

Lyndon Johnson and 1960s Political Culture

KC Johnson

Brooklyn College, CUNY

Structure

The unit consists of four tracks. The first three focus on separate content areas from the 1960s--foreign policy, civil rights, and electoral politics. Each of these three tracks is structured similarly and contains about the same amount of work, allowing the instructor to choose which track best fits his or her course. The fourth track examines events of the 1960s in the context of the Cold War, and thus reverses the order of the previous three tracks (here the documents are first, and the tapes second). By clicking on the link for the selected track, a series of separate pages appear that can be presented to the students, with the assignments for only that option. Instructors should not give access to this entire page to students, since it has tended to overwhelm them in the past.



*Lyndon Johnson working the telephone.
Photo from LBJ Presidential Library*

Overview

During his 5-year tenure as president, Lyndon Johnson secretly recorded (<http://millercenter.org/presidentialrecordings>) around 642 hours of phone conversations and (in 1968) cabinet meetings. The bulk of the available tapes come from 1964 and 1965, the years of his greatest political and legislative triumphs. This unit uses clips from these recordings to glimpse inside the White House at a time when LBJ made some of his key decisions--regarding civil rights politics and policy; Vietnam and foreign affairs; and his 1964 reelection bid.

Objectives

- show how critical issues of the 1960s (civil rights, foreign policy) changed over time and/or between administrations;
- provide a sense of the inner workings of the office of the presidency, and the significance of political institutions to understanding events of the mid-1960s;
- critically analyze different types of primary sources;
- illustrate tensions inherent within 1960s liberalism.

Track One: Civil Rights

Prerequisites

- Civil Rights Act of 1964 (<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97>)
- Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (SNCC History site, <http://www.ibiblio.org/sncc/mfdp.html>)

Activity One: (In-class assignment)

For a sense of how the MFDP issue vexed Johnson, listen to the clips below (each is under 2 minutes), four excerpts of a conversation between Johnson and Georgia governor Carl Sanders, perhaps the leading Southern moderate officeholder of 1964. As the reading above noted, Johnson had arranged for a "compromise" under which the segregated Mississippi regular delegation would be seated, and two members of the MFDP would be seated as "honorary" at-large delegates. Speaking for the MFDP, Fannie Lou Hamer announced that the MFDP didn't come to the convention site in Atlantic City (the "original Bay of Pigs," said one press wag) to "sit at the back of the bus." But even the moderate Sanders thought that LBJ had gone too far in the compromise.

- We pick up the conversation several minutes in, after Governor Sanders' complaint about the compromise plan.
MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders3.mp3>
OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders3.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: This is a pure Johnson move to try—try—not to call the roll in that convention. I don't see how it could hurt a human being. Mississippi's got every vote they've got. They didn't allow anybody to go in the primary. They wouldn't allow the Negroes to come into the convention. Nevertheless, we're going ahead and seating them. We're giving them every vote they've got. And all we're doing is saying that the protest group—protest of education, protest of housing—which you've already recognized in Georgia, and appointed four on it, which we've already recognized, and put some on it.

But they have *not* put anybody on it. And we're just saying on a national basis we're going to recognize two of them when we're not going to vote. It's a pure symbolic thing—

Sanders: Well, why don't you make them recognize two people outside of the damn Mississippi Freedom Party?

President Johnson: Well, if I could do that, and get my job done, it would be fine. If I were dictator, I wouldn't even be discussing it. But I can't! And I can't even get them to do it this way. But I can get the bosses to go with me this way, and *may* be able to get 1,100 to 900, something like that, assuming I could hold the South. If I can't, why, it's all off again, and we just have to go start something else.

- When Sanders offers a legalistic argument against seating the MFDP, Johnson exhibits rare (private) emotion.
MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders4.mp3>
OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders4.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: But what they ought to be, now, honestly, between you and me, with their population 50 percent [of the state], they ought to be delegates to the Mississippi group.

Sanders: Not unless they're Democrats, Mr. President.

President Johnson: [*forcefully*] They're Democrats! And by God, they tried to attend the convention, and pistols kept them out! These people went in and *begged* to go and participate in the conventions. They've got half the population. They won't let them. They lock them out!

Sanders: They aren't registered. They've got half the population—

President Johnson: Well, some of them are registered.

Sanders: Some of them.

President Johnson: Well—that's enough to get two delegates on here. I mean, you recognized them. John Connally recognizes them.

Sanders: Suppose this would have happened—

President Johnson: [*passionately*] I think you've got a good, legitimate case to say that the state of Mississippi wouldn't let a Negro come into their damn convention, and therefore they violated the law and wouldn't let them vote. Wouldn't let them register. Intimidated them. And, by God, they oughtn't to be seated. I think there's a legitimate case to be made there, but I don't want to make it.

But I don't see how they can raise hell—have their cake and eat it too—and just say, “By God, I'm going to be a dog in the manger. I'm going to have all I got, every vote that the state of Mississippi's got, and then, by God, I'm going to bark if somebody across the hall get a couple.”

- Fed up with Sanders' recalcitrance, the President launches into a series of sarcastic barbs against the Mississippi all-white Democratic delegation.

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders5.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders5.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: What's happening is we're doing four or five things. Number one: we're coming in there and seating the state of Mississippi. Every damn one of them. Now, they oughtn't to be, Carl. They oughtn't . . .

Sanders: I don't—

President Johnson: You and I just can't survive our political modern life with these goddamned fellows down there that are eating them for breakfast every morning. They've got to quit that. And they've got to let them vote. And they've got to let them shave. And they've got to let them eat, and things like that. And they don't do it.

However much we love Jim Eastland and John Stennis, they get a governor like Ross Barnett, and he's messing around there with [George] Wallace, and they won't let one [black] man go in a precinct convention. We've got to put a stop to that, because that's just like the old days, by God, when they wouldn't let them go in and cast a vote of any kind.

You've put a stop to it in your state. But we're going to ignore that. We're going to say, “Hell, yes, you did it. You're wrong. You violated the '57 law, and you violated the '60 law, and you violated the '64 law, but we're going to seat you—every damn one of you. [*dripping with sarcasm*] You lily white babies, we're going to salute you.”

- Sanders then protests that the Mississippi and Alabama delegations are complaining (mp3 file) about having to take a loyalty oath to the party's nominee. The "John" in the call refers to John Connally, Texas governor.

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders6.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanders6.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: You and John—you get with John and you-all suggest that. Both of you are young and modern and effective, and I'm a poor old man here that's got a government falling on me.

In Vietnam today, I just walked out of the [National] Security Council. I've got McNamara coming in here at 6:00 tonight. I'm bringing General [Maxwell] Taylor back. I've got Cyprus in a hell of a war.

I can't go up there and tell those damn fellows, and argue with Adam Clayton Powell and Martin Luther King and the fellow from Alabama—Bull Connor.^[2] They ought to try to make it as easy on me as they can, because they've all been in these things in their own state conventions. They've got problems, and they're going to have them.

Now, this doesn't hurt anybody. I'm for everybody taking the oath. Nobody claims they won't do it except Mississippi and Alabama.

Sanders: That's right, and now they say they'll do it. They just don't want to be singled out in writing.

President Johnson: Just tell them that every national committeeman has taken it, from every state, speaking for his state.

Sanders: Well, I agree with you. I—

President Johnson: Every one of them have already done it. But I don't object. I'd come up there myself, walk out naked and take it, if it would ease Bull Connor's pressure any.

You and John get together and try to talk to this group, and . . .

Discussion Questions

- What does this conversation say about the political obstacles that Johnson faced in championing civil rights?
- What were Johnson's principal arguments in attempting to persuade Sanders to back his MFPD compromise?
- Some historians have faulted Johnson for approaching a moral issue (seating of the integrated MFPD delegation) in a pragmatic manner. Do you agree with that criticism?

Activity Two: (Blackboard assignment)

Read the Civil Rights Act of 1964 at <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst306/documents/civil64.html>.

Text Questions

What are the act's most important features? How did the act's authors hope to use the law to achieve equal rights for all? What sorts of problems were not addressed or anticipated by the act?

Source Questions

In terms of historical skills, how does analyzing a government document differ from analyzing telephone calls between key policymakers? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each as a historical source?

You should post at least twice, with the second post at least 12 hours after the first, and to include responses to the arguments of the other posters.

Activity Three: (Writing assignment)

Listen to President Johnson's complete conversation with Sanders, along with this conversation between President Kennedy and Mississippi governor Ross Barnett during the crisis over the admission of an African-American, James Meredith, to the University of Mississippi.

President Johnson's conversation with Sanders

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanderslong.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/sanderslong.ogg>

Conversation between President Kennedy and Mississippi governor Ross Barnett

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/barnettlong.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/barnettlong.ogg>

Compare and contrast the approaches of Kennedy and Johnson to the issue of civil rights. Be sure to consider the following issues:

- How each man conceived of the power of the presidency;
- The implications of the different personal styles of JFK and LBJ;
- The degree of leverage possessed by the figure on the other end of the line (Barnett and Sanders);
- The similarities and differences between civil rights as a national issue in 1962--before Birmingham and the March on Washington--and 1964.

Track Two: Vietnam

Prerequisite

Vietnam 1964-1965

World War II provided the foundation for ending colonial rule in southeast Asia. Japanese forces ousted colonial regimes in Burma and Malaya (Britain), Indonesia (Holland), and Vietnam and Cambodia (France). Japanese rhetoric—though mostly self-serving—spoke of creating a Pan-Asian bloc of independent nations. And when the Japanese failed to deliver on their promises, intense partisan revolts erupted in Indonesia and French Indochina. In Indonesia, the partisan movement headed by Sukarno, the archipelago's first president, assumed a firmly non-communist tone. In French Indochina, on the other hand, the nationalist movement was led by a communist, Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969).

The First Vietnam War. Ho first attracted international attention in 1919, when he petitioned Woodrow Wilson, at the Paris Peace Conference, to support Vietnamese independence. Wilson, whose vision of self-determination was Eurocentric, declined to meet with the Vietnamese delegation, and shortly thereafter Ho joined the French Communist Party, the one major political movement in France that opposed imperialism. He worked as a low-level covert agent for the Soviet Union during the 1920s, and founded the Indochinese Communist Party in 1929. Ho remained in exile until 1940, when he returned to his homeland for the first time since 1911 and founded the Viet Minh, or Vietnam Independence League, which resisted both the Japanese and the restoration of French rule. With covert backing from U.S. agents in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the Viet Minh proved an effective fighting force.

On September 2, 1945, in the power vacuum that followed Japan's defeat, Ho and proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Borrowing heavily from Enlightenment ideals, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, the declaration charged that "French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow citizens," acting "contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice." The truth, Ho argued, "is that we have wrested our independence from the Japanese and not from the French," and he expected that if Allied nations wanted to live up to the pledges made in the Atlantic Charter and the UN Charter, they would support Vietnamese independence. Two OSS officers stood on the platform, behind Ho, as he made his address.

The West, however, did not back independence for Vietnam. Although Franklin Roosevelt, who believed that the French had failed as colonizers, strongly opposed allowing France to return to Vietnam, he yielded to Allied military plans that assigned liberation of Indochina to Britain's Lord Mountbatten (1900-1979), Supreme Allied Commander of the Southeast Asia Theater. Lest Vietnamese independence be used as a pretext to support dissolution of the British Empire, Mountbatten and the British remained in place until the French government could send troops to restore French rule over its colony. The United States did not protest.

Desultory negotiations between the French and Ho collapsed in mid-1946. Since Ho demanded independence and the French wanted to reestablish colonial control to prove that France remained a great power, a compromise between the two was impossible. Instead, France established a puppet state under Emperor Bao Dai (who spent most of his time in the French Riviera), and the Viet Minh rebelled.

While the French relied on conventional military strategy, Ho and Viet Minh General Vo Nguyen Giap (1912-2003) imitated the tactics of Mao Zedong and the CCP. By fighting a guerrilla war, the Viet Minh took advantage of their popular support. French opinion, meanwhile, divided between those who favored force and those who recommended negotiations, tried to locate blame for the conflict. (In a 1950 French poll, more than 60 percent listed either the United States, Japan, China, or Britain as primarily responsible for the war; only 5 percent considered France to blame for the outbreak of hostilities.) As they would later do in North Africa, the French recognized the independence of less significant parts of Indochina (Cambodia and Laos) in a vain effort to build international support for their retention of economically and strategically areas of Vietnam.

The CCP's triumph in China and the outbreak of the Korean War internationalized the French-Vietnamese conflict.

Despite the historical animosity between Vietnam and China, Mao's regime sent both military advisors and modern hardware to the Viet Minh, allowing Giap to adopt a more aggressive strategy. From the other side, the United States boosted funding to the French, so that by 1953 Washington was paying two-thirds of the war's cost. With the newly adopted NSC 68 guiding U.S. foreign policy, the Viet Minh's communist ideology made it a threat. Moreover, U.S. policymakers worried about how the Asian realignment would affect Japan. With the loss of traditional Japanese markets in China, a non-communist Southeast Asia loomed as a possible substitute for Japanese exports. Otherwise, officials in the Truman administration feared, the Japanese government would have no choice but to accommodate itself to China.

This outside backing only made the war more grisly. Declining popular support for the war in France prompted the French military to engage in increasingly risky tactics. In late 1953, hoping to draw out Viet Minh forces into a large-scale conventional battle, the new French commander, General Henri Navarre (1898-1983) adopted a new strategy of building entrenched, isolated outposts in northern and western Vietnam. Hoping to cut off Viet Minh attacks on Laos, Navarre decided to fortify Dien Bien Phu, a small town located in a northwestern Vietnam valley that the French could supply only by air. The plan was disastrously conceived, and Giap took advantage. Giap's troops began a siege in March 1954, dragging 200 howitzer guns up rugged mountain sides to target the French air base. Nearly 10,000 soldiers were trapped, and soon ran out of supplies. In a last-ditch effort to salvage the battle, the French appealed for formal U.S. assistance in early May 1954, and Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Arthur Radford recommended employing atomic weapons to break the siege. Eisenhower demurred and the French garrison fell. A conference in Geneva, Switzerland ended the first Vietnam War. Vietnam was divided into two states, with Ho ruling the North (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, or DRV) and Bao Dai placed in charge of the South. The Geneva Accords restricted the foreign military aid that either Vietnamese state could receive, and called for all-Vietnam elections in 1956 to reunify the country.

American Involvement. These elections never took place. Continuing a pattern he had demonstrated during the war, Ho's government cracked down against its domestic foes, triggering a mass migration, mostly of Catholics, to the South. Meanwhile, the United States, which did not sign the Geneva Accords, aggressively supported a non-communist regime in South Vietnam. Concluding that Bao Dai could not capably govern, the United States backed Ngo Dinh Diem (1901-1963), one of the few Vietnamese political figures with impeccable anti-communist and nationalist credentials.

Between 1955 and 1960, the United States flooded South Vietnam with economic and, increasingly, military aid. The Eisenhower administration justified its course by citing the "domino theory," which held that a Communist victory in Vietnam would result in surrounding countries becoming Communist like a "falling row of dominoes." Yet as a Catholic in a predominantly Buddhist nation and an autocrat who relied on advice from his even more autocratic brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu (1904-1963), Diem's political position grew more precarious. In 1960, the newly formed National Liberation Front (NLF), which consisted of Communist cadres left behind in South Vietnam after the end of the French-Vietnamese war, launched a revolt.

The NLF rebellion coincided with a new administration in Washington, as Democrat John Kennedy, the youngest elected President in U.S. history, replaced Eisenhower. Kennedy promised to bring new ideas to U.S. foreign policy. In military affairs, he was attracted to the work of Edward Lansdale, who argued that winning the "hearts and minds" of the civilian population was critical to victory in a guerrilla war. Kennedy also paid attention to the writings of MIT economist Walt Rostow, whose GET TITLES hypothesized that all nations passed through five stages of economic development—the traditional society, the preconditions for takeoff, the takeoff, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption—with vulnerability to a communist takeover occurring in the second stage, when traditional society collapsed.

Kennedy formed from these theories a national security doctrine called flexible response, and the administration considered the situation in Vietnam as a testing ground for the new theory. In reality, the new President dramatically expanded the U.S. military commitment in Southeast Asia. In Kennedy advisers Rostow and Maxwell Taylor recommended more aid, as well as the dispatch of an 8,000-man "logistic task force" to assist the South Vietnamese army. Kennedy declined the latter suggestion but accepted the first, and even that restriction carried little force: by the end of 1962, 9,000 U.S. "advisors" were stationed in South Vietnam (the Geneva Accords permitted just over 700) and the U.S. Army had assumed responsibility for training the South Vietnamese military. Seeking to deny NLF forces backing

from the South Vietnamese peasantry, U.S. advisors pressured Diem into adopting a “strategic hamlet” policy, which called for herding rural civilians into camps patrolled by the South Vietnamese army.

These policies only intensified South Vietnam’s political unrest. On June 11, 1963, after Diem’s refusal to implement an agreement ending religious discrimination, a Buddhist monk set himself on fire, receiving extensive coverage in the international media. Nhu’s wife, Madame Nhu, dismissed the event, saying that she would “clap hands at seeing another monk barbecue show.” Kennedy took the self-immolation far more seriously. He ruled out withdrawal, and instead urged the South Vietnamese military to organizing a coup against the Diem regime. On November 1, 1963, the generals acted, toppled the government, and assassinated Diem and Nhu.

Kennedy expected that the new government would wage the war more effectively. Instead, the coup destabilized South Vietnamese politics, creating the impression that the weak military regimes that followed Diem were little more than puppets of Washington.

Americanizing the War. Three weeks after Diem’s killing, Kennedy himself was assassinated. While a lively scholarly debate exists over whether Kennedy would have Americanized the conflict in Vietnam (around 19,000 U.S. troops were in Vietnam at the time of his death), his successor committed himself to victory. Lyndon Johnson (-1973) told advisors that he would not be the first American president to lose a war, and he recalled the criticism that fellow Democrat Harry Truman had received from Republicans like Joe McCarthy during the Korean War. In summer 1964, with CIA assistance, South Vietnamese armed forces initiated a covert operation called OPLAN 34-A, which involved small-scale naval raids on the North Vietnamese coast. On August 2, shortly after one such raid, North Vietnamese forces fired on the U.S.S. *Maddox*, which was inside North Vietnam’s 12-mile territorial waters. After confusing reports suggested an attack two nights later, the administration proposed a measure, which came to be known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, authorizing the President to “take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.” Only two senators—Wayne Morse of Oregon and Ernest Gruening of Alaska—voted against the bill, which would be used by Johnson as evidence that Congress approved a dramatically expanded U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia.

U.S. policy toward Vietnam during the Johnson administration suffered from a fatal flaw. Like Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson did the minimum possible to prevent South Vietnam from coming under Communist control. During the Eisenhower administration, the minimum possible was large-scale U.S. economic aid. Under Kennedy, the minimum possible was boosted military aid, along with an increased presence of U.S. advisors. Because of the weakness of the regimes that succeeded Diem, however, for Johnson, the minimum possible was to introduce U.S. combat troops, since otherwise the South Vietnamese government was likely to collapse. But by waging the war with U.S. soldiers, Johnson only strengthened the DRV’s contention that the United States had succeeded the French in waging a colonial war, and ensured that any government in South Vietnam would be perceived as a U.S. puppet regime.

