

# Chapter 1      Origins of the Cold War

## 1. The Atomic Bomb

George Weller Reports, September 1945

*During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union entered into an alliance of convenience to defeat Nazi Germany. After the end of the war in 1945, the two former allies increasingly confronted each other in a series of disputes that developed into the Cold War, which lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. One reason for the widening split was the US decision to use atomic bombs to force the surrender of Japan in August 1945. Soviet leaders saw the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a display of American muscle designed to frighten the Soviet Union into following the US lead on postwar issues, such as the disposition of occupied territories in Eastern Europe. Whether or not this was the American intent, nuclear weapons remained a shadow over world politics and an incentive to keep the Cold War from erupting into open warfare between the two countries, especially after the Soviet Union successfully tested its own atomic bomb in 1949.*

*The reality of atomic warfare was first experienced by the Japanese. On August 6, 1945, one US plane dropped one atomic bomb over Hiroshima, leveling the city and instantly killing an estimated 70,000 people. Three days later, a second bomb immediately took an unknown number of lives, perhaps 40,000, in the city of Nagasaki. During the months and years that followed, many thousands more died in both cities from the effects of nuclear radiation. The outside world only gradually learned about the nature of this new weapon, in part because US authorities limited access to the bombed-out cities.*

*In defiance of military restrictions, one American journalist, George Weller, evaded authorities and bluffed his way into Nagasaki, arriving on September 6,*

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*1945, four weeks after the atomic blast. A Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, Weller became the first western newsman to visit Nagasaki, where he wrote lengthy dispatches about what he witnessed. Following military protocol, he sent his reports to the censor in Tokyo, but unknown to Weller at the time, the news stories never reached his editor in Chicago. Instead, they disappeared. Weller, however, kept copies that came to light only after his death. In reading these excerpts from Weller's firsthand accounts, try to think about what made the atomic bomb seem so much worse than so-called conventional weapons that had already killed many more Japanese. What were the effects of the atomic bomb? What feelings does Weller express toward the use of the bomb, and what was the "Disease X" that he refers to? In addition, what possible reasons could explain why US authorities suppressed Weller's reports even though the war had ended?*

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Nagasaki, Japan – Thursday, September 6, 1945

Walk in Nagasaki's streets and you walk in ruins.

It is [28] days since two American planes appeared in a clear midday sky and let fall the blow which clinched Japan's defeat and decided her surrender. The mystery of the atomic bomb is still sealed. But the ruins are here in testimony that not only Nagasaki but the world was shaken.

The last two or three of what were scores of fires are burning amid Nagasaki's ruins tonight. They are burning the last human bodies. . . .

Though the smashed streets are as barren of production or commerce as Pompeii's, yet a living stream of humanity pours along them. . . .

The first thing you learn as you walk amid the flattened houses, and the cordwood that was once walls piled with Japanese neatness, is that the atomic bomb never really "hit" Japan. If the Japanese are right, the bomb exploded over Japanese soil. They can only tell what they saw and try to guess much of what really happened.

At about 11:30 o'clock on the morning of August 9th, a lieutenant . . . was walking through the headquarters on the hill above Nagasaki's long waterfront. The lieutenant heard a high faint moan of aircraft motors, found his fieldglasses, went to a porch and trained them to the sky. What he saw was two B-29s at about 22,000 feet, flying in echelon. No anti-aircraft fire was around them; they were too high for Nagasaki's batteries.

Suddenly there broke from the forward plane three parachutes. Their canopies unfolded and what they bore earthward seemed to be three oblong boxes. . . . With the parachutes at perhaps a five thousand feet level there suddenly occurred below them, at about fifteen hundred feet, a burst of flame. Almost instantly the flame, yellow as gaslight, fell in a widening cone to earth, at the same time spreading wider in hoopskirt fashion.

This skirt of flame fell across the bottleneck creek which is a dead end for Nagasaki's tremendous shipping industry. Nothing human or animal that was above ground there at that moment survived.

As the fiery skirts swept the ground there suddenly burst upward a cumulus cloud of black dust. This cloud climbed high into the sky, visited by a terrible atomic heat erecting a pillar of warning over death's city....

The puff of death quickly scurried up the valleys of hilly Nagasaki.... Winds of terrible force churned about in the valleys, stripped the roofs in many homes and brought the greatest number of dead in houses where they had been sheltered two and three miles from the explosion, in a fashion resembling a hurricane. Roofs fell on weak foundations, burying those beneath....

Nagasaki, Japan – Saturday, September 8, 1945

In swaybacked or flattened skeletons of the Mitsubishi arms plants is revealed what the atom can do to steel and stone, but what the riven atom can do against human flesh and bone lies hidden in two hospitals of downtown Nagasaki.... Those human beings whom it has happened to spare sit on mats or tiny family board-platforms in Nagasaki's two largest undestroyed hospitals. Their shoulders, arms and faces are wrapped in bandages. Showing them to you, as the first American outsider to reach Nagasaki since the surrender, your propaganda-conscious official guide looks meaningfully in your face and wants to know: "What do you think?"

What this question means is: Do you intend writing that America did something inhuman in loosing this weapon against Japan? That is what we want you to write.

Several children, some burned and others unburned but with patches of hair falling out, are sitting with their mothers. Yesterday Japanese photographers took many pictures of them. About one in five is heavily bandaged, but none are showing signs of pain.

Some adults are in pain as they lie on mats. They moan softly. One woman caring for her husband shows eyes dim with tears. It is a piteous scene and your official guide studies your face covertly to see if you are moved.

Visiting many litters, talking lengthily with two general physicians and one X-ray specialist, gains you a large amount of information and opinion on the victims' symptoms....

[M]ost of the patients who were gravely burned have now passed away and those on hand are rapidly curing. Those not curing are people whose unhappy lot provides an aura of mystery around the atomic bomb's effects.

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They are victims of what Lieutenant Jakob Vink, Dutch medical officer and now Allied commandant of Prison Camp #14 at the mouth of the Nagasaki harbor, calls “Disease X.” . . .

