

THE UNITED STATES & THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR ARMS RACE

The Truman Administration's Arms Build-Up of 1950-1951

Submitted for the PhD in International History
at the London School of Economics and Political Science
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with the American military build-up of 1950-1951, a crucial event in starting the Cold War arms race. It examines the decision to initiate the arms build-up, and some consequences of that decision.

In considering the beginning of the arms build-up, it accounts for the influence of external events, such as Soviet and European capabilities and actions, as well as internal factors, including public pressure and lobbying. In doing so, it seeks to assess the relative importance of the object being perceived, the Soviet military, and the lens through which that object was viewed, the political culture of the American foreign policy establishment.

The dissertation makes critical judgements as to the timing, nature, and cause of the arms build-up. It argues that the critical period was between 25 June 1950 and 19 September 1950, that the decisive influence came from the President, and not from the military, and that it was the perception of the Soviet threat in Central Europe that was important, not the war in Korea.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	PAGE 1
INTRODUCTION	PAGE 7
POST-WAR DEMOBILISATION	PAGE 14
1.1 American Demobilisation, 1945 to Early 1948	
1.2 Western European Military Preparedness, VE Day to Early 1947	
1.3 Soviet Demobilisation, 1945-1947	
CONSOLIDATION	PAGE 30
2.1 American Military Preparedness Stabilises, Early 1948	
2.2 Summer of 1948-Early 1949: The Truman Administration Chooses to Continue Its Reliance on Nuclear Weapons	
2.3 The Creation of the Western Union and the Signing of the North Atlantic Treaty: Their Impact on Western Military Power	
2.4 The Fiscal 1950 American Defence Budget	
2.5 The Truman Administration's Perceptions of Soviet Military Capabilities, 1948-1950	
2.6 The Accuracy of the Truman Administration's Perceptions of Soviet Military Capabilities	
RECONSIDERATION	PAGE 117
3.1 The Beginning of the Acheson-Johnson Conflict Over ArmsPolicy	
3.2 George Kennan's Opposition to an Arms Build-Up	
3.3 The Soviet Atomic Bomb and the American Hydrogen Bomb	
3.4 The Writing of NSC-68	
3.5 The Truman Administration's Reaction to NSC-68	
3.6 Work on the Fiscal 1951 and Fiscal 1952 Defence Budgets Before the Korean War	
3.7 Traitors, Spy Hunts, and the Growing Dissension, Early 1950	
3.8 The Return of the Old Guard	

TRANSFORMATION PAGE 208

- 4.1 The Truman Administration's Decision to Enter the Korean War
- 4.2 The Truman Administration's Decision to Begin an Arms Build-Up
- 4.3 The Primacy of the Arms Build-Up in the Truman Administration's Foreign Policy
- 4.4 Expansion of the Fiscal 1951 Defence Budget After the Start of the Korean War
- 4.5 The Fiscal 1952 American Defence Budget

GLOBALISATION PAGE 263

- 5.1 American Deployment to Europe and the Promise of German Rearmament
- 5.2 The War Scare and the Domestic Attacks on Truman's Policy
- 5.3 The "Great Debate"
- 5.4 The Birth of American Global Power
- 5.5 The Soviet Union Initiates an Arms Build-Up, 1950-1951

THE BUILD-UP: WHAT & HOW PAGE 315

- 6.1 Financing the American Arms Build-Up
- 6.2 The Arms Build-Up and the Economy
- 6.3 Civil Defence and Other Forms of Preparation for a Major War
- 6.4 The American Arms Build-Up: What New Conventional Forces Did It Buy?
- 6.5 The Expansion of the American Nuclear Arsenal and Delivery Systems
- 6.6 1953-1954: Truman Leaves Office and American Military Spending Stabilises at a High Level
- 6.7 1953-1954: Stalin Dies, and Soviet Military Spending Continues to Rise

CONCLUSION PAGE 378

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

US Army Center of Military History	ACMH
Basil Liddell Hart Centre	BLHC
Central Intelligence Agency, Historical Office	CIAH
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library	DDEL
Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library	FDRL
Foreign Relations of the United States	FRUS
Harry S. Truman Presidential Library	HSTL
US National Archives and Record Administration	NARA
Office of the Secretary of Defense, History Office	OSDH
Public Record Office of the United Kingdom	PRO

PREFACE

The dilemmas posed in understanding the US arms build-up of 1950-51 are those pertaining to most modern American diplomatic history. Like any history, this one has been written by, so to speak, standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before, and it is, therefore, necessary to briefly explain its relation to the existing texts.

This dissertation attempts to balance an emphasis on domestic factors, primarily the ideology, interests, and political culture of the American elites, with an emphasis on the interplay of nation states.¹

¹for a discussion on means of analysing sources of American foreign policy, see Michael Hogan, "Corporatism", *The Journal of American History* (June 1990); for explanations of the ongoing revisionist-postrevisionist debates, see Bruce Cumings, "Revising Postrevisionism", Or, The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History", and Melvyn Leffler, "New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Prospective Reconfigurations", both in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations Since 1941*, edited by Michael Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); on ideology see Michael Hunt,

This appears, superficially, as a problem of "who" plays the most vital role, but, for the arms build-up, it is also a question of "when", and "why". An emphasis on elites, and their world views, tends to lead historians to emphasise the role of the bureaucracy and of ideology, at the expense of the heads of state and of the impact of world affairs. For the arms build-up, this means that many recent historical works have highlighted the role of the bureaucracy in creating the document NSC-68, and have spent much effort examining the manner in which the views inherent in NSC-68 came to be adopted by their advocates. The State Department and Defense Department elites are "who" caused the arms build-up, the spring of 1950, during which NSC-68 was written, is "when" the arms build-up policy was adopted, and the question of "why" the arms build-up was adopted can be answered through an investigation of the political culture, the spectrum through which American elites viewed the Soviet Union. These works have added breadth to the understanding of the event, and has helped to better place the arms build-up within the context of the rest of American history and culture.

However, while making use of these works, this dissertation also tries to use archival evidence and selected historical works to readjust the balance between the role of ideology and personality, between internal and external affairs, and between the importance of the lens

through which perceptions are viewed, and the object which is being observed. In so doing, the dissertation attempts to present a fuller view of the process by which the arms build-up occurred. In this view, Truman plays a vital role in the question of "who" authorised the arms build-up. The start of the Korean War is the most critical of the many events (including the explosion of the Soviet atomic weapon, the victory of the Chinese Communist Party, the beginnings of the anti-Communist witch hunts in America, the signing of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty, and the submission of NSC-68) that led to the arms build-up, and provides the most useful answer to the question of "when" it began. The existence of a Soviet preponderance of conventional power in Europe, and of a Soviet leadership willing to acquiesce in its ally's use of force, are much more important factors in "why" the arms build-up occurred.

In addition to the crucial issues of who, when, and why, this dissertation also attempts, albeit briefly, to relate some of the consequences of the arms build-up. This includes changes in military strategy, such as the decision to resuscitate the Army, which had been subordinate to the Air Force's Strategic Air Corps in spending priorities, and the related decision to deploy American combat forces to Germany. The economic consequences for the United States of the arms build-up are also briefly examined.

Structurally, this dissertation is designed to place the arms build-up in its international and domestic contexts. Since the primary reason

the Truman administration expanded the US military in 1950-1951 was the perception of a Soviet preponderance of conventional power in Europe, the dissertation will attempt to explain the reasons that the Truman administration believed this. The first two chapters are devoted to this task; chapter one comparing the disarmament of the United States and its European allies after the Second World War with post-war Soviet military policy, and chapter two comparing the existing forces in 1948, and critiquing the Truman administration's evaluations of Soviet power. These sections will argue that, although perhaps overstated by the Truman administration, the Soviet Union did have superiority in conventional power. This is contrary to certain historical scholarship which has tried to argue that the USSR lacked a preponderance of offensive power in Europe.²

In chapter three, the dissertation reviews the critical period from January 1949 to June 1950, when the possibility of an arms build-up was discussed with much vigour, but dismissed. Views of the foreign policy-making establishment, the Congress, and the public are examined, especially with reference to the perception of Soviet power and the efforts of the State Department to address this issue. More importantly, perhaps, is an attempt to give a general essence of the mood in the nation and in the White House.

²for critiques of the Truman administration's perceptions of the Soviet military, see Matthew A. Evangelista, "Stalin's Post War Army Reappraised", *International Security* (Winter 1982/83), and Jerald A. Combs, "The Compromise That Never Was: George Kennan, Paul Nitze, and the Issue of Conventional Deterrence in Europe, 1949-1952", *Diplomatic History* (Summer 1991)

Once this has been done, chapter four will describe the initiation of the arms build up. It will argue that the Truman administration engaged in the arms build-up due to its changing perceptions of Soviet intentions in light of the North Korean attack on South Korea. It will also examine how the arms build-up became the primary aim of American foreign policy.

Chapter five will show the global extension of the arms build-up. This involved the militarisation of the North Atlantic Treaty alliance, the victory of the Truman administration in winning domestic support for its policy of sending troops abroad, and the globalisation of American military responsibilities.

Chapter six will examine the financing of the arms build-up, and will scrutinise the use of arms build-up funds to overhaul the existing American armed forces. There will also be a brief discussion of how the decision on the role of the American military, and the approximate share of national income to be devoted to it, which was made in the Truman years, came to be accepted by the new Eisenhower administration that entered power with the Republican landslide of 1952.

The sources used for this work are a mixture of documents from archives and libraries, the memoirs and personal accounts of

individuals involved in the arms build-up, and the work of historians who have blazed the trail in this field.³

³Some critical secondary accounts were Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), Doris Condit, *History of the Office of Secretary of Defense: Vol. 2, The Test of War, 1950-1953* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1988), Paul Hammond, "NSC-68: Prologue to Rearmament", *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets*, edited by Werner Schilling, Hammond, and Glenn Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Marc Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), Samuel J. Wells, "The First Coldwar Buildup: Europe in United States Strategy and Policy, 1950-1953", *Western Security: The Formative Years; Atlantic and European Defence, 1950-1953*, edited by Olav Riste (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1985), Walter Poole, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Volume 4: 1950-1952* (Wilimington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1980)

INTRODUCTION

Charles Bohlen, a Soviet expert in the US State Department, described the American arms build up during the Korean War (1950-53) by saying:

Before Korea, the United States had only one commitment of a political or military nature outside the Western Hemisphere. This was the North Atlantic Treaty. Our bases in Germany and Japan were regarded as temporary, to be given up when the occupation ended. True, as a hangover from pre-war days, we felt it necessary to retain bases in the Philippines, but there was no pledge on their use. The only places we had military facilities were in England, where we had transit privileges, and Saudi Arabia, where we had an airfield. As a result of our overinterpretation of Communism's goal, we had by 1955 about 450 bases in thirty-six countries, and we were linked by political and military pacts with some twenty countries outside of Latin America. It was the Korean War and not World War II that made us a world military-political power.¹

¹Charles Bohlen, *Witness to History*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 303 If anything, Bohlen was underestimating. There were 22 nations outside Latin America that the US was allied to by the mid-1950's. Coblenz, Kaplan, and Reitzel, *United States Foreign Policy, 1945-55*, p. 365

This extension of American power entailed a renewed use of conscription, the reintroduction of World War Two style price and wage controls, and a near tripling of United States military budgets in a two-year period to cover everything from new combat divisions to new Navy "supercarriers" to the construction of the largest nuclear weapons plants yet built, all caused by the fear that the Korean War was the prelude to a much wider global conflict. This was perhaps the greatest American panic of the Cold War, rivalling the Cuban Missile Crisis in the popular level of fright. Several US Senators hinted that the use of the atomic bomb should at least be considered. Stuart Symington, Chairman of the National Security Resources Board, asked President Truman in a January 1951 memo "Who doubts any longer that the Soviets will attack when ready? . . . As things are now going, by 1953 if not 1952, the Soviet aggressors will assume complete command of the world situation."² The Wall Street Journal, in the first week of 1951, warned that "1951 is the first full year of the great arms race to avert or fight World War III."³

This arms build-up began immediately after 25 June 1950, when the Korean War began. Although other events, such as the Turkish Straits crisis of 1946, the Iranian Crisis of 1946, the Greek civil war, the Berlin Crisis of 1948-49, the Soviet explosion of an atomic weapon in 1949,

²FRUS, 1951, Volume 1, January 11 1951 memorandum from W. Stuart Symington (Chairman of the National Security Resources Board) to the National Security Council (NSC), which filed it as NSC-100

³.*The Wall Street Journal*, "A Special Wall Street Journal Report on 1951 Prospects", January 4 1951, p. 1

the collapse of Chinese nationalist resistance in mainland China that same year, and the signing of the Sino-Soviet treaty of Mutual Assistance in February 1950 all contributed to tension between the Soviet Union and the United States, it was only after the start of the Korean War that the Truman administration embarked on an arms build-up designed to reverse the perceived Soviet lead in conventional forces. This was in direct contrast to Truman's policies from VJ Day right up to May 1950. It contravened his decision to demobilise forces as rapidly as possible after the war, as well the National Security Council's decision in February 1948 to "work towards the earliest withdrawal of all occupation forces from Germany".⁴ It was also in direct contrast to Truman's decision to submit to Congress in May 1950, the month before the beginning of the Korean War, the lowest proposed American military budget of the post-1945 era, while asking the Secretary of Defense to see if it could be cut yet further, by an extra half a billion dollars.

The 1950-1951 arms build-up was so important to the United States government that some of the most important components of American foreign policy, such as the demilitarised status of Germany and Japan, were rejected in order to support the increase in military power. Other radical changes included the decision to fund a globally deployed American military on an indefinite basis, choosing to

⁴NARA, record group 273, National Security Council Mill 9, "United States Foreign and Domestic Policy in Furtherance of National Security", February 25, 1948, p. 12

reintroduce conscription, and resolving to create a domestic system of air defence against enemy penetration.

Almost all the decisions to adopt these changes were made in the first three months of the Korean campaign. Later events, such as the start of the Chinese conquest of Tibet in October 1950, the Chinese entry into the Korean War, the introduction of Soviet pilots in that war, the beginning of a negotiated settlement in Korea, the successful testing of thermonuclear weapons by both the US and the USSR, the election of Eisenhower, and the death of Stalin all impacted American arms spending, but their impact was not revolutionary; the general scope of American commitments had been set in 1950-1951, and the future administrations could alter the scale or expense only at the margins.

The commitments made during the Korean War were global. In Korea, where American troops had withdrawn in 1949, they came back in 1950 and have stayed to the present day. In the Arctic, the US embarked upon the creation of a new radar system, the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line, to protect against Soviet attacks. In the air, the US built up the Strategic Air Command (SAC) into a potent force of several hundred thousand men, with bombers in the air at all times to retaliate in the event of a nuclear strike upon the United States or its allies. At sea, the US began patrolling the Straits of Taiwan, becoming militarily involved in the Chinese Civil War for the first time. Under the seas, the US launched its first nuclear-powered submarines. To

the emerging nations, it gave new quantities of economic aid. In Germany, where the American occupation units had previously been unarmoured, without air power, and involved primarily in "denazification" and the maintenance of public order, the North Atlantic Treaty signatories began building that paper alliance into an effective armed force, creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), with a multilateral command structure, a Supreme Allied Commander for Europe (SACEUR) in charge of field operations, four American divisions, and increased commitments from the other member states. Across the globe, the US created a plethora of alliances, such as the Australia, New Zealand and United States security pact (ANZUS), the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO), the Japanese-American Security arrangement, and the Philippine-American security treaty, all backed up by the newly enlarged US armed forces. In Yugoslavia, which had broken away from the Soviet camp in the previous two years, the US began an aid program, and started military staff talks.⁵ Within the anti-Soviet alliance, the US spent more on military aid in the two year period of 1950-1951 than it had on the entire Marshall Plan from its creation. In Indo-China, this increase in aid, given to help the French subdue the Communist insurgency, deepened American involvement, and was

⁵Stueck, *Korean War*, p.5

an important step in the process by which America would become involved in a future war there.⁶

Without the Korean War, or an incident similar to it, it is doubtful that America would have engaged in an arms build-up, or deployed its forces around the globe as it did. Although Truman would later claim, in an official address to Congress asking for military funds, that the decision to ask for an increased military budget "should have - and, though no doubt in smaller measure, would have - been taken" even in the absence of the Korean War, the evidence suggests otherwise.⁷ As we shall see, Truman was trying to trim the military budget right up to the day the war began. Truman may have been closer to expressing his real feelings on the subject in a January 1953 discussion with a journalist, in which he talked about Stalin's decision to allow the North Koreans to invade South Korea: "It's the greatest error he made in his whole career. If he hadn't made that mistake, we'd have done what we did after World War I: completely disarmed. And it would have been a cinch for him to take over the European nations, one by one." Instead of this, Truman said the beginning of the Korean War had dramatically changed matters: "It caused the rearmament of ourselves and our Allies. It brought about the North Atlantic Treaty [sic]. It brought about the various Pacific alliances. It

⁶Ronald Spector, *United States Army in Vietnam: Advice and Support, The Early Years, 1941-1960* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1983)

⁷Truman quote: Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July, 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371 90951, AU 1104/3

hurried up the signing of the Japanese Peace Treaty. It caused Greece and Turkey to be brought quickly into the North Atlantic Alliance."⁸

The changes had long lasting repercussions. The new deployments of forces in Germany and Korea would survive not just the end of the Korean War, but even the end of the Cold War. The military agreements with Japan, Australia, and New Zealand are still legally binding, and the NATO military structure is not only alive in the late 1990's, but is preparing to expand.

⁸Interview of Truman by Carleton Kent, *The Washington Sun-Times*, January 16 1953; for a discussion of the admission of Turkey to NATO, see Melvyn Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945-1952" *Journal of American History* (March 1985)

POST-WAR DEMOBILISATION

1.1 American Demobilisation, 1945 to Early 1948

Many, if not most, Americans had been opposed to America's military participation in the Second World War until the attack on Pearl Harbor and the German declaration of war on the United States. During the war, most Americans hoped for a quick end, and a return to the old ways of small armies and relatively little military action outside the western hemisphere. Although isolationist sentiment was on the decline, and although there was a sense that greater involvement in international politics shouldn't be avoided, it was still almost universally assumed that the armies and navies would return home after the war, and that there was no need for standing forces outside the United States.

By the time of the November 1944 elections, both of the major parties, reading the polls, tried to make electoral gains by claiming

that their party would demobilise fastest.¹ The Roosevelt administration began decreasing munitions production during 1944,² and made plans to slow warship construction.³ Roosevelt informed Harold Smith, his Director of the Bureau of the Budget, that after the war he wanted to emphasise debt reduction over foreign policy or tax relief.⁴

Truman, on assuming the Presidency in April 1945, was similarly inclined towards a rapid post-war demobilisation. In his 6 September 1945 message to Congress, at 16,000 words the longest address ever delivered by a President to the legislatures, Truman barely mentioned foreign policy, despite the fact that only four days earlier General MacArthur had hosted the formal surrender of Japan in Tokyo Bay.⁵ The message represented the end of the war in American politics. The goal was a return to normalcy: an ending of the unpopular shortages

¹Dewey predicted that the Democrats would keep troops in the Army to continue New Deal projects and to avoid unemployment. FDR was careful to also promise demobilisation.

²FDRL, The Papers of Alexander Sachs, box 163, folder entitled "Reports, Studies, and Memoranda on War Progress, June 1945" For a series of detailed charts on past and projected munitions production, see a pamphlet entitled "Delayed Economic Reflection of Military Reverses in Belgium and Subsequent Prefatory Readjustments for One Front War"

³FDRL, Map Room Files, box 157, MR 401(4), Section 1.

⁴FDRL, The Papers of Harold Smith, box 3, folder on conferences with the President, 1943-45. Smith's notes on his conferences with Roosevelt indicate that the President favoured rapid disarmament, but that the slow pace of the campaign in Europe delayed larger cutbacks. The two did agree on a 15 to 17 billion dollar reduction in war expenditures for fiscal 1946 (July 1, 1945 to June 30, 1946), from a total of \$86 billion the previous year. FDR made clear to Smith that after the war, cutting the national debt would receive priority above either foreign policy or tax relief.

⁵David McCollough, *Truman*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 468

of the war years and an effort to use the boom in production that the war had created (national income doubled 1939 to 1945) to boost the domestic standard of living and pay off the immense war debt, more massive relative to the size of the American economy than any before or since (almost double the amount, as a percentage of GNP, than at present).

Truman, looking over a world in which the Axis alliance had been totally shattered, and perhaps impressed that the American atomic monopoly would maintain US security in the future, ordered immediate demobilisation and the withdrawal of almost all American soldiers overseas. In one month, the Pentagon cancelled \$15 billion in contracts, which led the Boeing Corporation to lay off 21,200 employees and Ford Motor another 50,000.⁶ By the end of the year, the Department of Defense cancelled more than \$21 billion worth of contracts with aircraft manufacturers, leading to the closure of 50 out of the 66 airframe production facilities in the US.⁷ The hunger of the soldiers and their families back home to get back to the good times was insatiable. Wives began over 200 "Bring back Daddy" clubs to lobby the Congress for a quick return of troops.⁸ When a shortage of transport developed in the Pacific that stalled the return of troops, the

⁶ibid., *Truman*, p. 469

⁷John B. Rae, *Climb to Greatness: The American Aircraft Industry, 1920-1960* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1968), p. 173

⁸Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 240

men deluged Capitol Hill with "No boats, no votes" letters,⁹ and there was even a riot in the Philippines when soldiers were informed of the delayed pace of their return.¹⁰

Demilitarisation took only 2 years. The military budget fell from \$81.6 billion in fiscal 1945 (July 1944 to June 1945) to \$44.7 billion in fiscal 1946 to \$13.1 billion in fiscal 1947,¹¹ with Truman envisioning a time when defence spending might level off at \$6 to \$7 billion annually.¹² As a portion of Gross National Product, military spending dropped from 38.5% in fiscal '45 to 5.7% in fiscal '47.¹³ The drop in personnel and combat units was even steeper, as can be seen in the chart below.¹⁴

⁹quoted in Larson, *Origins*, p. 240

¹⁰Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 156

¹¹Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 359

¹²Jack Holl and Terrence Fehner, "Truman", *The Harry S. Truman Encyclopedia*, Richard Kirkendall, editor (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1989), p. 238

¹³Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 359

¹⁴1945 Army: *The World Almanac*, 1993, pp. 692-694. This includes 2,200,000 personnel in the Army Air Corps, which became an independent service, the United States Air Force, in 1947.

1948 Army: Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War* (New York: Times Books, 1987), p. 9. Data is for March 1948

Navy and Marine Corps: Congressional Service Quarterly, *Congress and the Nation*, p. 265. Data are for 30 June 1945, and 30 June 1948.

Decrease in US Military Personnel After World War Two

	Personnel in WW2	Personnel in 1948
Army	8,200,000	530,000
Navy	3,380,817	419,347
Marine Corps	474,680	84,988

Between VE Day and 2 November 1945, nearly two and a half million troops returned to the United States.¹⁵ By March of 1946, when there was a crisis concerning Soviet unwillingness to withdraw as promised from the northern regions of Iran, the Secretary of State, Jimmy Byrnes, felt that the US armed forces were already too weak to play a role.¹⁶ By 1948, the army had less than half the number of men in uniform that it had at the time of Pearl Harbor.¹⁷

Between the end of the war and 1948, the number of Navy aircraft carriers fell from 40 to 11.¹⁸ From the end of the war until early 1948, air power was cut from an Army Air Force total of 218 groups (each

¹⁵James A. Huston, *Outposts and Allies: U.S. Army Logistics in the Cold War, 1945-53* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1988), p. 16

¹⁶Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 111

¹⁷William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), p. 531

¹⁸Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 8 for these statistics. It seems likely that Blair is not including converted aircraft carriers in his figures. Documentation at FDRL, Map Room Files, box 157, folder MR 401(4) indicates that the Navy had 90 carriers as of the end of February, 1945, but either 61 or 62 of these were converted vessels. Given that the Navy planned to finish construction of 10 more carriers by August and that there was probably few or no losses of heavy carriers in the last months of the war, Blair's figure of 40 [non-converted] carriers could be close to the mark, but perhaps slightly over it.

consisting of either 30 bombers or 75 fighters) to 38.¹⁹ Despite the focus on strategic bombing, which we shall consider later, the 2.2 million personnel in the Army Air Corps of 1945 were reduced to 411,277 in the Air Force as of 30 June 1950.²⁰ The number of civilians in military aircraft production decreased from 2,101,600 in November 1943 to 138,700 in February 1946, and the number of airframe plants in operation dropped from 66 to 16 in 1945 alone.²¹

The pace was so rapid that Truman would later claim that it was not demobilisation, "it was disintegration".²² Perhaps an even more accurate description was made by General Alfred Wedemeyer, when he explained that the nation had "fought the war like a football game, after which the winner leaves the field and celebrates."²³ The Los Alamos facility, where the atomic bomb had been created, was stripped of equipment and almost totally deserted, becoming a wasteland in the desert,²⁴ with almost all the scientists headed off to universities.²⁵ Piles of military hardware, jeeps, and clothes were

¹⁹ibid., p. 9

²⁰Congressional Service Quarterly, *Congress and the Nation, 1945-64*, (Washington, DC: 1965), p. 265. 1945 Air Force: *The World Almanac*, 1993, p. 694. At that time, the personnel were members of the Army Air Corps.