The Americanization of the conflict occurred at an alarming pace. In early 1965, seeking to bolster morale in the South, the United States initiated a campaign to bomb the DRV, called Operation Rolling Thunder. To protect the air bases that housed the Rolling Thunder planes, Johnson sent the first U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam. By the end of 1965, over 180,000 U.S. troops were stationed in Vietnam. The military commander of the operation, General William Westmoreland, devised a policy called “search and destroy,” in which U.S. troops aggressively sought out NLF forces. The progress of this approach was determined by a daily “body count” that listed enemy casualties. Westmoreland believed that a high enough “kill ratio” would eventually break the will of the North Vietnamese to carry on the war. Instead, despite administration promises of a “light at the end of the tunnel,” more and more troops were sent to Vietnam (over 500,000 by the end of 1967), with no end to the war in sight.

Activity One: (In-class assignment)

For a sense of how Johnson struggled with the Vietnam policy that he inherited from Kennedy, listen to the clips below (each of which is less than 3 minutes), from a conversation between the President and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on March 2, 1964. Seeking to counter press criticism of the administration's Vietnam policy, the President pushed McNamara for a clearer sense of the U.S. justification for involvement in the war. Keep in mind that, by this time, Johnson had already been President for more than three months, and the number of U.S. troops in South Vietnam had risen to more than 20,000.

- We pick up the conversation after McNamara briefs the President on unrelated matters; Johnson asks (mp3 file) for a memorandum outlining Vietnam policy, and in the process spells out the alternatives for the United States as he sees them.

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-1.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-1.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: I want you to dictate to me a memorandum of a couple of pages, four-letter words and short sentences, several paragraphs, so I can read it and study it and commit it to memory. Not for the purpose of using it, now-I'm not going to give out your figures on 20,000 [Vietnamese] killed last year, compared to 5 [thousand]-on the situation in Vietnam, the Vietnam picture. If you had to put it in 600 words, or maybe 1000 words, if you have to go that long, just like you talk.

I'd like for you to say there are several courses that could be followed: we could send our own divisions in there, and our own Marines in there, and start attacking the Viet Cong, and the results that would likely flow from that.

We could come out of there, say we're willing to neutralize, let them neutralize South Vietnam, and let the communists take North Vietnam, and as soon as we get out, they could swallow up South Vietnam, and that would go.

We could pull out and say, "The hell with you. We're going to have Fortress America. We're going home." And that would mean-here's what would happen in Thailand, here's what would happen in the Philippines; come on back and get us back to Honolulu.

Or, we could say this is a Vietnamese war. They've got 200,000 men. They're untrained. We've got to bring their morale up. They have nothing really to fight for because of the type of government they've had. We can put in socially conscious people and try to get them to improve their own government, and what the people get out of their own government. We can train them how to fight, and 200,000 will ultimately be able to take care of these 25,000 [Viet Cong].

And that, after considering all of these [options], it seems that the latter offers the best alternative for America to follow. Now, if the latter has failed, then we have to make another decision.

- After reading McNamara a series of hostile comments from Republican senators and the press, focused on LBJ's remark in a UCLA speech that North Vietnam was playing a "deeply dangerous game," the President complains (mp3 file) about press criticism directed against him for considering escalating the U.S. involvement.

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-2.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-2.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: Now, they're all saying that following our [Johnson's] speech in Los Angeles, where we [Johnson] said this is a very dangerous period-

Robert McNamara: Mr. President, can I interrupt you? Who put the line in? I'm curious.

President Johnson: [pauses] I don't know. I would say [National Security Advisor McGeorge] Bundy. "Deeply dangerous game." But I don't see anything wrong with it, even yet. I think it *is* deeply dangerous when anybody starts aggression.

Now, that was not where it started at all. I blew my top here for a whole damned week. I jumped on you and jumped on Rusk both why you were saying, out in Saigon, that you were invading North Vietnam, even if you were going to invade it. Now, I know how [Policy Planning Staff director Walt] Rostow-how he feels. And I know how you all feel.

But they came back a week before we said it's a deeply dangerous game. This stuff is pouring out by reams. And the first story said that "military officials in Saigon"-it came from Saigon. I talked to you about it, and you said that wasn't correct. So I jumped on Rusk about it, and Rusk comes back and points out the story itself said "military officials." That's where it came from. Now, the story came from Saigon that we're getting ready to do this. And a lot of people in Saigon, they tell me, said that they got it from the State Department here-that Rostow had a propaganda move on to really invade North Vietnam, and always had had it.

I don't know enough about the inner workings of these two departments, but I know that this thing has been going on for ten days, or a week, before we got it, and I can get the clippings and show 'em where they were full of it.

But now they want to hang it on a little higher person and say that I indicated that we were going to invade Vietnam, or that we were going to hit the Chinese, or that we were going to bomb Moscow. Now, I didn't do any such thing. I said that this is deeply dangerous-and it is deeply dangerous! It's dangerous for any nation to start aggression, and start enveloping, a neutral, freedom-loving people. And I think it was dangerous to 20,000 of them [Vietnamese] that got killed there last year.

- After some more complaining about leaks (a favorite Johnson topic) from the State Department and the military, the President asks McNamara about how the administration should explain its Vietnam policy to the public, and receives a startling reply (mp3 file).

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-3.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-3.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: Do you think it's a mistake to explain what I'm saying now about Vietnam, and what we're faced with?

McNamara: Well, I do think, Mr. President, that it would be wise for you to say as little as possible. The frank answer is we don't know what's going on out there. The signs I see coming through the cables are disturbing signs-poor morale in Vietnamese forces, poor morale in the armed forces, disunity, a tremendous amount of coup planning against [Nguyen] Khanh. About what you'd expect in a situation that's had-

President Johnson: Then why don't we take some pretty offensive steps pretty quickly, then? Why don't we commend Khanh on his operation and try to prop him up? Why don't we raise the salary of their soldiers to improve that morale instead of waiting a long time? Why don't we do some of these things that are inclined to bolster them?

McNamara: Well, I'm not sure that they-

- After some discussion about the possible political motives of U.S. ambassador in Saigon Henry Cabot Lodge, a former Massachusetts senator who was making a write-in bid for the GOP presidential nomination, Johnson concludes (mp3 file) the call by pressing McNamara for bolder political and military tactics on behalf of the new South Vietnamese leader, General Nguyen Khanh, who had assumed power in a January military coup.

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-4.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaravn-4.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: And I was rather encouraged by Lodge's cable of yesterday in which he [Khanh] said that he showed more efficiency than either one of them [his predecessors as South Vietnamese rulers].

McNamara: That's right. I agree with you.

President Johnson: But I don't know why his 200,000 [troops] are not showing some results and we keep saying that everything is bad and looks blue.

McNamara: Well, this is the question, Mr. President. We've not seen the results yet. Maybe they'll come, but it's a very uncertain period. Khanh is behaving properly; there's no doubt.

President Johnson: Why don't we send Lodge a wire back in reply to the one he sent yesterday that we heartily agree with him: they ought to clear out an area and get some results, and to please tell Khanh that we think this is absolutely essential to our continued morale here, or our continued support or something?

McNamara: Sure, we'll do that.

Discussion Questions

- Based on these conversations, what was Johnson's primary goal in Vietnam?
- In terms of the relationship between Johnson and McNamara, who seemed to have a better sense of policy? Why?
- Who did American policymakers consider the "enemy" in Vietnam?
- How much consideration did LBJ give to domestic public opinion?

Activity Two: (Blackboard assignment)

Lyndon Johnson was someone who preferred doing business over the telephone, and who believed that formal meetings often were a waste of time. In contrast to his lobbying members of Congress, however, on foreign policy issues he had little choice but to work through the established bureaucracy, at least to some degree. The following documents from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series detail U.S. policy toward Vietnam in the month following Johnson's March conversation with Secretary of Defense McNamara. You should read [documents #74, 81, 84, and 100](#).

Text Questions:

What are the central features of the administration's policy toward Vietnam? How much leverage did the President possess compared to other key policymakers? Do you see any key "turning points" in the development of US policy?

Source Questions:

How does analyzing a government document differ from analyzing telephone calls between key policymakers? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each as a historical source?

You should post at least twice, with the second post at least 12 hours after the first, and to include responses to the arguments of the other posters.

Activity Three: (Writing assignment)

Listen to President Johnson's complete conversation with McNamara, along with this discussion between the President and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy about Vietnam from November 3, 1964. In what ways had the administration's approach to Vietnam changed between March and November 1964? What do you see as the one or two central principles of LBJ's policy? Be sure to consider the following issues:

President Johnson's conversation with McNamara

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaralong.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaralong.ogg>

Discussion between the President and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy about Vietnam from November 3, 1964

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/bundylong.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/bundylong.ogg>

- Johnson's conception of his role as commander-in-chief;
- The role of LBJ's personality in his approach to foreign affairs;
- The degree of leverage possessed by Johnson regarding Vietnam policy.

Track Three: 1964 Campaign

Prerequisite

Campaign of 1964

Lyndon Johnson assumed the presidency in the most trying of circumstances. The assassination of John Kennedy led both political parties to adjourn politics for a 30-day mourning period. Still, the new President never had conceded that a boundary existed between politics and policy, and Kennedy's death did not change the fact. In his first address before the Congress, Johnson committed himself to passing Kennedy's program, fully aware that success in this effort would also allow him to stand as a "can-do" President in the fall. In the process, Johnson not only established himself as chief executive in his own right: he also redefined the nature of running for the presidency.

In the initial weeks of his tenure, Johnson challenged long-established tradition by making an ability to shepherd legislation through Congress a tangible asset in presidential politics. By doing so, he shifted the playing field to an area where he possessed an overwhelming advantage over any possible foe. In 1999, C-SPAN asked 60 historians, journalists, and presidential scholars to rate the Presidents in 10 categories. In nine of the ten, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, or Franklin Delano Roosevelt received the highest ranking. But in one category-relations with Congress-first place went to Johnson. The intensity and productivity of his dealings with the institution the *Washington Star* considered his "first and lasting love" represented one of Johnson's sharpest breaks from his predecessor. Among 20th century chief executives, FDR might have pioneered the strategy of benefiting politically from performing presidential duties, but no previous President had established legislative success in and of itself as a political test-because no previous President had shared Johnson's confidence that he could perform the task.

Johnson did not make his first overtly political speech as President until February 29, 1964, thus confirming his mastery of FDR's strategy of shielding the presidency from the political arena. On the domestic front, Johnson pushed through Kennedy's major legislative items even as he ostensibly remained above the political fray. In championing the administration's civil rights bill, Johnson suggested that despite his Southern heritage, he would be a national, not a sectional, chief executive. Johnson's handling of his predecessor's tax bill accrued for him more political benefits than did civil rights: he willingly paid the price demanded by Senate conservatives-reducing the federal budget to below \$100 billion-since doing so fortified his reputation as a Democrat capable of appealing to both business and labor. And on no legislative measure did Johnson's political motives appear more clearly than in his handling of Kennedy's farm bill, which he saw as a chance first to keep together the New Deal Democratic coalition and then to woo Midwestern Republicans beyond the reach of the Democratic Party since 1936.

That political concerns affected public policy decisions in the Johnson administration (or that of any other President) comes as no great insight. But this study seeks to understand how and in what specific ways politics shaped policy. A fusion of politics and policy extended to the international arena as well. Johnson has been portrayed-both at the time and by many historians thereafter-as a somewhat passive President on international matters, at least in the initial period of his presidency. "The frivolous answer here," columnist Max Frankel mocked in early February 1964, "to inquiries from abroad about President Johnson's inclinations in foreign policy has been: 'Haven't you heard? There isn't going to be any foreign policy in the next year.'" To Frankel, the President had ignored the truism "often proclaimed by President Kennedy [that] the line between domestic and foreign affairs has become almost nonexistent."

In fact, Johnson fully understood how domestic politics and foreign policy intersected. But unlike Kennedy, who frequently worried about domestic forces constraining his international agenda, Johnson tailored his foreign policies to serve his perceived political needs. In the process, he assumed an active-and, indeed, decisive-role on a host of international issues. This pattern emerged most clearly in the administration's response to Latin America, but recent interpretations of Johnson's early Vietnam and European policies also show a chief executive decisive on international matters almost from the start of his presidency. Unfortunately for the President, he lacked the magical touch internationally that he displayed with Congress. By the early summer of 1964, it appeared as if his handling of foreign policy matters could provide an opening for a strong Republican candidate. That this ultimately did not occur represented one of the great surprises of the

1964 campaign.

For much of early 1964, in any case, it remained unclear whether the GOP would produce a viable challenger. Johnson's elevation to the presidency transformed all elements of the election, and perhaps most dramatically the contest on the Republican side. By late 1963, Arizona senator Barry Goldwater had assumed a healthy lead in Republican polls—due to the weakness of his principal opponent, New York governor Nelson Rockefeller, party leaders' excitement at Goldwater's ability to outpoll John Kennedy in the South, the senator's grassroots support from conservatives, and the fact that few prominent Republicans wanted to take on Kennedy. But few political observers, at least in early 1964, believed that even Goldwater, despite his criticism of civil rights legislation, could best Johnson in the South, although, in retrospect, clear signs existed to the contrary. Accordingly, several Republicans—Richard Nixon, William Scranton, and Henry Cabot Lodge chief among them—looked seriously at the race. Lodge ultimately emerged as the most potent of these challengers, thanks to his upset victory in the New Hampshire primary and his strength in subsequent public opinion polls. Goldwater and Lodge not only differed ideologically but also tactically. While Goldwater focused on winning delegates through state conventions, Lodge embraced what had been dubbed "Kennedy's Law," after the Massachusetts Democrat's success in 1960: that political professionals would nominate the candidate with the greatest popular appeal.

Lodge ultimately failed to sustain his public backing. Perhaps, as Rick Perlstein has most persuasively argued, the Massachusetts Republican never seriously threatened Goldwater's status as the frontrunner. But the Lodge candidacy nonetheless requires students of 1964 to entertain some counterfactual considerations. The thrust of recent scholarship has portrayed the right's capture of the Republican Party as a linear process, either through the decline of the liberal Republicans, the emergence of a new suburban base for the GOP, or the creation of a powerful base of conservative grassroots activists. But what if Lodge had prevailed in the Oregon primary, as he was favored to do, and a Lodge-Rockefeller coalition had then defeated Goldwater in California? Such results would have given Lodge a realistic chance at the nomination. And had the GOP selected this ardent champion of civil rights as its nominee, Alabama governor George Wallace almost certainly would have proceeded with a third-party presidential bid. An election with Wallace threatening Johnson's hold over the South and urban ethnic voters while Lodge challenged the President for predominance in the suburbs and with Cold War liberals would have yielded a different result on November 3—and possibly altered subsequent political history.

The collapse of the Lodge candidacy all but ensured Goldwater's nomination. Meanwhile, the passage of the Civil Rights Act, which Johnson signed into law on July 2, 1964, revived suspicions that a white backlash could determine the November outcome. In many ways, however, the most interesting question regarding the civil rights issue focuses on why the backlash failed to substantially assist the Republicans in 1964—in contrast to the 1968, 1980, and 1988 presidential races, where backlash sentiment peeled off enough Democrats to ensure GOP triumphs. Shortcomings in Goldwater's strategy alone do not provide a sufficient explanation. Although the 1964 San Francisco convention is generally remembered as an example of how political parties should not conduct national gatherings, commentary from the time viewed the affair differently, arguing that Goldwater had mobilized a conservative base that, when joined with a "silent" backlash vote, could propel the senator at the very least to an unexpectedly close finish.

In the event, the 1964 contest distinguished itself from its successors by featuring an issue to trump the backlash—national security policy. In October 1964, Richard Reston of the *Los Angeles Times* discussed how Johnson had used foreign policy "in a conscious political effort to isolate the more aggressive stand" of Goldwater. Talking about a bipartisan foreign policy tradition represented the first aspect of this effort, linking Dwight Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, and Henry Cabot Lodge into Johnson's portrayal of the mainstream foreign policy against which Goldwater was rebelling. Moreover, Goldwater's positions against the nuclear test-ban treaty and in favor of granting NATO commanders more discretion to use nuclear weapons allowed Johnson to portray the Arizonan as someone who would create "fear instead of confidence, division instead of unity, and controversy in times that demand a common front." In this sense, foreign policy emerged as the President's most potent "political weapon."

The end of the Republican convention in late July returned the political focus to Johnson, where it would remain for the rest of the year. At the time, the most significant undecided issue in the Democratic campaign was the identity of

the President's running mate. Minnesota senator Hubert Humphrey recalled the Johnson attitude: "It was the kind of situation he delighted in: floating a trial balloon, deflating it, suggesting different names. He held all the cards and played them as the whim struck."

Until the end of July, the central figure in this drama was Attorney General Robert Kennedy. One author has termed the battle between Lyndon Johnson and Robert Kennedy the "feud that defined a decade," and, if it was not quite that, it did play a critical political role in the early months of the Johnson presidency. The two men first came into regular contact in 1960, when Robert managed his brother's campaign and fumed at the desperate tactics employed by Johnson in the weeks before the convention. On the other side, the convention instilled in Johnson a deep dislike for Robert Kennedy, whom Johnson believed wanted to eliminate him from national politics. Relations between the two deteriorated during John Kennedy's presidency. In 1964, although the Attorney General made sporadic gestures of trying to force Johnson to nominate him, the President was not intimidated. In late July, he announced that Kennedy, along with all members of the Cabinet, would not be considered for the vice-presidential slot.

Kennedy's elimination made Humphrey, the Senate majority whip, the frontrunner for the nomination. Humphrey and Johnson had a longstanding, mutually profitable relationship. The Minnesotan won election to the Senate in 1948 after electrifying the year's Democratic convention with a speech endorsing a strong civil rights platform plank—the same plank that produced Strom Thurmond's brief departure from the party. The upper chamber, however, was far less receptive to his oratorical capabilities. His political rehabilitation came about largely from the efforts of Johnson, who saw in Humphrey a potential ally among Senate liberals skeptical of his commitment to traditional Democratic programs.

In the early months of 1964, in a revealing commentary on their future relationship, Johnson and Humphrey never had a conversation between equals. Humphrey never challenged or chastised the President, while Johnson regularly disparaged Humphrey's political and intellectual skills, sometimes directly, more usually behind the senator's back. And the President, who obsessed over press leaks, frequently complained about Humphrey's habit of speaking excessively to journalists.

This hesitancy caused Johnson to search for an alternative to Humphrey as the 1964 Democratic convention in-of all places—Atlantic City drew near. This quest eventually focused on Montana senator Mike Mansfield, the Senate majority leader. Humphrey salvaged his nomination only thanks to Mansfield's obvious reluctance for the post and the Minnesotan's work in resolving a controversy over the composition of the Mississippi delegation. After Mississippi's segregated Democratic Party sent an all-white, pro-Goldwater delegation to the convention, civil rights activists countered with a mixed-race delegation calling itself the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. The President harbored no particular sympathy for the Mississippi regulars, but recognized that denying them their seats would cause other Southern delegations to bolt the convention. Johnson eventually defused the crisis with a compromise that many liberals considered unsatisfactory and that generated surprisingly strong opposition from a significant supporting player in the 1964 contest, Georgia governor Carl Sanders.