Vink points out a woman on a yellow mat in the hospital who . . . has just been brought in. She fled the atomic area but returned to live. She was well for three weeks except for a small burn on her heel. Now she lies moaning, with a blackish mouth stiff as though with lockjaw, and unable to utter clear words. Her exposed legs and arms are speckled with tiny red spots in patches. . . .

According to Japanese doctors, patients with these late-developing symptoms are dying now – a month after the bomb’s fall – at the rate of about ten daily. The three doctors calmly stated that Disease X has them nonplussed and that they are giving no treatment whatever but rest. . . .

Nagasaki, Japan – Sunday, September 9, 1945

The atomic bomb’s peculiar “disease,” uncured because it is untreated and untreated because it is undiagnosed, is still snatching away lives here. Men, women and children with no outward marks of injury are dying daily in hospitals, some after having walked around for three or four weeks thinking they have escaped. The doctors here have every modern medication, but candidly confessed in talking to the writer – the first Allied observer to reach Nagasaki since the surrender – that the answer to the malady is beyond them. Their patients, though their skins are whole, are simply passing away under their eyes.

Kyushu’s leading X-ray specialist, elderly Dr. Yosisada Nakashima, who arrived today from the island’s chief city of Fukuoka, told the writer that he is convinced these people are simply suffering from the bomb’s beta, gamma, or neutron rays taking a delayed effect. . . .

Twenty-five Americans are due to arrive on September 11th to study the Nagasaki bombsite. The Japanese hope that they will bring a solution for Disease X.

Source: George Weller, *First Into Nagasaki: The Censored Eyewitness Dispatches on Post-Atomic Japan and Its Prisoners of War*, ed. Anthony Weller (New York: Crown, 2006), pp. 25–7, 37–9, 43, 45.

Study: Michael D. Gordin, *Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (New York: Knopf, 1946).

## 2. The Policy of Containment

George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," July 1947

*The Allies' defeat of Germany in 1945 left the Soviet Union in control of large parts of Eastern Europe, including the countries of Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. With the US enjoying exclusive possession of atomic weapons, the country's new president, Harry S. Truman, faced the question of what policy his administration should adopt toward the Soviet Union, which was seeking US aid to rebuild in the wake of World War II. One source of advice was George Kennan, an American diplomat stationed in Moscow. In February 1946, Kennan sent a long telegram from Moscow to officials in Washington, analyzing the sources of Soviet policies since the 1917 Russian revolution that brought communists to power, under the leadership of first Vladimir Lenin and then Joseph Stalin. Kennan's widely read analysis formed the basis of the so-called Truman Doctrine, announced in March 1947. Several months later, Kennan anonymously published (under the name "X") an article in Foreign Affairs, elaborating the views first expressed in his 1946 telegram. According to Kennan, what motivated the Soviet Union to act as it did, and exactly what policy did he recommend that the US should follow? Why did he claim that the US must act – what was at stake?*

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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 . . . is the system by which material goods are produced and exchanged; (b) that the capitalist system of production is a nefarious one which inevitably leads to the exploitation of the working class by the capital-owning class and is incapable of developing adequately the economic resources of

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society or of distributing fairly the material goods 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 circumstances of the immediate post-revolution period [after 1917] – 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. . . .

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. . . .

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. . . .

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. . . .

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. . . .

It must invariably 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. . . .

This means that we are going to continue for a 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. . . .

Thus the Kremlin has no compunction about retreating in the face of superior force. 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. . . .

In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a 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. . . . 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.

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 counterforce 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. . . .

[S]uppose 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? . . .

[T]he 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.

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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 counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interest of a peaceful and stable world. . . .

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 on 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.

Source: George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, 25 (July 1947), 566–82.

Study: John Lukacs, *George Kennan: A Study of Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

### 3. The Truman Doctrine

Harry S. Truman Address, March 12, 1947

*In March 1947, President Harry Truman addressed a joint session of Congress to request funding for a new US foreign policy. Founded on the recommendations of George Kennan, the policy became known as the Truman Doctrine and remained the basis of US foreign policies until the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. What specific actions did Truman call for the US to take and how did he justify these moves? In what ways were his statement of US policy, and his defense of its necessity, similar to and different from the recommendations of Kennan? In what respects were the president's views more sweeping or global than Kennan's? Above all, why exactly did the president claim that the US had to take action?*

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The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress.

The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved.

One aspect of the present situation, which I present to you at this time for your consideration and decision, concerns Greece and Turkey.

The United States has received from the Greek Government an urgent appeal for financial and economic assistance. Preliminary reports from the American Economic Mission now in Greece and reports from the American Ambassador in Greece corroborate the statement of the Greek Government that assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation.

I do not believe that the American people and the Congress wish to turn a deaf ear to the appeal of the Greek Government. . . .

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the government's authority at a number of points, particularly along the northern boundaries. . . .

Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.

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The United States must supply this assistance. We have already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic aid but these are inadequate.

There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn. . . .

Greece's neighbor, Turkey, also deserves our attention.

The future of Turkey as an independent and economically sound state is clearly no less important to the freedom-loving peoples of the world than the future of Greece. . . .

As in the case of Greece, if Turkey is to have the assistance it needs, the United States must supply it. We are the only country able to provide that help.

I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey, and I shall discuss these implications with you at this time.

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. . . . We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. . . .

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

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.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes. . . .

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East.

We must take immediate and resolute action.

I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400,000,000 for the period ending June 30, 1948. . . .

In addition to funds, I ask the Congress to authorize the detail of American civilian and military personnel to Greece and Turkey, at the request of those countries, to assist in the tasks of reconstruction, and for the purpose of supervising the use of such financial and material assistance as may be furnished. I recommend that authority also be provided for the instruction and training of selected Greek and Turkish personnel. . . .

This is a serious course upon which we embark. . . .

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died.

We must keep that hope alive.

The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms.

If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world – and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events.

I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.

Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1947* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 176–9.

