the allies' key supplies of oil. At the end of the war the Truman administration wanted to honor its wartime agreements with the Iranian government and began to withdraw the 26,000 troops they had stationed in the country to support the British and Soviet occupation efforts. They encouraged both the British and the Soviets to do the same, setting January 1<sup>st</sup> as the deadline for the joint allied withdraw, but when the uprising began in Azerbaijan the Soviets still in the area prevented Iranian troops from proceeding to the rebel stronghold at Tabriz.<sup>12</sup> The Soviets claimed that the activity in the province was not an uprising and even tried to reassure American sources that they had more than enough troops to police the region, including one infantry regiment, two infantry brigades, and two regiments of gendarme police units. Further, they claimed that the presence of Iranian police units would only make the situation worse. They also stated that their continued presence in Northern Iran followed the guidelines set forth by the Three Power Declaration concerning Iran in December 1943, which did not affect questions of the number of Soviet troops in Iranian territory or the period of time they could be stationed there.<sup>13</sup> Finally on April 4, 1946, after the matter had been taken to the United Nation for mediation, the Security Council passed a resolution calling for all remaining units of the Red Army to evacuate Iran within one and one-

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<sup>12</sup> "Note from the Government of the United States to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, November 24, 1945. *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 851-852

<sup>13</sup> "Note from the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the Government of the United States, November 29, 1945". *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 852-854

half months starting on March 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>14</sup> Kaplan believes that this incident had been a major concern for the United States, during which several key officials in the military began to voice negative opinions of rapid demobilization (which will be shown below), but he seems to have hit upon this given the nature of future events to come and the importance of the region to American and British interests. Yet, in hindsight, it must be pointed out that the Soviets had used their armed forces to sponsor, or at the very least support, a socialist revolution in a nation friendly to the United Nations at a time when the major allied powers had mutually consented to begin withdrawing their forces from the region. Furthermore, and Kaplan mentions this as a point of evidence for American concerns, besides losing its important reserves of oil, if Iran were to fall under the sway of Moscow it was likely to open the door for a Soviet takeover of Turkey, which meant Soviet control of the Dardanelle Straits, and the rest of the Middle East.<sup>15</sup> As mentioned briefly above, and in reference to Kaplan's point, this incident seems to have had an effect on military planners in Washington who, starting in January 1946, made their concerns known about how rapidly the number of American troops in the military was dwindling.

With the events in Iran still happening, several officials in Washington had begun to advocate against rapid demobilization. By January 1946, 5 million men and women had been discharged from the army and over a million and a half from the navy and marine corps. The hope was that new volunteers would be able to take the place of combat veterans in occupation duties in Germany and Japan; 480,000 had already volunteered by then, with the goal being to maintain a peacetime force of 2 million. Despite the initial optimism, there was some apprehension in placing total confidence in a volunteer campaign alone, so Truman took the step

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<sup>14</sup> "Resolution Adopted by the Security Council at Its Thirtieth Meeting, April 4, 1946". *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 857-858

<sup>15</sup> Kaplan. *The Life and Death of the Cold War*. 5-6

of asking Congress to consider extending the Selective Service Act of 1940 beyond its deadline of May 16, 1946, but only if the number of volunteers fell below the number needed to maintain the peacetime troop strength at 2 million. Troops were discharged based on a criterion which included a serviceman's, or woman's, length-of-service and points earned based on "length and character of service", and also on the number of dependents a soldier had.<sup>16</sup> The criterion included: 1.) All enlisted men (except volunteers) with 45 points as of September 2, 1945; 2.) All enlisted WAC (Women Army Corps) with twenty-four months' service as of April 30, 1946; 3.) all male officers (except regular army, volunteers, and medical department officers) with sixty-seven points as of September 2, 1945, or forty-five months of service as of April 30, 1946; 4.) All WAC officers (except volunteers) with thirty-six months of service as of April 30, 1945. This was meant to take effect as of January 15<sup>th</sup> and stay in effect until April 30, 1946.<sup>17</sup>

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, speaking before a special meeting of congress, seemed less enthusiastic about the record number of those already discharged, and even less enthused by the projected numbers to come. Troops were needed, as he put it, to supervise Germany and Austria in preparation for recovery, complete denazification, and aid in counter-intelligence operations to apprehend prominent Nazis still at large. By January 1946, only 110,000 American troops remained in Europe. If the proscribed criteria were to be met, then by July only 61,000 troops would remain in Europe; if demobilization continued unchecked, Eisenhower believed, the total strength of the army would eventually be reduced to as low as 500,000.<sup>18</sup> Reduction of the military to such a size would make enforcement of the authority of the United Nations, which

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<sup>16</sup>Harry S. Truman. State of the Union Address. January 14, 1946

<sup>17</sup> "Demobilization Directive of January 15, 1946". *New York Times*, January 16, 1946, pp. 15

<sup>18</sup> "Dwight D. Eisenhower. "Statement before congress, January 15, 1946." *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 116-123

the congress agreed upon in Senate Resolution 114 to “provide for the assembly and maintenance of a United Nations military force and to suppress by immediate use of such force any future attempt at military aggression by any nation” difficult to conduct.<sup>19</sup>

Eisenhower was not alone in his concerns. On April 1, 1946, Secretary of War Robert Patterson made a radio address in which he stated that the War Department was urging for the extension of the Selective Service Act. He stated that “the army had the task of providing the necessary forces of occupation”, but that the United States must be “prepared to furnish our share of military forces for world peace as set by the United Nations organization”. Eisenhower and himself had estimated that between 1,070,000 and 1,550,000 would be needed in the army alone to meet American post-war responsibilities; including the 200,000, estimated by Eisenhower, to maintain the American occupation zone in Germany. With the numbers of those volunteering for the military falling from 40,000 a week in November 1945 to 17,000 by April 1946 Patterson concluded that the Selective Service was the surest way of maintaining American troop strength through to 1947.<sup>20</sup> To keep the armed forces at a sufficient level for peace-time duties, Truman asked for and Congress approved, on June 29<sup>th</sup>, of an extension of the Selective Service Act to July 1, 1947.<sup>21</sup>

By the end of the war in Europe the United States had 7.6 million men and women stationed overseas. According the Raymond Haberski Jr, most of these troops, along with their families, simply wanted to return home. They had defeated the totalitarian threat to the world and

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<sup>19</sup> Senate Resolution 114. March 16, 1943

<sup>20</sup> “Radio Address by the Secretary of War (Patterson), April 1, 1946”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 490-492

<sup>21</sup> “An Act to Extend the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, June 29, 1946” (*Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 492-493

it was the Truman administrations responsibility to bring them home (a result that many Americans had believed was worth using atomic bombs against Japan to reach).<sup>22</sup> There was also a desire to return the economy to peace time production and with a balanced budget. Kaplan states that shifting resources to support “a strong foreign policy that undercut a balanced budget and required even heavier taxes was unlikely to evoke an enthusiastic response from a public longing for normal times”.<sup>23</sup> However, it was also the administration’s responsibility to maintain America’s promised contribution in occupation efforts in Europe and in enforcing the authority of the United Nations. The United States still needed to maintain a peace time military and for the time being extending Selective Service sufficed to meet the country’s need for replacements to take the places of its veterans returning home. The Soviets actions in Iran may have forced policy makers to recognize that there were still potential threats to the world, but at this point labeling the Soviet Union as aggressive was still implausible at this time, the spring of 1946, as they had complied with the United Nations request that they withdraw from Iran. Although the notion of Soviet aggression would linger in the minds of American policy makers as they sought alternative means to supplementing their troop strength.

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<sup>22</sup> Haberski. *God and War*. 12-14

<sup>23</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 16-17

## **Nuclear Alternative**

Along with extending Selective Service, the Truman administration, starting in early 1946, also began to look at expanding the role of nuclear weapons as an alternative to raising a large army for peace time responsibilities, which included deterring the outbreak of another war. Kaplan makes the point that, despite the enormous cost in manufacturing nuclear weapons, it would have cost substantially more to raise a large military to counter the Red Army, which had a standing force of 2.5 million and the capability of mobilizing a total of 12 million into 470 divisions, if the Soviet Union did become hostile in the near future.<sup>24</sup> At this point the United States still maintained a monopoly on nuclear weapons, but the world had been shown that the atomic bomb could be built and it would only be a matter of time before other nations had nuclear capabilities. Even the Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, admitted in March 1946 that the “American monopoly would be lost in time, even without international control of nuclear research sharing”.<sup>25</sup>

If hostilities were to break out between the western allies and the Soviet Union, whether by an aggressive action by the Soviets or, if the administration were able to convince the American public to support it, a preventative war by the United States to stop the Soviet Union from obtaining the bomb, the war was imagined to be one where, due to the decrease in available American military personnel, nuclear weapons would be used to wear down the Soviet Union in a war of attrition. It was thought that the Red Army would overrun the continent and that the United States would need to fly sorties to bomb the Soviet Union into submission. However,

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<sup>24</sup> Michael D. Gordon. *Red Cloud at Dawn*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 2009) pp. 26-28

<sup>25</sup> Report by the Board of Consultants to the Secretary of State’s Committee on Atomic Energy, Transmitted to the Secretary of State, March 17, 1946. *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 552-557



Kaplan stresses that there were major problems with this scenario. Besides there not being enough ground troops to fight the war at the outset, a long-range bomber to deliver the payloads did not exist that could fly into the heart of the Soviet Union to destroy their industrial centers. Bombers would have to fly from the United States, as the Americans did not support sending nuclear weapons to their allies out of fear that the Soviet would obtain the weapons in the event they overran Europe. This would be a difficult task for America's premiere heavy bomber, the B-29 Stratofortress, as it would have to fly 4,800 miles just to reach Moscow; much to less to Baku in the Caucasuses, the primary source of Soviet oil, or the Urals, where the Soviets had moved much of their wartime industry following the German invasion in 1941. Secondly, the United States nuclear stockpile by 1946-47 was extremely low.<sup>26</sup>

David Holloway felt that there was also a problem in putting a reliance on nuclear weapons alone to subdue the Soviet war machine. If strategic bombing was the primary option for waging war with the Soviet Union, one need only to analyze the last war to understand the number of atomic bombs that would have been needed to subdue the Soviet war machine. It was calculated that the total amount of explosives used during the allied bombing campaign against Germany equated to 330 plutonium bombs. Even having had the equivalent of 330 atomic bombs dropped on it, Germany did not capitulate until it was overrun by the allies, having been able to sufficiently supply and equip its troops until that time. It should be noted that the Soviet Union possessed many more natural resources and industrial centers.<sup>27</sup> Holloway's point is further backed by Michael D. Gordon, who cites a study done by General Lauris Norstad, a high-level planner for the Army Air Force, who determined that 466 bombs of 10-20 kiloton yield would be

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<sup>26</sup> Kaplan, *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 22-28

<sup>27</sup> Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*. 240

needed for a strategic bombing campaign against the Soviet Union, with 123 being the minimum.<sup>28</sup> To enable a battleplan based on these estimates the United States nuclear industry would need to be built up; and bomb designs would need to be improved for industrial output to meet the total minimum requirements. At the same time, it was recognized that the country would need to be ready to respond to a surprise attack by the Soviets. Thus, nuclear weapons alone would only be able to hamper, but not subdue, Soviet forces. Just as it was during the war, strategic bombing required ground forces, which were dwindling.

Besides the difficulties in producing them, there was also a problem with how some Americans, both civilians and military officials, viewed the morality of using the atomic bomb. When the bomb was dropped on Japan in August of 1945, most Americans did not second guess Truman's decision to do so. The President, according to Leffler, had chosen to use the bomb to save American lives, who would have been lost if the allied forces had invaded Japan, and also to demonstrate "American power" in order to deter other aggressive nations from following the Axis powers example.<sup>29</sup> After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, George C. Gallup conducted a survey asking Americans, "Do you approve or disapprove of the use of the atomic bomb?" Haberski states that 85% of approved of its use and the consensus of the time was that the bomb had "saved American lives" that would have been lost had the war continued. Thus, there was a coherent feeling of justification amongst the American public and the Truman administration over the deployment of the bomb. However, there were those who saw the use of the atomic bomb as an immoral act and even went as far as to call it an atrocity. Pacifist A.J. Muste, the executive of director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, labeled the atomic bomb as a "symbol

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<sup>28</sup> Gordon. *Red Cloud*. 27

<sup>29</sup> Leffler. *Soul of Mankind*. 45

of power to destroy and kill raised to demonic proportions”. Pushing back against this was Christian Realist Reinhold Niebuhr, who had defended America’s role in the war as “a nation that was forced to commit acts of extraordinary violence in order to protect its citizens and to defeat the monstrous system that led to wars of catastrophic destruction”. In regards to the bomb, Niebuhr believed that the use of the bomb “in certain circumstances was justifiable”. However, he also believed that the implications of using the bomb should always be taken into consideration, stating that he “objected to the use of the bomb without warning”, as was the case in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, he also stated that he “could not have said that [the bomb] should in no case have been used.” So, for Niebuhr the bomb had been a necessary sin, seen in the same light as saturation bombing, but a sin none the less due to its destructive nature and the fact that it killed indiscriminately when used against cities.<sup>30</sup> These conflicting moral positions would have made the use of the bomb a delicate matter unless the United States government could make a clear case that it was in the best interest for the defense of the country to use it in a possible war against the Soviet Union. Moreover, as mentioned before, with most American’s settling into peacetime a substantial case would have needed to have been made to convince the country to enter a conflict with the Soviet Union. As starting a war with the Soviets would have meant drafting and training 10 million soldiers, sailors and marines to send overseas to fight a war of attrition that may have taken years to win, with victory being far from certain. Besides these moral constraints, there were also issues with the effectiveness of the bomb itself.

Nuclear bombs at the time were also terribly inefficient in terms of how much of the fissile material that powered them was turned into energy during the fission process. In his work, *Under the Cloud*, Robert L. Miller goes into detail about the initial disappointment on the

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<sup>30</sup> Haberski. God and War. 15-18

efficiency of the early bomb designs felt after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was discovered that only 1.3% of the uranium core was turned into energy in the “Little Boy” type bomb, which was dropped on Hiroshima. The plutonium bomb that was used on Nagasaki, “Fat Man”, fared better in that 17% of its plutonium core had been turned into energy. This would make plutonium based bombs the preferred model for the military.<sup>31</sup> Miller also goes through the events that led to the Crossroads series of tests on Bikini Atoll in July 1946. There were several high-ranking figures in the military who doubted the effectiveness of the bomb in a tactical role. Admiral William D. Leahy had opposed the use of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, commenting that “the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan”. In his opinion, “the Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons”. General Curtis Lemay, of the Army Air Corps, believed the war would have been over in two weeks regardless of the bomb or the Russian invasion of Manchuria; declaring, “the atomic bomb had nothing to do with the end of the war at all.”<sup>32</sup> So the bomb’s place in the military had to be proven so that its development could continue and the nuclear alternative could succeed.

On July 1, 1946, 90 outdated battleships, carriers, destroyers, transport ships, and submarines were clustered together in the lagoon of Bikini Atoll to test the effect of nuclear bombs on modern naval vessels. The first test, “Able”, involved dropping a bomb and having it explode at altitude over the center of the fleet. Following the blast one destroyer and two transport sank immediately; a second destroyer and the Japanese cruiser *Sakawa* sank within twenty-seven hours; finally, the light carrier *Independence* was gutted by fires and resulting

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<sup>31</sup> Robert L. Miller. *Under the Cloud: The Decades of Nuclear Testing*. (New York: The Free Press) 66

<sup>32</sup> Miller. *Under the Cloud*. 75-76.

explosions. Ships a mile from the drop point had no apparent physical damage. Despite only six ships having been sunk, the first test was said to have “justified the expenditure required to conduct it”.<sup>33</sup> The second test, “Baker”, involved a submerged nuclear device to take place on July 7<sup>th</sup>.

The explosion from “Baker” caused an enormous column of radioactive water that embraced 90 percent of the ships. At detonation three small ships and the battleship *Arkansas* were sunk immediately; the carrier *Saratoga* sank in seven-in-half hours; finally, six submarines were submerged by the blast, but only one sank. The second test had shown that many of the ships would have been exposed to fatal doses of radiation. Because of the tidal wave it produced, the second test was even deadlier in terms of the radiation exposure. It was determined that if an enemy possessed just two plutonium bombs, and employed them in similar manner as the tests, the result would be as devastating as the air raid on Pearl Harbor. Furthermore, the radiation from the explosions would contaminate the ships and the surrounding waters, preventing any repairs for long periods, and would make rescue of survivors a deadly task. The tests showed the vulnerability of ships to the damage and radiation exposure caused by nuclear explosions, which led the military to the conclusion that the only way to guarantee any security from them was to eliminate war entirely.<sup>34</sup> These tests also proved that the bomb was an extremely effective weapon. However, it was still quite expensive to produce at this point. The United States would need to have sufficient ground forces to go along with a nuclear bombing campaign, enough bombs to have a strategic effect on an enemy like the Soviet Union, and construct a moral layout

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<sup>33</sup> “Preliminary Report of the President’s Evaluation Commission on the First Bikini Test, July 1, 1946.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 458-459

<sup>34</sup> “Preliminary Report of the President’s Evaluation Commission on the Second Bikini Test, July 25, 1946”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 459-461.

to justify their use. The Truman administration recognized this, but decided at the time to enact alternative measures to raising and maintaining a large peacetime military or developing a large nuclear arsenal.

## **United Military**

The administration sought to fix what they believed had made the United States ill-prepared to fight the Second World War at its outset. The first was to unify the two separate branches of the military; the War and Navy Departments. Truman felt that the military was made up of “two completely independent organizations with no well-established habits of collaboration and cooperation between them”. During the war the Joint Chiefs organized a number of committees, but it was in no sense a unified command. He felt that it had taken too much time for both departments to organize and bring the full force of the United States military to bear against the axis. He also makes the point that any future attack would come more suddenly than Pearl Harbor and the United States would be the first nation to be attacked. The only way to respond quickly was to consolidate the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps into one single agency, although the military branches would still retain their autonomy, under one civilian head; the Secretary of National Defense. Most importantly it would have a unified budget.<sup>35</sup>

Initial disagreements between the War Department, headed by Robert Patterson, and the Navy, under James Forrestal, on the basic principles of unification of the armed forces prevented the measure from being enacted by the 79<sup>th</sup> Congress.<sup>36</sup> By January 1947, the two had worked out their differences and fully backed the measure jointly. Stating in a joint letter to Truman, “In our opinion the necessity for agreement between the military services is now even greater than at

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<sup>35</sup> Message of the President to Congress, Recommending Legislation for the Unification of the Armed Forces, December 19, 1945 *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 469-478

<sup>36</sup> “Unification of the Armed Services”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 262-263

the time of our early letter [of May 31, 1946]”; agreeing then to all the points of the measure calling for the creation of a single Department of National Defense along with a single Secretary of National Defense.<sup>37</sup> “The National Security Act of 1947” passed Congress and was approved by Truman on July 26, 1947. It not only included the establishment of the National Military Establishment, it also created the Central Intelligence Agency, the position of Secretary of Defense, and the Air Force as its own department in the military.<sup>38</sup> The act also had the support of Eisenhower, then Chief of Staff of the Army, who said that it “sets up one civilian head, who, while achieving for the moment a degree of operational and direction coordination, will very naturally and logically find himself compelled to recommend periodically to congress such budgetary and other measures as will provide the greatest possible amount of security for the United States with the least possible cost in men, money, and materials.”<sup>39</sup> Truman would go one step further in unifying the United States armed forces in 1949. In order to make the National Military Establishment even more efficient financially, and more firmly under civilian control, he asked congress to amend the National Security Act of 1947 to convert the National Military Establishment into an executive department of the government: the Department of Defense. Also, the three branches of the military would be converted into departments within the Department of Defense and would be presided over by the Secretary of Defense.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> “Letter from the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy to the President on a Program for unification of the Armed Forces, January 16, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 263-265

<sup>38</sup> An Act to Promote the National Security by Providing for a Secretary of Defense and a National Military Establishment, July 26, 1947. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 266-281

<sup>39</sup> Statement by Chief of Staff, United States Army before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate on Unification of the Armed Services, March 25, 1947. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 265-266

<sup>40</sup> Message of the President to the Congress on Unification of the Armed Forces, March 29, 1949.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. x.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 294-297



## **Universal Training**

Another organizational and institutional response to growing concerns about post war threats to peace, which included aggression by the Soviet Union, was to maintain the United States military at or around 2 million personnel. Truman viewed this as a means of deterring any future aggression, guaranteeing the United Nations did not go the way of the League of Nations. In October of 1945, Truman stated that to preserve the military's strength would have meant either raising and maintaining "a large standing army, navy and air force". Truman stated, however, that there was a second option to maintain a strong military deterrent and that was to "rely upon a comparatively small regular army, navy and air force supported by well-trained citizens, who in time of emergency could be quickly mobilized".<sup>41</sup> Truman also believed that the it had taken too much time to call up America's manpower reserves at the beginning of the Second World War. He cites that problem being that it took "many months for men to become skilled in electronics, aeronautics, ballistics, meteorology and all the other sciences of modern war". Truman believed that "in any future war, the heart of the United States would be the enemy's first target", that America's geographical security was gone...with the advent of the robot bomb, the rocket, aircraft carriers and modern airborne armies". He may also have been considering the repercussions of an all-out nuclear attack that might destroy part of the American military, thus there would be a need for trained replacements to fight a ground war afterwards.<sup>42</sup>

