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NATO in the Beholder's Eye: Soviet Perceptions and Policies, 1949-56

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"NATO from the Soviet and East European Perspectives 1949-1968," in *Von Truman bis Harmel: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Spannungsfeld von NATO und europäischer Integration*, ed.. Hans-Joachim Harder (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 55-73.

"The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Warsaw Pact in 1955," in *Mechanisms of Power in the Soviet Union*, ed. Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, Bent Jensen and Erik Kulavig (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 241-66.

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"Pražský puč v únoru 1948 a počátky Severoatlantického paktu" [The 1948 Prague Coup and the Origins of NATO], *Soudobé dějiny* [Prague] 6 (1998), no. 2: 247-56.

Reassuring NATO: Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Western Alliance (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 1997).

Several documents referred to in the footnotes are available in facsimile on the website of the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, www.isn.ethz.ch/php.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAN [Archiwum Akt Nowych]: Modern Records Archives, Warsaw

AMZV [Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí]: Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague

AÚV KSČ [Archiv Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa]: Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Prague

APRF [Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii]: Archives of the President of the Russian Federation, Moscow

AVPRF [Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii]: Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation, Moscow

BA-MA: Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg in Br.; **BA-MA**: Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg im Breisgau

FRUS: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office)

IG: Istituto Gramsci, Rome

IMS: NATO International Military Staff, NATO Historical Archives, Brussels

LC: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

KC PZPR [Komitet Centralny Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej]: Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party

MfAA, PAAA: Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin

NARA: National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

NSA: National Security Archive at the George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

PAC: Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa

PRO: Public Records Office, London

RGANI [Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istrorii]: Russian State Archives of Contemporary History, Moscow

SACEUR: Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

SAPMO-BA: Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin

SHAPE: Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe

TsDA [Tsentralen D'rzhaven Arkhiv]: Central State Archives, Sofia

ZPA: Zentrales Parteiarchiv [der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands]

THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE ALLIANCE

Capitalist Bloc-Building

The notion of a capitalist alliance dedicated to the destruction of the Soviet state was as old as that state itself. It was rooted in the ideological beliefs of its Bolshevik leaders, particularly their Marxian concept of class struggle which, projected on the international level, presupposed that the capitalists colluded in struggle to destroy proletarian revolution. The image of their putative conspiracy to unscrupulously assert their class interests by any available means was deeply imbedded in the communist mind along with the conviction that the challenge had to be met in kind.

The Soviet belief in an international capitalist conspiracy was related to but independent of theory of war developed by Lenin from Marx's premises in 1916, the year before the Bolsheviks took power in Russia. That theory, which posited irreconcilable differences among capitalist states and their groupings, leading inevitably to self-destructive war between them and ultimately to proletarian revolution, mitigated but did not negate the notion that, as long as the hostile international system existed, capitalist alliances constituted a mortal threat to the state that posed as the product of such a revolution.

Once the Bolsheviks seized power in the midst of World War I and the Russian civil war, they therefore had a ready-made explanation of the foreign threat they faced. The explanation, which distorted the nature of the threat while exaggerating it, made the different military coalitions formed abroad in the hope of toppling the Bolshevik regime hand in hand with its domestic enemies look much more formidable in the eyes of its leaders that they actually were. Although the enemies were badly divided and the goal of overthrowing the hated regime never enjoyed the unqualified support of governments, much less of their constituents, the struggle against assorted coalitions of “interventionists” became an indispensable part of the Soviet Union's historical myth.

Even after the half-hearted interventions predictably failed, the Bolshevik rulers found it expedient to propagate the notion of hostile capitalist encirclement as a means of justifying their continued domestic repression. They attributed especially to France, Europe's premier capitalist power of the time, the scheme to organize a “cordon sanitaire” of alliances linking with the traditionally anti-Russian and now anti-communist nations west of Soviet borders. In trying to frustrate the hostile bloc-formation and undermine the international system they regarded as alien, they used dramatically, if ineffectively, the Communist International as a novel instrument of foreign policy. At the same time, the Bolsheviks tried to drive wedges into any nascent alliances by offering weaker countries vague friendship treaties, calculated to allow the Soviet Union maximum freedom of maneuver without any restrictive obligations.

Given the Soviet Union’s visceral mistrust of capitalist alliances, its adoption in the nineteen-thirties of the goal of collective security in cooperation with states it considered

both fundamentally hostile and moribund in the long run constituted a significant new departure. Yet although the Soviet government, led by Stalin, pleaded for the establishment in Europe of a collective security system and entered into quasi-military alliances with at least two countries, France and Czechoslovakia, its own commitments were kept sufficiently nebulous to enable it to stay out of the fracas should a war break out. In trying to encourage the Western powers to resist fascism and German expansionism, Moscow was pursuing the ambitious strategy of promoting and manipulating bloc-building by one group of capitalist states against another in order to safeguard its security in a deteriorating international environment where its influence was severely limited.

The strategy was a failure. On the eve of World War II, the most successful capitalist alliance proved to be the one that the Soviet Union rightly perceived as a mortal danger—the Tripartite "anti-Comintern" pact between Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and imperial Japan, later expanded to include several Eastern European countries. In what Stalin regarded as a brilliant diplomatic move, Moscow countered the threat by concluding nonaggression pacts with its two key members, Germany and Japan, while maintaining amicable relations with the third. In 1941, after Germany had overrun most of Western Europe and was about to turn east, the Soviet dictator desperately tried to stave off its impending aggression, even signaling a willingness to join the German-dominated pact as a junior partner—a conduct that nevertheless failed to prevent the Nazis from striking. All things considered, his experience with capitalist alliances proved nothing short of catastrophic.

Although the Soviet Union's subsequent wartime coalition with Great Britain and the United States, formed originally at their rather than its initiative, was for Stalin a marriage of convenience, it promised to be considerably more successful. It not only achieved the goal of defeating their common enemies, but also gave the Soviet Union coveted recognition as an equal great power as well as the prospect of a dominant position on the European continent. But although Stalin for these reasons hoped the working relationship with the two Western powers would continue, he remained suspicious of his allies' efforts to form larger international groupings to help maintain peace and order in the postwar world. If he could not prevent such associations from coming into being or control them, at least he insisted on having the right to veto their decisions.

Stalin triumphed when his country entered the United Nations as one of the permanent members of the Security Council, even cajoling the world organization into granting the Ukrainian as well as Belorussian Soviet republics separate membership as if they were sovereign states. Even more important was the launching in 1945 of the Council of Foreign Ministers as a great-power directorate viewed by Moscow as the main safeguard to ensure that in all important international decisions its interests would be heeded. Moreover, before the war ended, the Soviet Union had succeeded in aborting projects by smaller Eastern European states that could enable them to combine their forces to better resist its growing power. Instead, having already in 1943 concluded with Czechoslovakia the kind of vague treaty of "friendship and mutual assistance" Stalin preferred, Moscow proceeded eventually to tie other countries of the region to its fold with similar treaties.

The critical area where the Soviet Union did not manage to prevent what it perceived as capitalist bloc-building was Western Europe. There Great Britain, responding to the Europeans' new desire for transnational integration generated by the wartime resistance movements, had been promoting a union comprising the three Low Countries and possibly other states later on.[1] Prime Minister Winston Churchill publicized his vision of a United States of Europe, which by overcoming the national rivalries that had previously helped to plunge the continent into war would foster its recovery. In contrast to Churchill's vision, the Soviet planners of the postwar order, working in the Moscow foreign ministry under the direction of former foreign commissar Maxim Litvinov and former ambassador to London Ivan Maiskii, envisioned a future Europe of sovereign national or multinational states, overshadowed by the Soviet Union as the only remaining great power on the Continent.[2]

Viewing any European integration efforts with misgivings, Moscow signaled as early as 1944 its opposition to those aimed at uniting the Low Countries.[3] Insisting that the future belongs to nation states, it described any supranational constructs as artificial and potentially destabilizing.[4] As long as relations within the Grand Alliance remained reasonably good, the issue was subdued; once they began to deteriorate, however, Soviet outcry about a "Western bloc" became an important ingredient of the evolving Cold War.

In the military sense, after the war had ended Stalin had no reason to be worried about being threatened by an attack, and nothing suggests that he was. Much as the he was prone to attribute his own hatred and perfidy to his capitalist rivals, he assured the Polish party chief Władysław Gomułka in the fall of 1945 that he was "completely certain . . . there will be no war. . . . They are not capable of waging war against us. Their armies have been disarmed by agitation for peace and will not raise their weapons against us."[5] A year later, Stalin still "excluded another war in any near future" and contemplated "the course of developments with utmost calm."[6] Stalin's accurate perception of the security he had gained allowed him to demobilize his armed forces more extensively than the West was prepared to believe.[7]

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1. Klaus Larres, "A Search for Order: Britain and the Origins of the Western European Union, 1944-55," in *From Reconstruction to Integration: Britain and Europe since 1945*, ed. Brian Brivati and Harriet Jones (Leicester: University of Leicester Press, 1993), pp. 71-87, at pp. 73-77.

2. "Zaniatsia podgotovkoi budushchego mira" [Preparations for a Future World], *Vestnik Arkhiva Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 4 (1955): 114-58.

3. Vojtech Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare, and the Politics of Communism, 1941-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 216 and 230.

4. Aleksandr O. Chubarian, "Sovetskoe rukovodstvo i nekotorye voprosy evropeiskoi integratsii v nachale 50-kh godov" [The Soviet Leadership and the European Integration at the Beginning of the 1950s], in *Istoriia evropeiskoi integratsii, 1945-1994* [The History of European Integration], ed. A. S. Namazova and B. Emerson (Moscow: Institut vseobshchei istorii RAN, 1995), pp. 108-17, at p. 114.

5. Gomułka's memorandum of a conversation with Stalin, [fourth quarter of 1945], *Cold War International Project Bulletin* 11 (1998): 135-38, at p. 136.

6. According to his aide, Andrei A. Zhdanov, reported in entry for September 4, 1946, Georgi Dimitrov, *Dnevnik (9 mart 1933-6 fevruari 1949)* [Diary (9 March 1933-6 February 1949] (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv Kliment Okhridski, 1997), p. 535.

In his speech of February 9, 1946, often regarded as a landmark in the evolution of the Cold War, Stalin chose to resurrect the old themes of "capitalist encirclement" and "inevitable conflict" between capitalism and socialism.[8] Although he spoke in ideological terms, not specifying a military conflict, his pronouncement was widely perceived as anticipating war. Interpreted against the background of Moscow's insistence on the similarly inevitable victory of communism in the world, Stalin's statement caused alarm in the West, even prompting scattered calls by enemies of the Soviet Union for a preventive war against it.[9] While such calls never reflected official Western policy they were suggestive of the capacity of Soviet ideological pronouncements to generate the purported evidence of a capitalist conspiracy that communists had always been looking for.

Moscow did not unequivocally condemn the March 4, 1947, Dunkirk treaty between Great Britain and France for common defense against Germany, noting its conformity with both the UN Charter and the two countries' wartime treaties with the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Kremlin insinuated Churchill's scheme to foster an anti-Soviet bloc.[10] Yet it did not take the opportunity to prevent the rise of such a bloc by acting on London's invitation to conclude a tripartite pact with Britain and France[11]—an invitation indicative of their continued preference for accommodation with Moscow.

Having made a weak and divided Europe one of the key prerequisites of Soviet security as he understood it, Stalin was bound to see any signs of its recovery and coalescence with foreboding. He took in stride the extension of modest U.S. military assistance to Greece and Turkey—countries peripheral to both Soviet and American security—after the enunciation in March 1947 of the Truman doctrine vowing U.S. support of governments threatened by communist subversion.[12] But he became justifiably alarmed by the launching three months later of the Marshall Plan, aimed at economic—and hence also political, social, and moral—revitalization of the heartlands of Western Europe to make them more resistant to Soviet power and influence.

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7. Matthew A. Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Re-appraised," *International Security* 7, 3 (1982-83): 110-38.

8. Speech of February 9, 1946, Embassy of the USSR, Washington, D.C., *Information Bulletin*, 1946.

9. Russell D. Buhite and Wm. Christopher Hamel, "War for Peace: The Question of an American Preventive War against the Soviet Union, 1945-1955," *Diplomatic History* 14 (1990): 367-84, at pp. 374-75.

10. Peer Lange, "Konfrontation mit dem westlichen Bündnis in Europa," in *Sowjetunion: Außenpolitik, 1917-1955*, ed. Dietrich Geyer (Cologne: Böhlau, 1972), pp. 510-57, at p. 526.

11. Gerda Zellentin, *Die Kommunisten und die Einigung Europas* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1964), p. 46.

12. Othmar Nikola Haberl, "Die sowjetische Außenpolitik im Umbruchsjahr 1947," in *Der Marshall-Plan und die europäische Linke*, ed. Othmar Nikola Haberl and Lutz Niethammer (Frankfurt: Europäischer Verlagsanstalt, 1986), pp. 75-96, at pp. 79-83

In groping for a response to the American plan, which was formally offered to any country ready to collaborate with others in implementing it, the Soviet Union overestimated the strength of Western left-wing sentiment susceptible to manipulation from Moscow as well as the imminence of the supposed "general crisis of capitalism." It first considered participating in the project together with its allies, so that it could blunt the plan's political thrust while taking advantage of its economic benefits.[13] The Kremlin only reversed itself after the course of the preparatory conference in Paris had made it plain that this was not possible. Molotov broke off negotiations after a Soviet intelligence message informed him about recent secret Anglo-American talks in London during which the Marshall Plan was unequivocally designed to organize Western Europe against Soviet expansionism.[14]

Afterward Moscow mounted a campaign to derail the plan, lambasting it as a U.S. scheme to mobilize Western Europe for aggression while invoking a nonexistent Soviet threat as a pretext. Such unfounded insinuation was apt to reconfirm in the West the fear that Moscow was trying to hide its own aggressive designs. In fact, the rhetoric of Soviet propaganda—which conformed substantially with the tenor of internal communist communications—merely expressed in Marxist-Leninist terms the magnitude of the threat the Kremlin leaders were perceiving. Yet, in accordance with their doctrine, they considered the latest capitalist bloc-building not only hostile but also doomed to failure—a frame of mind not conducive to mitigating the challenge by concessions. Loath to offer any lest his weaknesses be revealed, Stalin proceeded to handle it with singular ineptitude.

The Emergence of NATO

Despite their martial rhetoric, the Soviets properly regarded the Marshall Plan as a political rather than a military threat.[15] Accordingly, they responded to it by a political act—the creation in September 1947 of the Cominform as an organization of their dependent communist parties designed both to supervise their campaign to destabilize the pro-American governments in Western Europe and to consolidate Soviet control of Eastern Europe. The proclamation at the founding meeting of the Cominform of the doctrine of "two camps" by Stalin's chief ideologue Andrei A. Zhdanov conveyed Moscow's perception of two hostile blocs along with its determination to fight the capitalist one by any means short of war—the essence of the Cold War.

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13. "Direktivy Sovetskoi delegatsii na soveshchanii ministrov inostrannykh del v Parizhe" [Directives for the Soviet Delegation at the Paris Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs], June 25, 1947, 06/1947/9/214/18, pp. 4-6, AVPRF.

14. Scott D. Parrish and Mikhail M. Narinsky, "New Evidence on the Soviet Rejection of the Marshall Plan, 1947: Two Reports," Working Paper no. 9, *Cold War International History Project* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1994), pp. 46-46; Vojtech Mastny, "Stalin, Czechoslovakia, and the Marshall Plan: New Documentation from Czechoslovak Archives," *Bohemia* [Munich] 32 (1991): 139-44.

15. On the NATO-Marshall Plan relationship, see Alan S. Milward, "NATO, OEEC, and the Integration of Europe," in *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe*, ed. Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham (New York, 1992).

Apart from wishing to consolidate his Eastern European empire under communist control, Stalin did not yet have a clear idea about how best it should be organized, without adding further incentives to the American bloc-building in the West. The confrontational turn of Soviet policy, however, sufficed to make the most militantly anti-Western of Stalin's Eastern European disciples, the Yugoslav chief Josif Broz-Tito, read the master's signals as authorizing the establishment of a bloc of communist states in the Balkans favored by Belgrade. The decisive steps toward the formation of such a bloc, undertaken by Tito with Stalin's acquiescence at the end of 1947 and beginning of 1948 included the conclusion of pacts among the region's communist regimes that were no longer directed specifically against Germany but against any enemy.[16] This meant particularly the United States, the protector of the Greek government against the country's communist insurgency, supported mainly by Yugoslavia.

The progress of communist-driven Balkan unification—highlighted by the proclamation of a "provisional government" by the Greek communists in December 1947 and the planned dispatch of Tito's troops to neighboring Albania in anticipation of its incorporation into the Yugoslav federation—coincided with setbacks for the Soviet Union in Western Europe. The communist attempts to paralyze French and Italian governments by violent demonstrations and strikes failed, as did Soviet efforts to dissuade the Western occupation powers from proceeding with the economic separation of their zones in Germany in preparation for a political separation of the part of the country they controlled.

Dramatizing the cost to Moscow of the recent communist aggressiveness, on January 22, 1948, British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin pleaded in a major speech for an accelerated unification of Western Europe to counter the advancing sovietization of Eastern Europe.[17] He gave his plea a military dimension by urging the Low Countries to join the Dunkirk treaty, concluded the year before mainly against a possible German threat but since then made more topical by the greater need to deter a Soviet one. To reinforce the deterrent, London took the lead in seeking to persuade the United States to commit itself to the defense of Europe.[18]

In trying to discourage the hostile bloc building in the more important Western part of the continent, Stalin acted to avoid giving the United States an unnecessary provocation in the less important Balkan region. He vetoed the projected Balkan confederation and blocked Yugoslavia's intended move into Albania. He hurriedly made Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania conclude with the Soviet Union pacts that, unlike those signed under Tito's auspices during the months before, again specified Germany as the enemy.[19] Yet he dissipated any

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16. Entry for October 16, 1947, Dimitrov, *Dnevnik,* pp. 580-81

17. Speech by Bevin, January 22, 1948, in Carlyle, *Documents on International Affairs, 1947-1948*, pp. 201-21.

18. John Kent and John W. Young, "The `Western Union' Concept and British Defence Policy, 1947-8," in *British Intelligence Strategy and the Cold War, 1945-51*, ed. Richard J. Aldrich (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 166-92.

19. Carlyle, *Documents on International Affairs, 1947-1948*, pp. 298-99; Natalia I. Egorova, "Stalin's Perceptions of External Threats (What Was He Really Afraid of?)," paper presented at the conference "Stalin

reassuring effect that these actions might have had by allowing the Czechoslovak communists to take advantage of the disarray among their political opponents and seize power in Prague on February 25, 1948.

The Prague coup gave a major impetus to the Western alliance-building that Stalin was hoping to arrest. Previously, the French and the British, loath to provoke adverse Soviet reaction, had been reluctant to pursue the formation of a multilateral Western alliance, advocated especially by the Belgian Prime Minister Paul-Henri Spaak, preferring instead the conclusion of a series of bilateral treaties.[20] After the Prague events, they adopted his concept, inviting the Low Countries to join the British-French alliance, thus clearing the way to the signing on March 17 of the Brussels treaty creating the Western European Union.[21] Unlike the Dunkirk treaty the year before—and the treaties recently masterminded by Moscow in Eastern Europe—the new pact was no longer aimed at Germany but implicitly, even though not explicitly, at the Soviet Union.

Moscow was accurately informed about the Western plans for military cooperation from its British spy Donald Maclean, who was present at the secret Washington talks about it.[22] Yet, although the Soviet Union was in a position to know that the plans still lacked military substance, it chose to express its disapproval of the Brussels Treaty by describing it in military terms. Contrasting the Western grouping with the seemingly looser bilateral agreements which linked Moscow with its Eastern European dependencies, the authoritative Soviet commentary described the fledgling Western European Union as an "alliance for war," designed to generate a war psychosis.[23] It compared the Brussels treaty with the nineteenth-century Holy Alliance of conservative monarchs against revolution.[24]

On February 27, the day after the Prague coup, Stalin demanded from Finland the conclusion of the same kind of mutual defense treaty that tied to the Soviet Union its already subjugated Eastern European dependencies; in the next few days, Norway received warnings

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and the Cold War, 1945-1953," Yale University, New Haven, September 23-26, 1999, pp. 6-8.

20. Luc De Vos, "Ein kleines Land in der großen Politik: Belgiens behutsamer Beitrag zum Entstehen einer militärischen Integration Europas," in *Die westliche Sicherheitsgemeinschaft 1948-1950: Gemeinsame Probleme und gegensätzliche Nationalinteressen in der Gründungsphase der Nordatlantischen Allianz*, ed. Norbert Wiggershaus and Roland G. Foerster (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1988), pp. 71-88, at p.78.

21. Maurice Vaïsse, "L'échec d'une Europe franco-britannique ou comment le pacte de Bruxelles fut crée et délaissé," in *Histoire des débuts de la construction européenne (mars 1948-mai 1950): Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 27-30 novembre 1984* , ed. Raymond Poidevin (Brussels: Bruylant, 1986), pp. 369-89.

22. Sheila Kerr, "The Secret Hotline to Moscow: Donald Maclean and the Berlin Crisis of 1948," in *Britain and the Cold War*, ed. Ann Deighton (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 71-87, at p. 7; Cees Wiebes and Bert Zeeman, "The Pentagon Negotiations March 1948: The Launching of the North Atlantic Treaty," *International Affairs* [London] 59 (1982-83): 351-63, at p. 363.

23. Alexander Fischer, "Sowjetische Reaktionen auf die Gründung der NATO," in *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis, 1949-1956,* ed. Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 55-68.

24. Lange, "Konfrontation," pp. 526-27.

that a similar request might be forthcoming.[25] Yet when the time came for the Finns to discuss the treaty in Moscow at the beginning of April, they were surprised to find Stalin satisfied with a much more benign document, merely obliging them to consult in case of a foreign threat to their country and defend its integrity. In changing his mind, Stalin may have been influenced by his awareness of the secret proposal, prepared in the Canadian foreign ministry by Assistant Undersecretary of State Escott Reid, to include Finland in the planned Western military alliance—a bit of information that Maclean was in a position to relay to his Soviet paymasters.[26] In any case, the impetus that the communist seizure of power in Prague had unwittingly given to Western alliance-building was a sufficient reason for abstaining from an action likely to encourage the process.

Lest the prospective Western alliance result in bringing the worldwide network of U.S. military bases still closer to Soviet borders, the treaties Moscow imposed on its Eastern European countries conspicuously omitted any provision for the stationing of Soviet troops in their territories (although the troops were actually present in several of them). On May 10, Molotov complained to U.S. ambassador Walter B. Smith about America's "policy of encirclement and war-like threat," insisting that the bases could not possibly be defensive.[27] He was articulating the dread of encirclement that haunted the Bolsheviks from the very beginning of their state and was now about to materialize.

The June 11 Vandenberg resolution of the Senate opened the way towards U.S. participation in an organization for European defense, which was further accelerated by the blockade of West Berlin imposed by Stalin a few days later. In the course of the ensuing confrontation, Moscow condemned as war-threatening the Western bloc-building in general, rather than specifically the military alliance that was in the making. To the Czechoslovak party chief, Klement Gottwald, Stalin expressed the somber view that war was inevitable, although he did not venture a prediction about the time and circumstances of its breakout.[28] According to tantalizing, if unconfirmed, reports from Russian archives, the Soviet 14th Army was at that time was deployed to the Chukotka peninsula in the Far East, building there airfields, roads, and air defenses, while the elite 132nd Wing of long-range bomber aviation was moved to Kamchatka, allegedly in support of landings in Alaska. By the fall of 1948, however, this eccentric plan was allegedly abandoned as troops proved ill-equipped to withstand the severe winter conditions.[29]

[25.] Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary, 1945-1951* (London: Heinemann, 1983), p. 528.

[26.] Jukka Nevakivi, "American Reactions to the Finnish-Soviet Friendship Treaty of 1948," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 13 (1988): 279-91, at p. 283.

[27.] Smith to Secretary of State, May 10, 1948, *FRUS*, 1948, vol. 4, pp. 851-54, at p. 851.

[28.] Karel Kaplan, "RVHP a Československo 1949-1955" [The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance and Czechoslovakia], *Svědectví* [Paris] 15, 58 (1979): 284-96, at p. 285. On contemporary Soviet perceptions of the likelihood of war, cf. Michael MccGwire, "Rethinking War: The Soviets and European Security," *The Brookings Review*, spring 1988, pp. 3-12, at p. 4.

29. *Kommersant* [Moscow], January 24, 1998.

As long as the East-West conflict remained political, Stalin was encouraged to believe that the capitalists could be compelled even against their will not to act on their worst instincts, thus delaying the outbreak of the likely war. Yet his attempts to put them on the defensive by driving wedges between them and manipulating his obedient communist parties had the opposite effect. Increasingly, he was left to rely upon the impersonal forces of history, which, though beyond his control, he nevertheless believed to be on the Soviet side, and hence capable of changing the situation for the better before it could become seriously worse.[30]

In the fall of 1948, the seemingly esoteric debate among Soviet academic experts about the allegedly imminent "general crisis" of capitalism was really about policy. At issue in this officially inspired disputation on the merits and demerits of the economist Evgenii Varga's theory about the relative stabilization of capitalism was nothing less than the correct assessment of where the U.S.-dominated Western bloc was heading and what the proper Soviet response to its likely development ought to be.[31]

In May 1948 Moscow tried to counter the creation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, which was the institutional embodiment of the Marshall Plan, by proposing the establishment of "a committee for the development of economic relations between European states" under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.[32] After the predictable rejection of the idea, Stalin in January 1949 inaugurated the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, later known as Comecon.[33] To the Eastern European officials invited for the occasion, he confided his view that Western European nations, particularly Italy and France, could be detached from the United States by being made critically dependent on the Soviet supply of raw materials. He imagined that the Comecon, by creating "a raw material base for the whole of Europe . . . will become more important than the Cominform."[34] He said that he "does not attach much importance to military matters," as he saw little probability of war in the next 8-10 years.[35]

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30. On Stalin's estimates of the probability of war, cf. Jonathan Haslam, "Le valutazioni di Stalin sulla probabilità della guerra (1945-1953)," in *L'età dello stalinismo*, ed. A. Natoli and Silvio Pons (Rome 1991), pp. 279-97.

31. William C. Wohlworth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 115-18.

32. Lange, "Konfrontation," pp. 535-36

33. Henryk Różański, "Początki RWPG" [The Beginnings of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance], *Polityka* [Warsaw], May 9, 1987,

34. Quoted in Kaplan, "RVHP a Československo," pp. 287-88.

35. Iordan Baev, *Voennopoliticheskite konflikti sled vtorata svetovna voina i B'lgariia* [Military-Political Conflicts after World War II and Bulgaria] (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Ministerstvoto na Otbranata "Sv. Georgi Pobedonosets", 1995).

As Stalin's *cauchemar des alliances* was coming true, he tried to avert it by brandishing both inducements and threats. In reply to questions by U.S. news executive Kingsbury Smith on January 30, 1949, he reaffirmed his previously expressed willingness to lift the Berlin blockade if the plans for the proclamation of a West German state were shelved, adding a proposal for the conclusion of a Soviet-American nonaggression pact.[36] Rebuffed, he amended the proposal into a four-power pact, while signaling a desire to meet with President Harry S. Truman for a *tête-à-tête*. The preparations for the Western military alliance, NATO, nevertheless proceeded apace.

Despite the outcry Moscow raised at allegedly aggressive Western intentions, its internal assessments show that its concern was not so much about the prospective alliance's modest military capabilities as about what its coming presaged for the future.[37] Rightly estimating its creation as primarily a diplomatic act, the Soviets responded to it by a political and propaganda offensive masterminded by Foreign Minister Viacheslav M. Molotov and his assistants without input by the military. The offensive opened with the publication on January 29, 1949, in *Izvestiia* of a lengthy declaration protesting the forthcoming formation of NATO.[38]

At Moscow's signal, communists in Western Europe stirred up a massive "peace" campaign against the project. Starting with French party boss Maurice Thorez invoking the threat of war but not its inevitability, the campaign grew progressively shriller.[39] According to Gian Carlo Pajetta of the Italian party directorate, the point was "to make it clear that we are in a position to create . . . a difficult situation for those who want war."[40] By the end of February, leading Western European communists were publicly serving notice that if war were to come, the Red Army would be welcomed in their homelands as a liberator.[41]

[36.] Stalin to Kingsbury Smith, January 30, 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, vol. 5, pp. 562-63.