Study: John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005). Arnold A. Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945–1953* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

## 24 A Critique of Truman's Policies

**4. A Critique of Truman's Policies**

Henry A. Wallace, "The Path to Peace with Russia," July 23, 1946

*Henry A. Wallace was one of the few American officials who disagreed with proposals to "get tough" with the Soviet Union. Franklin Roosevelt had chosen Wallace as his vice-presidential running mate in 1940, but replaced him with Harry Truman in 1944. Wallace then served as secretary of commerce, first under Roosevelt and then under President Truman. In the following letter to Truman, written in July 1946, Wallace took a position on US foreign policy that differed significantly from that advocated by George Kennan and others in the Truman administration. When Wallace's criticisms became public in September 1946, Truman fired him from the cabinet. Wallace later ran unsuccessfully against Truman in the 1948 presidential election. In reading Wallace's comments to the president in 1946, identify those points where he clearly disagreed with the emerging US policy recommended by Kennan. According to Wallace, what motivated the US and the Soviet Union to act as they did? What evidence did he use to support his argument? What policy did he say that the US should adopt?*

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My dear Mr. President:

... I have been increasingly disturbed about the trend of international affairs since the end of the war, and I am even more troubled by the apparently growing feeling among the American people that another war is coming and the only way that we can head it off is to arm ourselves to the teeth...

How do American actions since V-J Day appear to other nations? I mean by actions the concrete things like \$13 billion for the War and Navy Departments, the Bikini tests of the atomic bomb and continued production of bombs, the plan to arm Latin America with our weapons, production of B-29's and planned production of B-36's, and the effort to secure air bases spread over half the globe from which the other half of the globe can be bombed. I cannot but feel that these actions must make it look to the rest of the world as if we were only paying lip service to peace at the conference table. These facts rather make it appear either (1) that we are preparing ourselves to win the war which we regard as inevitable or (2) that we are trying to build up a predominance of force to intimidate the rest of mankind. How would it look to us if Russia had the atomic bomb and we did not, if Russia had 10,000-mile bombers and air bases within a thousand miles of our coast lines and we did not? ...

Our basic distrust of the Russians, which has been greatly intensified in recent months by the playing up of conflict in the press, stems from differences in political and economic organizations. For the first time in our history defeatists among us have raised the fear of another system as a successful rival to democracy and free enterprise in other countries and perhaps even our own. I am convinced that we can meet that challenge as we have in the past by demonstrating that economic abundance can be achieved without sacrificing personal, political and religious liberties. We cannot meet it, as Hitler tried to, by an anti-Comintern [anti-Communist International] alliance.

It is perhaps too easy to forget that despite the deep-seated differences in our culture and intensive anti-Russian propaganda of some twenty-five years' standing, the American people reversed their attitudes during the crisis of war. Today, under the pressure of seemingly insoluble international problems and continuing deadlocks, the tide of American public opinion is again turning against Russia. . . .

I should list the factors which make for Russian distrust of the United States and of the Western world as follows: The first is Russian history, which we must take into account because it is the setting in which Russians see all actions and policies of the rest of the world. Russian history for over a thousand years has been a succession of attempts, often unsuccessful, to resist invasion and conquest – by the Mongols, the Turks, the Swedes, the Germans and the Poles. The scant thirty years of the existence of the Soviet government has in Russian eyes been a continuation of their historical struggle for national existence. The first four years of the new regime, from 1917 through 1921, were spent in resisting attempts at destruction by the Japanese, British and French, with some American assistance, and by the several White Russian armies encouraged and financed by the Western powers. Then, in 1941, the Soviet state was almost conquered by the Germans after a period during which the Western European powers had apparently acquiesced in the rearming of Germany in the belief that the Nazis would seek to expand eastward rather than westward. The Russians, therefore, obviously see themselves as fighting for their existence in a hostile world.

Second, it follows that to the Russians all of the defense and security measures of the Western powers seem to have an aggressive intent. Our actions to expand our military security system – such steps as extending the Monroe Doctrine to include the arming of the Western Hemisphere nations, our present monopoly of the atomic bomb, our interest in outlying bases and our general support of the British Empire – appear to them as going far beyond the requirements of defense. . . .

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Finally, our resistance to her attempts to obtain warm-water ports and her own security system in the form of "friendly" neighboring states seems, from the Russian point of view, to clinch the case. After twenty-five years of isolation and after having achieved the status of a major power, Russia believes that she is entitled to recognition of her new status. Our interest in establishing democracy in Eastern Europe, where democracy by and large has never existed, seems to her an attempt to reestablish the encirclement of unfriendly neighbors which was created after the last war and which might serve as a springboard of still another effort to destroy her.

If this analysis is correct, and there is ample evidence to support it, the action to improve the situation is clearly indicated. The fundamental objective of such action should be to allay any reasonable Russian grounds for fear, suspicions and distrust. We must recognize that the world has changed and that today there can be no "one world" unless the United States and Russia can find some way of living together. . . .

We should ascertain from a fresh point of view what Russia believes to be essential to her own security as a prerequisite to the writing of the peace and to cooperation in the construction of a world order. We should be prepared to judge her requirements against the background of what we ourselves and the British have insisted upon as essential to our respective security. We should be prepared, even at the expense of risking epithets of appeasement, to agree to reasonable Russian guarantees of security. . . .

We should also be prepared to enter into economic discussions without demanding that the Russians agree in advance to discussion of a series of what are to them difficult and somewhat unrelated political and economic concessions. . . .

It is of the greatest importance that we should discuss with the Russians in a friendly way their long-range economic problems and the future of our cooperation in matters of trade. The reconstruction program of the USSR and the plans for the full development of the Soviet Union offers tremendous opportunities for American goods and American technicians. . . .

Many of the problems relating to the countries bordering on Russia could more readily be solved once an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence is established and some form of economic arrangements is worked out with Russia. These problems also might be helped by discussions of an economic nature. Russian economic penetration of the Danube area, for example, might be countered by concrete proposals for economic collaboration in the development of the resources of this area, rather than by insisting that the Russians should cease their unilateral penetration and offering no solution to the present economic chaos there.

This proposal admittedly calls for a shift in some of our thinking about international matters. It is imperative that we make this shift. We have little time to lose. Our postwar actions have not yet been adjusted to the lessons to be gained from experience of Allied cooperation during the war and the facts of the atomic age.