Truman's plan called a training program that would last for one year. That "each you man should enter training either at 18 or upon his graduation from high school", and after completing a year's training, "the trainee would become a member of the general reserve for the general

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<sup>41</sup> Message of the President to Congress, October 23, 1945. Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 496-502

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.496-497

reserve for a period of six years.” After this period, they would be placed a secondary reserve.<sup>43</sup> If this program could be adopted by congress Truman imagined a reorganization of the military into three elements: “First-A Comparatively small Regular Army, Navy and Marine Corps; Second-A greatly strengthened National Guard and an organized reserve for the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps; Third-A general reserve composed of all male citizens of the United States who have received training”.<sup>44</sup>

Truman used the opportunity of the expiration of Selective Service in March 1947 to push for his new peace time military policy. He stated that the administration wanted to maintain the current strength of the army, which had by then shrunk to 1,070,000, and the navy, which as at 571,000, through the next fiscal year; he did believe, however, that this was still an adequate force for the United States to meet its peacetime responsibilities.<sup>45</sup> A report by his advisory commission stated, after having conducted a 6-month study on the issue, that universal training of all able bodied men was essential for the United States and the United Nations to maintaining peace. The commission grounded its conclusion on three rationales: 1.) It would be a deterrent for the UN against aggressive powers, i.e. the Soviet Union; 2.) it offered the only method through which the United States could ensure they would have a sufficient number of trained personnel, which would be a cheaper option than maintaining a large military; 3.) Because the atomic bomb, among other recent horrifying innovations, has made warfare universal, it would be of great benefit to have trained men in every town and city in America ready to act in the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 497-499

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 497-498

<sup>45</sup> Message from the President to the Congress Recommending the Termination of Selective Service, March 3, 1947.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix.* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 281-283

event of a sudden surprise attack. If needed, they would simply report to their base and go immediately unto active duty.<sup>46</sup>

By the spring of 1948, with tensions between east and west increasing throughout Europe, Secretary of State George C. Marshall continued to try to garner support for universal training before the Senate. He asserted that he saw “no possible way financially to maintain a reasonable military posture except on the foundation of universal military training”, adding that “due to rapid dwindling in the strength of the armed forces”, the temporary reinstatement of the Selective Service would also be necessary to secure European recovery efforts.<sup>47</sup> Both Selective Service and Universal Military Training were brought before congress, but the latter was left out of the final bill and what was passed by the President June 24, 1948 became the “Selective Service Act of 1948”. The act allowed for 830,000 personnel plus 110,000 one-year enlistees for the Army; 660,882 plus 36,000 enlistees for the Navy; and 202,000 plus 15,000 enlistees for the Air Force. Despite this, the administration would continue to push for Universal Military Training into the 1950’s. These measures seemed to fit with the Gordon’s opinion about the tight booking nature of the Truman administration which seemed more concerned with keeping military expenditures down from the astronomical levels they had been at in 1945, which had dropped to \$12,543,633,395 by 1949.<sup>48</sup> However troop strength would only be 1,302,000 by 1950.<sup>49</sup> It can be no surprise that universal training was not widely accepted enough to get

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<sup>46</sup> “Report of the President’s Advisory Commission on Universal Training to the President”, May 29, 1947. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 284-289

<sup>47</sup>Statement by the Secretary of State before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate on Universal Military Training, March 17, 1948.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations. vol. x* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 282-284

<sup>48</sup> “Comparative Statement of the Appropriations and Contract Authorizations of the National Military Establishment for 1949 and 1950”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. xii* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 305

<sup>49</sup> “Budget Message of the President to the Congress, January 10, 1949”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. xii* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 279

congressional approval. As mentioned before, most Americans were looking forward to peace and would not have been enthusiastic about the notion of having every able-bodied man having to take military training; even if the administration were able to convince Americans that the threat Communism posed was worth it.

## **Reduction of Arms and Armies**

As well as the programs mentioned above, the administration also attempted to utilize the United Nations to reduce conventional armaments and the size of standing armies. Further it seemed as though Truman was even willing to forego United States' nuclear monopoly to see their disarmament measures succeed. There had been concerns over the continued possession of nuclear weapons since before Hiroshima in August 1945. The Frank Committee had recommended that the bomb only be demonstrated in order to force the Japanese to surrender and then afterwards the international community would eventually ban them from production and use; without which, there would be "an unlimited arms race".<sup>50</sup> Henry De Wolf Smyth stated at the end his report of the history of the development of the atomic bomb, *Atomic Energy for Military Purposes* (or the "Smyth Report"), ...

"In thinking about [the questions to come] the men on the [Manhattan] project have been thinking as citizens of the United States vitally interested in the welfare of the human race. It has been their duty and that of the responsible high government officials who were informed to look beyond the limits of the present war and its weapons to the ultimate implications of these discoveries...In a free country like ours such questions should be debated by the people and decisions must be made by the people through their representatives. This is one reason for the release of this report...which it is hoped men of science in this country can use to help their fellow citizens in reaching a wise decision."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The Frank Committee Predicts a Nuclear-Arms Race If the Atomic Bomb is Dropped on Japan, 1945". *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, vol. ii (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage; 2005) 188-190

<sup>51</sup> Henry De Wolf Smyth. *Atomic Energy for Military Purposes: The Official Report on the Development of the Atomic Bomb under the Auspices of the United States Government, 1940-1945*. New and Enl. Ed., Incl. Statements by the British and Canadian Governments]. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946) 220

Smyth, and the scientists of the Manhattan Project, argued that they understood the implications if nuclear energy was not controlled. They called on the American public to take measures in order to prevent an arms race from ensuing. With other Americans, such as A.J. Muste, questioning the morality of the bomb, it would have been wise for the administration to begin looking for a plausible way to control nuclear energy and prevent a future arms race.

The campaign began in August 1946 when the Soviets voiced their concerns about the continued presence of allied troops in various non-axis states and territories that had not been hostile to the allies during the war. However, the Soviets do not mention which states they felt allied forces should withdrawal from and is an ironic call to action given the events in Iran five months before.<sup>52</sup> Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Minister of Foreign affairs and their representative in the United Nations General Assembly, went a step further, suggesting “now that the disarmament of the principle aggressive countries has been carried out and measures have been taken to restrict sharply the armaments of other enemy states, the time has come to effect measures to carry out a general restriction of armaments”. Above the rest, was the prohibition of atomic energy for military purposes.<sup>53</sup> The United States was taken in with the Soviet Union’s proposal. However, they wanted reductions to be as universal as Molotov had stated they should be. Warren Austin, the United States’ representative to the General Assembly, responded that “after the last war we made the mistake of disarming unilaterally. We shall not repeat that mistake.” He concluded that, “it is our opinion that the proposed inquiry should

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<sup>52</sup> “Statement by the Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations Security Council before the Security Council, August 29, 1946” *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 532-533*

<sup>53</sup> “Statement by the Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations General Assembly before the General Assembly, October 29, 1946”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 533-535*

include all mobilized armed forces, whether at home or abroad.”<sup>54</sup> If the United Nations could mandate the reduction of standing armies, then the Soviet armed forces would be reduced and that would help balance the odds in the favor of the United States. However, the Soviets had their own goals in mind.

In 1945, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson had wanted to inform the Soviets about the bomb before it was used. It was his opinion that there would be a temptation by the Soviets to develop the bomb as soon as possible; this furthered the necessity of an international ban on atomic energy as a weapon.<sup>55</sup> Holloway seems to back up Stimson’s prediction that the Soviets would try to develop the bomb as quickly as they could after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but for different reasons than Stimson might have thought. Holloway’s main argument is that Stalin did not regard the bomb as serious threat by itself. It was Stalin’s belief that the bomb alone, “cannot decide the outcome of a war, since atomic bombs are quite insufficient for that.” He was seemingly unimpressed by the results of the bombs that the Americans dropped on Japan. It was the Soviet position that, because Japanese cities were composed predominantly of wooden buildings, the damage seen at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was greatly exaggerated. He was further ensured when a Soviet survey of the cities was conducted and reported back that the concrete buildings seemed to have had well weathered the explosions. This meant that the bomb may have less of an effect on a modern industrial city; causing Stalin to disregard atomic bombs for their tactical value.<sup>56</sup> Stalin instead recognized the bomb for its symbolic affect. For him, the

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<sup>54</sup> “Statement by the Senior Representative of the United States to the United Nations General Assembly before the General Assembly, October 30, 1946.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 535-536.*

<sup>55</sup> “Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson Appeals for Atomic Talks with The Soviet, 1945.” *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, vol. ii (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage; 2005) 191-192

<sup>56</sup>Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*. 225-228

country that possessed it had substantial authority in the international community. As long as the United States maintained its monopoly they could drive international efforts toward their own desired ends; something Stalin could not allow. It was also important that the Soviet Union be able to develop the bomb as it was its ideological mission to catch up to and overtake the west in all economic and industrial respects. Thus, according to Holloway, the Soviets efforts to either build a bomb or prohibit them all together in the international community was to level the playing field so that the Soviet Union was not subordinate to the United States.<sup>57</sup>

Melvin P. Leffler, in *For the Souls of Mankind*, interpreted Stalin's actions in a similar manner to Holloway's after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During the War, Stalin was able to assert his will at the various allied conferences and win the Soviet Union territorial acquisitions and, although not officially, a free hand in Eastern Europe. This had been especially true in the case of Poland, where the war had begun on September 1, 1939. According to Orlando Figes, in *Revolutionary Russia: 1891-1991*, Stalin wanted Poland as a buffer between the Soviet Union and Germany and with the western allies needing Soviet support against the Japanese they appeased Stalin, supporting the Soviet backed Lublin government, at Yalta in February 1945.<sup>58</sup> The role of the Soviet Union in the final defeat of Japan was for the Red Army to sweep into Manchuria and Northern China and crush the Japanese armies there in order to prevent them from being utilized in a defense of the home islands. Truman's decision to deploy the atomic bomb, however, had forced Japan into an early capitulation before Soviet armies could reach the home islands and, as a result, they were shut out of Japan's post-war reconstruction. Stalin, according to Leffler, interpreted Hiroshima and Nagasaki as "atomic blackmail", meant to be

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<sup>57</sup> Holloway, Stalin and the Bomb. 132-133

<sup>58</sup> Orlando Figes. *Revolutionary Russia: 1891-1991 A History*. (New York; Metropolitan Books; 2014) 231



used against the Soviet Union in the post-war period. He stated plainly that “the balance has been destroyed”, and that “they wanted to force us to accept their plans on questions affecting Europe and the world”.<sup>59</sup> This reinforced Holloway’s point about Stalin needing to have the bomb or have it prohibited in order for the Soviet Union to regain authoritative parity with the United States and the western nations in the post-war period.

On December 14, 1946, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution that seemed to satisfy all sides. It recommended that the Security Council, of which the United States and the Soviet Union were both members, formulate practical measures for the general regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces and to ensure that they would be observed by all participants and prevent a unilateral policy. It also recommended that the production of nuclear weapons be prohibited and what weapons were already in existence should be eliminated. The Security Council was to work with the Atomic Energy Commission, which had been established in January 1946, to create an international organ that would inspect nuclear facilities, enforce international laws, and regulate safeguards for reducing conventional weapons and armed forces as well as seen to the elimination of atomic energy as a weapon of mass destruction.<sup>60</sup> On February 4, 1947 the United States submitted a resolution to establish a commission composed of the members of the Security Council to make recommendations regarding the measures, “including the provision of effective safeguards for the regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces, except for matters that fell within the competence of the Atomic Energy Commission”. It also set up a committee for the Security Council, made up of

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<sup>59</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler. *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, The Soviet Union, And The Cold War*. (New York: Hill and Wang; 2007) 49

<sup>60</sup> “Resolution on Principles Governing the General Regulation and Reduction of Armaments, Approved by the United Nations General Assembly, December 14, 1946”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. viii* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1948) 542-544

representatives of each of its members, to make recommendations regarding the terms of reference of the proposed commission.<sup>61</sup>

On the same day the United States' representative to the United Nations General Assembly, Warren Austin, made this statement: "The United States considers that it is the primary task of the Council, in the coming months, to progress as rapidly as possible towards agreement on an international system of control which will provide the...safeguards...that the General Assembly has recognized are essential to the regulation and reduction of armaments." He concludes that the only road to disarmament is "genuine collective security and genuine international control of all armaments and of armed forces."<sup>62</sup> Austin's position would have all but solved the deficiencies in the United States military that had come about after demobilization as well as satisfy calls for the prohibition of nuclear weapons by the public. If the international law limited the size of a nation's armed forces, then the Soviet military would be substantially reduced. However, this was a daring gamble in that the administration could lose the chance to regulate nuclear weapons and their best chance to prevent the Soviets from obtaining the bomb. On February 13<sup>th</sup>, the Security Council approved a resolution to create the commission proposed in the February 4<sup>th</sup> bill. This was to be the Commission for Conventional Armaments.<sup>63</sup> Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Union's permanent representative to the United Nations, accused the United States of hindering the UN's efforts to the establish proper guidelines for the immediate

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<sup>61</sup> "Draft Resolution Regarding the Implementation of the General Assembly Resolution on the General Regulation and Reduction of Armaments, Submitted by the United States to the United Nations Security Council, February 4, 1947." *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 335-336

<sup>62</sup> "Statements by the Representative of the United States on the United Nations Security Council on the Regulation and Reduction of Armaments, February 4, 1947. *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 336-338

<sup>63</sup> "Resolution on General Regulation and Reduction of Armaments and Armed Forces, Approved by the United Nations Security Council, February 13, 1947." *Documents on American Foreign Relations. Vol. ix* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 338-339

prohibition of nuclear weapons, having delayed discussion of a previous plan from June 1946, and that it stemmed from the United States not wanting to give up its nuclear monopoly, even commenting, “the only obstacle to the conclusion of such a convention [on the prohibition of atomic weapons] is the desire of one country to impose its will in question of atomic energy on other countries, regardless of their legitimate interests”.<sup>64</sup>

In June 1947, Gromyko submitted a proposal for an international control commission that would carry out routine inspections of all facilities that contributed or were a part of research for nuclear energy. It was to report and make recommendations on all finding to the Security Council; who would then penalize any nation that was found to be breaking international laws on nuclear weapons production.<sup>65</sup> There were concerns over the proposal, voiced most profoundly by Warren Austin in October 1948, over the effectiveness of the routine inspections. He pointed out that to outlaw nuclear weapons without having the ability to enforce penalties, a power which the commission did not have, would make the act of banning the production and testing of nuclear weapons a futile gesture; Austin even goes as far as to compare it to the Kellogg-Briand pact, which outlawed warfare in general. Further, all matters and violations would have to be brought before the Security Council, where the Soviets could veto any action the council might take, making enforcement impossible.<sup>66</sup> If any sort of clandestine effort to develop nuclear weapons were discovered the Soviet Union would be able to block any efforts to enact measures

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<sup>64</sup> “Statement by the Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the United Nations Security Council before the Council, March 5, 1947.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. ix (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 344-345

<sup>65</sup> Proposals by the Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (Gromyko) on Atomic Energy Control, submitted to the Commission, June 11, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. Vol. ix (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 352-355

<sup>66</sup> Statement by the Representative of the United States to the United Nations General Assembly on the Proposal of the Soviet Union on the Reduction of Armed Forces, Made before the Political and Security Committee, October, 12, 1948.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 325-328

to penalize the violating nation. In hindsight, it would have benefited the Soviet Union greatly, as they would have been able to turn the international community toward pressuring the United States into decommissioning its nuclear arsenal, while continuing their efforts to develop their own nuclear weapons unabated. The Soviets would continue to push for their plan for an international commission to conduct inspections alongside the prohibition of all nuclear weapons through to 1949, even after the detonation of their first atomic bomb. In October of 1949, a month after the discovery of the Soviets first nuclear test, five of the six members of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, the Soviet Union being the sixth, made a statement commenting on the Soviet proposal in which they reiterated its unenforceable nature and its seeming inability to stop clandestine operations to develop the bomb; inquiring as to the Soviet Union's own experiences in developing the bomb in secret to make their point, to which the Soviet delegation did not answer.<sup>67</sup> The back and forth debating between the Soviet Union and the United States was an attempt for both sides to negate each other's strengths. The Soviet Union, even though it did not strip the United States of its nuclear arsenal, was able to gain time to complete their nuclear project. The United States, on the other hand was not able to decrease the size of the Red Army and had in turn allowed its own forces to dwindle at a time when the Cold War was beginning to escalate.

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<sup>67</sup> "Statement by the Representatives of the Canada, China, France, the United Kingdom and the United States on the Consultations of the Six Permanent Members of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, October 25, 1949." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1951) 350-358

## **Truman Doctrine**

One of the first tests of the Truman administration's foreign policy was in Greece. Most of Eastern Europe was firmly under the influence of the Soviet Union. Similar to what had happened in Iran, the Soviets were backing communist guerrillas in Greece operating out of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania.<sup>68</sup> By March 1947 the Greek government was desperate for aid. The Greek Prime Minister, Dimitrios E. Maximos, sent a letter to Secretary of State George Marshall, in which he stated that "immediate assistance has become vital", as the war and the insurgency had taken their toll on the Greek people and economy. In order for his government to survive Maximos requested that the United States government provide: 1.) Financial assistance in order to obtain food, clothing, fuel, seeds and other items vital for subsistence. 2.) financial and other assistance necessary to enable the civil and military establishments of the government. 3.) Aid in obtaining the financial assistance that will enable Greece to create the means of self-support in the future. 4.) And finally, the aid of experienced American administrative, economic, and technical personnel to assure the utilization in an up to date manner.<sup>69</sup>

Truman pleaded with Congress to approve of aid to Greece. That the very existence of the country was under threat due to the terrorist activities of communists. The British Government, whom Greece and Turkey had been looking to for aid and stability, could give no further support to the Greeks or the Turks after March 31<sup>st</sup>. The United Nations could not provide aid either, as none of its financial institutions were ready, and Greece needed aid immediately. Only the United States could provide the aid needed before the Greek

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<sup>68</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 5

<sup>69</sup> "Letter from the Prime Minister of Greece and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece to the President and Secretary of State Requesting Financial Aid, March 3, 1947. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 644-645

government collapsed. Truman also wanted to send aid to Turkey. Despite having stayed neutral during the war, Turkey had been seeking financial aid from Britain “for the purpose of effecting that moderation necessary for maintenance and its national integrity”. If order was going to be maintained in the Middle East, Turkish stability needed to be maintained. He therefore asked congress to send Greece and Turkey aid in the amount of \$400,000,000. He also added that the “seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth by when the hope for a better life has died.” It was up to the American to “keep that hope alive”.<sup>70</sup> If either Greece or Turkey were to collapse in the face of Communism then the Eastern Mediterranean would become, in Kaplan’s words, a “Soviet Lake”.<sup>71</sup>

Gromyko accused the United States of trying to bypass the United Nations, stating that the measures taken by the United States, “with respect to Greece and Turkey”, seriously undermined the authority of the United Nations and that it would “inevitably produce distrust in the relations among the member states of the United Nations”.<sup>72</sup> In response to Gromyko’s charge of the United States undermining the United Nations, Senator Arthur Vandenburg, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, stated that, besides not allowing Greece to sink into Communism, that the United States, far from bypassing the United Nations, providing the aid to Greece and Turkey was “the greatest act of voluntary allegiance to it in the story of the

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<sup>70</sup> “Message from the President to a Joint Session of the Congress, March 12, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 646-650.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid. 5

<sup>72</sup> “Statement by the Representative of the Union of the Socialist Republics to the United Nations Security Council to the Council, April 7, 1947. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 667-672

United Nations.”<sup>73</sup> The act was passed by Congress and approved by Truman on May 22, 1947. It included the provision that it was only allowing for the detailing of a limited number of military members “in an advisory capacity only”.<sup>74</sup> Truman’s call for Congress to allow aid to Greece and Turkey is the bases for what is now known as the “Truman Doctrine”, which in hindsight fits perfectly with the overall policy of the administration. It called for the supporting of friendly governments with aid and advisors, but not with supporting ground troops. It can only be contemplated that Gromyko’s point about the United States’ actions undermining the United Nations would have been justified if the administration had sent troops to support Greek forces.

