From the CWIHP Director

Despite the end of the Cold War almost a decade-and-a-half ago, its legacy still besets US foreign policy and the world at large. Cold War flashpoints, such as North Korea, Cuba, Afghanistan, and the Middle East continue to impose important challenges on the international community. Recent crises and conflicts underline the importance of gaining a better understanding of the sources of these and other countries’ foreign policies, cultural patterns, and world outlooks. This issue of the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin highlights recent findings from the former Communist world and other international archives on a range of critical issues that affect us today no less than they concerned policymakers and the public during the Cold War.

Of all the United States’ former Cold War adversaries, North Korea poses perhaps the most dangerous security problem. North Korea’s vitriolic and seemingly unpredictable rhetorical outbursts and actions confront international policymakers on an almost daily basis, yet information on the inner workings and motivations of this highly secretive country is scarce. To address this significant information gap, this issue of the CWIHP Bulletin features a treasure trove of previously unpublished documents from erstwhile communist allies of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). The documents are the result of a special effort by the Project to mine the archives of North Korea’s former allies. Coordinated by Kathryn Weathersby and funded by The Korea Foundation, the CWIHP Korea Initiative has been systematically exploring East European, Russian, and (to a lesser extent) Chinese archives for insights into perceptions and policymaking in Pyongyang. The Korean Initiative presented its first findings at a workshop hosted in conjunction with the George Washington University Cold War Group (GWCW) in March 2003 (“North Korea’s Crisis Behavior, Past and Present: New Light from the Archives of its Former Allies”), at which leading Korea specialists from academia, research centers, and government agencies in the United States, the Republic of Korea and Eastern Europe provided a first analysis of the significance of the new documents on North Korea.1 The newly accessible documentation bears on such questions as North Korea’s reaction to aid and external pressures, the internal workings of the Kim regime and the ideological prism of the North Korean leadership. The documents were featured in a front-page article in the Christian Science Monitor in July 2003 (“Files Show a Stubborn North Korea”). As with other materials that the CWIHP Korea Initiative is uncovering, the materials are also accessible online through CWIHP’s Virtual Archive.

Reading through the Afghanistan section of this Bulletin issue today remains just as eerie an experience as editing the materials by defected KGB archivist Vasiliy Mitrokhin’s on “The KGB in Afghanistan” (which the Project published as CWIHP Working Paper No. 40) while the US and its allies were fighting the Taliban in late 2001 and early 2002. To assess the legacies and lessons of the Soviet war in Afghanistan in light of new evidence, CWIHP organized a major international conference on the conflict in April 2002, “Towards an International History of the War in Afghanistan, 1979-1989.” Held in cooperation with the Center’s Asia Program and Kennan Institute, GWCW, and the National Security Archive, the “critical oral history” meeting centered on newly released and translated US, Russian, Bulgarian, East German, Czech, and Hungarian documents on the war. Conference participants included former Soviet officials and National Security Council (NSC), State Department, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officials from the Carter, Bush, and Reagan administrations, as well as scholarly experts from around the world. The Russian materials featured in the Afghanistan section of this issue, generously provided by Anatoly Chernyaev, A. A. Lyakhovsky, and the late Vasily Mitrokhin, allow fascinating insights into Soviet intelligence operations in the region, Gorbachev’s relationship with Afghan communist leader Nadjibullah, and the debate over withdrawal from Afghanistan within the Kremlin. Documents from the Bulgarian, East German, and Hungarian archives provide a glimpse at the bloc-wide repercussions of the Soviet intervention. Mitrokhin’s special contribution, moreover, extends the documentary shadow of the Soviet invasion to the larger history of Soviet policy on the South Asian subcontinent.

As in past issues, this Bulletin reflects the activities of the international network that constitutes the Cold War International History Project. Mark Kramer’s edition of Ukrainian archival documents continues CWIHP’s effort to document the spill-over effects and repercussions of crises within the Soviet empire, in this case the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Svetlana Savranskaya highlights findings from the October 2002 Havana Conference on the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Organized by the National Security Archive in partnership with Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Affairs and Cuban institutions, the conference brought together US, Russian, and Cuban veterans of the 1962 Cuban Crisis. The documents introduced by Jim Hershberg and Vladislav Zubok add to CWIHP’s unique corpus of Soviet documents on the Korean War. The Zhivkov Dossier, provided by Jordan Baev, is the most recent archival coup by CWIHP’s Bulgarian partner, the Cold War Group Bulgaria.