It is certainly desirable that, as far as possible, we achieve unity on the home front with respect to our international relations; but unity on the basis of building up conflict abroad would prove to be not only unsound but disastrous. I think there is some reason to fear that in our earnest efforts to achieve bipartisan unity in this country we may have given away too much to isolationism masquerading as tough realism in international affairs.

Source: Henry A. Wallace, "The Path to Peace with Russia," *New Republic* (September 30, 1946), pp. 401–6.

Study: H. W. Brands, *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Graham White and John Maze, *Henry A. Wallace: His Search for a New World Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

## 5. A Soviet View of US Policy

Nikolai Novikov Telegram, September 27, 1946

*Just as members of the Truman administration tried to understand the sources of Soviet conduct following the end of World War II, leaders of the Soviet Union sought to comprehend the postwar actions of the US. Recently opened Soviet archives have made available documents from this critical period. One such document is a telegram sent to Moscow in September 1946 by the Soviet ambassador to the US, Nikolai Novikov. Much like George Kennan in his long telegram from Moscow sent several months earlier, Novikov detailed his view of both long-term and immediate causes of his country's leading international opponent. Handwritten comments on Novikov's telegram make it clear that Soviet foreign minister Viacheslav Molotov carefully read the document, giving it added significance. How did Novikov explain the purpose and motivation for US actions? What particular actions did he find most provocative and how did he explain them? What evidence does this statement by a Soviet official provide to support the arguments of either George Kennan or Henry Wallace? Given the views of Novikov, Kennan, Truman, and Wallace, was there any way the two superpowers could have avoided confronting each other in what became the Cold War or was the conflict somehow inevitable?*

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## 28 A Soviet View of US Policy

The foreign policy of the United States, which reflects the imperialist tendencies of American monopolistic capital, is characterized in the postwar period by a striving for world supremacy. This is the real meaning of the many statements by President Truman and other representatives of American ruling circles: that the United States has the right to lead the world. . . . For this purpose broad plans for expansion have been developed and are being implemented through diplomacy and the establishment of a system of naval and air bases stretching far beyond the boundaries of the United States, through the arms race, and through the creation of ever newer types of weapons.

1. a) The foreign policy of the United States is conducted now in a situation that differs greatly from the one that existed in the prewar period. . . .

b) The two main aggressive powers, fascist Germany and militarist Japan, which were at the same time the main competitors of the United States in both the economic and foreign policy fields, were thoroughly defeated. The third great power, Great Britain, which had taken heavy blows during the war, now faces enormous economic and political difficulties. . . .

Europe has come out of the war with a completely dislocated economy, and the economic devastation that occurred in the course of the war cannot be overcome in a short time. All of the countries of Europe and Asia are experiencing a colossal need for consumer goods, industrial and transportation equipment, etc. Such a situation provides American monopolistic capital with prospects for enormous shipments of goods and the importation of capital into these countries – a circumstance that would permit it to infiltrate their national economies.

Such a development would mean a serious strengthening of the economic position of the United States in the whole world and would be a stage on the road to world domination by the United States.

c) On the other hand, we have seen a failure of calculations on the part of U.S. circles which assumed that the Soviet Union would be destroyed in the war or would come out of it so weakened that it would be forced to go begging to the United States for economic assistance. . . .

[T]he USSR's international position is currently stronger than it was in the prewar period. Thanks to the historical victories of Soviet weapons, the Soviet armed forces are located on the territory of Germany and other formerly hostile countries, thus guaranteeing that these countries will not be used again for an attack on the USSR. In formerly hostile countries, such as Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, and Romania, democratic reconstruction has established regimes that have undertaken to strengthen and maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union. In the Slavic countries that were liberated by the Red Army or with its assistance – Poland, Czechoslovakia,

and Yugoslavia – democratic regimes have also been established that maintain relations with the Soviet Union on the basis of agreements on friendship and mutual assistance. . . .

Such a situation in Eastern and Southeastern Europe cannot help but be regarded by the American imperialists as an obstacle in the path of the expansionist policy of the United States.

2. a) The foreign policy of the United States is not determined at present by the circles in the Democratic party that (as was the case during Roosevelt's lifetime) strive to strengthen the cooperation of the three great powers that constituted the basis of the anti-Hitler coalition during the war. The ascendance to power of President Truman, a politically unstable person but with certain conservative tendencies, and the subsequent appointment of [James] Byrnes as Secretary of State meant a strengthening of the influence on U.S. foreign policy of the most reactionary circles of the Democratic party. The constantly increasing reactionary nature of the foreign policy course of the United States, which consequently approached the policy advocated by the Republican party, laid the groundwork for close cooperation in this field between the far right wing of the Democratic party and the Republican party. . . .

b) At the same time, there has been a decline in the influence on foreign policy of those who follow Roosevelt's course for cooperation among peace-loving countries. Such persons in the government, in Congress, and in the leadership of the Democratic party are being pushed farther and farther into the background. The contradictions in the field of foreign policy existing between the followers of [Henry] Wallace and [Claude] Pepper, on the one hand, and the adherents of the reactionary "bi-partisan" policy, on the other, were manifested with great clarity recently in the speech by Wallace that led to his resignation from the post of Secretary of Commerce. Wallace's resignation means the victory of the reactionary course that Byrnes is conducting in cooperation with Vandenberg and Taft.

3. Obvious indications of the U.S. effort to establish world dominance are also to be found in the increase in military potential in peacetime and in the establishment of a large number of naval and air bases both in the United States and beyond its borders. . . .

Expenditures on the army and navy have risen colossally, amounting to 13 billion dollars according to the budget for 1946-47 (about 40 percent of the total budget of 36 billion dollars). This is more than ten times greater than corresponding expenditures in the budget for 1938, which did not amount to even one billion dollars.

Along with maintaining a large army, navy, and air force, the budget provides that these enormous amounts also will be spent on establishing a

## 30 A Soviet View of US Policy

very extensive system of naval and air bases in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. . . .