By 1948, Truman praised the successes of the American mission thus far. Though the military situation had yet to improve substantially, the Greek Army had increased in size and had become a more effective fighting force, as they proved in late December 1947 after a prolonged engagement with superior communist guerrilla forces at Konitsa. The Greek economy had been prevented from collapsing thanks to the American aid. Conditions, though, were still unstable at best. However, Truman did confirm that the Turkish aid program was proceeding in an orderly manner.<sup>75</sup> These early reports, although somewhat pessimistic, proved for Truman the effectiveness of American aid to Greece and Turkey. As it was stated in a report to congress on the effects of the American assistance to Greece that “avoidance of complete collapse [had] been made possible only because of American financial assistance and the technical guidance that has been given to the Greek Government in the administration of practically all aspects of the

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<sup>73</sup> “Address by the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate before the Senate on Aid to Greece and Turkey April 8, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 672-674

<sup>74</sup> “An Act to Provide for Assistance to Greece and Turkey, Approved May 22, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 674-678.

<sup>75</sup> “Second Report to the Congress on Assistance to Greece Turkey for the period Ended December 31, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 685-688

economy”.<sup>76</sup> Thus, with this moderate sense of success, the administration now moved to try and curb what it saw as an equally untenable situation going on in Western Europe using the same measures of aid that had worked in Greece and Turkey.

This initial approach to dealing with the spread of Communism, and the influence of the Soviet Union in Europe, was a way around the difficulties that would have been inherent in sending American troops to Greece and risking an all-out war with the Soviet Union and its satellite states in Europe at this time; a notion, again, that would have been difficult to convince the American public, and the rest of Europe, was a moral act. For now, there were no Soviet troops in Greece, although communist states were giving the guerillas assistance for their campaign. Leffler also points out that several policy makers, including George Kennan, believed that Stalin would not try to intervene directly in Europe to stop American aid or a European recovery effort as long as the United States held its nuclear monopoly. Thus, it was generally accepted that Stalin would “defer to American power”, for the time being.<sup>77</sup> Although its armed forces were weakened, the United States did have the means to prop up the Greek government, which was enough to hold off a communist takeover of Greece. So it can be no surprise that the administration would utilize this on a larger scale to secure Western Europe from leftist parties who were taking advantage of the economic downturn caused by the war. This was the beginning of what Leffler calls the “American Offensive” in Europe to try and drive back the spread of Communism by bolstering European economies and bringing back faith in the free market system.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 687

<sup>77</sup> Leffler. *For the Soul of Mankind*. 69

<sup>78</sup> Leffler. *For the Soul of Mankind*. 65



## **Marshall Plan**

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1947, George C. Marshall gave an address at Harvard University where he outlined the plight of the European nations in recovery from the war. The destruction wrought by the recent conflict had left even the victorious countries in shambles. As Marshall put it, “long-standing commercial ties, private institutions, banks, insurance companies and shipping companies had disappeared”. Further, industrial machinery was in disrepair and/or utterly obsolete and the business structure of all of Europe was at the breaking point. Europe’s need for food stuffs and energy, especially coal, was going to cost far more than they could afford. Also, because Europeans purchased many of their commodities from the United States, so a complete economic collapse of Europe would be a heavy blow for American economy. Thus, as Marshall put it, it was “logical that the United States should do whatever it was able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world”. Without which, he believed there would “be no political stability and no assured peace”. However, he also stated that it would not be fitting for the United States government “to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically”. It was the business of the Europeans, and that the initiative for such a program of aid should come from them.<sup>79</sup> This last point was meant to show that the Europeans were not under the control of the United States; an accusation the Soviets would inevitably make.

This speech was meant to sell a larger version of the what the administration had done in Greece and Turkey. John Lewis Gaddis, author of *We Now Know*, is one of a community, which includes Leffler, of Cold War researchers who see the Marshall Plan as America’s first major

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<sup>79</sup> “Address by the Secretary of State (Marshall) before the Harvard University Alumni, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 5, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 9-11

offensive to stave off Soviet domination of the rest of Europe; which included preventing them from taking complete control of Germany. It may very well have been that because it was offered not only to “free nations”, but also to the Soviet Union and its satellite states in Eastern and Central Europe; the consensus being that it was meant to support non-communist states while driving a wedge between the Soviets and their satellites. Gaddis even points out that Stalin was delighted by the Marshall Plan at first, having expected that the United States would eventually suggest some sort of loan, or other financial aid program, to stimulate the European economies; which in turn was supposed to be an indication of an impending economic crisis in the United States as well as in Western Europe.<sup>80</sup>

France and Italy were especially serious cases that the administration focused on, as officials had now felt that both nations had reached “the bottom of the barrel”. It was estimated that France needed roughly \$100 million a month worth of food, coal and other basic supplies, yet it was only drawing \$10 million a month from exports. According to one memorandum, France had been filling this gap, drawing on credit from the International Monetary Fund, by liquidating United States securities held by French nationals and also by drawing on its gold and dollar reserves; however, France would exhaust these final reserves by October of 1947. Italy possessed only half the reserves of gold and dollar resources that France did. It needed a minimum of \$85 million a month worth of necessary commodities to survive, but was only drawing \$20 million a month from exports. With elections coming up in both countries, in which leftist parties could take advantage, it was vital that their economies not collapse; it was also

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<sup>80</sup> John Lewis Gaddis. “We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History” (Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1997) 41

believed that this would initiate an economic depression, along with political chaos, throughout Europe and eventually the world.<sup>81</sup>

For obvious reasons, the United States needed all the remaining non-communist countries, with their manpower and material resources, in a position to counter any aggressive move either from the communist parties in their countries or from the Soviet Union itself. Economic turmoil could lead to increased sympathy toward communism. Just like in Greece, the United States also understood that it took a strong economy to maintain sufficient security forces that could deter such aggression. With American military officials concerned about the United States' declining troop strength, it was seen as being beneficial to having all the European nations ready to counter any aggressive move the Soviet Union might make in the future. At the very least their resistance could buy time against a Soviet attack which might even be a deterrent by itself, with one report by a joint committee of the State, Navy, and War Departments stating that resistance even by small countries against "foreign powers with aggressive designs...may consume significant...amounts of time and resources, thus affording a cushion of time and distance to the U.S".<sup>82</sup>

However, it was viewed by other officials as being detrimental to American foreign relations to depict the plan, and the Truman Doctrine, in this sense. George Kennan felt that any aid program to Europe needed to remove two impressions that he felt damaged it in American public opinions. First, "that the United States approach to world problems is a defensive reaction

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<sup>81</sup> "Memorandum" September 29, 1947. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 472-474

<sup>82</sup> "Report of the Special Ad hoc Committee of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee: April 21, 1947". *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 217

to communist pressure and that the effort to restore sound economic conditions in other countries is only a by-product of this reaction and not something [the United States] would be interested in doing if there were no communist menace". Second, "that the Truman Doctrine is a blank check to give economic and military aid to any area in the world where communists show signs of being successful". Kennan felt that the decision to send aid to a particular state or region needed to be based on a cost-benefit analysis. He uses Greece and Turkey as an example, stating that in that case the United States was "dealing with a critical area where the failure to take action would have had particularly serious consequences, where a successful action would promise particularly far-reaching results, and where the overall cost was relatively small".<sup>83</sup>

Marshall mentioned in his June 5<sup>th</sup> speech that it was not the place of the United States to formulate or dictate the terms of a plan for European economic recovery. Throughout the discussion of the plan it was made clear time and time again that the Europeans would need to take responsibility for formulating it. The United States desired that Europe be self-sufficient and exist without the need of outside charity. They wanted the Europeans to be able to import commodities from the United States, but also the administration wanted to make it so that they could have enough self-confidence to withstand outside pressures; meaning the Soviet Union of course.<sup>84</sup> Following Marshall's speech at Harvard, Britain and France became very interested in the concept and sought to invite Belgium and the Netherlands to the discussion. They also extended an invitation to the Soviets to take part in the conference due to start in Paris July 5<sup>th</sup>. Ernest Brevin, the British Foreign Secretary, and Georges Bidault, the French Foreign Minister

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<sup>83</sup> "The Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson): May 23, 1947". *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 229-230

<sup>84</sup> "Memorandum Prepared by the Policy Planning Staff: July 21, 1947". *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 335

both hoped that the Soviet would refuse the invitation, believing that their participation would only complicate matters.<sup>85</sup> Regardless of their personal feelings on the matter, Bevin and Bidault agreed to meet with Molotov in Paris on June 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the prospects of Soviet participation in the European Recovery Program.<sup>86</sup>

Molotov met with Bevin and Bidault on June 27<sup>th</sup>. The American ambassador to France, Jefferson Caffery, would send Marshall regular updates of the meetings throughout the next two days. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, he reported to the Secretary of State that Molotov had been raising doubts about the effectiveness of the upcoming conference and the dedication of the United States to deliver on the aid necessary to rejuvenate Europe's economy. He proposed to test the seriousness of the American proposal by asking the United States government "the exact sum of money which the United States was prepared to advance to aid European recovery", and "whether the United States Congress would vote such a credit". Bevin disagreed outright with the proposal. He reminded Molotov that Marshall's speech had not contained an offer of any specified sum of money. The Secretary of State had suggested that European countries come together and "form a constructive plan for European rehabilitation", and that the United States would back such a plan, "if it was realistic".<sup>87</sup> Molotov raised further doubt by questioning the effect of the plan on the sovereignty of the individual European states and made the suggestion that each European state conduct a study of its needs and then each report would be compiled to establish the total

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<sup>85</sup> "The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State: June 18, 1947-4pm" *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 258

<sup>86</sup> "The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State: June 18, 1947-11pm" *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 259-260

<sup>87</sup> "The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State: June 28, 1947". *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 297-299

credit needed from the United States. It seemed that the Soviets wanted to put the American government in a position where it would be forced to “shell out” dollars before there was an actual plan or, as it seemed the Soviets wanted, refuse to advance any credits. Despite this obvious attempt to cause dissent, Caffery states that Molotov’s responses and suggestions toward Bevin and Bidault were somewhat mild, as to give no valid reason to break with them.<sup>88</sup>

The final blow to the Three Power Conference, as Caffery refers to the meetings, came on July 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Here Molotov reiterated his previous arguments stating aloud that “there could be no infringement on the sovereignty of European states; that they could individually establish their needs and submit the total dollar costs of their combined needs to the United States government and ask if it were prepared to advance the necessary credits.” Bevin responded to Molotov, with Bidault’s support, that his proposal amounted to asking the United States for a blank check, even finishing with the comment, “If I were to go to Moscow with a blank check and ask you to sign it I wonder how far I would get with your end.”<sup>89</sup> The next day, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the French attempted to reconcile the Soviet concerns, stating that “Europe must put up a coordinated plan of her economy and that the United States would then be in a position to supply the supplement; Europe was to help itself and this could be done without any interference with sovereignty”. Again, however, Molotov stood firm in his resistance.<sup>90</sup> Leffler believes that Molotov was sent by Stalin to genuinely discuss the prospects of the United States providing aid

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<sup>88</sup> “The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State: June 29, 1947”. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 299-301

<sup>89</sup> “The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State: July 1, 1947”. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 301-303

<sup>90</sup> “The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State: July 2, 1947”. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 304-305

to all of Europe, but that he became aware that the program would require the opening of Eastern Europe to western influence and would ultimately isolate the Soviet Union.<sup>91</sup> Molotov's behavior seems to lend credence to Leffler's point. It seemed that when Stalin saw he could not take advantage of the program he turned to trying to disrupt it in the hope that the United States would not provide the necessary credit and that might lead to the failure of the Marshall Plan before the European states could meet to discuss the issue.

Molotov's resistance all but ended the conference, although there were distinctly mixed feeling toward the results. The French saw benefits in having the Soviets refuse to back the recovery program. First, it would disarm French communists, who were strong at this time, and who would have otherwise attacked the plan had the Soviets not had their say. Second, was that the absence of the Soviets also meant that there would be less interference, which the Soviets were now becoming known for in the international community, in developing a European plan with Britain.<sup>92</sup> Marshall also saw the benefits, which he shared in a reply to Caffery, stating that "at least the Soviet attitude in these questions has been clarified at this stage and will not continue to represent an uncertainty in the working out of a recovery program for other countries".<sup>93</sup> The British and French governments had agreed to meet with the Soviets seeing two possible outcomes. That the Soviets would choose to stay out of the process, making a recovery plan easier for the free states in Europe to complete, or would join the rest of Europe in

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid 63

<sup>92</sup> "The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State: July 2, 1947-noon". *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972)305-306

<sup>93</sup> "The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France. July 3, 1947". *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 308

the plan, thereby preventing further division of the continent between the two political camps. Either way there were pros to be taken advantage of.

One of the key repercussions to the Three Power Conference was that the Soviets were forced to have to assert their authority over the countries within the Soviet sphere of influence. This is duplicitous when one looks back to all the instances in which the Soviets had, and still would, use the excuse that no measures should ever be undertaken that would interfere with the internal affairs of sovereign states to prevent measures undertaken by the United Nations that they felt would have hindered both Soviet foreign policy and the international communist movement from progressing. This move by the Soviets would cause complications in their relations with Eastern Europe and the West. Lewis W. Douglas, the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom, reported that both Poland and Czechoslovakia wanted to participate in the program, but that they would need the permission of Moscow to do so.<sup>94</sup> Czechoslovakia was especially anxious to receive aid to rebuild their diminished industrial capacity. The American ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Laurence Steinhardt, informed Marshall that the Czechs were extremely anxious to participate in the Marshall Plan and would do so unless they were forbidden to by the Soviet Union; to whom the Czechs were dependent upon economically.<sup>95</sup> Steinhardt telegraphed Marshall on July 10<sup>th</sup> to inform him that Moscow had directed the Czech government to withdraw its acceptance to participate in the Paris Conference, which had been underway since the 7<sup>th</sup>. Steinhardt obtained his information via an informant, the identity of

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<sup>94</sup> "The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Douglas) to the Secretary of State. July 4, 1947." *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 311

<sup>95</sup> "The Ambassador in Czechoslovakia (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State. July 7, 1947." *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 313-314



whom he does not reveal, that the Czechoslovakian Prime Minister, Klement Gottwald, would state that his reason for doing so would be that he and his government felt that the conference was “a political and not an economic conference and that withdrawal of Czech acceptance would serve as conclusive evidence of Czechoslovakia’s loyalty to its alliance with the Soviet Union.” Czechoslovakia’s reasons for withdrawing from the Marshall Plan, along with the effect it had on the country, will be stated in greater detail in the next section. Steinhardt also mentions that the Czech withdrawal had been anticipated and that it had been made clear to the public that Czechoslovakia did not enjoy complete independence and that the repeated charge of it in the western press had now been proven.<sup>96</sup> Poland also gave its final answer, stating that they were choosing not to participate out of fear that “Poland would have little or nothing to say at the Paris Conference”, and that the discussion would be dominated by the French and British ministers. They also cited the Marshall Plan’s intention to rehabilitate Germany and that Poland would not tolerate the rejuvenation of the “aggressor nation”.<sup>97</sup> Poland joined Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Hungary in boycotting the conference. Like the other eastern states, the only real reason to why was that they had been informed by Moscow to do so and thus showed the dictatorial control the Soviet Union had over its neighboring states.

Following the Paris Conference in July the remaining European nations that accepted the invitation to participate in the recovery program formed the Committee of European Economic Cooperation which included Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy,

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<sup>96</sup> “The Ambassador in Czechoslovakia (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State. July 10, 1947) *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 318

<sup>97</sup> “The Ambassador in Poland (Griffs) to the Secretary of State. July 10, 1947) *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 320-322

Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. They compiled a report covering the amount of aid required and what form that aid should be in; there was a major debate over whether the majority of the aid should be in commodities or dollars to buy commodities.<sup>98</sup> Finally in December the basic European Recovery Program was complete. Congress approved on the aid as the “Foreign Aid Act of 1947”, which passed on December 15th and was approved by Truman on December 17th.<sup>99</sup>

On December 19<sup>th</sup> Truman sent a message to Congress highlighting the major points of American aid to Europe. He starts by explaining that it was necessary as a means of preventing a third world war. He stated that the plight in Europe had intensified a political struggle between those who wanted to live free and “those would use economic distress as a pretext for the establishment of a totalitarian state”. That if Europe failed to recover, the people of those countries might be driven to the “philosophy of despair, which contends that their basic wants can be met only by the surrender of their basic rights to totalitarian control”. This is a far cry from Kennan’s advice in the beginning that the United States should not give the impression that the Marshall Plan was a defensive measure against communism. The Paris report included a recovery program designed to enable them to become economically self-supporting within a period of four years. The program involved four basic point: “1.) A strong production effort by each of the participating countries; 2.) creation of internal financial stability by each country. 3.) Maximum and continuing cooperation among the participating countries; 4.) A solution of the problem of the participating countries trading deficit with the American continents, particularly

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<sup>98</sup> “Message from the President (Truman) to the Congress on a Program for United States Aid to European Recovery, December 19, 1947.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 233-247

<sup>99</sup> Editorial Note. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe.* (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 484

by increasing European exports.” The participating European states also agreed to measures for “the reduction of trade barriers, the removal of obstacles to the free movement of persons within Europe, and a joint agreement to use their common resources to the best advantages”.<sup>100</sup>

Again, Truman reiterates that the program is designed for the recovery of the European economies and is not a relief program. It was estimated that the first year, April 1948 to late June 1949, would require \$6.8 billion in American aid to Europe and another \$10.2 billion for the following three years. To cover all possibilities, Truman asked congress to authorize the appropriation of \$17 billion to cover the full period of the program from April 1, 1948 to June 30, 1952. Aid would also be provided in the form of grants and loans, with European countries increasingly turning to the International Bank and private financing, to countries that could make payments, but that grants would not be given to nations that could pay in cash for all imports or repay loans. The United States would also supply industrial goods in order to relieve critical shortages.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, however, the United States was also facing shortages and rising housing costs. Leffler states that during the latter half of 1946 rising prices of commodities along with housing costs drove many Americans against the administration; with Truman’s approval rating reaching an all-time low at 30%.<sup>102</sup>

From 1947 to 1948, the administration struggled to keep the public’s faith and to keep the economy strong. It was feared that, just as the collapse of Europe’s economies would mean the downfall of the United States’, if America’s economy failed then Western Europe would also fall into an economic depression which the communists would take advantage of. In a message to

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<sup>100</sup> Truman. “European Recovery”, 233-237

<sup>101</sup> Truman. “European Recovery”, 240-241

<sup>102</sup> Leffler. *For the Soul of Mankind*. 70

congress calling for action on the issue, Truman stated that the American people demanded legislative action by the government to both “check the inflation and rising cost of living” and “to help meeting the acute housing shortage”. Truman believed that these difficulties not only affect the average American family, but “also the entire world, for world peace depends upon the strength of our economy”. Truman pushed the congress to enact measures that would help to control rising prices and inflation because “the Communists are counting [America’s] present prosperity turning to a depression”, adding that “a depression the United States would cut the ground from under the free nations of Europe.” He therefore called on congress to enact anti-inflation program that included: 1.) “an excessive profits tax be reestablished in order to provide a Treasury surplus and provide a brake on inflation”; 2.) “consumer credit controls be restored in order to hold down inflationary credit”; 3.) “the Federal Reserve Board be given greater authority to regulate inflationary credit”; 4.) “authority be granted to regulate speculation on the commodity exchanges”; 5.) “authority be granted for allocation and inventory control of scarce commodities which basically affect essential industrial production, or the cost of living”; 6.) “rent controls be strengthened, and that adequate appropriations be provided for enforcement, in order to prevent unwarranted rent increases”; 7.) “stand-by authority be granted to ration those few products in short supply which vitally affect the health and welfare of [the American] people”; 8.) “price control be authorized for scarce commodities which basically affect essential industrial production or the cost of living.”<sup>103</sup> This program was aimed at keeping American stable at a time when it was believed by the administration that the country needed to look strong

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<sup>103</sup> Message of the President (Truman) to a Special Session of the Congress on Domestic Issues and Foreign Policy, July 27, 1948. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 18-19

and capable during a time when the West had been made vulnerable because of the economic downturn.

As far as Marshall Plan, and the Truman Doctrine, being an “American Offensive”, the evidence seems to support it as having been a response to economic and political turmoil and was mainly conceived as a measure for strengthening the west at a time where Stalin could have taken advantage. The communist parties were strong and influential in both France and Italy. Should they have obtained control of the governments of those countries it may very well have led to Soviet influence dominating the continent. The Soviets strength laid in playing the system off to their advantage or to use their authority in the international community to subvert it when they felt threatened and the Americans, British, and French seemed to recognize this and developed a strategy to undermine it. To keep the Soviets from interfering with the recovery program, as they had done with disarmament, they needed the Soviets to reject it out right to eliminate them from the process. This also meant that the Eastern European countries would be kept out by force, as it had already been determined beforehand that the Soviets held so much control over countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia they would need Stalin’s permission to accept the invitation to participate in the Paris Conference, which would mean both that aid could be focused on countries friendly to the United States and show the true nature of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. The notion of there being defections from the Eastern bloc did not seem to be a major goal. However, as it had been in France, there seemed to be some belief that the public would turn against the communists, who took their orders from Moscow, once the Soviets informed them to turn down the much needed aid. This effect, augmented with the Soviet clampdown in Eastern Europe as a response to the Truman Doctrine, would lead to the most

pivotal events of the post-war period. The first of which would take place in one of the only countries the Soviet Union did not force communist rule on; Czechoslovakia.