The Armenian and Georgian archival documents featured in this issue are a result of CWIHP’s continued cooperation with Armenian, Azeri, and Georgian (as well as US and Russian) scholars to uncover the hidden history of Soviet policies in the Southern Caucasus. They were among the materials presented at a workshop in July 2002 in the Tsindalanad Conference Center in the Kakheti Valley in Georgia. The workshop was the second meeting held in the framework of the initiative, “Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan in the Cold War,” launched in the summer of 1999 by the National Security Archive and CWIHP. The main goal of the project is to explore the archives in Tbilisi, Yerevan, and Baku to determine to what extent Cold War era documents, still classified in the central archives in Moscow, would be accessible there, and to bring scholars from the three republics into the larger international network of Cold War scholars.

Since the publication of the last Bulletin, CWIHP has sponsored or co-sponsored a series of conferences in addition to those mentioned above. Together with CWIHP and the National Security Archive, the Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies (CIMA), a newly created federation of Cold War programs at Italian universities, sponsored a critical oral history conference on “The Road to Helsinki: The Early Steps of the CSCE” in September 2003. The meeting, held in cooperation with the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP), gathered more than a dozen former CSCE diplomats and some fifty scholars to discuss key issues in the national policies and international negotiations that led
to the 1975 Helsinki Accords.6 The conference built on an international conference on the history of détente (“NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and the Rise of Détente, 1965-1972”), sponsored by CIMA and CWIHP in Dobbico in September 2002.7 A November 2002 conference on “Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean during the Cold War,” held in Mexico City in cooperation with Yale University’s Council on Latin American & Iberian Studies and the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores in Antropología Social (Mexico City), inaugurated collaborative efforts with Mexican and other Latin American researchers and archivists to relate the Latin American Cold War experience to the emerging international history of the post-1945 world.

A workshop on “China and its Frontier Issue” with China’s leading Cold War scholars in the Wuyi Mountains in August 2002 intensified collaborative ties with CWIHP’s Chinese partners. In October 2002, CWIHP co-sponsored a conference with the Institute of Political Studies at the Romanian Ministry of Defense and the PHP in Bucharest on “Romania and the Warsaw Pact.” Showcasing the first major release of documents from the Romanian, United States, and other archives on the subject, the conference drew considerable public attention to problems of access and research in Romania. Other meetings (co-)organized and sponsored by CWIHP included a March 2003 workshop at the Wilson Center on the recent declassification of US documents on Argentina’s “Dirty Wars”8 (co-sponsored with the Center’s Latin American Program). Pushing the boundaries of international history into the lives and the communities of peoples the world over, the International Security Studies Program at Yale University and CWIHP sponsored a meeting on “Lives and Consequences: The Local Impact of the Cold War” in April 2003.8 For two days, more than a dozen scholars traced the real-world effects of diplomacy on everyday life. In September 2003 the Project teamed up with the Finnish Academy of Sciences and the Russian State Archives for a conference on “The Economic Cold War” in Helsinki, exploring trade relations and trade embargos during the Cold War.9 Hosted by the Cold War Research Center in Budapest, directed by former CWIHP Scholar Csaba Békés, a November 2003 conference on “Central and Eastern European Archival Evidence on the Cold War in Asia” produced fascinating new evidence and exchanges on the impact of the Sino-Soviet rift on the Soviet alliance system and intra-bloc relationships. With graduate students and junior scholars steeped in archival research across the region as central participants, the meeting sponsored by GWCC and co-sponsored by CWIHP was in many ways the international debut of a new generation of Cold War historians.10 A special CWIHP/GWCC Bulletin issue will present many of the new materials to the scholarly community and public at large.

Broadening the debate on the history of the Cold War and its legacy based on new evidence has remained a central focus of CWIHP’s activities since the publication of the last Bulletin. With funding from the National Endowment for Humanities, GWCC and the Cold War International History Project hosted two summer institutes for about twenty high-school teachers in 2002-2003 to develop an interactive teaching tool for students. Featured in Humanities (“The Unknown Cold War”) in March/April 2003, the project will result in a new website that will provide access to the wealth of new documentary resources. Now in its final developmental stage, the new site, “The Cold War Files—Interpreting History Through Documents,” is set to go online in late 2004. CWIHP also participated in the Graduate Student Conference sponsored by GWCC and the University of California–Santa Barbara as well as the first Annual “Summer Institute on Conducting Archival Research” at George Washington University. (For a report by Cambridge University PhD candidate Sutayut Osornprasop, see http://cwihp.si.edu.) In September 2003, the Cold War International History Project hosted a pioneering international conference on “Cold War Memory: Interpreting the Physical Legacy of the Cold War.” Co-sponsored by the Association of Air Force Missileers, the Cold War Museum, the German Historical Institute (Washington, DC), the Harry S. Truman Library, the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Kennan Institute and organized in cooperation with the Norwegian Aviation Museum, the Eisenhower Foundation and Eisenhower Presidential Library, and the National Coalition for History, the conference was designed to foster a dialogue between Cold War scholars and individuals and organizations charged with interpreting the physical legacy of the Cold War in the United States and abroad. About one hundred cultural resource specialists, leading international scholars, Cold War veterans, media and foundation representatives, government officials, and other professionals from around the world met for two intense days to discuss new findings on the Cold War and their meaning for the conflict’s “public history.” CWIHP is publishing a report on the proceedings of the meeting on its website.