With even the moderate Sanders dubious about the President's political approach to civil rights, Johnson entered the fall campaign fully understanding that he lacked a secure base of Southern support. Both publicly and privately, however, the President expressed little concern: while commentators anticipated a backlash vote, he introduced a new word to the political lexicon. For several weeks following the convention, Johnson structured his campaign agenda around cultivating the "frontlash"—independents and Republicans uncomfortable with Barry Goldwater's positions on national security issues and civil rights. The fiscal conservatism of these voters had made them the core of the GOP in many Northern and Eastern states after World War II, and the New Deal economic agenda made them suspicious of the Democrats.

In 1964, Johnson not only wanted their votes—he wanted their permanent allegiance for his party. He used the early weeks of the fall campaign to outline a program based on peace, prosperity, and social justice that seemed tailor-made to persuade frontlash voters to switch to the Democratic Party. That process, however, proved much more difficult than the President, in his campaign manager persona, had anticipated; and it ultimately was undone by an attempt to balance the economic agenda demanded by frontlash voters with domestic policies preferred by traditional Democratic

constituencies, such as labor unions, liberals, and, ultimately, the President himself. By the end of September, under criticism for offering only the blandest of economic proposals, even Johnson concluded that the frontlash approach would not produce a permanent realignment.

Just as the Lodge campaign compels a closer look at alternative paths for the GOP, the frontlash effort forces us to reconsider the foundations of 1960s liberalism. Serious scholarship on the issue dates from Allen Matusow's magisterial *Unraveling of America*, which posited an ideological continuity between the Kennedy and Johnson administrations based on what Matusow termed "corporate liberalism." On the surface, Johnson's advocacy of a fiscally responsible, pro-business, pro-growth agenda would suggest a similarity between Johnson's economic approach and that of Kennedy, as would the retention of Kennedy's key economic advisers. But Johnson's economic program also included anti-poverty initiatives and a strongly favorable attitude toward unions, items that had assumed much less importance under Kennedy.

In this sense, Johnson's frontlash agenda represented much more a political than an economic program, a general approach that would resurface in the 1990s under the moniker "Third Way" in Europe and "New Democrat" in the United States. Like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, Lyndon Johnson wanted to make liberalism acceptable to upper-middle-class and middle-class voters, by de-emphasizing calls for expanding the welfare state and income redistribution, and stressing instead aspects of rights-related liberalism where the frontlash voters and traditional Democratic constituencies could make common cause. In the end, of course, Johnson would not duplicate the success of Clinton or Blair in this endeavor. But it is testimony to his political acumen that, recognizing how the Civil Rights Act would shatter the New Deal coalition, he made the attempt at all.

Johnson shared with his 1990s Democratic successor one other important trait—a tendency toward blowing small scandals out of proportion by responding to them inappropriately. In 1964, Johnson's ethical difficulties originated in an influence-peddling investigation involving his former aide and protégé, Bobby Baker, and inquiry that revealed what Cabell Phillips of the *New York Times* termed a "moral climate where the habitual wheeling and dealing in the coin of politics, privilege, and the reciprocal good turn tends to dull the sensibilities." If leveled at John Kennedy or Dwight Eisenhower, allegations of rampant ethical improprieties would have been dismissed out of hand. But regarding "Landslide Lyndon," the man who amassed a net worth of eight figures while serving exclusively on the government payroll, such charges seemed entirely plausible.

Months of investigation uncovered only two specific—and very minor—links between Johnson and the scandal. Had the President been immediately forthcoming, the matter might have passed with little political damage. Instead, Johnson's conduct magnified the problem. He first offered legalistic responses that, while technically true, made him appear evasive. He then argued that even if everything of which he was accused were correct, the charges involved private morality rather than public policy and therefore were inappropriate for a political campaign. He pressured Senate Democrats to close down the inquiry. He urged the FBI to investigate Baker's foes, and turned a blind eye to the leaking of confidential personnel information designed to discredit Baker's attackers. And finally, when the investigation began examining possible campaign finance law violations, the President authorized his lawyer and friend Abe Fortas, the man whose legal strategizing had saved his political career in 1948, to obstruct justice.

His having already gone to such extremes makes understandable Johnson's response to the biggest scandal of the fall campaign—the arrest of his closest aide, Walter Jenkins, on what was delicately termed a "morals" charge. With virtually no other line of attack, Goldwater had made restoring "morality" in Washington the centerpiece of his campaign. To provide himself with political cover from additional criticism, Johnson responded to Jenkins' arrest by ordering a full-scale FBI inquiry into the affair, only to realize that Jenkins' office safe contained damaging files including, among other things, evidence of campaign finance irregularities. Accordingly, the President, at the time in New York for a campaign address, ordered Fortas to remove the files from the office, thrice calling his counselor to confirm his instructions. And it was all captured on tape.

The Jenkins affair and Johnson's difficulties in articulating a frontlash agenda prevented the 1964 campaign from producing a permanent realignment. Instead, the contest's closing weeks featured the President trying to solidify his

historical legacy, largely by outperforming the 1936 showing of his mentor, Franklin Roosevelt and by using his margin of victory to ensure the defeat of his most vituperative congressional foes. Johnson achieved a mixed record in this regard, and this tactic—an approach he chose over the advice of most of his political counselors—paved the way for the quick collapse of his 1964 coalition when economic and international conditions subsequently soured. In this sense, 1964 represented a hollow victory; the President received a short-term boost but little long-term political strength.

Activity One: (In-class assignment)

For a sense of how Johnson conceived of the "frontlash," listen to these conversations—clips from August and September 1964 calls between the President and aide Bill Moyers.

- Johnson first picked up on the "frontlash" concept at the Atlantic City convention, as he demonstrated in this conversation (mp3 file) with Moyers. Moyers was at the convention hall, the President was in the Oval Office.
MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/moyersfrontlash.mp3>
OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/moyersfrontlash.ogg>
- Articulating a positive economic agenda that would appeal to frontlash voters, however, was difficult for a committed New Dealer like Johnson. In this conversation with Moyers (mp3 file), the President attempted to outline the main economic themes of his campaign, to be unveiled at the traditional Democratic campaign kickoff, a Labor Day speech in Detroit.
MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/moyers.mp3>
OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/moyers.ogg>

Discussion Questions

- Based on his conversation with Moyers, what did LBJ see as the central task of the Detroit speech?
- What domestic agenda did he envision for a completed term?
- How did LBJ hope to appeal to the "frontlash" constituency? What kind of voters was he talking about in his conversations with Moyers?

Activity Two: (Blackboard assignment)

The 1964 presidential campaign was the first in which the majority of commercials run by the two candidates—Johnson and Arizona senator Barry Goldwater—were negative; and the race produced the most famous attack ad in American history, Johnson's "daisy ad," which featured a countdown to a nuclear explosion superimposed over a little girl picking the petals off a daisy, with the implication that Goldwater would start a nuclear war if elected President. Watch these 20 television commercials from the campaign at <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964>.

Text Questions:

To what extent did Johnson accomplish the goals he outlined in his conversations with Moyers and Reedy? What message did Goldwater hope to convey, and was he successful in doing so?

Source Questions:

How should we analyze a source like TV ads, which rely on visual messages as much as the text or the sound? What did you consider the most effective ad of the 20? Why?

You should post at least twice, with the second post at least 12 hours after the first, and to include responses to the arguments of the other posters.

Activity Three: (Writing assignment)

Listen to this remarkable (lengthy) October 1964 conversation between Johnson and his chief aide, Walter Jenkins, in which the President, functioning as his own campaign manager, surveyed the state of the race against Goldwater, discussed political tactics, and outlined his vision for the future political state of the country. Historians (and contemporary political commentators) often remark on the contradictions between the necessities of campaigning for office and the more idealistic vision of public policy held by politicians. Compare and contrast Johnson's political goals with the tactics that he is willing to pursue. Be sure to consider the following issues:

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/jenkinslong.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/jenkinslong.ogg>

- How Johnson conceived of the power of the presidency;
- The relationship between LBJ's personal style and his functioning as President;
- The similarities and differences between American political culture in 1964 and that of today.

Track Four: The Cold War and the 1960s

Prerequisite: Cold War timeline

This timeline gives a sense of some of the key events in US policy toward the Cold War, 1946-1963.

To an extent, the Cold War developed a momentum of its own, as can be seen through a timeline (<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/coldwartimeline.htm>) of the era.

- **January 5, 1946:** President Truman indicates that the US will not recognize future communist governments, since *"I'm sick of babying the Soviets"*
- **February 9, 1946:** Before the Communist Party Congress, Stalin suggests that communism and capitalism were incompatible.
- **February 22, 1946:** George Kennan's (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm>) Long Telegram, one of the most famous documents of the Cold War, contending that Russian behavior was determined by a *"traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity,"* and that *"we have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with US there can be no permanent modus vivendi."*
- **March 5, 1946:** Former British prime minister Winston Churchill, at Fulton, Missouri, declares that an "Iron Curtain" (<http://www.hpol.org/churchill/>) has descended on Europe.
- **March 10, 1946:** Truman demands Russia withdraw from Iran (see Image One below), which had been jointly occupied by the British and the Red Army during World War II, with no oil concessions and no annexation of Azerbaijan.
- **September 12, 1946:** Former Vice President and then Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace (<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/case/3pt/wallace.html>) delivers a Madison Square Garden speech announcing *"the tougher we get with Russia, the tougher they will get with us"*; he was forced to resign as Secretary of Commerce September 20.
- **March 12, 1947:** President Truman announces the Truman Doctrine (<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/trumandoc.htm>), informing Congress, *"I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."*
- **June 5, 1947:** Secretary of State George Marshall, in a commencement address (<http://www.hpol.org/marshall/>) at Harvard University, announces a package of economic assistance to aid in European recovery. Though not "directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos," the Marshall Plan further divides Europe into two spheres of influence (<http://astro.temple.edu/~barbday/Europe66/resources/coldwardivisionmap1.htm>).
- **July 26, 1947:** Congress passes the National Security Act (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/national-security-act>), which creates a civilian Secretary of Defense (the first was James Forrestal), a National Security Council, a Central Intelligence Agency--but does not call for universal military training.
- **February 25, 1948:** Communists overthrow the government of Eduard Beneš (http://www.coldwar.org/articles/40s/czech_coup.asp) in Czechoslovakia, the last democratic nation in the Soviet bloc.
- **June 24, 1948:** Further increasing tensions over Europe's future, the Soviets begin a blockade of the Western zones in occupied Berlin; the Allied powers would respond with an 11-month airlift to supply the beleaguered http://www.coldwar.org/articles/40s/berlin_airlift.asp city.
- **Apr. 4, 1949:** The NATO treaty http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/nato.asp is signed.
- **July 14, 1949:** The USSR explodes its first atomic bomb.
- **Oct. 1, 1949:** The Communist Party completes its triumph in the Chinese Civil War (<http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/>)

[chin-cw2.htm](#)), as Mao Zedong assumes power.

- **January 1950:** Truman announces that the United States will build the hydrogen bomb (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/timeline/index.html>).
- **June 1950:** North Korea invades South Korea; the UN invokes (<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/un1950res.htm>) its collective security provisions to aid the South; and the United States send troops. The war will end in stalemate (see Image Two below) nearly three years later.
- **Fiscal Year 1951:** With the implementation of NSC 68 (see assignment one), U.S. military spending skyrockets (<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/milspend.htm>).
- **January 1953:** Republican Dwight Eisenhower replaces Truman as President; implements a new national security policy, NSC 162/2 (see assignment one), which calls for increased reliance on nuclear weapons and covert activities and decreased overall military spending.
- **March 1953:** Soviet dictator Josef Stalin dies; after a protracted power struggle, is eventually replaced by Nikita Khrushchev.
- **June 1954:** A U.S.-sponsored coup topples (<http://www.consortiumnews.com/archive/story38.html>) the left-leaning democratically elected government of Guatemala.
- **July 1954:** The Geneva Accords (<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/genevacc.htm>) recognize the independence of communist North Vietnam and non-communist South Vietnam; elections to reunify the country, which are never held, are scheduled for 1956.
- **November 1956:** Soviet troops invade Hungary (http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/4/newsid_2739000/2739039.stm) to topple a neutralist regime that had assumed power after anti-communist protests.
- **January 1959:** Fidel Castro assumes power in Cuba. Within 18 months, Castro will have proclaimed himself a Marxist and severed relations with the United States.
- **January 1961:** Democrat John Kennedy replaces Eisenhower as President; delivers Inaugural Address (<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/JFK-Quotations/Inaugural-Address.aspx>) promising to aggressively confront the Soviet Union through a variety of tactics.
- **April 1961:** An invasion of Cuba by U.S.-sponsored Cuban exiles ends disastrously at the Bay of Pigs (<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/bay-of-pigs>).
- **August 1961:** Seeking to stem the tide of refugees from communist East Germany into non-communist West Berlin, Nikita Khrushchev authorizes construction of the Berlin Wall (<http://www.dailysoft.com/berlinwall/photographs/berlinwall-1961.htm>).
- **October 1962:** The world seems to come to the brink of nuclear war with the Cuban Missile Crisis (http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/).
- **1963:** Kennedy dramatically raises (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/kennedyjfv/>) the U.S. role in South Vietnam, both by increasing the number of troops in the country and by approving a U.S.-sponsored coup (<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB101/>) that toppled the government of South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem.

Image One



Image Two



Activity One: (Blackboard assignment)

In 1947, the journalist and commentator Walter Lippmann penned an article describing the developing US-USSR confrontation as a "Cold War." The term came to describe the state of superpower relations for the next four decades. These maps portray how Europe (<https://web.archive.org/web/20000829081014/http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/03/maps/>) and the rest of the world (<http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/coldwar1.htm>) became divided into two camps.

© - W.Lippmann, "The Cold War", Foreign Affairs 65 (Spring, 1987), pp. 884-869. The first full-scale ideological challenge to George Kennan's containment doctrine, this article by a pillar of the Washington establishment laid out a line of argument to which many--including Lippmann himself--would return during the Vietnam War.

The Cold War ©

By Walter Lippmann

Mr X's article is . . . not only an analytical interpretation of the sources of Soviet conduct. It is also a document of primary importance on the sources of American foreign policy--of at least that part of it which is known as the Truman Doctrine.

As such I am venturing to examine it critically in this essay. My criticism, I hasten to say at once, does not arise from any belief or hope that our conflict with the Soviet government is imaginary or that it can be avoided, or ignored or easily disposed of. I agree entirely with Mr.X that the Soviet pressure "cannot be charmed or talked out of existence." I agree entirely that the Soviet power will expand unless it is prevented from expanding because it is confronted with the power, primarily American power, that it must respect. But I believe and shall argue, that the strategical conception and plan which Mr.X recommends is fundamentally unsound, and that it cannot be made to work, and that the attempt to make it work will cause us to squander our substance and our prestige.

II

We must begin with the disturbing fact, which anyone who will reread the article can verify for himself, that Mr.X's conclusions depend upon the optimistic prediction that the "Soviet power . . . bears within itself the seeds of its own decay, and that the sprouting of these seeds is well advanced"; that if "anything were ever to occur to disrupt the unity and efficacy of the party as a political instrument, Soviet Russia might be changed overnight (sic) from one of the strongest to one of the weakest and most pitiable of national societies"; and "that Soviet society may well (sic) contain deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own total potential."

Of this optimistic prediction Mr. X himself says that it "cannot be proved. And it cannot be disproved." Nevertheless, he concludes that the United States should construct its policy on the assumption that the Soviet power is inherently weak and impermanent, and that this unproved assumption warrants our entering 'with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and a stable world."

I do not find much ground for reasonable confidence in a policy which can be successful only if the most optimistic prediction should prove to be true. Surely a sound policy must be addressed to the worst and hardest that may be judged to be probable, and not to the best and easiest that may be possible.

As a matter of fact, Mr. X himself betrays a marked lack of confidence in his own diagnosis. For no sooner had he finished describing the policy of firm containment with unalterable counterforce at every point where the Russians show signs of encroaching, when he felt he must defend his conclusions against the criticism, one might almost say the wisecrack, that this is a policy of "holding the line and hoping for the best." His defense is to say that while he is proposing a policy of holding the line and hoping for the best, "in actuality the possibilities for American policy are by no means limited to holding the line and hoping for the best." The additional possibilities are not, however, within the scope of the authority of the Department of State: "the aims of Russian Communism must appear sterile and quixotic, the hopes and enthusiasms of Moscow's supporters must wane, and added strain must be imposed on the Kremlin's foreign policies" if "the United States can create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a world power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the major ideological currents of the time."

This surely is a case of bolstering up the wishful thinking of "hoping for the best"--namely, the collapse of the Soviet power--by an extra strong dose of wishful thinking about the United States. There must be something deeply defective in Mr. X's estimates and calculations. For on his own showing, the policy cannot be made to work unless there are miracles and we get all the breaks.

In Mr. X's estimates there are no reserves for a rainy day. There is no margin of safety for bad luck, bad management, error and the unforeseen. He asks us to assume that the Soviet power is already decaying. He exhorts us to believe that our own highest hopes for ourselves will soon have been realized. Yet the policy he recommends is designed to deal effectively with the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena." Do we dare to assume, as we enter the arena and get set to run the race, that the Soviet Union will break its leg while the United States grows a pair of wings to speed it on its way?

Mr. X concludes his article on Soviet conduct and American policy by saying that "the thoughtful observer of Russian-American relations will . . . experience a certain gratitude to a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent upon their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear." Perhaps. It may be that Mr. X has read the mind of Providence and that he knows what history plainly intended. But it is asking a good deal that the American people should stake their "entire security as a nation" upon a theory which, as he Himself says, cannot be proved and cannot be disproved.

Surely it is by no means proved that the way to lead mankind is to spend the next ten or fifteen years, as Mr. X proposes we should, in reacting at "a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and manoeuvres of Soviet policy." For if history has indeed intended us to bear the responsibility of leadership, then it is not leadership to adapt ourselves to the shifts and manoeuvres of Soviet policy at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points. For that would mean for ten or fifteen years Moscow, not Washington, would define the issues, would make the challenges, would select the ground where the conflict was to be waged, and would choose the weapons. And the best that Mr. X can say for his own proposal is that if for a long period of time we can prevent the Soviet power from winning, the Soviet power will eventually perish or "mellow" because it has been "frustrated."

This is a dismal conclusion. Mr. X has, I believe, become bogged down in it because as he thought more and more about the conduct of the Soviets, he remembered less and less about the conduct of the other nations of the world. For while it may be true that the Soviet power would perish of frustration, if it were contained for ten or fifteen years, this conclusion is only half baked until he has answered the crucial question which remains: can the western world operate a policy of containment? Mr. X not only does not answer this question. He begs it, saying that it will be very discouraging to the Soviets, if the western world finds the strength and resourcefulness to contain the Soviet power over a period of ten or fifteen years.

III

Now the strength of the western world is great, and we may assume that its resourcefulness is considerable. Nevertheless, there are weighty reasons for thinking that the kind of strength we have and the kind of resourcefulness we are capable of showing are peculiarly unsuited to operating a policy of containment.