²¹William Cunningham, "Postwar Developments and the Location of the Aircraft Industry in 1950", *The History of the American Aircraft Industry: An Anthology*, edited by G. R. Simonson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1968), pp. 181, 185

²²Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: 1945, Year of Decisions* (New York: Signet, 1955), p. 509

²³quoted in Manchester, *Glory*, p. 531

²⁴Manchester, *Glory*, p. 570

²⁵Richard Rhodes, *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995) p. 201

either left in the theatre of operations or auctioned off to the highest bidder.

American forces remained as occupation troops in Japan, Germany, and Austria, but these units were stripped of most armour and air power, being left essentially with the maintenance of public order and "de-nazification" as their only goals. Only the desire to fulfil these commitments prevented the US in 1945 from completely withdrawing its forces from theatres of operations, as it had in the early 1920's.

1.2 Western European Military Preparedness from VE Day-Early 1947

In the first two chaotic years after the Second World War, the pressing question on the minds of most Western Europeans was how to survive the economic collapse the war had created. The bombing, the shelling, the public borrowing to ever increasing levels of debt, the flooding caused by the collapse of dams and dikes, the disruption of normal economic activity brought about by conscription and conversion to war industries, all led to a marked decline in the standard of living. In the United Kingdom, debt was 2.7 times Gross National Product.²⁶ As soon as the challenging task of reorganising

²⁶William P. Snyder, *The Politics of British Defence Policy, 1945-62*, (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1964), p. 193

governments in the formerly occupied nations was accomplished, statesmen turned their energies toward the call for economic recovery.

Defence, in the strictly military sense of the word, was relatively neglected. Economic recovery was the most important ingredient of security, and the creation of the Council of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC) to oversee the distribution of aid from the European Recovery Program (better known as the Marshall Plan) was considered by many to be the most important step in forming an anti-Soviet bloc. Defence expenditures were low.

The Dutch, for example, were slow to replace Germany with the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to their independence, and placed their hopes after the war in the four power occupation of what had been the German state. Only after the failure of the London Conference of 1947 to create a new unified and demilitarised Germany did the Dutch, perceiving that it was Soviet intransigence that prevented a settlement, conclude that security against the USSR was necessary.²⁷

France had little money to devote to the military at this stage. What forces the nation did have were being used to resume control of the empire, especially in Indochina, which the Japanese had occupied,

²⁷Jan van der Harst, "From Neutrality to Alignment: Dutch Defense Policy, 1945-51", *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe*, edited by Francis Heller and John Gillingham, p. 29

and where, from 1946, the French were fighting the Vietminh for power.

In the United Kingdom, the Defence Committee of the British Cabinet felt, in 1947, that the possibility of a major war in the next five years was remote, and that the situation was unlikely to become dangerous in the next ten years.²⁸ The 1947 Future Defence Policy paper was based on the assumption that the defence of the UK, the control of the Middle East, and maintenance of sea communications were the highest defence priorities of the nation. The paper recommended that the government needed to slash its annual defence expenditures to 1.1 billion pounds sterling. Clement Attlee's Labour government had financial reasons to be receptive to the ideas of the paper. In addition to the vast realms of the British Empire that needed policing, London had, during the war, acquired new areas of occupation, in Lybia, Italian Somaliland, southern French Indochina, and Germany. Although many of these were to brief occupations, the revolts against British rule in Palestine and India proved to also be expensive. This is to say little of the desires for public housing and medical care, the problems posed by efforts to prop up the sterling area, and the difficult winter of 1946/47, when the coal pits froze. So Labour acquiesced to the military's plans that in the unlikely event that a war with the Soviets did break out, Britain was to abandon

²⁸Eric Grove, *Vanguard to Trident: British Naval Policy Since World War II*, (London: The Bodley Head, 1987) p. 39

Europe and fight Communism in the Asian parts of the Empire, particularly the Middle East, and through the use of strategic bombing.²⁹ The British War Office assumed that in the event of war the Soviet Army would be able to occupy Germany, the Low Countries, and France in two months, and would then embark on attacks on the oil rich Middle East.³⁰

1.3 Soviet Demobilisation, 1945-1947

The Soviet leadership was aware of the American demobilisation, which was public information in the west. Stalin also learned from his spies that in the immediate post-war era the US had only a tiny nuclear arsenal (fewer than 6 bombs in March 1946), and that the British still had none.³¹ However, the knowledge of the American demobilisation did not cause Moscow to embark on cutbacks of similar size. The Soviets seem to have concluded, in the 1945-1947 period, that there was sufficient need for forces, and that the USSR

²⁹.Peter Slowe, *Manny Shinwell: An Authorised Biography*, (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 233; Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 286

³⁰.*ibid.*, p. 233

³¹.David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 153. Klaus Fuchs, British nuclear scientists spying for the Soviets for ideological reasons, was a Soviet informant on this matter; Jeffrey Richelson, *A Century of Spies: Intelligence in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 227; 6 bomb statistic: Robert Dorr, "Thermonuclear Legacy", *Military History* (August 1995), p. 63

could afford only a partial demobilisation. Millions of troops were decommissioned, but the armed forces were not cut beyond an extent that would jeopardise the Soviet preponderance of force in central Europe. (we will examine this force in section 2.6)

According to the Russian historian Dmitri Volkogonov, who had access to Soviet archives in researching this subject, Stalin began the demobilisation process on May 21, 1945, less than two weeks after the end of the war in Europe. Stalin ordered that anti-aircraft and cavalry forces were to be demobilised first, followed by 40 to 60% of the infantry units.³² Demobilisation for units in Asia began, by order of the Supreme Soviet, in September, after the Soviet war against Japan.³³

The British historian David Holloway, using Soviet data published in the 1960's and 1980's, came to the following conclusion:

In June 1945 the Supreme Soviet adopted a law on demobilisation, and by the end of the year the Red Army, which numbered 11.365 million in May, had been cut by over 3 million men. Demobilisation continued during 1946 and by the end of 1947 the armed forces had been reduced to 2.874 million troops. The shift to a peacetime footing was at least partially reflected in the defence budget, which fell from 137.8 billion rubles in 1944 to 128.2 billion in 1945, 73.6 billion in 1946 and 66.3 billion in 1947 (at 1946 prices it would have been 55.2 billion).³⁴

³².Dmitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*, (New York: Grove Wiedenfield, 1992), p. 504

³³.James Hansen, *Correlation of Forces: Four Decades of Soviet Military Development*, (New York: Praeger, 1987), p. 7, and Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 504

³⁴.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 152 The same figure, of 2,874,000 troops, is cited as the strength for the year 1948 in Hansen, *Forces*, p. 17

In February 1948, the Soviet press published statistics indicating that Soviet military spending in 1947 and 1948 was 66.1 and 66.4 billion rubles respectively, much lower than wartime levels.³⁵

The Soviets took care to protect the critical armoured and air elements from the brunt of the cuts, as well as the core of their infantry. Decommissioning affected servicemen too old for normal service and units, such as cavalry, that were obsolete.³⁶ Tank units and the fleet were unaffected by the initial demobilisation,³⁷ many divisions at full strength were maintained on forward deployment in Central Europe, and, as we will see in a later chapter, the decrease in Soviet manpower was at least partially offset by improvements in Soviet military technology and techniques, which made the smaller force more mobile and advanced.

The level of Soviet military spending was dictated by conflicting factors. Driving costs up were the continuing existence of substantial disagreements with the other World War Two victors, the American atomic monopoly, the need for internal security, the need to maintain a strong political hold on eastern European states, the possibility that limited conventional operations might be necessary in the immediate future, and the apprehension and insecurity in the Kremlin, a result of

³⁵.FRUS, 1948, Volume 4, pp. 802-803, Telegram by the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Smith) to the Secretary of State (Marshall), February 3, 1948

³⁶.Hansen, *Forces*, pp. 7 and 12

³⁷.Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 504

Russian and Soviet history, internal weaknesses, and, perhaps most of all, the personality of the leading political figure. Driving costs down were the American demobilisation, the perception of war weariness in the United States, and the necessity of economic reconstruction.

The possibility of war with the other World War Two victors could not be entirely discounted, given the wide scope of disagreements on issues as diverse as the western boundaries of the USSR, the future of Eastern Europe and Germany, the unwillingness of the western allies to allow the Soviets to participate in the occupation and restructuring of Japan and Italy, the campaigns by conservative regimes against the Communists in China and Greece, the status of the Soviet forces in Iran, the continuing western colonial control of areas where the Soviets supported indigenous movements, and the failure of the other occupying powers to agree to Soviet plans for reparations from their sectors of Germany. Although it does not seem that either side wanted a major war, each had interests that they would have gone to war over, or that they might at least threaten war over, and the constant fluctuation in the perception of interests made it difficult to be sure that war could be avoided. The decline in relations between the Soviets and the Anglo-American coalition was precipitous. By February 1946, Stalin, in a radio address, began preparing the Soviet

populace for the possibility of a future war with the capitalist powers.³⁸

Within the Soviet dominated area in the zone between the Soviet Union and Germany, some military force had to be maintained as a deterrent to anti-Soviet activity. This was especially true in the Baltic states, where large parts of the populace resisted the annexation of the region by the USSR. The Soviets admitted losing 20,000 men against Lithuanian partisans.³⁹ It was also true in the western Ukraine, where traditional connections to the west were higher than in Russia, where Ukrainian nationalism and language was strongest, where support for the German occupiers had been highest, and where guerrilla warfare against the Soviet government continued for years after the region was liberated from the Nazi occupation. Approximately 50,000 to 200,000 Ukrainians were members of anti-Soviet paramilitary organisations fighting the Soviets in 1947.⁴⁰

It is possible that the decision not to fully demobilise was also motivated by the belief that limited military operations outside the USSR might prove useful if the opportunity arose. While the Soviets knew that a major war could bring about collapse, (that being how the Bolsheviks had come to power), they also knew that it was possible to

³⁸.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 9

³⁹.Richelson, *Spies*, p. 246 Lithuanian partisans later claimed that the Soviets lost between 80,000 and 100,000 Soviet soldiers in fighting there from 1945 to 1952. *Ibid.*, and Evangelista, "Postwar Army"

⁴⁰.Richelson, *Spies*

engage in more limited operations if one knew how far one could go without risking major war; it was through such small wars that the Soviets had reconquered some lost territories in 1920-21 and in 1939-1941.

Driving down costs was the need for economic reconstruction. The Soviet Union was years behind the west in industrial technology, even if one accepts the Soviet government's contention that forced industrialisation was rapidly narrowing the gap. Stalin told his confidants that the USSR needed at least three more five years plans to prepare for "all contingencies".⁴¹

Another factor which, perhaps, impacted costs was the continuing stream of intelligence on conventional weapons and political considerations coming from western officials working for the Soviet Union. Foremost was Donald Maclean, the First Secretary of the British Embassy in Washington, who was giving the Soviet intelligence services a wealth of data, including detailed reports on the month by month changes in American forces at every US base, domestic and foreign,⁴² and information on political talks amongst western leaders. To Maclean's information was added a host of other material, from a variety of sources, American, Australian, British, and others.⁴³ The extent to which this data affected Soviet military

⁴¹.quoted in Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 151

⁴².Richelson, *Spies*, pp. 226-227

⁴³.for information of these activities, see David Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, (New York: Ballantine Books,

budgeting, and whether it helped increase or decrease budgets, cannot be fully known until the Soviet archives are more open to scholars.

For both the Soviets and the Americans, military budgets had sunk by 1948 to a point where the factors driving costs up were at least equal to those driving them down.

CONSOLIDATION

2.1 American Military Preparedness Stabilises, Early 1948

The Truman administration seems to have given little thought to creating a comprehensive strategy for matching American military means and ends during the demobilisation. Only in 1948 did the Truman administration question American desires, limits, and requirements.¹ The administration then decided that military spending was to be stabilised. It was felt that the existing composition of forces was appropriate, as measured by the conflicting influences of the factors always impacting military budgets: political desires, competing demands for funds by other sectors of government and society, current capabilities, and the existing military balance.

Driving costs down were the American monopoly of nuclear weapons, the emphasis on strategic bombing (which was relatively

¹Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 277

cheaper than the conventional armed services), the seeming unlikeliness of a major war, the priority placed on paying off the federal debt, a President who distrusted large military budgets, and the American tradition of small peace time military budgets. Driving costs up was the desire to maintain occupation forces in defeated Germany and Japan, the desire to use American military personnel to aid in training the armies of friendly governments, the desire to maintain a bomber force capable of posing a nuclear deterrent, the new post war internationalism that permeated American political culture, and, most importantly, the continuing disagreements with the Soviet Union on a wide array of issues relating to the post-war settlement.² In the 1945-47 period, the factors driving costs down outweighed those driving costs up, but by 1948 an equilibrium between the opposing forces had been reached.

Among the factors keeping military spending down, the atomic monopoly was perhaps the most important. Atomic bombs, and the bomber fleets and bases to enable their use, were considered relatively inexpensive replacements for armies. Truman told David Lilienthal, the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, that the atomic bomb was the "mainstay" against Soviet expansion in Europe.³ One

²for one of many possible examples of the administration's conviction that the Soviets were working to enlarge their sphere of influence, see HSTL, B file, Ideological Foundations of the Cold War, folder number 7, document entitled "Soviet Foreign Policy: A Summation"

³Jack Holl and Terrence Fehner, "Military Spending", *The Harry S. Truman Encyclopedia*, pp. 237-239

Congressman, Representative Clarence Cannon (Democrat from Missouri), was echoing popular wisdom when he claimed that "the atomic bomb serviced by land based bombers is the only weapon which can ensure protection. As long as we have both we can and will maintain the peace of the world."⁴ In the event of war, it was thought by many, especially in Congress and the Air Force, that the United States could, at the very least, defend its interests through the nuclear bombing of the enemy's industrial and military facilities. Representative John Rankin (Democrat from Mississippi), expressed this view bluntly: "The next war will be an atomic conflict. It will be fought with airplanes and atomic bombs."⁵

By 30 August 1945, just days after Japan's surrender, the United States Army Air Force (the Air Force would not become a service of its own until 1947) had sent a new manuscript entitled *A Strategic Chart of Certain Russian and Manchurian Urban Areas* to Brigadier General Leslie Groves, head of the atomic bomb project. It detailed the number of atomic bombs that would be needed to destroy each of the major Soviet cities, and even specified which bases would be useful to carry out such a plan.⁶ All American contingency plans for a possible conflict with the Soviet Union that were made in the late

⁴quote of Representative Clarence Cannon (Democrat from Missouri), *US Congressional Record*, #95, April 13 1949, p. 4501

⁵quote of Representative John Rankin (Democrat from Mississippi), *United States Congressional Record*, #94, April 15 1948, p. 4536

⁶Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 24

1940's, such as BROILER, TROJAN, HALFMOON, and FLEETWOOD, were based on the use of atomic weapons. Bombers were to fly from bases in the United Kingdom, Okinawa, the Middle East, and from aircraft carriers. BROILER designated targets in 24 Soviet cities,⁷ and TROJAN designated industrial targets in 70 Soviet cities. Although the paucity of bombs made some of these plans unrealistic, and led to the outright replacement of FLEETWOOD,⁸ faith in the ability to produce more bombs and to successfully use existing ones was an overwhelmingly popular strategy in the aftermath of the atomic attacks on Japan. The immediate surrender of Japan following the bombing created the impression throughout the United States that atomic weapons were war winners; their use might cause any enemy to rapidly declare surrender. In the event this would prove to be untrue, the nuclear attacks on key Soviet command and production centres would at least weaken the USSR's ability to resist the eventual return to continental Europe of western troops after a military build-up (as we shall see in section 2.5, it was expected that the French, American, and British armies would not be able to make a determined stand on the continent in the initial stages, and would have to retreat across the Channel and below the Pyrenees, if not the Straits of Gibraltar).

⁷Hansen, *Forces*, p. 14

⁸FLEETWOOD: *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, edited by Louis Galambos, Volume 10, p. 367

The reliance on the atomic monopoly was both a result of and a cause of the low American military spending on conventional arms. Omar Bradley, the Army Chief of Staff, would later claim that "the Army of 1948 could not fight its way out of a paper bag"⁹ after its budget cuts. But his lobbying for an Army strong enough to at least consider defending the Rhine in the event of a war with the Soviets would come to naught before June 1950.

One of the biggest factors militating against any growth in defence budgets was the President. Truman was confident that the 1948 military was more than appropriate for America's political needs. Despite his writing in March 1948, regarding the Soviet sponsored coup in Czechoslovakia, that "We are faced with exactly the same situation with which Britain and France were faced in 1938-39 with Hitler", Truman made small cuts in military funding the next two fiscal years, which probably indicates his confidence that America could successfully maintain a nuclear deterrent within strict budget limits that he would set.

Truman's faith in his ability to apply budgetary limits to the military was natural given his personality and his preoccupations. Doing so combined two of his biggest interests, the military and budgeting, and was a natural outlet for his distrust of the professional officer corps.

⁹Omar Bradley (with Clay Blair), *A General's Life: An Autobiography*, p. 474 Bradley seems to have felt that he was at least partially responsible for that situation, admitting that "I supported the President" on the budget cutting decisions.

Truman's fascination with the military began in his boyhood, which he spent studying great generals and battles, a hobby he never lost. After being rejected by the military academies, due to poor eyesight, Truman continued to seek a military career, joining the Missouri National Guard. This led to his service as an artillery captain in France during the First World War, and subsequently to his involvement in a veterans group, the American Legion. There was always a side of Truman that wished he were a military leader. On one occasion, he even told a group of National Guard leaders that he wished he had some of the medals they had.¹⁰

As a Senator, Harry Truman chose military budgeting to be one of his prime areas of expertise. His proposals led to the creation, in February 1941, of the Senate Committee on Defense Production and Procurement, designed to oversee the build-up of forces the Roosevelt administration had initiated as the wars in Europe and Asia grew. The committee was chaired by Truman himself, who later claimed to have saved the nation 15 billion dollars in this capacity.¹¹ It was this job that propelled Truman into the headlines and may have led to his consideration for the job of Vice President.

In contrast to his predecessor in the Oval Office, and in disagreement with at least one of his Chairmen of the Council of

¹⁰.*Public Papers of the Presidents; Harry S. Truman, 1950, Remarks to Members of the National Guard Association, October 25 1950*

¹¹Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 5

Economic Advisers, Leon Keyserling,¹² Truman valued balanced budgets. The New Deal and, more importantly, the Second World War had created more than 250 billion dollars of federal government debt which Truman was convinced had to be slashed to relieve the economy of onerous interest payments.

The Truman administration in this respect was confused: its economists and some of its liberal advisers continually pushed for government stimulated demand and easy money, tenets of the American version of Keynesian economics that were the guiding ideas of the moderate left at that time. However, Truman, despite his agreement with the liberals on the benefits of government sponsored social programs for, as Truman put it, "the Common Man", was absolutely opposed to the ideas of fiscal and monetary management that had become influential since the first term of Franklin Roosevelt.

As Alonzo Hamby, perhaps the best of Truman's biographers, has written, "Truman. . .never fully accepted Keynesian economics of any variety. His ideas on budgetary management had been formulated during ten generally grim years of local government administration in which raising funds through debt had been a difficult process and the goal had always been to balance income with outgo."¹³ It was

¹²Keyserling, who was under the impression that deficit-financed spending could drive an economy to full capacity without controls and pay off the debts with the new tax revenues, did not become Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers until early 1950. HSTL, Papers of Leon Keyserling

¹³Alonzo Hamby, "American Interpreters of American History: U.S. Political History", *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*, edited by Ernest May (Boston: Bedford Books, 1993), p. 157

Truman's opinion that "during World War II, we borrowed too much and did not tax ourselves enough. We must not run our present defense effort on that kind of financial basis."¹⁴ When Keyserling wrote to Truman to try to persuade him to engage in deficit financed stimulus, Truman responded by writing "Leon, you are the greatest persuader I ever knew, but nobody can convince me that the Government can spend a dollar that its not got. I'm just a country boy."¹⁵ His first Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Edwin Nourse, later commented that "he was figure-minded and he relied very strongly on Jim Webb, who was Director of the [Bureau of] the Budget. You see they had a set of figures which we developed into economic indicators and that was the one thing where Mr. Truman made his most effective contact with the work of the Council. He had a leather bound, short version of economic indicators each quarter. . .and he said `Yeah, I keep this here all the time, and when people come in and talk to me about this, I say `Here are the figures' and I pull that out.' But he didn't say, `Here's the reasoning about these matters the Council of Economic Advisers has given me.' That was beyond his intellectual ken."¹⁶ Being a doer and not a theorist

¹⁴.*Public Papers of the Presidents; Harry S. Truman, 1950, Radio and Television Address to the American People Following the Signing of the Defense Production Act, September 9 1950*

¹⁵.HSTL, quoted by Keyserling in the Oral History with Leon Keyserling, p. 117 Keyserling at least had the President's ear, which he got by going through Presidential Assistant Clark Clifford. Nourse was so out of the policy making loop that he resigned. see Nourse's Oral History, p. 60

¹⁶.HSTL, Oral History of Edwin G. Nourse, p. 26

by nature, the President wanted programs that directly and visibly helped the people that he sympathised with (and was not unaware of their voting potential). He was unimpressed by his advisors' promises about running an economy at "full employment" through borrowing. His sympathy for the Common Man was expressed in his support for unemployment compensation, the minimum wage, price supports for farmers, the creation of a Fair Employment Practices Commission for civil rights, subsidised federal housing, and the continuance of war time controls to prevent inflation, which were either direct redistributions of wealth, or, at least, direct protection of the unempowered from such powerful forces as inflation or discrimination. This was all mixed with a hatred of unbalanced budgets, and further modified by a distrust of large corporations and the financial community. Truman was proud of the fact that he preferred Main Street to Wall Street.

The President was proud of his parsimony, something he accredited to his background as a farmer and small businessman. As a result of difficult times in 1922, Truman and one of his Army buddies had been forced to close their clothing store, but Truman saved his earnings for years afterward to pay off his debt, rather than declare bankruptcy.¹⁷ As a county judge, Truman had streamlined procurement, tracked and destroyed fraud and waste, and, in the process, reduced the

¹⁷Larson, *Origins*, p. 132

county debt by \$700,000.¹⁸ As mentioned, he focused on budgets in the US Senate.

Truman would later write in his memoirs that "the federal budget was one of my more serious hobbies."¹⁹ He laboured away on each budget, feeling that the budgeting of expenditure was at the heart of good government. This is obvious from Truman's habit of quoting figures on the GNP and the budget in his public statements, which was part of his habit of storing facts and figures and anecdotes in his head.

Truman's budgeting was successful. He became President in April 1945, and had little impact on the fiscal year 1945 (July 1944 to June 1945) budget. That year the federal government's deficit was \$20.7 billion and the federal government's debt was \$258.7 billion. The debt had risen from \$16.1 billion in 1930 and \$43 billion in 1940. From July 1, 1946 until June 30, 1952, the federal government collected slightly more revenue than it spent.²⁰ By fiscal year 1950, immediately before the start of the Korean War, the federal government's debt had been reduced to \$256.1 billion, a decrease in ratio of federal debt to GNP from 122.1% in fiscal 1945 to 89.9% in fiscal 1950, with per capita debt

¹⁸ibid., p. 132

¹⁹Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope, 1946-1952* (New York: Signet, 1956),p. 36

²⁰ibid., p. 38

in this period falling from \$1,849 to \$1,688.²¹ By eliminating the deficits, Truman had allowed the economy to reduce the debt.

How was this accomplished? Taxation played a role. Truman often suggested increases to stay in the black. However, he had difficulties with Congress on this issue. In 1948, the (Republican majority) Congress passed a tax reduction bill over Truman's veto, and in 1952, the (Democrat majority) Congress failed to pass a Truman taxation plan to fund the Korean War on a "pay as you go" basis, as Truman referred to it.²² On the other hand, Truman was not going to trim the "Fair Deal" programs.²³ They were his pride and joy, and were the most important source of the Democrats' popularity among their core voters: the urban poor, labour, ethnic groups, and blue collar workers. So Truman resorted to a different source to pay off the debt: keeping the lid on military expenditure.

The military was an obvious target to raid for funds. At the end of the Second World War, it absorbed 85.7% of the budget, and at no point of Truman's administration did the comparable figure slip below 30%.²⁴ Combined with international programmes, the military

²¹The debt figures are from the Bureau of Public Debt, Department of the Treasury, as quoted in *The World Almanac*, 1993 p. 128. The Gross National Product figures are from Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 359

²²Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope* This was after Congress had already supported three small tax bills during the war.

²³Truman began using the term "Fair Deal" in January 1949.

