

naturally reluctant to discuss the situation. When it was suggested that a general program of propaganda analysis be undertaken by an inter-American organization such as the Emergency Advisory Committee on Political Defense (CPD), the OCIAA opposed the suggestion as "dangerous to our positive program." Such a study of propaganda efforts, the OCIAA feared, would reveal that the volume of United States information was by far greater in the Latin American republics than that of the Axis.⁶⁰

Increasingly involved in a worldwide struggle, the Roosevelt administration did not desire an unstable political situation developing in its own "back yard." Of primary importance to American policymakers, therefore, was the creation of a stable, orderly hemisphere—an American hemisphere—based solidly on American principles and free from outside influences.

Faced with what they considered an unstable and hostile world situation, administration officials, perhaps quite naturally, renewed their emphasis on cultural affinity and unity among the nations of the New World. Given the circumstances, their attempt to foster an American hemisphere seemed a legitimate objective. Moreover, many of the programs instituted by the Roosevelt administration in the cultural and socioeconomic fields undoubtedly had a beneficial effect. Viewed from another angle, however, the cultural effort combined with the Roosevelt administration's vast political and economic programs for the area only served to bind the Latin American republics even more tightly to the United States and its foreign policy goals, increasing American hegemony of the hemisphere.

campaign against subversive movements in the Americas, "being scrupulous to avoid even the appearance of interference in the internal affairs of its neighbors," is open to considerable question.

⁶⁰OCIAA to Welles, 17 July 1942, D/S File 710 Consultation (3)A/154.

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Documents

The Bohlen-Robinson Report

[Below is the text of one of the alternatives to containment discussed in the article "Paths Not Taken: The United States Department of State and Alternatives to Containment, 1945-1946," pp. 297-319. This analysis of postwar Soviet-American relations by State Department specialists Charles Bohlen and Geroid T. Robinson was completed just prior to 10 December 1945. Soon afterward its perspectives and policy proposals were overwhelmed by the spectacular success of George Kennan's "long telegram" from Moscow. Since then this rejected alternative has remained unnoticed in the Department of State files; one of the "paths not taken" on the road to the cold war. (RLM)]

THE CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION AS AFFECTED BY AMERICAN POLICY

Introduction

The problem of Russian capabilities and intentions is so complex, and the unknowns are so numerous, that it is impossible to grasp the total situation fully and to describe it in a set of coherent and well-established conclusions. Yet an even greater risk is involved if each Russian problem is dealt with separately and no attempt is made to see every such question as a part of a single whole—however obscure the totality may be. Only the gravity of this greater risk could excuse such a doubtful and uncertain enterprise as the previous one.

I. The Problem

Since the defeat of Germany, the international balance of capabilities has changed (chiefly but not solely through the introduction of atomic warfare) in a way definitely unfavorable to the USSR, and for the time being the United States holds a decisive military superiority. However, in the course of a few years of independent development (without any sharing of foreign knowledge of the bomb) the USSR will probably have offensive capabilities not greatly different from those of the United States; the development by the USSR of the same relative capabilities for defense will probably require a number of years in addition.

During the period when capabilities show a substantial balance unfavorable to the USSR (Period I), the United States need not be acutely concerned about the immediate current intentions of the Soviet Union. In this period, the United States enjoys a considerable latitude in determining its policy toward the USSR; thus the United States may choose between a moderate and deliberately reassuring policy, and the policy of developing a maximum alignment of power against the Soviet Union.

In Period II, after the USSR has achieved large comparative capabilities, Soviet intentions will be of critical importance to the United States. The intentions of the USSR in Period II are in some degree predictable.

The chief problem to be determined in this paper is: How will the capabilities and intentions of the USSR in *Period II* be affected by the policy of the United States in *Period I*?

II. Factors Determining Soviet Intentions

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union will be determined in the main by three sets of factors:

1. The comparative capabilities of the USSR, and the ideology and desires of the Soviet leaders;
2. The relative strength, as conceived by the Soviet leaders, of the competing domestic forces in the chief problem areas of the world;
3. The foreign policy and intentions of the United States (and Great Britain), as they appear to the Soviet leaders.