The moral implications here are enormous for the United States. The Soviet Union keeping Eastern Europe out of the European Recovery Program demonstrated the authoritarian nature of Stalin's regime. This showed the world, and the American public especially, why the Soviet Union, and Communism in general, should be opposed by the democratic world. What would happen next, in Czechoslovakia, would be an even more overt demonstration of the insidious nature of the communist movement; giving even more justification for the United States on why they needed to contain and eventually, in the Niebuhrian sense, eliminate it through whatever means were necessary.

## Czechoslovakia

In 1940, Molotov had spoken to the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry saying that “if the First World War had allowed the Bolsheviks to carry out the first stage of their revolution, in Russia, a second would allow us to take power in the whole of Europe”.<sup>104</sup> After the Soviet Union had been brought into the war, until its eventually victory over Nazi Germany in May of 1945, the country seemed to be following Molotov’s statement to the letter. Stalin had made it clear that he intended to Sovietize all the states that the Red Army liberated during the war, telling Yugoslavian communist Milovan Djilas in 1945 that “whoever occupies a territory also imposes his own social system...It cannot be otherwise”.<sup>105</sup> It may have not been intentional, but the Marshall Plan did threaten Stalin’s hold on Eastern Europe. After leaving the Three Power Conference in July, as the Western nations had wanted, Stalin took a more hardline approach to consolidating his position. One step was to keep the Soviet satellite states out of the Paris Conference, as explained above. The Soviet Union was still reeling from the war. According to Leffler, much of the Soviet Union was left devastated and impoverished from the war. There were shortages of food which were made worse by a terrible grain harvest in 1946 which measured only “39.6 million tons compared with 95.5 million in 1940”. This, along with deteriorating housing conditions, caused demoralization throughout Russia. High ranking Soviet officials reported that “people are angry about their life and complain openly”, and that “policies are such [that] nobody wants to work”.<sup>106</sup> Thus, the European Recovery Plan could only aid in

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<sup>104</sup> Figes. *Revolutionary Russia*. 230

<sup>105</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 14

<sup>106</sup> Leffler. *For the Soul of Mankind*. 73

undermining Stalin's, and the Soviet leaderships, position further. This made it a natural decision to keep all states within the Soviet sphere of influence out of the discussion.

Another of his methods of clamping down, to prevent defections from the Soviet sphere, was to call a meeting of communist parties from across Europe at Szklarska Poreba, Poland in September 1947.<sup>107</sup> Representatives of the communist parties of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union, France, Czechoslovakia, and Italy arrived to "hear information reports on the activities of the central committees of the parties represented."<sup>108</sup> The Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) was formed there to be a replacement to the old Comintern, which Stalin had abolished in 1943, as the new organ to direct the international communist movement. The bureau's manifesto claimed that the Marshall Plan was "a farce, a European branch of the general world plan of political expansion being realized by the United States of America in all parts of the world".<sup>109</sup> The next major move would be to secure a vital nation that was not only strategically important, but also was key to Stalin's efforts to obtain the atomic bomb.

Kaplan narrates best the events and policies that led to the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in February 1948. The relationship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was a vague one. While the former was occupied, the Czechoslovakian government in exile signed an "Agreement of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Postwar Collaboration" in December 1943. Article 4 of the agreement stipulated that both sides respect each other's

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<sup>107</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 46

<sup>108</sup> "Communist Information Bureau". *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 622

<sup>109</sup> "Manifesto Issued by the Conference of Communist Parties in Connection with the Creation of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), Released to the Press in Warsaw, October 5 1947." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 624



independence and sovereignty, which includes a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the other state. Also, both sides agreed to develop economic relations on the widest possible scale and to “render each other every possible economic assistance after the war”.<sup>110</sup> Holloway also gives some insight into the importance of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union. The uranium mines at Jachymov (Joachimsthal) near the border with Saxony had been the world’s main source of uranium in the early part of the century, at one time they had been yielding 20 metric tons of uranium oxide a year. This was a key source of fissile material for the Soviet nuclear project and future bomb production and because it was so important the Soviets made a secret agreement with the Benes government giving them exclusive rights to the uranium ore there.<sup>111</sup>

After the country was liberated, the Communist Party came to dominate the Czechoslovakian government. They accounted for 38% of the popular vote, controlled the police, and were the heads of the Central Council of Trades Unions (URO). Despite this the country, especially the non-communists, wanted to maintain good ties with the west, especially as means of guaranteeing protection from Germany. As mentioned before, the Marshall Plan for European economic recovery would have been extremely helpful for the Czechs, and they were eager to join in the discussion of the European recovery plan going on in Paris in the summer of 1947.<sup>112</sup> Gottwald detailed his meeting with Stalin in telegram he had sent back to the Prague, which was obtained by the American ambassador to Czechoslovakia. In it, Gottwald described his meetings with Stalin, where the “Generalissimo made clear his feelings on Czechoslovakia’s accepting to participate in the Paris Conference. He told Czech officials that both Stalin and

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<sup>110</sup>Agreement of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Collaboration between the USSR and the Czechoslovak Republic. December 12, 1943.

<sup>111</sup> Holloway. *Stalin and the Bomb*. 109

<sup>112</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 105-117

Molotov, who was present at the meetings, “did not conceal [the] fact that they were surprised at the decision of the Czechoslovak Government in accepting the invitation to Paris”. They shared their feelings with him that the conference was a political maneuver by the United States to create a Western bloc to isolate the Soviet Union. Further, they made it clear that they would regard Czechoslovakia’s “participation as a break in the front of the Slav States and as an act specifically aimed against the USSR”.<sup>113</sup> Molotov would voice his and Stalin’s feelings again in November 1947, on the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution, in which he called the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan tools for American economic expansion. He related this to “an approaching economic crisis”, which had led the Americans to an expansionist policy in order to build a commercial monopoly in Europe.<sup>114</sup> This also reflected a statement made earlier, in 1946, by the Soviet Ambassador to the US, Nikolai Novikov, in which he stated that the United States would take advantage of a need for consumer goods, industrial and transportation equipment in Europe to advance their policy of world supremacy. He stated that “such a situation provides American monopolistic capital with prospects for enormous shipments of goods and the importation of capital into these countries; a circumstance that would permit it to infiltrate their national economies”.<sup>115</sup> Besides losing a dependent state, the possibility of Czechoslovakia defecting would also have caused a setback in the Soviets’ nuclear project. However, Stalin’s coercion had consequences for the communists in Czechoslovakia. Despite being the majority, and holding several vital government positions, Czechoslovakia was still a multi-party republic

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<sup>113</sup> “The Ambassador in Czechoslovakia (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State. Praha July 10, 1947”. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947. Vol iii The British Commonwealth; Europe*. (Washington: US Government Printing Office; 1972) 319-320

<sup>114</sup> “Address by the Foreign Minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Molotov) on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the October, November 6, 1947. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 618-622

<sup>115</sup> “Soviet Ambassador Nikolai Novikov Identifies a US Drive for World Supremacy, 1946.”. *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, vol. ii (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage; 2005) 197

and the communists were dependent on public support to maintain their advantage in Prague. As had happened in France, the communists began to lose the support of the Czechoslovakian public. This would lead to a desire by the communists to do away with the system entirely and establish the country as a one party state.

The coup began with a bomb plot, presumed to have been orchestrated by the communists, in September 1947. Explosives were sent through the mail to several key government officials. Despite interference from the communist controlled Ministry of the Interior, it was later proved that the plot had originated from a unit within the Communist Party. In February of 1948, the communists decided to use the case of the bomb plot to their advantage when word reached them that, due to the fallout from the refusal to participate in the European recovery plan, they were on track to lose 8 to 10 percent of the vote in the coming elections. They would use the case and a new plan that called for radical socialist reforms that they knew the non-communist parties would reject. They hoped this would precipitate a crisis that would lead to the resignation of several anti-communist officials; the communists hoped to replace them with their own members and preserve their majority. The non-communists in turn believed that they could use this plan against the communists by holding the elections early and before the communists could rig them.<sup>116</sup>

At a cabinet meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup>, the non-communists attempted to have the Communist Party support the reinstatement of eight non-communist police commissioners that they had tried to have replaced with communists. When they refused to budge on the issue, twelve non-communist's ministers handed in their resignations to President Benes. Benes

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<sup>116</sup> Kaplan. Life and Death of the Cold War. 121-124

congratulated the men on their efforts, but refused to accept their resignations, not wanting to support either side in the crisis. The communists called on the president to accept the resignations, along with communist delegates to replace them. When he resisted, the communists staged demonstrations on the 21<sup>st</sup> that were in turn countered by demonstrations by the democratic parties. Due to the communists having complete control of the police, several democratic demonstrators were arrested and over the course of the next two days the communists seized control of the government. Eventually, President Benes agreed to accept the resignations of the twelve non-communist ministers and to the installment of a new communist cabinet. The crisis had worked and the communists were now in complete control.<sup>117</sup> The western allies had wanted Czechoslovakia to be a bridge to the west, with the Czechoslovakians seeking good relations with their western neighbors to deter any future aggression by Germany. However, they were heavily reliant on Soviet support and so were under Stalin's thumb from the beginning. Eventually the communists would come to influence the Czechoslovakian government the most; taking complete control when their denial of American aid nearly cost them their dominance.

In a statement before the United Nations Security Council, Austin placed the blame for the communist takeover on the Soviet Union interfering in the affairs of Czechoslovakia. He claimed that "the Soviet Union had reduced the good people of Czechoslovakia to slavery". He even called for the Security Council to level a charge of indirect aggression against the Soviet Union. However, any action that the security council did take toward the United States proposal was vetoed and stopped by the Soviet Union.<sup>118</sup> These actions were meant to show the United

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<sup>117</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 124-128

<sup>118</sup> "Statement by the United States Representative on the United Nations Security Council before the Council, March 23, 1948." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 627-632

States' outrage towards the communists for overthrowing a democratic government, which did shock the American and Western European public, but the fact may have been that the coup came as no surprise to the administration. Since 1946 the United States had known that Czechoslovakia was firmly under the control of the Soviet Union. As it is stated in one report of soviet foreign and military policy, "In Czechoslovakia...although the government is democratic rather than authoritarian in pattern, no [soviet] interference is required, since the communists and related parties constitute a majority and the non-communist leaders are 'friendly'".<sup>119</sup> Despite the coup itself having been a surprise, Czechoslovakia had, in a way, already been lost to the west for some time.

Kaplan presents a piece of evidence of Soviet involvement in that there had been Soviet troop movements on the on the border of Czechoslovakia in mid-February 1948. These troops had been there, supposedly, to ensure delivery of grain shipments from the Soviet Union and to participate in a scheduled celebration of Soviet-Czechoslovak friendship. In all likelihood, they may have responded offensively had the communists been unsuccessful in their attempts to seize control in Prague. Interestingly enough it seems the Czechoslovakian communists were assured of their success further by notification that the American were in no position to aid the Czechoslovakian government.<sup>120</sup> Gaddis also states that the communists were assured of success by intelligence reports that showed the Americans would not intervene.<sup>121</sup> If American troops had been available to intervene in Czechoslovakia, which Kaplan implies might have stopped the coup, it would have been seen as an act of aggression by the international community, as well as

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<sup>119</sup> "Central Intelligence Group, Office of Research and Evaluation, OREI. Soviet Foreign and Military Policy." (July 23, 1946) 5

<sup>120</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 124

<sup>121</sup> Gaddis. *We Now Know*. 47

an unnecessary intervention by the American public, and may have led to direct hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union; and despite Austin's accusations and Kaplan's claim of Soviet coercion the Soviets did not directly takeover Czechoslovakia. Even if Stalin had ordered the troops he had on the border into the country it is not the likely the Americans would have intervened. Czechoslovakia was seen as already being in the Soviet sphere and the United States was not ready, militarily, to start a new war in Europe. Thus an American or western intervention would have been unorthodox and even, perhaps, catastrophic.

The coup in Czechoslovakia had shown communism as being hostile to democratic processes, that it was intent on expanding, and that it could not co-exist with the west; something the Marshall Plan had already proven. In March 1948, the UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg signed the 'Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defense'; the official language of the treaty indicated that the western European nations were banning together to take steps for the sake of mutual defense in case Germany ever again became aggressive. However, given the then recent events it can only be speculated that an aggressive move by the communists was being anticipated. The Truman administration applauded the move toward, what they saw as, European unity and pledged the full support of the United States.<sup>122</sup> The coup itself had cemented Stalin's hold on Czechoslovakia and had allowed the Truman administration to paint the Soviets as a dictatorial power holding onto the nations of Eastern Europe with an iron grip. It also allowed them to depict Communism as nothing more than a totalitarian system disguised as movement of liberation. Despite these gains for America's moral crusade against Communism, the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and the

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<sup>122</sup> Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defense between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Northern, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, Signed at Brussels, March 17, 1948". *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 584-588

coup had all but completed the bifurcation of Europe between the American and Soviet spheres of influence.

While Europe fractured, Truman was attempting to step up American nuclear capabilities in response to the spread of communism throughout Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Previously, in June 1947 he had approved a new round of nuclear tests at Bikini Atoll; Operation Sandstone. At the time he gave his approval the American nuclear stockpile consisted of only 13 bombs.<sup>123</sup> As it had been in late 1946, scientists and nuclear engineers were still trying to make nuclear weapons more efficient and economical to produce. By May 1948 they were finally ready to test a new version of the plutonium bomb, the MK-IV, which was the first nuclear bomb design made for mass production.<sup>124</sup> The president did not give up on international control of nuclear energy, but scientists working at Los Alamos had long since determined that the Soviets could produce a bomb of their own, and with the breakdown of talks for international regulations, the administration could not afford to lose its advantage.<sup>125</sup> Especially at the time, when the threat of Soviet aggression had reached one of its highest levels, and the United States possessed only 50 of the minimum of 200 plutonium bombs that had been determined to be needed to defeat the Soviet Union in an all-out war in Europe.<sup>126</sup> This information did not, however, deter American and Western European leaders from taking other steps to prepare themselves for further communist aggression.

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<sup>123</sup> "DNA 6033F (Operation Sandstone: 1948)." (December 19, 1983) 17

<sup>124</sup> Miller. *Under the Cloud*. 80

<sup>125</sup> Gordin. *Red Cloud*. 76

<sup>126</sup> "DNA 6033F". 18

## **The Berlin Blockade**

Just before the coup in Prague, Britain, France, and the United States held a conference in London over their mutual interests concerning Germany. The three occupying powers also invited Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands to participate in what became known as the Six-Power Conference. The Soviets cited the conference as a violation of the Potsdam Agreement for the quadripartite rule of Germany, voicing their frustrations in a note to the British government on February 14<sup>th</sup>, stating that “the calling of the conference in London is a violation of agreement in control machinery in Germany and a violation of the Potsdam decision on the treatment of Germany as single whole.” They also felt that any “questions to be considered at the London Conference...are questions as can only be decided by common agreements of all powers occupying Germany”.<sup>127</sup> The United States responded to the Soviets charge on February 21<sup>st</sup>, stating that the conference was an “examination of problems in Germany of mutual interests to the three governments”. Further, there were no provisions in the Potsdam agreement that prohibited “any of the powers from discussing between themselves question of common concern”. The US reprimanded the Soviet government for attempting to

“remind the other powers of their contractual obligations in Germany”. “The result evoked by the failure of the Soviet Government to observe the principle of economic unity provided for in Section III B 14 of the Potsdam agreement impels the other three powers at this time to consult among themselves to put an end to a state of uncertainty and economic deterioration in Germany which threatens recovery in all of Europe.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> “Note from the Government of the Soviet Union to the Government of the United Kingdom. Released to the Press February 14, 1948.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 105-108

<sup>128</sup> “Note from the Government of the United States to the Government of the Soviet Union, February 21, 1948”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 108-109



Among the provisions decided by the six countries at the conference was that the economic importance of a “democratic Germany” to Western Europe and that there should be close relations between them because of this. In light of this, the western powers decided that it would be important for “the German people to be free to establish for themselves the political organization and institutions which will enable them to assume those governmental roles [and] government responsibilities which...ultimately will enable them to assume full governmental responsibility”. They also decided that the new German state would be a federated one, so that power was not centralized, unlike with previous German governments.<sup>129</sup> The conference showed the level of separation that had occurred between the West and the Soviet Union caused by their bi-polar goals in the post-war world. At this point, with Communism spreading across the continent, it would only make sense that the United States and Western Europe would want to prevent the Soviets from gaining hegemony over Germany and its resources.

The crisis that followed was one long in the making. One that had been brewing at least since Germany surrendered in May of 1945. As tensions began to grow between the Soviet Union and the United States, either side feared that the other would gain complete control over Germany. Though it had been responsible for three conflicts in Europe over the last 70 years, Germany was a necessary industrial power in Europe, and needed to be maintained as such. Gaddis states, quite accurately, that “what each superpower feared was that its wartime enemy might align itself with its [now] Cold War adversary: if that were to happen, the resulting concentration of military, industrial, and economic power could be too great to overcome”.<sup>130</sup> It

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<sup>129</sup> “Communique Issued at the Conclusion of the Six-Power Conference of London on German Problems. Released to the Press, June 7, 1948”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 109-111

<sup>130</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 115

must be remembered that the United States controlled Japan and, in Stalin's mind, would be the benefactor to its industrial output. If the United States were to exert its influence on Germany it would be the beneficiary of the same power and resources that had allowed the former axis states to nearly conquer the world. In Stalin's mind this would have been as detrimental to the Soviet Union as allowing the United States to have a monopoly on nuclear weapons.

Gaddis states that before demobilization had taken its toll on American forces and the bomb had been revealed to the world, Stalin had been considering how to absorb the whole of Germany into the Soviet sphere. In June of 1945 he began meeting with the leaders of the German Communist Party (KPD) to discuss his two-pronged approach to accomplishing this goal. The first part involved the Red Army controlling the Soviet occupation zone, Sovietizing it, and the second would involve a united leftist party, made up of the KPD and the Social Democrats (SPD), which would be called the Socialist Unity Party (SED); whose task would be to infiltrate the western occupations zones and form "national fronts" with the non-communist leftist parties in western Germany. These fronts founded by the SED, which was under the control of the KPD, would win the sympathy and support of Social Democrats and other sympathetic Germans in the western zones; eventually leading to unification of the country under communist control. However, this plan was doomed from the start because the Red Army had been mistreating the local Germany population in their occupation zones: raping women, pillaging property, indiscriminately extracting reparations, and unilaterally transferring large portions of territory to the Lublin Poles. Suffice it to say, the Soviets were not popular. Further, any progress that might have been made in western Germany by the SED was undone by the Marshall Plan, which included the western allied occupation zones in the recovery program. Gaddis states, that the Marshall Plan presented Germans from the west with two choices, "they

could follow the Stalinist path toward national unity, knowing that the Soviet Union's capacity to bring about economic recovery was minimal and likely to remain so; or they could seek immediate economic assistance through alignment with the United States and its allies". The downside to choosing the latter would be that German unification would take longer. Most sided with aligning with the west and repairing Germany's shattered industry and infrastructure.<sup>131</sup> By the summer of 1948 the west was winning the battle for Germany. The London Conference had represented a near complete break with the Soviets on how to handle Germany's rehabilitation. They would have the industrial heart of Germany allied with them against the Soviets. Stalin knew this and was quick to act in order to prevent the formation of a west German state.