²⁴US Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, (Washington: 1975), pp. 224, 1116, as quoted in Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 359

absorbed more than half of the budget in the late 1940's, and approximately half of the remainder was for fixed charges that could not be easily reduced, such as interest on the federal debt and the payment of pensions.²⁵ Spending on items other than debt and international policy amounted to a smaller proportion of the national income than they had ten years previously.²⁶

The pursuit of cuts in military spending was facilitated by another characteristic of Truman: he distrusted the American professional officer corps, especially in regards to money. His experiences in the First World War convinced him that the officer ranks were composed of "ornamental and useless fops" who "can't see beyond the ends of their noses" and were incapable of getting value for money. "No military man knows anything at all about money. All they know how to do is spend it, and they don't give a damn whether they're getting their money's worth or not . . . I've known a good many who feel that the more money they spend, the more important they are."²⁷ In one World War One letter, Truman claimed that he wished he had a seat on the Senate Military Affairs Committee so that he could set the brass straight.

²⁵.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, President's Secretary's Files, Subject File on Bureau of the Budget, box 150, folder on BoB, FY 1951, Memorandum for the President from Frank Pace, "Basic Policies with Respect to 1951 Budget Ceilings"

²⁶.Address at the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, p. 165

²⁷Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 4

The President took offence at officers who continually complained about lack of funds, and refused to rely on the military's estimates of either needs or costs. This is not to imply that Truman's views on deployment were bereft of internationalism or any geopolitical strategy. As an amateur military historian himself,²⁸ Truman felt he could set the limits from which the officer corps would learn to make the most of what they had. As all Presidents do, Truman also had to balance military spending against many other economic priorities.²⁹

Truman probably felt that the military was sufficiently strong, especially since a war with the Soviets was judged unlikely in early 1948. The previous year, Truman's Munitions Board approved a mobilisation plan which operated on the assumption that there would be a lengthy period between the start of a mobilisation and the declaration of war.³⁰ General Eisenhower, after meeting with the service secretaries and Truman in December, 1948, wrote that the President felt "that we should insist that our overall defense picture is growing brighter and should not use trick figures to give an opposite

²⁸.Truman often commented that military history was his hobby. He liked to give examples of battles in ancient Rome or in the American Civil War when discussing military matters. for some examples, see *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950, Rear Platform and Other informal Remarks* (Baker, Oregon), May 10 1950, Remarks at the Armed Forces Dinner, May 19 1950, Remarks at the U.S. Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Virginia, June 15 1950, Address at Valley Forge, June 30 1950

²⁹.For an alternative view on this, see Holl and Fehner, "Truman", p. 238, which claims that Truman "adopted the 'remainder method' of calculating military spending: the military budget would be determined by first subtracting civilian requirements from the overall budget and then providing defense the 'remainder'."

³⁰.Terrence Gough, *US Army Mobilization and Logistics in the Korean War: A Research Approach* (Washington: Army Center of Military History, 1987), p.23

impression."³¹ Truman said "Our friends the Russkies understand only one language-how many divisions have you, actual or potential",³² and was sure that the US industrial strength provided those potential divisions to act as a deterrent. He was not to be persuaded by anyone from the Pentagon. Told by Secretary of Defense Forrestal that the administration should review its budget ceilings, Truman snapped "The proper thing for you to do is to get the Army, Navy, and Air people together, and establish a program within the budget limits which have been allowed. It seems to me that is your responsibility."³³

The manner in which the conflicts in Greece and Iran came to be resolved in the way the administration had hoped they would probably led Truman to believe he could rely on aid programs that were inexpensive relative to standing armies. Communist factions in these nations had been bloodily suppressed, with the United States supplying dated weaponry but not actively involving the United States military. While the "Truman Doctrine" speech of early 1947 included references to helping anti-Communist forces everywhere, this was not necessarily intended to include American military action in the event of a conflict. The speech was made to help pass a specific

³¹The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, edited by Louis Galambos, Volume 10, p. 367

³²as quoted in Ed Cray, *General of the Army: George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman*, (New York: Norton, 1990), p. 663 The statement was made in late March 1948

³³quoted in Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 399

military aid package (for Greece and Turkey), and the example was not to become standard procedure, as can be seen from the later decision to terminate aid to the Nationalist Chinese government even as it was collapsing to Communist forces in 1949. There is reason to believe that Truman's personal views against increases in the military budget made a difference. In the 1948 Presidential race, one of Truman's positions was to cap military spending, while his main rival, Thomas Dewey, favoured a \$5 billion per annum increase.³⁴

Truman did not face harsh Congressional opposition on these policies. Sensing war weariness in the public, the Democrats, forming the majority in both legislatures up to 1946, were eager to demobilise and end the unpopular conscription which had been adopted during the Second World War. The Republicans, regaining the majority in both houses of Congress in the 1946 mid-term elections, were back from sixteen years as a Congressional minority, and were eager to rein in what they had viewed as the excessive spending of their opponents, and to end the increasingly unpopular wartime controls on prices and wages, which they claimed were undue interference in private matters and poor economic policy.

In addition, a substantial minority of Congressional Republicans still maintained the pre-Second World War prejudice against foreign intervention, and so were not eager to expand the military. The

³⁴Richard Norton Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times*, p. 31

Republicans were in no position to make any major changes in funding one way or the other, considering they had won a tiny majority of seats on a minority of votes and faced a hostile executive branch.³⁵ By the time they opened the 81st Congress in January 1947, the demobilisation of the military had already taken place, and no effort was made to change this.

There was no major partisan schism on foreign policy in 1948. The habit of not using foreign policy as a partisan weapon, acquired for national security purposes during the war,³⁶ was still present. Both parties supported the administration on demobilisation, and a series of "containment" policies in the eastern Mediterranean and central Europe. The two most outspoken and important Republican Senators on foreign affairs issues, Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan and John Foster Dulles of New York, both felt that working with the administration would give them more influence. It was only in 1949 and 1950, with the downfall of the Chinese Nationalist government and the rise of new Republican leadership, that severe partisan differences in foreign policy would appear.

³⁵Herbert S. Parmet, *The Democrats: The Years After FDR*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 60

³⁶For instance, Thomas Dewey, the Republican Presidential nominee in 1944, had known that Roosevelt had been aware of the impending Japanese onslaught in 1941. He was preparing to make use of this information as campaign material when the Democrats became aware of what was going on and informed Dewey that to use the material would be to admit publicly that the US possessed a method of breaking Japanese codes that was still being used. In the interests of national security, Dewey did not divulge the material. see Smith, *Dewey*

The cutting of the military budgets after the war should be viewed in light of the American tradition of maintaining low peacetime military budgets. Having achieved economic preponderance over its neighbours at an early age, the US had survived (and even expanded through a destruction of Native American civilisation) by relying on a full-time Army that was tiny by European standards and on inexpensive part-time state militia. From 1865 to 1898, the United States Army never had more than 50,000 troops, and often had less than 30,000.³⁷ In the 1898 to 1933 period, the United States government had been a regional power, with a sphere of predominance in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and the Philippines, acquired through the imperialism common to western nations in that era. There was a fear of entering European politics and an unwillingness to use power in places where it could not be justified either financially or in terms of popular support. The World War One intervention only changed this temporarily, not leaving the US as a major player outside this sphere. In the 1933-39 period, there was an isolationist and pacifist trend. The Neutrality Acts, the Good Neighbour Policy, the plan to grant Philippine independence, and the growing sentiment that American entry into the Great War had been a mistake (in an April 1937 Gallup poll, 71% of respondents felt it had

³⁷Russell Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, (London: B. T. Batsford, 1967), appendix

been a mistake to enter the First World War)³⁸ indicated a process that, had it not been cut short by concerns about Japan and Germany, seemed destined to redefine the limits of American military operations as the American national borders. In 1937, the United States had spent \$1.032 billion on the military³⁹, approximately 1.52% of national income.⁴⁰ This was one of the lowest percentages of any nation in the world.

This invites a new question. Why were funding levels in the late 1940's not made even lower than they were? Had either a regional power policy or isolationism been pursued in the post World War Two era, the military funding levels of 1948 would have been more than enough. Chester Bowles, the noted liberal writer and politician, suggested in 1948 that the military was in fact too powerful, consuming more in one year than the whole federal government had a decade earlier.⁴¹ There was no immediate military threat of invasion of the nation or the hemisphere by any power. If American interests had been defined in their traditional sense there would have been little need for a strong military. But several things kept American

³⁸Smith, *Dewey*, p. 302

³⁹ Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict, 1500-2000* (London: Fontana, 1989), p. 382

⁴⁰Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, p. 429 Military expenditure did not begin to increase until calendar year 1940, when it was 3.9% of GNP, and then calendar 1941, when the naval rearmament and war status of the last few weeks brought the comparable figure up to 13.1% of GNP.

⁴¹.DDEL, Eisenhower Pre-Presidential Papers, Name Files, Box 13

military budgets on a higher level in 1948 than they had been in 1937. Three were most important. The first was the decision to maintain military units in Germany and Japan, for the purposes of assisting in the founding of new governments. The second was the necessity of maintaining the strategic air capabilities, as seen by the production of atomic bombs and efforts to maintain base rights in the Azores, Greenland, Iceland, Labrador, Okinawa, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere.⁴² The third, which was a partial cause of the first two, was the desire to play a stabilising role in European politics for the indefinite future.

The Second World War changed the American political philosophy, perhaps more than it had changed the politics of the other two victors, Britain and the USSR. It was not merely a change in administration policies but a deep seated change in political culture that was reflected in a generation of popular support for an activist foreign policy in the twenty years after the war. The new American political culture emphasised participating in European power politics in peacetime. The trend towards involvement in European politics was amplified by the seeming inability to reach a satisfactory post-war settlement with the Soviet Union. Soviet potential power, combined with a perception

⁴².FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, *Views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Military Rights in Foreign Territories*, undated, pp. 302-311, enclosed with Johnson memorandum of 19 May 1949; Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*, pp. 56-59, especially map on p. 57

of Soviet aggrandisement, led to a policy of containing Soviet influence.

2.2 Summer of 1948-Early 1949: The US Chooses to Continue its Reliance on Nuclear Weapons

In the spring and summer of 1948, some attempts were made, by US officials, to revise the American doctrinal emphasis on strategic nuclear bombing. The efforts came to naught. By the end of the summer, the creed of strategic bombing was as strong as it had ever been.

Both of the traditional armed services disliked the reliance on nuclear weapons. The Army favoured a strategy of "forward defense" in Europe, in which it would play a leading role.⁴³ In the event of a war with the USSR in Europe, the Army would attempt to fight the Soviet forces as far to the east as possible, retreating as slowly as practically possible until reinforcements could be transported from America. It was supposed that North Atlantic Treaty forces would not have to abandon the continent, and might even be able to prevent certain industrial centres in Europe from falling into Soviet hands.

⁴³Marc Trachtenberg, "The Nuclearization of NATO and US-West European Relations", *History and Strategy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

These ideas were much more agreeable to treaty allies than strategic bombing, in part because some Europeans feared that a reliance on nuclear bombing meant that atomic bombs would be dropped on them as the Americans tried to attack advancing Soviet troops.

The Navy, basing its strategy on the success of aircraft carrier groups against the Japanese in the Pacific War, wanted enormous carriers. It tended to support the Army's assertion that a conventional war should be planned for, since the Navy would play a critical role in such a campaign, fighting the Soviet submarine menace in an attempt to funnel troops and material across the Atlantic, and possibly into other war zones, such as the Middle East. The Navy had to defend itself against Air Force assertions that surface ships were obsolete in an age of trans-oceanic bombers.

Nuclear bombing was the option of choice for Air Force officers. Having been part of the Army for decades (the Air Force was only made independent in 1947) shaped the personality of the organisation. Since at least the era of Brigadier General Billy Mitchell in the 1920's, the air warriors had been advocating strategic bombing, in which wars could be won by destroying the enemy's industrial base in air attacks. They chafed under the Army's insistence on tactical bombing, in which air power be used to support ground forces by destroying targets in the Army's immediate theatre of operation.

Creating the Strategic Air Corps (SAC) in World War Two had strengthened the strategic bombing lobby. The leaders of this corps went on to form the nucleus of the top staff at the USAF, and they lobbied for heavy long-range bombers. SAC was in a pre-eminent position, responsible directly to the Air Force Chief of Staff, whereas the Tactical Air Command (TAC), as well as the Eastern Air Defense Force and the Western Air Defense Force, was under the Continental Air Command.⁴⁴

Even though the damage surveys of 1945-1946 showed that the strategic bombing in Europe had failed to break the back of German industry, Air Force generals claimed that the existence of atomic weapons made strategic bombing the pre-eminent means of warfare for all time to come, with ground troops necessary only to mop up after the raids.

Certain sections of the Air Force went so far as to advocate a "preventive" atomic bombing of the Soviet Union. General Ely Culbertson stated before a Senate Committee that the US was "facing within the next five or six years a preventive war by the capitalist world to eliminate the threat of the rising Russian giant state".⁴⁵ According to the historians Russell Buhite, Christopher Hamel, and Marc Trachtenberg, these views were shared by the Air Force Chief of

⁴⁴.PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

⁴⁵.quoted in Buhite, Russell, and Hamel, W. Christopher, "War for Peace: The Question of an American Preventive War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-55", *Diplomatic History* (Summer 1990)

Staff, General Nathan Twining, the commander of SAC, General George Kenney, the future commander of SAC, Curtis LeMay, the deputy commander of the Army Air Force, Lieutenant General Ira Eaker, and the senior Army Air Force officer on the Joint War Plans Committee, Brigadier General Frank Everest.⁴⁶ One insider termed it "the prevailing philosophy at the Air War College",⁴⁷ and the College's commandant, General Orvil Anderson, would, during the Korean War, be forced into early retirement by Truman for publicly declaring his support for preventive nuclear bombing.⁴⁸

The preventive war argument was based on the premises that war with the Soviets was nearly inevitable, that waiting until the eventual war broke out might allow the American monopoly on nuclear weapons to lapse, and that a nuclear bombardment would lead to a quick Soviet surrender. The Truman administration didn't believe the first assertion, despite the fact that it considered the second to be true, and commissioned surveys, the Harmon and Hull reports, to gauge the accuracy of the third premise. As will be seen in a later section, these reports found Air Force claims for effectiveness to be exaggerated. Truman also may have had moral objections to this policy, or, at the least, knew that the public would have moral

⁴⁶Twining and Kenney: Trachtenberg, "Wasting Asset", *History and Strategy*, p. 106; Everest, LeMay, and Eaker: Buhite and Hamel, "War", p. 373

⁴⁷Bernard Brodie, quoted in Trachtenberg, "Wasting Asset", p. 106

⁴⁸*The New York Times*, "General Removed Over War Speech", 2 September 1950

objections, and may have felt that a preventive strike would create a stronger backlash than had the war-time use of nuclear weapons on Japan in 1945. The administration included the use of nuclear weapons in its war plans, but would not countenance any preventive attacks. Even in July 1950, soon after the North Korean invasion of the South (but also after the Soviets had acquired their own nuclear capabilities), only 15% of Americans responded in the positive when polled as to the desirability of declaring war on the Soviets.⁴⁹

Since the Air Force had won control of atomic targeting in the period in which the Department of Defense was created, this meant that had a war with the Soviets occurred in the Truman era, nuclear weapons would have been used primarily against industrial conglomerations, as the Air Force desired, and not against enemy supply lines, command centres, and liquid fuels production, as the Army wanted.

In 1948, the inter-service bickering over the related issues of strategy and budgeting became so intense that the services began to attack each others' viability in public. The Air Force claimed that new atomic weaponry and long-range bombers had made the Navy's carriers obsolete, and the Navy countered by publicising the faults of the Air Force's B-36 bomber project.⁵⁰ In order to increase its

⁴⁹George Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971*, (New York: 1972), volume 1, p. 930

⁵⁰The battle became so heated that Air Force generals issued an order to not allow any Navy personnel to enter a B-36 bomber. Dorr, "Legacy", p. 64

importance and funding in this era of strategic bombing, the Navy decided to develop its own bombers, which were to be carrier-based (it succeeded in building the Lockheed P2V-3C, which could take off from an aircraft carrier but not land on one),⁵¹ and sent Congressmen a map of the Soviet Union showing that the range of carrier-based bombers covered major centres in the USSR.⁵² Both sides hinted that the Army plan was too expensive, given the quantities of armour, vehicles, artillery, anti-tank weapons, and manpower it required.

The older services failed to weaken the Air Force's strategic bombing program. In early March, 1948, the Congressional Aviation Policy Board (a select committee with members from both houses) suggested alterations in the budgets to give the Air Force greater weight. It was acting, in part, upon a December 1947 report by Truman's own Air Policy Commission (also known as the Finletter Commission in reference to its Chairman, Thomas K. Finletter). The Finletter Commission had ignored the conventional balance of power, focusing on the atomic deterrent. The report was based on what would later become known as Mutually Assured Destruction.⁵³ It assumed that the Soviets would eventually have atomic weapons, that 1953 was the year of greatest danger for the US, and recommended an

⁵¹.*ibid.*, p.64

⁵².*ibid.*, p. 64 Critics pointed out the map assumed that Navy carriers would be in the Black Sea, an unlikely proposition at the beginning of a war, and in the Caspian Sea, an impossible proposition.

⁵³Warner Schilling, "The Politics of National Defense", *Strategy*, p. 37

extra \$1.5 billion spent on the Air Force annually for five years. The money was to be used to support a 70 group Air Force instead of the current 55, with 12,400 modern aircraft instead of the current 10,800.⁵⁴ There were to be no major changes in the funding of the other services.

Truman, ever interested in budgeting, disapproved of both the Air Force's call for more bomber groups and the traditional forces' attempts to augment their capacities. He managed, as we will see, to keep cutting budgets across the board, and, despite his administration's doctrinal emphasis on strategic bombing, would refuse to spend money Congress allotted to the Air Force in the fiscal 1950 defence budget.

The President's only major interventions in the debate on military strategy in 1948 consisted of another effort by him to implement universal military training (UMT), and, following that, a conscription plan. Under Truman's UMT proposals, similar to ones which had been rejected by Congress in 1945 and 1947, all males were to receive basic training and be commissioned into a reserve force.⁵⁵ The Army favoured it, it would lay the groundwork for any possible future mobilisations, and it was economical.

⁵⁴Rae, *Climb to Greatness*, p. 193

⁵⁵Aaron Friedberg, "Why Didn't the United States Become a Garrison State", *International Security* (Spring 1992), p. 126

Even more important was its appeal to Truman's heart. Truman lionised the ideal of citizen soldiers doing their public service. The plan would replace the standing military with the type of unit Truman had served with at the Western Front. The power of the professional military establishment that Truman mocked would be curbed. The idea even had some popularity, with most polls found that over 65% of the public supported the idea of UMT.⁵⁶ With the full support of Secretary of State George Marshall,⁵⁷ whose years as an infantryman and a General had convinced him of the value of training and manpower, UMT was presented again to Congress.

Differences in strategic thinking doomed UMT. As can be seen from the budget debates, Congress had already been sold on the idea of strategic (and preferably nuclear) air power, and saw UMT as an attempt to prepare forces for an outdated and expensive version of attritional warfare that might never arise again. Congress was also probably taking into account the fact that UMT might prove less popular in actuality than the polls showed theoretically. The 1948 UMT bill was defeated.⁵⁸

A second, and more politically palatable method of maintaining manpower was selective conscription. Although Truman had, in

⁵⁶Samuel Huntington, *The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics*, p. 240

⁵⁷Friedberg, "Garrison", p. 125

⁵⁸*ibid.*, p. 126 Congress eventually did pass a UMT bill, but only in 1951, during the Korean War, and only in a vague bill that accepted the principle of UMT but made no plans for its implementation. UMT has still not, and might never be, implemented. Weigley, *Army*, p. 500

1947, advocated allowing the draft to end, he asked for new authority to conscript men, but not any money to actually pay to do so, on March 17, 1948, less than a month after the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁹ The new Selective Service plan would make 19 to 25 year old men eligible for 21 months service, and enable a maximum manpower level of over 2 million.⁶⁰ The package was passed, but the manpower ceiling was not reached before the Korean War because of the continuing effort to hold the line on military expenditure.

On the same day that Congress passed the Selective Service Act, 24 June 1948, the Soviets closed the roads and rail lines leading through their occupation sector of Germany, so that the British, French, and American occupation zones in Berlin would be cut off from the larger Anglo-French-American occupation sectors in the western part of Germany. Stalin, concerned that the British and Americans were rehabilitating their occupation sectors of Germany, seems to have started the blockade in order to try to force the allies to reopen negotiations on the future of Germany.

The days following the initiation of the Berlin blockade were some of the tensest moments of the Cold War. Truman was advised by Secretary of Defense James Forrestal and General Hoyt Vandenberg,

⁵⁹Schilling, "Politics", p. 41

⁶⁰Condit, *Test of War*, p. 4

Chief of Staff of the Air Force, to implement BROILER, attacking the USSR with atomic strikes.⁶¹ He declined. Instead, the US military began a three-part policy, beginning negotiations with the Soviets to reach an agreement on the issues of German sovereignty and currency, which failed to produce results,⁶² effecting a western counter-blockade designed to harm the East German economy,⁶³ and airlifting millions of tons of goods into the city daily, with the provision that the US was only to put BROILER into effect if the Soviets interfered with the air lift.⁶⁴ The US publicly announced it was sending atomic-capable bombers to Britain.

It is unclear if Truman thought that the US military, after his budget cuts, approached war readiness. In retrospect, it was not. The US stockpile of nuclear weapons was tiny, approximately 50 weapons.⁶⁵ The American B-29's didn't have the fuel capacity to fly to Moscow and return.⁶⁶ Only the B-36's, of which there were very few, could.⁶⁷

⁶¹.Buhite and Hamel, "War"

⁶².Lloyd Gardner, "From Liberation to Containment, 1945-53", *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*, William Appleman Williams, editor (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 359

⁶³.*ibid.*, p. 359

⁶⁴.Buhite and Hamel, "War"

⁶⁵.Robert Norris, "Estimated U.S. and Soviet/Russian Nuclear Stockpiles", *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, (Nov/Dec 1994), pp. 58-59

⁶⁶The Air Force tried to hide this fact from Forrestal, perhaps as part of its continuing campaign to gain funding by creating the impression that strategic bombing was the best policy. Arnold Rogow, *James Forrestal: A Study of Personality, Politics, and Policy* (New York: MacMillan, 1963), p. 207; The Air Force was still in the experimental stage in trying to develop in-flight refuelling capabilities for the B-29. Schilling, "Politics", p. 43. The August 1948 edition of *Aviation Week* mentioned that B-29's were not atomic-capable.

⁶⁷H. Brad Westerfield, *The Instruments of American Foreign Policy*, p. 178

The US was so unprepared that the bulk of the American force, consisting of three bomber groups, of approximately 30 aircraft and more than 2,000 men apiece, did not arrive in the UK until July of 1949, more than one year after the Berlin blockade had begun.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Stalin chose not to use his Air Force, and the airlift continued until May 1949, when Stalin terminated it, in return for a four-power conference on Germany.⁶⁹

The crisis spurred debate in America about the inadequacy of military preparation for a conflict, and then seemed to answer some of the key questions in the debate, by leaving the impression that the atomic monopoly and the diplomacy of hinting at strategic bombing were the critical elements in the search for the security of western Europe. One result was that the Air Force continued to win the battle of funds in Washington. Despite total military spending remaining fixed, the number of Air Force wings had been brought up to 48 after the Berlin crisis.⁷⁰ After the crisis began, Air Force personnel levels soon expanded to 850,000, although Truman would cut this down to 677,000 by the end of the year.⁷¹ In April 1949, Truman, acting on Forrestal's recommendation, approved \$31 million of funding to

⁶⁸.PRO FO 371/89978, WU 1197/2, "Memorandum for Minister of State for the Cabinet Defence Committee Concerning US Air Force Groups Based in the UK", 31 December 1949

⁶⁹.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 285

⁷⁰Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 9

⁷¹ibid., p. 8

lengthen the runways at Abu Sueir, Egypt, so as to accommodate long-range bombers.⁷² The military also sought air bases or landing rights at sites in Morocco, Algeria, and Lybia, to supplement the existing arrangements elsewhere.⁷³ Meanwhile, the older services continued to suffer. Not one new tank or naval vessel was purchased between 1946 and the start of the Korean War.⁷⁴ Although the Berlin Crisis undoubtedly increased Cold War tensions, and helped foster the environment in which the American arms build-up would later develop, it did not, in itself, lead to any large and permanent strengthening of the US military.

2.3 The Creation of the Western Union and the Signing of the North Atlantic Treaty: Their Impact on the US Military

The creation of the Western Union, by European states, and the North Atlantic Treaty, which also included North America, are often regarded as monumental events of the twentieth century. They

⁷².FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Memorandum by the Secretary of Defense to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, 17 March 1949, pp. 286-287; Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 287

⁷³.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Military Rights in Foreign Territories, undated, pp. 302-311, enclosed with memorandum from Johnson of 19 May 1949

⁷⁴.PRO FO 371/81692, AU 11917/11, Memorandum from Sir Oliver Franks, 28 July 1950

formed an alliance system for containing Soviet power, which worked towards that goal for four decades, and then evolved into a European wide security organisation. It is right that these pacts are regarded as being important. However, a closer look indicates that their political importance was not immediately matched by a corresponding improvement in military preparedness. On the contrary, despite the resounding ring of the rhetoric of these agreements, and despite some improvements in creating multilateral bodies on political and military issues, the signatory powers of these arrangements generally continued, on an individual basis, to weaken their military forces until June of 1950. It is necessary to briefly explain this process here, and then treat the question of comparative Soviet-Western power in the next section.