The establishment of American bases on islands that are often 10,000 to 12,000 kilometers [6,000 to 7,200 miles] from the territory of the United States and are on the other side of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans clearly indicates the offensive nature of the strategic concepts of the commands of the U.S. army and navy. . . .

All of these facts show clearly that a decisive role in the realization of plans for world dominance by the United States is played by its armed forces. . . .

7. a) The “hard-line” policy with regard to the USSR announced by Byrnes after the rapprochement of the reactionary Democrats with the Republicans is at present the main obstacle on the road to cooperation of the Great Powers. It consists mainly of the fact that in the postwar period the United States no longer follows a policy of strengthening cooperation among the Big Three (or Four) but rather has striven to undermine the unity of these countries. The objective has been to impose the will of other countries on the Soviet Union. . . .

b) The present policy of the American government with regard to the USSR is also directed at limiting or dislodging the influence of the Soviet Union from neighboring countries. In implementing this policy in former enemy or Allied countries adjacent to the USSR, the United States attempts, at various international conferences or directly in these countries themselves, to support reactionary forces with the purpose of creating obstacles to the process of democratization of these countries. In so doing, it also attempts to secure positions for the penetration of American capital into their economies. . . .

d) The numerous and extremely hostile statements by American government, political, and military figures with regard to the Soviet Union and its foreign policy are very characteristic of the current relationship between the ruling circles of the United States and the USSR. These statements are echoed in an even more unrestrained tone by the overwhelming majority of the American press organs. Talk about a “third war,” meaning a war against the Soviet Union, and even a direct call for this war – with the threat of using the atomic bomb – such is the content of the statements on relations with the Soviet Union by reactionaries at public meetings and in the press. . . .

The basic goal of this anti-Soviet campaign of American “public opinion” is to exert political pressure on the Soviet Union and compel it to make concessions. Another, no less important goal of the campaign is the attempt to create an atmosphere of war psychosis among the masses, who are weary of war, thus making it easier for the U.S. government to carry out measures for the maintenance of high military potential. . . .

e) Of course, all of these measures for maintaining a high military potential are not goals in themselves. They are only intended to prepare the conditions for winning world supremacy in a new war, the date for which, to be sure, cannot be determined now by anyone, but which is contemplated by the most bellicose circles of American imperialism.

Careful note should be taken of the fact that the preparation by the United States for a future war is being conducted with the prospect of war against the Soviet Union, which in the eyes of American imperialists is the main obstacle in the path of the United States to world domination.

Source: Kenneth M. Jensen, ed., *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts "Long Telegrams" of 1946* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1991), pp. 3–16.

Study: Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshkov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

## 6. The Prosecution of American Communists

Opening Statements of John F. X. McGohey and Eugene Dennis,  
March 21, 1949

*America's Cold War foreign policy to contain communism had domestic implications. Fear of Soviet expansion led to fear of a communist menace within the US. In July 1948 the federal government charged top American communists with violating the Alien Registration Act of 1940. Known as the Smith Act, this law prohibited "advocating, advising, or teaching the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying any government in the United States by force or violence." The indictment stated that the 12 (later 11) party officials had entered into a conspiracy to advocate and teach such ideas when they had reorganized the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) in 1945 under a new name and constitution. At the conclusion of the Smith Act trial, which lasted 10 months in 1949, the 11 defendants were all convicted, and 10 received the maximum five-year prison sentence. The following documents present the opening statements by the prosecutor, John F. X. McGohey, and one of the defendants, Eugene Dennis. What exactly was the nature of the government's charges and what kind of evidence was used? How did the accused defend themselves? Which arguments seem more persuasive today, and what reasons might explain why a jury would find the defendants guilty in 1949?*

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## 32 The Prosecution of American Communists

*John F. X. McGohey, Opening Statement on Behalf of the Government, March 21, 1949*

In this indictment the grand jury has charged that from April 1, 1945, and thereafter up to the filing of this indictment last summer, on July 20 of last summer, these defendants . . . conspired to accomplish two objectives: first, to organize the Communist Party of the United States of America, as a group of persons to teach and advocate the overthrow and destruction of the Government of the United States by force and violence; secondly, . . . they conspired further to carry out their program and thus to teach and advocate the duty and necessity of overthrowing and destroying the Government of the United States by force and violence. . . .

[I]t is further charged that the defendants would organize clubs, district and state units of their party; that they would recruit new members of their party, and that they, the defendants, would publish books, magazines and newspapers; that they would organize schools and classes, in all of which it was planned that there would be taught and advocated the Marxist-Leninist principles of the duty and necessity of overthrowing and destroying the Government of the United States by force and violence. . . .

I ask you ladies and gentlemen to remember that phrase, Marxism-Leninism. You will hear it frequently throughout this trial. We propose, we say, that we will establish that it is fundamental in the principles of Marxism-Leninism:

(1) That Socialism cannot be established by peaceful evolution but, on the contrary, can be established only by violent revolution; by smashing the machinery of government, and setting up in its stead a dictatorship – a dictatorship of the proletariat.

(2) That this smashing of the machinery of government and setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be accomplished only by the violent and forceful seizure of power by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party.

These defendants, by means of the schools and the publications of the Communist Party which they established in this country in 1945, taught and teach that the classic model for forceful and violent overthrow of the Government of the United States is the Russian Revolution of October 1917. That revolution, you will recall, under the leadership of Lenin, established the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia. . . .

The revolutionary doctrines of Marx, Lenin and Stalin are constantly repeated in the lectures and in the discussions, and the thinking of both the teachers and the students is constantly checked against these revolutionary writers. In each of these schools it is reiterated constantly that the students

are being trained as professional revolutionaries. Marxism, they are taught, is not merely dogma, it is a guide to action. . . . At the proper time, they are taught – the proper time being a time of national crisis, unrest, disorder brought about by a severe depression or war – at such a time the Party members will be in positions of influence in the key trades in the basic industries, and when the National Board decides that the revolutionary situation is at hand, the Party will lead the proletariat in violent revolution. They teach that this revolution cannot be without violence, for to be successful the entire apparatus of the Government must be smashed. Every vestige of the bourgeois state and class must be wiped out. Only when this has been accomplished can the program of Marxian Socialism be successfully carried out.