Following the release of the six-power communiqué, and an announcement of a currency reform in the western allied zones in late June, the Soviet commanders in Berlin stated that the whole Berlin Area was to be integrated into the Soviet zone of occupation. By June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Soviet officials asserted that they alone could write currency laws for Berlin and announced that they no longer recognized four power rule of the city. The United States held this as a complete violation of the quadripartite agreements, which the Soviets had sworn to. The next day Soviet officials issued Soviet Order 111, proclaiming currency reforms as of June 24<sup>th</sup> throughout the Soviet Zone and all sectors of Berlin. The next day after that, June 24<sup>th</sup>, Soviet authorities halted all rail and barge communications in and out of Berlin.<sup>132</sup> The United States government informed the Soviet Union that it regarded the latter's restrictive blockade of the city as clear violation of existing agreements for the governance of the city on July 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>133</sup> In response to the American

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<sup>131</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 116-120

<sup>132</sup> "Berlin Situation." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 80-82

<sup>133</sup> Note from the Government of the United States to the Government of the Soviet Union, July 6, 1948". *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 84-85

claim, on July 14<sup>th</sup>, the Soviets accused the United States, Great Britain, and France of being in violation of the quadripartite agreement by the announcement of the currency reforms in the western sectors of Berlin.<sup>134</sup> As a measure of deterrence, if the Soviet blockade had turned out to have been the opening move of a larger scale offensive to conquer Europe, Truman also sent B-29's modified to carry nuclear weapons to Britain. However, given the size of the arsenal at the time, being around 50 plutonium bombs, and that neither the United States or the rest of Europe was ready to respond to a Soviet ground offensive, it is doubtful whether Truman would have sent them with nuclear bombs or would have deployed them if they did.<sup>135</sup>

The Americans may not have been prepared to start a war, but they were willing to make the Soviet zone currency the dominant monetary note of Berlin, so long as the city was still to be governed by all four allied nations; however, they indicated that the blockade would have to be ended as a prerequisite for the agreement to be accepted. The Soviets wanted it in the opposite order, for the western occupiers to withdraw their new currency to their zones and then all travel and shipping restrictions to the city would be lifted. The Soviets also wanted meetings among representatives of the four government to be held in the future to discuss: “(A) Any question which may be outstanding as regards to Berlin and (B) any other outstanding problems affecting Germany as a whole”. The American ambassador to the Soviet Union, Walter Bedell Smith responded that the United States government could not accept an agreement that stipulated that an agreement must have been decided before the blockade was lifted, the Soviet request for the deferment of the physical establishment of a west German government, or any presumption that would give the idea that the west were allowing their sectors to be incorporated into the Soviet

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<sup>134</sup> “Note from the Government of the Soviet Union to the Government of the United States, July 14, 1948”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 86-88

<sup>135</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 91

zone.<sup>136</sup> Negotiations would drag on until late September, when the situation was brought before the United Nations Security Council for mediation. All the security council could do was urge the United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France to take all necessary steps toward a solution on the Berlin Question, and “open the way to prompt resumption of negotiations for the conclusion of the remaining peace settlements for Germany, Austria, and Japan”.<sup>137</sup>

Finally, in March, 1949, the Soviet Representative on the Security Council, informed the United States that the currency question could be settled in a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, if one could be arranged; one was in Paris on May 23. By May 12, 1949, the blockade was lifted. The council meeting in Paris did not solve the question of Berlin, which would remain divided until 1989.<sup>138</sup> By mid-1949, the western allies had established the basic laws and political make-up of the Federal Republic of Germany, the newest ally for the west against the Soviet Union.<sup>139</sup> Unlike in Czechoslovakia and Greece, there were both American and allied troops standing by in Germany as a part of the occupation effort, although how many is not clear, and the Soviets did not have the bomb yet, whereas the United States had a least 50. This was an instance in which nuclear deterrence seems to have worked in dissuading the Soviets from taking another action that might have been deemed as aggressive; for example, opening fire on allied

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<sup>136</sup> “Statement by the Ambassador of the United States to the United States to the Soviet Union Made on Behalf of the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France to the Foreign Minister of Soviet Union Regarding the Implementation of the General Principles for Terminating the Berlin Crisis, August 12, 1948” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 91-95

<sup>137</sup> “Joint Letter from the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the United Nations Assembly to the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union, November 13, 1948”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. x (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 100-101

<sup>138</sup> “Berlin Situation”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 104-105

<sup>139</sup> Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, Approved by the Military Governors, of the Western Zones of Germany, May 12, 1949.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 121

transport planes bring supplies into West Berlin. However, Europe was now divided with the West about to take one of the last steps in cementing the now divided world.

The United States had forced the Soviets hand with the introduction of the Marshall Plan and then utilized Stalin's response to show the authoritarian nature of the Soviet system in Eastern Europe. Now the Soviets had acted aggressively, at least from the American point of view, by trying to force the western allies out of Berlin in order to absorb it into the Soviet sphere of influence, and stifle attempts to create a new German state by denying the western allies the country's traditional capital. This action, which also endangered those living in West Berlin, helped to endorse the notion that the Soviet Union was becoming as much of an enemy to peace as the axis had been. Yet Stalin, still without the bomb, acted with restraint by eventually lifting the blockade on Berlin, thereby taking away any need, or justification, for an aggressive American response. However, this incident did show that the Soviet bloc was willing to use aggressive actions in order to hinder the policies of the western Allies in Europe. It also brought it home to the United States and the Brussels Pact that an armed conflict was a very definite possibility, now that the Soviets had used their security forces to take complete control of Berlin, as they now began consolidating their resources and planning for a defensive response to a future Soviet attack should the next incident escalate into direct hostilities between the two blocs.

## **NATO**

In his inaugural address on January 20, 1949, Truman reflected on the conflict between the United States, along with other likeminded countries, and regimes that adhered to the principles and beliefs of a “false philosophy, which purports to offer freedom, security, and greater opportunity to mankind.” That false philosophy was, of course, Communism, that by now had become the Truman administrations moral enemy. As a means for opposing it, Truman also spoke about an agreement on a number of designs to strengthen the security of the area of the North Atlantic and provided the foundations for collective defense that was within the terms of the United Nations Charter. The primary purpose of it being, according to Truman, “to provide unmistakable proof of the joint determination of the free countries to resist armed attack from any quarter”, he added, “If we can make it sufficiently clear, in advance, that any armed attack affecting our national security would be met with overwhelming force, the armed attack might never occur”.<sup>140</sup>

The United States Ambassador at Large, Philip C. Jessup, lent his support to the treaty calling it an extension of the Monroe Doctrine. “The boundaries of our security, “said Jessup, “the boundaries of our peace and safety...certainly are not lines which are fixed upon a map”. To defend itself, it was necessary to defend our allies in Europe, who were at this time were still recovering from the war. He further states that “economic recovery in itself, or aid in terms of financial and economic measures does not do the trick of putting a country or an area back on its

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<sup>140</sup> “Inaugural Address of the President (Truman), January 20, 1949.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 7-12

feet economically unless one creates in that area a fundamental sense of safety”.<sup>141</sup> In order to defend themselves efficiently, the United States needed their European allies strong and stable; the treaty was meant to be a guard for that outcome. When the terms of the treaty were made public, Secretary of State Dean Acheson justified the need for the pact by stating that “the system [of the United Nations] is not working as effectively as we hoped because one of its member has attempted to prevent it from working”. The secretary of state was referring to the Soviets, and their frequent use of the veto to block resolutions by the United Nations Security Council. However, he stated that the “United Nations is a flexible instrument”, in that the Charter recognized the importance of regional arrangements that were consistent with the principles of it. “Such arrangements”, he argued, “can greatly strengthen it.”<sup>142</sup>

The Soviets responded to the treaty by stating that, as they were not included in the pact, it was an instrument of aggression “directed against the Soviet Union”. They also claimed that the treaty was in violation of Article 53 of the UN Charter, which states that “no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements of by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council”. They even insisted that the treaty was an instrument to allow for Anglo-Saxon domination of Europe, saying “the North Atlantic pact is designed to daunt states which do not agree to obey the dictate of the Anglo-American grouping of powers that lay claim to world domination.”<sup>143</sup> Truman would respond, at the treaty’s signing on April 4, that “the pact will be a positive influence for peace.” He also stated that the treaty was not in

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<sup>141</sup> “Address by the United States Ambassador-at-Large on the North Atlantic Treaty and the Bases of United States Foreign Policy, Delivered before the National Conference on American Foreign Policy, Washington, March 17, 1949”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 595-599

<sup>142</sup> “Radio Address by the Secretary of State on the North Atlantic Treaty, March 18, 1949.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 599-606

<sup>143</sup> “Memorandum of the Government of the Soviet Union on the North Atlantic Treaty, April 1, 1949.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 607-609



violation of the United Nations charter, but actually followed its guidelines, justifying it under Article 51, which allowed a nation or collective to defend itself against armed attack.<sup>144</sup> The treaty, which was signed in Washington April 4<sup>th</sup>, signified the United States' leading role in the new coalition against the Soviet bloc. Like its aid programs, military measures and nuclear arsenal, the pact was another instrument the administration used to make up for the decrease in American troop strength by bringing all Western Europe together to prepare for, and perhaps deter, a possible Soviet attack.

In order to be ready for such an attack, it was acknowledged by Acheson that “the modern world requires modern arms and trained military forces”, and that as a result of the war, “the European countries joining in the Pact are generally deficient in both requirements”. It would now become necessary for the United States to not only provide economic aid to its allies, inside and outside the Pact, but also weapons and equipment in order to establish a strong military deterrent to any Soviet attack on western Europe.<sup>145</sup> On July 25<sup>th</sup>, Truman recommended that that “Congress enact legislation authorizing military aid to free nations to enable them to protect themselves against the threat of aggression”. Truman further explained that the European nations in NATO and the Brussels Pact, along with Norway, Denmark, and Italy, were undertaking military expenditures equivalent to five and half million dollars. This was, however, the maximum amount that they could spend without compromising their economic recovery efforts. In order to aid them in building up their military industries, Truman proposed three types of assistance:

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<sup>144</sup> “Address by the President at the Signing of the North Atlantic, Washington, April 4, 1949.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 609-612

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* 603

“First, a limited amount of dollar aid to enable them to increase their own production of military items without impairing their efforts for economic recovery; second, the direct transfer of certain essential items of military equipment; and, third, the assistance of experts in the production and use of military equipment and the training of personnel”.

This new legislation for the arming of Europe, Truman calculated, would add an additional \$1,450,000,000 to the budget of the 1950 fiscal year. The bulk of the aid, in the form of supplies and monetary aid, was to be delivered over the course of 1950 and 1951. \$50,000,000 of the total was slated for a military aid package to Greece and Turkey. Truman also made it clear that the aid sent by the United States would be only a fraction of what the Western European countries would spend on their own military programs.<sup>146</sup> After several months of debate, the Congress passed the Mutual Defense Assistance Program on October 9, 1949. By January 27<sup>th</sup> all eight members of the North Atlantic Treaty had signed bilateral agreements with the United States to receive military aid along with several non-members including Iran, the Republic of Korea, and the Philippines.<sup>147</sup> The passing of this act on October 9<sup>th</sup>, which was the first step in building a new allied army in Europe was no doubt aided by the event that the administration had been dreading would come for some time and would change the nature of the now strained relations between east and west.

On August 29, 1949, 140 kilometers’ northwest of the city of Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan the Soviets tested their first nuclear weapon. The device was a plutonium bomb that was a copy of “Fat Man”, that had been dropped on Nagasaki; the design had been leaked to the Soviets in June 1945 by their informant in the Manhattan Project, Klaus Fuchs.<sup>148</sup> The event was detected

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<sup>146</sup> “Message from the President to the Congress Transmitting Recommendations for the Enactment of Legislation Authorizing Military Aid to the Nations of Western Europe, July 25, 1949”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 620-626

<sup>147</sup> Kaplan, *We Know Now*, 198

<sup>148</sup> Holloway. *Stalin and the Bomb*, 213-220

by an American B-29 weather plane flying between Japan and Alaska on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. By September 23<sup>rd</sup> it had been confirmed that the plane had picked up traces of radioactive isotopes from a nuclear explosion which had taken place somewhere in the heart of the Soviet Union. In an official statement, Truman told the American people that they had “evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the USSR”. However, he also stated that the government had known that the “eventual development of this new force [atomic energy] by other nations was to be expected”, and had “always been taken into account by us”.<sup>149</sup> The same report that commented that Czechoslovakia was lost before 1948 also stated that an “intensive effort will be devoted [by the Soviets] to the development of special weapons, with particular reference to guided missiles and the atomic bomb”, and that “in any case, a maximum effort will be made to produce a practical bomb in quantity at the earliest possible date”.<sup>150</sup> Though some officials had stated that it would have taken the Soviets 20 years to develop the bomb, there were those, including physicists, who had speculated that it would have only taken as little as 5 to 7 years for the Soviets to develop their own nuclear device.<sup>151</sup> Thus, the news of the Soviets obtaining nuclear capabilities was not the great shock that modern myth makes it out to be. It seemed more like an unpleasant surprise; one that American officials had tried to avoid through international control of nuclear energy.

By April of 1950 more than 330,000 tons of equipment, including 500 tanks and other combat vehicles, had been shipped to Europe. This was supplemented with the transfer of 3,500 general purpose vehicles from the American stockpiles in Germany and the delivery of several

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<sup>149</sup> “Statement by the President on the Occurrence of an Atomic Explosion in the Soviet Union. White House Press Release, September 23, 1949.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 646

<sup>150</sup> “Soviet Foreign and Military Policy”. 11

<sup>151</sup> Gordon. *Red Cloud*. 203-213

B-29's, destroyer escorts, submarines and other various aircraft.<sup>152</sup> Despite this, by May NATO forces in Europe were comprised of only fourteen division and 1,000 aircraft, of various types, stationed throughout Europe, and with no unified command over them. Facing this was a Soviet force of twenty-five division, stationed in their satellite territories, supported by more than 6,000 aircraft; with the bulk of their armed forces remaining in the Soviet Union. Field Marshall Montgomery, then the commander-in-chief of the Western Union Forces, commented on the situation, stating that "as things stand today and in the foreseeable future, there would be scenes of appalling and indescribable confusion in Western Europe if we were ever attacked by the Russians". In response, on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1950, Truman asked congress for an additional expenditure of \$1.2 billion for the second year of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, following the outbreak of the Korea War in late June, Truman requested an additional \$4 billion and announced the that NATO planners were considering the creation of a full-time high command to integrate the activities of the alliance's military agencies. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, a formal agreement was reached for the creation of a unified army. The force in question would be made up for fifty division that would be organized under the North Atlantic Council. It was also to be directed by a supreme commander, with authority for the training of national contingents in times of conflict and peace.<sup>153</sup>

Following the organizations Sixth Session, it was announced that that North Atlantic Council had appointed General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the first supreme commander of NATO forces, after Truman gave him permission to assume to post. In the communique of the

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<sup>152</sup> "Second Semiannual Report on the Mutual Defense Assistance Program to the Congress, Covering the Period from April 6 to October 6, 1950." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1951) 228

<sup>153</sup> Kaplan, *We Know Now*, 202-205

sixth session it was also first announced that the Council was considering a role for Germany in NATO's defensive plans.<sup>154</sup> Kaplan states that military planners had always intended to utilize German territory for the defense of Western Europe, but not German troops. However, with Soviet forces being estimated at 175 divisions, military planners began to see the benefits of organizing and equipping German units. In a best-case scenario, it was believed that West Germany might be able to provide 25 divisions for NATO forces. The notion of German rearmament, even for the defense of Western Europe, was an idea that the French government, under Rene Preven, feared. Besides the obvious fear of a resurgent Germany, French officials were also concerned the Germans could undermine France's leading position on the continent as it was determined early on that the French would provide a large portion of the necessary ground forces for the NATO effort; the United States was slated to take responsibility for strategic bombing efforts as well as augmenting its naval forces with the British. Several efforts were made by the administration to compromise with Preven's government, including allowing for reduced units of German forces to be incorporated into the allied defense force. These units would be one-third the size of a normal division, furthermore, there was not to be a German ministry of war or a ministry of armaments. The German contribution was to make up only 20% of the total allied force with all recruiting and organization to be done by civilian agencies. The West German government in Bonn rejected this proposal desiring to raise full strength divisions and to have a defense ministry. The United States would continue to stress the need for German

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<sup>154</sup> "Communique Issued by the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at the Conclusion of Its Sixth Session, Held in Brussels, December 18 and 19, 1950." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1951) 215-220

troops in NATO's defense efforts in Europe until the end of the Truman administration, with German contingents remaining absent from NATO as late as 1955.<sup>155</sup>

The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization along with the Mutual Aid Assistance Program was the culmination of the Truman administration's policy of European Recovery for the purpose of utilizing as many resources as they could to build up European markets as well as armed forces to counter actions by the Soviet Union. It was the final step of a policy that had started with the Marshall Plan, which was meant to subvert any communist support base in Western Europe while pushing the Soviets out of the decision-making process, for the purpose of rebuilding Western Europe economically in order to utilize their industries for a future military build-up. The creation of a West German state, friendly to the United States, had also been key for this result as the Americans now had access to a large part of Germany's manpower and industrial capacity to further bolster any kind of European alliance; a notion that Stalin himself had had. Czechoslovakia and the Berlin had shown that communist expansion was becoming more open and aggressive; the most severe case might have been an attack by the Soviet Union and its satellites on Western Europe itself. As the program of military aid to Europe began in 1949, before the first Soviet nuclear test and indeed afterwards, it can be determined that the Red Army was still the primary concern of the administration and, more importantly, the United States' inability to counter a land invasion of Western Europe. The administration was not only looking to the remaining European democracies to be a first line of defense against Soviet aggression, but also as a source manpower to supplement diminished American forces in the event of future hostilities with the Soviets.

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<sup>155</sup> Kaplan, *We Know Now*, 210-223

## **Korea**

At the end of the Second World War the Korean peninsula had been occupied by both the United States, which occupied the southern half, and the Soviet Union, which had taken over the north. Gaddis points out that American forces had not originally planned to land in Korea, much less occupy it, but after the Japanese surrendered earlier than expected, thanks to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, Truman decided to divert troops there to prevent the Soviets from occupying it completely.<sup>156</sup> No doubt Truman had been concerned with the prospect of Soviet troops being able to land on the Japanese home islands to enforce their role in the post war occupation effort. Originally, there had been a plan to have the Korean Peninsula hold general elections and form a provisional government, but the Soviets commanders did not allow American or western personnel to enter the north. The Soviets also would not allow the Korean population under their occupation to participate in the political process the United States was leading in the south.<sup>157</sup> Despite a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1947 that called for the withdraw of all occupation forces, and the creation of a failed joint commission, the country remained divided; with a US backed republic in Seoul and a communist regime based in Pyongyang.<sup>158</sup>

By 1949 tensions between the government in Seoul, under Syngnam Rhee, and Pyongyang, led by Kim Il Sung, were steadily increasing as both sides claimed to be the legitimate government of Korea. The United States had adhered to a United Nations resolution

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<sup>156</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 57

<sup>157</sup> "Letter from the Secretary of State (Marshall) to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Molotov) on the United States Interpretation of the Moscow Agreement Regarding Korea. Department of State Press Release, May 2, 1947." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 116-118

<sup>158</sup> "Resolution on the Problem of the Independence Korea, Adopted by the General Assembly, November 14, 1947." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 121-123

calling for the withdrawal of occupation forces and left in 1948. However, the administration did not want to give substantial aid to the Republic of Korea (ROK) out of fear that they would attack the North. Furthermore, American policy makers had concluded that Korea was not an important strategic asset. With military resources and manpower limited at this time, the administration did not feel they could divert significant resources to Korea.<sup>159</sup> On January 12, 1950, six months before the North Korean invasion, Dean Acheson remarked that the American defensive perimeter in the Pacific “runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus...to the Philippine Islands.” However, though the United States was responsible for it before, they did not have a direct defensive responsibility for the Philippines or for the Kuomintang hold out of Formosa.<sup>160</sup>

According to Holloway, possession of the plutonium bomb along with seeing the American reaction to Greece, Czechoslovakia, and Berlin had dulled Stalin’s caution. He further states, that Stalin was convinced by North Korean leader Kim Il Sung that the Korean People’s Army could crush South Korea’s forces and occupy South Korea before the United States could intervene. This would seem to make sense if one were making a judgment based on the previous responses by the United States to other communist efforts. Holloway believes that Stalin saw Korea as a similar to Czechoslovakia, in which the United States would have to recognize it as an internal affair to be settled by the Koreans themselves (especially if the Seoul government was subdued quickly enough).<sup>161</sup> Kim Il Sung had also gained the support of the Chinese communist leader, Mao Zedong. According to Gaddis, Mao was still paranoid that the United

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<sup>159</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 140-142

<sup>160</sup> “Remarks by the Secretary of State (Acheson) before the National Press Club, Washington, January 12, 1950”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1951) 431

<sup>161</sup> Holloway. *Stalin and the Bomb*. 276-278



States would intervene in China in order to support the Chinese Nationalist Government on Formosa (Taiwan). If the invasion succeeded at the pace that Sung had said it would then the claim, again, could be made that it should be deemed as an internal affair of the Koreans. American influence would be driven out of northwest Asia and, most importantly, it would allow Mao to launch an invasion of Formosa to eliminate the American backed Kuomintang regime; making his regime the uncontested government of China.<sup>162</sup>

On June 25, 1950, the Korean People's Army launched their offensive. Initially it was a stunning success, with Seoul having fallen in three days, yet this did not cause the collapse of the South Korean government as original planned by Kim Il Sung. The United Nations Security Council met the same day as the invasion, the Soviets choosing to abstain, after determining that North Korea's actions were an act of aggression, the Council called on all the members of the United Nations to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities and to render all possible support for their resolution.<sup>163</sup> On June 27, the Security Council adopted a resolution condemning the North Korean invasion, and called on the members of the United Nations to "furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack".<sup>164</sup> Truman responded to the United Nations' resolution and began moving troops in to reinforce the beleaguered South Korean forces. He also moved the Seventh Fleet to Formosa, as a deterrent against any aggressive move by communist China, as well as accelerating aid to French Forces in Indo-China. He condemned the communist efforts in Korea, stating that it "is

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<sup>162</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 73-74

<sup>163</sup> "Concerning the Complaint of Aggression upon the Republic of Korea, Adopted by the United Nations Security Council, June 25, 1950." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1951) 443-444

<sup>164</sup> "Resolution Concerning the Complaint of Aggression upon the Republic of Korea, Adopted by the United Nations Security Council, June 27, 1950." *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 445

plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war”.<sup>165</sup> Gaddis states that these actions, especially the deployment of the 7<sup>th</sup> fleet, were taken by Mao to be a prelude to an American attack on mainland China, who referred to Truman’s moves as “The American invasion of Asia”, in a remark to his State Council on June 28<sup>th</sup>. It was at this point that Mao cancelled his invasion of Formosa, which he had planned for August following the North Korean victory. Instead he made plans to support North Korea.<sup>166</sup> On July 7<sup>th</sup> the Security Council approved the United Nations members to intervene militarily on behalf of the Republic of Korea and that the United States would have command over the United Nations forces.<sup>167</sup>

In late September, after the United Nations forces had been able to turn the tide in an amphibious assault on Incheon, Warren Austin called on the United Nations General Assembly to support a resolution to establish a united and democratic Korea. He states, “the artificial barrier which has divided North and South has no basis for existence either in law or in reason.”<sup>168</sup> At the same time Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Commander of all United Nations forces in Korea, had requested permission to launch an attack north along the western coastal corridor with the American 8<sup>th</sup> Army and conduct an amphibious landing using the American Tenth Corps at Wonsan on the east coast of North Korea. This plan was approved by the Joint Chiefs on September 29, before the United Nations General Assembly had met to consider the matter.<sup>169</sup> The General Assembly did, however, adopt a resolution on October 7<sup>th</sup> that called “for the

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<sup>165</sup> Statement by the President on the Korean Question, June 27, 1950.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 444-445

<sup>166</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now*. 78

<sup>167</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 151

<sup>168</sup> “Statement by the United States Representative on the United Nation’s General Assembly on the Future Status of Korea Made before the Political and Security Committee of the Assembly, September 30, 1950.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 454-458

<sup>169</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death of the Cold War*. 157

establishment of a unified, independent and democratic government of Korea”.<sup>170</sup> The United Nations forces now conducted an aggressive offensive operation to occupy the north and assimilate it into the Republic of Korea.