Negotiations leading to collective security were initiated by Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, who sought bilateral defence pacts with European nations as a means of countering Soviet and future German power. He succeeded in accomplishing such a pact with France, in the 4 March 1947 Treaty of Dunkirk. Paul Henri Spaak, the Belgian Prime Minister, informed the French and the British that he wanted to see the pact expanded to include other western European nations.⁷⁵ In January 1948, Bevin responded with a plan for a security system involving five powers, four of them with

⁷⁵.Jonathan Helmreich, *Belgium and Europe: A Study in Small Power Diplomacy*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1976) p. 386

empires. Bevin wanted Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom to create a defence union. The Benelux nations (as Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg were called after their 1946 agreement to have greater co-operation in economic and foreign policies) consulted each other and agreed to Bevin's proposals on 19 February 1948.⁷⁶ In the following days, a coup by the Communist party in Czechoslovakia against the other members of the ruling coalition government, followed by the murder of Czech leaders, convinced Bevin more than ever that the Soviets wanted "physical control . . . of the whole world island".⁷⁷ He was even concerned over a possible Soviet threat to Norway.⁷⁸ Negotiations for a defence union were sped up, and the Treaty of Brussels was signed on 17 March 1948 by France, the Benelux nations, and the United Kingdom. It pledged the signatories to mutually enforce their respective frontiers. It created the "Western Union", which was to have a Committee of Commanders-in-Chief, first led by the British Field Marshall Montgomery, in October 1948.⁷⁹ Further

⁷⁶.ibid., p. 387

⁷⁷quoted in C. J. Bartlett, *The Global Conflict: The International Rivalry of the Great Powers, 1880-1970*, (Harlow, Essex: Longman Group, 1984), p. 275 The remark was made on March 3, 1948

⁷⁸.Peter Boyle, "Oliver Franks and the Washington Embassy, 1948-52", *British Officials and British Foreign Policy, 1945-50*, edited by John Zametica, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990) p. 193

⁷⁹.Slowe, *Shinwell*, p. 242

efforts to expand on the concept of collective defence led to the North Atlantic Treaty, signed 4 April 1949.⁸⁰

However, collective security did not necessarily mean an increase in military power for western nations. The continuing existence of the American atomic monopoly, concerns over the impact of diverting resources from economic recovery, the seeming unlikelihood of war, and the feeling that without German commitment any attempt to match the Soviets division for division was futile, all prevented an arms build-up.

In Britain, the only change was a slowing of demobilisation, which involved an extension of the period of conscription by three months.⁸¹ Total military spending continued to fall, from 9.5% of GNP in 1947, to 7.7% of GNP in 1950.⁸² In France, military spending also fell, from 5.0% of GNP in 1947 to 4.9% in 1950.⁸³ Belgium was still weak, occupied Germany was still unarmed, and several important nations, such as Italy and the Scandinavian countries, remained outside the Western Union. The Netherlands was the only signatory to increase military funding during this period (the traditionally neutralist Dutch government's decision to spend 5.1% of 1949 GNP on defence was the

⁸⁰.there were twelve signatory nations: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They each ratified the treaty by 24 August 1949.

⁸¹.Slowe, *Shinwell*, p. 235

⁸².*ibid.*, p. 239

⁸³.*ibid.*

highest such figure since 1815)⁸⁴, but even then, the Netherlands did not have a single standing division in Europe.⁸⁵ For France and the Netherlands, the colonial wars in Indochina and Indonesia absorbed a great deal of military strength. For the United States, as we shall see, military spending would reach its post-war nadir in fiscal 1950 (1 July 1949 to 30 June 1950). These figures may not seem low by the standards of the 1990's, but as we will see in the next section, the perception in both the US and the treaty allies was that they were not enough to nullify the preponderant edge the Soviets had in conventional forces in Europe.

Although there was much discussion during the creation of the treaty of its significance, particularly as it represented a reversal of America's long standing unwillingness to enter an entangling alliance with European states, the treaty in reality merely put on paper what already existed: an American policy of planning to use force should any European state(s) become embroiled in a war with the Soviets or the Soviet allies.⁸⁶ Those plans, as we have seen, depended primarily on the use of strategic nuclear bombing of the Soviet Union in the

⁸⁴.van der Harst, "Dutch", p. 33

⁸⁵.*ibid.*, p. 31

⁸⁶.During the Senate's ratification hearings for the treaty, the administration attempted to temper fears of an entangling alliance by emphasising that article five of the treaty gave each nation the right to decide whether to declare war. Truman thereby claimed that the United States was not necessarily committing itself to war ahead of time. While this was technically true, the administration continued to use operational plans proposing the nuclear bombing of the USSR in the event of conflict with the USSR in Europe, and it was a virtually unquestioned assumption of American officials that the United States would fight in the event of such a war.

event of war. The treaty did nothing to change this, nor was it meant to. It was designed primarily to show both the Europeans and the Soviets that America had the political will to put such policies on paper, and that the isolationist forces in the United States, especially in the Senate, were not strong enough to defeat such a move. Secondly, the treaty was signed to pave the way for future increases in American aid to western Europe.⁸⁷

The treaty warned the Soviets that each of the founding states decided that the containment of Soviet influence was more important than any other issue. The United States decided that anti-colonialism would be a secondary issue, while France and the Benelux nations made fear of Germany secondary. The US stopped linking military aid to the termination of certain colonial wars, such as the Dutch war in Indonesia⁸⁸, and instead merely insisted, sometimes not very strongly, that military material given as aid be used solely in Europe.⁸⁹

The Truman administration felt that this public display of solidarity with western Europe, combined with the atomic monopoly, was enough to deter Soviet moves. Truman was willing to wage atomic war in the event of a war with the Soviets, and assumed that the

⁸⁷.This was a prime reason for the participation of some European nations in the alliance. for example, see the Danish government's request, FRUS, 1949, Volume 4, Pages 206-209, Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations

⁸⁸.van der Harst, "Dutch", p. 35

⁸⁹.PRO FO 371/89979, WU 1197/13, Memorandum from the Colonial Office, 28 December 1949; PRO FO 371/89979, WU 1197/16, Memorandum from Sir N. Charles, in Ankara, 28 December 1949

Soviets were aware of this. He placed a high premium on deterrence, and did not feel that any increases in the size of the military budget would be necessary to back up the pact. He did not at this time advocate a stronger American conventional military presence in Europe,⁹⁰ and his Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, explicitly ruled out, in public, the possibility of sending troops to Europe as part of the treaty.⁹¹ Acheson would later work towards the goal of sending such troops, but this would not become administration policy until after the start of the Korean War.

The US military leadership, given what they perceived as a small budget, with little sign of increases in the immediate future, continued to plan on the assumption that western conventional forces would be little more than a delaying force against the Soviets in the event of a war, a speed bump the Soviets would roll over on their way to the Atlantic. The British had similar assumptions. A directive for war-time planning stated that "because of the great geographic characteristics of Russia, and the great numerical superiority of her land forces, the only means of taking offensive action initially is by a strategic air offensive", which meant placing primary emphasis on hold the air bases in Britain, the Middle East, Pakistan, Japan, and sea areas near the USSR for use by carriers, while waiting for troops to

⁹⁰The treaty also did nothing on the issue of German rearmament. The European powers were split on the issue, and it was intentionally left out of the treaty.

⁹¹Phil Williams, *The Senate and US Troops in Europe* (London: Macmillan,1985), pp. 36-37

arrive from the "main support areas", which were the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the British areas of Africa, Argentina, and, if arrangements could be made, the Indian subcontinent.⁹² The treaty did not create a supranational body that had the authority to coordinate military action. Although there were various planning groups under the North Atlantic Council created to recommend policies, including regional planning groups, there was not an integrated multinational military force.⁹³

Support in the US Congress for military aid to Europe proved limited, and a radically new and improved European military would never have occurred without the Korean War. The Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP), which came into law 6 October 1949, might not have passed if not for the administration's public pronouncement of 23 September about the existence of the Soviet nuclear device,⁹⁴ and was watered down by clauses designed to ensure that the new American military aid to Europe would be slow in coming, and would reinforce existing US military plans. The legislation had the specific provision that a new umbrella organisation, run by the Department of Defense, Department of State, and Economic Cooperation Administration, would have to withhold

⁹².United Kingdom Paper P.M.M. (48)1, *Documents in Contemporary History: British Defence Policy Since 1945*, edited by Ritchie Ovendale (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 69-71

⁹³.BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, Microfilm Reel 5

⁹⁴.Lawrence Kaplan, *NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), p. 37

aid from European states until they signed bilateral agreements, committing them to the US strategic defence concept, based on American nuclear air strikes and an increased European military presence on the ground.⁹⁵ The only hint that the Americans might become more involved with conventional forces in the future was the similar insistence on gaining US base and other operating rights as a *quid pro quo* for aid,⁹⁶ but there was little funding for the vast network of bases that the US would begin using in the winter of 1950-1951.

The American insistence on signing these agreements was resented by many Europeans,⁹⁷ and progress was slow. To compound matters, the American military leadership, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, resented having to send war goods to Europe at a time when they felt the US military was under-funded, and did the minimum to help the program.⁹⁸

The North Atlantic Treaty, just like the military aid to Greece and Turkey, the European Recovery Program, and the Military Defense Assistance Program, was not designed to facilitate the deployment of more American troops to Europe. Rather, just like those other

⁹⁵Lawrence Kaplan, "The Office of Secretary of Defense and NATO, 1948-1951", unpublished conference presentation at the Army Center of Military History Conference on the Early Years of the Cold War, 1945-1958, p. 6

⁹⁶ibid., p. 5

⁹⁷ibid., p. 6

⁹⁸ibid., p. 1

decisions, it was designed, in part, to fulfil the role that an American standing army in Europe would have, and therefore was intended to prevent the emergence of such an army. The importance of the North Atlantic Treaty on the US military, therefore, was not that it resulted in any enlargement of forces, but that it was a foundation that would later be used to erect the NATO force.

2.4 The Fiscal 1950 American Defense Budget

The fiscal year 1950 (July 1 1949 to June 30 1950) budget was not very different from the two budgets preceding it, either in the quantity of funds allocated or in the degree to which this total resulted from Truman's arbitrary imposition of ceilings. It is usually remembered only for being one of the most problematic US defence budgets ever made. Its preparation led to public bickering between the services over the appropriate importance to be assigned to strategic nuclear bombing and the use of more conventional means of combat. This strategic predicament, which was intrinsic to all post-1945 American defence budgets, was never, before or since, to result in as much public disagreement and controversy amongst the services, the Congressional committees, the President, and European allies, as it would for this year.

The Department of Defense spent much of 1948 creating a planned fiscal 1950 budget, and submitted it to the President. Forrestal was asking for \$16.9 billion for defence.⁹⁹ Truman checked it with his Bureau of the Budget, and slashed the sums mightily. On 10 January 1949, the President unveiled his own proposed military budget for fiscal year 1950, for approximately \$14.2 billion: \$4.5 billion for the Army, \$4.35 billion for the Navy, and \$4.55 billion for the Air Force, with another 830 million dollars set aside for related items, including an anticipated pay increase.

In Congress, there had been a change in the budgeting process. Formerly, each service had been judged in a separate Congressional subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee (for example, the Appropriations Subcommittee for the Navy). The fiscal 1950 budget was the first year in which Congress attempted to use a unified subcommittee.¹⁰⁰ The services had to compete for funds in direct competition with each other at an earlier stage in the budgeting process, and resorted to publicly attacking each others viability.

Ironically, it was Forrestal who had helped water down the National Defense Act when he was Secretary of the Navy so that the service secretaries remained powerful. Now, as Secretary of Defense, he had a rebellion on his hands that he had little power to stop, a rebellion

⁹⁹ Robert Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1949-53* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p. 59

¹⁰⁰Condit, *Test of War*, p. 14

which almost certainly contributed to his eventual resignation. After Forrestal's departure, the new Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, proved more determined to force his will upon the services, but, as we shall see, his cancellation of the construction of the USS United States led to much controversy, and caused the debate on the budget to be conducted increasingly in the media. Through protest resignations and lobbying, Navy admirals managed to persuade Congress to investigate Johnson's activities, but this did not get the super-carrier built. Truman, roasted in the press for not being able to control his own Department of Defense, sought help in dampening the disputes and recruited Eisenhower, hoping that the retired General's reputation would enable him to act, with backing of the public and Congress, as an arbiter in the inter-service disputes.

Eisenhower took the job of broker in January 1949, and accepted Truman's suggested overall budget sums.¹⁰¹ He laboured to convince the services to cooperate, meeting with the Chiefs, Omar Bradley (Chairman), Hoyt Vandenberg (Air Force), Louis Denfeld (Navy), and Alfred Gruenther (Army), on a regular basis.¹⁰²

One of the methods used by Eisenhower was to ask each service to submit estimates on the minimum necessary for their service, as well as the other two, to meet the basic challenges for a campaign to

¹⁰¹*The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Memorandum for the Record to the Military Sub-Committee of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate, March 28 1950, pp. 1041-1046

¹⁰²*ibid.*

defend Europe and the Middle East in the event of a war with the Soviets, and then use the lowest estimates.¹⁰³ The Navy insisted that using limited funds to provide the Air Force with the fifteen new air wings it requested to carry out strategic bombing was wasteful, arguing that many of the bombers would be shot down by Soviet interceptor aircraft in the event of a war, and questioning the goal of destroying centres of production in the USSR while allowing the Soviet Army to capture more efficient factories in western Europe. The Air Force insisted that its land-based bombers were more efficient than any flown from the aircraft carrier the Navy was requesting.¹⁰⁴ Army studies tried to show that efforts to halt a Soviet advance might not be futile, and sought to convince the public, and Eisenhower, that the US should not plan on abandoning the European continent in the event of war.¹⁰⁵

Eisenhower's task was made more difficult by Truman's insistence on lowering the ceiling he had set on defence expenditure. The nation was, from approximately mid-1948 into the summer of 1949, in recession. Industrial production dropped about 13% during this time.¹⁰⁶ Tax revenues were falling, and yet Truman felt the economic conditions dictated that he avoid a planned tax increase. Something

¹⁰³.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 273

¹⁰⁴.*ibid.*, p. 273

¹⁰⁵.*ibid.*, p. 275

¹⁰⁶*ibid.*, p. 304

had to give. Truman did not believe in deficit-spending to aid recovery, and besides, his chief economic adviser, Edwin Nourse, was warning that if the administration failed to cut federal government debt, the United States would have difficulty financing any future war.¹⁰⁷ Frank Pace, the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, agreed. Nor would Truman cut revenue at the political base of his administration, the Fair Deal. Domestic spending absorbed only 24% of the federal budget,¹⁰⁸ and less than 5% of GNP. Foreign aid totalled an enormous \$6.5 billion, but the administration would not reconsider American commitments to Europe and Japan.¹⁰⁹ So Truman, in June, lowered the arbitrary spending limit on the military to approximately \$13 billion.¹¹⁰ By July (after the fiscal year had already started), Eisenhower had helped produce a budget within the \$13 billion ceiling. In doing so, he had produced new estimates of forces to meet a new strategic concept. This concept was then fashioned into an emergency war plan, named OFFTACKLE.¹¹¹ OFFTACKLE was a compromise, combining strategic nuclear bombing of 104 Soviet cities, plus extensive ground and naval operations.¹¹² Although

¹⁰⁷ibid., p. 309

¹⁰⁸.ibid., p. 304

¹⁰⁹.ibid., p. 304

¹¹⁰.*The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Memorandum for the Record to the Military Sub-Committee of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate, March 28 1950, pp. 1041-1046

¹¹¹.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 276

¹¹².for the 104 cities statistic: Hansen, *Forces*, p. 19

Eisenhower's belief in the necessity of sufficient naval funding to provide for the domination of the western Mediterranean in the event of war, and the importance he placed on the flexibility aircraft carriers provided, prevented the Air Force from getting all the funding it desired, OFFTACKLE was still, like other war plans in the time between demobilisation and the Korean campaign, highly dependent on the use of atomic weapons in the event of war.¹¹³ OFFTACKLE envisioned protecting the United Kingdom, controlling the western Mediterranean, retaining a position in the Middle East, and using nuclear weapons to blunt the Soviet advance and curtail Soviet production of war goods.¹¹⁴

OFFTACKLE presented the administration with two difficulties. First, it was incomplete. Eisenhower purposely did not make too many specific determinations as to which forces would be sent where. He wanted to grant American military leaders flexibility, especially since they would have little power at their disposal in the early stages of a war. Only in the event of combat with Soviet forces would American planners be able to gauge the relative strength of the fighting forces, and make the consequent decision on whether to maintain a bridgehead on the continent of Europe. The limits Truman had set on military spending made a force large enough to guarantee

¹¹³.Melvyn Leffler, *Preponderance of Power*, pp. 273-274

¹¹⁴.*ibid.*, pp. 273 and 276

a stand at the Rhine impossible. This created the second problem. The plans could not be shown to European allies without giving them the impression that the United States was unprepared for a large conflict in Europe.¹¹⁵ In discussions with North Atlantic Treaty allies, the Americans had to use information from the long-range war plan named DROPSHOT, produced simultaneously to OFFTACKLE, and based on a possible war in 1957.¹¹⁶ The complaints from Europe also caused the administration to begin creating a medium-term defence plan, to be finished the next year.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, the budget process went ahead, using the suggested OFFTACKLE force allocations. The budget was delayed in Congress until October, and when passed, had been altered by the pro-strategic bombing group in Congress to shift funds from the older forces' budgets to the Air Force. Truman, not convinced that the Air Force really needed so much extra money, and, as always, concerned over budgeting, gave orders that the extra amount (totalling 735.7 million dollars) not be spent.¹¹⁸ OFFTACKLE was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in December.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵Condit, *Test of War*

¹¹⁶Leffler, *Preponderance*, pp. 276 and 286

¹¹⁷Kaplan, "NATO"

¹¹⁸*The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, edited by Louis Galambos, Volume 10, p. 371

¹¹⁹Robert Ferrell, "The Formation of the Alliance, 1948-1949", *American Historians and the Atlantic Alliance*, edited by Lawrence Kaplan (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991), p. 27

Defence expenditures for fiscal 1950 totalled \$13.496 billion,¹²⁰ representing approximately 4.7% of gross national product. Military expenditures amounted to \$11.9 billion, funds for the governance of occupied areas totalled \$760 million, Army civil expenditures were \$720 million, and military aid to Greece and Turkey was \$120 million.¹²¹

2.5 The Truman Administration's Perceptions of Soviet Military Capabilities, 1948-1950

In 1948 and 1949, the Truman administration perceived the Soviet Union as being, relative to the western powers, economically weak, militarily strong, overtly hostile, but too cautious to risk a major war in the near future. Although there was a consensus that the Soviet Army was capable of conquering western Europe, a consensus that there was a realistic possibility of becoming entangled in a general

¹²⁰.*The Wall Street Journal*, "US Fiscal Deficit \$3,122 Million, \$2,411 Million Under Truman's Prediction", July 5, 1950, p. 2

¹²¹.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, President's Secretary's Files, Subject File on Bureau of the Budget, Box 150, Folder on BoB and the Military, 1945-53, Memorandum for Secretary Johnson from Assistant Secretary McNeil, July 5 1950

war with the Soviet Union was slower in developing, not reaching a critical stage until the beginning of the Korean War in 1950.

There was evidence indicating that the Soviet economy was weak. Even the Soviet government's published statistics, which were thought to be generally exaggerated, revealed an economy far behind the west. Soviet diplomatic actions in the immediate post-war period, whether in the form of attempts to gain more favourable conditions for Lend-Lease payments, Soviet lobbying for a large German reparations payment, Soviet demands to gain Austrian oil,¹²² or the transportation of basic infrastructure from conquered eastern Europe to the Soviet Union all indicated economic deficiencies. General Walter Bedell Smith, a future head of the Central Intelligence Agency, estimated that it would be another 10 to 15 years before the Soviets had recovered from the last war.¹²³

The CIA's Office of Research and Estimates (ORE) tried to appraise the Soviet Union in terms of war potential, looking at the industrial strength, technology, and possible bottlenecks to increased production. The ORE concluded that Soviet economic weaknesses gravely limited the ability of Moscow to fight a prolonged war with the North Atlantic Treaty nations.

¹²².FRUS, 1949, Volume 5, pp. 659-664, Despatch from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State (Acheson), October 1, 1949

¹²³.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 149

In particular, American analysts felt that the Soviet petroleum industry would find it difficult to produce enough high octane fuel, the Soviet machine tool industry did not produce enough spare parts, there was insufficient rolling stock to handle war time needs in the USSR, and the Soviets had perennial shortages of certain non-ferrous metals and certain types of finished steel.¹²⁴ Complicating these problems, and, to an extent, causing them, were the Soviet deficiencies in properly trained technological personnel and managers.¹²⁵

However, despite this nearly universal agreement by American analysts that the US possessed economic superiority, it was believed that the Kremlin had, by diverting a substantially higher percentage of its limited resources into war-making capacities, more than offset its poverty, and placed itself in a position of military superiority. The JCS believed that the USSR had 175 divisions: 105 rifle divisions (of which 40 were motorised), 35 mechanised divisions, 25 armoured, and 10 cavalry.¹²⁶ They were presumed to have a disposition that would enable them to attack western interests at many points along the periphery of Soviet power:

¹²⁴.ibid., pp. 307-308

¹²⁵.ibid., pp. 307-308

¹²⁶.BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Intelligence Guidance for the US Representatives on the Regional Planning Groups of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", 16 February 1950; the British government also considered 175 to be the minimum number of Soviet divisions. Churchill Archives, Winston Churchill Papers, box 5/36, Mr. Churchill's Speech in Debate on Defence, 27 July 1950

<u>Area</u>	<u>Divisions</u> ¹²⁷
Soviet Occupied Europe	35
Western Frontier Military Districts	49
West Central Military Districts	20
Caucasus Military Districts	21
Middle Asia Military Districts	19
Far East (Incl. 4 in Manchuria)	<u>31</u>
	TOTAL 175

Another, more alarmist, report, submitted to Truman by Major General Lauris Norstad, serving in the Operations and Planning Division of the War Department, claimed that the Soviets had 208 divisions, with 93 of them facing western Europe.¹²⁸ Norstad added that the Soviets had 15,500 operational aircraft.¹²⁹ The JCS believed that the Soviets could put 320 divisions in the field within 30 days of the start of mobilisation, and that this could be increased to 470 divisions and 12 million troops after one year of mobilisation.¹³⁰ The figure of 4,000,000 men was cited in terms of Soviet military manpower.¹³¹ To this had to be added the 56 divisions possessed by the Eastern European allies of the Soviet Union.¹³²

¹²⁷BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Intelligence Guidance for the US Representatives on the Regional Planning Groups of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", 16 February 1950 The USSR was divided into twenty-one Military Districts.

¹²⁸.cited in Buhite and Hamel, "War"

¹²⁹.cited in *ibid*.

¹³⁰BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Intelligence Guidance for the US Representatives on the Regional Planning Groups of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", 16 February 1950

¹³¹.*ibid*.

¹³².*ibid*.

Soviet armoured vehicles, heavy mortars, and towed antitank guns were considered superior to those in the West,¹³³ and the JCS declared that

The post-war reorganisation of the Soviet Army along modern mobile mechanised lines, plus a year-round intensive training schedule and generally successful efforts to reconstitute sagging morale, have imparted in the Soviet Army as a whole a combat efficiency in excess of that in any other existing army in the world today, at least for initial operations.¹³⁴

It was believed that the Soviet Air Force had approximately 600,000 men,¹³⁵ that the Soviets had significant biological and chemical war-making capabilities,¹³⁶ plus a well developed airborne force,¹³⁷ and that Soviet military expenditures were increasing by as much as 30% annually in 1948-49.¹³⁸

The Joint Chiefs of Staff felt that "if war occurs, little or no warning will be received" due to the difficulty in gathering information from the other side of the Iron Curtain.¹³⁹ Cities in North America would

¹³³.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 306

¹³⁴.BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Intelligence Guidance for the US Representatives on the Regional Planning Groups of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", 16 February 1950

¹³⁵.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 307

¹³⁶.BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Intelligence Guidance for the US Representatives on the Regional Planning Groups of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", 16 February 1950

¹³⁷.ibid.