Now there are sections in the constitution of the Communist party which was adopted at its convention in July 1945 that purport to urge support of American democracy. These are in that document for legal purposes only, as we will show from witnesses on this stand. We will show that such declarations as I have referred to are mere talk; that they are just empty phrases, that they are inconsistent with the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the overthrow of the Government by force and violence.

*Eugene Dennis, Opening Statement on Behalf  
of the Defendants, March 21, 1949*

I have decided to defend my honor and liberty in the manner which seems to me to provide the best defense, not only of my democratic rights and those of my party, but of the liberties of the whole American people. . . .

In view of the opening statement of the prosecution the defense is obliged to make sure that the jury fully understands just what the indictment charges and what it does not charge. The foreboding-sounding words “overthrow and destruction of the Government of the United States by force and violence” appear five times in the ten paragraphs of the indictment. But I call to your attention that not one of the ten of these ten paragraphs charges that we Communist leaders at any time committed a single act, a single overt act of force and violence against the Government of the United States, or that we ever directly or indirectly advocated or attempted its forcible overthrow.

The alleged conspiracy as stated in the indictment limps only on three active verbs – to organize the Communist Party, to teach, and to advocate.

Since no overt criminal act is even alleged there is no X to mark the spot where it was not committed. . . .

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The allegation of crime rests on the charge that we Communist leaders used our inalienable American rights of free speech, press and association, and sought to advance certain general political doctrines which the indictment falsely says teach and advocate the duty and necessity to overthrow the Government of the United States by force and violence.

We Communist leaders will show that in June and July of 1945 we thought that labor and the people could not rely on the Truman Administration to curb the greedy monopolists. We taught that, on the contrary, the people would have to resist the efforts of the administration and the bi-partisan Congress, to scuttle FDR's progressive policies. We will also prove that we did not even consider, let alone teach or advocate, that the Government, headed by President Truman, should therefore be overthrown by force and violence. We will establish that everything we did teach and advocate was in the interests of the American people and in accord with their understanding of achieving a Government of, by and for the people. . . .

My co-defendants and I will show that we put into practice the real principles of Marxism-Leninism, by teaching that labor and the people should intervene to defend their living standards, their democratic rights and world peace. . . .

I and my co-defendants will show . . . that we publicly advocated that all peace-loving Americans should unite [and] that the Truman Administration [should] enter into direct negotiations with the U.S.S.R. and respond in good faith to its repeated disarmament and other peace proposals. . . .

And to establish further the record of what we defendants actually have done in the period covered by the indictment, we Communist leaders will show that we have advocated defense of the people's living standards as an inseparable part of the struggle for democracy and peace. . . .

When the defense puts our Communist Party constitution in evidence, the jury will see that it speaks of the duty to organize and educate the working class, and declares that Socialism should be established, not by force and violence, but "by the free choice of the majority of the American people." . . .

You will see that our Communist Party Constitution acknowledges not only that we learn from Marx and Lenin but that we owe much to and learn from the teachings of men like Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, William Sylvis and Eugene V. Debs. . . .

I ask you to weigh carefully our sincere offer of proof which demonstrates that we Communists are second to none in our devotion to our people and to our country, and that we teach and advocate and practice a program of peace, of democracy, equality, economic security and social progress.

Source: Trial Testimony in Joint Appendix, United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, *United States of America v. Eugene Dennis, et al.* (1950), vol. IV, pp. 3208–9, 3222–3, 3225–7, 3233–4, 3239, 3240, 3246, 3248–50.

Study: Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

M. J. Heale, *McCarthy's America: Red Scare Politics in State and Nation, 1935–1953* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

## 7. The Red Scare

Joseph R. McCarthy Speech, February 9, 1950

*Alarms about possible communist threats within the US often had the ring of partisan politics. After Republicans won control of Congress in 1946 and began investigating alleged communist subversion, President Truman in 1947 established a federal employee loyalty program that gave review boards the power to dismiss government workers belonging to “communist or subversive” groups. Meanwhile in Congress, the House Committee on Un-American Activities investigated explosive charges that Alger Hiss, a former member of the State Department, had passed secret documents to a communist agent in the 1930s. Hiss’s denial led to his conviction for perjury in January 1950. The following month, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy made headlines with even more shocking charges about communists in government. At the time, McCarthy was a little-known Republican who was elected to the Senate from Wisconsin in 1946, but his name soon became a household word after he delivered a speech at a Republican Party rally in Wheeling, West Virginia, in February 1950. Although unable to prove his charges, McCarthy nevertheless continued to attack the Truman administration and Democrats in Congress for supposedly allowing “twenty years of treason” in Washington. McCarthy’s use of “the Big Lie” became known as “McCarthyism.” When fellow Senators asked McCarthy what he had said in his Wheeling speech, he responded that the speech was not written down, but he read a version in the Senate that he said came from a recording of the event. Judging from the following excerpts, what did McCarthy claim was the nature of the Cold War, and how did he explain the sources of Soviet strength? In what ways did his explanation differ from that of the Truman administration? What specific charges did McCarthy make against the Truman administration, and why would so many Americans initially believe him?*

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## 36 The Red Scare

Five years after a world war has been won, men's hearts should anticipate a long peace, and men's minds should be free from the heavy weight that comes with war. But this is not such a period – for this is not a period of peace. This is a time of the “cold war.” This is a time when all the world is split into two vast, increasingly hostile armed camps – a time of a great armaments race. . . .

[W]e are now engaged in a show-down fight – not the usual war between nations for land areas or other material gains, but a war between two diametrically opposed ideologies. The great difference between our western Christian world and the atheistic Communist world is not political, ladies and gentlemen, it is moral. There are other differences, of course, but those could be reconciled. . . .

Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down – they are truly down. . . .

At war's end we were physically the strongest nation on earth and, at least potentially, the most powerful intellectually and morally. Ours could have been the honor of being a beacon in the desert of destruction, a shining living proof that civilization was not yet ready to destroy itself. Unfortunately, we have failed miserably and tragically to arise to the opportunity.