[37.] "Atlanticheskii Pakt: Kratkaia spravka" [The Atlantic Pact: Short Information], by S. Vinogradov and A. Roshchin, 13 January 1949, and note by Gromyko on draft by Vinogradov and Khvostov, "Plan stati ob Atlanticheskom pakte" [Draft of an Article on the Atlantic Pact] 15 January 1949, 06/11/15/2 and 16/2, AVPRF. Cf. Nataliia I. Egorova, "NATO i evropeiskaia bezopasnost: Vospriiatie sovetskogo rukovodstva" [NATO and European Security: Soviet Leadership Perceptions], in *Stalin i kholodnaia voina* [Stalin and the Cold War], ed. Aleksandr O. Chubarian, Ilia V. Gaiduk, and Nataliia I. Egorova (Moscow: Institut vseobshchei istorii RAN, 1998), pp. 291-314.

[38.] Soviet statement, January 29, 1949, in *Documents on International Affairs 1949-50*, ed. Margaret Carlyle (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 14-33.

[39.] Irwin M. Wall, *French Communism in the Era of Stalin: The Quest for Unity and Integration, 1945-1962* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 97.

[40.] Verbali Direzione P.C.I., February 2, 1949, p. 1, IG.

[41.] Wall, *French Communism*, p. 77; Marshall D. Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 17; Ger Harmsen, *Nederlands kommunisme: Gebundelde opstellen* [Netherlands Communism: Collected Essays] (Nijmegen: Socialistiese Uitgeverij, 1982), p. 55.

In an open letter to President Truman, the "Peace Council" of France described the country's planned membership in NATO as unconstitutional because of the alliance's allegedly aggressive aims.[42] This tallied with Moscow's insistence that the organization would be incompatible with the UN Charter as well. Threatening annulment of its still formally valid wartime treaties with the Western powers if the alliance came into effect,[43] the Soviet Union tried at the eleventh hour to at least to limit NATO's membership by exerting pressure on the Nordic countries. Simultaneously, Poland's communist government extended feelers to those countries with the ostensible goal of concluding nonaggression pacts with them.[44]

On March 31, the Soviet Union summarized its objections to the alliance that was about to be signed in a note to the Western governments.[45] It accused Britain and France of having changed their policy under pressure from the United States, linking the change with Washington's putative design to restore German military power. It described NATO as aggressive because it was exclusive, alleging a scheme to isolate the Soviet Union similar to the ploy that in the nineteen-thirties had supposedly helped to unleash World War II. It dismissed as ludicrous the notion that Western Europe needed protection from a Soviet threat. More to the point, Soviet party chief Nikita S. Khrushchev in 1956 noted perceptively that "NATO was created as a result of a big military psychosis, when some people painted the Soviet Union in a very unfavorable militarist light before the peoples of the European countries. On our side we also gave a pretext for that."[46]

In a different retrospective assessment in 1952 of the Soviet reaction to the creation of NATO, the then U.S. ambassador to Moscow George F. Kennan believed that a "cosmic misunderstanding" had occurred. He thought that their being suspected "precisely of the one thing they had not done, which was to plan, as yet, to conduct an overt and unprovoked invasion of Western Europe", must have dumbfounded the Soviets[47] In Kennan's opinion,

> Observing . . . that the pact was supported publicly by a portrayal of their own intentions and strength that they did not recognize as fully accurate—it was no wonder that the

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42. Wall, *French Communism*, p. 97.

43. Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised*, p. 63.

44. CIA Office of Reports and Estimates, Weekly Summary, March 11, 1949, , Woodrow J. Kuhns, ed., *Assessing the Soviet Threat: The Early Cold War Years* (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1997), p. 292.

45. "Memorandum of the Government of the USSR Concerning the North Atlantic Treaty," March 31, 1949, Carlyle, *Documents on International Affairs 1949-1950*, pp. 261-65.

46. In a March 1956 conversation with Danish prime minister Hans-Christian Hansen. in March, quoted in Matthew Evangelista, *"Why Keep Such an Army?" Khrushchev's Troop Reductions*, Cold War International History Project, Working Paper no. 19 (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1997), p. 31.

47. "The Soviet Union and the Atlantic Pact," September 8, 1952, in George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1950-1963* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), pp. 327-51, at p. 336.

> Soviet leaders found it easy to conclude that the Atlantic Pact project concealed intentions not revealed to the public, and that these intentions must add up to a determination on the part of the Western powers to bring to a head a military conflict with the Soviet Union as soon as the requisite strength had been created on the Western side.[48]

In assuming that the Soviets found the alliance both threatening and incomprehensible, Kennan was right, but for the wrong reasons. Their misunderstanding, while genuine, was not "cosmic" but quite mundane; it was rooted not so much in the Western behavior as in their own ideological preconceptions. They had all along been imagining themselves as being encircled by hostile capitalist states ever ready to gang up to destroy them; what they were conceptually incapable of grasping was why and how these were doing so at that particular time and in that particular way. According the Marxist-Leninist writ, capitalism was entering its terminal crisis, and the embattled capitalist states were supposed to be falling out with one another rather than uniting. It was impossible for Moscow to conceive that the Western European desire to unite under American leadership could be voluntary—a misconception that would cause Soviet leaders consistently to underestimate the bonds that held the alliance together, the habitual bickering among its members notwithstanding.

Strategic Posturing

Implying that Soviet advance into Central Europe during World War II was not enough, Stalin at the Potsdam conference shocked US ambassador W. Averell Harriman by snapping that in 1815 "Czar Alexander got to Paris."[49] But when Marshal Semen M. Budennyi—the dim-witted cavalry officer and veteran of the Red Army's abortive revolutionary crusade through Poland in 1920—fretted that Soviet troops should have kept marching on to Western Europe, Stalin pertinently asked who would then feed all its people.[50] As far as has been revealed, Moscow's contingency plans from the immediate post-World War II period were routine and strictly defensive. Without specifying the likely attacker, a plan elaborated in 1946 assumed that in the event of war Soviet forces in Germany would assume defensive positions 50 to 100 kilometers east of the western boundary of the Soviet occupation zone, and wait there for the arrival of reinforcements that would make a counter-attack possible.[51] Anticipating a scenario similar to World War II, the Soviet command urged officers to study the experience from that period, particularly the great tank battle of Kursk of 1943, as the main guide for action.[52] The training plan for 1948 did not entail any significant change.[53]

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48. Ibid., p. 338.

49. W. Averell Harriman, *America and Russia in a Changing World: A Half Century of Personal Observation* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), p. 44.

50. *Izvestiia*, 11 February 1992, p. 6.

51. "Operativnyi plan deistvii Gruppy sovetskikh okkupatsionnykh voisk v Germanii" [Operational Plan of Action of the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany], November 5, 1946, *Voennoistoricheskii zhurnal*, 1989, no. 2: 26-31.

52. "Prikaz glavnokomanduiushchego Gruppoi sovetskikh okkupatsionnykh voisk v Germanii" [Order of the Supreme Commander of the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany], January 19, 1946,

Since massive concentration of manpower and equipment had been the hallmark of Soviet strategy in World War II, the substantial demobilization of Soviet armed forces after its end suggested that Moscow, despite the steady deterioration of East-West relations, did not consider a new outbreak of hostilities probable. At the same time, to help offset the American nuclear advantage and the West's overall superiority in resources, which would be decisive in a World War II-style conflict, the Soviet leadership tried to conceal both the extent of the country's demobilization and the defensive thrust of its strategy. Since a strategy designed to wage a counteroffensive was all but impossible to distinguish from an offensive one,[54] however, the concealment served Moscow's interests poorly by fomenting Western fear of its military power and inviting countermeasures.

The 1948 Berlin blockade, which shook the West by suggesting Moscow's readiness to risk a military confrontation over access to the city, did not have a comparable effect on the Soviet side. At no time during the crisis did the Soviet Union take measures to prepare for the possibility of such an emergency.[55] In July it did boost its anti-aircraft defenses in response to the demonstrative transfer by Truman of nuclear-capable, but unarmed, U.S. bombers to bases in Britain—just in case their load might become more lethal in the future.[56] Otherwise Moscow continued to build its still mainly defensive submarine fleet, which was already the largest in the world, and streamlined its ground forces—which, too, had always been bigger than their Western counterparts—for greater efficiency.[57]

The emergence of NATO did not trigger any frantic military buildup by the Soviets. Despite their obvious concern, they did not initially act as if they worried much about the alliance's alleged aggressive intentions. Their military response to its creation was moderate rather than alarmist: a 20 percent increase in defense spending, mainly calculated for public effect, reinforcement of the troops stationed in East Germany, the establishment of an office

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Voennoistoricheskii zhurnal, 1989, no. 8: 21-24.

53. "Plan komandirskikh zaniatii po operativno-takticheskoi podgotovke v polevom upravlenii Gruppy sovetskikh okkupatsionnykh voisk v Germanii na 1948 god" [Plan of the Commanders' Tasks in the Operational-Technical Preparation for the Field Management of the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany for 1948], *Voennoistoricheskii zhurnal*, 1989, no. 8: 24-26.

54. Although only semi-motorized and more involved in nonmilitary duties than Western armies, the Soviet army would have probably been capable of an offensive thrust, as it had proved to be in World War II. Gilberto Villahermosa, "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised: Déjà Vu All Over Again," *Soviet Observer* [Harriman Institute] 2, No. 1 (1990): 1-5.

55. Viktor M. Gobarev, "Soviet Military Plans and Activities during the Berlin Crisis, 1948-1949" (paper presented at the conference, "The Soviet Union, Germany, and the Cold War, 1945-1962," Essen, June 28-30, 1994).

56. Matthew A. Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Re-appraised," *International Security* 7, 3 (1982-83): 110-38, at pp. 132-33.

57. Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1970* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 38, 45-46.

to supervise the modernization of the armed forces of the Eastern European allies[58] Having previously preferred to keep them weak as potentially disloyal, Moscow now pressed forward a purge of their officer corps, to replace holdovers with more reliable party men.[59]

The Soviet Union had no need to be concerned about NATO's military capabilities. Although the alliance was formed to discourage Soviet aggression, and reassure the Western Europeans as a result, its ability to defend them—much less take offensive action against the enemy—was for the time being severely limited. In 1949, NATO had at its disposal less than 10 divisions and 400 combat aircraft.[60] Following its creation in April, the Moscow politburo did not even discuss it again until October, when unsuccessful Soviet efforts to prevent Italy's admission were on the agenda.[61]

The U.S. contingency plans, rooted—like the Soviet ones—in the experience of World War II, envisaged first strategic retreat from the continent and only later its eventual liberation after landing troops from overseas—a prospect so dismal that Washington thought it prudent to keep its plans hidden from its allies.[62] But they were unlikely to remain hidden from the Russian enemy, whose intelligence supplied accurate enough information about America's fighting potential, including the number of atomic bombs in its arsenal.[63]

Those bombs, rather than the modest conventional forces, were NATO's main deterrent, as well as possible offensive weapons. Successive U.S. strategic plans reconfirmed the intention to use them if required by circumstances—according to the "Trojan" plan of January 1949 for attacking seventy industrial cities, with the expected loss of 2,700,000 lives.[64] Five months later, however, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded that the Soviet Union could not be defeated by means of nuclear weapons alone.[65] This was the conclusion of its own experts as well, in accordance with which its war plans envisaged the destruction of U.S. bases and troop concentrations in Europe before reinforcements could arrive there from

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58. Ernest R. May, John D. Funner, and Thomas Wolfe, "History of the Strategic Arms Competition 1945-1972," part 1 (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1981), pp. 246-50, NSAF.

59. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe,* pp. 42-49; Ithiel de Sola Pool et al., *Satellite Generals: A Study of Military Elites in the Soviet Sphere* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1955), passim.

60. Richard L. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose: How Alliance Partnership Won the Cold War* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1993), p. 45.

61. Natalia I. Yegorova, "Soviet Perceptions of the Formation of NATO, 1948-1953," paper presented at the Nobel Institute Research Seminar 1998, Oslo, p. 14.

62. Christian Greiner, "The Defence of Western Europe and the Rearmament of West Germany, 1947-1950," in Riste, *Western Security*, pp. 150-77, at pp. 151-52.

63. David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 240.

64. Kenneth W. Condit, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, vol. 2, *1947-1949* (Wilmington, Del.: Glazier, 1979), pp. 288-314.

65. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, pp. 229-30.

across the Atlantic. The strike was to be followed by rapid advance of Soviet forces into Western Europe and possibly the Middle East.[66]

The defensive nature of both sides' military planning ensured the essential stability of their relationship, but not their security. When Stalin in July 1949 received the new British ambassador David Kelly, he complained about NATO, ruminating about its allegedly aggressive character and contrasting it with the ostensibly benign Soviet alliances, formally directed only at Germany.[67] Although the comparison was disingenuous, his apprehension was not feigned. If to one of his aides—his emissary to China Ivan V. Kovalev—he confided the view that war was not imminent, he qualified his estimate by saying that this was only because it would not be "advantageous for the imperialists. Their crisis has started; they are not ready to fight. They scare us with the atomic bomb but we are not afraid. There are no material preconditions for an attack, for launching a war. The U.S.S.R. is strong enough to defend itself."[68]

Thus Soviet confidence in avoiding, or at least postponing, a military showdown with the capitalist powers hinged upon the premise that they could not *afford* to strike rather than that they would not *want* to. The communist doctrine took their hostile intentions for granted; in trying to restrict and paralyze their capabilities, Moscow tried to appeal to their peoples. Once NATO was established, the Soviet Union tried to obstruct its development by capitalizing on the widespread popular revulsion against war. It had Western communists and their sympathizers stage huge "peace" rallies in Paris and Prague from April 20 to 25, 1949.[69]

Not differentiating between military and nonmilitary integration, Moscow condemned the creation on May 5 of the Council of Europe as a supposed "instrument of the aggressive North Atlantic bloc."[70] A year later, it denounced the launching of the Schuman plan for the European Coal and Steel Community as a scheme for the rearmament of West Germany, devised by U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson in collusion with the Morgan bank, U.S. Steel, and other capitalist wire pullers.[71] Preoccupied with the United States rather than its weak allies, the Soviets were both unable and unwilling to grasp the substance of the movement for European unity, repeatedly underestimating its indigenous character and independent dynamism.

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66. Maj. Gen. V. Khlopov, "O kharaktere voennoi doktriny amerikanskogo imperializma" [The Nature of the Military Doctrine of American Imperialism], *Voennaia mysl,* 1950, 6: 67-78, referred to in Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, pp. 238-39.

67. Kirk (Moscow) to Secretary of State, July 21, 1949, *FRUS,* 1949, vol. 5, pp. 632-34.

68. Quoted in Ivan V. Kovalev, "Dialog Stalina s Mao Tszedunom" [Stalin's Dialog with Mao Zedong], *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, 1991, no. 6: 83-93, at p. 87.

69. Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised*, p. 131.

70. Zellentin, *Die Kommunisten und die Einigung Europas,* p. 49.

71. Lange, "Konfrontation," p. 537; Zellentin, *Die Kommunisten und die Einigung Europas, p.* 51.

Soviet intelligence reports attributed NATO's initial weakness to allegedly insuperable differences among its members.[72] At variance with Moscow's public propaganda, they described the alliance as being designed not so much to wage war against "socialism" as to help the United States stave off the collapse of capitalism. A manual for internal use by the Czechoslovak intelligence services characterized NATO as being not only a "pact for aggression" but also "a pact for the saving of the capitalist order by violent means, as it is impossible to otherwise save the bankrupt order that finds itself in the state of a mortal crisis."[73] They took note of Washington's reluctance to provide its allies with an automatic US commitment to defend them militarily. In their exaggerated Marxist emphasis on conflict of interest, they showed consistent Soviet overestimation of NATO's internal disagreements and underestimation of the Europeans' readiness to join together in their own interest rather at American command.

From his well-placed spies, Stalin was in a position to know all that needed to be known about NATO's capabilities and intentions. This unintended "transparency" of the alliance at a time of its critical weakness may have been a blessing in disguise. Although the notoriously suspicious Soviet dictator could never be absolutely certain that the capitalists were not plotting to attack him—and had in fact been led by his doctrine to believe precisely that—at least he could be certain that the attack was not imminent. It was of paramount importance that the intelligence he was receiving from NATO's innermost sanctums did not encourage him to launch a preventive war while this appeared feasible, but rather to postpone it indefinitely.

In mid-1949, Stalin told China's second-ranking communist, Liu Shaoqi, that war was improbable because no one was strong enough to wage it.[74] This was a fair estimate of both his own and Western self-perceptions, much in contrast with the exaggerated estimates of Soviet capabilities that underlay NATO's early planning documents, particularly its first strategic concept of October 1949 and its medium-term plan for a five-year development of its conventional forces adopted half a year later[75]. Those estimates, resting on U.S. sources in turn informed by the dubious counting methods developed by the former Nazi intelligence chief Gen. Gerhard Gehlen, considered undersize Soviet divisions as if they were combat ready.[76] And while those divisions could be more easily brought to strength than their

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[72.] "O deiatelnosti organov severo-atlanticheskogo soiuza po voennym prigotovleniiam i raznoglasiiakh mezhdu stranami-uchastnitsami soiuza po voprosu o voennykh obiazatelstvakh" [Activities of the Organs of the North Atlantic Alliance Regarding Military Preparations and Disagreements among the Member Countries of the Alliance on Their Military Obligations], December 1950, 100/24, 92/1093, 34/41, SÚA.

[73.] "Mezinárodní organizace ve službách amerického imperialismu" [International Organizations in the Service of American Imperialism], 25 May 1949, 323-3-4, AMZV.

[74.] Shi Zhe, "I Accompanied Chairman Mao," *Far Eastern Affairs* 1989, no. 2, p. 127.

[75.]. MC 3, 19 October 1949, and DC 13, 28 March 1950, in *NATO Strategy Documents, 1949-1969*, ed. Gregory W. Pedlow (Brussels: NATO, 1997), pp. 1-8 and 107-77.

[76.] Philip A. Karber and Jerald A. Combs, "The United States, NATO, and the Soviet Threat to Western Europe: Military Estimates and Policy Options, 1945-1963," *Diplomatic History* 22 (1998): 399-429.

Western counterparts by mobilizing reserves, nothing in the available evidence suggests that in 1949-50 Stalin intended to attack in Europe.

Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb did not fundamentally change Stalin's outlook.[77] Regarding its possession desirable for political rather than for military reasons, he did not integrate it into the equipment of his armed forces.[78] Contrary to CIA estimates, mass production of nuclear weapons did not begin in the Soviet Union during Stalin's lifetime. Nor was the TU-4 Soviet long-range bomber capable to deliver them on any US target, as American officials feared.[79] Nevertheless, the conversion of industrial plants to military production, initiated in early 1949, was completed a year later.[80]

If the few published Soviet military plans antedating NATO are an indication, the Soviet armed forces were designed for defense against a possible, however improbable, Western attack rather than for the initiation of hostilities by Moscow. But if Stalin was not preparing to attack in Europe, by the time of NATO's creation he was already pondering the desirability of doing so in Asia. He had for his consideration the plan, proposed to him in deep secrecy by the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung as early as March 1949, which envisaged the military conquest of South Korea by the communists.[81]

The campaign, if successful, promised Stalin to both offset the string of self-inflicted failures he had recently been experiencing in Western Europe, among which the rise of NATO was the most telling, though hardly the most painful. Encouraged by U.S. acquiescence in the successful test of the first Soviet atomic bomb and America's retreat in Asia to a defensive perimeter not including Korea, in January 1950 he gave Kim Il Sung the green light to proceed with preparations for the invasion of South Korea, and provided the necessary Soviet material support besides military expertise.[82]

Following the defeat in China of the American nationalist protégés by the communists, the overthrow of Washington's client regime in South Korea would have been such a crushing blow to U.S. prestige that NATO could not have been expected to survive as a

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77. On the Soviet nuclear program, see, besides Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, the Russian publication *Istoriia sovetskogo atomnogo proekta: Dokumenty, vospominaniia, issledovaniia* [The History of the Soviet Atomic Project: Documents, Memoirs, and Investigations], ed. V.P. Vizgin (Moscow: Ianus-K, 1998).

78. Vladimir I. Batiuk, "Kak rozhdalsia mif o sovetskoi iadernoi ugroze" [How the Myth of Soviet Nuclear Threat Was Born], *Voennoistoricheskii zhurnal*, 1998, no. 1: 46-53, at p. 48.

79. Vladimir I. Batiuk, "Opasnyi samoobman" [Dangerous Self-deception], *Voennoistoricheskii zhurnal*, 1997, no. 5: 66-69.

80. According to CIA report, "Soviet Preparations for Major Hostilities in 1950," August 25, 1950, DDRS 1987/3151, cited in Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 98-99.

81. Kathryn Weathersby, "To Attack or Not to Attack? Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the Prelude to War," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 5 (1995): 1-9, at p. 8.

82. Stalin to Shtykov for Kim Il Sung, January 30, 1950, in Weathersby, "To Attack or Not to Attack?" p. 9.

functioning alliance. Although Stalin had good reasons to discount the possibility of U.S. military response to the planned communist aggression in Asia, he could not be absolutely certain, thus making it advisable to take measures to preventively paralyze any such response in Europe. Whipping up in Eastern Europe hysteria about largely imaginary Western subversion, he had his operatives bring the international "peace campaign" to a dramatic climax with the March 1950 "Stockholm appeal," coinciding with the time when the preparations for the attack in the Far East reached the decisive stage.

Until then, NATO had been for the Soviet Union a largely symbolic, though for that not any less keenly perceived, threat. It epitomized the hostile capitalist conspiracy that had always been an integral part of Soviet thinking. It bore testimony to all that had gone wrong with Stalin's postwar quest for security that had so unexpectedly made him feel more insecure. It was suggestive of the West's material superiority that could be mobilized to defeat the Soviet Union in a contest of attrition. It stood for the worst that Stalin had reasons or imagined having reasons to fear in Europe—U.S. atomic bombing, restoration of German power, and the attraction of the voluntarily unifying Western Europe on his forcibly regimented Eastern Europe. What NATO did not represent at that time was a credible military threat.[83] Making it into one was another of Stalin's blunders.

[83.] Harry A. Borowski, *A Hollow Threat: Strategic Power and Containment before Korea* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 186-215.

MILITARIZATION OF THE COLD WAR

The Impact of Korea

The Soviets never left a doubt that they believed the decisions for a massive Western military buildup in Europe, including particularly the rearmament of West Germany, had antedated the outbreak of Korean War, which merely provided a retrospective justification.[84] It is true that recommendations to that effect, notably the National Security Council document NSC-68, had been made and pressures to implement them had been growing before the invasion took place; it is equally true, however, that they had encountered strong opposition on both political and financial grounds, leaving their adoption uncertain until the communist aggression in Korea provided the necessary incentive.[85] Still, the Soviets were most unlikely to accept the fact that the United States was improvising rather than acting on premeditation.

If Stalin had been accurately informed by his spies that Washington had been unaware of the impending attack, then the swift and purposeful deployment of U.S. military power to meet the aggression in Korea could hardly fail to generate grave concern both about the reliability of the intelligence he had been receiving and about the enemy's ulterior goals, concealed by deception. In the first major Soviet editorial comment about the hostilities, *Pravda* on June 28 charged an American ploy to provoke the war and exploit it to Western advantage.[86]

The longer the fighting continued without conclusive victory for the North, the more worrisome for Stalin was the possibility that Americans might try to compensate for their rout in Asia by having NATO take offensive action in Europe. Khrushchev later recalled Moscow's "considerable alarm that the US might send its troops into Czechoslovakia."[87] Indeed, no sooner did the Korean War break out than U.S. observers in West Germany noted a "very considerable" increase of military activity on the Czechoslovak side of the border, including the construction of *defensive* installations.[88]

During the critical first week of the fighting in the Far East, no unusual military movements by Moscow or its allies were noticed along the sensitive Yugoslav, as well as Turkish and Iranian, borders.[89] While Americans were facing probable defeat in the Far East,

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84. Siegfried Thomas, *Der Weg in die NATO: Zur Integrations- und Remilitarisierungspolitik der BRD 1949-1955* (Berlin: Dietz, 1978), p. 148.

85. Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "The First Cold War Buildup: Europe in United States Strategy and Policy, 1950-1953," in Riste, *Western Security*, pp. 181-97, at pp. 183-84.

86. Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War* (New York: Longman, 1986), p. 164.

87. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), p. 189.

88. "Political and Economic Developments in Czechoslovakia during September, October, November 1950," Tyler Thompson (Prague) to Secretary of State, December 15, 1950, 749.00/12-1250, RG-59, NARA.

89. Memorandum on conversation between Dean Rusk and Wellington Koo, July 3, 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, vol. 7,

the Soviet Union had good reasons to avoid giving them an excuse to strike in retaliation elsewhere. Soon, however, Moscow was able to conclude that no Western military action in Europe was forthcoming—much like the West concluded that the Soviet Union was not contemplating any. At the same time, however, the West beginning to take political action to bolster its military might. On Churchill's initiative, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe on August 11 adopted a resolution in favor of the creation of a European army.

Moscow sought to preventively intimidate America's European allies. Rumors about an impending Soviet military move against Yugoslavia were later substantiated by Marshal Georgii A. Zhukov's recollection of Stalin having toyed with the idea of an armored thrust and airborne landings in Bosnia.[90] Western intelligence also received information about the delivery of Soviet armored vehicles, designed for offensive operations, to East Germany's fifty-thousand-person militarized police units.[91] The rumors, though false, tallied with the menacing public warning by East German party chief Walter Ulbricht that the Bonn government would soon suffer the fate of the one in Seoul and with his party's new "theses" referring ominously to a forthcoming "armed uprising" in West Germany.[92] Such scare tactics proved counterproductive by encouraging the Allies to proceed with precisely what Moscow wanted to prevent them from doing.

In Europe, the Soviet Union tended to be more conciliatory whenever the United States seemed to be winning in Korea, only to take the opposite tack as the tide of the war turned in the other direction. Following the start of the Chinese intervention, but while its outcome was still uncertain, Moscow revived its campaign for a German settlement on an ostensibly conciliatory note at the conference of Eastern European foreign ministers it convened in Prague on October 20-21. [93] "If we succeed in detaching West Germany from the [NATO] alliance," as East German foreign minister Georg Dertinger summed up for his colleagues the goal to be accomplished, "it is probable that this would shatter the Anglo-American war conspiracy in Europe at its roots."[94]

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p. 286.

90. Vladimir Dedijer, *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita* [New Supplements to the Biography of Josip Broz Tito], vol. 3 (Belgrade: Rad, 1984), p. 443.

91. Norbert Wiggershaus, "Bedrohungsvorstellungen Bundeskanzler Adenauers nach Ausbruch des Korea-krieges," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 25 (1979): 79-122, at pp. 103-104.

92. Robert McGeehan, *The German Rearmament Question: American Diplomacy and European Defense after World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 24.

93. "Statement Issued by the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and the Albanian Minister in Moscow, at a Meeting in Prague," October 21, 1950, in *Documents on Germany under Occupation, 1945-1954*, ed. Beate Ruhm von Oppen, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 522-27.

94. Telephone reports on the first and second sessions of the foreign ministers conference, October 20-21, 1950, 100/24; 91/1091, AÚV KSČ.

Three days later came the announcement of the Pleven Plan, drawn up by the French to control West Germany's unavoidable rearmament, but condemned by the Soviet Union as an American scheme to force the creation of a West German army.[95] Moscow proposed to reconvene the dormant four-power Council of Foreign Ministers, which could be utilized to promote a satisfactory settlement in Germany by linking it with that in Korea.[96] This is what the Soviet-sponsored "peace" congress in Warsaw attempted to do on November 16 by calling for a grand gathering of all great powers, including China, to endorse demands amounting to U.S. retreat from both Asia and Europe.[97] By then the Chinese had completed the first stage of their offensive and positioned themselves to deal a crushing blow to the American forces.

The Soviet intransigence made the United States more attuned to the possibility of war in Europe. To defend the continent against possible Soviet attack, the probability of which Washington expected to be highest during the next four years, the secret "Reaper" plan of November 29 envisaged dropping more than a hundred atomic bombs on the Soviet Union[98]—information that at least one of its master spies in the U.S. capital, Maclean, was in a position to pass on to his Moscow handlers.[99] During the eventful weeks that followed, NATO was then given the military substance that transformed it from a paper alliance into a real one.