III. Chief Problem Areas

The chief power centers of the world are the USA and the USSR, and the chief problem areas in which the relations of these two powers must be worked out are:

1. Eastern Europe, where Russian influence predominates;
2. Western Europe, the Mediterranean and the Near East, where Britain (with some American support) holds a similar, but much weaker, position;
3. Germany, Japan, and China, the chief areas of American-Russian compromise or competition, where America cannot yield full control to Russia, or Russia to America.

IV. Comparative Soviet Capabilities and the Atomic Bomb

Throughout the following discussion of capabilities, it is assumed that in the development of their power the USA and the USSR will proceed largely independently without sharing, for example, their knowledge of the bomb or of any newly discovered means of defense against the bomb. This assumption is not intended to express an attitude of any kind toward the non-sharing policy. If a different policy should be adopted, in any degree, this would of course require a reconsideration of these estimates and predictions respecting capabilities.

The sudden introduction of the atomic bomb has radically upset all previous estimates and predictions of comparative capabilities and has made all such estimates far more difficult and uncertain than they were a few months ago. The great and still unmeasured possibilities of the bomb itself are not the only cause of this uncertainty. Following after radar, the V-1, the V-2, the proximity fuse, and other such devices, the bomb has produced the impression that this is an era of headlong change where still other new weapons may at any time affect radically the international balance of capabilities. Speculation now centers most of all upon the possibility of some means of defense that will neutralize atomic bombs before they reach their targets. So far as is known, such defensive means remain entirely in the realm of speculation; but an invention of this kind might *at any time* alter the bases of all estimates of capabilities as radically as the bomb itself has altered them. For example, the early development of an effective defense might entirely eliminate "Period II" from the following summary schedule—which aims only at selecting from among many uncertainties, those that seem less uncertain than the rest.

The USSR will enjoy certain advantages throughout: in ability to protect the secrecy of scientific and technical information and of target locations, and in ability to discover such secrets abroad; in police protection against sabotage and in the organization of sabotage in other countries; in the degree of concentration of the resources of the country on selected objectives, such as atomic research or the protective dispersion of industry; in greater unity of public opinion, less responsibility to that opinion, and much greater freedom and elasticity (within the limits of Soviet capabilities) in determining foreign policy, in existing pressures abroad, in the final decisions of war and peace; and in the discipline and energy, if not the numerical strength, of supporting groups in foreign countries.

Period I. Predominance of Offensive Warfare: Decisive Superiority of the USA.

It is believed that for several years (perhaps 5 or even 10), the USSR will be unable to produce atomic bombs in significant quantities, and will also be unable by active defense measures to prevent the delivery, on Russian targets, of a significant proportion of any atomic bombs dispatched from American- or British-controlled bases. (The delivery, on the targets, of even a limited number of atomic bombs would be militarily decisive.) If—and so long as—the conditions here described are actual, the *offensive capabilities* of the USA are manifestly and decisively superior to those of the USSR, and any war between the USA and the USSR would be far more costly to Russia than to the United States. Such a war might cost the dissolution of the Soviet state.

In a few years the USSR may attain something like equality with the USA in the production of atomic bombs and long-range bomb-carriers, in facilities for active defense in atomic warfare, and in the dispersion and underground construction of bomb dumps, bomb carriers, launching sites, and plants directly engaged in the manufacture of bombs and carriers.

One or two decades in addition would probably be required for the USSR to match the total production of the United States in essential lines (a cushion against bombing losses) and in the dispersion of general production and population (a limitation on the effectiveness of each bomb). The political necessity to improve the standard of living in the USSR will limit the rate of development of heavy industry and the wholesale dispersion of industries already in existence, but will not interfere seriously with the planned dispersion of new construction.

Just how important the factors of total production and general dispersion will be, in the balance of capabilities, it is impossible to say. However it appears that Period I will shade by imperceptible degrees into Period II.

Period II. Continuing Predominance of the Offensive; Uncertainty as to the International Balance of Capabilities.