¹³⁸.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 306

¹³⁹.BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Intelligence Guidance for the US Representatives on the Regional Planning Groups of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", 16 February 1950

not be immune from attack, since the Soviets, according to the JCS, could fly Tu-4 bombers on one-way atomic missions from the eastern tip of the USSR and from Murmansk.¹⁴⁰ The JCS felt that despite weaknesses in the surface fleet and in strategic mobility, an over-reliance on rail transport, the shoddiness of its electronics and fire control devices, and the inexperience of its the Long Range Air Force, the Soviet military would have such a commanding edge in mass and preparedness that, in a war with the North Atlantic Treaty powers, it could undertake the following actions:

a. Simultaneously

- (1) A campaign against Western Europe
- (2) An aerial bombardment against the British Isles
- (3) Campaigns against the Near and Middle East
- (4) A campaign against Yugoslavia and Italy
- (5) Campaigns with limited objectives in the Far East
- (6) Attacks against Canada, the United States, and Alaska
- (7) A sea and air offensive against Allied sea communications
- (8) Subversive activity and sabotage against Allied interests in all

parts of

the world

b. If necessary, a campaign against Norway and Sweden

c. If possible, a campaign to overrun the Iberian

peninsula and secure the Straits of Gibraltar¹⁴¹

All of this was without even taking into account the activities of the

Chinese Communists. How successful would these campaigns be?

The Joint Intelligence Committee at the American Embassy in

Moscow concluded that "the Soviet Army is probably capable of

¹⁴⁰.ibid.

¹⁴¹.ibid.

overrunning continental Europe with the exception of Spain and Portugal and of occupying strategic areas of the Near East",¹⁴² and although the present lack of logistical support might make maintaining a hold on those territories difficult, the Committee concluded that such obstacles were rapidly being overcome at that very moment. We shall examine the accuracy of these reports in the next section.

The Red Army, after its bloody but successful sweep into central Europe in 1945 was bound to impress outside observers. German Army generals who were interrogated by the Americans after the collapse of the Nazi regime had the highest regard for the Soviet soldier. In one poll by the American Army, ex-Wehrmacht generals indicated that the Soviet Army had a much greater impact upon the defeat of Germany than either the western armies or the western navies, and that only the allied strategic bombing had been more important.¹⁴³ With the creation of logistical bases in the heart of central Europe, the Soviet position had improved since the war. By 1948, after the demobilisation of the armies of Britain and the United States, the Soviet force had become an object of fear and awe.

In Europe, which was considered the most vital battlefield should there be a Soviet-American war, NATO had a small force relative to

¹⁴².FRUS, 1949, Volume 5, pages 603-609, The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kohler) to the Secretary of State (Acheson), April 6, 1949. See the enclosure entitled "Report on Soviet Intentions Prepared by the Joint Intelligence Committee, American Embassy, USSR, April 5, 1949"

¹⁴³.ACMH, Historical Resources Center, file 384.1, folder entitled "Geog.M Germany-Causes"

what the Truman administration believed the Soviets to have. Although western nations may have had as many as 800,000 men on the European continent in the 1947-1948 period,¹⁴⁴ most of these were conscripted forces without the armour or air power to win a general war. At the time of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, the signatory states possessed fewer than 20 divisions of troops worldwide,¹⁴⁵ of which it should be assumed that the bulk of the quality European divisions were either fighting colonial wars in Indochina, Indonesia, the Belgian Congo, Malaya, and elsewhere, or were dispersed to distant locales judged to be potential points of conflict, such as Hong Kong and the Middle East. The American force was stationed, for the most part, in the USA. The sum of all divisions in western Europe, American and other, was 11 in the summer of 1950.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴800,000 man statistic: Evangelista, "Postwar Army", pp. 118-119 Evangelista gives the following manpower statistics:

<u>Germany and Austria</u>		<u>Home Armies</u>	
UK:	140,000	France:	270,000
US:	126,000	Netherlands:	108,000
France:	80,000	Belgium:	50,000
Belgium:	24,000	Denmark:	22,000
Norway:	4,400		
Denmark:	4,000		

Evangelista's sources are the Joint Intelligence Committee Report of 2 December 1948, and *The New York Times*, May 12 1947

¹⁴⁵NATO Information Service, *NATO: Facts and Figures*, (Brussels: 1971), p. 195

¹⁴⁶Churchill Archives, Winston Churchill Papers, box 5/36, Mr. Churchill's Speech in debate on defence, 27 July 1950, p. 4 Churchill includes, in his total, 2 British, 2 American, 7 French, and 1 Belgian division, but US

This figures should be compared to the force of over 120 divisions that the western nations had in the spring of 1940, when they were defeated by a swift German envelopment.

The United States had only fourteen active divisions in May of 1950, of which only one, the First Infantry, was in Europe (occupying Germany),¹⁴⁷ the total of American military personnel in Europe at that date being between 81,000 and 94,300.¹⁴⁸ These American personnel were primarily involved in "de-nazification" and the maintenance of law and order, and did not possess the armour or air power that would have made them capable of taking on a Soviet force. There were no American naval forces assigned to the western European region.¹⁴⁹ Most critically, American air forces were not expected to control the air over Europe.¹⁵⁰

The British forces in Germany consisted mostly of conscripts on 18 months service, lacked an armoured division, and were almost

Army records indicate that only 1 US division was in Europe

¹⁴⁷ACMH, Army Directory and Station List, May 1950 Divisions at this time could be undermanned. To meet budgetary ceilings and still provide the required divisions, the Army, under General Collins, had eliminated 1 battalion in 3 in each division's 3 infantry regiments and 1 of 3 firing battalions in each of the 4 divisional artillery battalions. Bradley, *Life*

¹⁴⁸The 94,300 personnel statistic comes from Blair. Blair claims that out of the total of approximately 591,000 troops in June of 1950, there were (approximately) 360,000 in the US, 108,500 in the Far East, 94,300 in Europe, and the rest mostly in Hawaii and Alaska. The 81,000 personnel statistic comes from Summers.

¹⁴⁹.BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Report By the Joint Strategic Plans Group to the Joint Strategic Plans Committee on Availability of Military Forces for Short-Term Planning, North Atlantic Regions"

¹⁵⁰.Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 289

entirely dependent on German civilians for transport.¹⁵¹ Their commander, General Bernard Montgomery, considered them to be even less effective than the American troops.¹⁵²

Montgomery also considered the French forces to be incompetent, due to defects in structure and personnel at the commanding level and the shortness of the period of service for French conscripts.¹⁵³ The overall defence of western Europe was, according to Montgomery, a "facade".¹⁵⁴

Military planners in both the US and the UK felt that a Soviet attack might be slowed, but not blunted, and made estimates of up to six weeks when predicting how long it would take before the Soviet tanks reached the Pyrenees. There was little chance of a quick American air or sea lift of troops to Europe in the event of a crisis, considering the shape of the American army as a whole. American war plans of 1948 envisioned a 10 month delay before a D-Day style landing could be attempted,¹⁵⁵ and in 1950 the Joint Chiefs of Staff were so convinced that the Soviets could march across most of Europe in the event of a war that they planned to land the first troops to cross

¹⁵¹Churchill Archives, Winston Churchill, box 5/36, Mr. Churchill's Speech in debate on defence, 27 July 1950, p. 5

¹⁵²Bartlett, *Global*, p. 304

¹⁵³.BLHC, *Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson (1949-1953)*, Memorandum 0507, 11 April 1950

¹⁵⁴.quoted in *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵.Kaplan, "NATO", p. 1

the Atlantic in Northwest Africa.¹⁵⁶ Winston Churchill, as leader of the Opposition in the British Parliament, summed up the prevailing view when he claimed, in 1948, and again in 1950, that "if it were not for the stocks of atomic bombs now in the trusteeship of the United States, there would be no means of stopping the subjugation of Western Europe by Communist machinations backed by Russian armies and enforced by political police."¹⁵⁷

In Asia, things were little better. Army Chief of Staff General L. J. Collins informed the Secretaries of State and Defense, as well as the other members of the JCS, that American forces were spread so thin in Hokkaido that it would be easy for the Soviets to make an amphibious landing there.¹⁵⁸ The local forces defending the Turkish and Iranian borders with the USSR were no match for the Soviet Army. In China, the anti-Communist Guomindang Party was losing its civil war with the Communists. Governments in the Philippines and South Korea seemed hard pressed just preventing Communist take-overs in their own country.

For the US, relying on atomic bombing of Soviet cities was a matter of course in the event of war. By the end of 1949, the American military had 250 atomic weapons, each being one of a series of bombs

¹⁵⁶Wells, "Buildup", p. 182

¹⁵⁷Churchill Archives, Winston Churchill Papers, box 5/36, Mr. Churchill's Speech in debate on defence, 27 July 1950, p. V.2

¹⁵⁸BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson (1949-1953), Memorandum of Conversation, 24 April 1950

that were developed from the "Fat Man" plutonium bomb used at Nagasaki,¹⁵⁹ with the newest of these weapons having an explosive capability five times that of the Hiroshima bomb.¹⁶⁰ However, the importance of this arsenal would, as we shall see, be increasingly questioned once the Soviets developed their own atomic weaponry.

Intentions are a much more difficult thing to judge than capabilities, and naturally there was much more disagreement about them. Pessimists, such as Foy Kohler, an official at the American Embassy in Moscow, assumed maximum aims on the part of the Kremlin leadership, asserting that only the reality of the current situation restrained Moscow:

[My] conclusion that the Kremlin will not initiate war in the next several years does not mean any alteration in the springs of action of the Soviet state nor change in Communist belief in the inevitability of war between the Soviet Union and the capitalist West. In fact this belief must be considered the basis of Soviet plans and policies. The mechanism of the state is being canalized toward preparation for war expected to eventuate some years hence. . . the Soviets will not deliberately resort to war until they have in production advanced weapons of mass destruction . . . they will utilize the intervening time for intensification of scientific development.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹.development from "Fat Man": Dorr, "Legacy", p. 63; David Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities: Paul Nitze and the Cold War* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990)

¹⁶⁰.Alonzo Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 524

¹⁶¹.FRUS, 1949, Volume 5, pp. 603-609, The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kohler) to the Secretary of State (Acheson), April 6, 1949. See the enclosure entitled "Report on Soviet Intentions Prepared by the Joint Intelligence Committee, American Embassy, USSR, April 5, 1949"

The belief that the Soviet Union was plotting an aggressive war against Europe was also sometimes cited, particularly by Air Force generals. But it wasn't the norm in the Administration.

Most executive branch analysts felt that the Soviets did not consider a military expansion of their sphere of influence to be Soviet policy. The ORE told Truman during the Berlin crisis of 1948 that the Soviets were not ready for war.¹⁶² The embassy in Moscow sent back a report in April 1949 stressing that the Soviets would not resort to force in the near future,¹⁶³ to which the State Department's Policy Planning Staff agreed.¹⁶⁴ An ad hoc group consisting of the heads of all US intelligence agencies concluded in May 1949 that the Soviet Union would, most likely, "exercise some care to avoid an unintentional outbreak of hostilities with the United States".¹⁶⁵ The Joint Chiefs of Staff opined in February 1950 that "it is improbable that the Soviets would deliberately venture any military action which would involve them in an open war".¹⁶⁶ There were, at least compared to the war scare in the year following the start of the Korean conflict in June 25 1950, only a few analysts believing the worst about Soviet intentions.

¹⁶². Author's interview with Dr. Donald Steury, CIA Historical Office, 12 September 1995

¹⁶³. Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 306

¹⁶⁴. *ibid.*, p. 306

¹⁶⁵. quoted in *ibid.*, p. 306

¹⁶⁶. BLHC, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 2, Europe and NATO, microfilm reel 5, "Intelligence Guidance for the US Representatives on the Regional Planning Groups of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization", 16 February 1950

The President, except for a few statements he made in anger (Truman was known for his blunt and emotional flare-ups), seems through his actions to have agreed with the more moderate group that war with the Soviets was not likely in the immediate future. Truman's efforts to keep military spending down, and to focus on domestic social programs, as well as his unwillingness to reinstate war-time civil defence programs do not suggest a real fear of war in the immediate future.

2.6 The Accuracy of the Truman Administration's Perceptions of Soviet Military Capabilities

There are two questions which must be answered in order to judge the accuracy of the Truman administration's perceptions of the Soviets.

1. Were Soviet conventional military forces much greater than those of the west in the 1946-1950 period?

2. Was the Soviet leadership considering military action in central Europe in the near future?

The answer to the first question is yes, and the second is no. In 1948 and 1949, the Truman administration answered these questions

correctly, although at a later date, after the beginning of the Korean War, there was considerable speculation by a vocal minority of administration officials as to the answer to the second question.

The Soviet military, even after demobilisation, was huge. Estimates of its size, written at later dates, range from 2.5 to 2.874 million men in 1948,¹⁶⁷ deployed in 100 to 175 fully manned divisions.¹⁶⁸ These estimates place the number of combat aircraft in the 14,000 to 15,000 range in 1947, increasing to 18,000 to 19,000 in mid-1950.¹⁶⁹ The later figure included about 1,000 jet fighters.¹⁷⁰ Qualitative improvements made to the armed forces since the war had offset much of the shrinkage in size.

Foremost was the improvement in the Soviet Air Force. Traditionally a technologically backward force by international standards, the Soviets engaged in a quantum leap in air technology in 1945-1947 that made them world leaders. There was a revolution in air technology resulting from the development of the jet engine, and the Soviets were able to bypass years of propeller powered development and start on the same footing as the west.

¹⁶⁷.Albert and Joan Seaton, *The Soviet Army: 1918 to the Present* (London: The Bodley Head, 1986), p.160, for the 2.5 million figure; Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), claims that there were 2.8 million personnel; John Erickson, Lynn Hansen, and William Schneider, *Soviet Ground Forces: An Operational Assessment*, p. 21 for the 2.874 million figure

¹⁶⁸.for 100 division statistic, see Seaton, *Soviet Army*, p. 160; for 175 division statistic, see Malcolm Mackintosh, *Juggernaut: A History of the Soviet Armed Forces*(New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 271

¹⁶⁹.Robert Kilmarx, *A History of Soviet Air Power*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 226

¹⁷⁰.*ibid.*, p. 227

One factor was the acquisition of German knowledge. Approximately forty thousand German scientists were forcibly brought into the USSR in 1946 alone.¹⁷¹ One historian, Alexander Boyd, has explained the how this affected the Soviet Air Force:

Two thirds of the German aircraft industry with its research and production facilities fell into Soviet hands . . . Most of the aircraft factories in Soviet-occupied areas were stripped of their presses - including two of the world's largest hydraulic presses which had been used to produce spars for the Ju88 - and their machine tools as well as drawings, models, and equipment. The dismantling and transportation of the captured factories were supervised by special squads of engineers sent out from Soviet aircraft plants and train loads were sent east.¹⁷²

German experts were rounded up and transported to centres in the Soviet Union which were exact replicas of the ones they had used in Germany, even down to the ashtrays and calendars.¹⁷³

The Soviets did not stop with merely imitating German aircraft. They created some of the best jet fighters in the world. Foremost was the Mig-15, which went into service in late 1947. The Mig-15 was comparable to western models in speed, with climbing and turning abilities that were, perhaps, better than those of American fighter

¹⁷¹.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 10

¹⁷².Alexander Boyd, *The Soviet Air Force Since 1918*, (London: MacDonald and Jane's, 1977), pp. 205-206 The US also benefited from German scientists. Towards the end of the Second World War, Werner von Braun, one of the leaders of the German rocket programs that had launched the V-1 and V-2 weapons, among other things, transported some men and equipment from eastern Germany towards the west so that he could avoid falling into Soviet hands. He was given control of a rocket program in Alabama by the Americans, but this did not receive priority funding or attention until the 1950's.

¹⁷³.Boyd, *Soviet Air*, p. 207

aircraft, especially at high altitudes.¹⁷⁴ Although the first Mig-15 engines were purchased from the Rolls Royce Corporation of Britain, the plane was Soviet designed and built,¹⁷⁵ and Soviet efforts to create their own high quality jet engines, under way since 1945, would enable the Soviets to imitate the Rolls Royce engine, and, by 1951, to have a fleet of fighter aircraft, 20% of them jet powered.¹⁷⁶

After the creation of the Long Range Air Force in April 1946,¹⁷⁷ the Soviets made rapid strides in improving their strategic bomber fleet, a relative weakness of the Soviets in the Second World War. Many of the new long range bombers were TU-4's, which had been created by copying a captured American B-29 four engine bomber. The TU-4

¹⁷⁴.ibid., pp. 212-214; Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, p. 500 The greatest challenge to the Mig-15 came from the American F-86 Sabrejet, which, according to USAF claims, had an 8 to 1 kill ratio over the Mig-15 during the Korean War. The Russians, however, have countered that this extraordinary ratio was due to the inexperience of the Chinese and North Korean pilots flying the Migs. The Soviets claim a 2 to 1 kill ratio in their advantage for those incidents over Korea in which Soviet-piloted Mig-15's encountered F-86's.

After a North Korean pilot defected to South Korea in a Mig-15 in 1953, the Americans ran a large number of tests on the captured aircraft. They concluded that it was difficult to ascertain whether the F-86 or the Mig-15 was better, particularly due to their different firing mechanisms (the Mig-15's two guns fired a larger calibre round that was less accurate but more destructive than the F-86's six machine guns). Nevertheless, the Mig-15 did lead in certain measurable flying categories.

Dale Trapp, "During the Korean War, A Brief Incident Near Vladivostock Pitted Grumman F9F-5's Against MiG-15's", *Military History* (April 1996), p. 70; The Discovery Channel, "Korean War Duel", *Wings Over the Red Star Series*, 25 August 1997

¹⁷⁵.Author's Interview with Donald Steury, CIA History Staff, September 12, 1995

¹⁷⁶.Hansen, *Forces*, pp. 8 and 31

¹⁷⁷.Holloway, *Bomb*, pp. 242-243

was in mass production by 1948,¹⁷⁸ and more than 1,000 were built in the next six years.¹⁷⁹

Rocketry was yet another area of improvement. Research was probably helped by the Red Army capture, in April and May of 1945, of the Peenemunde and Nordhausen rocket complexes, where the Germans had developed the V-2 rockets.¹⁸⁰ Research on ballistic missiles began at this time.¹⁸¹

Although it would have been impossible to stop all nuclear bomb carrying aircraft to penetrate airspace over Soviet cities, the Air Force improved defences dramatically through radar development, begun in 1945.¹⁸² Sabotage operations by the MGB against American forward bases were also planned in the event of war.¹⁸³

The trend towards new thinking was not limited to the Air Force. Whereas many of the leading innovators in the Red Army had been purged in the 1930's, during a time when being untainted by any contact with the outside world was the most important asset a Soviet military officer could possess, the initial Soviet setbacks in the war with Germany had made the Soviet leadership more willing to allow

¹⁷⁸.Kilmarx, *Air*, pp. 223, 226, and 230

¹⁷⁹.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 243

¹⁸⁰.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 8

¹⁸¹.Kilmarx, *Air*, p. 234

¹⁸².Hansen, *Forces*, p. 8

¹⁸³.Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 76

forward thinking men to study foreign ideas on doctrine and to create the equipment necessary for a modern fighting force.

The trend was towards creating a professional military establishment to replace the party dominated old force. The changing of names in 1946, from "Workers-Peasants Red Army" to "Soviet Army", symbolised this.¹⁸⁴

The inclination from 1941 on, though not admitted publicly by the Soviets, was to build the Soviet Army around the same types of massed tank strikes that the Germans had used so successfully in the early stages of Operation Barbarossa. In fact, the Soviets specifically designed three types of divisions, each modelled after a Wehrmacht counterpart.¹⁸⁵ There was the armoured division, modelled after the Panzer divisions, and designed to break through the enemy lines and to use speed and firepower to envelop enemy troops.¹⁸⁶ Each armoured division had approximately 240 tanks in addition to a small amount of infantry.¹⁸⁷ There was also the mechanised division, modelled after the Panzer Grenadier division.¹⁸⁸ The mechanised divisions had approximately 220 tanks plus a larger complement of

¹⁸⁴.Erickson, et al, *Soviet*, p. 20

¹⁸⁵.*The Times of London*, "The Soviet Army", October 6 1950, p. 7

¹⁸⁶.*ibid.*, p. 7

¹⁸⁷.Seaton, *Soviet Army*, p. 155

¹⁸⁸.*The Times of London*, "The Soviet Army", October 6 1950, p. 7

infantry than the armoured divisions.¹⁸⁹ The task for these divisions was to support armoured thrusts, often by sealing off the flanks so as to prevent a counterattack from isolating the penetrating armoured divisions. The third type of division was the rifle division, essentially an infantry division, but, unlike a British infantry division, the Soviet model had its own tanks.¹⁹⁰ There was a further differentiation between traditional rifle divisions and new motorised rifle divisions, in which trucks replaced horse-drawn transport methods.¹⁹¹ By 1950, only half of ground forces transport was horse-drawn, whereas a Soviet rifle division of 1943-1944 had only 25 to 30 motor vehicles, but more than 600 horse drawn wagons or carts and up to 2000 horses.¹⁹² The German Army, in its successful 1940-1941 blitzkriegs, had operated with far more reliance on horse transport than the Soviet Army of 1950. In the event of a war with the west, the Soviets could have increased the speed of their conquests by taking advantage of the road networks in central and western Europe.

The tanks that the Soviets possessed were capable and reliable, the foremost being the T-34, the main battle tank of the Great Patriotic War against the Germans. Many of these were improved in the post-war modernisation by the addition of greater armour and a stronger

¹⁸⁹.Seaton, *Soviet Army*, p. 155

¹⁹⁰.*The Times of London*, "The Soviet Army", October 6 1950, p. 7

¹⁹¹.Seaton, *Soviet Army*, p. 153

¹⁹².Mackintosh, *Juggernaut*, p. 224

85mm gun.¹⁹³ These were supplemented by Joseph Stalin III's, which had 122 mm guns, providing greater firepower than any western tank.¹⁹⁴ The United States, in contrast, was still using the Sherman as its main battlefield tank. Events in Korea would show the Sherman to be the inferior of the T-34.

Airborne landings, begun by parachuted troops and backed up by massive air-lifts of men and material to captured air strips, were already in practice by the time of the Manchurian campaign of 1945, and the Soviets focused on building up this capacity in the post-war period.¹⁹⁵ In 1946, the Soviets created the VTA (Military Transport Authority), which was subordinate to the airborne troops.¹⁹⁶

The Soviets believed that, in areas close to their air bases and ports, they could control the sea lanes and launch amphibious landings, as they had in the Black Sea during World War Two.¹⁹⁷ In the late 1940's, Stalin deployed the 14th Army to the Chukotka Peninsula to land in Alaska in the event of a war with the United States.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³.*The Times of London*, "The Soviet Army", October 6 1950, p. 7

¹⁹⁴.*ibid.*, p. 7

¹⁹⁵.P. H. Vigor, *Soviet Blitzkrieg Theory*, (London: MacMillan, 1983), pp. 122-124 The Manchurian campaign also saw the greatest use of armoured warfare in the entire Pacific War. Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms: A Global History of the Second World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 540

¹⁹⁶.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 10

¹⁹⁷.Earl Ziemke and Magna Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad: Decision in the East*, (New York: Military Heritage Press, 1988)

¹⁹⁸.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 242

An added dimension was research into chemical warfare. In the final stages of the Second World War, the Red Army had acquired German nerve gas plants, at Breslau and Dyhernfurth.¹⁹⁹ By the end of 1945, the Soviets had already moved two nerve-agent production plants to the Soviet interior, and were supplying the Red Army with lethal chemicals.²⁰⁰ In 1945, the Soviets had also captured a Japanese biological warfare facility in Manchuria, which the Japanese were in the process of destroying.²⁰¹ It is not known how much the Soviets learned from this find.

Soviet doctrine emphasised that these components, including air power, would have been used in combined operations to penetrate the enemy lines, and to follow this up with envelopments of enemy troops, similar to the German actions on the eastern front in the summer of 1941.

Troop morale seems, by most accounts, to have been high. Although the living conditions of many soldiers in the Soviet Army was probably worse than their counterparts in western armies, the relative difference between civilian and military standards of living in the USSR was no greater than in the west. The enlisted men of the post-war era were almost all born after the Russian revolution, and had been raised in the Communist system, inculcated in the spirited

¹⁹⁹.ibid., p. 8, for Breslau; Weinberg, *World At Arms*, p. 559 for Dyhernfurth

²⁰⁰.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 8

²⁰¹.Weinberg, *World At Arms*, p. 560

propaganda of the regime. While serving abroad, they were not allowed any contact with the locals, who might weaken their will, under penalty of demotion or worse.²⁰² For those who dared question the system or attempt to desert, the political officers attached to every sizeable unit would insure that the security services exacted punishment. Obedience, by both civilians and military units, was enforced through the 700,000 troops of the MGB (Ministry for State Security, later renamed the KGB, or Committee for State Security) and MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs).²⁰³ The murdering of returned Soviet POW's and the use of harsh punishment for those who disobeyed orders, which during the Second World War had sometimes meant being sent to a punishment battalion which acted as cannon fodder, marching straight into enemy positions, almost certainly reduced the willingness of anyone in the Soviet armed forces to desert.²⁰⁴

By late 1949 and early 1950, Soviet power in central Europe was further enhanced by the strengthening of the eastern European satellites.²⁰⁵ The East German "Alert Police", in reality an army, had 50,000 men in arms by March 1950, and were being issued Soviet

²⁰².Mackintosh, *Juggernaut*, p. 281

²⁰³.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 9

²⁰⁴.A point contrary to this is made in Michel Garder, *A History of the Soviet Army*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966), p. 129, where he claims that as many as 75,000 Soviet armed forced personnel may have deserted from Soviet occupation forces in Germany and Austria in the immediate post-war years.