CWIHP also continues its Cold War seminar series at the Woodrow Wilson Center, designed to bring new findings and publications to the attention of Washington’s policy and scholarly community. Recent events included a discussion of “Lyndon Johnson and Europe,” the new book by former Wilson Center Fellow Thomas Alan Schwartz; a panel on William Taubman’s new biography of Nikita Khrushchev (with commentaries by Clinton Administration Undersecretary of State Strobe Talbott and NPR’s Daniel Schorr) before a standing room-only audience; a discussion of Milton Bearden’s and James Risen’s new book on intelligence and the end of the Cold War (“The Main Enemy”); and book launches for CWIHP Senior Scholar Hope Harrison (“Driving the Soviets Up the Wall”), Jeremi Suri (“Power and Protest”), and Jeffrey Kimball (“The Vietnam War Files”). A full list of the meetings and meeting reports is available on the Project’s website (http://cwihp.si.edu).

Thanks to the support by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Project was able to award additional CWIHP scholarships. In 2003, CWIHP hosted Russian scholar Sergey Mazov (Russian Academy of Sciences) as its most recent CWIHP Scholar. During his stay in Washington, Sergey Mazov conducted extensive research on Soviet policy towards West Africa. The Project was also fortunate to host Melvyn Leffler (University of Virginia), Jussi Hanhimaki (Graduate Institute, Geneva), Keith R. Allen (Washington), Marilena Gala (University of Florence) and Trudy Huskamp Peterson, former acting National Archivist and former director of the Open Society Archive in Budapest as Wilson Center Fellows and Public Policy Scholars.

CWIHP has been building its website presence, and the Project is currently restructuring its “Virtual Archive” of declassified and translated documents to facilitate full-text searching and collating of original and translated versions of documents. With support from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, CWIHP has been exploring the possibilities for developing search engines that would allow harvesting across several online archives and collections. Additional web features go online in the spring and summer of 2004. CWIHP’s varied activities would not be possible without the support of a broadening international network of individuals and...
This Bulletin issue—and the activities mentioned above—would not have been possible without the generous support by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (Chicago), The Andrew Mellon Foundation (New York), The Henry Luce Foundation (New York), The Korea Foundation (Seoul), and as well as individual donors. I am indebted to my colleagues at the Woodrow Wilson Center, in particular Lee H. Hamilton, Michael van Dusen, Lauren Crowley, Robert Hathaway, Robert Litwak, Blair Ruble, and Samuel F. Wells, as well as the members of the CWIHP Advisory Committee, chaired by William Taubman, for their steadfast support. CWIHP scholars and partners, in particular Keith Allen, Jordan Baev, Csaba Békés, Tom Blanton, Gregg Brazinsky, William Burr, Malcolm Byrne, Sandra Cavalucci, Chen Jian, MASSIMILIANO GUDERZO, LEOPODLO NUTI, TRUDY HUSKAMP PETERSON, SERGEY RAIDCHENKO, HANNU RAUTAKALLIO, SVETLANA SAVRANSKAIA, BERND SCHÄFER, THOMAS SCHWARTZ, DOUGLAS SELVAGE, DANIELA SPENSER, BALAZS SZALONTAI, SHEN ZHIHUA, OLDRICH TUMA, Yu WEIMIN, ODD ARNE WESTAD, KATHRYN WEATHERSBY, DAVID WOLFF, and VLADISLAV ZUBOK provided essential support in the making of this issue and the activities underlying it. The Project’s outstanding staff, M. Dee Beutel, Nancy Meyers, Mircea Munteanu, and Richard Thomas, as well as a talented group of interns, in particular Jeffrey Becker, HEDI GIUSTO, JÖRN KÄSBEHR, CONOR SAVOY, dealt patiently and skillfully with the editorial and production demands of an ever-growing publication. Finally, I am deeply grateful to this issue’s patient contributors.

—Christian F. Ostermann

Notes

1 The conference received generous support from The Henry Luce Foundation and the Korea Foundation.


4 See in particular the articles and compilations by Kathryn Weathersby in CWIHP Bulletins nos. 4, 5, 6-7 and 11.


6 Diplomat-veterans included Ambassador Jim Goodby (US), Ambassador John Maresca (US), Sir Crispin Tickell (UK), Sir Rodric Braithwaite (UK), Ambassador Yuri Kashlev (Russia), Ambassa-
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