This is conceived of as a period, reasonably predictable, when both the USA and the USSR would possess:

a) atomic bombs and long-range bomb-carriers, and specific means for their production and protection, in very rough equality, with an advantage in forward bases on the side of the United States.

b) a rough balance in means of locating and shooting down a proportion of bomb-carriers, but no effective means of neutralizing the bomb itself in flight (for example, by exploding it at a great distance from the target, or conceivably by attacking it with a ray that would render the bomb inoperative).

c) a volume of production of essentials, and a dispersion of production and population, much nearer to equality than is now the case.

Under these conditions, both sides would have *large offensive capabilities* in atomic warfare, heavy counter-attacks could not be prevented by surprise, war would be enormously destructive to both sides, and the outcome would be extremely uncertain; it might well be that neither power would be able to win a decision over the other, and that in a ruinous stalemate one or both states would collapse.

If in such a war the Soviet state survived and were able to establish control over Europe, the war would have to be counted a Russian victory.

Period III. Predominance of the Defensive: Complete Uncertainty as to International Balance of Capabilities.

Period III is thought of as a period when both sides possess atomic bombs and bomb-carriers in military quantities, as in Period II; but it is assumed that in Period III one or both sides would also possess means of *active defense* that can effectively neutralize the bombs dispatched by an enemy. When Period III will arrive, or whether it will ever arrive at all, is a matter of speculation; in any case it is probable that Russia (as well as the United States) will have bombs and carriers in military quantity for some time before an effective defense is discovered.

If effective means of active defense should be discovered *before* the USSR succeeds in producing the bomb itself in quantity, Period II, as

described above, would never materialize. The discovery of such defensive means *after* Russia had succeeded in producing the bomb would bring Period II to a close.

If, in Period III, completely effective means of active defense were available to both the USA and the USSR, the atomic bomb would cease to be a factor of importance in determining their comparative capabilities. If the new defensive means were available to one power only (when both possessed the bomb) that power would thus have an overwhelming superiority, since it could attack the other power without itself being attacked. It is extremely unlikely that either the USA or the USSR could remain in exclusive possession of such defensive means for a long period—but either might well do so long enough to win a war.

Because it is not inconceivable that warfare may still be conducted on a non-atomic basis, something should be said of the comparative capabilities of the USSR under that condition. There is every reason to believe that the Russians will succeed in maintaining a relatively high tempo of industrial expansion, as compared with the industrially mature West, and that, ignoring atomic weapons, their capabilities will rise more rapidly than those of Britain and the United States.

However, with one-fourth of Russia's fixed capital lost and her population weakened by severe wartime privations, Russia will be able to produce an annual national income (in the American sense) of not much more than 25 billion dollars, or \$150 per capita, in 1945. (The comparable figure for the United States is about \$1,000 per capita.) Leaving the atomic bomb out of account, the Western Powers might have been expected to have, for some years, an advantage over Russia in terms of total material capabilities. Yet this is a statement respecting capabilities in the abstract, without regard to possible areas of military operation: in a conflict on the continent of Europe, the logistical advantage would be heavily with the Russians, especially after current American and British withdrawals and demobilization; in the Far East, on the other hand, American and British shipping and air transport could easily outmatch the Trans-Siberian RR plus Soviet air transport.

The first practical test of comparative capabilities, in a non-atomic war, would be a contest between Russia and the United States (and Britain) for the control of Europe and Asia. In pre-atomic days it was often said that the USSR was without effective means of striking at the home territory of the USA. Yet a war that did not touch America, but left Russia in control of the Continent of Europe would still have to be counted a Russian victory, since it would lay the foundation for a power so great as to be a potential threat to America. If America succeeded at the same time in taking control of Eastern Asia, this could by no means balance Russian success in Europe until after a long period of peaceful development in the Far East—if such a period were allowed.

V. Mass and Distance as Factors in Capabilities

In the war just finished, sheer mass of resources and population were probably the deciding factor. In the end, mass overcame the obstacles of advance enemy bases and of greater distance from the major areas of operation (the USA vs. Germany and Japan).

In terms of pre-atomic warfare, the development of security zones seemed to offer great military advantage, in assuring advance positions, and most particularly in bringing additional masses of resources and population within a given military combination. In these terms, the Russian security zone in Europe seemed to have a much greater military significance than the new isolated Pacific bases claimed by the United States.