²⁰⁵.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 241

tanks.²⁰⁶ After the introduction of conscription in 1949, the Polish Army grew to 400,000 men,²⁰⁷ and by 1950 the Czechoslovakian Army had 140,000 men.²⁰⁸ These Czech troops, as well, to a lesser extent, all of the Communist armies in Europe, relied on goods from the Skoda arms works, one of the largest military production complexes in the world.

Critiques of the Truman administration's fear of Soviet power cast doubt on the battle readiness of the Soviet Army in this era. Khrushchev would later claim that only one third of the Red Army's divisions were anywhere near battle ready, another one third were semi-organised, and a third were virtual shells.²⁰⁹ But Khrushchev is not very specific about how ready a partially organised division was, and even if only one third of the Soviet Army divisions were battle ready, the Soviets still had a large preponderance of power in the field, especially if those units closest to readiness were the ones in central Europe. By 1949, the Soviet forces in eastern Germany were undergoing large unit field manoeuvres as part of their training.²¹⁰

Another critique offered by historians arguing that the Truman administration overestimated the fighting power of the Soviet Army

²⁰⁶.ibid.

²⁰⁷.ibid.

²⁰⁸.ibid.

²⁰⁹.Khrushchev, *Remembers*

²¹⁰.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 241

is the fact that Soviet divisions, throughout the history of the USSR, had fewer troops than western divisions, a factor sometimes not acknowledged in reports on Soviet strength. During this era, a Soviet Army division had approximately 10,000 men, half the number of men as a typical British division, and only a small proportion of the extra manpower in the British division could be accounted for in its larger administrative support structure.²¹¹ However, even if we divide these estimates in half to account for smaller division size, the Soviets maintain an advantage of between 2.5 and 8 times the overall manpower of western armies in Europe, enough, it would seem to successfully conduct an offensive. Improvements in mechanising transport and adding armour (about 20 to 30 divisions were either armoured divisions or mechanised divisions²¹²) may have made the Soviet force of the late 1940's as powerful as the war-time Red Army, which had begun with 300 divisions and ended the war with approximately 500 divisions, each of which had considerably less manpower and less up to date weaponry than the post-war ones.²¹³

A third criticism sometimes made of the post-war Soviet Army is that it had to devote a considerable portion of its efforts in the post-war years towards the transport of capital equipment from the

²¹¹*The Times of London*, "The Soviet Army", October 6 1950, p. 7 It was thought that a British division had an "administrative tail" approximately 15% larger, proportionate to the size of the division, than that the Soviet division.

²¹²Seaton, *Soviet Army*, p. 155

²¹³300 divisions: Seaton, *Soviet Army*, pp. 153 and 160, 500 divisions: Mackintosh, *Juggernaut*, p. 269

occupied territories to the Soviet Union and to general cleaning and reconstruction projects, such as the clearance of war time mines and the rebuilding of factories and farms.²¹⁴ This criticism, while important in the 1945-1946 period, becomes increasingly less so for later years. The Soviets had successfully prosecuted the war against Nazi Germany while a very large proportion of troops was involved in moving industrial infrastructure east of the Urals and in the construction of war goods production centres. The proportion of Soviet troops involved in such activities in 1948-1949 was probably much less. The western occupation forces in Germany, which would have fought the Soviets in the event of a war, were themselves weakened by their various occupation tasks.

A fourth criticism of Soviet war-making capacities was that the Soviet Navy was too weak to pose a threat, as shown by the World War Two experience. Hitler's staff had initially feared that the Soviets would interrupt ore shipments crossing the Baltic from Scandinavia to Germany, but soon found that there was little reason to worry, and even abandoned convoy shipments for a time.²¹⁵ This was despite the fact that the Soviets had the greatest number of submarines in the world at the start of the war.²¹⁶ Similarly, the Anglo-American

²¹⁴.Evangelista, "Postwar Army"

²¹⁵.ACMH, file 091, folder entitled "Soviet Union", memorandum from Mr. Riley Sunderland for General Malony, October 20, 1948, page 5

²¹⁶.ibid.

convoys sailing the Arctic route to Murmansk, carrying supplies, found that on at least one occasion, the Soviet surface fleet deliberately fled from trouble.²¹⁷ In the post-war period, western intelligence learned that the Soviet crews lacked the ability to properly operate the advanced equipment produced by copying German designs.²¹⁸ Western analysts of the Soviet Navy have also criticised its lack of an appropriate long term strategy. According to this critique, during the entire Cold War the Soviet leadership never grasped the vulnerability of western commerce. A sound military decision would have been to pay particular attention to improving submarine construction, so that the new vessels were better equipped and capable of long range oceanic missions. In the large scheme of things, where the Soviets were the dominant continental power, spanning the heart of Eurasia, and the strongest potential enemies were powers either on the fringes of Eurasia or across the seas, the enemy's sea lines of communications and transportation (SLOC) were vulnerable to submarines, but geographical limits and the lack of Soviet productive capacity made a Soviet strike across the seas unrealistic, and a large surface fleet capable of projecting power therefore unnecessary. But the Soviets under Stalin instead focused on submarines as defensive weapons (and later as missile launching

²¹⁷.*ibid.*

²¹⁸.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 307

weapons) and not as a means of attacking SLOC, while building large surface vessels. Soon after the war, the Soviets had between 150 and 200 submarines,²¹⁹ but these were not of a very high quality.²²⁰

This is the most valid of the criticisms. The Soviet Navy during this era was, compared to western ones, weak both in size and in strategy. However, even if this is accepted, it does not invalidate the premise that the Soviets could have rolled across western Europe. The Soviets did not need to dominate the Atlantic during the few weeks it would take for the Red Army to drive to the English Channel, since it was highly unlikely that North America's productive capacity could be converted fast enough to send war goods across the ocean in such a brief time. The Soviet Navy was capable of doing all that was needed: the submarines and the fleets and flotillas²²¹ could achieve enough power in the Barents, the Baltic, the Black, the Caspian, and the Japan Seas to cast serious doubts in the minds of anyone considering offensive action against the Soviet Union.²²²

A fifth criticism of the post-war Soviet military was that its leaders were weak men who were put in power for political purposes. There

²¹⁹.ACMH, History Resources Center 091, folder on Soviet Union, article from the United States Naval Institute Proceedings, June 1955, by Rear Admiral E. M. Eller, entitled "Soviet Bid for the Sea", p. 622

²²⁰.Author's Interview with Dr. Donald Steury, CIA History Office, September 12 1995

²²¹.Officially, the USSR had four fleets (Arctic, Baltic, Black, and Pacific) and one flotilla (Caspian).

²²².The Soviets probably would have captured all of Spitzbergen within a day of the start of a European war, as a means of protecting the Soviets' northern flank. John Teal, Jr., "Europe's Northernmost Frontier", *Foreign Affairs*(January 1951)

is some basis for this claim: the ever paranoid Stalin, fearing men who might threaten his rule, preferred to rely on cronies. In 1946, false charges were used to demote Marshal Zhukov and Admiral Kuznetzov, the Deputy Minister of Defence (Stalin was the Minister of Defence) and the commander of the Navy, respectively.²²³ Zhukov had earned international respect as one of the leading generals in the world during the war. Stalin then resigned as Minister of Defence and promoted Nikolai Bulganin to the position, a man whose qualifications seem to have been mostly in the field of surviving the Byzantine world of Kremlin politics.

However, this criticism of the Soviet military can be used against other nations. In both the United States and the United Kingdom, the Cabinet officers in charge of the armed forces at the time of the outbreak of the Korean War, Louis Johnson and Manny Shinwell, also possessed an almost strictly political background. Furthermore, Stalin, as was his habit, kept certain demoted people whom he considered to have valuable skills alive, so that they could be placed in power in time of need. Kuznetzov would be reinstated by Stalin in 1952, and Zhukov survived to become Minister of Defence in 1953, after Stalin's death.²²⁴

²²³.Pavel Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness- A Soviet Spy Master*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1995), pp. 311-312, 314 Listening devices planted in Zhukov's apartment in 1944 failed to turn up evidence of anti-Stalinist statements, so certain leading figures under arrest were tortured until they "confessed" to having heard Zhukov making slanderous remarks concerning Stalin.

²²⁴.Sudoplatov, *Tasks*, p. 314

In retrospect, Stalin was telling the truth when he claimed in January 1951, weeks before the first additional US troops arrived in Europe, that "No European army is capable of seriously opposing the Soviet Army",²²⁵ and the Truman administration was correct in agreeing. But the administration also believed that in a long war, Soviet weaknesses in production, communications, weapons development, internal transport, and naval power would all lead to a gradual turning of the tide in favour of the North Americans and whatever European forces survived the initial Soviet onslaught.

Once more, the administration was correct. The Soviet economy was too weak for a long war against the west. From approximately 1929, it had been subjected to Stalinist planning, which achieved some gains in heavy industries, such as steel, but had led to a lowering of the real wages of Soviet workers by 22% in the 1928 to 1940 period.²²⁶ Then the economy had experienced the shock of an almost genocidal war with Nazi Germany, in which 1,710 towns had been annihilated, 70,000 villages burned to the ground, 32,000 factories rendered unusable, 65,000 kilometres of railroad track destroyed, 90,000 road bridges wrecked, 100,000 collective farms laid to waste, 70 million livestock animals killed, 1,000 coal pits made unusable, 3,000 oil wells

²²⁵ quoted in Richard Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941-1991*, (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 86

²²⁶ Michel Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich, *Utopia in Power: A History of the USSR From 1917 to the Present*, translated by Phyllis Carlos (London: Hutchinson, 1985), p. 476

destroyed, and 25 million people made homeless.²²⁷ In 1947, the rebuilding Soviets claimed that they had managed to get back to the 1940 levels of production,²²⁸ but these were not impressive quantities relative to the US. By 1948, Soviet workers' wages were only 59% of the 1928 level.²²⁹ The eastern European economies, wrecked by war and Soviet plundering, were in a state of chaos. As American intelligence interceptions of Soviet communications would reveal a few years later, the rail lines and rolling stock in East Germany that the Soviet military depended upon were in substandard condition.²³⁰

In addition, the USSR was weakened by the continued fighting with various resistance groups, especially in the western Ukraine, where there was strong opposition to re-imposition of control by Moscow. There was also a battle to re-impose control in the Baltic states, with one Lithuanian partisan group later claiming that the Soviets lost 100,000 men in fighting there from 1945 to 1952.²³¹ Stalin, afraid that those sections of the populace which had been exposed to foreign rule

²²⁷.Volkogonov, *Stalin*, p. 504, except for the statistic on bridges, which comes from Evangelista, "Postwar Army", p. 122, and the statistics on livestock, oil wells, and coal pits, which come from Douglas Botting, *In The Ruins of the Reich*, (London: Grafton Books, 1985), p. 135

²²⁸.*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, "Elections to Local Soviets", December 9 1950 (translation of a *Pravda* article of October 26)

²²⁹.Heller and Nekrich, *Utopia*, p. 476

²³⁰.Martin, *Wilderness*, p. 89 This knowledge would come from the May 1955 tapping of a major East Berlin underground communications cable.

²³¹.Evangelista, "Postwar" These partisan bands were composed primarily of local anti-Communists, but some members were German soldiers who had refused to surrender to the Soviets on VE-day and had instead joined the resistance. Botting, *Ruins*, p. 137

would have increased doubts about the validity of the Soviet system, began a fresh campaign of terror, sending millions of people to the penal camps, many for the sole reason that the government believed that they had not been active enough in countering the Nazis.²³² This creation of millions of people considered disloyal probably gave Stalin second thoughts about popular support for any new war.

The eastern European allies, with whom Stalin was signing treaties of friendship, were still consolidating their power, and it could not be assumed that they would prove effective allies in a general war. In August of 1944, the Romanian government under King Michael had switched its allegiance from the Germans to the Soviets when it appeared in its best interest. How could the Soviets be sure that the Romanian Communists would not do the same, in the event that western troops ever entered the Balkans? Eastern European nations had forfeited, without their consent, much of their industrial plant to the Soviet Union, and the Soviets had created a trading order which forced eastern European nations to pay heavily to support the occupying Soviet Army, all of which was bound to anger local sentiment.

Despite the development of their jet fighters, the Soviets had good reason to fear western strategic bombing, which, in the nuclear age, would be exponentially more destructive than the western bombing

²³².Heller and Nekrich, *Utopia*, p. 495

of Germany had been in the last war. In April of 1945, allied soldiers noticed that the Soviets were constructing anti-aircraft defences in Austria, despite the fact (or maybe due to the fact) that the German air force had been replaced by the US Air Force and the British Royal Air Force in the skies over central Europe by this final stage of the war. In the post-war era, the Soviets mounted 85 or 88 mm anti-aircraft guns around Budapest,²³³ and strengthened their internal air defences.

On the matter of political intentions, the result of internal administration policy debates seems to have been a victory for those who believed that the Soviet political leadership would not initiate a general war in Europe, except in the most dire circumstances.

The administration was right in believing this. Despite the glaring examples of territorial expansion in Soviet history, and despite the fact that the Soviet leadership appears to have not been in the least bit intimidated by America's nuclear weapons,²³⁴ the USSR was not preparing for war in the late 1940's. Soviet expenditure on domestic projects of little military value indicates that the Soviets considered a war in the near future unlikely. In the late 1940's, the Soviets

²³³PRO, FO 371/87478, Memorandum entitled "Information Received from the Turkish Military Attaché concerning Russian military equipment movements into the satellites and Bulgarian troop movements", March 1950

²³⁴Stalin received a report from his embassy in Japan concluding that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had not been as effective as outsiders were led to believe, and another report, by the physicist Peter Kapitsa, that claimed that the blasts in Japan were so destructive because the Japanese lived in crowded "cardboard houses". Kapitsa added that protective measures could reduce damage. Stalin often indicated his belief that atomic weapons would not prove decisive in a general war, a strategy which seems to have been critical in leading the Soviets to maintain a preponderance of conventional military force in central Europe. Holloway, *Bomb*, pp. 226-227 for reports; same chapter for examples of remarks Stalin made disdaining atomic weapons

extended the Moscow metro, an immense project that had been in progress since the 1930's. The Soviets were also planning a new housing program, which would begin in 1950, that was to create a new residential neighbourhood in suburban Moscow with more than 700,000 square meters of living space.²³⁵ There were also attempts to build new agricultural towns to replace smaller collective farms and villages.²³⁶

The very large Soviet military presence in Germany may have been created primarily as a means of enhancing Soviet bargaining leverage with the west on issues such as the future of Germany. Alternatively, this preponderant force may have been created as an overreaction by the paranoid Stalin to perceived western encirclement. Memories of the Allied interventions of the early Bolshevik years were enhanced by the extension of American aid to Greece and Turkey (the Soviet press spoke of a "Mediterranean military bloc"²³⁷), the rehabilitations of former enemies Japan, Italy, and Germany as pro-western nations, and the American atomic monopoly. The passage of the American National Security Act of 1947, which led to the unification of the armed services and the formation of the National Security Council, was followed closely by Stalin, who ordered all available material on

²³⁵.Roy Medvedev, *Khrushchev*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 52

²³⁶.*ibid.*, p. 53

²³⁷.PRO FO 371/87465, Memorandum from the Chancery, Moscow, to the Foreign Office's Northern Department, 4 April 1950, see the included translation of an *Izvestiya* article from 31 March 1950

the act to be translated, considering it possible that the act was meant as preparation for war.²³⁸

In hindsight, the Soviet Union, despite possessing a very capable field army, had severe internal weaknesses that limited its potential to win a lengthy war, and the Soviet leadership, at least partly for this reason, did not intend to involve itself in a war with the west. However, those in the west who feared a Soviet attack had understandable reasons for their anxiety. Since intentions can change rapidly, and military capabilities can change only slowly, it made sense to be concerned with the current imbalance between the two camps in Europe.

A further complication was that western intelligence on the Soviet Union was lacking. It could not be assumed that assessments of Soviet capabilities were anything more than semi-educated guesses, and knowledge on Soviet intentions was even more speculative. The Truman administration could not assume that intelligence services would give much advance notice if and when Moscow did begin final preparations for an offensive. The CIA had only been formed in 1947, and the quality of its work may have been shoddy in this era. General Walter Bedell Smith, who worked with CIA agents when he was ambassador to Moscow in the late 1940's, and who reluctantly agreed to become CIA director in 1950, told his friend George Allen,

²³⁸.Richelson, *Spies*, p. 216

ambassador to Yugoslavia, that regarding CIA personnel "My experience in Moscow was not particularly reassuring."²³⁹ Before beginning his term as Agency Director, he told another friend "I expect the worst and know I won't be disappointed."²⁴⁰

The CIA did not insert its own agents into the Soviet Union until late 1949, when airdrops began as part of a spy operation code named REDSOX.²⁴¹ The officer in charge of these air operations, Harry Rositzke, would later claim that they were partially compromised by Kim Philby, the MI6 liaison officer in Washington who was secretly giving information to the Soviet Union.²⁴² Many of the men being dropped may have been turned into double agents by the Soviets, who used them to send back misinformation. Peer de Silva, who in 1951 became the chief of operations for the Agency's Soviet Bloc Division, later claimed that "a close review of our operational files led me to [believe] that practically every one of our parachuted agents was under Soviet control and was reporting back to us under duress. The KGB was writing their messages and feeding back information they wanted us to have which was either false, misleading or confusing. We therefore had almost no assets, in terms of agents,

²³⁹.quoted in Martin, *Wilderness*, p. 54

²⁴⁰.*ibid.*, p. 54

²⁴¹.Richelson, *Spies*, p. 217, and Hansen, *Forces*, p. 19

²⁴².Martin, *Wilderness*, p. 57

within the borders of the USSR or the Baltic states.¹¹²⁴³ The dropping of agents proved so valueless it was terminated in 1954.²⁴⁴

As for handling those Soviets and eastern Europeans who fled to the west and offered to go back east and spy for America, the CIA, according to intelligence expert Angelo Codevilla, was so incompetent that the "communist security services were able to learn the identity of Western cross border agents even before they were dispatched."¹¹²⁴⁵ This was due to the agency's habit of pooling its recruits together, which enabled those agents who were working for foreign security services to betray the rest. Furthermore, "the CIA never attempted to use [these] thousands of willing East European recruits as long term penetrators of their societies, their governments, or their Communist parties" preferring to allow them only to give basic information on local troop formations, because the Agency was too inflexible. In the CIA culture, "moles [could] be courted and handled only by 'classic' American officers posing as diplomats."¹¹²⁴⁶ Codevilla believes that before 1952, the US had no moles in the Soviet government.²⁴⁷

²⁴³.ibid., p. 62

²⁴⁴.Richelson, *Spies*, p. 218

²⁴⁵.Angelo Codevilla, *Informing Security: Intelligence for a New Century*, p. 86

²⁴⁶.Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, p. 87

²⁴⁷.ibid., p. 99 According to Codevilla, in 1952, GRU (Soviet Military Intelligence) Major Vladimir Popov initiated contact with the CIA in Vienna, becoming the first penetration of the Soviet government the US ever had.

CIA estimates of Soviet aircraft production were guesses based on the square footage of known Soviet factories and occasional overflights of certain air bases,²⁴⁸ neither of which were reliable means to gauge Soviet capabilities as a whole.

The CIA met with a little more success in Eastern Europe than it did in the USSR, but even this was limited. Dr. Walter Linse, who directed an underground network of East Germans from Berlin, was kidnapped outside his apartment one day and driven into the Soviet sector, never to be seen again.²⁴⁹ The CIA supported a Polish underground anti-Communist group named WIN (the Polish acronym for Freedom and Independence Movement), only to find that it was thoroughly penetrated, from 1947 on, by Polish security services, who turned the organisation against the US.²⁵⁰

As for cryptoanalytic work, the Army Security Agency had a notable success in the late 1940's in decyphering Soviet cables, but it too was short-lived, due to the presence of Philby literally in the room where the decyphering was being done.²⁵¹

One historian, Harry G. Summers, Jr., feels that part of the reason the CIA was often uninformed at this time was that it was "operating

²⁴⁸Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 499

²⁴⁹Martin, *Wilderness*, p. 68

²⁵⁰Richelson, *Spies*, p. 248

²⁵¹Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 181

out of cramped quarters in downtown Washington with only a tiny staff and a limited number of field agents.²⁵² In its early days, the Agency used some shabby buildings that had been set up on the National Mall in Washington as temporary space for the government during the Second World War.²⁵³

The military intelligence services may have been little better. As late as November 1948, the Air Force Material Command's Intelligence Department estimated that "95% of the qualitative intelligence on Russian aircraft" came from the Air Attaché watching the annual May Day military shows in Moscow,²⁵⁴ which says little on behalf of the Air Force's observation efforts. The overflights of Soviet territory by Air Force reconnaissance craft had just begun in the late 1940's, and were nowhere near the sophisticated operations they would become during the mid to late 1950's.²⁵⁵ The Air Force was trying to monitor Soviet radio traffic in this era,²⁵⁶ but significant messages tended not to be transmitted this way.

In fairness to the CIA and other intelligence agencies, the Soviet Union was a hard target for information acquisition. The primary

²⁵².Harry G. Summers, Jr., *Korean War Almanac* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), p. 89 It was only in 1961 that the CIA moved to Langley, Virginia, its present location

²⁵³.Interview with Dr. Donald Steury, CIA Historical Office, September 12, 1995

²⁵⁴.quoted in Richelson, *Spies*, p. 218

²⁵⁵.Richelson, *Spies*, pp. 219-220, for information on Operations LEOPARD, RICKRACK, STONERWORK, and OVERCALLS; Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, for information on the 1950's operations.

²⁵⁶.Richelson, *Spies*, p. 222, see information on SIGINT station in Alaska

method of acquiring military intelligence in the era before spy satellites was the use of moles, and recruiting moles in the Soviet Union was difficult. The purges in the 1930's and 1940's had established in the minds of every Soviet official that even the possibility that one had contact with the west or westerners at any times was grounds enough for suspicion and might result in death. Soviet security agencies maintained networks of informers who related the affairs of their neighbours to the government on a constant basis. It was so unusual for American Embassy staff to converse with Soviet citizens that when meetings did occur, almost all of which were innocuous chance encounters of short duration at skating rinks, opera intermissions, or similarly mundane occasions, the Embassy would send a memorandum back to Washington reporting it.²⁵⁷

The enormity of the USSR, the secretiveness surrounding Soviet defence production, and the Kremlin's policy of intentionally building key facilities far from the borders, made it difficult for American spy planes to locate and assess Soviet assets. Even within the USSR, many of these locations were only known to top party or military officials. Secrecy was so strict that networks of defence cities were created in which children growing up could only meet children from other defence cities. Soviet citizens themselves had internal passports that

²⁵⁷for example, BLHC, Confidential US State Department Central Files, The Soviet Union: Foreign Affairs, 1950-1954, Foreign Service Memorandum from Embassy in Moscow, January 5, 1950, Incoming Airgram, January 16 1950

limited their movement, travel by foreigners within the USSR was extremely limited, with certain cities, such as Vladivostock, being off limits to all non-Soviet citizens,²⁵⁸ and the press was closely supervised by the government. Stalin himself is perhaps most famous for his extreme paranoia, in which he imagined that even his personal acquaintances, their wives, his doctors, or his employees were, at any given moment, employed by foreign intelligence services. Partly as a result of this paranoia, the Soviet government may have paid more attention to the threat of spies than any other government in modern history.

The general lack of sound information on the Soviets would make it increasingly likely for the Truman administration to believe that they had to assume the worst about the USSR.

²⁵⁸. *The New York Times*, "Russia Reopens Its Cosmopolitan Door to the Pacific", James Brooke, August 8 1996

RECONSIDERATION

3.1 The Beginning of the Acheson-Johnson Conflict Over Arms Policy

In 1948, while Secretary of Defense James Forrestal was proposing increases in his Department's budget, the Secretary of State, George Marshall, was agreeing with the President's decision to hold the line on military spending. By the next year, there was a role reversal. The new Secretary of Defense would be launching a cost-cutting drive while the new Secretary of State would be pushing for enormously greater funds for the US armed forces.

Forrestal's pleading for an arms build-up was ahead of its time, and received little support. It is possible that this frustration, combined with Forrestal's inability to prevent public bickering amongst the service chiefs, and his fears that Truman was trying to oust him due to his disloyalty during the 1948 campaign, contributed to his personal

crises, and helped increase the paranoia that seems have been part of his personality. Forrestal turned into a nervous wreck, afraid that his inability to gain funding increases would, as he predicted, make things worse during the coming war with the USSR. He began babbling about Communist and Zionist plots against him, suffered a series of mental breakdowns, and was replaced (he offered his resignation on 2 March 1949) shortly before committing suicide.