How, for example, under the Constitution of the United States is Mr. X going to work out an arrangement by which the Department of State has the money and the military power always available in sufficient amounts to apply "counterforce" at constantly shifting points all over the world? Is he going to ask Congress for a blank check on the Treasury and for a blank authorization to use the armed forces? Not if the American constitutional system is to be maintained. Or is he going to ask for an appropriation and for authority each time the Russians "show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world"? If that is his plan for dealing with the manoeuvres of a dictatorship, he is going to arrive at the points of encroachment with too little and he is going to arrive too late. The Russians, if they intend to encroach, will have encroached while Congress is getting ready to hold hearings.

A policy of shifts and manoeuvres may be suited to the Soviet system of government, which, as Mr. X tells us, is animated by patient persistence. It is not suited to the American system of government.

It is even more unsuited to the American economy which is unregulated and uncontrolled, and therefore cannot be administered according to a plan. Yet a policy of containment cannot be operated unless the Department of State can plan and direct exports and imports. For the policy demands that American goods be delivered or withheld at "constantly

shifting geographical and political points corresponding to the shifts and manoeuvres of Soviet policy."

Thus Mr. X and the planners of policy in the State Department, and not supply and demand in the world market, must determine continually what portion of the commodities produced here may be sold in the United States, what portion is to be set aside for export, and then sold, lent, or given to this foreign country rather than to that one. The Department of State must be able to allocate the products of American industry and agriculture, to ration the goods allocated for export among the nations which are to contain the Soviet Union and to discriminate among them, judging correctly and quickly how much each nation must be given, how much each nation can safely be squeezed, so that all shall be held in line to hold the line against the Russians.

If then the Kremlin's challenge to American society is to be met by the policy which Mr. X proposes, we are committed to a contest, for ten or fifteen years, with the Soviet system which is planned and directed from Moscow. Mr. X is surely mistaken, it seems to me, if he thinks that a free and undirected economy like our own can be used by the diplomatic planners to wage a diplomatic war against a planned economy at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points. He is proposing to meet the Soviet challenge on the ground which is most favorable to the Soviets, and with the very instruments, procedures, and weapons in which they have a manifest superiority.

IV

I find it hard to understand how Mr. X could have recommended such a strategic monstrosity. For he tells us, no doubt truly, that the Soviet power "cannot be easily defeated or discouraged by a single victory on the part of its opponents, and that "the patient persistence by which it is animated" means that it cannot be "effectively countered" by "sporadic acts." Yet his own policy calls for a series of sporadic acts: the United States is to apply "counterforce" where the Russians encroach and when they encroach.

On his own testimony no single victory will easily defeat or discourage the patient persistence of the Kremlin. Yet Mr. X says that the United States should aim to win a series of victories which will cause the Russians to "yield on individual sectors of the diplomatic front." And then what? When the United States has forced the Kremlin to "face frustration indefinitely" there will "eventually" come "either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of the Soviet power."

There is, however, no rational ground for confidence that the United States could muster "unalterable counterforce" at all the individual sectors. The Eurasian continent is a big place, and the military power of the United States, though it is very great, has certain limitations which must be borne in mind if it is to be used effectively. We live on an island continent. We are separated from the theaters of conflict by the great oceans. We have a relatively small population, of which the greater proportion must in time of war be employed in producing, transporting and servicing the complex weapons and engines which constitute our military power. The United States has, as compared with the Russians, no adequate reserve of infantry. Our navy commands the oceans and we possess the major offensive weapons of war. But on the ground in the interior of the Eurasian continent, as we are learning in the Greek mountains, there may be many "individual sectors" where only infantry can be used as the "counterforce."

These considerations must determine American strategy in war and, therefore, also in diplomacy, whenever the task of diplomacy is to deal with a conflict and a contest of power. The planner of American diplomatic policy must use the kind of power we do have, not the kind we do not have. He must use that kind of power where it can be used. He must avoid engagements in those "Individual sectors of the diplomatic front" where our opponents can use the weapons in which they have superiority. But the policy of firm containment as defined by Mr. X ignores these tactical considerations. It makes no distinction among sectors. It commits the United States to confront the Russians with counterforce "at every point" along the line, instead of at those points which we have selected because, there at those points, our kind of sea and air power can best be exerted.

American military power is peculiarly unsuited to a policy of containment which has to be enforced persistently and patiently for an indefinite period of time. If the Soviet Union were an island like Japan, such a policy could be enforced by American sea and air power. The United States could, without great difficulty, impose a blockade. But the Soviet Union has to be contained on land, and "holding the line" is therefore a form of trench warfare.

Yet the genius of American military power does not lie in holding positions indefinitely. That requires a massive patience by great hordes of docile people. American military power is distinguished by its mobility, its speed, its range and its offensive striking force. It is, therefore, not an efficient instrument for a diplomatic policy of containment. It can only be the instrument of a policy which has as its objective a decision and a settlement. It can and should be used to redress the balance of power which has been upset by the war. But it is not designed for, or adapted to, a strategy of containing, waiting, countering, blocking, with no more specific objective than the eventual "frustration" of the opponent.

The Americans would themselves probably be frustrated by Mr. X's policy long before the Russians were.

V

There is still greater disadvantage in a policy which seeks to "contain" the Soviet Union by attempting to make "unassailable barriers" out of the surrounding border states. They are admittedly weak. Now a weak ally is not an asset. It is a liability. It requires the diversion of power, money, and prestige to support it and to maintain it. These weak states are vulnerable. Yet the effort to defend them brings us no nearer to a decision or to a settlement of the main conflict. Worst of all, the effort to develop such an unnatural alliance of backward states must alienate the natural allies of the United States.

The natural allies of the United States are the nations of the Atlantic community: that is to say, the nations of western Europe and of the Americas. The Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, which is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean, unite them in a common strategic, economic and cultural system. The chief components of the Atlantic community are the British Commonwealth of nations, the Latin states on both sides of the Atlantic, the Low Countries and Switzerland, Scandinavia and the United States.

The boundaries of the Atlantic community are not sharp and distinct, particularly in the case of the Germans and the western Slavs and the dependencies and the colonies of western Europe. But the nucleus of the Atlantic community is distinct and unmistakable, and among the nations that are indisputably members of the Atlantic community there exists a vital connection founded upon their military and political geography, the common traditions of western Christendom and their economical, political, legal, and moral institutions which, with all their variations and differences, have a common origin and have been shaped by much the same historic experience.

Now the policy of containment as described by Mr. X, is an attempt to organize an anti-Soviet alliance composed in the first instance of peoples that are either on the shadowy extremity of the Atlantic community, or are altogether outside it. The active proponents of the policy have been concerned immediately with the anti-Soviet parties and factions of eastern Europe, with the Greeks, the Turks, the Iranians, the Arabs and Afghans, and with the Chinese Nationalists.

Instead of concentrating their attention and their efforts upon our allies of the Atlantic community, the makers and shapers of the policy of containment have for more than a year been reaching out for new allies on the perimeter of the Soviet Union. This new coalition, as we can see only too clearly in Greece, in Iran, in the Arab states and in China, cannot in fact be made to coalesce. Instead of becoming an unassailable barrier against the Soviet power, this borderland is a seething stew of civil strife.

We have not succeeded in organizing the new and alien coalition of the Russian perimeter, and we have failed to consolidate, as the mounting crisis of western Europe and of Latin America shows, the old and familiar coalition of the Atlantic community. The supporters of the Truman Doctrine attribute the divisions and the paralysis of western Europe to the machinations of the Soviet Union, to its obstruction in the United Nations and in all the various peace conferences, to the propaganda, the infiltration of the communist parties. Perhaps. But their argument, if true, destroys the last reason for thinking that the policy of containment can be made to work successfully.

For the nations of the Atlantic community are not occupied by the Red Army. They cannot be occupied by the Red Army unless the Kremlin is prepared to face a full-scale world war, atomic bombs and all the rest. Though impoverished and weakened, the nations of the Atlantic community are incomparably stronger, richer, more united and politically more democratic and mature than any of the nations of the Russian perimeter.

If the Soviet Union is, nevertheless, able to paralyze and disorganise them, then surely it can much more readily paralyze and disorganise the nations of the perimeter. They have never, in fact been organized and effective modern states. Yet we are asked to believe that we can organize the perimeter of Russia, though the Russians are so strong and so cunning that we cannot consolidate the Atlantic community.

By concentrating our efforts on a diplomatic war in the borderlands of the Soviet Union, we have neglected--because we do not have unlimited power, resources, influence, and diplomatic brain power--the vital interests of our natural allies in western Europe, notably in reconstructing their economic life and in promoting a German settlement on which they can agree.

The failure of our diplomatic campaign in the borderlands, on which we have staked so much too much, has conjured up the specter of a Third World War. The threat of a Russian-American war, arising out of the conflict in the borderlands, is dissolving the natural alliance of the Atlantic community. For the British, the French, and all the other European see that they are placed between the hammer and the anvil. They realize, even if we do not realize it, that the policy of containment in the hope that the Soviet power will collapse by frustration, cannot be enforced and cannot be administered successfully, and that it must fail. Either Russia will burst through the barriers which are supposed to contain her, and all of Europe will be at her mercy, or at some point and some time, the diplomatic war will become a full-scale shooting war. In either event Europe is lost. Either Europe falls under the domination of Russia, or Europe becomes the battlefield of a Russian-American war.

Because the policy of containment offers these intolerable alternatives to our old allies, the real aim of every European nation, including Great Britain, is to extricate itself from the Russian-American conflict. While we have been devoting our energies to lining up and bolstering up the Chinese Nationalists, the Iranians, the Turks, the Greek monarchists and conservatives, the anti-Soviet Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, the natural alignment of the British, French, Belgians, Dutch, Swiss and Scandinavians has been weakened.

And so in any prudent estimate of our world position, they are no longer to be counted upon as firm members of the coalition led by the United States against the Soviet Union. We must not deceive ourselves by supposing that we stand at the head of a world-wide coalition of democratic states in our conflict with the Soviet Union.

The aim of the leading democratic states of Europe and probably also of the Americas is at best to hold the balance of power between Russia and America, and thus to become mediators of that conflict. At worst, their aim is to isolate themselves in some kind of neutrality which will spare them the dual catastrophe of being overrun by the Red Army and bombed by the American air forces.

For they cannot have reasonable confidence in what Mr. X says is sufficient ground for reasonable confidence. They cannot rely on his wishful prediction which "cannot be proved" and "cannot be disproved," that the Soviet power will break up or "mellow" when it has been frustrated for ten or fifteen years by unassailable barriers in such inaccessible "individual sectors" as Manchuria, Mongolia, north China, Afghanistan, Iran, Hungary and Romania.

They remember Mr. Chamberlain's efforts to contain Hitler by a guarantee to Poland. They remember Mr. Hull's effort to contain Japan in China. They know that a policy of containment does not contain, that measures of "counterforce" are doomed to be too late and too little, that a policy of holding the line and hoping for the best means the surrender of the strategic, initiative, the dispersion of our forces without prospect of a decision and a settlement, and in the end a war which, once begun, it would be most difficult to conclude.

VI

In the introduction to this essay, I said that Mr. X's article on "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" was "a document of primary importance on the sources of American foreign policy" in that it disclosed to the world the estimates, the calculations, and the conclusions on which is based that part of American foreign policy which is known as the Truman Doctrine.

Fortunately, it seems to me, the Truman Doctrine does not have a monopoly. Though it is a powerful contender for the control of our foreign policy, there are at least two serious competitors in the Field. One we may call the Marshall line, and the other is the American commitment to support the United Nations.

The contest between the Truman Doctrine on the one hand, the Marshall line and the support of the U.N on the other is the central drama within the State Department, within the Administration, within the government as a whole. The outcome is still undecided.

The real issue is hidden because the Truman Doctrine was promulgated shortly after General Marshall became secretary of state, and because he made the decision to go to the support of Greece and Turkey, which was a concrete application of the Truman Doctrine. The issue is confused by that fact that Mr. Molotov and the Soviet propaganda abroad and many publicists here at home are representing the Marshall proposals to Europe as an application of the Truman Doctrine. The confusion is compounded still more because of the director of Secretary Marshall's planning staff is now known, through the publication of Mr. X's article, to have been the leading expert upon whose observations, predictions, and hypotheses the Truman Doctrine is based.

Nevertheless, if we look at the two main theaters of American diplomatic interest--at China and at Europe--and if we fix our attention on the Secretary Marshall's approach, we can see a line of policy developing which is altogether different from the line of the Truman Doctrine. General Marshall's report on China, which has now been reviewed and confirmed by General Wedemeyer, made it quite clear that in his judgement we could not, and should not, attempt the kind of intervention in China which we are carrying on in Greece. The Marshall and Wedemeyer reports do not argue that we can contain the Soviet Union and erect unassailable barriers in its path by participating in the Chinese civil war, as we are in the Greek civil war, and by underwriting Chiang Kai-shek's government as we are underwriting the Athens Government. The Marshall line in China is not an application of the Truman Doctrine, but of an older American doctrine that we must not become entangled all over the world in disputes that we alone cannot settle.

Yet the Marshall line in China is not isolationist. It would not end in our ceasing to interest ourselves in China and in giving Russia a free hand. But it is emphatically not the line of the Truman Doctrine which would involve us as partisans in the Chinese conflict and as patrons of one faction.

The line of the Marshall policy in China is to disentangle the United States, to reduce, not to extend, our commitments in Asia, to give up the attempt to control events which we do not have the power, the influence, the means, and the knowledge to control.

The proposal which Secretary Marshall addressed to Europe in his Harvard speech last June was animated by the same fundamental conception--as China's problem has to be dealt with primarily by the Chinese, so European problems have to be dealt with primarily by Europeans. Thus there was no "Marshall Plan" for Europe: the essence of his proposal was that only a European plan for Europe could save Europe, or provide a basis on which the American people could prudently and fairly be asked to help Europe save itself. The Marshall proposal was not, as Mr. Molotov and many Americans who do not understand it have tried to make out, an extension to Europe as a whole of the experiment in Greece. Quite the contrary. In Greece we made an American plan, appropriated the money, entered Greece and are now trying to induce the Greek government to carry out our plan. In the Harvard speech Secretary Marshall reversed this procedure. He told the European governments to plan their own rehabilitation, and that then he would go to Congress for funds, and that then the European governments would have to carry out their plans as best they could with the funds he could persuade Congress to appropriate.

The difference is fundamental. The Truman Doctrine treats those who are supposed to benefit by it as dependencies of the United States, as instruments of the American policy for "containing" Russia. The Marshall speech at Harvard treats the European governments as independent powers, whom we must help but cannot presume to govern, or to use as instruments of an American policy.

The Harvard speech was delivered about three months after President Truman's message. Much had happened in those three months, and all of it had gone to show that while Congress and the people were willing to applaud the Truman Doctrine, because they are exasperated with the Russia, they were not going to support it with the funds and blanket authority which it requires. Though the President got the funds he asked for in order to apply his doctrine in Greece and Turkey, he got them after a long delay and in circumstances which were tantamount to telling him not to come back too

soon for much more. The plans which existed for extending the Truman Doctrine to Korea and then to a series of impoverished, disordered and threatened countries on the perimeter of the Soviet Union were discreetly shelved.

Yet a crisis, enormously greater than that in Greece or Korea or Iran or Turkey, was developing. It was a crisis of the British Empire, and of France, and of Italy, and indeed of the whole western world. Extraordinary measures of American assistance were obviously going to be needed. After Congress had showed its attitude last spring, there was no possibility that this assistance would be provided by applying the principles, the procedure and precedent of the Truman Doctrine, as it had been revealed in the Greek affair. A wholly different conception and a radically different approach were necessary if the crisis of the western world was to be dealt with.

Out of the knowledge that the Truman Doctrine was unworkable in Europe, that Congress would not support it anyway, and that a constructive revival of European collaboration was imperatively necessary, the policy of the Harvard speech was conceived. And I think it is true to say that those who conceived it were concerned not only to devise a way by which Europe could be saved from economic disaster, but also to devise a graceful way of saving the United States from the destructive and exhausting entanglements of the Truman Doctrine.

They may not succeed. If the planning of policy in the Truman administration were to be dominated by the conclusions propounded by Mr. X, the Marshall's proposals would fail. For the European crisis is insoluble if Europe remains divided by the iron curtain, raised by the Russians, and by the containing wall which we are supposed to construct.

But there are reasons for thinking that the Russians will not be able to maintain the iron curtain and that we cannot construct western Europe as a containing wall. They are that the vital needs of the people of Europe will prevail: the economic independence of western and eastern Europe will compel the nations of the continent to exchange their goods across the military, political and ideological boundary lines which now separate them.

The great virtue of the Marshall proposal is that it has set in motion studies abroad and in this country which will demonstrate conclusively that the division of Europe cannot be perpetuated. And since the division of Europe came about, because the Red Army, the Red Army and Anglo-American armies met in the middle of Europe, the withdrawal of these armies is necessary if Europe is to be reunited. The Harvard speech calls, therefore, for a policy of settlement, addressed to the military evacuation of the continent, not for a policy of containment which would freeze the non-European armies in the heart of Europe.

The Marshall studies will show that the industrialized areas of western Europe cannot be supported, except to relieve their most pressing immediate needs, from North and South America. They must revive their trade with the agricultural regions of eastern Europe and with European Russia. If they do not do that, the cost of maintaining a tolerable standard of life in western Europe will be exorbitant, and the effort to meet it will require a revolutionary readjustment of the economic life of the whole of the western hemisphere.

At the same time studies made in Warsaw, Prague and in Moscow will show that the problems of eastern Europe are insoluble without increasing economic intercourse with western Europe. Thus from all quarters in eastern Europe and in western Europe, in Washington and in Moscow, the pressure will increase to reunite the divided economy of Europe--and perhaps to go on towards a greater unity than ever existed before.

VII

At the root of Mr. X's philosophy about Russian-American relations and underlying all the ideas of the Truman Doctrine there is a disbelief in the possibility of a settlement of the issues raised by this war. Having observed, I believe quite correctly, that we cannot expect "to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime," and that we must "regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner in the political arena," and that "there can be no appeal to common purposes," Mr. X has reached the conclusion that all we can do is to "contain" Russia until Russia changes, ceases to be our rival, and becomes our partner.

The conclusion is, it seem to me, quite unwarranted. The history of diplomacy is the history of relations among rival powers, which did not enjoy political intimacy, and did not respond to appeals to common purposes. Nevertheless, there have been settlements. Some of them did not last very long. Some of them did. For a diplomat to think that rival and unfriendly powers cannot be brought to a settlement is to forget what diplomacy is about. There would be little for diplomats to do if the world consisted of partners, enjoying political intimacy, and responding to common appeals.

The method by which diplomacy deals with a world where there are rival powers is to organize a balance of power which deprives the rivals, however lacking in intimacy and however unresponsive to common appeals, of a good prospect of successful aggression. That is what a diplomat means by the settlement of a conflict among rival powers. He does not mean that they will cease to be rivals. He does not mean that they will all be converted to thinking and wanting the same things. He means that, whatever they think, whatever they want, whatever their ideological purposes, the balance of power is such that they cannot afford to commit aggression.