The development of the atomic bomb and its long-distance carriers reduces but does not destroy the value of security zones. The significance of distance, and therefore of advance positions, is diminished; but the zone would still contribute something, particularly, in the way of resources and of dispersion—two factors in passive defense in atomic warfare.

Finally, warfare might return, under certain conditions, to a pre-atomic basis, thus restoring much of the old value to security zones. Such a reverse might take place:

- a) If both sides possessed the bomb, while neither had an effective means of neutralizing it in flight, and both sides therefore refrained from bombing, for fear of heavy counterattacks;
- b) If both sides possessed means of neutralizing the bomb in flight;
- c) If the bombing capabilities of both sides were exhausted, but both still retained some military capabilities in other forms.

VI. Ideology of the Soviet Leaders

It is expected that the leaders of the Communist Party will retain their tight control over Russian life in the years to come. Therefore, it is safe to assume that Russian foreign policy will be the policy of the Communist Party of the USSR, and more particularly that of the top leadership of the Party.

The principal factor of uncertainty in any prediction respecting Soviet foreign policy is not the objective one of the comparative capabilities of the USSR and any other country or countries, but the subjective conception of the Soviet leaders respecting the relations of the Soviet state with non-Soviet states. The chief reason for doubt and uncertainty respecting this major subjective factor is that it involves, besides all the usual suspicions inherent in the relations of government with government, an official Soviet ideology of a very special character which is itself in process of change.

This ideology respecting the relation between Soviet and non-Soviet states and respecting the relation between classes within states of the latter type, is basically the Marxian ideology of inevitable conflict. Yet this philosophy does not by any means prescribe overt conflict at all times and in all places; on the contrary, it contains within itself certain very obscure and

sometimes contradictory ideas respecting the strategy and timing of compromise and collision, in different practical situations.

It is by no means to be expected that in the future the foreign policy of the Soviet leaders will be determined entirely by Marxian theory. This has never been the case since the establishment of the Soviet government; and as the Nazi power expanded and the Soviet need for allies increased, the influence of theory diminished notably. Yet it would be very unsafe to assume, on the other hand, that the future attitude of the Soviet leaders toward non-Soviet states and toward the domestic forces and movements within these states will not be influenced in any degree by the Marxian ideology. At a minimum, ideological considerations are likely to cause the Soviet leaders to construe even some of the friendly acts of non-Soviet states as sinister in design, and to arm more heavily and seek more expansion of power, in the name of security, than these leaders would do if no such ideology were influencing them. This ideology is likely to make the relations of the USSR with Britain and America more difficult than they otherwise would be; and at a maximum the Marxian concepts might eventually supply a strong impulse toward a further wide expansion of Soviet power and influence.

VII. Alignment of Governments

At the San Francisco Conference there was abundant evidence of a wide alignment of governments against the USSR. France and China vacillated for some time after this, but at the London Conference they were found on the side of the USA, rather than on that of the USSR. The abandonment by France of her attempt to play between East and West is especially significant.

VIII. Conditions in the Problem Areas

In general, the popularity of the USSR and the popular support of the local Communist leaders, have diminished in the problem areas since V-E day.

1. *Eastern Europe.* Here the disorders of Russian soldiers, the conspicuousness and crudity of Russian political intervention in several countries, and the weight of Russian economic exactions, have led to a weakening of pro-Russian and pro-Communist elements and a growth of opposition movements, except in Finland and Yugoslavia and, to a lesser extent, in Czechoslovakia.

2. *Western Europe.* In France the Communists have become the strongest single party but a majority of the votes cast in the recent national election went to parties favoring a Western orientation. Elsewhere in Western Europe, Communism has probably passed its high tide, at least for the time being.

3. *Germany.* Here Communist strength seems to have declined considerably in the Soviet Zone and is still weak in the Western Zones.

These changes are unfavorable to an expansion of Soviet power in Europe. Yet unless something can be done to improve economic conditions in Europe, a new reaction in favor of Communist leadership and pro-Soviet policies may easily occur.