The NATO "Agreement on Berlin Security," concluded on December 9, provided for military action against East Germany if the Western positions in the city were endangered.[100] Four days later, the alliance decided to defend Western Europe as far east as possible and to operationally integrate its northern, central, and southern flanks. On December 18, the North Atlantic Council approved in principle the West German military contribution to its defense. In an evocative comparison with the struggle against Nazi Germany during World War II, the supreme Allied commander at that time, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, returned to become the supreme commander of the alliance against the Soviet Union.

As the Chinese relentlessly pushed forward in Korea, the Soviet Union could expect that NATO would be shattered by American defeat there. After the inconclusive end of the fall session of the UN General Assembly, Soviet foreign minister Andrei Ia. Vyshinskii, before

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95. Iurii Zhukov, "Po ukazke amerkanskikh agressorov" [On the Orders of American Aggessors], *Pravda*, October 30, 1950.

96. "Note from the Soviet Government to the British Government Proposing a Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers to Discuss the Demilitarization of Germany, November 2, 1950, in Ruhm von Oppen, *Documents on Germany under Occupation*, p. 535.

97. Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised,* pp. 155-56.

98. Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans* (New York: Garland, 1988), pp. 142-43.

99. Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), p. 328.

100. Wiggershaus, "Bedrohungsvorstellungen," p. 100.

sailing home from New York, told a group of Eastern European diplomats at a secret briefing that the situation in Asia was "already beyond American control."[101] At the same time, he assured them that there would be no world war because the Western Europeans resented the U.S. rearmament program and the Americans would be unable to afford its cost anyway. He optimistically described the correlation of forces as tilting in favor of communism—the reason why the Soviet Union, though capable of overrunning Western Europe, need not bother doing so.

By January 1951, however, the Chinese still had not brought about a resolution of the Korean War to a victorious end while in Europe the NATO buildup continued apace. Among West Europeans, the incipient transfer of U.S. troops to the continent along with the prospective West German rearmament generated fears that the Russians might be provoked into launching a preventive war before the West was ready to defend itself.[102] French Premier René Pleven on his visit to Washington warned that the Soviets might see the correlation of forces to be tilting against them and try to redress it by a thrust that could enable them to overrun all of Europe.[103] And, indeed, in late 1950 Moscow alerted its Eastern European allies to be prepared for war by the end of 1952.[104] The target date was tantalizingly identical with the one recurring in the contemporary secret American estimates of the period of the presumed greatest danger of a Soviet attack[105]—estimates accessible to Stalin's spies in Washington.

The resulting transparency would not necessarily have been reassuring for Moscow. As a knowledgeable veteran of its intelligence agency pertinently observed, "mistaken though genuine Western fears of a Soviet attack were, when reported to the Kremlin, almost certainly interpreted by Stalin as a cover for the West's own aggressive designs."[106] Thus, if he knew that his enemies expected him to attack, he had all the more reason to worry that they might want to preempt him, thus giving him a reason to strike first. French ambassador to Moscow Yves Chataigneau suspected that the Russians were afraid Washington would rearm to the point where it could either compel them to negotiate on its terms or else "force them to submission by resorting to arms."[107]

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101. Memorandum on conversation by State Department Polish desk officer Vedeler with a confidential source, January 3, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 1522-23.

102. Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 404.

103. Ibid., pp. 409-10.

104. Milan Lichnovský, "Bedřich Reicin a československá armáda" [Bedřich Reicin and the Czechoslovak Army], *Historie a vojenství* [Prague] 44, no. 6 (1995): 81-117, at pp. 84-84.

105. "Soviet Capabilities and Intentions," NIE-3, November 15, 1950, in *CIA Cold War Records: Selected Estimates on the Soviet Union, 1950-1959,* ed. Scott A. Koch (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1993), pp. 165-78, at pp. 169-70.

106. Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, p. 326.

107. Quoted in Beatrice Heuser, *Western "Containment" Policies in the Cold War: The Yugoslav Case, 1948-53*

At this critical juncture, Stalin convened on January 9-12, 1951, East European party and military leaders for an important conference in Moscow. Fragmentary information about the gathering first became available in 1978, when former Czechoslovak party historian Karel Kaplan included them in his book published after his defection to the West.[108] His source had been Gen. Alexej Čepička, Czechoslovak participant in the meeting. Kaplan's second-hand account was later supplemented by the testimony of a Polish participant, former politburo member Edward Ochab, given in his self-defense to the aggressive anticommunist interviewer, Teresa Torańska.[109] Only after the fall of communism did a first-hand contemporary report finally emerge, written by the Romanian defense minister and Soviet intelligence confidant, Emil Bodnăraş. It bears a resemblance to the notorious "Hoßbach minutes" of Hitler's conclave with his generals and economic chiefs in November 1938, when the Nazi dictator had ruminated about his plans for launching war. With similar revelations as well as ambiguities, the Bondăraş report gives a crucial insight into Stalin's thinking at the time.[110]

Referring to America's alleged inability to wage a major war, as demonstrated by its failure to win even the minor Korean one, Stalin called for exploiting this "very favorable circumstance for us, for the world revolutionary movement." Without specifying, he proceeded to demand the creation of "a modern and powerful military force . . . that must be combat-ready" within the "two-to-three years" he expected the Americans to "remain pinned down" in Asia. He scolded his audience that "it is abnormal that you should have weak armies. This situation must be turned around."

The timing of Stalin's pronouncement may or may not have been related to the information received at about that time by Soviet intelligence, according to which the Americans, "in connection with their failures in Korea," had revealed at a December 1950 NATO meeting their intention "to provoke in the summer of 1951 a military conflict in Eastern Europe with the goal of seizing the eastern zone of Austria. To realize this goal, the Americans intend to utilize Yugoslavia."[111] Although the existence of such a plan has not

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(London: Routledge, 1989), p. 136.

[108.] Karel Kaplan, *Dans les archives du comité central: Trente ans de secrets du bloc soviétique* (Paris: Michel, 1978), pp. 165-66.

[109.] Teresa Torańska, *"Them": Stalin's Polish Puppets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 46. The meeting is also mentioned to in the memoirs by the well-informed Polish general Tadeusz Pióro, *Armja ze skazą: W Wojsku Polskim 1945-1968 (wspomnienia i refleksje)* [The Defective Army: In the Polish Army, 1945-1968 (Memories and Reflections)] (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1994), pp. 161-62.

[110.] C. Cristescu, "Ianuarie 1951: Stalin decide înarmarea Românei" [January 1951: Stalin Decides to Arm Romania], *Magazin Istoric* [Bucharest], 1995, no. 10, pp. 15-23.

[111.] "O deiatelnosti organov severo-atlanticheskogo soiuza v sviazi s sozdaniem atlanticheskoi armii i remilitarizatsiei zapadnoi Germanii" [Activities of the Organs of the North Atlantic Alliance in Connection with the Creation of an Atlantic Army and Remilitarization of West Germany], February 1951, AÚV KSČ, 100/24, 92/1093, SÚA.

been confirmed from Western sources, Moscow passed it on as genuine to top Eastern European party leaders. Did Stalin ask them to bolster their armed forces to prepare them for defense against the expected U.S. aggression? Or did he want them to be ready to pre-empt it by offensive action? His statement at the Moscow meeting did not preclude either consideration, but neither did it make his motives clear. Stalin had not convened the gathering to respond to an immediate emergency but to a long-term opportunity.

In his presentation at the conference, Stalin dwelt on a time frame within which he wanted the mighty armies to be created, thus implying that the favorable circumstances justifying their creation might not last. This was another resemblance to Hitler's meeting, where the Nazi dictator, in preparing for a war of conquest, lectured his minions that Germany must become ready for it before the conditions for waging it would start deteriorating. More significantly, Stalin's three-year timetable corresponded to the prevailing Western estimates of the period of the maximum Soviet threat as well as the timetable for NATO's expansion intended to neutralize it. In another presentation at the conference, Soviet chief of staff Gen. Sergei M. Shtemenko, alluding to the expected completion by 1953 of the enemy expansion plans, reaffirmed the task of building up the Soviet-bloc armies within the same time frame.[112] The Stalin timetable provides yet another *prima facie* evidence of his ability, thanks to his proficient spies, to remain privy to the thinking and planning of his enemies.

Far from merely anticipating a clash with Yugoslavia acting as an American proxy (much as North Korea and China were widely presumed to be acting as a Soviet proxies), Stalin was initiating a change of policy. As was Stalin's habit, he berated his lieutenants for having neglected their military, whereas in reality he was the one to have kept the Eastern European armies weak because of not sufficiently trusting them, ravaging them by his ruthless purges. With the first round of the purges completed and the officer corps reconstituted with Soviet loyalists, Stalin was now turning around to maximize the military potential at his disposal.

In the longer perspective, the Moscow meeting was as important for what happened as for what did not happen as a result of it. Most importantly, unlike Hitler, Stalin did not go to war and, as with anything that did not happen, it impossible to be certain why. Besides other inhibitions that existed, two ensuing developments were bound to confuse his calculus. By the end of January, the Chinese offensive ground to a halt, to be followed by an American counteroffensive, and eventually a stalemate on the Korean front. Then, uncertainty about enemy intentions arose after Stalin's most important informants in Washington, the spying pair of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, had to be spirited to Moscow in May to escape detection.

What did happen as a result of the conference was, as Stalin had ordered, a massive buildup of the Soviet and East European military establishments, paralleling the growth of NATO but putting incomparably greater strain on the weaker communist economies.

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112. Matiash Rakoshi, “Liudiam svoistvenno oshibatsia” [To Err Is Human], *Istoricheskii arkhiv 1997*, no. 5: 5-50, at 7-8.

Czechoslovakia's army, for example, increased from 140,000 men in 1950 to 250,000 men in 1951; the Hungarian army quintupled in 1949-1952 from 41,500 to 210,000 men.[113] The Soviet Five-Year Plan for 1951-55 envisaged a 2.5-fold increase in defense production.[114]

The military buildup, with its emphasis on quantity rather than quality, heavy on indoctrination and morale-building, was reminiscent of the Soviet way of waging World War II. Furthermore, the conference provided the basis for subsequent military planning. This is what Czechoslovak military experts were referring to in 1968 in their secret memorandum recalling how in the early nineteen-fifties the leaders of the Soviet bloc, expecting that "a military conflict in Europe was imminent," embraced the strategy "based on the slogan of defense against imperialist aggression, but at the same time assuming the possibility of transition to strategic offensive with the goal of achieving complete Soviet hegemony in Europe."[115]

Such a strategy contrasted with the skepticism about the merits of a military advance into Western Europe that Stalin had expressed in 1945 to Budennyi. But it was consistent with the support he had given to Kim Il Sung for advancing into capitalist territory in Asia, as well as with his low esteem of American military prowess. The possibility of its implementation depended upon whether the expansion of NATO, opening up the prospect "of an improvement of the military balance in the West's favor previously unimaginable even in its wildest dreams,"[116] would provide a stronger deterrent of war or, as the Soviet Union professed to believe, would have the opposite effect.

Against the European Army

The war scare in Europe passed as the front lines in Korea became stabilized. NATO's incipient transformation from a hollow to a real military alliance and the projected rearmament of West Germany under the impact of the Korean War did not immediately alarm Moscow. Soviet agents, capable of eavesdropping on some of the most intimate

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113. Condoleezza Rice, *The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army, 1948-1983: Uncertain Allegiance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 78-79; Imre Okváth, "In the Shadow of the Kremlin: Hungarian Military Policy in the Early Period of the Cold War, 1945-1956," in William W. Epley, ed., *International Cold War Military Records and History: Proceedings of the International Conference on Cold War Military Records and History Held in Washington, D.C., 21-26 March 1994* (Washington: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1996), pp. 457-69, at p. 459.

114. Nikolai Simonov, *The Military-Industrial Complex of the USSR in the 1920s-1950s* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1996), pp. 200-204.

115. Memorandum by thirty members of the academic staff of the Military Political Academy and Military Technical Academy for the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee, 4 June 1968, Vojtech Mastny, "`We Are in a Bind': Polish and Czechoslovak Attempts at Reforming the Warsaw Pact, 1956-1969," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 11 (1998): 230-50, at p. 245.

116. Norbert Wiggershaus, "Nordatlantische Bedrohungsperzeptionen im `Kalten Krieg' 1948-1956," in Maier and Wiggershaus, *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis,* pp. 17-54, at p. 37.

conversations among Western statesmen and reading many of NATO's "cosmic" secrets, were privy to the difficult negotiations about the European Defense Community as a vehicle of German rearmament.[117] Their estimate was that the project would fail. The more it was progressing, however, the more Stalin had reason to worry. Having often misjudged Germans with catastrophic results before, he was obsessed with their proverbial efficiency and military prowess. He regarded the American championship of their integration into the West's military structures as thoroughly ominous, and tried to prevent it as best as he could.

In trying to hamper the growth of NATO, the Soviet Union denounced it while professing a willingness to negotiate. It blasted the European Coal and Steel Community as an "instrument for the consolidation of heavy and armament industries for the military aims of NATO"[118] while reiterating, through its subservient World Peace Council on February 26, the proposal for the conclusion of a five-power "Peace pact."[119] The Soviet government further pressed for a conference of foreign ministers to discuss the German question, so that West Germany's rearmament could be blocked while the discussion was kept going.

Refusing to talk about the German problem unless the larger issues that had created it in the first place were addressed as well, the United States countered the Soviet campaign for a foreign ministers' conference by proposing a meeting of their deputies that would first prepare the agenda for their later talks.[120] Moscow resisted the proposal until the fading prospects for a communist victory in Korea gave it a reason to reconsider. On March 6, deputy foreign minister Andrei A. Gromyko met with his Western counterparts at the Paris Palais Rose. They expected him to be mainly interested in Germany but were surprised to find out that the Soviet priority had meanwhile become the "arms race," meaning the expansion of NATO.[121] No substantive discussions ensued since Washington was not prepared to talk about disarmament while fighting a war, whereas Moscow was not yet ready to help bring the hostilities in Korea to an end.

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117. "O deiatelnosti organov severo-atlanticheskogo soiuza po voennym prigotovleniiam i raznoglasiiakh mezhdu stranami-uchastnitsami soiuza po voennykh obiazatelstvakh" [Activities of the Organs of the North Atlantic Alliance in Regard to Military Preparations and Disagreements among the Member Countries of the Alliance about Military Obligations] and "O deiatelnosti organov Severo-atlanticheskogo Soiuza v sviazi s sozdaniem atlanticheskoi armii i remilitarizatsiei zapadnoi Germanii" [Activities of the Organs of the Atlantic Alliance in Connection with the Creation of an Atlantic Army and Remilitarization of West Germany], December 1950 and February 1951, AÚV KSČ, 92/1093, 100/24, SÚA.

118. Joachim Peck, *Das imperialistische Kriegspaktsystem und seine Krise* (Berlin: Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung, 1956), p. 52.

119. "The Appeal of the World Peace Council for the Conclusion of a Pact of Peace," February 25, 1951, *New Times* [Moscow], no. 9 (February 28, 1951), pp. 4-9.

120. Secretary of State to the Embassy in France, January 8, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 1058-60.

121. The Director of the Office of German Political Affairs (Laukhuff) to the Director of the Bureau of German Affairs (Byroade), April 6, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 1121-22.

The opening of armistice negotiations in Korea encouraged the United States to propose on May 31 a conference of foreign ministers, to be convened in Washington in five weeks' time.[122] Reaffirming the Soviet priority, Moscow made its acceptance of the American invitation conditional upon raising at the conference the twin issues of NATO and U.S. military bases abroad.[123] The first pertained to its worries about West Germany's increasingly likely integration into the alliance, the second to those about America's growing capacity to project power and influence in Europe. The Soviets overplayed their hand. On June 22 the United States broke up the Paris meeting, and nothing came of the other proposed conference.

Moscow had placed exaggerated hopes in its ability to derail NATO's expansion by engaging the West in inconclusive negotiations. Once the Paris talks broke down, Gromyko spent two hours pestering the United States for spoiling them.[124] At the United Nations, Soviet representative Iakov Malik lamented the outcome, complaining about the growth of NATO, America's air and naval power, its stockpile of atomic arms.[125] The alliance nevertheless continued to grow. In July, the National Security Council authorized the immediate start of a long-term U.S. military buildup—a decision which a year later would bring NATO's strength in Europe to 17 combat divisions and 5-7 reserve divisions, thus substantially improving the balance of conventional forces in its favor.[126] Supporting these forces, as well as providing facilities for strategic airborne operations against the Soviet Union, a growing network of bases spanned from Greenland and Iceland to Spain, Morocco, and the Azores.

On July 24, the Allied conference in Paris endorsed the creation of a West German army within a European Defense Community (EDC), thus providing a compromise solution to satisfy both the American demand for German rearmament and the French desire for guarantees against a revival of German militarism.[127] From the Soviet point of view, the EDC project was worse than either the original Pleven plan, which would have mixed German soldiers with others as far down as the regimental level, or West Germany's possible membership in NATO, where U.S. presence would have provided a check on it. Like many Frenchmen, the Soviets feared that France's weakness would allow the Germans to quickly dominate the new grouping, in which neither Britain nor the United States were to be

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122. Acheson to Vyshinskii, May 31, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 1148-49.

123. U.S. Delegation at the Four-Power Exploratory Talks to the Secretary of State, June 4, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 3, pt.1, p. 1150.

124. U.S. Representative at the Four-Power Exploratory Talks (Jessup) to Secretary of State, June 22, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 1161-62.

125. Memorandum on Gross-Malik conversation, June 29, 1951, *FRUS,* 1951, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 590-92.

126. Wiggershaus, "Nordatlantische Bedrohungsperzeptionen," 37.

127. For a history of the project, see Kevin Ruane, *The Rise and Fall of the European Defence Community: Anglo-American Relations and the Crisis of European Defence, 1950-55* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

included. Moreover, since EDC was to be operationally subordinated to NATO, the German influence could be expected to extend there as well. In a series of notes to France in October and November, which addressed it as a potential ally different from Britain or the United States, Moscow warned against EDC as an alleged instrument of German domination.[128]

The Soviet Union countered these adverse developments by intensified "peace" propaganda, calculated to reassure West Europeans about its intentions, and by well-timed protests, designed to hamper the ratification of EDC and the expansion of NATO's membership. In trying to obstruct the formation of its southern flank, Moscow opposed the revision of the peace treaty with Italy that would allow it to actively participate in the alliance, in vain demanding Italy's withdrawal from it. The Soviet Union protested to Turkey, though not to Greece, against their intended entry into NATO and expressed opposition to the proposed creation of its Middle East command—an abortive British attempt to bring the Arabs rather than the Turks into the alliance.[129]

In December 1951, NATO's adoption of the MC 14/1 strategic directive envisaged moving its defense line from the Rhine to the east in the course of five years while integrating the defense of northern and southern Europe. Three months later, Greece and Turkey joined the alliance. After the French National Assembly gave NATO a green to go ahead with the EDC project, the London conference of foreign ministers assigned West Germany an important future role in it and, most important, the February 1952 Lisbon meeting of NATO approved a vast expansion of its conventional forces as well as reciprocal security guarantees between it and EDC. Britain extended its continental commitment by promising to maintain its Army of the Rhine.[130]

Recognizing that NATO's ambitious "Lisbon goals" were economically and politically not feasible, the Soviet Union did not take them seriously.[131] Its own forces were expanding at a lower rate than NATO's, and during Stalin's lifetime only one exercise was held, in 1951, to train them for combat under nuclear conditions.[132] In the winter of 1951-52, Soviet military expenditures were substantially reduced, thus indicating that Stalin regarded the threat he was facing as primarily political rather than military.[133] "The most curious feature of the analysis provided by Germany experts in the Soviet Foreign Ministry in 1951-1952," Russian historian Aleksei Filitov observes, "is the almost complete neglect of the important question of how to prevent Western rearmament. Considerations within the Soviet Foreign

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128. Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1951*, pp. 331-41.

129. Ibid., pp. 546-47.

130. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose,* pp. 60-62.

131. "Ob itogakh lissabonskoi sessii Soveta Severoatlanticheskogo soiuza" [The Tasks of the Lisbon Session of the North Atlantic Council], undated [1952], AÚV KSČ, 100/24, 92/1093, SÚA.

132. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, pp. 241-42.

133. May, Steinbrunner, and Wolfe, "History of the Strategic Arms Competition, p. 272.

Ministry centered on how to use this fact in propaganda. And even in this field, there was a great deal of a rather formal, nonchalant attitude, sometimes bordering on neglect."[134]

The threat Stalin belabored in his theorizing about the "inevitability of war" referred to an impending rather than imminent war—a war that could be delayed, perhaps indefinitely, until the eagerly awaited "general crisis" of capitalism would have weakened the enemy sufficiently to change the all-important "correlation of forces" irreversibly in favor of the Soviet Union. As historian Kathryn Weathersby has observed, "While Stalin spoke as if he assumed that another great war would eventually come, he wanted to be sure it did not begin before the Soviet Union was prepared to win it, which it was clearly not in a position to do in 1950."[135]

Meanwhile any Western hopes for subverting Soviet power from within had to be frustrated—hence the massive proportions of the terror Stalin unleashed, even at the price generating paralyzing fear, once the United States stepped up its "psychological warfare" in early 1951. Again, Moscow was privy to the details of the American planning, complete with the transcripts of the secret Frankfurt briefings of US diplomats from Eastern Europe and the conference of Western foreign ministers in Washington. But the message was ambiguous: While US ambassador to Moscow Adm. Alan G. Kirk expressed at the Frankfurt gathering his doubts about the efficacy of efforts to subvert communist rule, Acheson warned his colleagues that the West should brace for a "general war."[136]

Judging from the experience in Korea, the Soviet military reportedly planned on the assumption that in such a war the United States would not use nuclear weapons.[137] The rare 1951 plan for the defense of Poland in such a war, preserved in the Warsaw archives, supported neither NATO's contemporary belief in Moscow's high readiness for aggression nor its own professed belief in an acute threat of war posed by Western policies.[138] The plan

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134. Aleksey Filitov, "Soviet Security Concepts in Historical Retrospective," in *Russia's Place in Europe: A Security Debate*, ed. Kurt R. Spillmann and Andreas Wenger (Bern: Lang, 1999), pp. 147-62, at p.152.

135. Kathryn Weathersby, "Soviet Documents and Reinterpretation of the Origins of the Korean War," in *Ending the Cold War in Korea: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Chung-in Moon, Odd Arne Westad, and Gyoo-hyoung Kahng (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2001), pp. 161-69, at p. 165.

136. "O konferentsiiakh amerikanskikh predstavitelei v stranakh vostochnoi a zapadnoi Evropy i Blizhnego Vostoka" [Conferences of the American Representatives in the Countries of Eastern and Western Europe and the Near East], undated intelligence report, AÚV KSČ, 100/24, 92/1093, 34/34, and "Ob amerikanskoi propagande metodom `psikhologicheskogo nastupleniia' [The American Propaganda of a "Psychological Offensive"], July 1951, 100/23, 92/1093, SÚA; U.S. report on the Frankfurt meeting, 2 February 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 4, pt. 1, pp. 148-70; statement by Acheson, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 3, pt. 3, pp. 1238-40.

137. Vladislav M. Zubok, "Stalin and the Nuclear Age," in John Lewis Gaddis, Philip H. Gordon, Ernest R. May, and Jonathan Rosenberg, eds., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy since 1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 39-61, at p. 59.

138. "Plan operacyjny rozwinięcia 1 i 2 Armii Wojska Polskiego na wypad działań wojennych w 1951 r." [Operational Plan for the Deployment of the 1st and 2nd Polish Armies in the Event of Hostilities in 1951], microfilm (o) 96/6398, reel W-15, LC. Facsimile and English translation on www.isn.ethz.ch/php, "Collections."

presumed, several days after the initiation of hostilities, limited penetration into the country of sea and airborne Anglo-American troops from Western Europe, mistakenly described as having been kept there ready ever since the 1944 Normandy landings, and their repulsion but not any follow-on offensive.

A greater sense of urgency permeated contemporary communist estimates of a likely Balkan war, which assumed that in case of a conflict in Central Europe NATO would strike at the continent's presumably soft "underbelly"[139]—Churchill's controversial idea dating back to the time of World War II. In February 1951, false reports about the presence of American and British warplanes on Yugoslav airfields jolted the Romanian general staff.[140] The Bulgarians, too, constantly worried about a Yugoslav attack, building defenses and exercising troops to repel it. From unidentified sources, they received the disturbing information that in case of a Soviet attack in Central Europe NATO would retaliate in the Balkans by unleashing on them the Yugoslavs, Greeks, and Turks.[141] The Soviet Union wrongly saw Tito's Yugoslavia as acting in collusion with the Western powers.[142] But it rightly remained unimpressed by the shaky Balkan pact linking Belgrade with NATO members Greece and Turkey.[143]

Whatever Moscow's perceptions and plans, they hardly warranted NATO's dire estimates of "Soviet Strength and Capabilities," compiled annually since 1951 from mainly US and British intelligence sources.[144] These credited the Soviet army of supposedly 175 combat-ready divisions with the capacity to perform superhuman feats: massive surprise assaults launched simultaneously against Western Europe and Scandinavia, the British Isles and the Balkans, Italy and Turkey, the Near and Middle East, even Canada and the United States, particularly Alaska and the Aleutian Islands—all this while retaining enough reserve to defend the home territory.[145] So disturbing was NATO's comparison of forces that its

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[139.] Iordan Baev, "Izgrazhdane na voennata struktura na organizatsiiata na Varshavskiia dogovor 1955-1969 g.," *Voennoistoricheski sbornik* [Sofia] 66, no. 5 (1997): 56-77, and idem *Voennopoliticheskite konflikti*, pp. 42, 126-27.

[140.] "Nota cu nevoile informative ale direcției operații referitoare la Jugoslavia," [Note on Information for the Operations Directorate Concerning Yugoslavia] Dos. 77, Nr. 59.093, Marele Stat Major, Direcția Operații, Romanian Military Archives, Bucharest.

[141.] Baev, *Voennopoliticheskite konflikti,* pp. 42, 126-27.

[142.] Some of them later recalled their surprise at learning during their 1955 Belgrade visit that there had been no NATO forces and U.S. nuclear weapons stationed in Yugoslavia. Record of the July 1955 Soviet party central committee plenum, 2/1/172/86-108, RGANI, copy in NSAF.

[143.] Study by V. Zimianin on the Balkan union, about October 1954, Sekr. Min./13a/28/27/89-92, AVPRF; John O. Iatrides, *Balkan Triangle: Birth and Decline of an Alliance across Ideological Boundaries* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), pp. 110-12.

[144.] Record of the 87th meeting of the Standing Group, 24 September 1951; MC 33, 23 November 1951; MC 44, 17 December 1952; SG 161, 16 October 1951, and subsequent SG 161/ series, IMS.

[145.] "Estimate of the Relative Strength and Capabilities of NATO and Soviet Bloc Forces at Present and in the Immediate Future," MC 33, 23 November 1951, IMS. Concerning the Alaska landings, evidence out of Russia

intended publication, designed to boost morale among the allies, was abandoned lest they panic. Relying "primarily on military considerations,"[146] the Western assessments were more distorted than the Soviet estimates of the "correlation of forces," which made better allowance for other attributes of power.

Prompted by the decision on September 14, 1951, of the Allied foreign ministers at their meeting in Washington to terminate in the near future West Germany's occupation status and integrate the country into EDC,[147] Moscow prepared a new initiative on the German question on the assumption that the divisions between NATO members as well as between Germans favoring and opposing their country's military contribution could be exploited to stop EDC. In the fall, the Soviet party central committee secretly approved a plan that eventually resulted in Stalin's controversial note of March 10, 1952, the importance of which was later to be much inflated as a missed opportunity to reunite Germany.[148]

While the note sought open-ended discussions about a future united and nonaligned Germany with its own armed forces and limited military production, the immediate Soviet aim was to block German membership in EDC, and with it the project itself. The proposal insisted on Germany's obligation to shun any "coalition or military pacts" directed against any state that had taken part in the war against Hitler—that is, prohibition not only of its membership in EDC or NATO but also its participation in any nonmilitary grouping that Moscow might find objectionable.[149] This applied to the Schuman Plan for the European Coal and Steel Community, which the Soviet Union hoped to undo by advocating the return to German control of the Ruhr industrial area,[150] and Schuman's other project of a European Political Community, denounced by Moscow as a particularly insidious scheme aimed at combining and advancing both the Community and EDC.[151]

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indicates that these were in fact considered—though in 1948 rather than 1951—only to be ruled out because of the inability of the troops, brought to the Soviet Far East for training, to cope with the inclement weather. *Kommersant* [Moscow], 24 January 1968. At the September 1999 conference at Yale University, "Stalin and the Cold War, 1945-1953," Russian archivist Vladimir Naumov reported, but did not present, evidence that massive preparations for military action against North America were made in the Soviet Far East during the last years of Stalin's life.