In our conflict with Russia a policy of a policy of settlement--as I have sought to show--would aim to redress the balance of power, which is abnormal and dangerous, because the Red Army has met the British and American armies in the heart of Europe. The division between east and west is at that military boundary line. The meeting of those armies caused the division. No state in eastern Europe can be independent of the Kremlin as long as the Red Army is within it and all around it. No state in western Europe is independent while it is in effect in the rear of this military frontier. The presence of these non-European armies in the continent of Europe perpetuates the division of Europe. The Soviet government has been communist for thirty years. For more than a hundred years all Russian governments have sought to expand over eastern Europe. But only since the Red Army reached the Elbe River have the rulers of Russia been able to realize the ambitions of the Russian Empire and the ideological purposes of communism.

A genuine policy would, therefore, have as its paramount objective a settlement which brought about the evacuation of Europe. That is the settlement which will settle the issue which has arisen out of the war. The communists will continue to be communists. The Russians will continue to be Russians. But if the Red Army is in Russia, and not on the Elbe the power of the Russians communists and the power of the Russian imperialists to realise their ambitions will have been reduced decisively.

Until a settlement which results in withdrawal is reached, the Red Army at the centre of Europe will control eastern Europe and will threaten western Europe. In those circumstances American power must be available, not to "contain" the Russians at scattered points, but to hold the whole Russian military machine, in check, and to exert a mounting pressure in support of a diplomatic policy which has as its concrete objective a settlement that means withdrawal.

Then we shall know what we are trying to do. The Russians will know it. Europe will know it. We shall be trying to do a great thing which is simple and necessary: to settle the main consequences of this particular war, to put an end to the abnormal situation where Europe, one of the chief centers of civilization, though liberated from the Nazis, is still occupied by its non-European liberators.

We shall be addressing ourselves to an objective to which our own power is suited--be it in diplomacy or in war. We shall be seeking an end that all men can understand, and one which expresses faithfully our oldest and best tradition--to be the friend and champion of nations seeking independence and an end to the rule of alien powers.

For this Blackboard assignment, read three of the critical document of U.S. Cold War grand strategy:

- The "X" Article of 1947, by George Kennan, which articulated the "containment" doctrine.
- NSC 68, approved in 1950, which deemed a communist triumph anywhere a threat to U.S. security
- NSC 162, approved in modified form as NSC 162/2 in 1953, which outlined Dwight Eisenhower's new national security philosophy.

THE SOURCES OF SOVIET CONDUCT

By X

Part I

The political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstances: ideology inherited by the present Soviet leaders from the movement in which they had their political origin, and circumstances of the power which they now have exercised for nearly three decades in Russia. There can be few tasks of psychological analysis more difficult than to try to trace the interaction of these two forces and the relative role of each in the determination of official Soviet conduct. yet the attempt must be made if that conduct is to be understood and effectively countered.

It is difficult to summarize the set of ideological concepts with which the Soviet leaders came into power. Marxian ideology, in its Russian-Communist projection, has always been in process of subtle evolution. The materials on which it bases itself are extensive and complex. But the outstanding features of Communist thought as it existed in 1916 may perhaps be summarized as follows: (a) that the central factor in the life of man, the factor which determines the character of public life and the "physiognomy of society," is the system by which material goods are produced and exchanged; (b) that the capitalist system of production is a nefarious one which inevitable leads to the exploitation of the working class by the capital-owning class and is incapable of developing adequately the economic resources of society or of distributing fairly the material good produced by human labor; (c) that capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction and must, in view of the inability of the capital-owning class to adjust itself to economic change, result eventually and inescapably in a revolutionary transfer of power to the working class; and (d) that imperialism, the final phase of capitalism, leads directly to war and revolution.

The rest may be outlined in Lenin's own words: "Unevenness of economic and political development is the inflexible law of capitalism. It follows from this that the victory of Socialism may come originally in a few capitalist countries or even in a single capitalist country. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and having organized Socialist production at home, would rise against the remaining capitalist world, drawing to itself in the process the oppressed classes of other countries." It must be noted that there was no assumption that capitalism would perish without proletarian revolution. A final push was needed from a revolutionary proletariat movement in order to tip over the tottering structure. But it was regarded as inevitable that sooner or later that push be given.

For 50 years prior to the outbreak of the Revolution, this pattern of thought had exercised great fascination for the members of the Russian revolutionary movement. Frustrated, discontented, hopeless of finding self-expression -- or too impatient to seek it -- in the confining limits of the Tsarist political system, yet lacking wide popular support or their choice of bloody revolution as a means of social betterment, these revolutionists found in Marxist theory a highly convenient rationalization for their own instinctive desires. It afforded pseudo-scientific justification for their impatience, for their categorical denial of all value in the Tsarist system, for their yearning for power and revenge and for their inclination to cut corners in the pursuit of it. It is therefore no wonder that they had come to believe implicitly in the truth and soundness of the Marxist-Leninist teachings, so congenial to their own impulses and emotions. Their sincerity need not be impugned. This is a phenomenon as old as human nature itself. It has never been more aptly described than by Edward Gibbon, who wrote in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: "From enthusiasm to imposture the step is perilous and slippery; the demon of Socrates affords a memorable instance of how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others, how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self-illusion and voluntary fraud." And it was with this set of conceptions that the members of the Bolshevik Party entered into power.

Now it must be noted that through all the years of preparation for revolution, the attention of these men, as indeed of Marx himself, had been centered less on the future form which Socialism would take than on the necessary overthrow of rival power which, in their view, had to precede the introduction of Socialism. Their views, therefore, on the positive program to be put into effect, once power was attained, were for the most part nebulous, visionary and impractical. beyond the nationalization of industry and the expropriation of large private capital holdings there was no agreed program. The treatment of the peasantry, which, according to the Marxist formulation was not of the proletariat, had

always been a vague spot in the pattern of Communist thought: and it remained an object of controversy and vacillation for the first ten years of Communist power.

The circumstances of the immediate post-revolution period -- the existence in Russia of civil war and foreign intervention, together with the obvious fact that the Communists represented only a tiny minority of the Russian people -- made the establishment of dictatorial power a necessity. The experiment with war Communism" and the abrupt attempt to eliminate private production and trade had unfortunate economic consequences and caused further bitterness against the new revolutionary regime. While the temporary relaxation of the effort to communize Russia, represented by the New Economic Policy, alleviated some of this economic distress and thereby served its purpose, it also made it evident that the "capitalistic sector of society" was still prepared to profit at once from any relaxation of governmental pressure, and would, if permitted to continue to exist, always constitute a powerful opposing element to the Soviet regime and a serious rival for influence in the country. Somewhat the same situation prevailed with respect to the individual peasant who, in his own small way, was also a private producer.

Lenin, had he lived, might have proved a great enough man to reconcile these conflicting forces to the ultimate benefit of Russian society, though this is questionable. But be that as it may, Stalin, and those whom he led in the struggle for succession to Lenin's position of leadership, were not the men to tolerate rival political forces in the sphere of power which they coveted. Their sense of insecurity was too great. Their particular brand of fanaticism, unmodified by any of the Anglo-Saxon traditions of compromise, was too fierce and too jealous to envisage any permanent sharing of power. From the Russian-Asiatic world out of which they had emerged they carried with them a skepticism as to the possibilities of permanent and peaceful coexistence of rival forces. Easily persuaded of their own doctrinaire "rightness," they insisted on the submission or destruction of all competing power. Outside the Communist Party, Russian society was to have no rigidity. There were to be no forms of collective human activity or association which would not be dominated by the Party. No other force in Russian society was to be permitted to achieve vitality or integrity. Only the Party was to have structure. All else was to be an amorphous mass.

And within the Party the same principle was to apply. The mass of Party members might go through the motions of election, deliberation, decision and action; but in these motions they were to be animated not by their own individual wills but by the awesome breath of the Party leadership and the overbrooding presence of "the word."

Let it be stressed again that subjectively these men probably did not seek absolutism for its own sake. They doubtless believed -- and found it easy to believe -- that they alone knew what was good for society and that they would accomplish that good once their power was secure and unchallengeable. But in seeking that security of their own rule they were prepared to recognize no restrictions, either of God or man, on the character of their methods. And until such time as that security might be achieved, they placed far down on their scale of operational priorities the comforts and happiness of the peoples entrusted to their care.

Now the outstanding circumstance concerning the Soviet regime is that down to the present day this process of political consolidation has never been completed and the men in the Kremlin have continued to be predominantly absorbed with the struggle to secure and make absolute the power which they seized in November 1917. They have endeavored to secure it primarily against forces at home, within Soviet society itself. But they have also endeavored to secure it against the outside world. For ideology, as we have seen, taught them that the outside world was hostile and that it was their duty eventually to overthrow the political forces beyond their borders. Then powerful hands of Russian history and tradition reached up to sustain them in this feeling. Finally, their own aggressive intransigence with respect to the outside world began to find its own reaction; and they were soon forced, to use another Gibbonesque phrase, "to chastise the contumacy" which they themselves had provoked. It is an undeniable privilege of every man to prove himself right in the thesis that the world is his enemy; for if he reiterates it frequently enough and makes it the background of his conduct he is bound eventually to be right.

Now it lies in the nature of the mental world of the Soviet leaders, as well as in the character of their ideology, that no opposition to them can be officially recognized as having any merit or justification whatsoever. Such opposition can flow, in theory, only from the hostile and incorrigible forces of dying capitalism. As long as remnants of capitalism were officially recognized as existing in Russia, it was possible to place on them, as an internal element, part of the blame for the maintenance of a dictatorial form of society. But as these remnants were liquidated, little by little, this justification fell away, and when it was indicated officially that they had been finally destroyed, it disappeared altogether. And this fact created one of the most basic of the compulsions which came to act upon the Soviet regime: since capitalism no longer existed in Russia and since it could not be admitted that there could be serious or widespread opposition to the Kremlin springing spontaneously from the liberated masses under its authority, it became necessary to justify the retention of the dictatorship by stressing the menace of capitalism abroad.

This began at an early date. In 1924 Stalin specifically defended the retention of the "organs of suppression," meaning, among others, the army and the secret police, on the ground that "as long as there is a capitalistic encirclement there will be danger of intervention with all the consequences that flow from that danger." In accordance with that theory, and from that time on, all internal opposition forces in Russia have consistently been portrayed as the agents of foreign forces of reaction antagonistic to Soviet power.

By the same token, tremendous emphasis has been placed on the original Communist thesis of a basic antagonism between the capitalist and Socialist worlds. It is clear, from many indications, that this emphasis is not founded in reality. The real facts concerning it have been confused by the existence abroad of genuine resentment provoked by Soviet philosophy and tactics and occasionally by the existence of great centers of military power, notably the Nazi regime in Germany and the Japanese Government of the late 1930s, which indeed have aggressive designs against the Soviet Union. But there is ample evidence that the stress laid in Moscow on the menace confronting Soviet society from the world outside its borders is founded not in the realities of foreign antagonism but in the necessity of explaining away the maintenance of dictatorial authority at home.

Now the maintenance of this pattern of Soviet power, namely, the pursuit of unlimited authority domestically, accompanied by the cultivation of the semi-myth of implacable foreign hostility, has gone far to shape the actual machinery of Soviet power as we know it today. Internal organs of administration which did not serve this purpose withered on the vine. Organs which did serve this purpose became vastly swollen. The security of Soviet power came to rest on the iron discipline of the Party, on the severity and ubiquity of the secret police, and on the uncompromising economic monopolism of the state. The "organs of suppression," in which the Soviet leaders had sought security from rival forces, became in large measure the masters of those whom they were designed to serve. Today the major part of the structure of Soviet power is committed to the perfection of the dictatorship and to the maintenance of the concept of Russia as in a state of siege, with the enemy lowering beyond the walls. And the millions of human beings who form that part of the structure of power must defend at all costs this concept of Russia's position, for without it they are themselves superfluous.

As things stand today, the rulers can no longer dream of parting with these organs of suppression. The quest for absolute power, pursued now for nearly three decades with a ruthlessness unparalleled (in scope at least) in modern times, has again produced internally, as it did externally, its own reaction. The excesses of the police apparatus have fanned the potential opposition to the regime into something far greater and more dangerous than it could have been before those excesses began.

But least of all can the rulers dispense with the fiction by which the maintenance of dictatorial power has been defended. For this fiction has been canonized in Soviet philosophy by the excesses already committed in its name; and it is now anchored in the Soviet structure of thought by bonds far greater than those of mere ideology.

Part II

So much for the historical background. What does it spell in terms of the political personality of Soviet power as we know it today?

Of the original ideology, nothing has been officially junked. Belief is maintained in the basic badness of capitalism, in the inevitability of its destruction, in the obligation of the proletariat to assist in that destruction and to take power into its own hands. But stress has come to be laid primarily on those concepts which relate most specifically to the Soviet regime itself: to its position as the sole truly Socialist regime in a dark and misguided world, and to the relationships of power within it.

The first of these concepts is that of the innate antagonism between capitalism and Socialism. We have seen how deeply that concept has become imbedded in foundations of Soviet power. It has profound implications for Russia's conduct as a member of international society. It means that there can never be on Moscow's side an sincere assumption of a community of aims between the Soviet Union and powers which are regarded as capitalist. It must inevitably be assumed in Moscow that the aims of the capitalist world are antagonistic to the Soviet regime, and therefore to the interests of the peoples it controls. If the Soviet government occasionally sets its signature to documents which would indicate the contrary, this is to be regarded as a tactical maneuver permissible in dealing with the enemy (who is without honor) and should be taken in the spirit of *caveat emptor*. Basically, the antagonism remains. It is postulated. And from it flow many of the phenomena which we find disturbing in the Kremlin's conduct of foreign policy: the secretiveness, the lack of frankness, the duplicity, the wary suspiciousness, and the basic unfriendliness of purpose. These phenomena are there to stay, for the foreseeable future. There can be variations of degree and of emphasis. When there is something the Russians want from us, one or the other of these features of their policy may be thrust temporarily into the background; and when that happens there will always be Americans who will leap forward with gleeful announcements that "the Russians have changed," and some who will even try to take credit for having brought about such "changes." But we should not be misled by tactical maneuvers. These characteristics of Soviet policy, like the postulate from which they flow, are basic to the internal nature of Soviet power, and will be with us, whether in the foreground or the background, until the internal nature of Soviet power is changed.

This means we are going to continue for long time to find the Russians difficult to deal with. It does not mean that they should be considered as embarked upon a do-or-die program to overthrow our society by a given date. The theory of the inevitability of the eventual fall of capitalism has the fortunate connotation that there is no hurry about it. The forces of progress can take their time in preparing the final *coup de grâce*. Meanwhile, what is vital is that the "Socialist fatherland" -- that oasis of power which has already been won for Socialism in the person of the Soviet Union -- should be cherished and defended by all good Communists at home and abroad, its fortunes promoted, its enemies badgered and confounded. The promotion of premature, "adventuristic" revolutionary projects abroad which might embarrass Soviet power in any way would be an inexcusable, even a counter-revolutionary act. The cause of Socialism is the support and promotion of Soviet power, as defined in Moscow.

This brings us to the second of the concepts important to contemporary Soviet outlook. That is the infallibility of the Kremlin. The Soviet concept of power, which permits no focal points of organization outside the Party itself, requires that the Party leadership remain in theory the sole repository of truth. For if truth were to be found elsewhere, there would be justification for its expression in organized activity. But it is precisely that which the Kremlin cannot and will not permit.

The leadership of the Communist Party is therefore always right, and has been always right ever since in 1929 Stalin formalized his personal power by announcing that decisions of the Politburo were being taken unanimously.

On the principle of infallibility there rests the iron discipline of the Communist Party. In fact, the two concepts are mutually self-supporting. Perfect discipline requires recognition of infallibility. Infallibility requires the observance of discipline. And the two go far to determine the behaviorism of the entire Soviet apparatus of power. But their effect cannot be understood unless a third factor be taken into account: namely, the fact that the leadership is at liberty to put forward for tactical purposes any particular thesis which it finds useful to the cause at any particular moment and to require the faithful and

unquestioning acceptance of that thesis by the members of the movement as a whole. This means that truth is not a constant but is actually created, for all intents and purposes, by the Soviet leaders themselves. It may vary from week to week, from month to month. It is nothing absolute and immutable -- nothing which flows from objective reality. It is only the most recent manifestation of the wisdom of those in whom the ultimate wisdom is supposed to reside, because they represent the logic of history. The accumulative effect of these factors is to give to the whole subordinate apparatus of Soviet power an unshakable stubbornness and steadfastness in its orientation. This orientation can be changed at will by the Kremlin but by no other power. Once a given party line has been laid down on a given issue of current policy, the whole Soviet governmental machine, including the mechanism of diplomacy, moves inexorably along the prescribed path, like a persistent toy automobile wound up and headed in a given direction, stopping only when it meets with some unanswerable force. The individuals who are the components of this machine are unamenable to argument or reason, which comes to them from outside sources. Their whole training has taught them to mistrust and discount the glib persuasiveness of the outside world. Like the white dog before the phonograph, they hear only the "master's voice." And if they are to be called off from the purposes last dictated to them, it is the master who must call them off. Thus the foreign representative cannot hope that his words will make any impression on them. The most that he can hope is that they will be transmitted to those at the top, who are capable of changing the party line. But even those are not likely to be swayed by any normal logic in the words of the bourgeois representative. Since there can be no appeal to common purposes, there can be no appeal to common mental approaches. For this reason, facts speak louder than words to the ears of the Kremlin; and words carry the greatest weight when they have the ring of reflecting, or being backed up by, facts of unchallengeable validity.

But we have seen that the Kremlin is under no ideological compulsion to accomplish its purposes in a hurry. Like the Church, it is dealing in ideological concepts which are of long-term validity, and it can afford to be patient. It has no right to risk the existing achievements of the revolution for the sake of vain baubles of the future. The very teachings of Lenin himself require great caution and flexibility in the pursuit of Communist purposes. Again, these precepts are fortified by the lessons of Russian history: of centuries of obscure battles between nomadic forces over the stretches of a vast unfortified plain. Here caution, circumspection, flexibility and deception are the valuable qualities; and their value finds a natural appreciation in the Russian or the oriental mind. Thus the Kremlin has no compunction about retreating in the face of superior forces. And being under the compulsion of no timetable, it does not get panicky under the necessity for such retreat. Its political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power. But if it finds unassailable barriers in its path, it accepts these philosophically and accommodates itself to them. The main thing is that there should always be pressure, unceasing constant pressure, toward the desired goal. There is no trace of any feeling in Soviet psychology that that goal must be reached at any given time.

These considerations make Soviet diplomacy at once easier and more difficult to deal with than the diplomacy of individual aggressive leaders like Napoleon and Hitler. On the one hand it is more sensitive to contrary force, more ready to yield on individual sectors of the diplomatic front when that force is felt to be too strong, and thus more rational in the logic and rhetoric of power. On the other hand it cannot be easily defeated or discouraged by a single victory on the part of its opponents. And the patient persistence by which it is animated means that it can be effectively countered not by sporadic acts which represent the momentary whims of democratic opinion but only by intelligent long-range policies on the part of Russia's adversaries -- policies no less steady in their purpose, and no less variegated and resourceful in their application, than those of the Soviet Union itself.