In the Far East, Japan was defeated sooner than the Soviet leaders had expected; the Soviet forces entered the war too late to carry out all their strategic plans of occupation. In Japan, conditions are now more favorable to the development of American than Soviet influence. In China, however, Communist strength appears to have increased since V-J day.

IX. General Trend in Modern Industrial Society

Modern industrial society shows a progressive increase in the power of government. This trend is visible in all modern industrial countries (whether they are democratic, Fascist, or Communist), and is due chiefly to a common cause that is present in all these countries—a technology of machine production that necessitates increasing regulation and control. There is no prospect that this trend can be checked, except through checking the technological developments that give rise to it. The industrial application of atomic energy will be only one very conspicuous development among the many that are leading to a centralization of power in the state.

There is, however, a major issue involved in this general development of state power: the question whether it shall take place through democratic evolution, with some regard for individual freedom, or through revolution and dictatorship, Fascist or Communist. It is arguable that friction or war between the USA and the USSR would tend to check the democratic evolution of state power in many countries and to stimulate extremist tendencies and domestic conflicts between Communist and Fascist forces.

X. Alternative American Policies in Period I

A comparison between American and Russian capabilities was attempted in Section IV above.

In Period I, when the balance of capabilities is unfavorable to the USSR, the United States has a considerable latitude in choosing its policy vis à vis Russia; and the choice may depend very largely upon an estimate of the Russian reaction to be expected in Period II, after the USSR has developed capabilities approximating those of the United States. (No attempt is made here to deal separately with British policy toward the Soviet Union, the assumption being that if the United States gives a strong lead in dealing with Russia, Britain will follow.)

The United States might choose to follow, in Period I, one of the following policies:

Policy A. To seek a long-term stabilization of American-Russian relations by proceeding along these lines:

i) With respect to scientific and technical knowledge:

a) by sharing with the USSR, immediately and without condition, the knowledge necessary for the production of the atomic bomb; or

b) by exchanging basic scientific knowledge for peaceful purposes, and particularly by transmitting detailed information concerning the practical industrial application of atomic energy, if and when effective safeguards have been provided against the use of such knowledge for destructive purposes;

ii) by avoiding general unilateral statements of principle which permit of various possible applications, in time and place, and therefore tend to promote constant uneasiness and uncertainty;

iii) by taking and keeping the diplomatic initiative in the handling of specific problems; by making prompt, clear, and concrete proposals for the solution of such problems and for the continuing joint implementation of such solutions; by asking, in most situations, for substantially less than the current capabilities of the United States could secure, and by including in all proposals the clearest and most detailed indications and guarantees of the limitations placed upon American plans; most particularly, by using every means of the kind just indicated to develop joint American-Russian action to promote the establishment, in Germany, Japan, and China, of stable buffer régimes acceptable to both the USA and the USSR, friendly to both, and allied with neither.

iv) By promoting economic recovery, and accepting and even promoting economic and political reform, in Europe and Asia, in order to prevent the development of "revolutionary situations." (This also has importance quite apart from the problem of American-Russian relations.)

Policy B. To withhold all knowledge and other assistance that would contribute to the development of Soviet capabilities, and to exert all the pressure short of war that American capabilities will permit, in attempting to build up, at home and abroad, a balance of power so strong that the USSR will be held in check in Period II regardless of what Soviet intentions may be at that time.

Third Alternative Procedure. "Policy A" focuses upon an attempt to influence *Soviet intentions* in Period II through compromise in Period I, but without any major sacrifice of comparative American capabilities. Policy B concentrates upon an effort to establish and maintain permanently a decisive balance of *Non-Soviet capabilities*, regardless of the effect on Soviet intentions. A third possible procedure would be to try to keep American-Soviet relations somewhat indeterminate and fluid; to leave undecided the choice between "Policy A" and "Policy B"; to follow both policies alternately, or even simultaneously; and in each particular situation to seek some specific advantage.