146. D-D (52) 45 (Final), 10 March 1952, IMS.

147. "Communiqué Issued by the Foreign Ministers of the United States, United Kingdom, and France," September 14, 1951, *FRUS*, 1951, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 1306-8.

148. Gromyko to Stalin, January 25, 1952, 082/1952/40/11/101a/255, p. 7, AVPRF.

149. Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs to U.S. Embassy Moscow, March 10, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 169-72.

150. Draft of a peace treaty, before February 18, 1952, 082/1952/40/11/101a/255, pp. 31-46, AVPRF.

151. Klaus Törnud, *Soviet Attitudes towards Non-Military Regional Co-Operation* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1961), pp. 105-106.

The Soviet note was calculated to foment in the West a divisive discussion that would hamper the approaching conclusion of the two agreements crucial to European security—besides the EDC treaty that was to be initialed on May 27, the Contractual Agreements on terminating West Germany's occupation regime and establishing its sovereignty, scheduled to be signed the day before. In a confidential conversation with East German foreign minister Georg Dertinger, however, Soviet envoy Georgii M. Pushkin conceded that West Germany's eventual integration into the West's defense system was a foregone conclusion.[152]

After the Allies rejected Moscow's proposal, Stalin during confidential discussions with East German leaders made it clear that he did not take seriously the Soviet pretense that EDC was intended to become a tool of military aggression. What he rather feared was that, once established, it would enable the Americans to project their power on the Continent more effectively by other means, with potentially calamitous consequences for the stability of East Germany. Cautioning the East German party chairman and president Wilhelm Pieck that the "pacific period" was over, he urged that a regular army needed to be created in the country—"without much noise, but with perseverance."[153]

In trying to avert at the eleventh hour the signing of the EDC treaty, to be concluded in Paris on May 27, Moscow instructed French communists to reverse their policy of keeping the party and its subsidiary "peace" movement formally separate—which was to make the movement more attractive to the wider public—and instead bring the masses to the streets under party banners to intimidate the government by rioting and strikes.[154] Not only was the treaty signed as scheduled, but the violence also enabled the police to crack down on the party, throwing it into disarray. Reverting to the former tactic of keeping the struggle for "peace" and for "socialism" separate, Moscow no longer provided clear guidance. It dropped dark hints about "secret treaties" behind the EDC facade, without elaborating.[155]

This was the time when Stalin was rapidly loosing his grip as his ability—though not his desire—to control events as his health deteriorated. In August, French ambassador Louis Joxe, astonished to have been invited to the Kremlin after the increasingly reclusive dictator had all but ceased to see any foreigners, found him looking "old and tired . . . , sickly."[156] Offering no clue as to why he had wanted to meet in the first place, Stalin was "beating around the bush," complaining about German rearmament but not making any proposals. He

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[152.] Hermann-Josef Rupieper, *Der besetzte Verbündete: Die amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik 1949-1955* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), p. 254.

[153.] "Plan der Besprechung" by Pieck and his notes, about April 7, 1952, Pieck 36/696, SAPMO-BA.

[154.] Philippe Robrieux, *Histoire intérieure du Parti Communiste*, vol. 2 (Paris: Fayard, 1981), pp. 309-30; Wall, *French Communism in the Era of Stalin,* pp. 145-47.

[155.] *Pravda*, November 3, 1952.

[156.] Georges Bortoli, *The Death of Stalin* (New York: Praeger, 1975), p. 48.

was asking silly questions: whether De Gaulle thought that the French-Soviet pact had been good, whether Iceland was aggressive, whether the Soviet Union might join NATO.[157]

Stalin's pronouncements about war during his last months of life were erratic. In his essay on economics, prepared for the Soviet party's nineteenth congress, he added a seemingly reassuring twist to Lenin's theory by positing that the contradictions among capitalist states were even greater than those between them and the "socialist" camp, thus suggesting that its enemies would destroy themselves in a fratricidal war before they would be ready to fight against the Soviet Union. He considered particularly the recovery of Germany and Japan to be conducive, sooner or later, to such a war, as they would turn against the United States.[158] Yet he did not unambiguously spell out the implications for Soviet policy, making it possible to invoke the kind of war that was impending as a justification for both restraint and its opposite. Whereas the inevitable self-destruction of the capitalists could be construed as a reason for not taking any risks while waiting to pick up the pieces, the irrepressible discord among them could also be seen as making it safer to take the risks in order to give them a push.

Stalin did not make his preference for either course any clearer by insisting that particular wars could be prevented, thus implying—though never stating explicitly—that an East-West Armageddon could be avoided. In his brief presentation at the party congress, he chose the topic of how Western communists should help prevent war by making their capitalist governments incapable of waging it, expressing confidence in the ability of the people in the capitalist countries to nullify the aggressive propensities of their rulers.[159] Yet the belief in their succeeding was difficult to reconcile with the notion that war was inevitably arising from contradictions inherent in the capitalist system.

There was more than a touch of desperation in Stalin's reasoning amounting to the acknowledgment that capitalism's collapse—which alone could safely prevent the inevitable war—could not really be accomplished by anything within the realm of foreign policy but only by the attainment of "communism" in the Soviet Union. And this was to be accomplished by strengthening even more the power of the state and proceeding even more ruthlessly with the purge of its internal enemies. Such was the dismal prescription of how to protect the country against the implacably hostile capitalist alliance that he had been so prominently instrumental in bringing into life.

Ironically, at the very time Stalin's rule was entering the stage of its terminal paralysis, the West was most impressed by its presumed vitality. In November, just as the most monstrous of the Stalinist purge trials was opening in Prague, the U.S. Board of National Estimates judged that on the Soviet side "internal stresses and strains appear less serious now

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157. Kennan to Deputy Undersecretary of State, August 25, 1952, *FRUS*, 1952-54, vol. 8, pp. 1042-45.

158. "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.," in *The Essential Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings, 1905-1952*, ed. Bruce Franklin (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 445-81, at pp. 467-73.

159. Speech of October 14, 1952, in Franklin, *The Essential Stalin,* pp. 508-11.

than ever before."[160] A month later, the North Atlantic Council noted a "greatly increased" Soviet confidence.[161] Reflecting on the Soviet perception of NATO in his cable from the U.S. Embassy, George F. Kennan noted that Moscow felt seriously threatened by it and could have been reassured if the Western alliance had not been created in the first place.[162]

The persisting Soviet disdain for NATO—to be distinguished from Soviet respect for American power—cast doubt on that assertion. But otherwise Kennan's grasp of Stalinism's fundamental weakness was more to the point than Washington's estimates of the looming threat posed by the Soviet Union's alleged readiness to deliberately initiate a global war before the chances of its success would start diminishing by 1954. Nothing that has come out of the Russian archives so far substantiates the contemporary speculations that Stalin toward the end of his life was on the verge of provoking such a war, from which the world was only saved by his timely death.[163]

During the tense weeks of rising domestic terror that preceded Stalin's death, the Soviet Union remained largely passive in the face of NATO's continued expansion. Having successfully persuaded Denmark not to allow U.S. air force bases on its territory,[164] it remained suspicious that the February 1953 meeting of the newly established Nordic Council, which provided for political cooperation among the countries of the area, was a prelude to Sweden's entry into the Western alliance.[165] But it did not mount a campaign to obstruct the more worrisome American plan to connect Yugoslavia with NATO through membership in a Balkan pact, which would link the anti-Soviet communist state with Greece and Turkey, even after the three governments on February 28 concluded a political friendship treaty and Yugoslav foreign minister Koča Popović pointedly refused to answer the question of whether his country would seek NATO membership.[166] A few days before Stalin died on March 5, he seemed ready to deal with the issue when he reportedly instructed his specialist on political murders, Pavel Sudoplatov, to prepare a plan for the assassination of Tito and the intensification of covert activities against Western Europe.[167] But the despot did not have enough time left to follow through such schemes.

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160. "Estimate Prepared by the Board of National Estimates," November 21, 1951, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 186-96, at p. 187.

161. Robert Spencer, "Alliance Perceptions of the Soviet Threat, 1950-1988," in *The Changing Western Analysis of the Soviet Threat*, ed. Carl-Christoph Schweitzer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 9-48, at p. 16.

162. "The Soviet Union and the Atlantic Pact," September 8, 1952, Kennan, *Memoirs, 1950-1963,* pp. 327-51.

163. Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 166-67.

164. Bent Jensen, "The Soviet Union and Denmark during the Cold War: Perception and Policy 1945-1962," paper presented at the conference "The Nordic Countries and the Cold War: International Perspectives and Interpretations," Reykjavik, June 24-27, 1998, pp. 15-17.

165. Lange, "Konfrontation," p. 537.

166. Iatrides, *Balkan Triangle*, pp. 101-102 and 106.

167. Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoly Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness□A Soviet*

As long as Stalin lived, the East-West strategic relationship was more stable than the intense mutual hostility suggested. The stronger Western side was too much impressed by its overdrawn image of Soviet capabilities to risk anything that might provoke war while the weaker Soviet Union was sufficiently reassured by what it was able to find out about Western intentions to avoid testing NATO's military weaknesses. The situation changed once the dictator, with his particular fears as well as his unique ability to act on them, was gone while the buildup of the Western alliance had reached the point that made it a military adversary to reckon with.

The Post-Stalin "Peace Initiative"

For Stalin's successors, NATO was not a pressing priority. Their first important foreign policy decision, secretly adopted within two weeks after his death and gradually implemented in a series of cautious preparatory steps starting with Molotov's public statement on April 2, was to terminate the Korean War.[168] Nevertheless, the declaration on March 15 by the new Premier, Georgii M. Malenkov, that his country had no dispute with any other that "could not be settled by peaceful means, on the basis of mutual agreement,"[169] was bound to have implications for Europe as well. It spread doubts among US allies about whether EDC was necessary after all.

Presuming the Kremlin's new readiness to not only settle the Korean War but also defuse the confrontation in Europe, Churchill wanted to test Soviet intentions at a summit meeting.[170] The new Republican administration in Washington, however, was skeptical. To Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the signals from Moscow did not give "any great comfort,"[171] while President Dwight D. Eisenhower considered calls for a summit premature, pending tangible proofs of Soviet good faith. Such proofs were unlikely to be forthcoming from Molotov, the longtime manager of Stalin's foreign policy, whose reappointment as foreign minister was a mark of continuity rather than of change.

While outsiders anxiously speculated about whether a new era of peace might be dawning, behind the closed doors of a party central committee meeting Molotov disparaged his government's "so-called `peace initiative'" as merely a ruse, designed to sow "confusion

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Spymaster (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), pp. 334-39.

168. Decision by the Council of Ministers, March 19, 1953, and draft of Statement by Molotov, March 30, 1953, 3/65/830/60-71 and 106-12, APRF.

169. Speech by Malenkov, March 15, 1953, in *Documents on International Affairs 1953*, ed. Denise Folliot (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 12-13.

170. John W. Young, "Cold War and Détente with Moscow," in *The Foreign Policy of the Churchill Peacetime Administration, 1951-1955*, ed. John W. Young (Leicester, England: Leicester University Press, 1988), pp. 55-80.

171. Quoted in John Yurechko, "The Day Stalin Died: American Plans for Exploiting the Soviet Succession Crisis of 1953," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 3, no. 1 (May 1980): 44-73, at p. 67.

in the ranks of our aggressive adversaries."[172] The readiness of the new Kremlin leaders to negotiate while making the necessary concessions in the process was limited by their feeling, in Khrushchev's pregnant phrase, "terribly vulnerable."[173] Hence they suspiciously regarded Churchill's proposal for a summit as nothing but a Western ruse, calculated to "wring some concessions" out of them before they had their "feet firmly on the ground."[174] Accordingly, they tried to undo some of Stalin's most egregious mistakes, such as the war in Korea, but not entertain more concessions than absolutely necessary, lest they give an impression of weakness to adversaries whom they regarded as implacably hostile.

Instead of a meeting at the highest level, presidential adviser C. D. Jackson advocated holding a conference of foreign ministers intended—as Khrushchev rightly guessed—to extract from the Russians substantial concessions because of their momentary weakness. According to Undersecretary of State W. Bedell Smith, the best way to deal with the Soviet "peace offensive" and save the EDC was to hold such a conference quickly, thus allowing Molotov to expose there the fact that Soviet policy had not substantially changed.[175] But the State Department vetoed the plan on the grounds that it might succeed and cause the Western Europeans' tepid support for EDC to vanish altogether.[176]

Eisenhower's long-delayed "Chance for Peace" speech of April 16 was anything but an invitation for bargaining. On the one hand, it tried to lure the cynical Soviet chieftains to implausibly join hands with the West in stopping the arms race and waging instead a "new kind of war" on the world's "brute forces of poverty and need."[177] On the other hand, the particular conditions the president singled out for them to fulfill if they wanted to prove their good faith—ending the Korean War, signing the pending Austrian state treaty, releasing the remaining German prisoners of war—were ill-suited to give the desired proof.

The publicity Moscow gave the Eisenhower speech was misleading of Soviet readiness for détente. Grasping that the United States not ready for accommodation, internal Soviet estimates judged the speech "irritating and provocative" rather than worthy of a serious response.[178] Compounded two days later by Dulles's public demand that the Soviet Union

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172. "Delo Beriia (Plenum TsK KPSS, Iiul 1953 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet)" [The Beriia Affair: Stenographic Record of the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in July 1953], *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, January 1991, pp. 139-214, at p. 171.

173. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), p. 220.

174. Ibid, p. 362.

175. Young, *Winston Churchill's Last Campaign,* p. 144.

176. Walt W. Rostow, "Notes on the Origin of the President's Speech of April 16, 1953," May 11, 1953, *FRUS,* 1952-1954, vol. 8, pp. 1173-83.

177. Walt W. Rostow, *Europe after Stalin: Eisenhower's Three Decisions of March 11, 1953* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), pp. 113-22.

178. Vladislav M. Zubok, "Soviet Intelligence and the Cold War: The `Small' Committee of Information, 1952-53," *Diplomatic History* 19 (1955): 453-72, at pp. 460-61.

give up its domination of Eastern Europe[179]—and thus in effect capitulate—the impression Moscow received was that of a U.S. administration unwilling to negotiate. But this correct impression merely reinforced the Soviet unwillingness to do so either. There was simply not enough trust on either side to give the other the necessary benefit of the doubt. Thus, while a breakthrough seemed possible in theory, it proved impossible in practice.

NATO was notably reluctant to admit that as a result of Stalin's departure from the scene the Soviet threat might have diminished. Countering the spreading public belief that it did, the Paris meeting of the North Atlantic Committee next month reached a "remarkable unity of opinion" that it did not.[180] The alliance's annual estimate of enemy capabilities, despite its disclaimer that "a mere recital of theoretical data and statistical facts without adequate knowledge of human weaknesses is likely to present an unduly formidable picture," nevertheless continued to present such a picture. It depicted the Soviet Union as another Nazi Germany, poised for global conquest, only with vastly superior human, economic, and technological resources.[181]

Once Stalin's successors set upon liquidating the conflict in the Far East that they had inherited from him, they concentrated on the traditional Soviet priority, Europe. There the Balkan Pact required their immediate attention because of the possibility of its growing into a military alliance subsidiary to NATO. In April Molotov invited Yugoslav envoy Dragoje Djurić for a surprise interview, after which the two governments patched up their dispute enough to allow for the resumption of diplomatic ties.[182] To the central committee Molotov explained candidly what he had been doing: "Since we did not succeed in settling the particular problem [of Yugoslavia] by a frontal assault, it became necessary to resort to other methods. It was decided to establish with Yugoslavia the same relations as with the other bourgeois states tied with the aggressive North Atlantic bloc."[183] Yet Belgrade secretly tried to reassure Moscow that Yugoslavia's membership in the Balkan Pact actually prevents the United States from using it against the Soviet Union.[184] Wooing the other two members of the none too solid Balkan grouping, Moscow also renounced the territorial claims that Stalin had gratuitously raised against Turkey in 1945, and restored diplomatic relations with Greece as well.[185]

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179. Speech by Dulles, April 18, 1953, in Rostow, *Europe after Stalin*, pp. 122-31.

180. Spencer, "Alliance Perceptions of the Soviet Threat, "p. 17.

181. "The Soviet Bloc Strength and Capabilities, 1953-56," SG 161/3 (Revised Final), 30 September 1953, IMS. Quote from p. 95.

182. Iatrides, *Balkan Triangle,* pp. 114-15.

183. "Delo Beriia," January 1991, p. 164.

184. V.K. Volkov, *Uzlovye problemy noveishei istorii stran Tsentralnoi i Iugo-Vostochnoi Evropy* [Main Problems of the Recent History of the Countries of Central and Southeastern Europe] (Moscow: Indrik, 2000), p. 155.

185. Ferenc Vali, *Bridge across the Bosporus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 174-75.

On the premise that the recent ratification by Bonn of the EDC treaty had provoked "serious disagreements" between Washington and its European allies, Molotov's aides at the foreign ministry were preparing in April a new proposal on Germany, calculated to make it difficult to be rejected by the Western powers.[186] Its novelty consisted in proposing the formation of a provisional government for the whole country, to be followed by elections that would lead to the creation of a permanent one, until which time the governments currently in power in the two parts of Germany would continue functioning. As the final outcome of the plan, its authors expected a four-power conference to be convened as early as June and conclude with Germany a peace treaty that would forever rule out its membership in either EDC or NATO.[187]

The plan indicated that Molotov, like Churchill, entertained illusions about his ability to induce the other side to negotiate, although the expected results of the negotiations he hoped to set into motion were different from, and incompatible with, the Western expectations. In again trying to compel the Western governments to collaborate against their will in a German settlement the Soviet Union wanted, the plan did not substantially differ from Stalin's futile note of March 1952. It was shelved after Churchill, responding to what he misinterpreted as Moscow's encouraging reaction to the Eisenhower speech, had on May 11 preempted the pending Soviet initiative by calling for a conference of the great powers.[188] Insisting that their security needs were compatible, he outlined a possible settlement modeled after the 1925 treaty of Locarno, which would have provided international guarantees of Germany's frontiers to prevent any future aggression on its part. The lukewarm Soviet response disappointed the British.[189] Never keen on Locarno—which had failed to discourage German aggression before—Moscow welcomed the idea of compatible security but otherwise merely repeated its routine call for a speedy German settlement without adding anything new about how to achieve it.

The habitual Soviet mistrust of capitalist treachery did not mean that all members of the ruling team were of one mind. Among them, the security chief Lavrentii P. Beriia has sometimes been retrospectively regarded as something of a closet liberal and an active proponent of accommodation with the West in Europe.[190] The fragmentary evidence suggests that he indeed entertained ideas which, if implemented, could have brought about the kind of Soviet concessions the West was looking for, notably the abandonment of the communist

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186. "Predlozheniia po germanskomu voprosu" [Proposals on the German Question], by Malik and Pushkin, April 24, 1953, 082/1953/41/19/112 vol.2/271, pp. 2-12, quote on p. 5, AVPRF.

187. "On Further Soviet Measures on the German Question," ca. April 28, 1953, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10 (1998): 72-74.

188. John W. Young, "Churchill, the Russians and the Western Alliance: The Three-Power Conference in Bermuda, December 1953," *English Historical Review* 101 (1986): 889-912, at p. 893.

189. Frank Roberts, "Stalin, Khrushchev in Berlinskie krizisy" [Stalin, Khrushchev, and the Berlin Crises], *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn*, 1991, no. 10: 130-43, at p. 138; Zubok, "Soviet Intelligence in the Cold War," p. 469.

190. Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 226, 183-91.

regime in East Germany and the possible unification of Germany on Western terms, in return for the neutralization of the whole country. Showing particular interest in the German question, he had his agents gather information about the feasibility of such a solution.[191] During the meeting of the ruling group convened on May 27 to discuss the deteriorating economic and political situation in East Germany, he shocked his colleagues by suggesting not only that "the course of building socialism in the GDR be abandoned at the present time" but also that a neutralized Germany would be preferable to a socialist one.[192]

As Stalin's former security chief the most detestable member of the ruling team, Beriia had enough ambition, but not enough competence, much less credibility. As Molotov pertinently observed, the spymaster and manager of terror, though an arrogant man, was a poor politician, "lacking deeper interest in fundamental policy questions."[193] Beriia was prone to indulging in risky schemes, having reportedly dispatched a reconnaissance plane to probe NATO's defenses in northern Europe.[194] Certainly, his ideas on foreign policy amounted to no coherent concept or plan of action. And when the popular uprising in East Germany threatened Soviet positions here, Beriia closed ranks with his comrades to crush it by force. In any case, before he could make an imprint on Soviet policy abroad, they had him executed because of the threat he posed to their power at home.

The Kremlin took it for granted that the June 17 East German uprising was NATO's doing. Soviet officials on the spot reported having actually seen Western agents instigating the insurgents although they could see with their eyes that the revolt was spontaneous.[195] Soviet authorities in the country anxiously monitored Western troop movements in its vicinity and the commander of the Soviet forces there, Gen. Andrei Grechko, was relieved to report to Moscow on the following day that the U.S. 7th Army and 6th Air Force had been taken off alert.[196]

Previously the Moscow had been trying to press East Germany's reluctant party chief, Walter Ulbricht, to introduce the necessary reforms to reverse its economic decline and help stabilize its political situation. Now the foremost priority was to prevent the balance in that critical part of Europe from shifting decisively in favor of the West. Pending the outcome, the proposal prepared in the foreign ministry with the intention to initiate discussions that

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191. Ibid., pp. 363-64.

192. "Delo Beriia," January 1991, pp. 143-44, 162-63.

193. Feliks Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* [Hundred and Forty Conversations with Molotov] (Moscow: Terra, 1991)

194. Sudoplatov and Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks*, pp. 360-63.

195. Viktor Gobarev, "Soviet Military Planning and Activities during the East German Uprising of June 1953," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 10, no. 4 (1997): 1-29, at pp. 6-7, 15.

196. Grechko and Tarasov to Bulganin, June 18, 1953, in Christian F. Ostermann, *Uprising in East Germany1953: The Cold War, the German Question, and the First Major Upheaval behind the Iron Curain* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), p. 216.

would compel the Western powers to accede to a settlement in Germany on Soviet terms was put on hold as Soviet forces carried out their emergency operation to prevent the East German regime from collapsing.

The course of events caught the West unprepared, providing a test of the proclaimed American readiness to challenge Soviet power by exploiting its vulnerabilities. The other occupation powers in Germany, Britain and France, showed sympathy for the Soviet Union's need to restore order in its own zone.[197] Thanks to swift Soviet action and Western inaction, Stalin's heirs weathered their most severe crisis since his death remarkably well. Despite the ouster of Beriia, they remained united rather than divided. This made them less rather than more accommodating toward a Western alliance that was showing signs of strain. If previously the Kremlin leaders had not been sufficiently secure to dare to negotiate, now they were not sufficiently insecure to feel compelled to. U.S. intelligence was right that, Moscow was going to "offer no real concessions to effect a settlement" in Europe.[198]

As time seemed to be working in its favor, the Soviet government was in no hurry to accept the proposal for a meeting of foreign ministers that the West submitted in July to regain initiative in the German question.[199] Instead, the Kremlin judged the time right to publicize its own proposal on Germany, originally planned to be submitted before the East German revolt intervened, which demanded the abandonment of EDC.[200] By then, however, that project was all but dead anyway, as growing numbers of West Europeans became less fearful of the Soviet threat than of the growing nuclear arsenals of both superpowers.

Unlike the year before, now the Western alliance was unmistakably on the defensive. The Yugoslav military delegation that visited Washington in September expressed a desire for cooperation with NATO in strategic planning, but Belgrade's possible membership was not mentioned.[201] Although the Yugoslavs kept pressing for the transformation of their political treaty with Greece and Turkey into a military pact—a goal they achieved a year later—they were doing so to increase their leverage in seeking a rapprochement with Moscow rather than to prepare for a confrontation with it on the side of NATO. Insisting that a fundamental rather than merely tactical change of Soviet policy had taken place, Tito exhorted the West to abstain from demanding excessive concessions. His opposed the power blocs as beholden to outdated ideologies, and urged a "realistic settlement."[202]

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197. Christian F. Ostermann, "The United States, The East German Uprising of 1953, and the Limits of Rollback," Working Paper no. 11, *Cold War International History Project* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1994), p. 20.

198. "Probable Soviet Bloc Courses of Action through mid-1953," NIE-64, pt. 2, December 11, 1952, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington.

199. Bohlen to Department of State, November 27, 1953, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol, 7, pt. 1, p. 679.

200. Extract from Soviet note, August 15, 1953, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1953*, pp. 84-91.

201. Iatrides, *Balkan Triangle*, p. 124.

202. Ibid., p. 121.

Increasingly Western statesmen signaled an inclination toward such a settlement. In September Belgian foreign minister Paul van Zeeland proposed mutual withdrawal of Soviet and Anglo-American forces from Germany and the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between them, after which the country would be reunited and enter EDC, although the Western alliance would be prohibited from deploying its troops in former East Germany—[203]a deal foreshadowing that which would eventually allow Germany to reunite in 1990. Even Dulles was pondering "a spectacular effort to relax world tensions on a global basis," including the mutual pullback of U.S. and Soviet troops in Europe along with major reductions of both conventional and nuclear weapons.[204]

In the summer of 1953, the Soviet Union took advantage of Danish opposition to NATO's planned maneuvers in the Baltic by demanding assurances that Denmark would never allow foreign troops on its island of Bornholm. Moscow took the position that such had been its expectation when it withdrew its troops from the island in 1946, following their occupation of Bornholm at the end of World War II. Although this was a specious argument, the Copenhagen government chose not to contest it, and while it did not specifically declare that this part of its territory was off-limits for NATO, in practice it made it so, thus giving the Soviet Union a rare success against the alliance.[205]

Although Moscow recognized that some NATO members were now more willing to collaborate with it in a radical reshaping of East-West relations in Europe than they had been earlier that year, it was no more inclined to do its part than before. Having concluded that Churchill's advocacy of détente was genuine, Soviet analysts saw him ready to compensate for the admission of reunited Germany into EDC by concluding an East-West nonaggression pact, recognizing the Oder-Neisse line as the German-Polish border, and accepting Soviet supremacy in Eastern Europe. They considered these concessions a substantial but still not sufficient price to pay.[206] They remained unimpressed by the Western debate about providing security guarantees for the Soviet Union, initiated by Churchill's "Locarno" speech, and ignored the notion, propagated by West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer during his campaign for re-election, that EDC would help safeguard Soviet security by limiting the size of the German armed forces.[207]

[203.] Eugene Hinterhoff, *Disengagement* (London: Stevens, 1959), pp. 164-65.

[204.] Memorandum by Dulles, September 6, 1953, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 2, pp. 457-60.

205. Bent Jensen, *Den lange befrielse: Bornholm besat of befriet 1945-1946* [The Long Liberation: Bornholm Occupied and Liberated] (Odense 1996).

[206.] Vladislav Zubok, "Soviet Intelligence and the Cold War: The `Small' Committee of Information, 1952-53," Working Paper no. 4, *Cold War International History Project* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1992), p. 23.

[207.] Young, *Winston Churchill's Last Campaign*, p. 200.

In the fall of 1953, Moscow procrastinated by setting unacceptable conditions for the foreign ministers conference; the conditions ranged from German unification on Soviet terms to the inclusion of China as a fifth participant.[208] Yet the situation changed once Adenauer's landslide victory in the German elections removed doubts about the continuation of his country's course toward rearmament within the Western alliance and the prospects for its unity improved as a result of the decision to hold the delayed tripartite summit in Bermuda at the end of the year.