In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is important to note, however, that such a policy has nothing to do with outward histrionics: with threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward "toughness." While the Kremlin is basically flexible in its reaction to political realities, it is by no means unamenable to considerations of prestige. Like almost any other government, it can be placed by tactless and threatening gestures in a position where it cannot afford to yield even though this might be dictated by its sense of realism. The Russian leaders are keen judges of human psychology, and as such they are highly conscious that loss of temper and of self-control is

never a source of strength in political affairs. They are quick to exploit such evidences of weakness. For these reasons it is a *sine qua non* of successful dealing with Russia that the foreign government in question should remain at all times cool and collected and that its demands on Russian policy should be put forward in such a manner as to leave the way open for a compliance not too detrimental to Russian prestige.

Part III

In the light of the above, it will be clearly seen that the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence. The Russians look forward to a duel of infinite duration, and they see that already they have scored great successes. It must be borne in mind that there was a time when the Communist Party represented far more of a minority in the sphere of Russian national life than Soviet power today represents in the world community.

But if the ideology convinces the rulers of Russia that truth is on their side and they they can therefore afford to wait, those of us on whom that ideology has no claim are free to examine objectively the validity of that premise. The Soviet thesis not only implies complete lack of control by the west over its own economic destiny, it likewise assumes Russian unity, discipline and patience over an infinite period. Let us bring this apocalyptic vision down to earth, and suppose that the western world finds the strength and resourcefulness to contain Soviet power over a period of ten to fifteen years. What does that spell for Russia itself?

The Soviet leaders, taking advantage of the contributions of modern techniques to the arts of despotism, have solved the question of obedience within the confines of their power. Few challenge their authority; and even those who do are unable to make that challenge valid as against the organs of suppression of the state.

The Kremlin has also proved able to accomplish its purpose of building up Russia, regardless of the interests of the inhabitants, and industrial foundation of heavy metallurgy, which is, to be sure, not yet complete but which is nevertheless continuing to grow and is approaching those of the other major industrial countries. All of this, however, both the maintenance of internal political security and the building of heavy industry, has been carried out at a terrible cost in human life and in human hopes and energies. It has necessitated the use of forced labor on a scale unprecedented in modern times under conditions of peace. It has involved the neglect or abuse of other phases of Soviet economic life, particularly agriculture, consumers' goods production, housing and transportation.

To all that, the war has added its tremendous toll of destruction, death and human exhaustion. In consequence of this, we have in Russia today a population which is physically and spiritually tired. The mass of the people are disillusioned, skeptical and no longer as accessible as they once were to the magical attraction which Soviet power still radiates to its followers abroad. The avidity with which people seized upon the slight respite accorded to the Church for tactical reasons during the war was eloquent testimony to the fact that their capacity for faith and devotion found little expression in the purposes of the regime.

In these circumstances, there are limits to the physical and nervous strength of people themselves. These limits are absolute ones, and are binding even for the cruelest dictatorship, because beyond them people cannot be driven. The forced labor camps and the other agencies of constraint provide temporary means of compelling people to work longer hours than their own volition or mere economic pressure would dictate; but if people survive them at all they become old before their time and must be considered as human casualties to the demands of dictatorship. In either case their best powers are no longer available to society and can no longer be enlisted in the service of the state.

Here only the younger generations can help. The younger generation, despite all vicissitudes and sufferings, is numerous and vigorous; and the Russians are a talented people. But it still remains to be seen what will be the effects on mature performance of the abnormal emotional strains of childhood which Soviet dictatorship created and which were enormously increased by the war. Such things as normal security and placidity of home environment have practically ceased to exist in the Soviet Union outside of the most remote farms and villages. And observers are not yet sure

whether that is not going to leave its mark on the over-all capacity of the generation now coming into maturity.

In addition to this, we have the fact that Soviet economic development, while it can list certain formidable achievements, has been precariously spotty and uneven. Russian Communists who speak of the "uneven development of capitalism" should blush at the contemplation of their own national economy. Here certain branches of economic life, such as the metallurgical and machine industries, have been pushed out of all proportion to other sectors of economy. Here is a nation striving to become in a short period one of the great industrial nations of the world while it still has no highway network worthy of the name and only a relatively primitive network of railways. Much has been done to increase efficiency of labor and to teach primitive peasants something about the operation of machines. But maintenance is still a crying deficiency of all Soviet economy. Construction is hasty and poor in quality. Depreciation must be enormous. And in vast sectors of economic life it has not yet been possible to instill into labor anything like that general culture of production and technical self-respect which characterizes the skilled worker of the west.

It is difficult to see how these deficiencies can be corrected at an early date by a tired and dispirited population working largely under the shadow of fear and compulsion. And as long as they are not overcome, Russia will remain economically as vulnerable, and in a certain sense an impotent, nation, capable of exporting its enthusiasms and of radiating the strange charm of its primitive political vitality but unable to back up those articles of export by the real evidences of material power and prosperity.

Meanwhile, a great uncertainty hangs over the political life of the Soviet Union. That is the uncertainty involved in the transfer of power from one individual or group of individuals to others.

This is, of course, outstandingly the problem of the personal position of Stalin. We must remember that his succession to Lenin's pinnacle of pre-eminence in the Communist movement was the only such transfer of individual authority which the Soviet Union has experienced. That transfer took 12 years to consolidate. It cost the lives of millions of people and shook the state to its foundations. The attendant tremors were felt all through the international revolutionary movement, to the disadvantage of the Kremlin itself.

It is always possible that another transfer of pre-eminent power may take place quietly and inconspicuously, with no repercussions anywhere. But again, it is possible that the questions involved may unleash, to use some of Lenin's words, one of those "incredibly swift transitions" from "delicate deceit" to "wild violence" which characterize Russian history, and may shake Soviet power to its foundations.

But this is not only a question of Stalin himself. There has been, since 1938, a dangerous congealment of political life in the higher circles of Soviet power. The All-Union Congress of Soviets, in theory the supreme body of the Party, is supposed to meet not less often than once in three years. It will soon be eight full years since its last meeting. During this period membership in the Party has numerically doubled. Party mortality during the war was enormous; and today well over half of the Party members are persons who have entered since the last Party congress was held. Meanwhile, the same small group of men has carried on at the top through an amazing series of national vicissitudes. Surely there is some reason why the experiences of the war brought basic political changes to every one of the great governments of the west. Surely the causes of that phenomenon are basic enough to be present somewhere in the obscurity of Soviet political life, as well. And yet no recognition has been given to these causes in Russia.

It must be surmised from this that even within so highly disciplined an organization as the Communist Party there must be a growing divergence in age, outlook and interest between the great mass of Party members, only so recently recruited into the movement, and the little self-perpetuating clique of men at the top, whom most of these Party members have never met, with whom they have never conversed, and with whom they can have no political intimacy.

Who can say whether, in these circumstances, the eventual rejuvenation of the higher spheres of authority (which can only be a matter of time) can take place smoothly and peacefully, or whether rivals in the quest for higher power will not eventually reach down into these politically immature and inexperienced masses in order to find support for their respective claims? If this were ever to happen, strange consequences could flow for the Communist Party: for the membership at large has been exercised only in the practices of iron discipline and obedience and not in the arts of

compromise and accommodation. And if disunity were ever to seize and paralyze the Party, the chaos and weakness of Russian society would be revealed in forms beyond description. For we have seen that Soviet power is only concealing an amorphous mass of human beings among whom no independent organizational structure is tolerated. In Russia there is not even such a thing as local government. The present generation of Russians have never known spontaneity of collective action. If, consequently, anything were ever to occur to disrupt the unity and efficacy of the Party as a political instrument, Soviet Russia might be changed overnight from one of the strongest to one of the weakest and most pitiable of national societies.

Thus the future of Soviet power may not be by any means as secure as Russian capacity for self-delusion would make it appear to the men of the Kremlin. That they can quietly and easily turn it over to others remains to be proved. Meanwhile, the hardships of their rule and the vicissitudes of international life have taken a heavy toll of the strength and hopes of the great people on whom their power rests. It is curious to note that the ideological power of Soviet authority is strongest today in areas beyond the frontiers of Russia, beyond the reach of its police power. This phenomenon brings to mind a comparison used by Thomas Mann in his great novel *Buddenbrooks*. Observing that human institutions often show the greatest outward brilliance at a moment when inner decay is in reality farthest advanced, he compared one of those stars whose light shines most brightly on this world when in reality it has long since ceased to exist. And who can say with assurance that the strong light still cast by the Kremlin on the dissatisfied peoples of the western world is not the powerful afterglow of a constellation which is in actuality on the wane? This cannot be proved. And it cannot be disproved. But the possibility remains (and in the opinion of this writer it is a strong one) that Soviet power, like the capitalist world of its conception, bears within it the seeds of its own decay, and that the sprouting of these seeds is well advanced.

Part IV

It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena. It must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure toward the disruption and, weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

Balanced against this are the facts that Russia, as opposed to the western world in general, is still by far the weaker party, that Soviet policy is highly flexible, and that Soviet society may well contain deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own total potential. This would of itself warrant the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.

But in actuality the possibilities for American policy are by no means limited to holding the line and hoping for the best. It is entirely possible for the United States to influence by its actions the internal developments, both within Russia and throughout the international Communist movement, by which Russian policy is largely determined. This is not only a question of the modest measure of informational activity which this government can conduct in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, although that, too, is important. It is rather a question of the degree to which the United States can create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problem of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a World Power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the major ideological currents of the time. To the extent that such an impression can be created and maintained, the aims of Russian Communism must appear sterile and quixotic, the hopes and enthusiasm of Moscow's supporters must wane, and added strain must be imposed on the Kremlin's foreign policies. For the palsied decrepitude of the capitalist world is the keystone of Communist philosophy. Even the failure of the United States to experience the early economic depression which the ravens of the Red Square have been predicting with such complacent confidence since hostilities ceased would have deep and important repercussions throughout the Communist world.

By the same token, exhibitions of indecision, disunity and internal disintegration within this country have an exhilarating effect on the whole Communist movement. At each evidence of these tendencies, a thrill of hope and excitement goes through the Communist world; a new jauntiness can be noted in the Moscow tread; new groups of foreign supporters climb on to what they can only view as the band wagon of international politics; and Russian pressure increases all along the line in international affairs.

It would be an exaggeration to say that American behavior unassisted and alone could exercise a power of life and death over the Communist movement and bring about the early fall of Soviet power in Russia. But the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power. For no mystical, Messianic movement -- and particularly not that of the Kremlin -- can face frustration indefinitely without eventually adjusting itself in one way or another to the logic of that state of affairs.

Thus the decision will really fall in large measure in this country itself. The issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of the overall worth of the United States as a nation among nations. To avoid destruction the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation.

Surely, there was never a fairer test of national quality than this. In the light of these circumstances, the thoughtful observer of Russian-American relations will find no cause for complaint in the Kremlin's challenge to American society. He will rather experience a certain gratitude to a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security

*A Report to the President
Pursuant to the President's Directive
of January 31, 1950*

TOP SECRET

[Washington,] April 7, 1950

ANALYSIS

I. Background of the Present Crisis

Within the past thirty-five years the world has experienced two global wars of tremendous violence. It has witnessed two revolutions--the Russian and the Chinese--of extreme scope and intensity. It has also seen the collapse of five empires--the Ottoman, the Austro-Hungarian, German, Italian, and Japanese--and the drastic decline of two major imperial systems, the British and the French. During the span of one generation, the international distribution of power has been fundamentally altered. For several centuries it had proved impossible for any one nation to gain such preponderant strength that a coalition of other nations could not in time face it with greater strength. The international scene was marked by recurring periods of violence and war, but a system of sovereign and independent states was maintained, over which no state was able to achieve hegemony.

Two complex sets of factors have now basically altered this historic distribution of power. First, the defeat of Germany and Japan and the decline of the British and French Empires have interacted with the development of the United States and the Soviet Union in such a way that power increasingly gravitated to these two centers. Second, the Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world. Conflict has, therefore, become endemic and is waged, on the part of the Soviet Union, by violent or non-violent methods in accordance with the dictates of expediency. With the development of increasingly terrifying weapons of mass destruction, every individual faces the ever-present possibility of annihilation should the conflict enter the phase of total war.

On the one hand, the people of the world yearn for relief from the anxiety arising from the risk of atomic war. On the other hand, any substantial further extension of the area under the domination of the Kremlin would raise the possibility that no coalition adequate to confront the Kremlin with greater strength could be assembled. It is in this context that this Republic and its citizens in the ascendancy of their strength stand in their deepest peril.

The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself. They are issues which will not await our deliberations. With conscience and resolution this Government and the people it represents must now take new and fateful decisions.

II. Fundamental Purpose of the United States

The fundamental purpose of the United States is laid down in the Preamble to the Constitution: ". . . to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." In essence, the fundamental purpose is to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual.

Three realities emerge as a consequence of this purpose: Our determination to maintain the essential elements of individual freedom, as set forth in the Constitution and Bill of Rights; Our determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper; and our determination to fight if necessary to defend our way of life, for which as in the Declaration of Independence, "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

III. Fundamental Design of the Kremlin

The fundamental design of those who control the Soviet Union and the international communist movement is to retain and solidify their absolute power, first in the Soviet Union and second in the areas now under their control. In the minds of the Soviet leaders, however, achievement of this design requires the dynamic extension of their authority and the ultimate elimination of any effective opposition to their authority.

The design, therefore, calls for the complete subversion or forcible destruction of the machinery of government and structure of society in the countries of the non-Soviet world and their replacement by an apparatus and structure subservient to and controlled from the Kremlin. To that end Soviet efforts are now directed toward the domination of the Eurasian land mass. The United States, as the principal center of power in the non-Soviet world and the bulwark of opposition to Soviet expansion, is the principal enemy whose integrity and vitality must be subverted or destroyed by one means or another if the Kremlin is to achieve its fundamental design.

IV. The Underlying Conflict in the Realm of ideas and Values between the U.S. Purpose and the Kremlin Design

A. NATURE OF CONFLICT

The Kremlin regards the United States as the only major threat to the conflict between idea of slavery under the grim oligarchy of the Kremlin, which has come to a crisis with the polarization of power described in Section I, and the exclusive possession of atomic weapons by the two protagonists. The idea of freedom, moreover, is peculiarly and intolerably subversive of the idea of slavery. But the converse is not true. The implacable purpose of the slave state to eliminate the challenge of freedom has placed the two great powers at opposite poles. It is this fact which gives the present polarization of power the quality of crisis.

The free society values the individual as an end in himself, requiring of him only that measure of self-discipline and self-restraint which make the rights of each individual compatible with the rights of every other individual. The freedom of the individual has as its counterpart, therefore, the negative responsibility of the individual not to exercise his freedom in ways inconsistent with the freedom of other individuals and the positive responsibility to make constructive use of his freedom in the building of a just society.

From this idea of freedom with responsibility derives the marvelous diversity, the deep tolerance, the lawfulness of the free society. This is the explanation of the strength of free men. It constitutes the integrity and the vitality of a free and democratic system. The free society attempts to create and maintain an environment in which every individual has the opportunity to realize his creative powers. It also explains why the free society tolerates those within it who would use their freedom to destroy it. By the same token, in relations between nations, the prime reliance of the free society is on the strength and appeal of its idea, and it feels no compulsion sooner or later to bring all societies into conformity with it.

For the free society does not fear, it welcomes, diversity. It derives its strength from its hospitality even to antipathetic ideas. It is a market for free trade in ideas, secure in its faith that free men will take the best wares, and grow to a fuller and better realization of their powers in exercising their choice.

The idea of freedom is the most contagious idea in history, more contagious than the idea of submission to authority. For the breadth of freedom cannot be tolerated in a society which has come under the domination of an individual or group of individuals with a will to absolute power. Where the despot holds absolute power--the absolute power of the absolutely powerful will--all other wills must be subjugated in an act of willing submission, a degradation willed by the individual upon himself under the compulsion of a perverted faith. It is the first article of this faith that he finds and can only find the meaning of his existence in serving the ends of the system. The system becomes God, and submission to the will of God becomes submission to the will of the system. It is not enough to yield outwardly to the system--even Gandhian non-violence is not acceptable--for the spirit of resistance and the devotion to a higher authority might then remain, and the individual would not be wholly submissive.

The same compulsion which demands total power over all men within the Soviet state without a single exception, demands total power over all Communist Parties and all states under Soviet domination. Thus Stalin has said that the theory and tactics of Leninism as expounded by the Bolshevik party are mandatory for the proletarian parties of all countries. A true internationalist is defined as one who unhesitatingly upholds the position of the Soviet Union and in the satellite states true patriotism is love of the Soviet Union. By the same token the "peace policy" of the Soviet Union, described at a Party Congress as "a more advantageous form of fighting capitalism," is a device to divide and immobilize the non-Communist world, and the peace the Soviet Union seeks is the peace of total conformity to Soviet policy.

The antipathy of slavery to freedom explains the iron curtain, the isolation, the autarchy of the society whose end is absolute power. The existence and persistence of the idea of freedom is a permanent and continuous threat to the foundation of the slave society; and it therefore regards as intolerable the long continued existence of freedom in the world. What is new, what makes the continuing crisis, is the polarization of power which now inescapably confronts the slave society with the free.

The assault on free institutions is world-wide now, and in the context of the present polarization of power a defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere. The shock we sustained in the destruction of Czechoslovakia was not in the measure of Czechoslovakia's material importance to us. In a material sense, her capabilities were already at Soviet disposal. But when the integrity of Czechoslovak institutions was destroyed, it was in the intangible scale of values that we registered a loss more damaging than the material loss we had already suffered.

Thus unwillingly our free society finds itself mortally challenged by the Soviet system. No other value system is so wholly irreconcilable with ours, so implacable in its purpose to destroy ours, so capable of turning to its own uses the most dangerous and divisive trends in our own society, no other so skillfully and powerfully evokes the elements of irrationality in human nature everywhere, and no other has the support of a great and growing center of military power.

B. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of a free society are determined by its fundamental values and by the necessity for maintaining the material environment in which they flourish. Logically and in fact, therefore, the Kremlin's challenge to the United States is directed not only to our values but to our physical capacity to protect their environment. It is a challenge which encompasses both peace and war and our objectives in peace and war must take account of it.

1. Thus we must make ourselves strong, both in the way in which we affirm our values in the conduct of our national life, and in the development of our military and economic strength.
2. We must lead in building a successfully functioning political and economic system in the free world. It is only by practical affirmation, abroad as well as at home, of our essential values, that we can preserve our own integrity, in which lies the real frustration of the Kremlin design.
3. But beyond thus affirming our values our policy and actions must be such as to foster a fundamental change in the nature of the Soviet system, a change toward which the frustration of the design is the first and perhaps the most important step. Clearly it will not only be less costly but more effective if this change occurs to a maximum extent as a result of internal forces in Soviet society.

In a shrinking world, which now faces the threat of atomic warfare, it is not an adequate objective merely to seek to check the Kremlin design, for the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable. This fact imposes on us, in our own interests, the responsibility of world leadership. It demands that we make the attempt, and accept the risks inherent in it, to bring about order and justice by means consistent with the principles of freedom and democracy. We should limit our requirement of the Soviet Union to its participation with other nations on the basis of equality and respect for the rights of others. Subject to this requirement, we must with our allies and the former subject peoples seek to create a world society based on the principle of consent. Its framework cannot be inflexible. It will consist of many national communities of great and varying abilities and resources, and hence of war potential. The seeds of conflicts will inevitably exist or will come into being. To acknowledge this is only to acknowledge the impossibility of a final solution. Not to

acknowledge it can be fatally dangerous in a world in which there are no final solutions.