Forrestal's replacement was Louis Johnson, a World War One veteran, lawyer and businessman from West Virginia, whose involvement with the Democratic Party had led to a position as Assistant Secretary of War from 1937 to 1940. He had met Truman during his work with the American Legion, of which Johnson had been a founder and a National President, in the early 1930's. Johnson had always been ambitious, even resigning in 1940 when Roosevelt passed him over for the Secretary of War post to appoint Henry Stimson.¹ In 1948, when most of the supposedly knowledgeable people in politics were betting on Truman being trounced by Dewey,² Johnson became Truman's finance chairman, providing much of the funding from his own wallet. His loyalty was rewarded, after Forrestal's demise, with the Secretary of Defense position, which he

¹Paul Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 293

²Almost all the major newspapers, as well as polling agencies, had predicted a Dewey victory. The wealthy Averell Harriman, a lifelong Democrat and personal envoy of Roosevelt who yearned to be a Secretary of State, had donated a mere \$500 to the campaign, which caused him to later complain that had he given more, he might have been in the Cabinet. Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 520

had specifically campaigned for, going to each state delegation during Truman's inauguration week and asking for their support.³

Johnson was tough and blunt, with a self-confidence bordering on arrogance. He was exactly the opposite of the insecure Forrestal. Upon arrival at the Pentagon, Johnson jettisoned the Army leadership from the best office space, and moved himself and his staff in. His demeanour would lead to many confrontations with other Cabinet members, especially after Secretary of Commerce Sawyer discovered that Johnson was trying to meddle in Commerce's affairs.⁴ He also clashed with the powerful Senator Brien McMahon of Connecticut, the Chairman of the Joint [Congressional] Committee on Atomic Energy, when Johnson declined to share classified atomic information with the Senator.⁵ But this strength of will may have given Johnson the personality necessary to enforce discipline amongst the generals and admirals, some of who were still resentful of being placed under the auspices of a single civilian agency.

Johnson proved to be loyal to the President's aim of reducing military costs. His confidence, and the backing of Truman, allowed him to do this even as sections of the military and the foreign policy

³Robert Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 62. Donovan got this information in an interview with William J. Bray, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

⁴.*ibid.*, p. 159

⁵FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Record of Discussions at the Meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, April 21 1949, pp. 288-291

establishment tried to oppose him at every turn.⁶ His ability to effect change was strengthened by new legislation, passed in 1949, that made the Secretary of Defense much more effective, rectifying some of the difficulties in leadership that Forrestal had encountered.⁷ He was so adamant in trimming what he termed "fat" from the defence establishment that the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Stephen Early, prophesied that Johnson would become famous as the "Secretary of the Economy".⁸

The new Secretary of Defense's political outlook meshed perfectly with his designated task of slashing budgets. He had little fear that the Soviet threat existed, and does not seem to have favoured American participation in NATO, telling a Daughters of the American Revolution meeting in 1948 that "military alliances are not in the tradition of the United States", a statement he was later forced to retract, but probably not with much relish.⁹ Defending his cost-cutting, he declared that excessive spending would cripple the economy. He was also of the opinion that no amount of spending on arms could ever guarantee protection against Soviet nuclear attack.¹⁰

⁶Johnson was used to battles: he had, ironically enough, been a proponent of increasing military funding during his stint as Roosevelt's Assistant Secretary of War, under the isolationist Secretary, Harry Woodring. Paul Hammond, "NSC-68"; Alonzo Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 356

⁷Congressional Quarterly Service, *Congress and the Nation*, p. 253

⁸Poole, *Chiefs*

⁹Kaplan, "NATO", p. 3

¹⁰PRO FO 371/81692, AU 11917/4, Memorandum from Sir O. Franks, 13 March 1950

Greater reliance on nuclear weapons, which were relatively cheap (they had more "bang for the buck" in Pentagon terminology), and massive cuts in more conventional military programs were the essence of Johnson's program. Within a month of taking office, he cancelled the \$100 million construction order for the 65,000 ton super-carrier USS United States, whose keel had already been laid in Norfolk, Virginia naval shipyard, and began ordering the relatively inexpensive B-36 bomber,¹¹ which could deliver nuclear weapons to enemy territory less expensively than the Navy hoped to do with carrier-based bombers. More atomic bombs were ordered from the Atomic Energy Commission.¹²

The Navy reacted by launching a public protest, asserting that surface fleets were still vital in the nuclear age, questioning the desirability of primary reliance on atomic bombing as a means of defense, and asserting that if the US was to use A-bombs, some should be dropped from Navy bombers flying from aircraft carriers.¹³ The House Armed Services Committee investigated the matter, holding "Unification and Strategy" hearings in which the services argued their case.¹⁴ Congressman Charles Van Zandt, a Navy veteran

¹¹Congressional Quarterly Service, *Congress and the Nation*, p. 253, and Doris Condit, *Test of War*, p. 15. The B-36 was also the nation's first inter-continental bomber.

¹²HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, B File - Development of Atomic Weapons Program, box 1, folder 2, Memorandum for the President from the Director of the Bureau of the Budget (Pace), April 5 1949

¹³Rae, *Climb to Greatness*, p. 196

¹⁴Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 302

acting on information from an assistant to the Under Secretary of the Navy, accused Johnson of collusion with the Convair Corporation, manufacturer of the B-36, in his decisions. He alleged that Johnson, having been a director of the Atlas Corporation, which owned a large portion of Convair, was profiting.¹⁵ The Navy and its friends also challenged the B-36's viability, claiming that it would be an easy target for enemy interceptors, with Admiral Arthur Radford calling the aeroplane a "billion dollar blunder".¹⁶ Admiral Louis Denfeld, Chief of Naval Operations, resigned at the end of October 1949 as part of the campaign against Johnson, but it was to no avail. The B-36 program went forward.

The public bickering highlighted what would be a recurring problem for Johnson: a lack of understanding between himself and much of the military leadership. The Pentagon was, by the end of 1949, only nine months after Johnson was sworn in, already marked by high levels of distrust towards the Secretary. Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff challenged Johnson's budgeting programs publicly, without mentioning his name, and four of the service secretaries resigned during Johnson's 16 month tenure: Kenneth C. Royall and Gordon Gray of the Army, John L. Sullivan of the Navy, and Stuart Symington of the Air Force.¹⁷ As Doris Condit, an historian devoted

¹⁵Rae, *Climb to Greatness*, pp. 184 and 195

¹⁶quoted in *ibid.*, p. 195

¹⁷Condit, *Test of War*, p. 16 Royall resigned in April 1949, Sullivan left in May 1949, and Gray and Symington

to the study of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, has remarked, "although one or two of these resignations were apparently in the making before Johnson's arrival, it may be inferred that the high incidence of departures was a measure of Johnson's generally troubled relationship with his service secretaries."¹⁸ A perception existed within the armed forces that Johnson placed personal political considerations above national security requirements.¹⁹ He was accused of trying to gain the 1952 Democratic nomination for President, in which his cost-cutting was a tool for publicity.²⁰

The most important opponent of Johnson's fiscal austerity programs, and the man who would remain in office long enough to see both Johnson's firing and a tripling of defence budgets, was the new Secretary of State, Dean Acheson.²¹ In 1949 and early 1950, much of the policy debate over American defence budgets took the character of a personal duel between the two Secretaries. Acheson began a lobbying campaign to increase American military budgets, only to be countered at every turn by Johnson.

left in April 1950.

¹⁸*ibid.*, *Test of War*, p. 16

¹⁹Blair, *Forgotten War*, p. 15

²⁰Harry Truman told his staff in August of 1949 that Johnson wanted to run for President. Brigadier General Louis Renfrow, Johnson's assistant, said the same. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 62

²¹Secretary of State Marshall, like Forrestal, had sharply differed with Truman over the creation of Israel in 1948. This, combined with his poor health, led him to resign.

Acheson was a well connected lawyer (he was friends with Roosevelt's personal assistant Averell Harriman and Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter) who had served for a short time as a White House counsel in the Roosevelt administration before resigning over what he considered a question of ethics (FDR asked him to find a way around a particular law). He had come back to government service during the Second World War, served as Assistant Secretary of State under Marshall, and, like Johnson, had remained steadfastly loyal to Truman during the 1948 election, when many Democrats deserted the administration. He took command of the Department on 20 January 1949, and successfully lobbied Truman for wide responsibilities, including formulation of German policy upon the end of the military governourship, greater direction of foreign aid programs, and a recognition of State's superiority over the National Security Council.²² Acheson was familiar with the constant bureaucratic fighting in Washington, and was determined to be assertive in foreign policy formulation. He did not consider military budgeting to be beyond his jurisdiction.

Acheson agreed with only part of the State Department consensus on Soviet policy. He agreed with the State Department evaluation that "the Soviet Union will not deliberately resort to military action in

²².Leffler, *Preponderance*, pp. 269-270

the immediate future",²³ but felt that one had to judge an opponent on capabilities, not intentions, and therefore favoured increases in defence budgets.

Acheson felt that American diplomacy was impotent because of the lack of conventional military power, especially in Europe. He felt that persuasion and compromise would only work when backed by strength. He was a proponent of traditional international power politics. If the power of a state or alliance was equal to or greater than that of potential adversaries, the state could either forcibly achieve its aims or threaten other states into concessions. This was best illuminated in his insistence that the United States had to operate from "situations of strength".²⁴ He declared that the initiative in international affairs would belong to whoever was willing to back up their desires with power and a willingness to use it. He wanted to show that the United States could not be intimidated, that it would pursue firm policies in Berlin, Indochina, and the eastern Mediterranean (a notable exception was China). He especially wanted to make the North Atlantic Treaty alliance a militarily competent force. As Paul Nitze, a member of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, would later write, the alliance was, at this time, "viewed as a North American political commitment to the defence of

²³FRUS, 1949, Volume 5, pages 603-609, The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kohler) to the Secretary of State (Acheson), April 6, 1949. See the enclosure entitled "Report on Soviet Intentions Prepared by the Joint Intelligence Committee, American Embassy, USSR, April 5, 1949"

²⁴*Department of State Bulletin*, 23 January 1950, p. 114

Europe rather than as a framework for a military reorganisation.¹²⁵ Although there was a permanent alliance staff, there was no supreme commander of NATO forces with the authority to order units of various nationalities into action. The Treaty was not backed up with enough American forces, according to Acheson, and its provisions still granted the US Congress ultimate control as to an American formal entry into war, allowing both the Soviets and the western Europeans to question the American commitment to European affairs. Acheson, along with much of the State Department staff, believed that the European economies, although rapidly recovering from the damage of the Second World War, were not yet strong enough to produce the necessary counterbalance to Soviet power on their own. Britain, having already opted to terminate its military commitments in Palestine, India, and Burma, due to the difficult economic burden they presented, was being stretched to the limit in an effort to fight the colonial war in Malaya, while also maintaining forces in such key spots as Gibraltar, the Suez canal zone, the Persian Gulf, and Hong Kong, not to mention imperial duties in Africa.²⁶ Only large

²⁵Paul Nitze, "NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat", *International Security* (Spring 1980); Acheson had sarcastically noted during the celebrations in Washington at the signing of the treaty that the band's choice of the song "I've Got Plenty of Nothing" was appropriate. Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 489

²⁶Major General Sir Ian Jacob, "Principles of British Military Thought", *Foreign Affairs* (January 1951), pp. 219-228; Anthony Eden, "Britain in World Strategy", *Foreign Affairs* (January 1951), pp. 341-350, divulges that British troop commitments at the time of the writing of the article were: Korea, 12,000; Austria and Trieste, 10,000; Germany 50,000; Great Britain, 230,000; Middle East, 45,000; Malaya, 17,000; Hong Kong 20,000; and bases other than Singapore and Hong Kong, 20,000

contingents of American forces could counter-balance the Red Army in continental Europe. As Acheson would later write,

The threat to Western Europe seemed to me singularly like that which Islam had posed centuries before, with its combination of ideological zeal and fighting power. Then it had taken the same combination to meet it: Germanic power in the east and Frankish in Spain, both energized by a great outburst of military power and social organization in Europe. This time it would need the added power and energy of America, for the drama was now played on a world stage.²⁷

American combat divisions in Europe would also help to convince the French to accept German rearmament, already being considered at the State Department in 1949. Since German rearmament might threaten France's security, the French would only go along with it if assurances were given of an Anglo-American commitment to the Continent. The only way to provide such forces would be to engage in a general increase in military spending.

In the mind of Acheson, the United States had to avoid following the pattern of the 1930's: trade wars, economic misery, and above all, an unwillingness of the United States to create, and prepare to use, a working military force to act as a deterrent. If the west could build up forces, it would be ready to play what amounted to a new version of the old Anglo-Russian "great game" of an earlier era. With the US consuming almost 50% of the raw materials produced in the non-

²⁷.Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), p. 376

Communist world,²⁸ it could not afford, as Acheson saw it, to allow Soviet expansion without suffering direct losses to American well being. Acheson did not place much faith in the view held by some Foreign Service officers that local nationalists and geographical factors might make extensions of Soviet influence a means of Soviet overstretch.

Having lived through the most violent and revolutionary three decades in western history since the mid-17th century, Acheson's generation, it has been remarked, had lost faith in the inherent orderliness of the world. A military build-up had the potential psychologically of reaffirming the ability of the west to control events. It is also possible that Acheson saw the Cold War in civilisationist terms, it often being said that he was Anglophile and Europhile, and sought to use American power to unite the western world against its perceived enemies.

Perhaps the only agreement on security policy between the two Secretaries was that the Europeans should increase their defence spending, which, as Johnson saw it, could relieve the US of the burden of European defence, and, as they both agreed, could help contain Soviet opportunism. The two departments lobbied NATO nations, with marginal success, to increase military budgets.²⁹

²⁸Coblentz, et al, *Foreign Policy*, p. 333

²⁹.PRO FO 371/89951, Western Union Secretariat, 1112/95, note from the Foreign Office to Sir Gladwyn Jebb

On a personal level, Acheson and Johnson disliked each other. Their mutual enmity took many forms. They disagreed on military policy, with Acheson preferring a massive build-up of forces while Johnson preferred downsizing. They disagreed on foreign policy, with Johnson committed to an Asia-first strategy while Acheson saw western Europe as the "keystone of the world" and seemed, to some, uninterested in Asian affairs.³⁰ They differed in taste, with Johnson holding to his blunt West Virginia ways while Acheson preferred to play the urbane East Coast establishment lawyer. By 1950, Johnson was so eager to oust his rival that he told Averell Harriman, then a special advisor to the President, that he would support any efforts by Harriman to become Secretary of State if Harriman helped remove Acheson from power. Acheson, never one to mince words when in disagreement, responded in his memoirs that

evidence accumulated to convince me that Louis Johnson was mentally ill. His conduct became too outrageous to be explained by mere cussedness. It did not surprise me when some years later he underwent a brain operation.³¹

The combination of rebellion from within the Department of Defense and attack from Acheson made Johnson suspicious of plots to circumvent his authority. Johnson insisted that all contacts between the two departments be personally approved by either himself or

³⁰quoted in Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 277; Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 165; Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 475
Acheson was willing to subordinate Asian issues, such as IndoChina, to the need to maintain European unity.

³¹.Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 374

General James Burns, his liaison officer for State. This only made Acheson more irate.

If he was to succeed in his efforts to convince the President, Congress, and the public of the need for an arms build-up, Acheson had to build a team at State that could quietly work with the military to circumvent Johnson's authority, draw public attention to the growing Soviet military menace, oppose Truman's budget ceilings at every opportunity, and work to convince the President himself of the futility of such arbitrary impositions. The first problem Acheson had to solve in this effort was that of building a team at State Department that could work with him to create the arms build-up. The only major opposition to be overcome was from the Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff (PPS), George Kennan.

3.2 George Kennan's Opposition to an Arms Build-Up

George Kennan had risen to the position of founder and Director of the Policy Planning Staff through his acknowledged expertise on Soviet affairs. He had been dedicated to the task of studying the USSR since before American recognition of that country in 1933. Stationed at the American embassy in Moscow throughout much of the 1930's and the war years, he was fluent in Russian and on personal

terms with high-ranking Soviet foreign policy officials. Along with Loy Henderson and Charles Bohlen, other members of the "Riga group", so named because they had studied Soviet affairs in that Latvian city prior to 1933, Kennan had articulated a policy of defending American interests from Soviet encroachment. He had been the man with the critical ideas in the critical place at the critical time when Soviet-American relations soured in 1945-1946.

The key moment had come in the aftermath of a Joseph Stalin speech read before the Soviet Presidium on 9 February 1946, in which the Soviet General Secretary had attacked American policies and referred to the inevitability of warfare in the capitalist camp, as prophesied by Marxist-Leninist ideology. Washington had asked the American embassy in Moscow for advice in understanding what seemed to be a turn towards a more severe Soviet policy. Kennan's response had been delivered to the White House on 22 February 1946. A similar article was later published anonymously.³² It was more than 8,000 words in length, earning it the sobriquet "the long telegram", and expansive in nature.

The long telegram provided the Truman administration with the explanation it wanted to hear. Only months earlier Washington had still hoped to reach acceptable terms for resolving the issues brought about by the collapse of the Axis powers. Problems over eastern

³².X, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct", *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947)

European governments, reparations, the future of Germany, and many other issues had proved, however, to be intractable. At precisely the moment when the Truman administration was questioning the value of that strategy, the long telegram had told them that their failure to get along with Moscow was due not to a lack of effort on their part, but was due to the extreme difficulty of reaching any *modus vivendi* with the Soviets. This explanation, which was not wholly inaccurate, had been warmly received by the Truman administration.

The long telegram had focused, as Kennan's writing's usually did, on the Russian character and the nature of the Soviet state. According to Kennan, the long history of attack from abroad and dictatorship from above had made the Russians cautious to the point of paranoia, and accepting of brutal government. The ruthless revolutionary dogma of the Soviet Communist Party accentuated this tendency for xenophobia and violence, and explained the cynicism and opportunism that guided Moscow's relations with the West.

Kennan had preached that both Russian history and the nature of the Soviet regime were such that the Soviets tended to seek safety through power and control, rather than through co-operation. He had declared:

Some of us here [at the embassy in Moscow] have tried to conceive the measures our country would have to take if it really wished to pursue, at all costs, [the] goal of disarming Soviet suspicions. We have come to the conclusion that nothing short of complete disarmament, delivery of our air and naval forces to Russia and resigning of [the] powers of government to American Communists would even dent this problem:

and even then we believe-and this is not facetious-that Moscow would smell a trap and continue to harbor [the] most baleful misgivings.³³

Kennan had used the term "containment" to describe his approach to relations with the Soviets, a word which would become the byword of American foreign policy for over four decades.

By 1949, Kennan had clarified and refined the concept of containment. At the time of the long telegram, Kennan had not made clear distinctions between military and political efforts to contain Soviet power, and had not clearly stated the geographical and economic limitations, if any, that were to be imposed on efforts to combat Soviet designs.³⁴ But questions concerning his article by those in government and in the media, particularly by the journalist Walter Lippmann, combined with the unfolding of events in Greece, Iran, Czechoslovakia, and Berlin, led Kennan to elaborate on his views.

Kennan opposed Truman's pledge, in a speech before Congress designed to gain their acceptance of an aid package for Greece, to support peoples everywhere who were resisting Communism,³⁵ believing that Stalin could be contained if the West prevented four critical economic areas outside of the Soviet bloc from falling into Communist hands. These were Western Europe, North America, the oil regions of the Middle East, and Japan.

³³ Combs, "Compromise"

³⁴.ibid.

³⁵.ibid.

The North Atlantic Treaty was another object of Truman's ardour that Kennan opposed.³⁶ While intending to give a message of firmness and resolve, the creation of an alliance system, Kennan claimed, could foster contrary impressions. Nations would soon be categorised as falling inside or outside the American defence sphere. It was not necessary to create the alliance in order to signal Moscow of America's intentions, for it was clear to everyone after the two world wars that the US would intervene militarily to prevent an upset in the continental balance of power, or so Kennan thought. The real concern was not such an attack, but the possibility of Communism's advance through political methods, a concern shared by others in the administration, and a fear which had helped foster the aid programmes. Kennan also felt that an Atlantic alliance would limit policy options. Including a foreign state in an alliance could make things difficult for the United States by tying her down to expensive, rigid commitments to regimes of potentially opposing interests. The impact of an alliance might run contrary to American intentions. Rising anti-Americanism, bred by the stationing of US forces on foreign soil, would replace anti-Sovietism as the dominant political force. Although he continued to feel that the Soviet leadership was cynical and manipulative, Kennan did not rule out the possibility of a negotiated settlement for a united, neutralised, and demilitarised

³⁶.ibid.

Germany, perhaps combined with a Soviet withdrawal of forces from Eastern Europe.³⁷

Kennan lobbied against American military aid for Europe, feeling that this would only make the Atlantic alliance so dependent on thinking in terms of the military balance of power that it would be inflexible in its ability to negotiate with the Soviets.³⁸ He also opposed any extension of the nuclear arms race, wanting to adopt a "no first use" policy for atomic bombs, even in the event of a war initiated by the Soviet Union.³⁹ Nuclear attacks on the USSR would, said Kennan, "stiffen the courage and will to resist of the Russian people."⁴⁰

Most critically, for this dissertation, Kennan did not favour an arms build-up, preferring economic and political policies, such as the Marshall Plan. Kennan felt that American resources were too limited, and he did "not believe in the reality of a Soviet military threat to western Europe".⁴¹ He told his co-workers that "the best evidence available to us indicates that the Russians are not planning to start a war", being "too preoccupied with Tito and the Far East" to do so.⁴²

³⁷.*ibid.*; Gaddis, *Strategies*, chapter 3; Kennan's believing that a united, demilitarised Germany was possible represented a change from what he thought in 1944-46. Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, p. 75

³⁸.Kaplan, *Enduring Alliance*, p. 34

³⁹.Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 488

⁴⁰.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 148th Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Tuesday, October 11, 1949, pp. 399-403

⁴¹George Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), p. 464

⁴².FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 148th Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Tuesday, October 11, 1949, pp. 399-403

Kennan believed that Soviet military capabilities were being greatly exaggerated by American officials, and said that "basic Russian intent still runs to the conquest of western Europe by political means. In this program, military force plays a major role only as a means of intimidation".⁴³ Two Marine divisions, he said, would be sufficient to support the military needs of containment.⁴⁴

During a meeting with Department of Defense planners in the summer of 1949, Kennan declared that the military requirements of American foreign policy could be met under the current budget ceiling (\$13.5 billion annually), if the money was directed towards small, mobile, well-trained and highly mechanised task forces.⁴⁵ These forces would be designed for the localised conflicts of limited scale that might prove necessary in upholding the policy of containment.⁴⁶ Kennan's views ran counter to the DoD policy, made in light of the budget ceilings, of not even planning for small conflicts. The Pentagon was devoting whatever it had towards the possibility of a major war. Kennan told his counterparts at Defense that a total war with the USSR was too remote a possibility to be taken seriously, and might not be winnable if it did occur. It was virtually impossible for anyone to occupy the Soviet Union, according to Kennan. He also

⁴³.quoted in Combs, "Compromise"

⁴⁴Nitze, "NSC 68", p. 171

⁴⁵.Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 287

⁴⁶.ibid., p. 287

expressed doubts as to efficacy of Strategic Air Command's plans for nuclear bombardment.⁴⁷

Kennan lobbied against a large military establishment in PPS meetings as well. Opposing the strategic bombing faction in one meeting, he mentioned, as an alternative, what he considered to be the French view of European security: having the ability to stop a Soviet advance at either the Elbe or the Rhine, and then tying the Soviet Army down in fighting at that front until Soviet weaknesses were exposed and a settlement was reached.⁴⁸ He added that "we should not even contemplate trying to occupy all of Russia and Siberia".⁴⁹ He seems to have believed that the French version of security could be met without an increase in military spending.