Ulbricht tried to foment confrontation when he proposed to his Moscow mentors to respond to the forthcoming Bermuda conference of Western leaders by convening immediately afterward a meeting of pro-Soviet parliamentarians and other public figures from both East and West. This would serve to mobilize popular opposition to EDC and Western Europe's political integration while promoting Soviet proposals on Germany.[209] Yet the Kremlin preferred instead to reverse course. On November 26, it agreed to hold the conference of foreign ministers without preconditions.[210]

At the same time, the Soviet Union attempted to steer the preparations for the gathering to advance its own priorities. Rejecting the Western agenda, which singled out primarily the organization of free German elections and the establishment of a free all-German government, it insisted that the ministers meet without any agenda agreed in advance. This looked to Adenauer like "an implied agenda . . . which placed European security before solution of [the] German problem."[211] As EDC faltered, the prospect of its failure dealing a possibly fatal blow to NATO enabled the Soviet leaders to contemplate the conference, set to meet in Berlin in January 1954, with more confidence in their ability to make the West accept a revamping of the European security environment in accordance with their preferences.

Military Thinking in Transition

Regardless of the growth of nuclear armaments, Soviet military doctrine did not substantially change in Stalin's lifetime. Drawing on the experience of World War II, it presumed that the next war would be little more than a more destructive replica of the preceding one.[212] Even after the Soviet Union acquired an atomic bomb of its own in 1949

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208. Extract from Soviet note, November 11, 1953, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1953,* pp. 100-106.

209. Ulbricht to Soviet party central committee, November 17, 1953, ZPA J IV 2/202-332, SAPMO-BA.

210. Extract from Soviet note, November 26, 1953, in Folliot, *Documents on International Relations 1953*, p. 107.

211. Conant to Department of State, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, p. 682.

212. On the persistence of the World War II paradigm, see the best Russian study of Soviet perceptions of military threat, Vadim L. Tsymburskii, *Voennaia doktrina SSSR i Rossii: Osmysleniia poniatii "ugrozy" i "pobedy" vo vtoroi polovine XX veka* [The Military Doctrine of the USSR and Russia: Understanding the Notions of "Threat" and "Victory" in the Second Half od the Twentieth Century] (Moscow: Rossiiskii Nauchnyi Fond, 1994), pp. 30-37.

and NATO began introducing U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe in the spring of 1952, Soviet military thinking remained beholden to Stalin's banal doctrine of "permanently operating factors," according to which the outcome of a war is decided by the number, equipment, and morale of the troops, the quality of their leadership, and the steadiness of the "domestic front." The doctrine reflected the Stalinist reliance on the country's vast human and material resources marshaled by the totalitarian system of government the despot had at his disposal.

In a private conversation with the Italian socialist politician Pietro Nenni, Stalin rightly doubted the West's ability physically to occupy Soviet territory. Despite Moscow's public clamor about Western warmongers, he questioned especially America's ability to find the millions of soldiers needed to wage another World War."[213] Soviet planning therefore concentrated on defense against nuclear bombing which Stalin was in a position to know the United States was prepared to resort to in case of a war. The Soviet plans envisaged strikes against the mainly European bases from where the bombers were most likely to be deployed and against other targets in the NATO countries that would be essential for the conduct of military operations. By the early 1950s, the Soviet Union acquired a long-range air force of some 1,700 aircraft, two thirds of which were to be used against Western Europe.[214]

Although Stalin pressed his designers to develop aircraft and missiles that could credibly threaten the United States with nuclear weapons, he never came to believe that such weapons would prove decisive in war, relying instead on the conventional threat the Soviet army posed to Western Europe. And Moscow's conventional superiority remained overwhelming, despite the growth of NATO and EDC during the Korean War—a sufficient reason for the Soviet Union to build up its military power more slowly than the West was doing.

An emergency buildup would have been all the more redundant once it became clear that NATO's ambitious "Lisbon goals" of February 1952 would fall far short of realization. A year later, the North Atlantic Council at its meeting in Paris in April 1953 substantially reduced those goals despite its warning that even after Stalin's death the Soviet threat to Western security remained unchanged.[215] Yet doubts persisted about the feasibility even of the reduced goals because of the reluctance of the Western publics to sacrifice economic growth to what appeared to them as a greatly diminished threat.

Appropriately, within a year after Stalin's death the Soviet Union reduced its high level of military expenditures as well as its oversized armed forces, although it neither advertised these actions nor did it substantially change its military posture.[216] The reduction, coinciding

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213. Entry for July 17, 1952, Pietro Nenni, *Tempo di Guerra Fredda: Diari, 1943-1956* (Milan: Sugar, 1981), pp. 534-38, at p. 537.

214. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, pp. 243-45.

215. Young, *Winston Churchill's Last Campaign,* p. 155; Spencer, "Alliance Perceptions of the Soviet Threat," p. 17.

216. Evangelista, *"Why Keep Such an Army?"*, p. 4.

with the inauguration in June 1953 of the "New Course" in Eastern Europe, conveyed the new leadership's increased preoccupation with domestic priorities, particularly the consolidation of economies strained by the wasteful Stalinist system.[217] In Czechoslovakia, for example, the expansion of the armed forces initiated under Stalin was slowed down as the country's military investment in 1954 decreased by one-third and its military output by 16.5 per cent.

Although the Republican administration that took power in Washington in January 1953 had long advertised its intention to rely for the defense of Western Europe mainly on nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union did not immediately draw the necessary conclusions. Only after the successful test of its own hydrogen bomb on August 12, 1953, demonstrated the awesome power of this weapon as well as the Soviet capability to produce it did Moscow begin to prepare for the impending change in NATO's strategy. In October the first U.S. atomic artillery pieces arrived in Europe, and in the same month the Soviet army under the supervision of high-ranking generals conducted in the Carpathian mountains its first field-exercise designed to test the "methods of conducting combat operations in which the `enemy' uses nuclear weapons."[218]

The main Soviet concern still continued to be defense against nuclear weapons rather than their deployment. Yet in September 1953 an article by Gen. N. Talenskii in the classified military journal *Voennaia mysl* opened up a debate on its pages about what, if any, difference nuclear weapons made in warfare. Amid much Marxist-Leninist gobbledygook about the applicability of "laws of military science," the debate challenged the Stalinist notion that the next war would be a repetition of World War II, arguing instead that advances in weaponry made a decisive defeat of the enemy in a short time possible.[219]

The debate, closely watched in the West, turned on the necessity of preventing the enemy from launching a surprise attack, which under nuclear conditions might lead to quick victory. The theme struck some Western observers as revolutionary,[220] although its being debated was only revolutionary within the Soviet context while it corresponded to NATO's own avowed intention to launch "an immediate all-out attack against the Soviet air and atomic threat" before the threat could materialize—a strategy indistinguishable from pre-emption.[221] The issue became increasingly topical once NATO decided to rely on nuclear

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217. Tadeusz Pióro, "W kleszczach wojennej psychozy: Obciążenia obronne Polski w latach 1950-1955" [In the Grip of a Military Psychosis: Poland's Defense Burden in 1950-1955], *Więź* [Warsaw], August 1955, pp. 140-52, at p. 150.

218. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, p. 325; *Krasnoznamennyi Prikarpatskii* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), p. 118.

219. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Praeger, 1962), pp. 66-69.

220. Herbert S. Dinerstein, "The Revolution in Soviet Strategic Thinking," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1958.

221. "Report by the Standing Group to the Military Committee on the Capabilities Study Allied Command Europe (ACE) 1957," MC 49, November 18, 1954, IMS.

weapons to compensate for its shortage of conventional forces and the unwillingness of its members to underwrite the cost of their expansion.

On January 12, 1954, Dulles publicly announced the adoption of the strategy of massive retaliation, vowing to respond to any Soviet aggression by the massive use of all resources at America's disposal, including nuclear weapons.[222] In theory, this meant that in the event of Soviet attack on Western Europe use of nuclear weapons, which in previous contingency plans had figured as the measure of last resort, now became the centerpiece of the NATO strategy, aimed at a wholesale destruction of enemy targets.[223] In practice, however, all this meant that both sides were groping with the implications of their possession of increasingly destructive nuclear weapons and did not know what to do about them.

Since the Soviets were presumably not preparing to attack, responding to the change in Western strategy was not a matter of immediate urgency for them. Yet the adaptation of their military planning to the change in the strategic environment defined by NATO, particularly to the increased vulnerability in the event of war of massive concentration of forces, which figured so prominently in their strategy, could not be delayed indefinitely.[224] Moreover, the frequent U.S. probing of their defenses by penetrating Soviet airspace was positively enervating: a Soviet fighter pilot has retrospectively described, for example, the agony of his unsuccessful intercept on May 9, 1954, of an intruding NATO RB-47, considered by Moscow a reconnaissance variant of a nuclear-capable aircraft.[225] In addition to the long-range air force, designed for strategic bombing, the Soviet Union finally developed its own tactical nuclear weapons as well. From 1954 it provided them to its troops in Europe.[226]

Soviet planners regarded both strategic and nuclear weapons mainly as support for ground forces rather than an instrument of massive nuclear strike.[227] As on the American side, on the Soviet side, too, the creeping nuclearization fostered a potentially dangerous separation between military planning and political direction. Participants in the debate in *Voennaia mysl* pleaded for the necessity of separating professional military matters from the larger issues of war and peace.[228] Thoughtful people involved in the Soviet nuclear program

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222. Speech of January 12, 1954, in *American Defense Policy in Perspective: From Colonial Times to the Present Day,* ed. Raymond O'Connor (New York: Wiley, 1965), pp. 326-30.

223. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose*, p. 80.

224. John G. Hines, Philip A. Petersen, and Nora Trulock III, "Soviet Military Theory from 1945-2000." *The Washington Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 117-37, at p. 120.

225. V. I. Dudin and I. N. Kosenko, "Zaplanirovanaia tragediia: Anatomiia vtorzheniia" [A Planned Tragedy: The Anatomy of an Intrusion], *Voennoistoricheskii zhurnal,* 1993, no. 1, pp. 16-23, at pp. 17-18.

226. Evangelista, *Innovation and the Arms Race,* p. 178.

227. Kimberly Marten Zisk, *Engaging the Enemy: Organization Theory and Soviet Military Innovation, 1955-1991* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 63.

228. Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age,* pp. 66-69.

became aware of the dilemma between wanting to have and not wanting to use the doomsday weapons and, understandably enough, found it difficult to resolve.

In March 1954, Igor Kurchatov and several other of the country's top nuclear scientists warned the Soviet leadership in a secret report that the weapons they were developing could threaten human civilization with extinction.[229] On March 12 Malenkov in a public speech departed from the nonchalant Stalinist view of such weapons as "something to frighten those with weak nerves"[230] by describing nuclear war as an unmitigated catastrophe that must be avoided at any cost—a view at variance with the still prevailing Soviet position that such a war would destroy capitalism but allow communism to flourish.[231]

It was symptomatic of the reluctance of the less perceptive men in the Kremlin to face the nuclear realities that they both barred the publicity of Kurchatov's ideas and forced Malenkov to recant by reaffirming the necessity of strong defense against nuclear blackmail.[232] By then the debate among military professionals on the pages of *Voennaia mysl* centered on the disturbing question of pre-emptive strike. Yet a seminal article on this subject by Marshal Pavel A. Rotmistrov, positing the potentially decisive importance of surprise in warfare, was kept from publication.[233]

On September 14, in the presence of high-ranking military officers from East European countries and China, the Soviet high command detonated an atomic bomb in the Urals in order to test the ability of its troops to engage in combat in a nuclear environment, exposing hundreds of soldiers to radioactive fallout.[234] The prospect that any war in Europe was likely to be nuclear was soon confirmed by NATO's December decision to provide its members with low-yield nuclear arms and increase the air power of the alliance by one-third; at the same time the number of its ground divisions planned for Central Europe was reduced from 54 to 30.[235]

The Soviet Union had both light and medium bombers capable of delivering atomic bombs against Western European targets as well as an air defense system capable of

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229. Yuri Smirnov and Vladislav Zubok, "Nuclear Weapons after Stalin's Death: Moscow Enters the H-Bomb Age," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, no. 4 (1994): 1 and 14-18.

230. Reply to questions by Alexander Werth, September 17, 1946, quoted in Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, p. 171.

231. *Izvestiia*, March 13, 1954.

232. James G. Richter, *Khrushchev's Double Bind: International Pressures and Domestic Coalition Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 48-49.

233. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine* (Washington: Brookings, 1990), p. 42.

234. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb,* pp. 326-28,

235. Wiggershaus, "Nordatlantische Bedrohungsperzeptionen," p. 44.

hindering the penetration of U.S. aircraft carrying such bombs to its territory.[236] In January 1955, Marshal Georgii Zhukov convened high-ranking military officers to discuss the outcome of the debate about how Soviet military doctrine should be adapted to the changed strategic environment.[237] As he later told U.S. ambassador Bohlen, he believed the hydrogen bomb to be more destructive than the party line would have it.[238] By then the unexpected turn in the development of EDC and NATO, coinciding with a split within the Kremlin leadership, created a new security situation for the Kremlin leadership to face.

From EDC to the Paris Agreements

When the conference of foreign ministers convened in Berlin on January 25, the Soviets had reasons to be concerned that EDC, once established, would be dominated by West Germany because of France's weakness and the absence from the organization of both the United States and Great Britain. But there was also the distinct possibility that the project might never get off the ground because of French opposition and the lukewarm support extended to it by its other prospective European members, who were becoming increasingly relaxed about the Soviet threat. Moreover, if the EDC treaty were not ratified, the "agonizing reappraisal" of America's commitment to the defense of Europe that Dulles threatened might take place[239] could reverberate to Moscow's advantage.

Although it was unwise for the Soviet Union to count on such a development, in trying to stop EDC Molotov at the Berlin conference acted as if he believed the disagreements among the Western Allies were so deep that no substantive Soviet inducements were necessary. He brought with him no new proposal on the German question, reiterating instead the same themes that Moscow had been pursuing for the past two years, with the single exception of suggesting that the prospective all-German government should not be bound by any treaties concluded by its Western or Eastern predecessors.[240] This was meant to eliminate particularly the EDC treaty, whose fifty-year period of validity Molotov described as constraining the hypothetical unified Germany's freedom of decision.[241]

In a conversation with Dulles on February 6, Molotov turned a deaf ear to his suggestion that the Soviet Union should feel more secure with West Germany in EDC rather than in NATO because the former provided more effective restrictions on the growth of the national

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236. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose*, p. 69.

237. Garthoff, *Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age,* pp. 67-69.

238. Hayter to Foreign Office, tel. no. 569, NS 1242/156, FO 371/116 742, PRO.

239. Dulles to North Atlantic Council, December 14, 1953, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 5, p. 463.

240. Soviet proposals on the German question, February 10, 1954, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, p. 77.

241. U. S. delegation at the Berlin conference to Secretary of State, February 2, 1954, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 948-50, at p. 950.

armed forces of its members.[242] Nor did the Soviet foreign minister react to the statement by his American counterpart that if EDC were not to be realized the United States would support West German entry into NATO. Ignoring either option, four days later he presented to the conference a substitute proposal for a European collective security treaty so preposterous that the Western representatives "laughed out loud."[243]

The laughable idea was that a fifty-year treaty would be signed by European states including not only the Soviet Union as a whole but—as followed from Molotov's counting 32 prospective signatories—its supposedly sovereign constituent "republics" as well while excluding the United States, except in the role of an observer, to be shared with China. While the treaty was to be open to all European states—as Moscow claimed EDC and NATO were not—it would leave unimpaired their other contractual obligations, except those that contravened its spirit—as NATO did according to the Soviet view.[244] U.S. presidential adviser C. D. Jackson was surprised that Molotov

> passed up the fairly easy opportunity to say that he could live with NATO but could not live with EDC. Had he done this, he would have undoubtedly scuttled EDC with the French and the Germans. Instead, he chose the most extreme position that could be taken, namely, that EDC must be abandoned, NATO must be dismantled, the U.S. must become nothing more than an observer in European affairs, and all possible regional defense alliances must be forbidden.[245]

Molotov hardly made his proposal more palatable by insisting four days later on its being merely intended as a "direct alternative to EDC" rather than an attempt to abolish NATO.[246]

More to the point, the Soviet foreign minister broadly hinted that his government might help end the Indochina war if only France rejected EDC.[247] By February 15 all he had conceded was his readiness to discuss upgrading the participation of the United States and Canada as full members rather than observers in the security pact he was proposing.[248] He ruminated about NATO's alleged similarity with the Anti-Comintern pact that he saw as having precipitated World War II.[249] In view of such posturing, British foreign secretary

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242. Memorandum on Dulles-Molotov conversation, February 6, 1954, *FRUS,* 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 984-88, at pp. 985-86.

243. C. D. Jackson to Marie McCrum, February 10, 1954, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 1032-33.

244. Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, pp. 37-39.

245. C. D. Jackson, "Post-Berlin Thoughts on the Current Soviet Psyche," February 22, 1954, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 1215-20, at p. 1218.

246. Summary of February 15 meeting, February 16, 1954, *FRUS,* 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, p. 1122.

247. Memorandum of conversation, by Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, January 29, 1954, *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, pp. 833-34.

248. Summary of February 15 meeting, February 16, 1954, *FRUS,* 1952-1954, vol. 7, pt. 1, p. 1122.

249. "The Soviet Union and the Safeguarding of European Security," February 10, 1954, in Viacheslav M.

Anthony Eden was wasting his time by trying as hard as he did to convince Molotov in private conversations that NATO's purpose was strictly defensive.[250]

In a secret speech on March 2 to the party central committee, Molotov expressed his confidence that NATO would fail because of the pressure exerted by Western public opinion for improved relations with the Soviet Union.[251] But he was not optimistic about the outcome of the Berlin conference, and had nothing to offer that would provide a suitable basis for discussion with the West. Instead, he had his assistants prepare a proposal for an "all-European security conference," calculated to obstruct the ratification of EDC by appealing particularly to its opponents in the French National Assembly.[252]

After the conference's inconclusive ending, the Soviet Union on March 31 made the bizarre proposal to give NATO a "truly defensive character" by opening discussions about its own entry into the alliance together with its European dependencies.[253] It repeated idea on July 27.[254] Inveighing against closed associations of states, Moscow pressed for the convocation of a conference, this time including the United States, to prepare a European collective security pact. Yet the Soviet insistence on the participation of China as an observer, besides the added demand that the treaty serve to promote economic cooperation and thus abolish Western restrictions on trade with the communist bloc, were ill-suited to convey the impression that the proposal was serious. In another two weeks the Soviet government supplemented it by suggesting that the preparation of the conference be entrusted to another meeting of foreign ministers—to be held in August and September when the crucial vote about the ratification of EDC was expected to take place in France.[255]

The rejection of EDC by the Paris National Assembly on August 30 could hardly be attributed to any subtlety of the campaign Moscow had been conducting to prevent the project from being realized.[256] The Soviet Union nevertheless praised the French for their "deeply patriotic action" and lionized Premier Pierre Mendès France as a hero.[257] It reiterated

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Molotov, *Statements at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of USSR, France, Great Britain and USA, January 25-February 18, 1954* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), pp. 93-104, at pp. 94-95.

250. Anthony Eden, *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden: Full Circle* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), pp. 73-85.

251. Speech by Molotov at the central committee plenum, March 2, 1954, 2/1/87, RGANI, copy in NSAF.

252. Records of the Soviet foreign ministry cited in Marie-Pierre Rey, "L'URSS et la sécurité européenne 1953-1956," *Communisme* 49/50 (1997): 121-135, at pp. 127-30.

253. Soviet note, March 31, 1954, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, pp. 39-43.

254. Soviet note, July 24, 1954, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, pp. 46-51.

255. *Department of State Bulletin*, September 20, 1954, p. 402.

256. Pierre Guillen, "The Role of the Soviet Union as a Factor in the French Debates on the European Defence Community,"*Journal of European Integration History* 2 , no. 1 (1996): 71-83.

257. Youri Roubinski, "Pierre Mendès France vu par l'URSS," in *Pierre Mendès France et le rôle de la France dans le monde*, ed. René Girault (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1991), pp. 171-76.

the proposal for a European collective security system that would replace military groupings as a way toward preserving the "destiny of France as a great power" rather than reducing it to "second-rate status within NATO." Warning that the battle had not yet been won, the statement exhorted the French not to be "fooled" by any attempt to integrate Germany into NATO.[258]

So severe was the setback to Western unity that Moscow did not find it necessary to mount a vigorous campaign against such an attempt until this alternative became unexpectedly topical because of its speedy endorsement by the London conference of NATO representatives in early October and the prospect of its imminent implementation as a result of the agreements set to be initialed in Paris later that month. Only on the day the agreements were signed on October 23 did Moscow try to undermine them by repeating its proposal for a meeting of foreign ministers that would prepare an all-European security conference.[259] Three days later, an editorial in the communist party daily *Neues Deutschland* raised the tantalizing prospect that Germany could be unified, with all foreign troops gone, "even before Christmas."[260]

No Western reply was sent while NATO's most important expansion since its founding were being put into effect. The provisions of the Paris agreements objectionable to the Soviet Union included more than the restoration of West Germany's sovereignty and its admission into NATO. In return for the German military contribution, the alliance also promised to extend its line of defense farther east and support Bonn's policy of reunification. Moreover, the United States formally committed itself to providing nuclear protection to its NATO allies and maintaining indefinitely sizable troops on the continent.

Moscow had reason to be surprised at the uncanny speed with which the Western alliance managed to overcome its crisis while devising a substitute for EDC potentially even more damaging to Soviet interests, setting a date—May 5, 1955—by which West Germany's integration into NATO was to be finalized. Faced with a timetable, the Kremlin leaders appeared divided about how best to proceed. On November 8 Malenkov showed a conciliatory face to Bohlen and his British colleague William Hayter, protesting Soviet desire for good relations with the West.[261] But the Soviet response to the October 23 Paris agreements, which set the timetable for West Germany's admission to NATO and fixed the target date, still followed and, if anything, reinforced the familiar Molotov line. On the same day the agreements were signed, Moscow reiterated its proposal for an all-European security

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258. Statement by Soviet foreign ministry, September 9, 1954, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, pp. 51-55.

259. Soviet note, October 23, 1954, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, pp. 96-101.

260. Paul Noack, *Das Scheitern der Europäischen Verteidigungsgemeinschaft: Entscheidungsprozesse vor und nach dem 30. August 1954* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1977), pp. 140-41.

261. Charles Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-69* (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. 369-70; William Hayter, *A Double Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974), p. 114.

conference, calling for a meeting of the four powers' foreign ministers to prepare it.[262] When the West ignored the proposal the Soviet government threatened to convene the conference anyway, which it subsequently did on November 29 in Moscow, with only its own allies attending.[263]

At the rump gathering, Czechoslovak Premier Viliam Široký elaborated on the need for special security arrangements between his country, Poland, and East Germany as those supposedly most directly endangered by the recent developments in the West.[264] Besides raising the prospect of taking organizational and other measures to bolster their defense, the conference participants declared that if West Germany established its own armed forces, East Germany must do the same.[265] The meeting was followed next month by a gathering in Prague of parliamentarians from the three "northern tier" countries, which on December 30 vainly made a last-minute appeal to the French National Assembly to desist from the ratification of the Paris agreements.[266]

Moscow's intention to bring into life German armed forces of any kind may seem difficult to reconcile with its pervasive fear of German militarism. Yet by 1955 the Soviet authorities had already created in East Germany a sizable force of militarized police, composed largely of repatriated prisoners of war who had been successfully indoctrinated during their captivity, although the force had not been sufficiently trusted to be organized for combat duty.[267] It was only the approaching West German rearmament that made it all but impossible, for political and prestige reasons, for Moscow to behave as if it did not trust "its" Germans as much as the Western powers trusted "theirs." Besides, the East German communists badly wanted to have a real army to bolster the credibility of their state.[268]

The necessity of finding a proper institutional framework for such an army added to the growing pressure on the Soviet leaders to make up their minds about the German question while the clock set into motion by the Paris agreements was ticking. At the secret January 1955 plenum of the party central committee, Malenkov was criticized for his close

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262. Note by Soviet government, October 23, 1954, Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, pp. 96-101.

263. Note by Soviet government, November 13, 1954, Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954,* pp. 58-61.

264. Speech by Široký, A 14631, MfAA, PAAA.

265. Declaration, December 2, 1954, Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954,* pp. 64-70.

266. Beate Ihme-Tuchel, *Das "nördliche Dreieck": Die Beziehungen zwischen der DDR, der Tschechoslowakei und Polen in den Jahren 1954 bis 1962* (Cologne: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1994), pp. 64-68.

267. Norman M. Naimark, *"To Know Everything and to Report Everything Worth Knowing": Building the East German Police State*, Cold War International History Project Working Paper no. 10, (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1994), p. 25.

268. Bruno Thoß, *Volksarmee schaffen—ohne Geschrei!: Studien zu den Anfängen einer verdeckten Aufrüstung in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1952* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994).

association until 1953 with the disgraced Beriia, who had indicated a preference for a neutral united Germany rather than the preservation of a communist regime in its eastern part.[269] During the subsequent maneuvering calculated to thwart West Germany's rearmament, Moscow had never brought up such a heretical notion, although the Soviet-sponsored conference of hand-picked parliamentarians and other public figures, convened in Warsaw in February 1955 to address the German question, came tantalizingly close to reviving it.

The gathering passed a resolution which not only commended the recently enunciated plan of British Prime Minister Anthony Eden for internationally supervised all-German elections—a recipe for voting the East Berlin regime out of existence—but also called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany as well as all Soviet troops from Poland. Indicating that different signals had been emanating from Moscow, the resolution appeared in the Polish press on February 9 but not in the Soviet media.[270] What did appear there on that day was the sensational news that Malenkov had been ousted from office.

Although the case against Malenkov concerned mainly his alleged mismanagement of domestic policy, the accusations against him had important implications for Soviet security policy. At the January plenum, Khrushchev inveighed against him for not being "a sufficiently mature politically and hard enough Bolshevik leader." Although Khrushchev did not question his honesty, Khrushchev found Malenkov lacking in character and backbone. Referring particularly to Churchill's desire for a summit, Khrushchev expressed the fear that "if he were to come, and would talk with Malenkov alone, then Malenkov would be scared and give up."[271] Given the Soviet habit of retrospectively exaggerating disgraced leaders' faults, none of this shows that Malenkov had actually promoted a policy diverging radically from that of the rest of the leadership, as his son would later assert,[272] yet some of his thinking on important issues was undoubtedly different.

Malenkov's party critics referred to his advocating a shift of emphasis from the traditional Stalinist priority of investment in heavy industry, deemed necessary to prepare the country for a looming military confrontation with the West, to the production of consumer goods, more affordable if the danger of war had diminished. The shift tallied with Malenkov's March 1954 statement about the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war, which prompted Molotov's rebuke at the plenum that "a communist should not speak about the 'destruction of world civilization' or about the 'destruction of the human race' but

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269. "Postanovlenie Plenuma TsK KPSS o tov. Malenkove, G.M." [The Decision of the Plenum Concerning Comrade G.M. Malenkov], 31 January 1955, 2/1/110/38-42, RGANI.

270. *Trybuna Ludu* [Warsaw], February 9, 1955. Cf. Michael Howard, *Disengagement in Europe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), p. 21.

271. "Postanovlenie Plenuma TsK KPSS o tov. Malenkove, G.M." [The Decision of the Plenum Concerning Comrade G.M. Malenkov], January 31, 1955, 2/1/110/38-42, RGANI.

272. Andrei Malenkov, *O moem ottse Georgii Malenkove* [My Father, Georgii Malenkov] (Moscow: Tekhnoekos, 1992).

prepare and mobilize all forces for the destruction of the bourgeoisie."[273] At the heart of the dispute were the proper assessment of the situation since Stalin's death and the question of what policy consequences should follow. The assessment concerned particularly the feasibility and desirability of demilitarizing Soviet policy, and with it the whole East-West relationship, at the very time NATO was poised to expand by incorporating West Germany while implementing the crucial decision to entrust the defense of Europe mainly to nuclear weapons.

[273.] L.A. Openkin, "Na istoricheskom perepute" [At the Crossroads of History], *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, 1990, no. 1: 109-10.

ATTEMPTED DEMILITARIZATION

The Making of the Warsaw Pact

The sequence of events that began with the rejection of the project, continued with its substitution by the Paris agreements providing for West German rearmament within a revived Western European Union, and culminated in West Germany's admission into NATO precipitated a radical revision of Soviet security policy, the magnitude of which can only now be appreciated from internal evidence.[274] It amounted to an attempt, spearheaded by Khrushchev, to demilitarize the East-West strategic relationship in a fashion that would allow Moscow to cut its losses, regain initiative by diplomatic means, and eventually turn tables on the West by redefining Europe's security environment to Soviet advantage. The abolition of NATO was the centerpiece of the scheme.