Only 5 years removed from the Second World War, North Korea had committed the first truly aggressive action since VJ day, so the act of invading and occupying North Korea for political and social reform should not be viewed as out of context with recent events. The United States now officially viewed Communism itself as an aggressive totalitarian system. So here we see that the old Niebuhrian paradigm of the Second World War, but Nazi Germany’s position as the “monstrous system” was now being occupied by the Soviet Union and Communism in the American mindset.<sup>171</sup> The events of the last 4 years, along with the constant concern about America’s declining military strength following demobilization, had caused the Truman administration to regard Communism in the same manner as they did the axis powers. Korea now seemed to be the starting point to begin the elimination of Communism, and the Soviet sphere of influence with Kim Il Sung’s regime. This is one of the most important results of demobilization. As it was the administrations attempts to bolster the military, especially their actions in Europe, that drove the Soviets to become suspicious of the west and led to the events in Europe that allowed the Americans to paint the communists as aggressors. However, the means to defeating Communism seemed limited to an aggressive land campaign, and not with the use of nuclear weapons, for reasons that will be discussed later.

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<sup>170</sup> “Resolution Concerning the Problem of the Independence of Korea, Adopted by the General Assembly, October 7, 1950.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 459-461

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* 18

Initially Mao had been enthused to face off against the American forces in Korea, even stating in an address to his Politburo that “if the US imperialists win [in Korea] they may get so dizzy with success that they may threaten us...we therefore must come to [North] Korea’s aid and intervene in the name of a volunteer army...”, yet Gaddis points out that he essentially dragged his feet, even after Stalin had informed him that Kim Il Sung had sent him a message stating that his country would not be able to defend itself if the United Nations forces pushed over the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>172</sup> Stalin called on him to send Chinese forces into Korea, and Mao responded that they had planned to, but that they were poorly equipped and that there could be no guarantee that they would succeed against the American led United Nations forces. Stalin responded to Mao on October 5<sup>th</sup> that intervening would force the Americans to accept a settlement that would favor North Korea and would drive them from Taiwan. Mao finally agreed to send Chinese forces into Korea, but only after Stalin assured him that the Soviet Union would send air forces to aid them; along with other forms of military assistance to supplement the defects of the Chinese military.<sup>173</sup> On October 19<sup>th</sup> Mao sent nine division of the Chinese People’s Volunteers over the Yalu River into North Korea and succeeded in pushing the United Nations forces back south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Stalin made good on his promise to provide Soviet air forces, but attempted to hide their involvement by having them dress in Chinese People’s Volunteer uniforms, identifying themselves as Russians living in China. From this point, until hostilities ceased in March 1953, the war would turn into a stalemate.<sup>174</sup>

The Chinese offensive was effective in that it drove the United Nations forces back across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, but it did not cause a Dunkirk like evacuation of them from Korea either;

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<sup>172</sup> *ibid.* 78

<sup>173</sup> Gaddis. *We Know Now.* 79-80

<sup>174</sup> Holloway, *Stalin.* 282-293

which was probably what Stalin hoped for when he pushed Mao to go through with his invasion. Despite having to recapture Seoul for a second time in under a year, the United Nations forces were able to push the combined communist forces to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel from which neither side was able to make headway. In January of 1951 the Political and Security Committee of the fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly had submitted a report for a cease-fire in Korea. It stipulated, firstly, that the cease fire should be immediate, but that it must “contain adequate safeguards for ensuring that it [would] not be used as a screen for mounting a new offensive”. Second, when a cease fire occurs, steps “should be taken of it to pursue consideration of further steps to be taken for the restoration of peace”; meaning of course that a peace treaty should be negotiated immediately before hostilities could break out a second time. The third point involved carrying on the United Nations resolution of October 7, 1950, and continuing the effort for a unified a democratic Korea. It included the term that the “all non-Korean armed forces will be withdrawn, by appropriate stages”, in order to allow the “Korean people to express their own free will”, absent any coercion from abroad. The fourth involved making “interim arrangements...for the administration of Korea and the maintenance of peace and security there”. The fifth and final point called for the establishment of a body consisting of representatives from the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union, and People’s Republic of China that would work to achieve settlements to the current problems of the Far East that included the issue of Formosa and the controversy of communist Chinese representation in the United Nations.<sup>175</sup>

This report in turn was transmitted to the Chinese government for their approval.

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<sup>175</sup> “Supplementary Report of the Group on Cease-Fire in Korea Concerning the Program for a Cease-Fire in Korea, submitted to the Political and Security Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, January 11, 1951”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 443-444

The Chinese responded to the United Nations Cease-Fire Program on January 17<sup>th</sup> with a cablegram from the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chou En-Lai, who outlined communist China's desire for "a rapid termination of hostilities in Korea". However, the response stated that "the subject matter of the negotiations must include the withdrawal of United States Armed Forces from Taiwan and the Taiwan Straits and from Far Eastern related problems". It also called for negotiations to take place under a seven-party conference, which was to be made up of the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, India and Egypt. Moreover, this conference was to be held in China at a location to be selected.<sup>176</sup> This response encapsulates all of Mao's goals, which the Chinese intervention was supposed to accomplish following an utter defeat of United Nations forces, and was more akin to a victors' terms of peace. It must have been foreseen by Mao's government that these terms would be rejected. Also, it shows the Chinese strategy in Korea was to continue the war to the point that the United States would concede to at least some the Chinese demands and thereby establish a peace that was highly favorable to communist interests.

Warren Austin responded to Chou En-Lai's telegram with utter contempt. This had actually been the third attempt to negotiate an agreement for a cease-fire with China. He called the Chinese intervention an aggressive act that served "no legitimate...interest, but only the interests of that expanding power which...would impose a new and far more rigorous colonialism upon the peoples of the Asia." He stated further that the United Nations had faced this same expansive power over and over again staring in Iran then Greece, Berlin, and now

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<sup>176</sup> "Cablegram form the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China (Chou En-Lai) to the Acting Secretary-General of the Political and Security Committee of the General Assembly, January 17, 1951". *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 444-446

Korea. That “the United Nations has learned from these past experiences that each crisis was met only by our determination to stand together”, and that their “standing together has had the eventual effect of bringing the Soviet imperialist power to a standstill”. The Chinese government in Peiping had interfered in a military action approved by the United Nations against an aggressive country. Further they had, in Austin’s words, “rejected efforts to bring about a cease-fire in Korea, has rejected proposals aimed at a peaceful settlement, and has continued its invasion of Korea and its attack upon United Nations forces there”. Austin then called on the general assembly to state openly the fact that China had committed an act of aggression and that it should “call upon all states and authorities to lend their assistance to the United Nations, and to refrain from giving any assistance to the aggressors”.<sup>177</sup> The communists defied this effort and committed men and resources against the Republic of Korea.<sup>178</sup> On February 1<sup>st</sup> the General Assembly passed a resolution that officially condemned the actions of the People’s Republic of China as acts of aggression both against the United Nations and Korea.<sup>179</sup> The United Nations went a step further on May 18<sup>th</sup>, when the General Assembly passed a shipping embargo to all territories controlled by the People’s Republic of China and North Korea of arms, ammunition, implements of war, atomic energy materials, petroleum, and items useful in the production of arms, ammunition and implements of war”.<sup>180</sup> China was officially an aggressor in the eyes of

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<sup>177</sup> “Remarks by the United States Representative on the United Nations General Assembly (Austin) on the Reply of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China (Chou En-Lai), Made before the Political and Security Committee of the Assembly, January 18, 1951” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 423-433

<sup>178</sup> “Statement by the Secretary of State (Acheson) on The Question of Withdrawal of All Foreign Troops from Korea, Released to the Press, July 19, 1951”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 439

<sup>179</sup> “Resolution Concerning the Intervention of the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China in Korea, Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, February 1, 1951”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 451-452

<sup>180</sup> “Resolution Concerning Additional Measures to be Employed to meet the Aggression in Korea, Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, May 18, 1951.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 452-453.

the United Nations. To the United States Mao was yet another puppet at the beck and call of Stalin and by pushing the UN to officially label China's actions as being aggressive, which was in many ways were, they widened the already substantial division between east and west. Further, according to Kaplan, by officially designating China as an aggressive state was severally detrimental to the United Nations as it showed the international organization was firmly in the American camp.<sup>181</sup>

On June, 23 1951 Jacob Malik, the Soviet representative and then President of the UN Security Council, declared in a radio address that the Korean problem could be solved through an immediate cease fire and withdrawal of all troops from the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Deciding to hold the meeting at Kaesong on 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, negotiations began on July 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>182</sup> Acheson commented that the "United Nations force must remain in Korea until a genuine peace has been firmly established"; whereas the Soviets had called for an immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea following an armistice. He further commented that "foreign forces were withdrawn from Korea as a part of a United Nations plan to reach a final settlement of the Korean problem"; this meaning the original order by the United Nations in 1948 for the Soviets and the Americans to withdrawal their occupation forces.<sup>183</sup> The results of the first meetings in July formed the basis for the negotiation that would take place over the next year and a half. They included: "1.) adoption of an agenda; 2.) the fixing of a military demarcation line between both sides so as to establish a demilitarized zone as a basic condition for cessation of hostilities; 3.) concrete

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<sup>181</sup> Kaplan. *Life and Death*. 193

<sup>182</sup> "Armistice Negotiations". *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xi (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 437-439

<sup>183</sup> "Statement by the Secretary of State(Acheson) on the Question of Withdrawal of All Foreign Troops from Korea, Released to the Press, July 19, 1951. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 439



arrangements for the realization of a cease-fire and an armistice in Korea, including the composition, authority, and functions of a supervising organization for carrying out the terms of a cease-fire and armistice; 4.) arrangements relating to prisoners of war; and 5.) recommendations to the governments of the countries concerned".<sup>184</sup>

As negotiation entered 1952 there were several difficulties that held up a cease fire. First was that the neutrality of Kaesong, which was vital to negotiations, was constantly being violated. First in July, when communist forces occupied the area and limited the United Nations' access to it. The second was on August 5th, when a company of communist soldiers gained access to the site. Eventually the conference site was moved to Panmunjom in November. Another difficulty was deciding where the line of demarcation should be for the armistice agreement. The communists had wanted the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to be preserved for that role. The UN forces favored having it be the frontline, as it allowed for strong defensive positions against future aggression for both sides. The most prominent challenge was dealing with prisoners of war. A large number of North Korean and Chinese prisoners had objected to being repatriated out of fear that they would suffer injury or death if returned home to their countries. Many prisoners made it clear that they would violently resist if necessary. In a survey conducted by the United Nations it was found that 70,000 out of 106,000 prisoners were willing to repatriate; later this figure increased to 86,000 after prisoners who were not willing to be screened the first time were included in the survey. The communists were surprised by the large numbers of soldiers that did not want to repatriate and called on the United Nations to repatriate all prisoners by force if necessary. The United Nations Command, however, made it clear that they would not force

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid. 437-439

prisoners to return to their home countries.<sup>185</sup> In December the General Assembly passed a resolution in which they agreed to adhere the Geneva Convention relative to the “Treatment of Prisoners of War”, dated 12 August 1949, in which they would not repatriate enemy prisoners of war forcefully, and would only encourage them to do so.<sup>186</sup>

By 1953 the Chinese and North Koreans were exhausted, but were still urged on by Stalin. Gaddis suggests that one of Stalin’s motives for continuing the war in Korea was to prove his point that the Americans had been pinning the success of their foreign policy on their nuclear monopoly and superior air forces, and that Soviet land forces were still superior and could subdue the American backed NATO forces; boasting that the American wanted “to subjugate the world, yet they cannot subdue little Korea”.<sup>187</sup> Even commenting to Mao that the conflict “could even be useful learning experience to the Chinese”, that the war “shakes up the Truman regime in America and harms the military prestige of the Anglo-American troops”.<sup>188</sup> However, Kim Il-Sung did not share Stalin’s enthusiasm stating the “enemy almost without suffering any kind of losses constantly inflicts on us huge losses in manpower and material”. By the summer of 1953 the Chinese had lost 3 soldiers for every 1 killed on the side of the United Nations, but some American sources place it as high as 10 to 1. Stalin had also not delivered fully on the military aid he had promised Mao, which was decidedly one of the reasons he intervened in Korea in 1950, and had even insisted that the Chinese and North Korean’s pay for what they had received.

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<sup>185</sup> “Korea: Special Report of the Unified Command on the United Nations Action, October 18, 1952 *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954)307-324

<sup>186</sup> “Korea: General Assembly Resolution 610 (VII), Adopted December 3, 1952”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954) 374-377

<sup>187</sup> “Soviet Transcript, Stalin-Zhou Enlai Conversation, 20 Aug. 1952”, *We Know Now: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1997) 109

<sup>188</sup> “Stalin to Mao, 5 June 1951, *CWHP Bulletin* 6 and 7 (Winter 1995/6) 59

Finally, in March 1953, Josef Stalin died. Within two weeks of his death the Soviet government informed Mao and Sung to seek “the soonest possible conclusion” to the conflict in Korea.<sup>189</sup>

On July 27, 1953, an armistice was finally signed. The communist negotiators gave way on the issue of where the demarcation line should be and agreed to the United Nations forces terms that it should follow the point of contact of the opposing forces. A demilitarized zone was also to be established in which either side would withdraw two kilometers north and south from the frontline, creating a 4-kilometer-wide no man’s land. A cease fire would be called within twelve hours of the signing of the agreement and each side would complete their withdrawal from the demilitarized zone within 72 hours. Both sides would cease sending reinforcements of men, combat aircraft, armored vehicles, weapons and ammunition. However, the armistice agreement did allow for the rotation of 35,000 military personnel a month for both sides. A military armistice commission, headquartered at Panmunjom, made up of military officers of the United Nations Command and the communist forces would supervise the implementation of the terms of the armistice and deal with any violations. A “neutral nations supervisory” was also established, made up of representatives of neutral nations nominated by both sides to supervise, observe, inspect, and investigate adherence to the terms of the armistice relative to the introduction into Korea of reinforcing military personnel and equipment. Finally, in regards to the release and repatriation of prisoners, the armistices stated that each side was to turn over all remaining prisoners of war who were not directly repatriated from its military control to the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission. Above all, no prisoner of war would be forced to repatriate. Instead, if a POW did not exercise their right to repatriate, they would officially be given civilian status by the commission after a period of 120 days following the receipt of the

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<sup>189</sup> Gaddis. *We Now Know*. 108-109

prisoner to their custody and would be assisted by the Commission and the Red Cross Society of India.<sup>190</sup>

Kaplan and Gaddis both label the Korean War as a gamble by both sides at a pivotal moment in the Cold War. Holloway and Gaddis also support the assumption that Stalin and Mao both chose to back the North Korean invasion, which had been assured would take place when the Soviet occupation forces refused to allow the north to take part in the United Nations general elections, based on the responses of the United States to events in Greece, Czechoslovakia, and Berlin. Up until 1950 the United States had chosen to let the United Nations handle all crisis, as was the purpose of its inception, and gave aid only as it felt was sanctioned by its charter. The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the Berlin Airlift had involved countering Soviet moves through support of the local administration with aid to prevent a complete communist takeover. They had not sent troops to oust the Communist Party in Prague or intervention forces to Greece to help the Greek Government combat the insurgents. During the Berlin Crisis, the administration sent B-29's without nuclear weapons to Britain as a move of deterrence, but not aggression. It seems logical, if one were analyzing the issue from the perspective of either heads of state, that so long as Kim Il Sung finished his conquest of South Korea before the United States could respond with any of the measures listed above than the matter would be settled. Adding on the fact that the United States no longer held its nuclear monopoly, as Holloway implies, may have played a role in both leaders reasoning, but the United States nuclear arsenal was much more substantial than that of the Soviet Union's and many in the United States

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<sup>190</sup> "The Korean Armistice: Summaries and Excerpts from the Armistice Agreement Signed by the Representatives of the United Nation Command and of the Korean People's Army, and Chinese People's Volunteers, Panmunjom, July 27, 1953". *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 289-302

military and both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations had pressed for the use of the nuclear weapons in Korea to break the stalemate.

By this time, and what should have been apparent from the Marshall Plan, the United States had abandoned the notion of co-existence with the Soviet Union, and was looking to halt the spread of Communism through more assertive approaches. That being said, the United States, looking to the United Nations for support of intervening on behalf of South Korea, showed they were still willing to work within the system of the United Nations to conduct their policy of containment. Despite this, it seemed the Truman administration had fully reverted back to a Niebuhrian paradigm in their view of Communism, which was demonstrated after they requested both an invasion of North Korea, designating Communist China as an aggressive state, and implementing an embargo on China and North Korea from the United Nations, thereby risking the outbreak of a larger war to put an end to the North Korean state. Kaplan further points out that the United Nations had humiliated itself by labeling China as an aggressor and then negotiating a settlement with them as moral equals. This move also discredited them as a mediator to the world by responding overwhelmingly to the American requests.<sup>191</sup>

Remarkably, though, this conflict was limited so that it would not set off a third world war. All sides sought to limit the conflict to Korea despite the rise in tensions and apprehension toward one another. When asked by some why he did simply issue an ultimatum to the North Koreans and deploy nuclear weapons, as a measure of total war, Truman responded that, “we are not the only nation that is learning to unleash the power of the atom”. Further he stated that “a third world war might dig the grave not only of our Communist opponents but also of our own

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid. 193

society, our world as well as others”.<sup>192</sup> Despite his fervor towards defeating Communism, Truman knew the implications of expanding the war to include the Soviet Union and the communist bloc in Eastern Europe and continued the war effort in a manner that sought to prevent that. At this point the United States was devoting many its resources to the war in Korea and would not have been in a position to respond quickly to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. This would have been a definite possibility had the conflict in Korea resulted in a war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The situation would have been even worse now that the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons that could be implemented in a conquest of Europe or against the continental United States itself. So, it was in the best interest of the United States to keep the conflict confined to Korea with its resources, not only limited, but now overstretched.

There was also an issue in America’s support for the administration’s efforts to eliminate Communism. Haberski states that at the beginning of the Korean War there were mixed feelings about waging war with Communism directly. By the close of hostilities, 50% of American’s believed that it had been a mistake to enter the war.<sup>193</sup> Haberski explains that the American people were opposed to Communism, but that they “wanted to struggle over abstract notions of right and wrong against a foe that was both real enough to scare them but not enough of a threat to engage with militarily”.<sup>194</sup> They did not want to sacrifice American lives for the nation’s moral ideas.<sup>195</sup> With the horrors of the Second World War still fresh in their minds, it can be no surprise that many Americans did not want to enter into another global conflict; especially now that the Soviets had the bomb.