The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate or members of minority groups who have been selling this Nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer – the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in Government we can give.

This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been worst. . . .

In my opinion the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with Communists.

I have in my hand 57 cases of individuals who would appear to be either card carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.

One thing to remember in discussing the Communists in our Government is that we are not dealing with spies who get 30 pieces of silver to steal the blueprints of a new weapon. We are dealing with a far more sinister type of activity because it permits the enemy to guide and shape our policy.

Source: *Congressional Record*, February 20, 1950, pp. 1954–6.

Study: Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998).

## 8. The Lavender Scare

US Senate Committee Report, December 15, 1950

*During the Cold War the fear that permeated American culture was not limited to communists. Senator Joseph McCarthy's broad charges about subversives in the State Department kept shifting. At first he claimed they were "card-carrying communists." Later he referred to them as merely "security risks" – a much broader category consisting of anyone who might reveal state secrets, through either carelessness or coercion. Attention soon focused on the threat homosexuals working within the government might pose to national security. An admission by a State Department spokesperson that 91 homosexuals had been dismissed from that agency seemed to substantiate McCarthy's charges and fueled his popularity. After Republicans won the White House in 1952 under the slogan "Let's Clean House," President Dwight D. Eisenhower expanded Truman's loyalty program to a "security program," excluding from federal employment alcoholics, "sex perverts," and other alleged threats to national security. As a result of this "lavender scare," thousands of loyal Americans lost their jobs. In 1950, a Senate subcommittee held hearings to investigate the alleged threat posed by homosexuals. According to the subcommittee's report, what connections supposedly existed between issues of sexuality and national security? What other reasons for excluding homosexuals did these US Senators advance? How is their view of homosexuality similar to or different from current understandings?*

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The primary objective of the subcommittee in this inquiry was to determine the extent of the employment of homosexuals and other sex perverts in Government; to consider reasons why their employment by the Government is undesirable; and to examine into the efficacy of the methods used in dealing with the problem. . . . A number of eminent physicians and psychiatrists, who are recognized authorities on this subject, were consulted and some of these authorities testified before the subcommittee in executive session. In addition, numerous medical and sociological studies were reviewed. Information was also sought and obtained from law-enforcement officers, prosecutors, and other persons dealing with the legal and sociological aspects of the problem in 10 of the larger cities in the country. . . .

## 38 The Lavender Scare

The subcommittee found that most authorities agree on certain basic facts concerning sex perversion and it is felt that these facts should be considered in any discussion of the problem. Most authorities believe that sex deviation results from psychological rather than physical causes, and in many cases there are no outward characteristics or physical traits that are positive as identifying marks of sex perversion. Contrary to a common belief, all homosexual males do not have feminine mannerisms, nor do all female homosexuals display masculine characteristics in their dress or actions. . . .

Psychiatric physicians generally agree that indulgence in sexually perverted practices indicates a personality which has failed to reach sexual maturity. The authorities agree that most sex deviates respond to psychiatric treatment and can be cured if they have a genuine desire to be cured. However, many overt homosexuals have no real desire to abandon their way of life and in such cases cures are difficult, if not impossible. . . .

Those charged with the responsibility of operating the agencies of Government must insist that Government employees meet acceptable standards of personal conduct. In the opinion of this subcommittee homosexuals and other sex perverts are not proper persons to be employed in Government for two reasons; first, they are generally unsuitable, and second, they constitute security risks.

Overt acts of sex perversion, including acts of homosexuality, constitute a crime under our Federal, State, and municipal statutes and persons who commit such acts are law violators. Aside from the criminality and immorality involved in sex perversion such behavior is so contrary to the normal accepted standards of social behavior that persons who engage in such activity are looked upon as outcasts by society generally. The social stigma attached to sex perversion is so great that many perverts go to great lengths to conceal their perverted tendencies. This situation is evidenced by the fact that perverts are frequently victimized by blackmailers who threaten to expose their sexual deviations. Law enforcement officers have informed the subcommittee that there are gangs of blackmailers who make a regular practice of preying upon the homosexual. . . .

In further considering the general suitability of perverts as Government employees, it is generally believed that those who engage in overt acts of perversion lack the emotional stability of normal persons. In addition there is an abundance of evidence to sustain the conclusion that indulgence in acts of sex perversion weakens the moral fiber of an individual to a degree that he is not suitable for a position of responsibility.

Most of the authorities agree and our investigation has shown that the presence of a sex pervert in a Government agency tends to have a corrosive influence upon his fellow employees. These perverts will frequently attempt

to entice normal individuals to engage in perverted practices. This is particularly true in the case of young and impressionable people who might come under the influence of a pervert. Government officials have the responsibility of keeping this type of corrosive influence out of the agencies under their control. It is particularly important that the thousands of young men and women who are brought into Federal jobs not be subjected to that type of influence while in the service of the Government. One homosexual can pollute a Government office.

Another point to be considered in determining whether a sex pervert is suitable for Government employment is his tendency to gather other perverts about him. Eminent psychiatrists have informed the subcommittee that the homosexual is likely to seek his own kind because the pressures of society are such that he feels uncomfortable unless he is with his own kind. Due to this situation the homosexual tends to surround himself with other homosexuals, not only in his social, but in his business life. Under these circumstances if a homosexual attains a position in Government where he can influence the hiring of personnel, it is almost inevitable that he will attempt to place other homosexuals in Government jobs.

The conclusion of the subcommittee that a homosexual or other sex pervert is a security risk is not based upon mere conjecture. That conclusion is predicated upon a careful review of the opinions of those best qualified to consider matters of security in Government, namely, the intelligence agencies of the Government. Testimony on this phase of the inquiry was taken from representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the intelligence services of the Army, Navy and Air Force. All of these agencies are in complete agreement that sex perverts in Government constitute security risks.

The lack of emotional stability which is found in most sex perverts and the weakness of their moral fiber, makes them susceptible to the blandishments of the foreign espionage agent. It is the experience of intelligence experts that perverts are vulnerable to interrogation by a skilled questioner and they seldom refuse to talk about themselves. Furthermore, most perverts tend to congregate at the same restaurants, night clubs, and bars, which places can be identified with comparative ease in any community, making it possible for a recruiting agent to develop clandestine relationships which can be used for espionage purposes. . . .