XI. Intentions of the Soviet Union

A long-term study of the evidence respecting Soviet intentions produces an inconclusive result. It can be argued with some force that the Soviet

leaders believe in the inevitability of conflict between the USSR and the non-Soviet powers, and in the inevitable proletarian revolution as the only means of changing non-Soviet countries into dependable friends. It is generally believed that in the later prewar years this ideology had less operative effect on Soviet policy than it had formerly had; yet it is impossible to say whether this was due chiefly to a basic change of the Soviet outlook itself or to the lack of adequate capabilities at home and of appropriate "revolutionary situations" abroad.

During the current period of American superiority in capabilities (Period I), Soviet policy will not give a definite answer to this question, since Soviet capabilities will not permit to the USSR a wide freedom of action. In Period II, the USSR will have much greater comparative capabilities, and at that time Soviet intentions will be of critical importance to the United States. This section of the present report is concerned with the possible effect of American policy in Period I upon Soviet capabilities and intentions in Period II.

Soviet Intentions and Policy A. The early and unconditional sharing of atomic technology with the USSR would be an irreversible action. Unquestionably the Soviet Government would welcome this move with enthusiasm, but what it would actually do if the capabilities at its command were quickly and substantially increased in this way is of course uncertain. Its foreign policy might well be toughened; but in any case it would probably be several years before the USSR could match the United States in capacity to deliver the atomic bomb on enemy targets, and it might be one or two decades longer before the capabilities of the USSR for passive defense against atomic attack would equal those of the United States.

The exchange of scientific knowledge, under enforceable safeguards against its destructive use, would be a different matter. It is questionable whether effective safeguards acceptable to both the USA and the USSR can possibly be devised. The United States now possesses the technology of the bomb, the plants to produce this weapon, and some completed bombs. The plants and bombs could conceivably be destroyed, as a disarmament measure, but the knowledge of the bomb as such could not be. If the *special* technology of the bomb is an important body of knowledge distinct from the knowledge necessary for the industrial use of atomic energy, it is improbable that the USSR would submit to any inspection or other safeguard that would prevent her from sharing the bomb-technology already possessed by the USA or from developing it independently. If on the other hand the Russians were convinced that the proposed transfer of knowledge and the establishment of inspection would give the USSR and the USA an even start toward production of the bomb, after any possible outbreak of hostilities, the USSR would probably accept these arrangements, in spite of the fact that the establishment of a continuous and thorough inspection by foreigners would require a sharp reversal of a very fundamental Soviet attitude. In any case the general process of negotiation and exchange of scientific knowledge would proceed by stages, and presumably before the atomic stage were reached considerable

time would be available for the application of the phases of "Policy A". If any success were to be expected, this long period of application would be indispensable.

How the USSR would react to the other aspects of "Policy A" is of course uncertain. The policy would take advantage of an expected period of some years of Soviet inferiority, to attempt to accustom the USSR to a system of stable relations (especially in respect to Germany, Japan and China) in the hope that this system would still be satisfactory to the USSR in Period II, after the comparative capabilities of that country had been greatly increased. "Policy A" is essentially experimental and in part reversible. It is by no means certain that Soviet intentions are set irrevocably in the pattern of expansion facilitated by revolution. Even if they now appear to lean somewhat in that direction, a long period of consistent application of "Policy A" might moderate the intentions of the USSR before its capabilities are largely increased.

If long and consistent application of "Policy A" should fail to produce the desired results, a shift might then be made to "Policy B" *before* the USSR achieved equality of capabilities with the USA.

Soviet Intentions and Policy B. "Policy B" would perhaps be justified from the beginning if the Soviet leadership were known to be irrevocably committed to a policy of expansion facilitated by revolution. However, it is certainly not possible to prove that the pattern of Soviet intentions is now fixed unalterably in these terms. On the other hand, it may be argued that the application of "Policy B" would probably fix Soviet intentions in this form, and that in Period II the combination of large Soviet capabilities with Soviet aggressiveness and Soviet appeals to revolutionary elements abroad might create an exceedingly dangerous situation.

Soviet Reaction to Third Alternative Procedure. An indecisive and fluctuating combination of "Policy A" and "Policy B" might well have an inflammatory effect on Soviet intentions, without a corresponding effect in building a decisive balance of capabilities as a check upon the USSR.