If the plans for NATO's buildup became a catalyst of Malenkov's downfall, their implementation bode ill for relations between the two other members of the Kremlin triumvirate, Khrushchev and Molotov, who had temporarily allied with each other against Malenkov to prevent any risky initiatives liable to prejudge a coherent new policy. In contrast to Molotov, Khrushchev struck Ambassador Hayter as "startlingly ignorant of foreign affairs . . . ; [but] as soon as he applied his powerful intelligence and encyclopedic memory to foreign affairs he mastered them completely."[275] This is what Khrushchev, relying on support from the figurehead new premier Marshal Nikolai Bulganin and his successor as defense minister, Zhukov, proceeded doing after Molotov's attempted strategy to prevent the Western alliance from growing had proved counterproductive.

Coinciding with the ouster of Malenkov, the Soviet diplomatic offensive in early 1955 thus started with Molotov and Khrushchev cooperating. Contemporaries saw Molotov's keynote speech on February 8 as marking a hardening of Soviet policy. It was indeed primarily designed to obstruct the ratification of the Paris agreements. He noted the possibility of better relations with Yugoslavia, although he attributed it—not without a reason—to the more forthcoming attitude of the Belgrade government rather than to any revision of Soviet policy. Only his suggestion about the possibility of proceeding toward the signing of the long-stalled State Treaty with Austria pointed potentially, though not unequivocally, in a new direction.

The Austrian initiative was initially launched not so much to promote a wider détente as to cut Moscow's looming losses in Central Europe as a result of the likely expansion of the West's ascendant defense system beyond Germany into the Western-occupied bulk of Austria.[276] It characteristically started with Molotov's approaching Austrian ambassador to

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[274.] Analysis of the Paris agreements by Gromyko, October 28, 1954, Sekr. Min./13a/28/27/20-39, AVPRF.

[275.] Hayter, *A Double Life*, pp. 104 and 114.

[276.] Günter Bischof, "Österreich—ein 'geheimer Verbündeter' des Westens? Wirtschafts- und sicherheits-politische Fragen der Integration aus der Sicht der USA," in *Österreich und die europäische Integration, 1945-1993* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1993), pp. 425-50).

Moscow Norbert Bischoff, known for his pro-Soviet disposition, with an offer of negotiations intended to bypass the Western allies and present them with a *fait accompli*. Wary Westerners suspected a ploy to disrupt NATO's lines of communication from Germany through Austria to Italy.[277] Yet for Moscow this was only a secondary benefit of the primary goal of preventing Austria's "Anschluß" with Germany—the code word for its probable integration into the ascendant Western alliance that West Germany was poised to dominate. It was the political rather that military consequences of its forthcoming NATO membership that mattered most at a time when the Soviet Union—acting on Khrushchev's, not Molotov's, conviction that the peril of war had substantially receded—embarked on a demilitarization of the East-West conflict.

No evidence from the Soviet side supports the retrospective speculation by authors unfamiliar with Russian-language sources that Moscow actually welcomed the prospect of Germany's becoming part of NATO because of the safeguards that U.S. control of the alliance would presumably provide against the threat West German militarism. In the opinion of historian Marc Trachtenberg, the Soviet Union Soviets "almost certainly" would have accepted "a stable peace based on the system set up by the Paris accords" and acquiesced in a "NATO system" that would ensure permanent American military presence in Western Europe to contain the German threat. A deal to that effect was allegedly thwarted by Washington's misguided desire to withdraw its troops from the Continent and turn over its defense to nuclear weapons controlled by Europeans, including West Germans.[278] Not only are such inferences without factual foundation but they also misconstrue the Soviet concern about Germany, which by this time concerned its political ascendancy rather than any potential military threat. Khrushchev, in particular, did not share Stalin's obsession with the phantom German militarism although he often found it expedient to pretend otherwise.

The Soviet initiative on Austria had wider implications if—as was increasingly likely—the Paris agreements were ratified and the Soviet Union had to acquiesce in the unattractive prospect of a rearmed West Germany within growing NATO. On these wider implications, Molotov and Khrushchev came to differ. The former insisted that Moscow should reserve itself the right to reintroduce troops into Austria if required by Soviet security—as it had tried to argue in regard to Poland when Hitler's aggression was looming in 1939. In contrast, Khrushchev pointedly asked Molotov whether he wanted war, and if not,

> then what do you want to accomplish having our troops stay in Vienna? If you are for war then it would be right to stay in Austria. It is a strategic area, and only a fool would give up a strategic area if he is getting ready to go to war. If we are against war we have to leave.[279]

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277. P. H. Vigor, *The Soviet View of War, Peace and Neutrality* (London: Routledge, 1975), pp. 182-83.

278. Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace*, pp. 140-200, quote on pp. 140-41. On alleged Soviet interest in securing U.S. military presence in Europe, see also Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, *Stalin's Cold War: Soviet Strategies in Europe, 1943 to 1956* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

279. Record of the CPSU central committee plenum, July 12, 1955, 2/1/176/282-95, RGANI, copy at NSAF. Khrushchev rendered his statement almost verbatim in his conversation with U.S. vice president Richard Nixon on July 26, 1959, *FRUS*, 1958-60, vol. 10, pt. 1, p. 366.

Molotov's reluctant acceptance of Khrushchev's demand for the permanent withdrawal of Soviet forces from Austria at the beginning of April marked the turning point toward détente.[280] Although it occurred out of public sight, already by mid-March astute observers detected an incipient change of Soviet policy. We now know that at this time the Moscow party presidium had also decided to alter the rigid position of Molotov's representatives that blocked progress in the UN disarmament commission in London.[281] Instead of insisting upon proportional cuts disadvantageous to the West, they were subsequently instructed to seek substantial reductions of conventional forces, as proposed by the Western powers earlier, and the prohibition of nuclear weapons as well. Earlier that month, the Central Intelligence Agency reported that Soviet military attachés from the European capitals had been summoned to Moscow—a move which its director Allen W. Dulles rightly guessed foreshadowed the formation of a Soviet-run military alliance.[282]

Already on the last day of 1955 Molotov's assistants had prepared drafts of a multilateral alliance as well as a mutual defense treaty between the Soviet Union and East Germany.[283] For the first time since the onset of the Cold War, the Soviet groping for a response to NATO's forthcoming enlargement provided the East Europeans with an opportunity to make a modest input into Moscow's policy in accordance with their own interests. The East Germans, supported by the Czechoslovaks, advocated a tripartite military arrangement between their two countries and Poland—a small grouping that would maximize the role of East Germany's nascent army. Alternatively, the Poles championed a collective defense treaty linking all of the Soviet allies with Moscow in a larger alliance that would make the Polish army rank second only to the Soviet one and integrate more tightly the East German military forces.[284] By the end of February, the latter option won the Kremlin's favor, as shown also in the choice of Warsaw for the alliance's inaugural meeting. Molotov's assistants the forwarded the text of the proposed pact to him for further action while the draft treaty with East Germany was shelved.[285]

While the share of Molotov's foreign ministry in the project had so far consisted mainly the drafting of the appropriate texts, Khrushchev positioned himself for its later political exploitation. In sending the draft of the treaty to the party secretaries of the prospective

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280. Gerald Stourzh, *Um Einheit und Freiheit: Staastvertrag, Neutralität und das Ende der Ost-West-Besetzung Österreichs, 1945-1955* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1998), pp. 405-406, and critique in Vojtech Mastny, "The Soviet Godfathers of Austrian Neutrality," in *Neutrality in Austria*, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Ruth Wodak (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2001), pp. 240-50.

281. Record of party plenum, July 9, 1955, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10 (1998): 39-40.

282. Memorandum of discussion at the 239th meeting of the National Security Council, March 3, 1955, *FRUS,* 1955-1957, vol. 24, p. 29.

283. Drafts by Gromyko, Zorin, and Semenov, December 31, 1954, 06/14/12/1/1-11, AVPRF.

284. Ihme-Tuchel, *Das "nördliche Dreieck,"* pp. 75-80.

285. Gromyko and Semenov to Molotov, February 19, 1955, 06/14/54/4/1-8, AVPRF.

signatory states on March 4, he justified the proposed alliance by alluding to the all but certain ratification of the Paris agreements.[286] But beyond that, referring to the Soviet-sponsored security conference in Moscow the preceding December, he described the forthcoming meeting in Warsaw as "The Second Conference of European Countries for the Preservation of Peace and Security in Europe." The description suggested that more was intended to be accomplished there than a mere formalization of military ties within the Soviet bloc.

Moscow's intention to create an Eastern counterpart of NATO became public knowledge on March 21, when a Soviet press statement to that effect was issued shortly before the crucial vote in the French Senate that would conclude the process of ratification of the Paris agreements.[287] The statement mentioned recent consultations among the participants in the December Moscow conference, although nothing more was involved than timid comments on the Soviet draft.[288] As an inducement for anti-NATO opposition in West Germany, the East Germans "cautiously" proposed to Soviet ambassador Georgii M. Pushkin a declaration that the pact would be invalidated in case of Germany's unification—an idea approved by Molotov as "expedient."[289] But no such approval was given to the Polish suggestion that a demand for the removal of US bases in western Europe be included in the treaty's preamble—a demand liable to weaken the justification of Soviet military presence in Europe.[290]

On April 1, the Soviet party central committee decided to convene the Warsaw conference to approve the treaty three weeks later. Only at this late stage did it bring in the military, instructing Zhukov at a very short notice to draft a document on the establishment of the alliance's unified command.[291] The defense minister delivered the text on the 18th, by which time the date of the gathering had been postponed until mid-May. Four days later, Polish premier Józef Cyrankiewicz was in Moscow to receive instructions about how to organize the event.[292]

For his part, Khrushchev during a visit to Poland in the same month publicly discounted the military significance of the prospective alliance, dwelling instead on the desirability of a European collective security organization, which he insisted would provide the necessary

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286. Soviet party central committee to Czechoslovak party central committee, 4 March 1955, AÚV KSČ, 62/2/36/48, SÚA; Khrushchev to Ulbricht, March 5, 1955, ZPA J IV 2/202-244 Bd 1, SAPMO-BA.

287. *Pravda*, March 21. 1955.

288. The lack of evidence of any formal consultations is noted in the East German foreign ministry dossier, A 14630, pp. 31-34, MfAA, PAAA.

289. Molotov to Soviet party central committee, May 9, 1955, 06/14/54/4/99, AVPRF.

290. Decision by Soviet party central committee, April 1, 1955, 06/14/54/4/39, AVPRF.

291. Ibid.

292. Report of April 22, 1955, 06/14/54/4/88, AVPRF.

safeguards against German aggression.[293] His inclusion of the United States in such an organization made it appear more attractive than the previous variations designed by Molotov. By this time the last hurdle on the way to the implementation of the Paris agreements had been overcome, thus setting the stage for the admission of West Germany into NATO on May 5, as well as for Moscow's countermeasures. These began with the formal renunciation of its obsolete World War II alliances with France and Great Britain.[294]

More importantly, on May 10 the Soviet Union submitted in London its most sweeping disarmament project so far.[295] The document, prepared at Khrushchev's initiative by the foreign ministry despite obstruction by Molotov's aide Iakov Malik,[296] adopted several of the Western—though more British and French than American—positions that Moscow had previously ruled out as unacceptable, notably the limitation of conventional forces by means of numerical ceilings rather than proportional cuts. It also advanced new ideas, such as a moratorium on nuclear tests starting in 1956 and the evacuation of all foreign troops from Germany. According to one of the authors of the proposal, A. A. Roshchin, Moscow expected a positive response, and was disappointed when Washington, still regarding rearmament rather than disarmament as the top priority, raised obstacles to prevent an agreement.[297] It is "not in the security interests of the United States," the Joint Chiefs of Staff insisted, "to have any disarmament for the foreseeable future." Since the Soviet Union's position was weakening, they maintained, "We should accordingly hold its feet to the fire . . . [and better continue the] arms race than to enter into an agreement with the Soviets."[298]

The disarmament initiative, coinciding with the Western invitation to hold a four-power summit long desired by Moscow,[299] was a prelude to the Warsaw meeting where the signing of the new military pact was calculated to provide an additional incentive for the West to reconsider the strategic situation in Europe. The Soviet-furnished text, adopted at the

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293. *Pravda*, April 21, 1955.

294. Soviet note to British government, December20, 1954, in Folliot, *Documents on International Affairs 1954*, pp. 212-15; *Pravda*, May 7, 1955.

295. "Proposal by the Soviet Government on the Reduction of Armaments, the Prohibition of Atomic Weapons and the Elimination of the Threat of a New War," May 10, 1955, US Department of State, *Documents on Disarmament, 1945-1959*, vol. 1 (Washington: US Department of State, 1960), pp. 456-67.

296. Record of the CPSU central committee plenum, 9 July 1955, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10 (1998): 39-40.

297. A.A. Roshchin, "Gody obnovleniia, nadezd i razocharovanii (1953-1959 gg.)" [The Years of Renewal, Hopes, and Disappointments] *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1988, no. 5: 127-47, at p. 131.

298. Quoted in Richard H. Immerman, "`Trust the Lord but Keep the Powder Dry': American Policy Aims at Geneva," in *Cold War Respite: The Geneva Summit of 1955*, ed. Günter Bischof and Saki Dockrill (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, forthcoming 2000).

299. Tripartite note to the Soviet Union, 10 May 1955, in US Department of State, *The Geneva Conference of Heads of Government, July 18-23, 1955* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 6-7.

gathering without even the semblance of a discussion,[300] bore similarities to the NATO treaty. The similarities included declaration by the signatories of their intent to refrain from the use or threat of force, the almost identical description of the mutual consultations they vowed to conduct in case of an enemy attack, their explicit—if qualified—pledge to assist each other against such an attack by "all the means deemed necessary," and the compatibility of their treaty with any of their other obligations. Less crucial, but still important, affinities between the two treaties concerned their invoking the principles of the UN Charter, their twenty-year validity, and their provisions for accession by additional countries—made easier in the Warsaw than the NATO document.[301]

The dissimilarities concerned matters of less practical importance but more revealing of the Warsaw treaty's main purposes. Unlike NATO's commitment to uphold the common values and institutions of its members, the Soviet-made alliance merely affirmed such platitudes as the promotion of peace and friendship, besides advancement of economic and cultural relations. More to the point, the Warsaw document dwelt on the desirability of establishing in Europe a collective security system, reducing armaments, and banning weapons of mass destruction—all leitmotifs of Soviet diplomacy at the time. Yet, apart from the proclamation of the new alliance, hardly anything was done to build it up—as NATO had so feverishly tried to do at the time of its creation before.

By modeling the Warsaw Pact on NATO but not proceeding to give it substance, Khrushchev would find it that much easier to discard what Western officials rightly perceived as a "cardboard castle"[302] if, by doing so, he could attain their consent to its replacement by the collective security system he wanted. Following on the dissolution of the phantom Eastern alliance along with the real Western one while leaving Moscow's network of bilateral military treaties with its dependencies intact, such a system would have allowed the Soviet Union as its strongest member to become the arbiter of European security.

According to the Russian text of the Warsaw treaty, each signatory state pledged to consult with others, and then render such assistance as "it may consider necessary." In the German version of the text, however, the pronoun used was "they," thus implying a decision to be made collectively rather than individually.[303] Commenting on the formulation, ostensibly denying the East Germans the right to make independent decisions, party chief Walter Ulbricht noted the discrepancy, yet prudently withheld objection.[304] He also

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300. "Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance," May 14, 1955, in *Documents on International Affairs 1955*, ed. Noble Frankland (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 193-97.

301. The respective texts, often reprinted, can be found, for example, in *NATO: Basic Documents* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, Brussels, 1989), pp. 10-13, and Frankland, *Documents on International Affairs 1955*, pp. 193-97, as well as on www.isn.ethz.ch/php, "Collections."

302. Quoted in Spencer, "Alliance Perceptions of the Soviet Threat," p. 19.

303. The German text is printed and analyzed in Boris Meissner, *Der Warschauer Pakt: Dokumenten-sammlung* (Cologne: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1962), pp. 97-101 and 40-48.

304. Ulbricht to Khrushchev, March 9, 1955, ZPA, J IV 2/202-244 Bd 1, SAPMO-BA.

interpreted the provision in the treaty that left it open for other states to join "irrespective of their social and state system" as meaning that such additional states would not necessarily be entitled to be defended.

In view of the Soviet drive for the neutralization of Austria and reconciliation with Yugoslavia, the formula conveyed Khrushchev's innovative idea, alien to Molotov's Stalinist mind, that nonaligned states could be won over to the Soviet side as political rather than military allies. For other reasons as well, the ostensibly military pact qualified as primarily a political document. Its call for "the strengthening of economic and cultural relations" among its signatories—shorthand for their organizational and ideological streamlining—assumed particular significance in anticipation of the conclusion on the next day of the state treaty with Austria, whose enviable neutrality some of the Soviet allies might otherwise be tempted to regard as an attractive example to emulate.

Stage-managed by Moscow, the Warsaw conference featured ritualistic "discussion," during which amendments of secondary importance were offered, most probably after having been previously commissioned by the Soviet organizers.[305] All the documents, prepared by them in advance, were subsequently published, except the one concerning the troop contingents to be contributed to the alliance by its different members. After a copy had been sent to the party secretaries less than two weeks earlier,[306] the particulars were now simply announced by Zhukov at a secret meeting without even a pretense of a discussion. Polish colonel Tadeusz Pióro, who took the record, later recalled how it had been subsequently whittled down by the Soviet managers to a meaningless one-page document, which left the military dimensions of the alliance entirely at Moscow's discretion.[307] All considered, the launching of the Warsaw Pact by Stalin's successors was even more thoroughly orchestrated than the creation of the Cominform in 1947 had been by the master himself.

In his *tour d'horizon* presented to the Soviet allies assembled in Warsaw, Khrushchev's mouthpiece Bulganin explained that the international situation resulting from the Paris agreements required greater coordination than was possible under the existing system of bilateral treaties, but he did not specify military coordination. He emphasized that the new alliance did not mean the end of efforts to achieve an all-European security pact.[308] Indeed, its conclusion became Khrushchev's foremost priority at his approaching summit with the Western leaders, scheduled to meet in Geneva on July 18.

For a New European Security System

Once West Germany entered NATO, leaving the Soviet Union little choice but to acquiesce, Khrushchev went on the offensive to create favorable conditions for pursuing at

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[305.] Stenographic record of meeting, May 12, 1955, 0447/1/1/1, AVPRF.

[306.] Khrushchev to Ulbricht, May 2, 1955, ZPA, J IV 2/202-244 Bd 1, SAPMO-BA.

[307.] Pióro, *Armia ze skazą,* pp. 210-13; copy of the record provided by Gen. Pióro.

[308.] Speech by Bulganin, May 11, 1955, ZPA, NL 90/461, SAPMO-BA.

Geneva a radical plan for the alteration of Europe's security environment. On the last day of the Warsaw conference, he stunned the world with the news of his forthcoming visit to Yugoslavia, an important goal of which was which was to foreclose any possibility of Belgrade's inclusion in the Western defense system.[309] The visit then took place on May 26-June 2, and was praised by the leader of neighboring Bulgaria, V'lko Chervenkov, for having "neutralized" the 40 Yugoslav divisions by denying them to NATO.[310] On June 7 he announced the Soviet intention to sign with East Germany a treaty which would formally give it a sovereign status similar to that of West Germany and expressed willingness to establish diplomatic relations with the Bonn government, wooing it with the prospect of unspecified concessions.[311] Khrushchev also seized the initiative in the Third World, paying highly successful state visits to India and Burma.

Because of the risks involved, such a Cold War of movement was an anathema to the Cold war of positions preferred by Molotov. The otherwise ambivalent outcome of Khrushchev's trip to Belgrade—where the reconciliation with Tito had been achieved at the price of legitimizing his interference in Eastern Europe[312]—and the prospect of ending the hostile isolation of West Germany by establishing diplomatic dies with it sharpened disagreements in the Kremlin. At the contentious secret meeting of the party central committee at the beginning of July, Khrushchev and Molotov clashed over the policies toward Austria and Yugoslavia, the latter of which Khrushchev reportedly favored admitting into the .[313] This would have made little military sense but would have added pressure on the West to take his drive for the reorganization of European security more seriously.

As the Cold War rivals positioned themselves for the summit, much depended on how strong each side perceived itself to be and how strong it was perceived by the other. The United States interpreted Soviet concessions on Austria as a sign of weakness. Brushing aside the creation of the as mere posturing, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles came to the conclusion "that we are now confronting a real opportunity . . . for a rollback of Soviet power. Such a rollback might leave the present satellite states in a status not unlike that of Finland. . . . The big idea is to get the Russians out of the satellite states and to provide these states with a real sense of their freedom. Now for the first time this is in the realm of possibility."[314]

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309. Egorova, "Evropeiskaia bezopasnost," p. 73.

310. Speech by Chervenkov to Bulgarian politburo, June 6, 1955, 1-B/7/1764/1-23, at p. 7, CDA.

311. Soviet note, June 7, 1955, in Frankland, *Documents on International Affairs 1955*, pp. 245-48.

312. *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), pp. 379-82.

313. Testimony by Seweryn Bialer about the July 1955 plenum of the Soviet party central committee, in US Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Scope of Soviet Activity in the United States*, part 29, session of June 8, 1956 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1957), pp. 1590-91.

314. Memorandum on discussion at the 249th meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, May 19, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 182-89, at p. 184.

In Dulles's estimate, the Soviets, having effected a "complete alteration of their policy,"[315] would be unable to proceed with the same energy and imagination as before. He thought "Khrushchev had power but impressed him as a man who talked without thinking [and] . . . Molotov he felt was in a weakened and uneasy position. He had been impressed by his lack of sure-footedness at Vienna as compared to past occasions."[316] Such disdainful American assessments did not augur well for the forthcoming Geneva summit, but neither did the Soviet attitudes.

Khrushchev later described in his memoirs how painfully aware he had been of his country's backwardness, even comparing the clumsy Soviet aircraft on which he traveled to Geneva with the fancier machines flown by his capitalist counterparts.[317] Together with Bulganin, he therefore all the more implored the Western leaders not to make the mistake of thinking the Soviet Union was weak.[318] This was nevertheless the conclusion they reached, although they condescendingly pretended how much they were impressed by Soviet strength. But neither were they themselves as self-confident as they tried to appear; even Dulles, on his way to the summit, privately confessed his being "terribly worried about this Geneva conference"[319] because of the disposition of the NATO allies.

The secretary of state was "deathly afraid our allies might not come up to scratch" and that even Eisenhower might succumb to Russian smiles—particularly those of his wartime comrade-in-arms, Zhukov—and "upset the apple cart." Dulles was exasperated with the French and British willingness to take the seriously. French Prime Minister Edgar Faure found "attractive the idea to establish a similarity between the Western bloc and the Warsaw organization and consider them as organizations of the same type and seek contracts between them."[320] And his British colleague, deluding himself that the Russians were eager to bolster his country's status by treating it as a bridge between the two superpowers,[321] seemed to be hopelessly infatuated with anything that could be labeled "Eden Plan," such as the establishment of a demilitarized strip in central Europe through some "harmonization" between NATO and the Warsaw alliance.[322]

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315. Statement at the same meeting, quoted in Ronald W. Pruessen, "Beyond the Cold War—Again: 1955 and the 1990s," *Political Science Quarterly* 108 (1993): 59-84, at p. 66.

316. Memorandum of Dulles-Adenauer conversation, Washington, June 13, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 224-28, at p. 226.

317. *Khrushchev Remembers*, p. 395.

318. Memorandum of conversations at President's dinner, Geneva, July 18, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 372-78.

319. C.D. Jackson Log Entry, July 19, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 301-305, at pp. 301-302.

320. Memorandum on conversation at tripartite luncheon, Geneva, July 17, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 343-54, at p. 349.

321. Antonio Varsori, "Le gouvernement Eden et l'Union soviétique (1955-1956): de l'espoir à la dés-illusion," *Relations internationales* 71 (1992): 273-98, at p. 284.

322. C.D. Jackson Log Entry, July 19, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-57, vol. 5, pp. 301-305, at p. 301, and Delegation at

To prevent anything of that sort, at the Paris tripartite meeting preparatory to the summit Dulles sought to impress upon America's allies that the alliance was nothing but "a device whereby the Soviet Union projected its frontiers into the center of Europe." He insisted that "the West should not do anything that would sanctify or consolidate a situation which he felt was abnormal and must change before the peace could be consolidated." Hence it was appropriate to mention "the organization as little as possible" lest it be given "an appearance of a real security system."[323]

Once in Geneva, each side was worried about its own weakness while exaggerating the readiness of the other to make concessions out of weakness, and tried to test its limits by tabling patently unrealistic proposals. The United States challenged the Soviets to allow in Eastern Europe changes that would have amounted to surrendering their control over the region and proposed disarmament measures, particularly Eisenhower's "open skies" plan, that would have spelled the end of the closed Soviet society.[324] For their part, the Soviets reiterated their May 10 disarmament proposal (as if Washington had not made its incompatibility with US security requirements abundantly clear) and pressed their idea of a European collective security system (as if NATO could be reasonably expected to collaborate on its own demise after it had recently so successfully enlarged itself).

US deputy secretary of defense Robert B. Anderson and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Arthur W. Radford agreed in their estimate that all the Soviets were "willing to concede is the superficial fruits of their own recent efforts such as the Warsaw Treaty to counter such organizations as the North Atlantic Treaty and the Paris accords."[325] Yet the amendments Moscow offered to make its proposals more attractive were suggestive of a belief that the West could be compelled to entertain them. They envisaged advancing in steps: at first NATO and the Warsaw Pact would remain in place, later they would be dissolved, and finally all foreign troops would leave Europe.[326] At variance with Molotov's earlier proposals and in accordance with Khrushchev's April speech in Poland, the prospective collective security system was to include the United States (though not Canada) as a full member rather than mere observer.

The Soviet draft of a "General European Treaty on Collective Security in Europe," presented to the Geneva conference on July 20,[327] revealed most clearly the Warsaw Pact's

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the Tripartite Foreign Ministers Meeting to Department of State, July 15, 1955, *ibid.*, pp. 319-21, at p. 320.

323. Memorandum on conversation at tripartite luncheon, Geneva, July 17, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 343-54, at p. 349.

324. Rostow, *Open Skies: Eisenhower's Proposal of July 21, 1955* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

325. Anderson and Radford to Secretary of State, Paris, July 19, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 384-86, at p. 385.

326. Statement by Bulganin at Geneva, July 18, 1955, in US Department of State, *The Geneva Conference*, pp. 35-43.

327. "General European Treaty on Collective Security in Europe," July 20, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp.

original purpose as a blueprint for the continent's new security system. Many provisions of the new document were identical or built upon the Warsaw model. The identical ones included the principle of open admission, the prohibition of any treaty contrary to the present one (but also the preservation of the signatories' obligations under treaties entered into previously), the promotion of economic and cultural cooperation, and the establishment of a political consultative committee (with terms of reference yet to be specified) as well as a "military consultative organ." Consistent with but reaching beyond the Warsaw text were passages in the Geneva document providing for a mutual pledge against the use of force or the threat of force, the freezing of the current troop and armaments levels in preparation for their reduction, and consultation in case of an armed attack on any of the signatories.

The consultation clause was more nebulous than in the Warsaw Pact. Its stated goal was merely determining the procedure to be used in the collective effort to preserve peace, thus making the proposed treaty all but useless as an instrument for repelling aggression. Evidently its Soviet architects did not envisage it to be tested in a crisis but rather used for altering the East-West balance in a fashion that would not only make Moscow more secure but also allow it to position itself as the arbiter of European security.

In trying to encourage an open-ended and wide-ranging discussion, Soviet representatives in Geneva further sought the conclusion of a "treaty between groupings of states now in existence in Europe,"[328] besides the reduction of conventional forces and gradual elimination of nuclear arms. In the meantime, the signatories were to pledge not to use force against one another and, "as one of the first measures, "to halt nuclear testing.[329] Bulganin described his government's priorities as being, in descending order, European security, disarmament, and the German question.[330] Since this was the reverse order of the American priorities, no substantive discussion about security ensued. Before the conference ended, the heads of state therefore directed their foreign ministers to tackle the unresolved issues at another meeting later.