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<sup>192</sup> Haberski. *God and War*. 35

<sup>193</sup> Haberski. *God and War*. 34

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. 34

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. 34

The Soviets, who depended on the Chinese to rescue the North Korean cause, were still recovering from the effects of the war, which had cost them 20 million soviet lives. Also, their nuclear arsenal was not as large as the United States' and so a nuclear war, should it have broken out at this time, would have highly favored the Americans. What the conflict did show was that, despite having a smaller military since 1945, combined western forces could halt and hold back communist forces through conventional tactics; albeit in a restricted setting. At the same time if the United States had a larger military there is a chance that UN forces could have driven the Chinese out of Korea. However, it also showed that communist forces could, as had always been predicted, overrun and drive back American led forces. However, a takeover of a democratic state by a communist state had been prevented by intervening directly to stop it. This would have major implications for the next administration and alter America's strategy of containing Communism to include intervention, as well as establish a budget that was believed adequate to finance it (which will be explained further on). The stalemate that transpired during the war also showed military planners that there may be a place for the atomic bomb on modern battlefields as a way to negate Soviet troop strengths and break any deadlocks that may occur if the two sides were to fight each other again in a similar manner; albeit if the Soviet struck first.

## **The Atomic Battlefield**

Korea marked the end of the post-World War II period, which had the best chance of achieving the Wilsonian idea of a united world that would see to the end of war itself, and initiated the emblematic stages of the Cold War. The Soviet Union and the United States had formed their blocs for the purpose of opposing each other, tearing the world in two, with the United Nations having been left in a weakened state as a result. A second result of the Korean War had been the cementing of the role of nuclear weapons in this new stage of tensions between the communist east and the democratic west. Despite Truman's comments that "starting an atomic war is totally unthinkable to rational men" military planners had begun to consider the use of nuclear weapons in future engagements with the Soviets.<sup>196</sup> Officials in the United States government and military had sought to break the deadlock in Korea by equipping soldiers with far more devastating weapons that they believed could turn the tide, as had been advocated for earlier when the strategy of "Preventative War" was still being discussed as a way of dealing with American troop deficiencies in the face of superior Soviet forces. Before the conflict in Korea the bomb had been relegated to the strategic bombing of Soviet cities and industrial centers should war have broken out. As early as 1949, there had been desires by several members in the military to develop nuclear weapons for tactical purposes alongside convention forces on the frontline. General Omar Bradley, who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1949, believed that nuclear weapons would strengthen western firepower in Europe; balancing it with the Red Army's superiority in ground forces.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid. 35

<sup>197</sup> Miller. *Under the Cloud*. 141



Despite Truman's opposition to it, there were repeated calls by government and military officials to use nuclear weapons against North Korea and China. On February 4, 1951, General J. Lawton Collins, being interviewed by the International News Service, commented that the American soldier, "the finest soldier in the world", would soon be assisted by "atomic guided missiles and artillery". Congressman James E. Van Zandt of Pennsylvania, who was also an advocate for continuing the war in Korea until the utter defeat of the North, was a strong supporter of nuclear weapons being used in the conflict. He stated that he was not only a supporter of the bomb's use in Korea, but also across the Yalu River in Manchuria. Congressman Lloyd Bentsen of Texas even advised Truman at one point to issue an ultimatum to the North Koreans where they were to "withdrawal [their] troops beyond the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel within one week or use that week to evacuate civilians from a specified list of Korean cities that will be subjected to atomic attack." By this time, generals from the United States Army, Navy and Marine Corps had been clamoring for smaller and lighter tactical nuclear weapons. Specifically, they wanted something that could be fired from an artillery piece or even from bazookas. Most importantly it needed to be safe enough to allow troops to maneuver in and around ground zero of the blast.<sup>198</sup> The conflict in Korea had espoused these claims for the practical application of nuclear weapons as a way of negating the superiority in numbers that military planners believed the communists would had. Before it was believed that nuclear weapons needed to be prohibited due to their destructive nature. After Korea, it was believed that the destructive nature of nuclear weapons was vital for the survival of democracy against Communism.

The Buster-Jangle series of nuclear tests, which took place at the Nevada Testing Site from October to November 1951, would allow for the first instance of troops operating in

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<sup>198</sup> Miller. *Under the Cloud*. 100-102

maneuvers in extreme proximity to ground zero of a nuclear blast site. Buster: “Dog”, the fourth test in the series, included 883 military personnel that would proceed to within 500 yards of ground zero. The scenario for the operation, which was code named Desert Rock I, was that an enemy had landed on the west coast and was advancing inland. As a defensive measure, a decision would be taken to deploy nuclear weapons to halt the attack. This same, improbable, scenario would be repeated in tests throughout the decade. Following the explosion, which were witnessed from 6.8 miles away, the troops advanced first to a display area, where various pieces of military equipment had been placed to test their durability in a nuclear explosion, and then from there they advanced to within 1,500ft of ground zero.<sup>199</sup> These would be the first of the controversial “atomic soldiers”, but they would not be last.

Following Buster-Jangle was the Tumbler-Snapper series, which took place between April and June of 1952, and saw troops get closer to ground zero than they had been before. During the third test in the series, Charlie, paratroopers were dropped on ground zero; with some landing within 175 yards of it.<sup>200</sup> Proceeding tests would see the military at odds with the Atomic Energy Commission because the former wanted troops to be able to advance all the way to ground zero, despite the risk of radiation exposure. There was even a call from the Navy Department for the AEC to raise the maximum radiation exposure level for ground personnel from 3 roentgens to 20.<sup>201</sup> This would be an ongoing dispute between the AEC and military, who wanted to be able to use tactical nuclear weapons in concert with conventional military forces.

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<sup>199</sup> Miller. *Under the Cloud*. 126-127

<sup>200</sup> Miller. *Under the Cloud*. 148

<sup>201</sup> Miller. *Under the Cloud*. 155-156

The main purpose of these tests, once again, harkened back to the Red Army and the military's concern with having to fight a war in Europe with conventional forces alone. General George C. Kenny, commander of the Strategic Air Force, commented that "The United States has no intension of landing massed armies in Europe and slugging it out with the Red Army-manpower against manpower", adding that, "Napoleon and Hitler both made that mistake".<sup>202</sup> Had the United States military had more experience with using tactical nuclear weapons there is a good chance Korea could have been a testing ground for it given the deadlock that had developed. The same scenario might have been imagined for Europe where, in a best-case scenario, NATO forces would have been able to hold, but not be able to push back, Soviet forces. The public would need to be convinced of the necessity of it, but one could imagine a seen like the First World War, where massive underground charges were exploded to create gaps in the enemy's frontline, but instead there would be nuclear explosions vaporizing tens of thousands in an instant. So, despite Truman's official comments, military officials appeared to be taking the idea of nuclear weapons being used in conventional warfare more seriously than ever as the concern over whether the United States and NATO could halt and defeat a Soviet led invasion endured; especially now that the Soviets possessed a nuclear arsenal of its own. The nature of warfare, they believed, had now changed and that it was necessary for the United States to adapt in order meet the threat now posed by Communism.

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<sup>202</sup> Miller. Under the Cloud. 141

**NSC-68**

The culmination of the policies of the Truman administration, including demobilization, the campaign for international control of nuclear energy, and the Marshall Plan had resulted in the Korean War, which was the first instance of communists aligning themselves against the United Nations. Also by this time advances made in nuclear bombs to create larger stockpiles that included bombs with yields a thousand times greater than “Little Boy”. Before the North Korean invasion in June, Truman had ordered Dean Acheson and George C. Marshall to undertake a study to reexamine American objectives for war and peace and the effects they would have on the United States’ strategic plans following the Soviet nuclear test in September 1949, and also in regards to the possibility that the Soviet may be developing a thermonuclear weapon to complement their fledgling nuclear arsenal.<sup>203</sup> Holloway states that the idea of the thermonuclear bomb had been suggested by Italian physicist Enrico Fermi, who had aided in the discovery of chain-reaction in the fission process, to Edward Teller, one of the key physicists involved in the Manhattan Project, that an atomic bomb could be used to ignite a hydrogen based device in 1942. While at Los Alamos, Teller would continue to develop the design and would advocate highly for the building of a thermonuclear bomb, which was called the “Super” at the time. The Soviets had also considered the idea of a thermonuclear weapon and worked on it, theoretically, while developing their first fission bomb; developing a basic design of the hydrogen bomb by the end of 1948. At the same time, many physicists, including Robert Oppenheimer, who was chairman of the General Advisory Committee of the Atomic Energy

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<sup>203</sup> A Report to the National Security Council - NSC 68", April 12, 1950. President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers.

Commission, had been more concerned with improving the design of fission bombs and had looked very little into launching a project to develop the Super.<sup>204</sup>

The situation changed dramatically after the Soviet nuclear test in September 1949, and it was realized that the Soviets may be ahead of the United States in developing the thermonuclear bomb. On October 5th, Lewis Strauss, member of AEC, stated in a letter to his fellow commissioners, that “the time has come for a quantum jump in our planning...we should make an intensive effort to get ahead with the Super.” American intelligence at the time had yet to confirm if the Soviets had given top priority to developing a thermonuclear bomb, however, the failure to anticipate when the first Soviet nuclear test was going to take place had shown how fast the Soviet nuclear program was progressing and how little the United States knew about it. So it seemed plausible that a Soviet hydrogen bomb was right around the corner.<sup>205</sup> This feeling was voiced in April 1950, in the NSC-68 report, not only for its threat militarily, but also diplomatically. It was feared that if the Soviets did beat the United States in the race for the thermonuclear bomb they would put even more pressure on the West; also, it was believed that a Soviet attack on the United States would become an even more definite possibility if the Soviets had such a superiority in nuclear armaments.<sup>206</sup>

Aside from American concerns over the Soviets attaining the hydrogen bomb, the report also stipulates Soviet intentions and the possibility of a Soviet ground invasion of Western Europe. Above all the priority was to prevent any further advance by the communist bloc into Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Marshall and Acheson stated that any “substantial further

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<sup>204</sup> Holloway. *Stalin and the Bomb*. 294-299

<sup>205</sup> Holloway. *Stalin and the Bomb*. 300

<sup>206</sup> NSC-68. 38

extension of the area under the domination of the Kremlin, would raise the possibility that no coalition adequate to confront the Kremlin could be assembled”.<sup>207</sup> By this time the intentions of the Soviet Union were confirmed to be expansionist and it was believed that communists would continue to undermine and takeover non-communist governments with Soviet support; as they had done in Czechoslovakia. Marshall and Acheson mentioned the coup in their report, stating that the shock the United States sustained had little to nothing do with the loss of Czechoslovakian materiel as they were, as mentioned before, “already at Soviet disposal”. What they claimed resonated with the administration was “when the integrity of Czechoslovak institutions was destroyed”.<sup>208</sup>

Despite these fears, it was also made clear that the United States would only use force as a last resort. Besides the political and social implications that would come with an aggressive move against the Soviet Union, it was considered impractical to pursue a policy of unconditional surrender against the Soviet Union as they had against the axis. Such a strategy would more likely unite the Russian people against NATO; just as the Germany invasion of the Soviet Union had done in 1941. A better strategy would be to weaken the authority of the Soviet government and the Russian peoples support for it. This, according to NSC-68, would allow for the possibility to “create institutions in which the Russian people would have control of their own futures”. This would in turn make the Russian public, who would have grown discontented at the Soviet government, a potential ally for the United States and NATO against the Bolsheviks.<sup>209</sup> This seemed to have been the goal of the American led forces when they entered North Korea in October 1950; to bring North Koreans into the democratic institution that they had created in

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<sup>207</sup> NSC-68. 6

<sup>208</sup> NSC-68. 8

<sup>209</sup> NSC-68. 11

South Korea. However, there was also the implication that initiating a war with the Soviets would lead to a disastrous scenario in Europe and the United States.

Despite having an economy that out produced the Soviet Union nearly 4 to 1, according to the 1948-49 Gross National Production statistics, the Soviet Union devoted 40 percent of its gross available resources to military expenditures and investments, compared to only 20 percent in the United States; and it being agreed that both sides would devote up to 50 percent in the event of war.<sup>210</sup> For policy makers and military planners at the time this meant that there was a possibility that the Soviets would be more prepared for a war than the United States and Western Europe in the event hostilities broke out in 1950. It was acknowledged that the United States armed forces were stronger than they had been at any other time in their history when they were not at war, yet they were still inherently inferior, numerically, vis-à-vis the Soviet armed forces. The report goes on to say when the United States “military strength is related to the world situation and balanced against the likely exigencies of such a situation it is clear that our military strength is becoming dangerously inadequate”.<sup>211</sup>

Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs had speculated that the Soviet Union, enforced with men and material from its satellites, was at a military preparedness that would allow them “to overrun Western Europe, with the possible exception of the Iberian and Scandinavian peninsulas; to drive toward the oil-bearing areas of the Near and Middle East; and to consolidate communist gains in the Far East”. It was also determined that, after their conquest of Europe, the Soviets would be able to launch nuclear attacks against selected targets in Alaska, Canada and the United States. Coupled with a full-scale air and a limited sea campaign against Britain, the Soviets could deny

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<sup>210</sup> NSC-68. 26-27

<sup>211</sup> NSC-68. 30-31

NATO forces a jumping off point for a Normandy type invasion of the continent.<sup>212</sup> Along with having strong conventional forces, the Soviets were expected to have a nuclear arsenal of 200 bombs by 1954; it having already been estimated that 100 bombs alone would be enough to cripple the United States.<sup>213</sup>

War would have meant risking Soviet domination of the Eurasian continent, also the secretaries understood that the American public would consider a preemptive attack by NATO as a “repugnant act”; even if they believed it could be successful and deliver a crippling blow to Soviet war industry. Choosing to withdraw from their international responsibilities was also not an option. It was determined that without American support the remaining democracies in Western Europe would eventually fall into a policy of neutrality and that might have meant that no resistance would be offered if the Soviets invaded. It was also determined that the free world could not continue with the peacetime policies it had been conducting up to that time. Demobilization had left the United States’ conventional forces weakened and now its nuclear monopoly had ended; with the Soviets now catching up in the arms race. It was also clear the American public would not support a preemptive attack against the Soviet bloc which, besides it being seen as an aggressive act, would cost a substantial number of American lives. Therefore, the only policy left open, short of war, that could halt Soviet expansion and degrade the Soviet state was to build up militarily, politically, and economically the western nations in order to deter, but also allow for a rapid response, to Soviet aggression. Militarily they needed to have sufficient forces to counter any aggressive Soviet move and, if necessary, conduct a defensive

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<sup>212</sup> NSC-68. 17-18

<sup>213</sup> NSC-68.19-20



campaign in Western Europe to allow offensive forces to be built up and brought to bear against Soviet forces.

It also meant strengthening NATO politically and economically in order to increase military expenditures to build up their armed forces, as well as economic assistance programs to assist the economies of their allies; who would in turn be able to increase their military expenditures. Finally, there would need to be campaign to unhinge the Soviet satellite nations from the sway of the Kremlin; “programs designed to build and maintain confidence among other peoples in [the United States and NATO’s] strength and resolution, and to wage overt psychological warfare calculated to encourage mass defections from Soviet allegiance and to frustrate the Kremlin’s design...”.<sup>214</sup>

It would also be necessary to continue to build up and maintain the United States nuclear arsenal as an offensive weapon; due in no short part because of inadequate troop strengths. The report stipulates that if the United States had overwhelming atomic superiority then the Soviet Union might be deterred from employing its atomic weapons. However, this would also mean that the campaign for international control of nuclear energy would have to be suspended indefinitely. It was deduced that if the United States made the statement that they were prepared to eliminate its nuclear arsenal, or simply to say that they will only use it if attacked first, then it might be seen as sign of weakness.<sup>215</sup> Their past experiences taught them that it was impossible to develop an effective plan for international control “unless and until the Kremlin design [had] been frustrated to a point at which a genuine and drastic change in Soviet politics [had] been

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<sup>214</sup> NSC-68. 48-57

<sup>215</sup> NSC-68. 39

taken”.<sup>216</sup> This would mean an arms race would have to be conducted in order for the United States to keep its arsenal from falling behind the Soviets. It would mean a nuclear build up on a new scale with more destructive bombs than had been used before; whose only point of existence was that one side could not have a monopoly on them alone.

Two years after this classified report was completed, on November 1, 1952, the United States tested their first thermonuclear device, which was called “Mike”, at the Eniwetok Atoll in the South Pacific. The yield was 1,000 times that of uranium bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. A year after the Mike shot, on August 12, 1953, the Soviets tested their first thermonuclear bomb, which was 25 times smaller than Mike, but was able to be delivered more adequately from the air.<sup>217</sup> NSC-68 would frame the basis of the United States policy of containment and nuclear deterrence. The conflict in Korea was the first test of this new policy. The United States responded with armed forces, not only to protect their ally, but also to begin breaking the communist bloc by occupying and reforming North Korea, which failed due to Chinese intervention. Despite the incompleteness of the results, the United States and NATO would continue this strategy of containment into the next administration.

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<sup>216</sup> NSC-68. 43, 47

<sup>217</sup> Holloway. *Stalin and the Bomb*. 303-307

## **Eisenhower**

Truman's policies throughout his time in office had been to strengthen the United Nations to being stronger than the League of Nations had been and to create the world that Roosevelt and Churchill had promised would come after victory over the Nazis and the Japanese had been achieved. Demobilizing the United States military so rapidly failed to take into consideration the possibility of continued mistrust by the Soviets of the capitalist world, or that the United Nations would be as ineffective as it was at curbing Stalin's ambitions, which led to the rapid spread of Communism across Eastern and Central Europe as well as Northern Asia.. Soviet power was now at its peak. One of the benefactors to this, curiously, was the Republican Party in the presidential elections of 1952.

The Republicans ran on the platform that the Truman administration had squandered the "unprecedented power and prestige" the United States had held at the end of the Second World War. Furthermore, they pointed out that "more than 500,000,000 non-Russian people of fifteen different countries [had] been absorbed into the sphere of communist Russia" under the current administration. Some of the nations in question, they claimed, had been "friendly nations", including the Baltic states, Poland, and Czechoslovakia; which had been left to fend for themselves against the Soviet Union and were eventually swallowed up by it. They also brought up the Korean War, which was still ongoing, and hinted at the administration's policy of disengagement and demobilization, stating that "in South Korea, they withdrew our occupation troops in the face of the aggressive, poised for action, communist military strength on its northern border." Acheson's earlier statement in which the United States publicly announced that

Korea was not its concern was taken as an invitation for communist aggression that North Korea warmly accepted.<sup>218</sup>

In regards to the war itself, the Republicans interpreted the United States' performance in a different light. American forces, after seven years of trying to balance the budget, had been forced to fight in unfavorable conditions which had, by then, resulted in the over 110,000 casualties. Moreover, their solution to avoiding another instance like Korea, or Czechoslovakia for that matter, was to have a military that could be ready to defend against, and respond quickly, to sudden attacks. To create this sort of preparedness required "the quickest possible development of appropriate and completely adequate air power and the simultaneous readiness of coordinated air, land and sea forces, with all necessary installations, bases, supplies and munitions, including atomic energy weapons in abundance".<sup>219</sup>

The Democratic Party ran on a platform that both the country and the world had benefited when the United States was under democratic leadership, which won the Second World War, and which "sponsored and helped create the United Nations". The party also asserted that they would continue "efforts to strengthen the United Nations, improve its institutions as experience requires, and foster its growth and development". The Democrats also wanted to continue the policy of collective security against future aggression, rejecting the idea of the United States having to face such threats alone; a method they deemed both expensive and dangerous. Instead the United States needed "strong allies, around the world, making their maximum contribution to the common defense". This would be a continuation of the policies of the Truman Doctrine, the

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<sup>218</sup> "The Presidential Election Campaign. Republican Campaign Platform, Adopted July 10, 1952" *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 80-84

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid* 80-84

Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>220</sup> Thus, a new democratic administration would keep the Truman strategy of involving all the non-communist nations in a strategy of containment against Soviet expansion, whereas the republican ticket sought to strengthen the United States itself against aggression in a new policy that seemed to revolve around responding quickly to situations like Korea.

The Republican nominee for president was Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had called for the Truman administration to gain control of the record number of American military personnel being demobilized in 1946. In a speech given in September of 1952, he critiqued the weakness of the Truman Doctrine as having strengthened Europe at the cost of security in other parts of the world. He called for a universal defense of the free world that would not leave any place vulnerable to direct communist aggression. Like Truman, he also espoused universal disarmament, but that any new program would not be dependent on “assurances of good faith on the part of every participating nation”; as it would have been if the Soviet proposal of nuclear regulation would have been accepted. However, he also stated that “In this atomic age...victory is impossible in a global war. Only the losing of a modern war could be more disastrous than winning it”.<sup>221</sup> His plan was to deter the Soviets through strong relations with and support of democratic states in every part of the world, a strong American economy, and, perhaps, a nuclear deterrent to both prevent and prepare for the outbreak of a third world war.