It is the opinion of this subcommittee that those who engage in acts of homosexuality and other perverted sex activities are unsuitable for employment in the Federal Government. This conclusion is based upon the fact that persons who indulge in such degraded activity are committing not only illegal and immoral acts, but they also constitute security risks in positions of public trust.

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Source: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government: Interim Report*, S. Doc. 241, 81st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1950, pp. 1–5, 19, 21.

Study: John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

## 9. A Defense of Civil Liberties

William O. Douglas, “The Black Silence of Fear,” January 13, 1952

*American political leaders were slow to question the assumptions and techniques of the anti-communist crusade that swept the US during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The few who spoke out, even US Senators, were accused of being “un-American” or disloyal, and they risked their political careers. An early and rare challenge to the growing intolerance and resulting silence came from US Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, a former New Dealer who was appointed to the Supreme Court by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939. A liberal defender of individual rights, Douglas took the unusual step in 1952 of writing an article for the New York Times, defending “freedom of thought and expression” in the midst of the Cold War. According to Douglas, how and why had fear affected American society? In Douglas’s view, how should Americans deal with intolerance at home and the Soviet threat abroad?*

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There is an ominous trend in this nation. We are developing tolerance only for the orthodox point of view on world affairs, intolerance for new or different approaches. Orthodoxy normally has stood in the path of change. Orthodoxy was always the stronghold of the status quo, the enemy of new ideas – at least new ideas that were disturbing. He who was wedded to the orthodox view was isolated from the challenge of new facts.

The democratic way of life rejects standardized thought. It rejects orthodoxy. It wants the fullest and freest discussion, within peaceful limits, of all public issues. It encourages constant search for truth at the periphery of knowledge.

We as a people have probably never lived up to that standard in any of our communities. But it has been an ideal toward which most of our communities have strived. We have over the years swung from tolerance to intolerance and back again. There have been eras of intolerance when the

views of minorities have been suppressed. But there probably has not been a period of greater intolerance than we witness today. . . .

This is alarming to one who loves his country. It means the philosophy of strength through free speech is being forsaken for the philosophy of fear through repression. . . .

[W]e are drifting in the direction of repression, drifting dangerously fast.

What is the cause of this drift? What are the forces behind it? It is only a drift, for certainly everything in our tradition would make the great majority of us reject that course as a conscious choice.

The drift goes back, I think, to the fact that we carried over to days of peace the military approach to world affairs. Diplomacy . . . took a back seat. . . .

The military effort has been involving more and more of our sons, more and more of our budget, more and more of our thinking. The military policy has so completely absorbed our thoughts that we have mostly forgotten that our greatest strength, our enduring power is not in guns, but in ideas. . . . Today at home we are thinking less and less in terms of defeating communism with ideas, more and more in terms of defeating communism with military might.

The concentration on military means has helped to breed fear. It has bred fear and insecurity partly because of the horror of atomic war. But the real reason strikes deeper. In spite of our enormous expenditures, we see that Soviet imperialism continues to expand and that the expansion proceeds without the Soviets firing a shot. The free world continues to contract without a battle for its survival having been fought. It becomes apparent, as country after country falls to Soviet imperialistic ambitions, that military policy alone is a weak one; that military policy alone will end in political bankruptcy and futility. Thus fear mounts.

Fear has many manifestations. The Communist threat inside the country has been magnified and exalted far beyond its realities. Irresponsible talk by irresponsible people has fanned the flames of fear. Accusations have been loosely made. Character assassinations have become common. Suspicion has taken the place of good-will. Once we could debate with impunity along a wide range of inquiry. . . . Now there is suspicion. Innocent acts become tell-tale marks of disloyalty. The coincidence that an idea parallels Soviet Russia's policy for a moment of time settles an aura of suspicion around a person.

Suspicion grows until only the orthodox idea is the safe one. Suspicion grows until only the person who loudly proclaims that orthodox view, or who, once having been a Communist, has been converted, is trustworthy. Competition for embracing the new orthodoxy increases. Those who are unorthodox are suspect. Everyone who does not follow the military policy-makers is suspect. Everyone who voices opposition to the trend away from

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diplomacy and away from political tactics takes a chance. Some who are opposed are indeed “subversive.” Therefore, the thundering edict commands that all who are opposed are “subversive.” Fear is fanned to a fury. Good and honest men are pilloried. Character is assassinated. Fear runs rampant. . . .

Fear has driven more and more men and women in all walks of life either to silence or to the folds of the orthodox. Fear has mounted – fear of losing one’s job, fear of being investigated, fear of being pilloried. This fear has stereotyped our thinking, narrowed the range of free public discussion, and driven many thoughtful people to despair. This fear has even entered universities, great citadels of our spiritual strength, and corrupted them. We have the spectacle of university officials lending themselves to one of the worst witch hunts we have seen since early days. . . .

Repression of ideas has taken the place of debate. . . .

The mind of man must always be free. The strong society is one that sanctions and encourages freedom of thought and expression. When there is that freedom, a nation has resiliency and adaptability. When freedom of expression is supreme, a nation will keep its balance and stability.

Our real power is our spiritual strength, and that spiritual strength stems from our civil liberties. If we are true to our traditions, if we are tolerant of a whole market place of ideas, we will always be strong. Our weakness grows when we become intolerant of opposing ideas, depart from our standards of civil liberties, and borrow the policeman’s philosophy from the enemy we detest. . . .

The times demand a renaissance in freedom of thought and freedom of expression, a renaissance that will end the orthodoxy that threatens to devitalize us.

Source: *New York Times Magazine*, January 13, 1952, pp. 7, 37–8.

Study: James F. Simon, *Independent Journey: The Life of William O. Douglas* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

### Discussion Questions

1. What factors led to the Cold War antagonism between the US and the Soviet Union?
2. What impact did Cold War fears have on American society?
3. How did the US manage the conflicting needs for security and individual liberty during the Cold War?