Later on, both Khrushchev and his Western partners would retrospectively deprecate the summit. According to Khrushchev's sneering commentary, Bulganin had been lazy and not properly prepared, Faure ineffective, Eden bright but indecisive, and Eisenhower not up to the task either, behaving "not as a maker of policy but as an executor of Mr. Dulles's policies."[331] Yet at the time most estimates of Geneva were more favorable. Dulles thought

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328. US Delegation at the Geneva conference to Department of State, July 21, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 447-48.

329. Proposal of the Soviet delegation, July 21, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 519-20, at p. 520.

330. Record of seventh plenary session at Geneva, July 23, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 503-12, at p. 504.

331. Record of Khrushchev-Humphrey conversation on December 1, 1958, dated December 9, 1958, USSR 1958, Records of the Policy Planning Staff, 1957-1961, Box 145, RG-59, NARA; record of Khrushchev-Harriman conversation on June 13, 1959, dated June26, 1959, *FRUS*, 1958-1960, vol. 10, pt. 1, pp. 269-81, at p. 276.

its outcome to be "very much on the plus side for the West," even musing that "we might get [German] unification in the next two years."[332] But Khrushchev concluded the very opposite: in his view, the conference was a success because it would presumably not allow Adenauer to sleep well.[333] Choosing to believe what they wanted to believe, both sides showed how far apart their mutual understanding of each other was. Most importantly, as Khrushchev later summed up in his memoirs, the summit convinced him that "there was no prewar situation, for our enemies were as much afraid of us as we were of them."[334]

"In connection with the change of the international situation following the Geneva conference," Khrushchev in mid-August directed Moscow's Eastern European allies to reduce the size of their expected troop contingents for the Warsaw Pact and announced the reduction of the Soviet Union's own forces by 640,000 men before the end of the year.[335] He thus signaled a reluctance to vigorously pursue the building of the alliance despite the appointment later that month of its Soviet supreme commander and Soviet chief of staff, followed by the promulgation of a secret statute equipping the top officer with sweeping powers.[336] This later caused much resentment among the alliance's subordinate members, but otherwise bore scant relevance to Khrushchev's grand design for European security.[337]

Pending the uncertain outcome of the design, the immediate utility of the Warsaw Pact pertained to the nascent East German army. Attesting to its undecided status at the time the treaty was concluded, alone among the signatories the GDR's contribution was left open. But the outcome of Geneva encouraged Khrushchev to press forward his concept of two German states, which required giving the Eastern one the appropriate trappings of sovereignty. On his way home from the summit, he stopped in Berlin to publicly vow not to accept any German settlement at the expense the communist state.[338] At the same time, over Molotov's misgivings, Khrushchev took the lead in normalizing relations with West Germany during the September visit of its chancellor Konrad Adenauer to Moscow.

[332.] Minutes of National Security Council meeting, July 28, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, p. 531.

[333.] Khrushchev's statement at reception by East German government in Berlin, July 24, 1955, KC PZPR 2630/2-8, AAN.

334. "Memuary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva" [Memoirs of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev], *Voprosy istorii*, 1992, no. 8-9: 69-106, at p. 76.

[335.] Khrushchev to Bierut, August 12, 1955, KC PZPR 2661/3, AAN; *Izvestiia*, August 13, 1955.

[336.] "Polozheniie ob obedinennom komandovanii vooruzhennykh sil gosudarstv-uchastnikov Varshavskogo soveshchaniia" [Statute of the Unified Command of the States Participating in the Warsaw Conference], Khrushchev to Bierut, September 7, 1955, KC PZPR 2661/2, 16-19, AAN. For a facsimile and an English translation, see www.isn.ethz.ch/php, "Collections."

[337.] Mastny, "`We Are in a Bind'," pp. 23-43.

[338.] *Pravda*, July 27, 1955.

The Soviet Union cemented the division of Germany by formally bestowing sovereignty on the German Democratic Republic on September 20.[339] The treaty substituted for a bilateral alliance between the two countries, the absence of which had so far distinguished East Germany from Moscow's other European dependencies. It advanced military collaboration by entrusting the protection of the country's boundaries to East German border troops.[340] Ulbricht promptly requested Soviet weapons for his incipient army, supplementing them with starting the GDR's own production of small arms.[341]

Khrushchev harbored no illusions about the success of the foreign ministers conference, nor could any be reasonably expected given the Soviet desiderata he mentioned to the Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson during the latter's visit to Moscow on October 12.[342] Dismissing the suggestion of Western security guarantees for the Soviet Union in return for German unification as humiliating, Khrushchev insisted that "you should let us into NATO—we have been knocking at the door for two years." Thus, in his opinion, the Soviet Union would at least be put on equal footing with NATO's other members rather than being dependent for its security on the West's goodwill. He said he might consider the guarantees if the number of the countries underwriting them were increased to include both Germanys, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Canada, and perhaps others—a scaled-down version of the collective security pact.

When the foreign ministers reconvened in Geneva in October, Molotov, by then unmistakably on his way out of power, did not press the Soviet cause very hard. He resubmitted Moscow's already rejected proposals for treaties on European security and the creation of a joint council of the two German states.[343] Otherwise the conference marked time by pointlessly debating such hypothetical questions as what would happen if a reunited Germany joined NATO or the Warsaw Pact.[344] At the end Molotov attempted to slip in a document summing up in vague items the subjects on which agreement had supposedly been reached, but was corrected by Dulles that this was in fact not the case. The conference disbanded without accomplishing anything. By then Khrushchev, now in full command of Soviet foreign policy, was pursuing his goal of unsettling NATO by other means.

Disengaging the Enemy

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339. Soviet-East German treaty, September 20, 1955, Frankland, *Documents on International Affairs 1955*, pp. 200-202.

340. "Aktennotiz," September 20, 1955, Strausb. AZN 32437, BA-MA.

341. Ulbricht to Bulganin, December 6, 1955, ZPA, J IV 2/202-244 Bd 1, SAPMO-BA.

342. Lester B. Pearson, *Memoirs 1948-1957: The International Years* (London: Golancz, 1974), pp. 206-207.

343. Soviet draft treaty on security in Europe, October 31, 1955, Frankland, *Documents on International Affairs 1955*, pp. 53-55.

344. *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. 5, pp. 633-802.

Outside of the Soviet bloc, Yugoslavia alone supported Moscow's concept of a European security treaty. On July 25 Tito declared in an interview that the members of the Balkan pact, which tied his country with Greece and Turkey, no longer faced a threat to themselves. He went on to predict that "when collective security is established, this pact will also lose its military character, as will be the case with the other pacts," namely, the Warsaw Pact and NATO."[345] Sensing trouble brewing between his two Balkan allies, he no sooner distanced himself from them than the Greek-Turkish conflict in Cyprus touched off bloody anti-Greek riots in Istanbul, rocking NATO's fragile southern flank.[346]

The encouragement Moscow gave to the Yugoslav policy of nonalignment was widely regarded as part of a Soviet scheme to create in Europe an area of disengagement, comprising countries from which foreign troops would have been withdrawn. Soon after Khrushchev's trip to Belgrade, rumors about the possible withdrawal of Soviet troops in Romania spread in Western Europe.[347] In view of the diminished tension in the region, the possibility was indeed being discussed as desirable in the Bucharest politburo but, no doubt at Moscow's behest, was then publicly denied on August 12 by party chief Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej as not topical unless foreign troops in NATO countries were ready to leave, too. Yet during Khrushchev's visit to Romania later that month, defense minister Emil Bodnăraş again raised the issue with him.[348]

At first, the Soviet leader was appalled at the suggestion, and left the country in anger. Afterward, however, he came to see merit in the Romanian argument that, since the country had no capitalist neighbors that could attack it, the pullout would be a telling demonstration of Soviet confidence in the strength of its communist system.[349] In November, Khrushchev surprised Bondăraş by telling him that we have "decided to withdraw the Soviet troops from Romania's territory.[350] The proposal for a nonaggression treaty between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which Moscow made through the alliance's political consultative committee at its inaugural meeting on January 28, 1956, could be seen as an indication of Soviet readiness to proceed with the withdrawal. But Khrushchev did not actually act on it until two years later.

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345. Iatrides, *Balkan Triangle*, pp. 163-64.

346. Höpker, Wolfgang. *Europäisches Niemandsland: Moskaus Zwischeneuropa vom Nordkap bis Kreta* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1956), pp. 116-17.

347. Sergiu Verona, *Military Occupation and Diplomacy: Soviet Troops in Romania, 1944-1958* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 76-80.

348. Ioan Scurtu, ed., *România: Retragerea trupelor sovietice, 1958* [Romania: The Withdrawal of Soviet Troops in 1958] (Bucharest: Editura didactică şi pedagogică, 1996), pp. 61-62; Dennis Deletant, *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State, 1948-1965* (London: Hurst, 1999), pp. 273-74.

349. *Khrushchev Remembers*, pp. 513-14.

350. Scurtu, *România*, p. 62.

The meeting of the Warsaw Pact committee also reiterated the proposal, made earlier by Molotov at the Geneva conference of foreign ministers, for a demilitarized zone including both German states and some of their neighbors, besides other countries.[351] Yet while advocating the withdrawal of foreign troops from Europe as part of the continent's broader security rearrangement, Moscow remained cool to suggestions that the Austrian neutrality might become the model for the establishment of a belt of neutral states separating the two military blocs. It especially never indicated that any of its own client states in Eastern Europe could become part of such a belt.[352] No was Austrian neutrality to be construed as a model for the solution of the German question. Although Soviet spokesmen occasionally referred to the accommodating attitude of Austrian politicians as a worthy example to be followed by the Germans, they never went so far as to suggest that the Austrian settlement would be feasible in Germany.[353] When the Austrians quizzed the Soviet leaders specifically on that subject, the response was evasive.[354]

In trying to impress upon Bonn the price of joining NATO, Khrushchev reaffirmed Soviet determination to keep Germany divided. On his way from Geneva, he vowed in a Berlin speech not to allow any solution of the German question at the East Germany's expense.[355] During negotiations with Adenauer in Moscow about the establishment of diplomatic relations on September 10, he condemned West German membership in NATO but conceded that it was now too late to undo it. Instead he tried to lure Bonn closer to Moscow by suggesting that his country could be a better trading partner for it than any other.[356]

The bestowing upon East Germany of the formal trappings of sovereignty shortly after the Adenauer visit amounted to a delayed response to the Paris agreements rather than a prelude to any new Soviet initiative on the German question. On paper, the treaty of September 20 granted Moscow's client state a similar extent of sovereignty as that given to West Germany by the Allies.[357] Also the East German army, once created in the following

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351. "Memorandum of the Conversation at the Soviet Luncheon," July 21, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. pp. 439-41; Warsaw pact declaration, January 28, 1956, Meissner, *Der Warschauer Pakt*, pp. 105-10.

352. "Plans of the Western Powers Concerning the Creation of a `Zone of Reduced Tension' in Europe," by Foreign Ministry Committee on Information, October 18, 1955, 89/70/1, RGANI.

353. Bruno Thoß, "Modellfall Österreich? Der österreichische Staatsvertrag und die deutsche Frage 1954/55," in *Zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Entspannung: Sicherheits- und Deutschlandpolitik der Bundesregierung im Mächtesystem der Jahre 1953-1956*, ed. Bruno Thoß and Hans-Erich Volkmann (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1988), pp. 93-136.

354. Vojtech Mastny, "Kremlin Politics and the Austrian Settlement," *Problems of Communism* 31, no. 4 (1982): 37-51,at p. 48; Bruno Kreisky, *Die österreichische Neutralität* (Vienna: Verlag des Österreich-ischen Gewerkschaftsbundes, 1960), pp. 7-11.

355. *Pravda*, July 27, 1955.

356. Meissner, *Der Warschauer Pakt*, pp. 96-98.

357. Soviet-East German treaty, September 20, 1955, in Frankland, *Documents on International Affairs 1955*, pp. 200-202,

year, was—like its Western counterpart—wholly integrated into the respective alliance, a distinction shared with none of its other members. Such parallelism would make the Moscow-proposed symmetric dismantling of the two alliances, should it ever come, that much easier.

In trying to promote a disengagement that would eventually compel the West to negotiate away both alliances, replacing them with an all-European security system guaranteed by the Soviet Union, Moscow targeted the Nordic countries. In September, in trying to ensure the re-election of Finnish president Urho Kekkonen and the continuation of his pro-Soviet foreign policy, it declared its readiness to evacuate the Porkkala-Udd military and naval base near Helsinki.[358] It advertised this unilateral concession as an example for NATO to emulate. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union reversed itself by lifting its opposition against Finnish membership in the Nordic Council, long berated by Moscow as an agency of NATO, but now perceived as a potential instrument for undermining it.[359]

Norway was the fulcrum of Soviet efforts. After its social democratic premier Einar Gerhardsen declared his wish to establish good relations" with the Soviet Union, he was invited to visit Moscow. During the visit, which took place on November 10-22, Gerhardsen's Soviet hosts lectured him about the desirability of the Nordic countries developing closer ties with one another rather than with NATO. Khrushchev tried, but did not succeed, to persuade him that should Norway transform its voluntary renunciation of the presence of foreign troops on its territory except in the case of war or a threat of war into an international agreement which the Soviet Union would underwrite, thus obtaining the *droit de regard* concerning decisions on Norway's security. He offered to pull the Soviet army away from its northern borders as far as the Norwegians would want.[360] He also vainly urged them to agree, "symbolically," to trade at least some of the strategic goods NATO banned. "Who is closer to you by social background," Khrushchev appealed to the labor politician, "the American capitalists or the representatives of the working class of Russia?"[361]

In March 1956, Khrushchev ruminated to visiting Danish Prime Minister Hans-Christian Hansen that "we proved our peace-making nature, and we will continue to prove it. Thereby we shall shake NATO loose. We will continue to reduce armed forces unilaterally . .

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358. Kimmo Rentola, "From Half-Adeversary to Half-Ally: Finland in Soviet Policy, 1953-8," *Cold War History* 1, no. 1 (2000):. 75-102, at pp. 83-89.

359. Heinz Fiedler, *Der sowjetische Neutralitätsbegriff in Theorie und Praxis* (Cologne: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1959), p. 231.

360. Remarks by Khrushchev during lunch at the Norwegian embassy, November 14, 1955, Holtsmark, *Norge og Sovjetunionen*, pp. 519-21, at p. 521.

361. Maksim L. Korobochkin, "Visit E. Gerkhardsena v Moskvu: Iz istorii sovetsko-norvezhskikh otnoshenii v pervoi polovine 50-kh godov" [E. Gerhardsen's Visit to Moscow: From the History of Soviet-Norwegian Relations in the First Half of the 1950s], in Ilia V. Gaiduk, Natalia I. Egorova, and Aleksander O. Chubarian, ed., *Stalinskoe desiatiletie kholodnoi voiny: Fakty i gipotezy* [Stalin's Decade of the Cold War: Facts and Hypotheses] (Moscow: Nauka, 1999), pp. 97-107.

. , [and] you will find it hard to justify NATO before public opinion."[362] He actually proceeded with deeper reductions than authorized by the party central committee on the basis of what the Soviet military considered acceptable.[363] And NATO was indeed shaken, as well as incredulous.

Praising Sweden's neutrality during the visit of its prime minister Tage Erlander the same month, Moscow publicized the idea of the Baltic as "a sea of peace," meaning a water from which NATO, though not Warsaw Pact vessels, would be barred.[364] It exhorted Norway and Denmark to proclaim neutrality, and seek security in treaties with the Soviet Union. The evacuation of the Soviet forces from Porkkala-Udd at least had the effect of inducing the Icelandic parliament to demand that the United States, too, should close its Keflavik air and naval base on the island.[365] Yet the Icelanders were no more successful in having their wish granted than the Soviet Union was in moving the Norwegians and Danes to meet its wishes.

The Soviet Union placed exaggerated hopes in the ability and willingness of the Western European Left to loosen NATO by entertaining closer ties with Moscow. Besides the ruling social democrats in the Scandinavian countries, it wooed their Austrian and West German counterparts with overtures for collaboration.[366] After the Socialist International rejected collaboration with communists in principle, *Pravda* on April 20 appealed for a common front "for the sake of workers' unity and peace." To add credibility to the appeal, three days earlier the Soviet Union had announced the dissolution of the Cominform—the all but defunct organization of European communist parties created in 1947 in response to the Marshall plan and subsequently used to excommunicate Yugoslavia from the Soviet bloc.[367] Afterward Tito publicly endorsed collaboration with Western socialists as well.[368]

During Khrushchev's and Bulganin's state visit to Britain, begun on the day the Cominform was dissolved, the Soviet leaders paid tribute to the Labor party by acknowledging it, rather than the British communist party, as being the true representative of the working class. Yet Khrushchev's interview with Labor politicians, who demanded the release of social democrats imprisoned in Eastern Europe, went badly (although many of the

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362. Cited in Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 185.

363. Evangelista, *"Why Keep Such an Army?*," p. 10.

364. "Za druzhbu shvedskogo i sovetskogo narodov" [For the Friendship of the Swedish and Soviet People], *Pravda*, April 5, 1956.

365. Valur Ingimundarson, *The Struggle for Western Integration: Iceland, the United States, and NATO during the First Cold War* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 1999), pp. 46-55.

366. "Moscow Presses Bids to Socialists," June 11, 1956, IR 7267, RG-59, NARA.

367. *Pravda*, April 18, 1956.

368. *Le Monde*, May 5, 1956.

prisoners were subsequently released).[369] The Soviet visitors made a better impression on the conservative government, nourishing Eden's illusion that they respected his country as a great power and accepted NATO as a defensive alliance.[370]

In reality, Khrushchev returned from Britain convinced that it was a power in decline and reinforced in his conviction that socialism was winning in the contest against capitalism, the meager results of his anti-NATO campaign notwithstanding. Hayter was struck by the "patent self-confidence of the Soviet leaders . . . in a degree that is novel in my experience," attributing it to their country's real or imagined political and economic accomplishments and their faith in the ultimate victory of communism.[371] He lamented that the West regarded détente as inhibiting while the Russians regarded it as liberating their respective policies. On the premise of Soviet political ascendancy Khrushchev's launched his revolution in security policy, resulting in a markedly different Soviet military posture toward the West.

Khrushchev's Strategic Revolution

Until his rise to supreme power after February 1955, Khrushchev had not distinguished himself by any original thinking on military matters that would differentiate him from other Soviet leaders. He later plausibly described his sleepless nights after having been first briefed in 1953 by his military aides about what nuclear weapons could do.[372] But he joined the chorus in denouncing Malenkov for his statement about the unacceptable destructiveness of nuclear war. In 1954, he invited Eastern European party representatives to a discussion in Moscow on December 10-15 about the reorganization of their armed forces in view of the recent rapid technological advances, although nothing is known about the results, if any, of the meeting.[373] In regard to NATO, Khrushchev did not perceptibly deviate from Molotov's hard line policy until that policy failed to prevent the Paris agreements and West Germany's entry into the alliance.

Afterward, Khrushchev's growing input into Soviet foreign policy, notably manifested in the radical disarmament proposal of May 10, 1955, was suggestive of his growing willingness to draw new conclusions from recent military developments.[374] In his evolving strategic concept, he sought to bring into play his country's supposedly superior political, ideological, and economic assets by applying dynamic personal diplomacy while relying for military security more on the deterrent provided by the Soviet Union's growing nuclear

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369. "Moscow Presses Bids to Socialists," June 11, 1956, IR 7267, RG-59, NARA.

370. Hayter, *A Double Life*, pp. 134-40; Varsori, "Le gouvernement Eden," pp. 293-98.

371. Hayter to Selwyn Lloyd, January 18, 1956, FO 371/122, 782, PRO.

372. Mohammed Heikal, *Sphinx and Commissar: The Rise and Fall of Soviet Influence in the Third World* (London: Collins, 1978), p. 129.

373 Khrushchev to Polish party central committee, undated [late 1954], KC PZPR 2661/7, AAN.

374. Richter, *Khrushchev's Double Bind,* pp. 52-62.

capability than on the combat readiness of its traditional conventional forces. At the same time, his conviction that the danger of war had greatly diminished made him more inclined to utilize that capability for political purposes.

A harbinger of change was the clearing for publication by Khrushchev's ally and new defense minister Zhukov of Marshal Rotmistrov's controversial article dwelling on the perils of a surprise attack and the necessity of averting it, if necessary, by preemption. Readiness to meet imminent attack by launching a pre-emptive strike subsequently became the dominant theme of debate in Soviet military journals although, as Rotmistrov pointedly stressed, preventive war, particularly risky in nuclear conditions, was not part of Soviet strategy.[375] Khrushchev himself later pertinently observed that "missiles are no cucumbers, one cannot eat them and one does not require more than a certain number in order to ward off an attack."[376]

NATO's December 1954 decision to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Europe was made on the assumption that the Soviet Union was bent on deploying them, too, for—in the words of the leading contemporary US expert on the subject, Thomas W. Wolfe—"Khrushchev's new policy envisaged 'nuclearizing' the theater forces as rapidly as Soviet technology and supplies of nuclear material would permit."[377] But this was an erroneous assumption; Khrushchev in fact resisted the `nuclearization' of Soviet forces below the division level. And, regardless of his public professions of a readiness to equip even the Warsaw Pact allies with those dangerous weapons, he did not show the slightest inclination to do so.[378]

In response to the prospective expansion of NATO and the rearming of West Germany in early 1955, Moscow demonstratively increased its defense budget for that year.[379] But there is no indication of its taking any new military measures in response to that adverse turn of events while proceeding to minimize its consequences and reverse it by diplomatic and other political means. The Warsaw Pact, originally designed as a political rather than a military counterpart to NATO, was notably devoid of military substance at the time of its creation. It was only in four months later that Khrushchev sent the Eastern European leaders the text of the statute of its unified command.[380]

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375. Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Soviet Image of Future War* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959), pp. 60-85.

376. Quoted in Evangelista, *"Why Keep Such an Army,"* p. 38.

377. John D. Duffield, *Power Rules: The Evolution of NATO's Conventional Force Posture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 238 and 348.

378. TASS account of Khrushchev's conversation with Randolph Hearst, 22 November 1957.

379. Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Walter C. Clemens, Jr., and Franklyn Griffiths, *Khrushchev and the Arms Race: Soviet Interests in Arms Control and Disarmament 1954-1964* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1966), p. 107.

380. Khrushchev to Bierut, September 7, 1955, KC PZPR 2661/2, 16-19, AAN.

The undecided status of East Germany in the Warsaw Pact at the time of its foundation was indicative of its primary purpose as an instrument in the Soviet campaign for a new European security system rather than a framework for the incorporation of an East German army within the existing two-bloc system. Alone among the member states, the GDR's contribution to the alliance remained undetermined; the others were to contribute specified numbers of army divisions as well as air force fighter, ground-support, and bomber divisions.

The respective contingents were as follows: the Soviet Union 32/22/3/9, Poland 17/7/2/1, Czechoslovakia 11/5/1/1, Hungary 6/2/0/0, Romania 8/3/1/0, and Bulgaria 7/3/1/0. Albania was merely to manage its armed forces in coordination with the pact's high command. All the naval forces of Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria were also made part of the alliance, as were the Soviet Baltic and Black Sea fleets. The stationing of troops of one member state on the territory of another—in effect only Soviet troops—was to be regulated by mutual agreement, and so were any changes in the contingents. Equipping them with modern weapons was made a high priority.

Only East Germany, which depended more than the others on the pact for building up its army and hence its international standing, acted on the priority with a sense of urgency. Already on June 7, Ulbricht requested from Khrushchev the necessary designs to build Iliushin warplanes under Soviet license, and by the end of the year East Germany prepared for the production of small arms.[381] Otherwise the secret supplementary protocol to the Warsaw treaty left the organization of the new alliance and its order of battle to be decided later by its political consultative committee, which met after a leisurely interval of eight months in January of the next year.[382]

With Khrushchev's bid for a European security treaty failing, the Warsaw Pact no longer had an important place in his scheme of things. Without his having any more incentives for making it into a military counterpart of NATO, the communist alliance remained in existence by default. Khrushchev's priority was building down rather than building up the military—his most innovative revision of Stalin's thinking about security. "After we created the Warsaw Pact," Khrushchev later reminisced, "I felt the time had come to think about a reduction of our armed forces."[383] In July 1955, without consulting his allies, he inaugurated the first of his successive cuts of conventional forces.

Moscow's announcement of a unilateral reduction of its armed forces by 640,000 was received widely with disbelief.[384] Yet the reduction, while having little effect on Soviet troop

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381. Ulbricht to Khrushchev, June 7, 1955, and Ulbricht to Bulganin, December 6, 1955, J IV 2/202-244 Bd 1, S APMO-BA.

382. "Protokoll über die Schaffung eines Vereinten Kommandos der Streitkräfte der Teilnehmerstaaten des Vertrages über Freundschaft, Zusammenarbeit und gegenseitigen Beistand," Strausb. AZN 32437, BA-MA.

383. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, p. 220.

384. Evangelista, *"Why Keep Such an Army?,"* p. 45; record of the session of NATO Military Committee, December 9, 1955, IMS.

strength in central Europe, was genuine. Pressing the Warsaw Pact allies to cut their armed forces as well, the Soviet Union made Poland and Czechoslovakia reduce the size of their military establishments while extending their modernization over a period of five years.[385] Khrushchev's attempt to shift the thrust of Soviet security policy from the traditional emphasis on massive conventional forces to minimal nuclear deterrent, thus freeing the country's resources and reducing its excessive dependence on military force to maintain its international status, amounted to a radical new departure.

Soviet allies contemplated with trepidation the consequences of Khrushchev's policy. At the secret Moscow meeting of party secretaries on January 6, 1956, Czechoslovakia opposed further unilateral cuts. Its militarized economy found it difficult to adjust to the reduction of defense expenditures from 9.4 per cent to 7.3 per cent of the GNP and to the forced modernization that required excessive imports from the Soviet Union and the underutilization of the domestic manufacturing capacity.[386] In a speech dwelling on economic rather than military priorities, Khrushchev told the meeting that more IL-14 warplanes were being produced in the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia than were needed.

In contrast to Molotov's dire assessment of the international situation, which dwelt on the alleged persistence of the threat of war, Khrushchev urged his audience not to be provoked by the warmongering Western "imperialists," for the Soviet hydrogen bomb was bound to have a sobering effect on them. He insisted that the military, political, and moral strength of the communist bloc was now colossal although it should be used "reasonably." He concluded that no opportunity must be missed to strengthen the economy.[387] In reply, Ulbricht welcomed plans for closer economic cooperation but noted that the communist allies should pay more attention to the Schuman Plan and NATO because of their superior organization.

The first meeting of the Warsaw Pact's political consultative committee (PCC), held in Prague on January 27-28, 1956, approved the incorporation of the newly created East German army as the only one to be wholly integrated within its structure, thus making the alliance serve as the framework for the utilization and control of an army strategically placed in NATO's immediate vicinity.[388] Otherwise, however, it did not proceed to build up the alliance. Its political consultative committee never became an equivalent of the North Atlantic Council—with its semiannual policymaking conferences of the heads of state or foreign ministers, supplemented by the permanent representatives of the signatory governments meeting in continuous session. The PCC's proclaimed intention to furnish the

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385. Khrushchev to Bierut, August 12, 1955, KC PZPR 2661/3, AAN.

386. Karel Kaplan, *Československo v letech 1953-66: Společenská krize a kořeny reformy* [Czechoslovakia in 1953-55: The Social Crisis and the Roots of Reform] (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1992), pp. 72 and 131.

387. Records of the meeting of party secretaries, January 6, 1956, ZPA, J IV 2/202/193, SAPMO-BA.

388. Meissner, *Der Warschauer Pakt*, pp. 103-104.

alliance with additional institutions, particularly a secretariat and a committee of foreign ministers, remained unfulfilled.[389]

Separately a supreme command was set up and given to a Soviet marshal, equipped with arbitrary powers loosely described in a document appropriately kept secret.[390] Imposed without even a pretense of consultation and designed mainly for the conveyance of orders from Moscow to the Eastern European capitals, the system was a caricature rather than a replica of SHAPE and SACEUR. Moreover, it remained secondary to the system of Soviet "advisers," on whom Moscow continued to rely for the control of its vassal armies. Sometimes Soviet officers were installed outright in key command positions—such as was Poland's minister of defense, Marshal Konstantin K. Rokossovskii, masquerading as a Pole.