All these objectives of a free society are equally valid and necessary in peace and war. But every consideration of devotion to our fundamental values and to our national security demands that we seek to achieve them by the strategy of the cold war. It is only by developing the moral and material strength of the free world that the Soviet regime will become convinced of the falsity of its assumptions and that the pre-conditions for workable agreements can be created. By practically demonstrating the integrity and vitality of our system the free world widens the area of possible agreement and thus can hope gradually to bring about a Soviet acknowledgement of realities which in sum will eventually constitute a frustration of the Soviet design. Short of this, however, it might be possible to create a situation which will induce the Soviet Union to accommodate itself, with or without the conscious abandonment of its design, to coexistence on tolerable terms with the non-Soviet world. Such a development would be a triumph for the idea of freedom and democracy. It must be an immediate objective of United States policy.

There is no reason, in the event of war, for us to alter our overall objectives. They do not include unconditional surrender, the subjugation of the Russian peoples or a Russia shorn of its economic potential. Such a course would irrevocably unite the Russian people behind the regime which enslaves them. Rather these objectives contemplate Soviet acceptance of the specific and limited conditions requisite to an international environment in which free institutions can flourish, and in which the Russian peoples will have a new chance to work out their own destiny. If we can make the Russian people our allies in the enterprise we will obviously have made our task easier and victory more certain.

The objectives outlined in NSC 20/4 (November 23, 1948) ... are fully consistent with the objectives stated in this paper, and they remain valid. The growing intensity of the conflict which has been imposed upon us, however, requires the changes of emphasis and the additions that are apparent. Coupled with the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union, the intensifying struggle requires us to face the fact that we can expect no lasting abatement of the crisis unless and until a change occurs in the nature of the Soviet system.

C. MEANS

The free society is limited in its choice of means to achieve it sends.

Compulsion is the negation of freedom, except when it is used to enforce the rights common to all. The resort to force, internally or externally, is therefore a last resort for a free society. The act is permissible only when one individual or groups of individuals within it threaten the basic rights of other individuals or when another society seeks to impose its will upon it. The free society cherishes and protects as fundamental the rights of the minority against the will of a majority, because these rights are the inalienable rights of each and every individual.

The resort to force, to compulsion, to the imposition of its will is therefore a difficult and dangerous act for a free society, which is warranted only in the face of even greater dangers. The necessity of the act must be clear and compelling; the act must commend itself to the overwhelming majority as an inescapable exception to the basic idea of freedom; or the regenerative capacity of free men after the act has been performed will be endangered.

The Kremlin is able to select whatever means are expedient in seeking to carry out its fundamental design. Thus it can make the best of several possible worlds, conducting the struggle on those levels where it considers it profitable and enjoying the benefits of a pseudo-peace on those levels where it is not ready for a contest. At the ideological or psychological level, in the struggle for men's minds, the conflict is worldwide. At the political and economic level, within states and in the relations between states, the struggle for power is being intensified. And at the military level, the Kremlin has thus far been careful not to commit a technical breach of the peace, although using its vast forces to intimidate its neighbors, and to support an aggressive foreign policy, and not hesitating through its agents to resort to arms in favorable circumstances. The attempt to carry out its fundamental design is being pressed, therefore, with all means which are believed expedient in the present situation, and the Kremlin has inextricably engaged us in the conflict between its design and our purpose.

We have no such freedom of choice, and least of all in the use of force. Resort to war is not only a last resort for a free society, but it is also an act which cannot definitively end the fundamental conflict in the realm of ideas. The idea of slavery can only be overcome by the timely and persistent demonstration of the superiority of the idea of freedom. Military victory alone would only partially and perhaps only temporarily affect the fundamental conflict, for although the ability of the Kremlin to threaten our security might be for a time destroyed, the resurgence of totalitarian forces and the re-establishment of the Soviet system or its equivalent would not be long delayed unless great progress were made in the fundamental conflict.

Practical and ideological considerations therefore both impel us to the conclusion that we have no choice but to demonstrate the superiority of the idea of freedom by its constructive application, and to attempt to change the world situation by means short of war in such a way as to frustrate the Kremlin design and hasten the decay of the Soviet system.

For us the role of military power is to serve the national purpose by deterring an attack upon us while we seek by other means to create an environment in which our free society can flourish, and by fighting, if necessary, to defend the integrity and vitality of our free society and to defeat any aggressor. The Kremlin uses Soviet military power to back up and serve the Kremlin design. It does not hesitate to use military force aggressively if that course is expedient in the achievement of its design. The differences between our fundamental purpose and the Kremlin design, therefore, are reflected in our respective attitudes toward and use of military force.

Our free society, confronted by a threat to its basic values, naturally will take such action, including the use of military force, as may be required to protect those values. The integrity of our system will not be jeopardized by any measures, covert or overt, violent or non-violent, which serve the purposes of frustrating the Kremlin design, nor does the necessity for conducting ourselves so as to affirm our values in actions as well as words forbid such measures, provided only they are appropriately calculated to that end and are not so excessive or misdirected as to make us enemies of the people instead of the evil men who have enslaved them.

But if war comes, what is the role of force? Unless we so use it that the Russian people can perceive that our effort is directed against the regime and its power for aggression, and not against their own interests, we will unite the regime and the people in the kind of last ditch fight in which no underlying problems are solved, new ones are created, and where our basic principles are obscured and compromised. If we do not in the application of force demonstrate the nature of our objectives we will, in fact, have compromised from the outset our fundamental purpose. In the words of the *Federalist* (No. 28) "The means to be employed must be proportioned to the extent of the mischief." The mischief may be a global war or it may be a Soviet campaign for limited objectives. In either case we should take no avoidable initiative which would cause it to become a war of annihilation, and if we have the forces to defeat a Soviet drive for limited objectives it may well be to our interest not to let it become a global war. Our aim in applying force must be to compel the acceptance of terms consistent with our objectives, and our capabilities for the application of force should, therefore, within the limits of what we can sustain over the long pull, be congruent to the range of tasks which we may encounter.

[The document continues with a detailed discussion of US armament and economic capabilities before moving on to the key concluding section.]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The foregoing analysis indicates that the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union have greatly intensified the Soviet threat to the security of the United States. This threat is of the same character as that described in NSC 20/4 (approved by the President on November 24, 1948) but is more immediate than had previously been estimated. In particular, the United States now faces the contingency that within the next four or five years the Soviet Union will possess the military capability of delivering a surprise atomic attack of such weight that the

United States must have substantially increased general air, ground, and sea strength, atomic capabilities, and air and civilian defenses to deter war and to provide reasonable assurance, in the event of war, that it could survive the initial blow and go on to the eventual attainment of its objectives. In return, this contingency requires the intensification of our efforts in the fields of intelligence and research and development.

Allowing for the immediacy of the danger, the following statement of Soviet threats, contained in NSC 20/4, remains valid:

14. The gravest threat to the security of the United States within the foreseeable future stems from the hostile designs and formidable power of the USSR, and from the nature of the Soviet system.

15. The political, economic, and psychological warfare which the USSR is now waging has dangerous potentialities for weakening the relative world position of the United States and disrupting its traditional institutions by means short of war, unless sufficient resistance is encountered in the policies of this and other non-communist countries.

16. The risk of war with the USSR is sufficient to warrant, in common prudence, timely and adequate preparation by the United States.

a. Even though present estimates indicate that the Soviet leaders probably do not intend deliberate armed action involving the United States at this time, the possibility of such deliberate resort to war cannot be ruled out.

b. Now and for the foreseeable future there is a continuing danger that war will arise either through Soviet miscalculation of the determination of the United States to use all the means at its command to safeguard its security, through Soviet misinterpretation of our intentions, or through U.S. miscalculation of Soviet reactions to measures which we might take.

17. Soviet domination of the potential power of Eurasia, whether achieved by armed aggression or by political and subversive means, would be strategically and politically unacceptable to the United States.

18. The capability of the United States either in peace or in the event of war to cope with threats to its security or to gain its objectives would be severely weakened by internal development, important among which are:

a. Serious espionage, subversion and sabotage, particularly by concerted and well-directed communist activity.

b. Prolonged or exaggerated economic instability.

c. Internal political and social disunity.

d. Inadequate or excessive armament or foreign aid expenditures.

e. An excessive or wasteful usage of our resources in time of peace.

f. Lessening of U.S. prestige and influence through vacillation of appeasement or lack of skill and imagination in the conduct of its foreign policy or by shirking world responsibilities.

g. Development of a false sense of security through a deceptive change in Soviet tactics.

Although such developments as those indicated in paragraph 18 above would severely weaken the capability of the United States and its allies to cope with the Soviet threat to their security, considerable progress has been made since 1948 in laying the foundation upon which adequate strength can now be rapidly built.

19. The analysis also confirms that our objectives with respect to the Soviet Union, in time of peace as well as in time of war, as stated in NSC 20/4 (para. 19), are still valid, as are the aims and measures stated therein (paras. 20 and 21). Our current security programs and strategic plans are based upon these objectives, aims, and measures:

- a. To reduce the power and influence of the USSR to limits which no longer constitute a threat to the peace, national independence, and stability of the world family of nations.
- b. To bring about a basic change in the conduct of international relations by the government in power in Russia, to conform with the purposes and principles set forth in the UN Charter.

In pursuing these objectives, due care must be taken to avoid permanently impairing our economy and the fundamental values and institutions inherent in our way of life.

20. We should endeavor to achieve our general objectives by methods short of war through the pursuit of the following aims:

- a. To encourage and promote the gradual retraction of undue Russian power and influence from the present perimeter areas around traditional Russian boundaries and the emergence of the satellite countries as entities independent of the USSR.
- b. To encourage the development among the Russian peoples of attitudes which may help to modify current Soviet behavior and permit a revival of the national life of groups evidencing the ability and determination to achieve and maintain national independence.
- c. To eradicate the myth by which people remote from Soviet military influence are held in a position of subservience to Moscow and to cause the world at large to see and understand the true nature of the USSR and the Soviet-directed world communist party, and to adopt a logical and realistic attitude toward them.
- d. To create situations which will compel the Soviet Government to recognize the practical undesirability of acting on the basis of its present concepts and the necessity of behaving in accordance with precepts of international conduct, as set forth in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

21. Attainment of these aims requires that the United States:

- a. Develop a level of military readiness which can be maintained as long as necessary as a deterrent to Soviet aggression, as indispensable support to our political attitude toward the USSR, as a source of encouragement to nations resisting Soviet political aggression, and as an adequate basis for immediate military commitments and for rapid mobilization should war prove unavoidable.
- b. Assure the internal security of the United States against dangers of sabotage, subversion, and espionage.
- c. Maximize our economic potential, including the strengthening of our peacetime economy and the establishment of essential reserves readily available in the event of war.
- d. Strengthen the orientation toward the United States of the non-Soviet nations; and help such of those nations as are able and willing to make an important contribution to U.S. security, to increase their economic and political stability and their military capability.
- e. Place the maximum strain on the Soviet structure of power and particularly on the relationships between Moscow and the satellite countries.
- f. Keep the U.S. public fully informed and cognizant of the threats to our national security so that it will be prepared to support the measures which we must accordingly adopt.

In the light of present and prospective Soviet atomic capabilities, the action which can be taken under present programs and plans, however, becomes dangerously inadequate, in both timing and scope, to accomplish the rapid progress toward the attainment of the United States political, economic, and military objectives which is now imperative.

A continuation of present trends would result in a serious decline in the strength of the free world relative to the Soviet Union and its satellites. This unfavorable trend arises from the inadequacy of current programs and plans rather than from any error in our objectives and aims. These trends lead in the direction of isolation, not by deliberate decision but by lack of the necessary basis for a vigorous initiative in the conflict with the Soviet Union.

Our position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility upon the United States for leadership. We must organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world in a positive program for peace which will frustrate the Kremlin design for world domination by creating a situation in the free world to which the Kremlin will be compelled to adjust. Without such a cooperative effort, led by the United States, we will have to make gradual withdrawals under pressure until we discover one day that we have sacrificed positions of vital interest.

It is imperative that this trend be reversed by a much more rapid and concerted build-up of the actual strength of both the United States and the other nations of the free world. The analysis shows that this will be costly and will involve significant domestic financial and economic adjustments.

The execution of such a build-up, however, requires that the United States have an affirmative program beyond the solely defensive one of countering the threat posed by the Soviet Union. This program must light the path to peace and order among nations in a system based on freedom and justice, as contemplated in the Charter of the United Nations. Further, it must envisage the political and economic measures with which and the military shield behind which the free world can work to frustrate the Kremlin design by the strategy of the cold war; for every consideration of devotion to our fundamental values and to our national security demands that we achieve our objectives by the strategy of the cold war,

building up our military strength in order that it may not have to be used. The only sure victory lies in the frustration of the Kremlin design by the steady development of the moral and material strength of the free world and its projection into the Soviet world in such a way as to bring about an internal change in the Soviet system. Such a positive program--harmonious with our fundamental national purpose and our objectives--is necessary if we are to regain and retain the initiative and to win and hold the necessary popular support and cooperation in the United States and the rest of the free world.

This program should include a plan for negotiation with the Soviet Union, developed and agreed with our allies and which is consonant with our objectives. The United States and its allies, particularly the United Kingdom and France, should always be ready to negotiate with the Soviet Union on terms consistent with our objectives. The present world situation, however, is one which militates against successful negotiations with the Kremlin--for the terms of agreements on important pending issues would reflect present realities and would therefore be unacceptable, if not disastrous, to the United States and the rest of the free world. After a decision and a start on building up the strength of the free world has been made, it might then be desirable for the United States to take an initiative in seeking negotiations in the hope that it might facilitate the process of accommodation by the Kremlin to the new situation. Failing that, the unwillingness of the Kremlin to accept equitable terms or its bad faith in observing them would assist in consolidating popular opinion in the free world in support of the measures necessary to sustain the build-up.

In summary, we must, by means of a rapid and sustained build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world, and by means of an affirmative program intended to wrest the initiative from the Soviet Union, confront it with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin design of a world dominated by its will. Such evidence is the only means short of war which eventually may force the Kremlin to abandon its present course of action and to negotiate acceptable agreements on issues of major importance.

The whole success of the proposed program hangs ultimately on recognition by this Government, the American people, and all free peoples, that the cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake. Essential prerequisites to success are consultations with Congressional leaders designed to make the program the object of non-partisan legislative support, and a presentation to the public of a full explanation of the facts and implications of the present international situation. The prosecution of the program will require of us all the ingenuity, sacrifice, and unity demanded by the vital importance of the issue and the tenacity to persevere until our national objectives have been attained.

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
to the
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
on
BASIC NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

[After a general survey, we begin this document in the area where Eisenhower most clearly departs from his predecessor's thinking.]

U.S. Ability to Support Security Expenditures

19. The United States must maintain a sound economy based on free private enterprise as a basis both for high defense productivity and for the maintenance of its living standards and free institutions. Not only the world position of the United States, but the security of the whole free world, is dependent on the avoidance of recession and on the long-term expansion of the U.S. economy. Threats to its stability or growth, therefore, constitute a danger to the security of the United States and of the coalition which it leads. Expenditures for national security, in fact all federal, state and local governmental expenditures, must be carefully scrutinized with a view to measuring their impact on the national economy.

20. The economy of the country has a potential for long-term economic growth. Over the years an expanding national income can provide the basis for higher standards of living and for a substantial military program. But economic growth is not automatic and requires fiscal and other policies which will foster and not hamper the potential for long-term growth and which will operate to reduce cyclical fluctuations.

21. Excessive government spending leads to inflationary deficits or to repressive taxation, or to both. Persistent inflation is a barrier to long-term growth because it undermines confidence in the currency, reduces savings, and makes restrictive economic controls necessary. Repressive taxation weakens the incentives for efficiency, effort, and investment on which economic growth depends.

22. In spite of the reimposition of tax rates at approximately the peak levels of World War II, expenditures have risen faster than tax receipts, with a resulting deficit of \$9.4 billion in fiscal year 1953. Despite anticipated larger receipts, without the imposition of new taxes, and assuming substantially unchanged world conditions, a deficit of \$3.8 billion is estimated for fiscal year 1954.

23. a. Under existing law, tax reductions of \$5 billion a year will become effective next January. A proposal to impose substitute taxes therefor would be a reversal of policy.

b. Additional revenue losses of \$3 billion a year are due to occur on April 1, 1954. Congress has not acted on the President's recommendation that these reductions be rescinded. Even if the \$3 billion reduction is rescinded, or offset by revenue from new sources, large deficits would occur in FY 1955 and FY 1956 at present levels of expenditures.

c. The economic problem is made more difficult by the need to reform the tax system in the interests of long-term economic growth. Inevitably, many of the changes necessary to reduce the barriers to growth will lead to a loss of revenue in the years immediately following their adoption.

24. Any additional revenue will have to be secured by new taxation on a broad base.

25. The present high level of the Government debt further complicates the financial and economic problems of the country. Substantial additional borrowing could come only from sources which would be inflationary.

26. There is no precise level or duration of government expenditures which can be determined in advance, at which an economic system will be seriously damaged from inflationary borrowing on the one hand or from repressive taxation on the other. The higher the level of expenditures, the greater is the need for sound policies and the greater are the dangers of miscalculations and mischance. These dangers are now substantial.

27. The requirements for funds to maintain our national security must thus be considered in the light of these dangers to our economic system, including the danger to industrial productivity necessary to support military programs, arising from excessive levels of total Government spending, taxing and borrowing.

28. Modifications of the foregoing fiscal policies to promote long-term growth may be necessitated for a limited period: (1) to deal with short-term cyclical problems or (2) to achieve overriding national objectives that justify departure from sound fiscal policies.

...

POLICY CONCLUSIONS

Basic Problems of National Security Policy

31. a. To meet the Soviet threat to U.S. security.

b. In doing so, to avoid seriously weakening the U.S. economy or undermining our fundamental values and institutions.

Nature of the Soviet Threat

32. a. With increasing atomic power, the Soviets have a mounting capability of inflicting very serious and possibly crippling damage on the United States. The USSR will also continue to have large military forces capable of aggressive action against countries of the free world. Present estimates are, however, that the USSR will not deliberately initiate general war during the next several years, although general war might result from miscalculation. In the absence of general war, a prolonged period of tension may ensue, during which each side increases its armaments, reaches atomic plenty and seeks to improve its relative power position.

b. In any case, the Soviets will continue to seek to divide and weaken the free world coalition, to absorb or win the allegiance of the presently uncommitted areas of the world, and to isolate the United States, using cold war tactics and the communist apparatus. Their capacity for political warfare against the United States as well as its allies will be enhanced by their increased atomic capability.

33. a. A sound, strong, and growing U.S. economy is necessary to support over the long pull a satisfactory posture of defense in the free world and a U.S. capability rapidly and effectively to change to full mobilization. The United States should not weaken its capacity for high productivity for defense, its free institutions, and the incentives on which its long-term economic growth depends.

b. A recession in the level of U.S. economic activity could seriously prejudice the security of the free world.