Before leaving office, in his final state of the union address, Truman reiterated the triumphs and shortcomings of his administration. One of the latter included the United Nations,

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<sup>220</sup> “Democratic Campaign Platform, Adopted July 24, 1952.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 86-90

<sup>221</sup> “Ten Steps Towards Winning an Enduring Peace: Speech of the Republican Presidential Candidate (Eisenhower) at Philadelphia September 4, 1952.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. xiii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1953) 90-93

in that the United States was “prepared, and so were the other nations of the free world, to place our reliance on the machinery of the United Nations to safeguard peace.” He goes on to say that the Soviets, unlike the other members of the Security Council, have failed to honor their pledge to cooperate to that end. Adding that the “free world refused to resign itself to collective suicide merely because of the technicality of the Soviet veto and the unceasing efforts of the Soviet representatives to sabotage the United Nations”. This statement is not far from the truth of the matter. The Soviets had utilized the post-war system to expand their influence, as well as their borders, by taking advantage of the position they had won during the war. He hailed the events in Iran, Greece, Turkey, and Berlin as victories for the free world, as well as his administration, with Korea being the greatest, despite public opinion about the war. It was there that “aggression was repelled, driven back, and punished”, and it was also there that “demonstrated that the free world has the will and the endurance to match the communist effort to overthrow international order through local aggression”.<sup>222</sup>

Also in his final state of the union address Truman credits the Soviet nuclear test in the fall of 1949 as having, in response to it, helped to stimulate the American program of defense mobilization. He also takes to time to give admiration to the United States nuclear capabilities. That in the seven years following “Alamogordo we have developed nuclear weapons with many times the explosive force of the early models, and we have produced them in ...substantial quantities”. The irony is thick in this statement coming from the man that had only six years before been advocating for the prohibition of nuclear weapons boasting of their destructive capabilities, stating further that “from now on, moves into a new era of destructive power,

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<sup>222</sup> “The Inheritance of the New Administration: Annual Message of the President (Truman) to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 7, 1953.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954) 1-10

capable of creating explosions of a new order of magnitude”, in this case megatons, “dwarfing the mushroom clouds of Hiroshima and Nagasaki”. He goes on to declare that the stage the United States had “reached in the release of the atom will not be the last”. That America was on a path that could only end with an international commitment to preventing further development of nuclear energy for destructive capabilities. Until that time the country must stay the course because “no advance we make is unattainable by others”.<sup>223</sup> This statement, and Eisenhower’s new nuclear policy, marked the end of the initial stages of the nuclear arms race which began with the effort in the United Nations to establish international prohibition of nuclear weapons, which Stalin would not have allowed so long as the United States alone could produce them and now it seemed that he would not allow such measures with the Soviets, whom he and the nation believed could never be trusted, and instead would compete with them over superiority of nuclear armaments.

When he assumed office, Eisenhower laid down his new foreign policy. First, that there needed to be close cooperation between the executive and legislative branches. One of the major tenets of the Republican platform was that the United States would be able to respond to any new act of aggression in the world quickly, which be another form of deterrence, toward communist expansion, so cooperation between the branches of government was important. The second was that the United States needed to have a “coherent global policy”, where defensive measures in Asia would be the same as those in Europe and the Americas. Included in his third point, the Eisenhower administration’s dedication to making the free world secure, was the point that the United States government “recognize[d] no kind of commitment contained in secret

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid 10-19

understandings of the past with foreign governments which permit this kind of enslavements”.<sup>224</sup> The enslavement referred to here of course was the soviet style of subjugation. It also referred to the agreements made during the war by the Roosevelt and Truman administration with the Soviet Union that led to it dominating Eastern and Central Europe. This would evolve into the “Captive Peoples” resolution, in which the Eisenhower administration officially rejected “any interpretations or applications of any international agreement or understanding, made during World War II, which have been perverted to bring about the subjugation of free peoples...”.<sup>225</sup>

The fourth point of the new administration’s foreign policy was a reflection of the Truman administrations push for collective security. It stated “that no single country, even one so powerful as [the United States], can alone defend the liberty of all nations threatened by communist aggression from without or subversion within”. The main point being that “mutual security means effective mutual cooperation”. The fifth point was the administration sought “to foster unity throughout Western Europe”; this was another left over from the Truman years. The final point included the recognition of the importance of world trade.<sup>226</sup> In September Eisenhower’s secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, went before the United Nations General Assembly, to reaffirm the United States commitment toward the organization becoming “an increasingly “effective instrument of peace”. Dulles addressed the claims that the organization had fallen short of its purpose, maintaining international peace and security, due to its involvement in the Korean War and the war in Indochina. Dulles dispels these by reminding the

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<sup>224</sup> “The Principles of American Foreign Policy: Message of the President (Eisenhower) to the Congress on the State of the Union, February 2, 1953.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954) 19-20

<sup>225</sup> “The Draft ‘Captive Peoples’ Resolution.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954) 188-189

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid* 21-22



assembly that “for the first time in history an international organization was instrumental in repelling armed aggression”, alluding to their success in Korea, and until Soviet foreign policy changed, the policy of containment would have to continue.<sup>227</sup>

Before Dulles’ speech in September, the defense budget for the 1954 fiscal was finally released. These new budget measures clarified how different the Eisenhower administration would be from Truman’s penny pinching policy, but instead contained some surprising characteristics. Eisenhower’s secretary of defense, Charles Erwin Wilson, had planned to make reductions in the number of personnel in all four branches of the military, following the cessation of hostilities in Korea. The Army would be reduced from its strength, during the Korean War, of 1,500,000 to 1,370,000; the Navy was to go from having 800,000 personnel to 745,000; the Marine Corps would go from 245,000, to 230,000 personnel; finally, the Air Force would be reduced from 970,000 personnel, first, to 960,000 by June of 1954 and then to 915,000 by June of 1955. The total budget was also to be reduced from the original amount of \$48 billion that had been figured in January 1953 to \$43.2 billion, but it was hoped that it could be brought down to as low as \$40 billion.<sup>228</sup> During the post war period the United States had seen its troop numbers peak at the end of the war in 1945 at 12.3 million to 1.6 million in 1947 and then to their low of 1.3 million in 1950.<sup>229 230 231</sup> According to Wilson, by 1953 they had rebounded to 3.5 million

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<sup>227</sup> “Proposals for the Easing World Tension through the United Nations: Address by the Secretary of State (Dulles) before the United Nations General assembly, September 17, 1953.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954) 34-44

<sup>228</sup> “The Defense Budget Fiscal Year 1954: Statement by the Secretary of Defense (Wilson) before the Armed Services Subcommittee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, May 11, 1953.” *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954) 52-62

<sup>229</sup> Haberski. *God and War*. 12

<sup>230</sup> “Message from the President (Truman) to the Congress Recommending the Termination of Selective Service, March 3, 1947”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* Vol. ix. (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1949) 282

<sup>231</sup> “Budget Message of the President to the Congress, January 10, 1949”. *Documents on American Foreign Relations*. xii (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1950) 279

due to the Korean War.<sup>232</sup> The budget had also been altered following the conflict in Korea. \$43.2 billion compared to Truman's planned budget for 1950 of \$14.7 billion.<sup>233</sup> The United States would spend an amount equivalent to just under half of what its wartime expenditures had been during the last year of the second world war in order to achieve the military readiness that Eisenhower believed was necessary to deter the communists.

In December the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Arthur W. Radford made an address before the National Press Club in Washington where he outlined the "New Look" in the defense planning of the Eisenhower administration. Radford explained that national defense now required the United States to "prepare for the long pull; not a year-of-crisis". The country would maintain a sturdy military posture "over an extended period of uneasy peace, rather than peaking forces at greater costs for a particular period of tension". The justification for this new approach was that hot spots would arise and if America maintained "a strong military posture...a counter offensive capability along with mobile, combat forces in readiness...it should convince the men in the Kremlin that neither a global nor a localized war [would] be to their advantage". Hence here we see the Eisenhower administration attempting to correct the defects that plagued the previous administration by forming a strategy that relied on ground forces, which would respond quickly to Soviet aggression or provocation unlike in the years before 1950; along with this new approach would also be a strong nuclear deterrent to give the Soviets even more of an incentive to avoid a direct confrontation with the west. In regards to the latter, Radford mentions that in order "to accomplish these ends we are improving greatly our combat effectiveness by the application of new weapons and new techniques, and hope ultimately to achieve greater

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid. 52-62

<sup>233</sup> Ibid 252

flexibility than heretofore attainable". At this time nuclear weapons were being tested alongside conventional forces as a way of synthesizing the two in order for nuclear weapons to have a place on the battlefield in any war against the Soviets. In fact, Radford states, quite clearly, that "atomic weapons have virtually achieved conventional status within our Armed Forces". In regards to the new defense policy, each branch of the military had the capability of "putting this weapon into military use".<sup>234</sup> This in turn would allow the military to reach a new level of combat effectiveness. The reason for such new weapons had a familiar ring to it by now. In Wilson's report on the demobilization of the military for the 1954 fiscal year stated that the strength of the Soviet Armed Forces showed that they could field 175 divisions, with their satellites providing an additional 75; as well, the Soviet Air Force was comprised of some 20,000-frontline aircraft; with the Soviet Navy including 350 submarines, with many of these being of the latest models. To defend against this the United States could field 20 Infantry divisions from the Army and an additional 3 divisions from the Marine Corps; naval forces that included 16 carrier air groups, which included 9,900 operational aircraft, and 120 air wings of the United States Air Force.<sup>235</sup> Ideally, these would be supported by NATO forces that would number some 50-divisions as mentioned before.<sup>236</sup>

This policy of rapid response and intervention was the final stage in the process with had been started in May 1945 when President Truman began demobilizing American forces following the surrender of Nazi Germany. Eight years later, with the paranoia of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe ever present in the minds of top political and military officials, the

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<sup>234</sup> "The 'New Look' in Defense Planning: Address by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Radford) before the National Press Club, Washington, December 14, 1953." Documents on American Foreign Relations (Boston: World Peace Foundation; 1954) 63-66

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid 203

United States had shifted away from deterrence by maintaining a large military to one that included maintaining a moderately sized peace time military force that was now practicing using nuclear weapons on the frontline. What had begun as a suggestion to offset military costs, but which could deter Soviet aggression with the same potency as having a large standing military, had become one of the United States' primary strategies to defeating the Soviets militarily.

Nuclear weapons would now be utilized in the event of a third world war between NATO and the Soviet Union, and with the advent of nuclear weapons that could be produced quickly for mass production, what mattered now was not only the size of a country's standing army, but the capacity of their nuclear arsenal which they could bring to bear in a devastating attack on their enemy. This also meant that justification for the use of nuclear weapons was also solved, as both sides understood that an opening move by the aggressor, be it the Soviets or the Americans, would most likely be a nuclear attack aimed at crippling the other sides ability to sustain their military forces; so each side needed to be able to use their nuclear weapons to respond in turn in order to prevent the aggressor from winning a complete victory at the outset of a conflict.

Eisenhower had taken the lessons of the Truman administration to mean that the United States needed to at least show that they were ready to respond quickly to communist aggression directly instead with aid and protest in the UN. With this new strategy of deterrence and assertiveness it was hoped that Communism could be successfully contained.

## **Conclusion**

Rapid demobilization played a pivotal role in the escalation of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Its effects caused a sense of paranoia that was based on the concern that American forces would be insufficient to stop a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Following the rise in Communism in Eastern Europe and the reluctance of the Soviet Union to withdrawal from Iran during the 1945 socialist uprising in Azerbaijan, American policy makers feared that the Soviet Union could become aggressively expansionistic. The administration, however, was also concerned with finding a financially sound solution that would not invite the sort of military expenditures and enormous budget deficits seen during the war. As Truman argued in a speech to Congress in 1947, requesting financial aid for Greece and Turkey, the United States had spent close to \$341 billion to fight the Second World War.<sup>237</sup> The costs for the fiscal year in 1945, if recalled, were over \$100 billion alone.<sup>238</sup>

The American soldiers stationed overseas wanted to come home and it was the responsibility of the Truman administration to bring them back to their families now that the war was over. Politicians and policy makers, especially Truman and even Eisenhower in the beginning, were also adhering to the older American ideology that disdained compulsory military service and the maintaining of a large military in peace time. So instead they sought alternate solutions to the problem of rapidly declining troop strengths. These included successful measures, including the unification of the War and the Navy Departments into the Department of Defense, which made the American command structure more centralized and able to react quicker to sudden acts of aggression. Universal military training, which was meant to be the

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<sup>237</sup> *ibid* 646-650

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid* 106-107

answer to volunteer shortages, was less successful, as it would have meant the militarization of the United States civilian population against only a possible threat to national security at a time when most Americans were weary of war.

The atomic bomb provided the solution that selective service, the volunteer campaign, and universal training could not. It could create a form of deterrence that did not involve having to risk the outrage of the public by extending the draft indefinitely or forcing every 18-year-old man in the country to take basic training. The administration seems to have taken nuclear deterrence with the same seriousness as the other options after having dispelled any doubts about the bombs effectiveness in the Crossroads tests at Bikini Atoll and after having develop a bomb design that was both efficient and could be produced quickly for military production. Except for trying to use the bomb in bargaining for the reduction of armed forces worldwide, which would have negated the threat posed by the Red Army, the administration seemed determined to make the bomb an important part of their strategy of combating the Soviets.

By far the most successful program the administration implemented as a measure to deter the Soviets was the Marshall Plan. Truman's aid program to Greece had shown that Communism could be resisted through financial aid and material relief to struggling nations, rather than by sending intervening forces. It seems moderately correct to label the plan as the great "American offensive" that both Gaddis and Leffler consider it to be. It was aimed at building up markets and keeping people's faith in capitalism to prevent communist parties in Western Europe from taking advantage of the economic downturn that had resulted because of the war. This was especially the case in France and Italy, where the communist movements were gaining support and popularity before the upcoming elections. The exclusion of the Soviets from the program, following the breakdown of the Three Powers Conference in Paris, had major implications on the

political make-up of Europe. Because Stalin had ordered the communist parties to denounce and abstain from the Paris Conference they lost much of their public support. Western Europe was kept from collapsing economically and was brought together politically, eventually leading them to form the Brussels Pact and eventually the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, while at the same time Eastern Europe came firmly under to control of the Soviets (following Stalin's clampdown). So, while it saved Western Europe from "falling" to Communism, and, to use Truman and Churchill's language, allowed the administration to begin consolidating resources in Europe that could be utilized against the Soviets, the Marshall Plan effectually divided Europe in two and was the leading cause of the coup in Czechoslovakia.

Morton Kaplan champions the idea that American intervention early in the post-war period may have turned the tide against communism early in the standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, to send troops to Iran, Greece, or Czechoslovakia likely would not have been viewed by the public or the international community as being justifiable to maintaining peace. So, to say that stationing more troops in Europe or the Middle East might have been a better deterrent against communist aggression might is difficult to promote. Michael Gordon suggests that demobilization left the United States with no choice but to put more money and effort into building a nuclear arsenal, especially after the Soviets acquired the bomb in 1949. NSC-68, and Truman's own actions, lend credence to this claim. However, before 1949, and beyond the Joe-1 test, what drove the development of the United States nuclear arsenal was the concern over how the military, which had been weakened by demobilization, was going to fare in an engagement against superior numbers of Soviet forces. These fears were furthered by the possibility that the Soviets would achieve superiority or just parity in nuclear weapons over the United States. As a result, the United States took measures to prop up "friendly states",

alienating and isolating the Soviet bloc, and undermining the authority of the United Nations. The United States would steadily build up its nuclear stockpile from 298 in 1950 to 1,161 by the end of the Truman Administration in 1953.<sup>239</sup> After the Soviets obtained nuclear capabilities, the United States expanded their arsenal further to include more powerful hydrogen bombs and tactical nuclear weapons, meant to be used alongside conventional forces in battle. These developments underscore the United States military's rising view of nuclear weapons necessary in combating the enormous manpower of the Red Army, thus lending more credence to Gordon and Kaplan's claim.

Holloway and Leffler make the claim that Stalin largely wanted the bomb to negate diplomatic leverage the United States thought it had because of its nuclear monopoly. Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been heavy blows to the power and influence Stalin had won for himself due to the Allies desperately needing Soviet support to defeat the Axis.<sup>240</sup> If he was ever to fully gain global credibility he needed the Soviet Union to have the bomb, but until he did he was forced to take a cautious approach and rely on "parliamentary means" of spreading communism.<sup>241</sup> These points are proven by the fact that Stalin showed only passive opposition, using the Soviet Union's veto in the United Nations, to hinder resolutions that he felt were detrimental to his foreign policy, with his only real act of aggression being the Berlin Blockade in 1948. Kennan mentioned in 1946 that the Soviet Union would behave in this manner stating that they would "not take unnecessary risks" if they believed there would be a significant response to their actions.<sup>242</sup> However, Stalin also saw the extent to which the Truman administration would go to

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<sup>239</sup> Holloway. *Stalin and the Bomb*, 230

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. 49

<sup>241</sup> Leffler. *Soul of Mankind*.29

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. 194



oppose Communism and this gave him the reassurance that the United States would not intervene militarily in Korea if Kim Il Sung's forces could conquer South Korea quickly. By 1950, however, the Truman administration had become disillusioned with their previous methods of containing Communism, such as providing aid to democratic states, and sought a more assertive approach to dealing with the Soviet Union; who they now and regarded as much a threat to the world as the Axis had been. Although, according to the Raymond Haberski Jr's analysis of this period, their options to combat the Soviet Union were somewhat limited given American attitudes towards going to war to defeat Communism and the unjustified use of nuclear weapons. Such positions might have changed, however, if there had been an overwhelming Soviet invasion of Western Europe or an attack on the United States itself and the American public believed that using nuclear weapons could help in ending the war quickly with minimum loss of American lives; which had been the case when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed. Korea would end up being a proving ground for either side to understand what a war between the United States and the Soviet Union would look like. It pushed American military planners to begin thinking of nuclear weapons as something to be used in a conventional role in order to prevent another stalemate with communist forces. This would carry over into the Eisenhower administration, which augmented nuclear weapons with a policy of covert and small scale intervention as a dual strategy of deterrence.

The policy of demobilization was a series of choices. These policy choices, in turn, led the United States government and military to believe that the country was unprepared to counter Stalin's revolutionary and expansionist policies in the post-war period. After it became clear that the United States and the Soviet Union were at cross purposes in their foreign policies, with each side labeling the other as a threat to peace, a policy of "containment" was enacted by the Truman

administration as a more hardline approach to dealing with the Soviet Union and halting the spread of Communism. Truman would try to avoid the expenditures, criticisms, and responsibilities that came with conscripting and maintaining a large military. To do so Truman and his Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, eventually expanded the role of nuclear weapons in the American strategy to become its leading deterrent against Soviet led aggression. When the administration could not reduce the Soviet armed forces through international efforts, for which they were willing to give up their nuclear monopoly, the focus of the administration's foreign policy was to preserve as many friendly states as it could that would be able to resist the Soviets economically and militarily. The actions taken to do so resulted in the division of Europe and a dramatic increase in paranoia in the soviet camp toward the intentions of the west and vice versa. This long process started with a concern over the policy of reduction of American armed forces in the face of superior Soviet forces and ended in a bifurcated world that teetered on the edge of global conflict for nearly 44 years.

The effects of the rapid demobilization of American armed forces were felt throughout the post-war period and helped to degrade relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which in turn led to a breakdown of international cooperation. Though it did not cause the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union by itself, it is one of the key factors in shaping the early stages of the Cold War. Some scholars like Michael Gordon and Morton Kaplan mention demobilization as one of several factors that led to other events or policies in this period. In most cases its true importance is rarely mentioned in lieu of discussing the effects of other factors such as the fundamental conflict between Capitalism and Communism that made the Cold War inevitable, whether it was wise to not include the Soviets in the Manhattan Project, or the Roosevelt administration's failure to understand Stalin's territorial ambitions during the

war. However, if one analyzes this period with an understanding of the effects of demobilization a new image of the United States emerges. The leaders of the country were at odds with trying to fulfill their moral obligations to the American people, who wanted peace and prosperity after the war had been won, while at the same time trying to stand by its pledges to support the United Nations and the free world against the threat of totalitarianism. After the drastic reduction of the military, the Truman administration was hard-pressed to satisfy both of these obligations. Attempts to bolster the military, which included sending aid and material to Europe, drew the distrust of Josef Stalin and set in motion the events that led to the breakdown of relations between the Soviet Union and the west. Thus, insecurity and paranoia caused by the policy of demobilization due to the fear of American weakness in the face of Communism initiated a domino effect of decisions and policies that eventually led to an end of the post war period and direct, albeit subtle, hostilities between the Capitalist west and Communist east. When the full effects of demobilization are understood and correctly applied to this period there is a clearer understanding of the motives and concerns that drove the decision-making processes of both sides. With this comes the answers to how the victorious allied powers ended up becoming bitter rivals only five years out from defeating the Axis and how nuclear weapons, which seemed poised to go the way of mustard gas, ended up becoming the forefront of each sides strategy of deterrence in one of the longest standoffs in modern human history.

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