In trying to manage the Soviet allies, Khrushchev preferred to revitalize the dormant organization for economic cooperation, the Comecon, while using the Warsaw Pact mainly as a conduit of his disarmament initiatives. These stressed the desirability of small practical steps rather than grand schemes envisaged in the earlier Soviet proposals. Described as preparatory steps toward the later establishment of a European collective security system, Moscow proposed an array of measures calculated to weaken NATO—the creation of a zone of limited and controlled armaments including both German states, reduction of their armed forces, partial or complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Germany, and a ban on nuclear weapons on its territory. The Warsaw Pact's appeal for a nonaggression treaty with NATO and an agreement on a peaceful settlement became a staple for the next ten years.

The change in the Soviet defense budget did not concern so much its size as its structure. While direct military expenditures for 1956 decreased by 8.6 per cent, the purchasing power of the ruble increased, mass production of weapons made them cheaper, and many of the key military items remained concealed as "scientific research," the outlays for which went up 17.2 per cent.[391] This applied especially to nuclear research and development, crucial for Moscow's new military posture.

Khrushchev's attempt to shift the thrust of Soviet security policy from the traditional emphasis on massive conventional forces to minimal nuclear deterrent, thus freeing the country's resources and reducing its excessive dependence on military force to maintain its international position, amounted to a radical new departure. The Soviet Union "entered a revolutionary phase in the development of weapons technology, one that held out prospects for eventual strategic superiority over the United States, under the banner of budgetary conservatism."[392] This paralleled the reasoning behind NATO's December 1954 decision to

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389. For the stenographic record and other documents of the PPC meeting in Prague, January 27-28, 1956, in facsimile and with a commentary, see www.isn.ethz.ch/php, "Collections."

390. "Statute of the Unified Command of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty," September 7, 1955, Mastny, "`We Are in a Bind'," pp. 235-36. For facsimile of the Russian text, see www.isn.ethz.ch/php, "Collections."

391. "Soviet 1956 Budget Stresses Long-Term Preparedness," January 18, 1956, IR 7141, RG-59, NARA.

392. Bloomfield, Clemenas, and Griffith, *Khrushchev and the Arms Race,* p. 108.

equip its forces with tactical nuclear weapons in order to reduce costs.[393] Much like SACEUR Gen. Matthew Ridgway in NATO, on the Soviet side Gen. S. Krasilnikov warned that reliance on such weapons would require an increase rather than decrease of conventional forces because of the staggering casualties in a nuclear war.[394]

At the twentieth Soviet party congress on February 14-25, Khrushchev and other speakers expatiated on their belief that the Soviet Union was prevailing in a peaceful competition, thus bringing nearer the day when the capitalists would have no choice but acquiescing in its proposals. Because of the growing "zone of peace," Khrushchev declared, capitalist encirclement ceased to exist. At variance with the Leninist and Stalinist orthodoxy, he expressed the optimistic view that even though capitalism still bred economic causes of war, the political conditions no longer made it "fatalistically inevitable."[395] Should it nevertheless come, however, he insisted that the Soviet Union was in a position to deliver nuclear bombs "to any point of earth by aircraft or rockets," although this was in fact not the case.

At a closed plenary session of the Polish party central committee on March 20, Khrushchev gave his perhaps most coherent rationale for his troop cuts:

> We have to smartly . . . move toward disarmament. But, we should never cross the line, which would endanger the survival of our conquests. We have to do everything to strengthen defense, to strengthen the army. Without these things, nobody will talk to us. They are not hiding the fact that they have the hydrogen bomb, nuclear arms, and jet-propulsion technology. They know that we have all these things, and therefore they have to talk to us, fight with us; but not be afraid, . . . this is a game, in which nobody will be a winner. If Lenin would arise he would have been pleased to see his cause become so strong that the capitalistic world admits being unable to win the war against the socialist countries . . . . We must work . . . to reduce the troops and increase defense . . . It is difficult to agree with marshals on this matter, they're rather hot-tempered.[396]

The Soviet disarmament proposal of March 27 focused on conventional rather than nuclear arms reductions.[397] It envisaged cuts in manpower and weaponry in Europe to ceilings that would affect NATO more than the Warsaw Pact, making particularly West German rearmament all but impossible. Unlike Moscow's earlier proposals, this one did not call for the prohibition of nuclear weapons—the number of which the Soviet Union was expanding though not as rapidly as it was able to make the world believe. It proposed to end their testing and establish a nuclear-free zone in Europe, no longer demanding the removal of

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393. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose*, p. 88.

394. Cited in Evangelista, *"Why Keep Such an Army?,"* p. 8.

395. "Soviet Views on Foreign Affairs," April 11, 1956, IR 7224.1, and "The 20th CPSU Congress and the Doctrine of the `Inevitability of War'," IR 7284, RG-59, NARA.

396. Translation of the Polish record of Khrushchev's speech, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10 (1998): 31.

397. Bloomfield, Clemens, and Griffith, *Khrushchev and the Arms Race*, pp. 27-29.

the American bases there. Both U.S. State Department analysts and NATO ministers concurred that Moscow was genuinely interested in a reduction of military expenditures, presumably for economic reasons, as well as a limited agreement on conventional disarmament, but feared the negative effects of inspection and control on the cohesion of the Soviet system.[398]

Considering the respectable growth of the Soviet economy at the time, the disarmament campaign was not primarily motivated by economic reasons. Instead Khrushchev acted as if he believed that he could defeat NATO by relying not so much on military power as on the ostensibly irreversible growth of his country's political influence and economic might. On May 14 he announced a second major reduction of Soviet armed forces, this time by 1.2 million men. Even if the Western assessments were right in assuming that the previous reductions had not been implemented and that the capability of the remaining forces had not been adversely affected, what was implemented was real.[399]

At the beginning of July, the Soviet commanders in Germany startled their Western counterparts by proposing an exchange of visits to observe maneuvers of the respective forces. While the British were willing to reciprocate, SACEUR Gen. Alfred Gruenther worried lest such visits make it "increasingly difficult to convince some of our weaker allies as to the necessity for remaining in constant readiness against a possible surprise attack."[400] Moscow kept pressure on by conditionally accepting later that month the troop ceilings that the West, in trying to offset NATO's relative weakness, had demanded in response to the previous Soviet proposal. The condition of Soviet acceptance was a mutual commitment to a follow-up leading to still deeper reductions as well as a ban on both the testing and the use of nuclear weapons, the end of their production, and finally the destruction of their stocks.[401]

When the UN Disarmament Commission Subcommittee adjourned on July 16, Khrushchev was optimally positioned in his campaign to demilitarize the Cold War and checkmate NATO in the process. After Greece, piqued by Turkish resistance to its demand for the unification of Cyprus with the Greek “motherland,” threatened to leave NATO, the Soviet Union expressed its support. Not without reason, it considered the Western alliance to be in crisis.[402] The North Atlantic Council thought so, too, noting the corrosive impact on Western solidarity of Khrushchev’s unilateral force cuts and his “sugary” appeals for

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398. "The Soviet Disarmament Proposal of March 27, 1956," April 3, 1956, IR 7216, RG-59, NARA; "Draft Statement on Disarmament," 24.4., NATO-Min Mtg of the Council (papers 26.4.-26.6.56), 90-91/008, Vol. 217, 50102-N-40, Pt. 2, RG-25, PAC.

399. "The JIC Semi-Annual Review of Trends in Communist Bloc Policy Including Communist China (1 October 1955-29 February 1956)," Adm. Radford file, 091 Russia (1956), RG-218, NARA.

400. USNMR Paris France to OASD/ISA Washington DC," July 18, and "Exchange of Visits of Military Personnel between the U.S. and Soviet Commands in Germany," July 21, 1956, CCS 350.09 USSR (12-19-49) Sec. 12, RG-218, NARA.

401. Bloomfield, Clemens, and Griffith, *Khrushchev and the Arms Race,* p. 29.

402. Peck, *Das imperialistische Kriegspaktsystem,* pp. 51-59.

peaceful coexistence.[403] Yet it was the integrity of the Soviet bloc, rather than of NATO, that came to be threatened as riots erupted in Poland in June 1956, leading to a full-scale crisis in Eastern Europe later that year.

The End of Détente

The West thoroughly misjudged the situation in Eastern Europe. After the Polish riots, U.S. officials estimated that "Soviet domination of the Eastern European satellites remains firm and there appears little immediate prospect of basic change in this regard. This was not the opinion of the Soviet leaders who were preparing military action to reverse the course of events in the country which they feared could result in the collapse of the communist power there.[404] The Polish army as well became affected by the ferment although it was sufficiently controlled by its Soviet commander, minister of defense Marshal Rokossovskii, to be prevented from effectively resisting an outside intervention; the same could not be said with certainty, however, about the forces of the Ministry of the Interior, controlled by the party.[405]

During the confrontation on October 18 between the Polish politburo and its Soviet counterpart, which had descended on Warsaw *en bloc*, Poland's membership in the Warsaw Pact, and by extension in the Soviet sphere of power, was at issue. The newly appointed Polish reformist party leader Władysław Gomułka tried to reassure his uninvited guests that the country's continued loyalty to the Soviet alliance was not in doubt. Khrushchev, however, threatened that whatever the Poles were saying, the Soviet Union had to intervene.[406] It was therefore a considerable feat for Gomułka convincing the Soviet leaders that he had the situation firmly under control, and staying their hand.

After the showdown averted Moscow's imminent military intervention, even Dulles was prepared to believe that Soviet concessions would lead to free elections in Poland, thus providing a justification for a benevolent US policy toward its new communist leadership.[407] But when the subsequent events in Hungary took a revolutionary turn, Eisenhower—though not Dulles—came to fear that the Soviet Union might "be tempted to resort to very extreme

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403. Spencer, "Alliance Perceptions of the Soviet Threat," p. 20.

404. Edward Jan Nałepa, "Die Polnische Armee in den Ereignissen des Jahres 1956," in *Das inter-nationale Krisenjahr 1956: Polen Ungarn, Suez*, ed. Winfried Heinemann and Norbert Wiggershaus (Munich: Oldenbourg, 199), pp. 60-73.

405. Leszek W. Gluchowski, *The Soviet-Polish Confrontation of 1956: The Situation in the Polish Internal Security Corps*, Cold War International History Project, Working Paper no. 17 (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1997).

406. Record of Gomułka-Zhou Enlai conversation on January 11-12, 1957, dated January 16, 1957, Krzystof Persak, "Polsko-čínské rozhovory v lednu 1957" [The Polish-Chinese Conversations in January 1957] *Soudobé dějiny* [Prague] 4, no. 2 (1997): 338-66, at p. 347.

407. Memorandum of conversation with Bernard Yarrow, 22 October 1956, cited in Pawel Machcewicz, "U.S. Policy toward Poland in 1956," paper presented at the conference "Hungary and the World, 1956: New Archival Evidence," Budapest, September 26-29, 1996, pp. 6-7.

measures and even to precipitate global war."[408] Convinced that its behavior depended critically on the American attitude, he thought it appropriate to reassure the Kremlin leaders both publicly and through diplomatic channels that Washington did not seek to exploit their distress to its own military advantage.[409] Harold Stassen, the president's special adviser on disarmament, proposed telling them that "we would accept for the satellites some neutralized status like that of Austria" and would not take Hungary into NATO, and Dulles subsequently said so in a public speech on October 27.[410]

In reality, the Soviet leaders never expected NATO to move; the alliance was hardly even mentioned during their discussions. Although in communications with Hungarian communists they tried to justify Soviet military presence in the country by suggesting that "the withdrawal of Soviet troops would inevitably bring about the entry of American troops," they did not take the possibility of Western military action into consideration.[411] While they worried about the shifting East-West balance, the actual or anticipated Western reaction to their prospective intervention in Eastern Europe played a negligible role in their decisions. The Chinese attitude was more important to them. Contrary to Western estimates, even after being reassured by Gomułka that Poland would remain in the Warsaw Pact, they were still preparing to remove him by force and install a government of their choice, but strong opposition by the Chinese communists made them desist. [412]

While the Kremlin remained undecided about what to in Hungary it considered the possible role of the Warsaw Pact in resolving the crisis. Zhukov told U.S. ambassador Bohlen that the withdrawal of Soviet troops presently in Hungary or possible intervention there were matters for the alliance to decide.[413] This was indeed the prevailing view within the party leadership; even Molotov thought the decision must be made in consultation with the allies.[414] Some of them, particularly Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria, seem to

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408. Memorandum on discussion at National Security Council, October 29, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-57, vol. 25, pp. 295-99, at p. 299.

409. Raymond F. Garthoff, "Hungary 1956: The Washington Reaction," paper presented at the conference "Hungary and the World, 1956: New Archival Evidence," Budapest, September 26-29, 1996.

410. Memorandum on Dulles-Stassen conversation, October 26, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-57, vol. 25, p. 305 and 318.

411. Mikoian and Suslov to CPSU Central Committee, October 26, 1956, in *The Hidden History of Hungary 1956: A Compendium of Declassified Documents*, ed. Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne,and Christian Ostermann (Washington: National Security Archive, 1996), document no. 3.

412. Mark Kramer, "The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no.2 (1998): 163-214, at pp. 172, 186-90; Chen Jian, "Beijing and the Hungarian Crisis of 1956," paper presented at the conference "The Sino-Soviet Relations and the Cold War," Beijing, October 22-25, 1997, pp. 7-9, 13.

413. Bohlen to Department of State, October 26, 1956, *FRUS,* 1955-57, vol. 25, pp. 336-37.

414. Working notes from the CPSU presidium session, October 30, 1956, in Békés, Byrne, and Ostermann, *The Hidden History of Hungary.*

have been eager to send troops to help prevent the Hungarian contagion from spreading.[415] The attitude of Tito was so important to the Soviet leadership that Khrushchev and several other presidium members took a grueling trip to consult with him at his summer house at Brioni.

On October 30, the presidium—under Chinese pressure to respect the "sovereignty" of socialist countries—decided to let Hungary go its way despite the dangerous precedent this would set. None other than Molotov admitted that "the course of events reveals the crisis in our relations with the people's democracies . . . With the agreement of the government of Hungary, we are ready to withdraw our troops."[416] The concurrent British-French military action against Egypt at the Suez Canal made the Kremlin, if anything even more reluctant to intervene in Hungary; as Khrushchev put it, the "real mess" in which the British and French found themselves was no example to imitate. [417]

The presidium approved the text of a declaration on relations with socialist states that went farther than any previous Soviet statements in signaling a willingness to acquiesce in their autonomous development. Made public on October 31, it offered to recall Soviet advisers and discuss the presence of Soviet troops in Poland, Hungary and Romania, insisting that any foreign troops may only be deployed on the territory of the Warsaw Pact states by agreement among all of them and with the consent of the country concerned.[418] Zhukov reportedly favored convening the alliance's political consultative committee to discuss the Hungarian situation.[419] Yet on the same day the Kremlin chiefs reversed the decision they had made the day before, and voted to use force in Hungary.[420] In Washington, officials worried about "a series of actions and counter-actions leading inadvertently to war," but the Soviet leaders remained convinced that "there will be no large scale war."[421]

[415.] Notes of talks between Soviet and Polish party and state delegations, May 24-25, 1957, in *Rewolucja węgierska 1956 w polskich dokumentach* [The 1956 Hungarian Revolution in Polish Documents] ed. János Tischler (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych, 1995), pp. 145-48, at p. 147. The evidence on Romanian readiness to intervene is inconclusive, according to Mihai Retegan, "1956—Rumänische Echos auf die internationalen Krisen," in Heinemann and Wiggershaus, *Das internationale Krisenjahr 1956*, pp. 423-37, at pp. 434-35.

[416.] Quoted in Vladislav M. Zubok, "The Kremlin Power Struggle and the Hungarian Crisis," paper presented at the conference "Hungary and the World, 1956: The New Archival Evidence," Budapest, September 26-29, 1996, p. 10.

[417.] Working notes from the CPSU CC presidium session, October 28, 1956, ibid.

[418.] Soviet declaration, October 30, 1956, in Meissner, *Der Warschauer Pakt*, pp. 111-13.

419. Volkov, *Uzlovye problemy,* pp. 185-86.

[420.] Working notes from the session of the CPSU presidium, October 31, 1956, in Békés, Byrne, and Ostermann, *The Hidden History of Hungary.*

[421.] "U.S. Policy toward Developments in Poland and Hungary," NSC-5616, October 31, 1956, ibid., document no. 7; "Working Notes from the CPSU CC Presidium Session," October 31, 1956, ibid., document No. 6.

In prompting the reversal, the declaration by the Budapest government on November 1, which ended the country's membership in the Warsaw Pact and asked the four great powers to guarantee its neutrality did not make a difference; it came after the decision in Moscow had already been made and only reinforced it. Nor did either the inaction of the West in regard to Hungary or the British-French action against Egypt, which engendered Washington's. opposition and a crisis of NATO, play a role. In the end, what swayed the reluctant Soviet leaders was the rapid loss of communist control in Hungary, which also led both the Chinese and Tito to change their minds in favor of the intervention. Once the Soviet Union sent troops to restore the communist rule in Hungary, it did not use the pretense of doing so within the framework of the Warsaw Pact, although it did consult with its members in advance.[422]

Unlike the Americans, the Soviets thought in political rather than military terms. Their main concern was the likely effect of the Polish and Hungarian events on the stability of their empire. This is not to say that Khrushchev and his associates were indifferent to the impact that their crushing of the Hungarian revolution would have on East-West relations. But they were more preoccupied with the perceptions of strength and weakness than with the future of détente. "If we depart from Hungary," Khrushchev explained to the presidium session of October 31 in justifying the crackdown, "it will give a great boost to the Americans, English and French—the imperialists. They will perceive it as weakness on our part and will go into the offensive. We would then be exposing the weakness of our positions . . . . To Egypt they will then add Hungary. We have no choice."[423]

Despite its passivity, NATO exerted influence in an unexpected way. The original creation of the Warsaw Pact to NATO's image came to haunt the Kremlin in Poland by prompting Polish generals to propose a reform of the communist alliance to make it closer to the Western model. They acted in response to the November 30 declaration of Soviet willingness to revise the arbitrary provisions of the Warsaw treaty, regulate the presence of Soviet forces on the territory of its member states, and recall the unwanted Soviet military advisers there.[424] Regardless of the progressing crackdown in Hungary, defended by Moscow as allegedly justified under the treaty,[425] the Polish general staff formed a special commission to elaborate the reform proposals and the country's future role in the alliance.

Deputy chief of staff Gen. Jan Drzewiecki prepared a critique of the secret 1955 statute on the powers of the Warsaw Pact's supreme commander as well as a "legal analysis" of the agreements on the ten-year plan of development of Poland's armed forces, imposed by

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422. Walentin A. Pronko, "Ungarn-UdSSR: Herbst 1956," in Heinemann and Wiggershaus, *Das internationale Krisenhajahr 1956*, pp. 75-94, at pp. 87-88.

423. Ibid.

424. Declaration of October 30, 1956, J.P. Jain, *Documentary Study of the Warsaw Pact* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1973), pp. 168-71.

425. Arkadii Sobolev at the UN Security Council meeting, November 4, 1956, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1955-1957, vol. 25, p. 388.

Moscow before and after the signing of the pact.[426] He argued that the agreements lacked proper legal basis and were not truly bilateral because they consisted of Polish obligations only. Referring to the secret military annexes to the Warsaw treaty, Drzewiecki noted that not even his country's foreign minister had been informed about them.

The final text of Drzewiecki's proposal, completed on November 7, 1956, summed up the Polish case for reforming the alliance and spelled out the country's proposed obligations within it.[427] Taking into account the international situation—meaning NATO member West Germany's pending claim to the German territories annexed by Poland after World War II—the document did not question the pact's need for the nation's security but found its military provisions objectionable. The author took exception to the status of the supreme commander and his chief of staff as supranational officials with prerogatives incompatible with Polish independence and sovereignty, to the signatories' "purely formal" representation on the unified command, to the arbitrary assignment of national contingents to the alliance, and—most topical in view of the intervention in Hungary—to inadequate regulations concerning Soviet military deployments on the territories of the other member states.[428]

As the intervention became an accomplished fact, the Poles found it preferable to separate their radical critique of the Warsaw Pact from the demand for the regulation of Soviet troops stationed on their territory since World War II, mainly to facilitate communication with the occupation forces in East Germany. Invoking as an example the status of foreign forces in NATO countries and alluding even to the manner in which American military presence was made acceptable in the Philippines, Libya, and Ethiopia, the demand was well timed.[429] Still on the defensive in trying to justify the crackdown in Hungary, Moscow on December 17 granted to Poland a more favorable status-of-forces agreement than to any other country. It gave the host nation jurisdiction in case of violation of Polish law by Soviet military personnel and for provided for giving the Polish government

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426. "Uwagi i propozycje odnośnie dokumentu p.n. `Polozhenie ob obedinennom komandovanii vooruzhennymi silami gosudarstv-uchastnikov Varshavskogo dogovora'," [Reflections and Proposals Concerning the Document Entitled "Statute of the Unified Command of the Armed Forces of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty"], and "Analiza strony prawnej dokumentu p.n. 'Protokol soveshchaniia po planu razvitiia Vooruzhennykh Sil Polskoi Narodnoi Respubliki na 1955-65 gg.' oraz następnych protokółów wnoszących do niego zmiany," [Analysis of the Legal Aspects of the Document Entitled "Protocol on the Consultation about the Plan for the Development of the Armed Forces of the Polish People's Republic in 1955-65" and Its Subsequent Amendments], November 3, 1956, microfilm (o) 96/6398, reel W-15, LC.

427. Vice Minister of Defense Bordziłowski to Gomułka, November 7, 1956, KC PZPR 2661/53, AAN; "Memorandum w sprawie Układu Warszawskiego oraz planu rozwoju Sił Zbrojnych PRL" [Memorandum Concerning the Warsaw Treaty and the Plan for the Development of Poland's Armed Forces], microfilm (o) 96/6398, reel W-25, LC.

428. Cf. "Wykaz zagadnień wojskowych wymagających omówienia i uregulowania na nowych zasadach" [An Outline of Military Problems Requiring Discussion and Regulation according to New Principles], by Drzewiecki, November 8, 1956, KC PZPR 2661/137-38, AAN.

429. Commentary by Drzewiecki, undated (November-December 1956), KC PZPR 2661/124, AAN.

advance notice of any movement of the troops. Although the former provision was subsequently evaded in practice, the latter was generally honored.[430]

Having thus made an important concession to Poland's special status, Moscow was not in a mood to entertain in addition a reform of the Warsaw Pact. When Polish Defense Minister Marian Spychalski brought up the subject during his visit to the Soviet capital in January 1957, the alliance's supreme commander Marshal Ivan S. Konev felt personally offended. He was aghast at the idea that his office should be filled by rotation. "What do you imagine," he exploded, "that we will make some NATO here?"[431] The proposal was shelved,[432] leaving the Warsaw Pact unreformed for another decade.

As the Soviet intervention in Hungary climaxed, Khrushchev sought to divert attention from it by his public threat to obliterate Paris and London with nuclear missiles unless the British and French stop their intervention at Suez. Since he did not have the missiles and they were already about to stop it anyway because of U.S. opposition, he was bluffing. Yet his "showing teeth" was retrospectively credited by his associate Anastas Mikoian with both getting results in Egypt and creating preconditions for the resumption of détente.[433] Although this was not the way the Soviet conduct was regarded in the West, Moscow nevertheless proceeded on that assumption.

Indeed, hardly had blood dried in the streets of Budapest when the Soviet Union presented another disarmament proposal, calculated to accommodate some of U.S. preferences. Besides agreeing to Eisenhower's idea of "open skies" on an experimental basis inside a corridor on both sides of the East-West dividing line, the proposal envisaged reductions of both conventional and nuclear forces in preparation for the departure of all foreign troops from Europe. Coincidentally, Washington happened to be considering at the same time its own proposal, calculated to induce the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe by reciprocal action.[434]

Both proposals had originated before the Hungarian upheaval, and might have led to negotiations if only Moscow could have avoided giving the impression of negotiating from weakness. Yet the events in Eastern Europe made this impossible. U. S. analysts dismissed the Soviet disarmament proposal as old wine in new bottles, and Dulles publicly denied that Washington might be contemplating negotiations about a mutual withdrawal of troops.[435]

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430. Pióro, *Armia ze skazą*, pp. 277-80.

431. Ibid., pp. 280-82.

432. Marginal note on Document No. 2.

433. Session of CPSU central committee plenum, June 24, 1957, "Posledniaia 'antipartiinaia' gruppa," *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 1993, no. 4: 4-36, at p. 33.

434. NSC 5616/2, 1 November 19, 1956, and "Possible Withdrawal of Forces from Central Europe," Mill 178, Box 3, RG-273, NARA.

435. "Soviet Disarmament Proposal Has Few New Points," November 20, 1956, IR 7379, RG-59, NARA; Hinterhoff, *Disengagement*, p. 193.

According U.S. estimates, Moscow was not ready to move its forces out of Eastern Europe even if it could obtain the departure of the American ones from Western Europe in return.

Despite the sight of Soviet repression in Hungary, NATO leaders continued to worry lest the Moscow manage to convince their constituencies of its benevolence.[436] Moreover, NATO's Standing Group reached the worrisome conclusion that in the event of an attack from the east retreat to the Rhine was inevitable within 48 hours,[437]—and the reduction of U.S. and British troops in Europe in consequence of the shift to the strategy of massive nuclear retaliation was only beginning. The feasibility of using nuclear weapons on the crowded continent remained questionable. To provide a relief from the pressure to use them in retaliation, SACEUR Gen. Lauris Norstad advocated a conventional "pause first," thus putting the wisdom of the whole new strategy in doubt even before it could be implemented.[438]

The United States, though not nearly so much its European allies, insisted upon the further development of a nuclear deterrent as the necessary precondition for any dealing with Moscow about political issues. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, despite its round condemnation of NATO's strategy, it was not particularly uncomfortable with the Western commitment to massive retaliation, for it had no reason to believe the West would attack unless strongly provoked, and supplying the provocation was in its own hands.[439] Khrushchev surpassed the Western leaders in flexibility and readiness to demilitarize. Yet that readiness was contingent on the availability of real or perceived Soviet political and economic assets, for the shortage of which he was prepared to compensate by building up nuclear capability. As the crisis in Eastern Europe exposed the severity of the shortage, the resulting commitment of both alliances to a nuclear arms race cast a deeper shadow over Europe's security in the years to come.

Ever since its beginning in 1949, NATO figured prominently in Moscow's public and private vocabulary as a shorthand for the threat posed by the combined power of the capitalist nations. Yet it was not so much NATO's military power, whose shortcomings were sufficiently known to Soviet intelligence, as the U.S. military power that impressed the Kremlin and determined its military calculations. Not only in public utterances but also in their internal communications, Soviet leaders never left a doubt that they considered NATO an American tool—much as the Warsaw Pact was their tool. But this ostensibly hard-nosed assessment, distorted by their Marxist preconceptions, underrated the "soft power" wielded by NATO as a voluntary association of like minded-nations that, unlike its communist counterpart, functioned on the basis of sovereign equality.

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436. Robert E. Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 4.

437. Wiggershaus, "Nordatlantische Bedrohungsperzeptionen," pp. 47-48.

438. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose,* p. 88.

439. Arnold L. Horelick, and Myron Rush, *Strategic Power and Soviet Foreign Policy* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 106-10.

Stalin had proved more sensitive than Khrushchev to the potentially disruptive political effects of the Western alliance on his European empire when he preventively tried to bolster its cohesion and resilience by his characteristic brand of terror. Khrushchev, though less disposed than Stalin to rely on force in both his domestic and foreign policies, was blinded by his fallacious belief in the communist system's irresistible ascendancy which would enable it to overtake and ultimately defeat the capitalist rival. This belief led him to underestimate the abiding attraction of Western values and institutions to the restive peoples of Eastern Europe. Within the Warsaw Pact, the abortive Polish attempt to reform it along NATO lines was a preview of things to come. The Western alliance, in trying too hard to keep a low profile during the revolutionary events in Poland and Hungary, did not sufficiently appreciate the fact that the communist leader's main concern was the workings of NATO's soft power rather than its military posture. Despite Moscow's ability to reassert its rule in Eastern Europe and the evolving arms race, that power would remain the West's fundamental asset, which the Soviet superpower could never match.