Defense Against Soviet Power and Action

34. In the face of these threats, the United States must develop and maintain, at the lowest feasible cost, requisite military and non-military strength to deter and, if necessary, to counter Soviet military aggression against the United States or other areas vital to its security.

a. The risk of Soviet aggression will be minimized by maintaining a strong security posture, with emphasis on adequate offensive retaliatory strength and defensive strength. This must be based on massive atomic capability, including necessary bases; an integrated and effective continental defense system; ready forces of the United States and its allies suitably deployed and adequate to deter or initially to counter aggression, and to discharge required initial tasks in the event of a general war; and an adequate mobilization base; all supported by the determined spirit of the U.S. people.

b. This strong security posture must also be supported by an effective U.S. intelligence system, an adequate manpower program, superior scientific research and development, a program of limited defense mobilization, reasonable internal security, and an informed American people.

c. Such a strong security posture is essential to counter the Soviet divisive tactics and hold together the coalition. If our allies were uncertain about our ability or will to counter Soviet aggression, they would be strongly tempted to adopt a neutralist position, especially in the face of the atomic threat.

35. In the interest of its own security, the United States must have the support of allies.

- a. The military striking power necessary to retaliate depends for the foreseeable future on having bases in allied countries. Furthermore, the ground forces required to counter local aggressions must be supplied largely by our allies.
- b. The loss of major allies by subversion, divisive tactics, or the growth of neutralist attitudes, would seriously affect the security of the United States.

36. United States policies must, therefore, be designed to retain the cooperation of our allies, to seek to win the friendship and cooperation of the presently uncommitted areas of the world, and thereby to strengthen the cohesion of the free world.

- a. Our allies must be genuinely convinced that our strategy is one of collective security. The alliance must be rooted in a strong feeling of a community of interest and firm confidence in the steadiness and wisdom of U.S. leadership.
- b. Cooperative efforts, including equitable contributions by our allies, will continue to be necessary to build the military, economic and political strength of the coalition and the stability of the free world.
- c. Constructive U.S. policies, not related solely to anti-communism, are needed to persuade uncommitted countries that their best interests lie in greater cooperation and stronger affiliations with the rest of the free world.
- d. To enhance the capacity of free world nations for self-support and defense, and to reduce progressively their need for U.S. aid, the United States should assist in stimulating international trade, freer access to markets and raw materials, and the healthy growth of underdeveloped areas. In this connection, it should consider a modification of its tariff and trade policies.
- e. In subsequent fiscal years economic grant aid and loans by the United States to other nations of the free world should be based on the best interests of the United States.

37. a. In Western Europe, a position of strength must be based mainly on British, French, and German cooperation in the defense of the continent. To achieve a stronger Europe, the United States should support, as long as there is hope of early success, the building of an integrated European Community (including West Germany and if possible a united Germany), linked to the United States through NATO. The United States should press for a strong, united stable Germany, oriented to the free world and militarily capable of overcoming internal subversion and disorder and also of taking a major part in the collective defense of the free world against aggression. The United States must continue to assist in creating and maintaining mutually agreed European forces, but should reduce such assistance as rapidly as United States interests permit.

b. In the Far East, strength must be built on existing bilateral and multilateral security arrangements until more comprehensive regional arrangements become feasible. The United States should stress assistance in developing Japan as a major element of strength. The United States should maintain the security of the off-shore island chain and continue to develop the defensive capacity of Korea and Southeast Asia in accordance with existing commitments.

c. In the Middle East, a strong regional grouping is not now feasible. In order to assure during peace time for the United States and its allies the resources (especially oil) and the strategic positions of the area and their denial to the Soviet bloc, the United States should build on Turkey, Pakistan and, if possible, Iran, and assist in achieving stability in the Middle East by political actions and limited military and economic assistance, and technical assistance, to other countries in the area.

d. In other areas of the free world the United States should furnish limited military aid, and limited technical and economic assistance, to other free nations, according to the calculated advantage of such aid to the U.S. world position.

38. a. As presently deployed in support of our commitments, the armed forces of the United States are over-extended, thereby depriving us of mobility and initiative for future military action in defense of the free world.

b. Under present conditions, however, any major withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe or the Far East would be interpreted as a diminution of U.S. interest in the defense of these areas and would seriously undermine the strength and cohesion of the coalition.

c. Our diplomacy must concentrate upon clarifying to our allies in parts of the world not gripped by war conditions that the best defense of the free world rests upon a deployment of U.S. forces which permits initiative, flexibility and support; upon our political commitment to strike back hard directly against any aggressor who attacks such allies; and upon such allies' own indigenous security efforts.

39. a. In specific situations where a warning appears desirable and feasible as an added deterrent, the United States should make clear to the USSR and Communist China, in general terms or with reference to specific areas as the situation requires, its intention to react with military force against any aggression by Soviet bloc armed forces.

b. (1) In the event of hostilities, the United States will consider nuclear weapons to be as available for use as other munitions. Where the consent of an ally is required for the use of these weapons from U.S. bases on the territory of such ally, the United States should promptly obtain the advance consent of such ally for such use. The United States should also seek, as and when feasible, the understanding and approval of this policy by free nations.

(2) This policy should not be made public without further consideration by the National Security Council.

Defense Against the Threat to the U.S. Economy and Institutions

40. a. A strong, healthy and expanding U.S. economy is essential to the security and stability of the free world. In the interest of both the United States and its allies, it is vital that the support of defense expenditures should not seriously impair the basic soundness of the U.S. economy by undermining incentives or by inflation.

b. The United States must, however, meet the necessary costs of the policies essential for its security. The actual level of such costs cannot be estimated until further study, but should be kept to the minimum consistent with the carrying out of these policies.

c. Barring basic change in the world situation, the Federal Government should continue to make a determined effort to bring its total annual expenditures into balance, or into substantial balance with its total annual revenues and should maintain over-all credit and fiscal policies designed to assist in stabilizing the economy.

d. Every effort should be made to eliminate waste, duplication, and unnecessary overhead in the Federal Government, and to minimize Federal expenditures for programs that are not essential to the national security.

e. The United States should seek to maintain a higher and expanding rate of economic activity at relatively stable price levels.

f. The economic potential of private enterprise should be maximized by minimizing governmental controls and regulations, and by encouraging private enterprise to develop natural and technological resources (e.g. nuclear power).

41. To support the necessarily heavy burdens for national security, the morale of the citizens of the United States must be based both on responsibility and freedom for the individual. The dangers from Soviet subversion and espionage require strong and effective security measures. Eternal vigilance, however, is needed in their exercise to prevent the intimidation of free criticism. It is essential that necessary measures of protection should not be so used as to destroy the national unity based on freedom, not on fear.

Reduction of the Soviet Threat

42. a. The United States must seek to improve the power position of itself and the rest of the free world in relation to the Soviet bloc.

- b. The United States must also keep open the possibility of negotiating with the USSR and Communist China acceptable and enforceable agreements, whether limited to individual issues now outstanding or involving a general settlement of major issues, including control of armaments.
- c. The willingness of the Soviet leadership to negotiate acceptable settlements, without necessarily abandoning hostility to the non-Soviet world, may tend to increase over time, if the United States and its allies develop and increase their own strength, determination and cohesion, maintain retaliatory power sufficient to insure unacceptable damage to the Soviet system should the USSR resort to general war, and prove that the free world can prosper despite Soviet pressures, or if for any reason Soviet stability and influence are reduced.
- d. The policy of the United States is to prevent Soviet aggression and continuing domination of other nations, and to establish an effective control of armaments under proper safeguards; but is not to dictate the internal political and economic organization of the USSR. *

* This paragraph does not establish policy guidance for our propaganda or informational activities.

43. As a means of reducing Soviet capabilities for extending control and influence in the free world, the United States should:

- a. Take overt and covert measures to discredit Soviet prestige and ideology as effective instruments of Soviet power, and to reduce the strength of communist parties and other pro-Soviet elements.
- b. Take all feasible diplomatic, political, economic and covert measures to counter any threat of a party or individuals directly or indirectly responsive to Soviet control to achieve dominant power in a free world country.
- c. Undertake selective, positive actions to eliminate Soviet-Communist control over any areas of the free world.

44. a. Measures to impose pressures on the Soviet bloc should take into account the desirability of creating conditions which will induce the Soviet leadership to be more receptive to acceptable negotiated settlements.

b. Accordingly, the United States should take feasible political, economic, propaganda and covert measures designed to create and exploit troublesome problems for the USSR, impair Soviet relations with Communist China, complicate control in the satellites, and retard the growth of the military and economic potential of the Soviet bloc.

45. In the face of the developing Soviet threat, the broad aim of U.S. security policies must be to create, prior to the achievement of mutual atomic plenty, conditions under which the United States and the free world coalition are prepared to meet the Soviet-Communist threat with resolution and to negotiate for its alleviation under proper safeguards. The United States and its allies must always seek to create and sustain the hope and confidence of the free world in the ability of its basic ideas and institutions not merely to oppose the communist threat, but to provide a way of life superior to Communism.

46. The foregoing conclusions are valid only so long as the United States maintains a retaliatory capability that cannot be neutralized by a surprise Soviet attack. Therefore, there must be continuing examination and periodic report to the National Security Council in regard to the likelihood of such neutralization of U.S. retaliatory capability.

Text Questions:

To what extent did these three documents envision a similar threat posed by the Soviet Union? Did Eisenhower's call for taking into account the economic limitations of the United States really differ from Truman's general approach?

Source Questions:

Do you notice any difference between the X Article--which was written for public consumption--and the two NSC documents, which were classified?

You should post at least twice, with the second post at least 12 hours after the first, and to include responses to the arguments of the other posters.

Activity Two: (In-class assignment)

After the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the Cold War in Europe stabilized. The superpowers' focus turned to Latin American and Asian affairs. In 1962, the U.S. discovery of a planned Soviet nuclear missile base in Cuba prompted the Cuban Missile Crisis; after 13 days of tension, the Soviets pulled out their missiles. Forcefulness proved a less appropriate response to events in Vietnam. U.S. troop levels in the Southeast Asian country dramatically increased after John Kennedy's assassination in 1963.

- In this conversation, President Kennedy and British prime minister Harold Macmillan discuss the options available to the United States—and the risks that each option posed—following the discovery of the Soviet plan.
- Kennedy was a foreign policy President, comfortable thinking about world affairs and dealing with international crises. His successor, Lyndon Johnson, was not. In this conversation from early 1964 (mp3 file), the new President revealed a rather limited intellectual perspective in thinking about the U.S. approach to the conflict in Vietnam.

President Johnson and Walker Stone (excerpt), 6 January 1964

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/stone.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/stone.ogg>

Transcript

President Johnson: I never enjoyed life more, never felt better in my life, physically, than I do now.

At 12:45 today, I took [Johnson aides] Jack Valenti, Walter Jenkins, Bill Moyer[s], and I swam the length of that [White House] pool eight times. Eight times today.

I went down and had a hamburger. I came back and looked over my State of the Union [address]. Called up and fussed with a fellow about \$40 million too much in the budget. Then I stretched out and took a little doze, lost consciousness, for about five minutes on the couch.

I came back, and they said, "Now, are you in good humor?" I said yeah. They said, "Well, we'll save you this until you're in a bad humor." I said, "What is it?" They said, "It's [conservative columnist] George Carmack's article. We want to give it to you when you're in a bad humor."

Now, I knew it was going to be bad because it was George's. I read it, and he said, "They always say that folks are not true to their raising. But Johnson is true to his raising." And he wrote the kindest, sweetest, nicest description.

I'm going to send it to [Secretary of State] Dean Rusk, [National Security Advisor] McGeorge Bundy, and all these sophisticated fellows—[Chief of Protocol] Angier Biddle Duke. He even complements Angier Biddle Duke. I want you to read it.

Walker Stone: I'll catch it—

President Johnson: Then I read old man [Texas politician Frank] Dobie's letter.

You know, I don't have anything to do at night. I can't go out. I broke out twice. What I do is I go home, and I have myself two or three highballs with my wife. I have to sit there and read and work.

I've got Indonesia. They wanted me to give them 35 million [dollars in foreign aid] the other day. I had to read on it until 2:00 in the morning. Came in, and had to have India 65 [million in aid], and I read on it till 2:00, and turned both of them down.

But I just thought: what if I hadn't had the desire to read them? I'd be in a helluva shape.

Discussion Questions:

- Based on these calls, what do you see as the principal similarity between JFK and LBJ in their approach to foreign affairs? The principal difference?
- How did the Cold War backdrop affect US foreign policy in the 1960s?
- How important was appeasing domestic sentiment to both men?

Activity Three: (Writing assignment)

How did the two Democratic administrations of the 1960s address the emerging problem of Vietnam. Compare and contrast the recording of this meeting on Vietnam (<http://millercenter.org/presidentialclassroom/exhibits/1000-troop-withdrawal-from-south-vietnam-jfk-mcnamara-bundy>) between President Kennedy and his key national security advisors with President Johnson's March 1964 conversation with Defense Secretary Robert McNamara. Be sure to consider the following issues:

President Johnson's conversation with McNamara

MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaralong.mp3>

OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/mcnamaralong.ogg>

- How Kennedy and Johnson viewed the main issue facing the United States in the region;
- The role of the President's personality in his approach to foreign affairs;
- How the situation on the ground in Vietnam limited the options available to U.S. policymakers.

Conclusion

Presidential biographies are among the most common, and popular, type of political history, and presidential historians have to balance the sometimes competing needs of presenting a faithful portrayal of the President's personal life with an understanding of his public policies. Striking this balance can be especially difficult when dealing with the tapes, since the recording systems often picked up unusual and perhaps atypical moments in a President's life that under any other circumstances never would have been retained.

How much attention should historians devote to the private traits of 1960s chief executives? Keep this question in mind when listening to the following two calls: the first, between Lyndon Johnson and Joseph Haggar, in which the President ordered some slacks, giving some very specific tailoring advice; the second, between Richard Nixon and the late New York senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, at the time US ambassador to the UN, in which Nixon discussed his theories on the capacities of different races for effective governance.

- LBJ and Joseph Haggar, August 9, 1964, 1.17pm.
President Johnson's conversation with McNamara
MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/haggar.mp3>
OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/haggar.ogg>

President Johnson: Hello?

Joe Haggar: Hello.

President Johnson: Mr. Haggar?

Haggar: Yes, this is Joe Haggar.

President Johnson: Joe, is your father the one that makes clothes?

Haggar: Yes, sir. We're all together.

President Johnson: Uh-huh. You-all made me some real lightweight slacks that he just made up on his own,

sent to me three or four months ago. It's a kind of a light brown and a light green, rather soft green and soft brown.

Haggar: Yes, sir.

President Johnson: And they're real lightweight. Now, I need about six pairs for summer wear.

Haggar: Yes, sir.

President Johnson: I want a couple, maybe three, of the light brown, kind of an almost powder color, like a powder on a lady's face.

Haggar: Yes, sir.

President Johnson: Then there were some green, and then maybe some other light pair. If you had a blue in that or a black, I'd have one blue and one black. I need about six pairs to wear around in the evening when I come in from work.

Haggar: Yes, sir.

President Johnson: And I need...They're about a half an inch too tight in the waist.

Haggar: Do you recall the exact size? I just wanted—I want to be sure we get them right for you.

President Johnson: No, I don't know. You-all just guessed at them, I think, and sent them, but wouldn't you have the measurements there?

Haggar: We'll find them for you.

President Johnson: I can send you a pair. I want them a half an inch larger in the waist than they were before, except I want two or three inches of stuff left back in there, so I can take them up. I vary 10 or 15 pounds a month.

Haggar: All right, sir.

President Johnson: So leave me at least two-and-a-half [or] three inches in the back where I can let them out or take them up and put a—make these a half an inch bigger in the waist. Make the pockets at least an inch longer. My money and my knife and everything fall out.

Wait just a minute. [*Goes away from the phone.*]

Unidentified: Would you hold on just a minute please?

Haggar: Yes. [*Holds for approximately one minute and thirty-seven seconds.*]

President Johnson: Hello?

Haggar: Hello.

President Johnson: Now, the pockets, when you sit down in a chair, the knife and your money comes out. So I need at least another inch in the pockets.

Haggar: Be fine.

President Johnson: Yeah. Now, another thing: the crotch, down where your nuts hang, is always a little too tight. So when you make them up, give me a inch that I can let out there, because they cut me. They're just like riding a wire fence. These are almost—these are the best that I've had anywhere in the United States.

Haggar: Fine.

President Johnson: But when I gain a little weight they cut me under there. So leave me...You never do have

much margin there, but see if you can't leave me about an inch from where the zipper ends around under my—back to my bunghole.

Haggar: All right, sir.

President Johnson: So I can let it out there if I need to.

Haggar: Be fine.

President Johnson: Now, be sure you got the best zippers in them. These are good that I have. And if you get those to me, I would *sure* be grateful.

Haggar: Fine. Where would you like them sent, please?

President Johnson: White House.

Haggar: Fine.

President Johnson: Now, I don't guess there's any chance of getting a very lightweight shirt, sportshirt, to go with that slack, is there? That same color?

Haggar: We don't make them, but we can have them made up for you.

President Johnson: If you might look around, I wear about a 17...

Haggar: [*Unclear.*]

President Johnson: Extra long.

Haggar: Would you like it in the same fabric?

President Johnson: Yeah, I sure would. I don't know whether that's too heavy for a shirt or not.

Haggar: I think it'd be too heavy for a shirt.

President Johnson: I sure want, I sure want the lightest I can, in that same color or matching it. If you don't mind, you figure out somebody up there that makes good shirts and get me one to match each one of them. And if they're good, we'll order some more.

Haggar: Fine.

President Johnson: I just sure will appreciate this. I need it more than anything and... now... that's, that's about it. I guess I could get a jacket made out of that if I wanted to, couldn't I?

Haggar: I don't know. I think that—did Mr. James Haggar have a jacket made?

President Johnson: Yeah, he sent me some jackets for some earlier, but they were *way* too short. They hit me up about halfway down my belly. I have a much longer waist. But I thought if they had material like that and somebody could make me a jacket, I'd send them a sample to copy from.

Haggar: Well, I'll tell you what: if you will send us this, we'll get it, we'll find someone to make it.

President Johnson: OK.

Haggar: And we can supply the material to match it.

President Johnson: OK. I'll do that. Now, how do I—You give this boy the address, because I'm running for a funeral, and give him the address, just how to address these trousers.

So we'll send them to you, and don't you... You get the measurements out of them and add a half an inch to the back, give us an inch to the pockets, and about an inch underneath, so we can let them out.

Haggar: In other words, you like just a little more stride in the crotch?

President Johnson: Yeah, that's right.

Haggar: We'll take care of it.

President Johnson: I want you to build these at least a half an inch more, and then leave me some in there.

Haggar: Yes, sir.

President Johnson: OK, here he is.

- Richard Nixon and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, October 7, 1971, 10.32am.
Transcript: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/files/mex16.pdf>.
MP3 Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/nixonmx.mp3>
OGG Audio Location: <http://investigatinghistory.ashp.cuny.edu/audio/nixonmx.ogg>

Resources

- Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library (<http://www.lbjlibrary.org/>)
- Miller Center for Public Affairs , University of Virginia (Presidential Recordings Project, <http://millercenter.org/presidentialrecordings>)
- Foreign Relations of the United States series (official documents of State Department, <http://history.state.gov/>)
- Living Room Candidate (history of presidential campaign commercials, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org>)