Kennan's mentioning of the French plan may have reflected his belief that war was unlikely as much as it reflected belief in the plan's viability. Kennan seems to have felt that any argument against military spending, conventional or nuclear, was useful, considering the unlikelihood of war. He was convinced that the balance of power was stable.⁵⁰ Where Acheson saw a dangerous Soviet threat, Kennan

⁴⁷.*ibid.*, p. 287

⁴⁸.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 171st Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Friday, December 16 1949, pp. 413-416

⁴⁹.*ibid.*

⁵⁰John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, and Provocations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 29

felt that "both sides have somewhat over-extended lines and are attempting to consolidate their positions".⁵¹ The American atomic weapon was a "superfluous deterrent".⁵²

Kennan challenged Acheson's premises directly. When, at an October 1949 meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Acheson suggested that "unless we face up to what we want, decide how to get it, and take the necessary action, the whole structure of the Western World could fall apart in 1952", Kennan struck back, claiming that "the Western World need not necessarily collapse simply because we stopped financing it . . . perhaps the main strain might be felt in this country unless we can decide how we can swallow our own surpluses."⁵³

Acheson did not take such criticism lightly. In response to some of Kennan's pleas for a less militaristic policy, Acheson snapped, "If that is your view, you ought to resign from the Foreign Service and preach your Quaker gospel, but don't do it within the department."⁵⁴ In response to Kennan's broaching of the French plan, Acheson ridiculed it with the remark that "if the Red Army got started [the American

⁵¹.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 148th Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Tuesday, October 11, 1949, pp. 399-403

⁵².FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 171st Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Friday, December 16, 1949, pp. 413-416

⁵³.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 148th Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Tuesday, October 11, 1949, pp. 399-403

⁵⁴.quoted in Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 489

military] would not be able to stop it, even with the bomb".⁵⁵ His distrust of Kennan seems to have continued even after leaving government office. One historian quotes Acheson as referring to Kennan years later as "a footnote of the Truman Presidency".⁵⁶ Most significantly, Acheson gradually began to remove Kennan from policy-making circles. From September 1949 onwards, the PPS no longer reported directly to the Secretary, but how to go through the operational division chief.⁵⁷

Despite his confidence in challenging the Secretary of State's views, Kennan does not seem to have engaged in any significant effort to construct a consensus on the inadvisability of an arms build-up. His challenges to Acheson were those of a lone dissenter. There is little record of co-operation between Kennan and the other major bureaucratic opponent of the arms build-up, Louis Johnson, no hint of an effort to smooth over differences over atomic policy with Johnson in order to forge an alliance against the proposed conventional arms build-up. Kennan did not possess the ear of Truman, nor of the JCS. When Kennan criticised a National Security Council draft report on US security objectives, even Charles Bohlen, his long-time associate at

⁵⁵.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 171st Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Friday, December 16, 1949, pp. 413-416

⁵⁶Douglas Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-71*, p. 92

⁵⁷.Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 71

the Moscow Embassy, disparaged Kennan's overly rosy view on security affairs, claiming that

We are not now in the military phase of our relations with the Russians. But we must look ahead. Certain things must be done now in terms of a long-range projection . . . if in 1953 we should find the Russian war wounds are healed, her industry re-established, her military on a firm footing and in possession of the atom bomb, we might be in a position to say: `What should we have done in 1949?'⁵⁸

By late 1949, Kennan had lost any control over his own Policy Planning Staff. Minutes of the meetings increasingly show Kennan debating several people at once, including Acheson.⁵⁹ He spent increasing amounts of time alone, holed up in a small office in the Library of Congress, working on a lengthy paper for his futile effort to convince the administration of a no first-use policy.⁶⁰ He was paid less and less attention. Kennan offered to change jobs, and Acheson consented. Effective 31 December 1949, Kennan resigned from his position at PPS, becoming a "Counselor of the Department". Theoretically, this was not a demotion, but it took Kennan further away from the day to day affairs of the department. His replacement as director of PPS was his underling, the former investment banker

⁵⁸.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Record of the Under Secretary's Meeting, Department of State, April 15, 1949, pp. 283-284

⁵⁹.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 148th Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Tuesday, October 11, 1949, pp. 399-403; Minutes of the 171st Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Friday, December 16, 1949, pp. 413-416

⁶⁰.Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, Thomas and Isaacson, *Wise Men*

Paul Nitze, a fervent believer in the necessity of an American arms build-up.

3.3 The Soviet Atomic Bomb and the American Hydrogen Bomb

The Truman administration and the leadership of the armed forces had assumed since 1945 that the Soviets were trying to build their own atomic weapon. The military had even created the Long Range Detection Program (LRDP), in which specially equipped aircraft would look for clues of a Soviet atomic explosion.⁶¹ However, the President continually underestimated Soviet capabilities in atomic research, and in the Soviet ability to spy on the American atomic establishment. Soon after the war, Truman had the following conversation with J. Robert Oppenheimer, the chief physicist of the Manhattan Project:

Truman: "When will the Russians be able to build the bomb?"

Oppenheimer: "I don't know."

Truman: "I know."

Oppenheimer: "When?"

Truman : "Never."⁶²

⁶¹.Christopher Andrew, *President's Eyes*, p. 177

⁶².quoted in Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 241

Truman wilfully ignored the information coming in which suggested that the Soviets could succeed quickly. The physicist Niels Bohr, who had worked in the Manhattan Project and who had been approached by Soviet scientists attempting to recruit him, told the American government in January 1948 that Stalin would have the bomb within sixteen or eighteen months.⁶³ However, as late as July 1949, Truman chose to rely on General Leslie Groves's prediction that the monopoly would last another decade rather than believe a report produced by experts at the Atomic Energy Commission, the Pentagon, and the CIA predicting that the Soviets would achieve fission by mid-1950.⁶⁴

He was wrong to do so. On 3 September 1949, a US Air Force B-29 flying over the North Pacific near Alaska on LRDP duty detected high levels of radiation in atmospheric samples. Further flights were made. The results were the same, and the Air Force forwarded its conclusion to Washington: the Soviets had exploded an atomic device similar in composition to the one the Americans had detonated at Alamogordo.⁶⁵

⁶³.FRUS, 1948, Volume 1, part 2, p. 508, Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Edmund A. Gullion, Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State, January 27, 1948

⁶⁴Gregg Herken, *Cardinal Choices: Presidential Science Advising from the Atomic Bomb to SDI*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 38 There was wide variation in the numerous American predictions made on Soviet atomic capabilities. for one of the worst, see CIA Intelligence Memorandum 225, 20 Sep 1949, predicting that the Soviets could not achieve fission before mid-1950. Michael Warner, editor, *CIA Cold War Records: The CIA Under Harry Truman*, (Washington: CIA, 1994)

⁶⁵.Richelson, *Spies*, p. 222

The Soviet atomic program, the details of which would remain largely unknown until the collapse of the USSR, had been started in the 1930's. After it had languished for some years, Stalin had ordered an all-out development program on the day after Hiroshima. In charge of the program was Laventri Beria. The program had been aided by the use of vast amounts of resources, by Communist sympathisers in the Anglo-American atomic establishment who gave the Soviets classified information, usually for ideological motives, and by the existence of a brilliant core of experts in theoretical physics, led by Yuri Khariton. The men were under such pressure that one of them would later claim they would have been shot for failure.⁶⁶ Even Beria found that Stalin was spying on him.⁶⁷ By the middle of 1949 Stalin's physicists had told him that they were ready to produce either a copy of the American bomb or their own atomic bomb. Stalin, always the cautious and prudent man, was more concerned with having a bomb that worked than making original advances in nuclear physics, and ordered the imitation bomb to be used. It was exploded on the morning of 29 August 1949, near the town of Semipalatinsk, in Kazakhstan.⁶⁸ This site, in the Ust Urt desert, would become one of the Soviets' favourite testing sites.

⁶⁶.Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 366

⁶⁷.*ibid.*, p. 367

⁶⁸.*ibid.*, p. 364

The Truman administration admitted its findings to the public on 23 September. The reality that the nation's rival possessed a weapon of mass destruction slowly sank into a demoralised public. On 6 November 1949, the thirty-second anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, official speeches in Moscow indicated what American officials understood to be a new Soviet assertiveness in international affairs.⁶⁹ A new stage in the Cold War had been reached.

What, if anything, was the US to do about the Soviet bomb? Truman himself seems to have been slow to rush into any hasty action. As late as March 1952, he would write in his diary, inaccurately, that the Soviet bomb might be a "phoney".⁷⁰ But he could not be certain of anything, and he was in the midst of a tense Cold War. Virtually everyone around him assumed (accurately) that the Soviet bomb was genuine, and Truman found himself at the centre of a debate on whether and how to respond to the Soviet weapon.

The State Department Estimates Group, in the Office of Intelligence Research, suggested that the American government should not radically alter its policies.⁷¹ The American Ambassador in Moscow, Alan Kirk, essentially agreed, feeling that the only change in Soviet

⁶⁹.Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 290

⁷⁰.Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 525

⁷¹.Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*

policy resulting from the bomb would be a new propaganda push.⁷² Similarly, Louis Johnson had told reporters after the announcement of the Soviet atomic explosion "I warn you, don't overplay this."⁷³

Others saw the new strategic environment as demanding new vision. Kennan, who did not believe in the practicability of nuclear weapons, wanted a new initiative to internationalise atomic energy under the auspices of the United Nations, and hoped for negotiations to reduce conventional forces in Europe. He also conducted a series of briefings in October 1949 that investigated the strengths and weaknesses of an American declaration opposing the first use of nuclear weapons in any conflict.⁷⁴ Despite the possibility that the Soviets might now bomb London or other European cities in the event of a war, the threat of first use was still the backbone of American defence policy in Europe, and its questioning was a matter of serious discussion. The attendees at an October 1949 meeting of the General Advisory Committee of the AEC, including Generals Bradley, Norstad, and Hull, among others, were unable to definitely favour a first use policy in the event of a war in Europe,⁷⁵ although they did not favour a public statement against American first use either.⁷⁶

⁷².FRUS, 1949, Volume 5, page 658, Telegram from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State (Acheson), September 29, 1949

⁷³as quoted in Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Beginning of the Atomic Age*, (New York: Pantheon, 1985), p. 337

⁷⁴.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 148th Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Tuesday, October 11, 1949, pp. 399-403

⁷⁵.David Lilienthal, *The Journals of David Lilienthal; Volume II: The Atomic Energy Years, 1945-1950*, (New York:

A Special Committee of the National Security Council recommended that the nation respond to the Soviet bomb with an increase in America's quantitative nuclear edge, proposing an increase in the current rate of production, which was 4 atomic bombs per week⁷⁷ (the total number of atomic bombs was 250 in 1949).⁷⁸ The Committee, consisting of Johnson, Acheson, and Lilienthal, cited, in their report, the recommendations of the JCS. The Joint Chiefs asserted that improvements in the plutonium separation process, in waste recovery, and in the use of U-235 would make increased production feasible, and that a quick decision would be helpful, given the three to four year lead times from conception to realisation in the production of atomic weapons.⁷⁹ There were military benefits to more A-bombs, claimed the JCS, such as "lower unit costs of weapons, probable shortening of war, increased military effectiveness, decreased logistical and manpower requirements for the prosecution of certain tasks in war, and increased flexibility in the conduct of the

Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 580-581

⁷⁶.In retrospect, this meeting was a partial step away from the overwhelming reliance on strategic bombing that characterised American security policy in the immediate post-Hiroshima era. It suggested that the path ahead might lie in a twin commitment towards conventional and nuclear deterrence, in which the US would not abandon the principle of first use, but would attempt to construct another alternative. This was what American policy would be for several decades, but no one at the time could be certain of such an outcome.

⁷⁷.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, "Report to the President by the Special Committee of the National Security Council on the Proposed Acceleration of the Atomic Energy Program", p. 562

⁷⁸.Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 78

⁷⁹.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, B File - Development of Atomic Weapons, box 1, folder 2, Report to the President by the Special Committee of the National Security Council on the Proposed Acceleration of the Atomic Energy Program, October 10 1949

war.⁸⁰ They also cited political factors, such as "continued international tension, springing from the continuing refusal of the Soviet Union to become a co-operating member of the world community", "the growing United States commitments on a world-wide scale", "the growing realisation of the necessity to defend Western Europe in the event of Soviet aggression", and "the military prostration of our Western European allies" as reasons for increases in atomic production.⁸¹ The Committee also relied on AEC reports as to the economic feasibility of an increase in bombs, and on State Department conclusions regarding the positive impact of the nuclear deterrent.⁸²

Others wanted to increase America's qualitative edge, by developing hydrogen weapons. The physicists Ernest Lawrence, Luis Alvarez, and Isador Rabi were particularly forceful in advocating this.⁸³

Acheson and Nitze either did not agree with these views or saw them as missing the critical need, which was a conventional arms build-up. Whereas the Estimates Group had specifically noted that the Americans could draw strength from their quantitative lead in atomic production, Acheson and Nitze prophesied that this edge

⁸⁰.ibid.

⁸¹.ibid.

⁸².ibid.

⁸³.Lilienthal, *Atomic Energy Years*, p. 577, 10 October 1949, 29 October 1949, pp. 580-81

would be hard to maintain as the Soviets shifted into large-scale atomic production. American estimates in early 1950 assumed that the Soviets would have 10-20 atomic bombs by mid-year and, quite possibly, 100 by 1953.⁸⁴ They felt that the qualitative edge would be even more difficult to keep. Although American scientific research was considered sound, technological progress tends to occur in unplanned jumps, not smooth rises. It was impossible to predict which side would lead in developing new technologies. (This would be proven by events. The Soviets would construct a usable hydrogen bomb and test it on 12 August 1953, whereas by 1955 the United States still had not downsized their own fusion device, first successfully tested on 1 November 1952, into a weapon capable of being carried by a bomber).⁸⁵

Acheson and Nitze partially agreed with Kennan's arguments against the usefulness of atomic weapons in international affairs, but drew different conclusions. The appropriate response to the nullification of America's nuclear deterrent was not negotiation, but rearmament.

⁸⁴A Joint Chiefs of Staff study submitted to the National Security Council on 1 February 1950 estimated the Soviets would possess 10-20 atomic bombs by the middle of that year and 70-135 by mid 1953. The Central Intelligence Agency completed a report on 10 February 1950 concluding that the Soviets would have 100 atomic bombs by 1953 and 200 by the end of 1955. The CIA report also included the prediction that 200 atomic weapons delivered on proscribed targets "might prove decisive in knocking the United States out of the war", although it did not predict that the Soviets would feel that their superiority was great enough to do so until 1956-57. Samuel Wells, "Sounding the Tocsin: NSC 68 and the Soviet Threat" *International Security* (Fall 1979)

⁸⁵Soviet bomb: Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 306, American bomb: Paul Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1989), p. 92

At one PPS meeting, Kennan, desiring a unilateral American declaration not to use atomic weapons first, had told the other members of staff that in light of the Soviet nuclear weapon "it may now be impossible for us to retaliate with the atomic bomb against a Russian attack with orthodox weapons."⁸⁶ Nitze responded that the Soviet atomic weapon "might make conventional armaments, and their possession by the Western European nations, as well as by ourselves, all the more important."⁸⁷ Nitze worried that the Soviets might use satellite armies to achieve their aims,⁸⁸ in what he would later term "piecemeal aggression against others, counting on our unwillingness to engage in atomic war unless we are directly attacked".⁸⁹

Conventional forces were more suitable for such campaigns, since nuclear weapons were difficult to use in measured quantities as a means of intimidation. The situations of strength argument that was the backbone of Acheson's diplomacy was dependent upon combat-ready conventional forces deployed globally, so that force, or the threat of force, could be used in local conflicts.

⁸⁶.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 148th Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Tuesday, October 11, 1949, pp. 399-403

⁸⁷.ibid.

⁸⁸.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Minutes of the 171st Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, Friday, September 16, 1949, pp. 413-416

⁸⁹.NARA, record group 273, NSC-68, April 11, 1950

Backing up the Acheson-Nitze viewpoint were the reports that had been ordered by Secretary of Defense Forrestal in the wake of the inter-service public disputes of 1948. These were completed at about the time of the Soviet bomb, and they cast doubt on the effectiveness of Air Force strategic bombing claims. The Harmon report, completed 28 July 1949, stated that nuclear strikes would destroy only 30 to 40 percent of Soviet industrial capacity,⁹⁰ which "would not force the surrender of the Soviet Union."⁹¹ No matter how atomic weapons were used, whether on rail lines, oil refineries, or other targets, they would fail to

per se, bring about capitulation, destroy the roots of Communism, or critically weaken the power of Soviet leadership to dominate the people . . . for the majority of the Soviet people, atomic bombing would validate Soviet propaganda against foreign powers, stimulate resentment against the United States, unify the people, and increase their will to fight . . . the capability of the Soviet armed forces to advance rapidly into selected areas of Western Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East would not be seriously impaired.⁹²

One Navy analyst pointed out that the allies had dropped the equivalent of 500 atomic bombs on Germany during the Second World War, without destroying its war-making capacity.⁹³ Using

⁹⁰*The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, edited by Louis Galambos, p. 569, footnote #2

⁹¹.quoted in Combs, "Compromise"

⁹².the Harmon Report, quoted in David Alan Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision", *Journal of American History* (June 1979)

⁹³.Combs, "Compromise"

different means of comparison, the historian David Holloway has noted that the Soviet Union suffered more casualties and physical destruction in the first four months after the 1941 Nazi invasion than all 200 nuclear weapons in the 1949 American arsenal could have achieved, and had still managed to win that war.⁹⁴ The Hull report, written by the Department of Defense's Weapon Systems Evaluation Group, chaired by Army General John Hull, stated in its 23 January 1950 report that so many American bombers would be destroyed in the initial attack, which would destroy only 35 to 60 percent of the intended targets, that a second strike would not be possible.⁹⁵

The armaments faction, led by Acheson and Nitze, began constructing an informal case for an American conventional arms build-up. They cited the shift in the balance of conventional military power against the US, and the changes in military doctrine brought about by the Soviet bomb. General Omar Bradley, the Chairman of the JCS, told Congress in October 1949 that Soviet possession of the atomic bomb made any operation similar to the Normandy landings of 1944 impossible,⁹⁶ hinting that Europe would be lost unless the Soviet steamroller was stopped as it tried to roll to the Atlantic. He did not think that was likely. With the Soviets having established their bases of supply well to the east of the Pripet Marshes, he told

⁹⁴Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 240

⁹⁵*The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, p. 569

⁹⁶*The New York Times*, October 16 1949

Atomic Energy Commission(AEC) Chairman David Lilienthal, they could mount a deadly powerful offensive, and the only thing protecting Europe was the small stockpile of atomic bombs.⁹⁷

Although the Soviets did not yet have bombers capable of flying to North America and back, the Truman administration could not be sure as to how far in the future that outcome would occur. The possible destruction of the North American industrial centres would de-emphasise the role of production potential in winning a war, while increasing the need for powerful forces deployed by the start of a conflict.⁹⁸ There was also the need for more troops to maintain order in the aftermath of a nuclear strike upon the United States.⁹⁹

But the case for an arms build-up was not successfully argued in 1949. Truman's budgetary concerns and general unwillingness to seriously rethink an already accepted doctrine (one that represented traditional American policy) caused him to adhere to his fiscal limits for the armed forces. He may have been strengthened in his belief by the deficiencies in Soviet delivery capacities, and by institutional inertia. The first US defence budget formulated after the discovery of the Soviet bomb does not indicate a high degree of change in military doctrine. War plans were still based on the assumption that the US would bomb the USSR with nuclear weapons at the start of a war,

⁹⁷.Lilienthal, *Atomic Energy Years*, December 31 1949, pp. 616-617

⁹⁸Trachtenberg, "Wasting Asset", p.109

⁹⁹Friedberg, "Garrison"

and, in co-operation with European allies, fight a delaying action against Soviet thrusts westward until reinforcements could be created and sent from North America. Fighting a "broken backed war", one in which a nation fought on even after the introduction of nuclear weapons left one or both sides with wrecked domestic infrastructures, was an assumption incorporated into military doctrine.¹⁰⁰

There were, however, at least two direct effects of the discovery of the Soviet atomic bomb. The first was a boom in research into a hydrogen bomb. The second was a review of America's global strategy in light of recent events.

Research into more destructive types of atomic weapons was already underway. Serious investigation of a boosted fission bomb had occurred since 1948. Such a bomb would use a thermonuclear fission reaction to enhance the power of the main fission reaction.¹⁰¹ Even more spectacular, however, was the concept of a fusion bomb, which would use a thermonuclear reaction to attempt to fuse hydrogen atoms.

The fusion of hydrogen atoms creates 25 to 1,000 times more energy than the fission of uranium atoms, so that in terms of explosive power a very large hydrogen bomb might be just as great an exponential leap in killing power over the atomic bomb as the atomic bomb was

¹⁰⁰ibid.

¹⁰¹Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 299

over mass raids with conventional explosives. To achieve fusion, it was necessary to use fission bombs just to reach the required temperature. Whereas the fission bomb dropped at Hiroshima had destroyed the centre of the city but had left the suburbs virtually intact, a hydrogen bomb could create a four-mile wide fireball and a lethal fallout zone more than 10 miles in radius.

The idea had been on the drawing boards of some scientists since at least 1932,¹⁰² and had even been researched at Los Alamos during the Second World War. But in 1946, it had been decided to discontinue further practical development of the fusion weapon.¹⁰³ Work continued, under the supervision of the physicist Edward Teller, on only a theoretical level. Sidney Souers, the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, left an October 1949 meeting with the President under the impression that Truman was completely oblivious to the H-bomb.¹⁰⁴ But there were new calls to develop the weapon in the wake of the Soviet success in developing a fission device.

Opinion was very much divided. Some of the leading atomic physicists vocally opposed the H-bomb, as they had been doing since at least 1945. The General Advisory Committee of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), a panel including the physicists Enrico Fermi and

¹⁰²Herken, *Cardinal Choices*, p. 35

¹⁰³Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 290

¹⁰⁴Herken, *Cardinal Choices*, p. 37

Robert Oppenheimer, declared on 30 October 1949 that the construction of a hydrogen weapon was morally reprehensible and should not be undertaken.¹⁰⁵ They also warned that a program to develop the fusion bomb would divert men and resources from the fission program, slowing the manufacture of those weapons.¹⁰⁶ Instead of mass destruction bombs, the Committee wrote, the US should work to create small fission devices for use as tactical weapons.¹⁰⁷ The AEC agreed with the findings, and passed them on to the administration.¹⁰⁸

Kennan, in his last days at the PPS, totally opposed, on moral grounds, any further development of weapons which, in all likelihood, would be used for mass destruction of civilians. David Lilienthal, the head of the AEC, also felt humanitarian concerns ruled out such a weapon, and he recommended on 9 November 1949 that no attempt be made to develop a hydrogen weapon.

Johnson was already a supporter of atomic weapons on the basis of their relatively low cost compared to the maintenance of conventional forces, and favoured fusion development. As a member of the NSC subcommittee concerned with the question, Johnson approved a

¹⁰⁵.Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 73

¹⁰⁶.Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 290

¹⁰⁷.Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 68

¹⁰⁸.Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 291

recommendation to build the H-bomb.¹⁰⁹ The only way that he would revise this decision, he claimed, was if, implausibly, the Soviets agreed to the American plan for the international control of atomic energy.¹¹⁰

Nitze argued forcefully for the bomb, especially to Acheson. Neither Acheson or Nitze, however, wanted any atomic weapon to be seen as a substitute for large deployed armies.

In November of 1949, Truman appointed Acheson, Johnson, and Lilienthal to investigate the desirability of development of the H-bomb.¹¹¹ Lilienthal argued against fusion bomb development in meetings with the other two members, in part because he thought that neither the State nor Defense Departments had thought through the implications of nuclear weapons for world politics.¹¹² He wanted a top-to-bottom review of America's national security policies before making a decision on the bomb.¹¹³ Acheson also wanted a review, in order to illuminate his desire for an arms build-up. Although the National Security Council had already authorised a wide-ranging review on January 5,¹¹⁴ Acheson decided to take advantage of

¹⁰⁹.*ibid.*, p. 293

¹¹⁰.Lilienthal, *Atomic Energy Years*, December 25 1949

¹¹¹Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 309

¹¹².Lilienthal, *Atomic Energy Years*, December 25 1949, pp. 613-614

¹¹³.*ibid.*, January 26 1950, p. 620; Paul Hammond, "NSC-68"

¹¹⁴.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 207, Minutes of the 51st Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, January 5, 1950

Johnson's desire to gain Acheson's formal approval of an enlarged hydrogen bomb program. According to Nitze's memoirs, Acheson held up his approval for the hydrogen bomb project until he received permission from Johnson to conduct Lilienthal's suggested review.¹¹⁵ This would make it more difficult for Johnson to oppose the review's conclusions when they were unveiled.

It is unclear if Lilienthal or Johnson realised that Acheson would use the review to recommend a massive increase in the size of the military. Either way, Lilienthal, now being the minority on the committee on the H-bomb issue, knew that he could do little to prevent the building of the fusion weapon. He discussed the matter with Acheson, and decided to sign a directive to build a fusion weapon, in return for an agreement to hold the review.¹¹⁶ A letter, written by the State Department, ordering the State and Defense Departments to make an overall assessment of American foreign and defence policy in light of the loss of China, the Soviet mastery of atomic energy, and the prospect of a fusion bomb, was appended to the H-bomb directive.¹¹⁷ The State Department intentionally gave authority to only two departments, hoping, or perhaps already

¹¹⁵Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 91. Later, Johnson would claim that he had not been informed of the writing of the review, and that the whole exercise had been a conspiracy made behind his back by Nitze and General Truman Landon, who was the liaison between the team writing the review and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

¹¹⁶discussion with Acheson: Lilienthal, *Atomic Energy Years*, January 26 1950, p. 620; writing of the directive: Hammond, "NSC-68"

¹¹⁷.Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 292

knowing through back-channel contacts, that they could convince those denied suitable funding at the Pentagon to cooperate in recommending increases in the military budget. State Department officials did not want to include representatives of other departments, who might not share their pro-arms build-up sympathies.¹¹⁸

Meanwhile, pressure was mounting on the administration for a decision. The existence of a private debate in the administration about the hydrogen bomb had become public knowledge during January, with the journalists Drew Pearson and Edward R. Murrow mentioning it on their radio shows, the New York Times printing a front-page story on the issue, and former Presidential advisor Bernard Baruch urging fusion development.¹¹⁹ Public sentiment was behind the thermonuclear bomb, and, as the historian Alonzo Hamby has put it, "No elected politician of any significance was prepared to go to the barricades to defend a negative decision [on the hydrogen bomb issue]".¹²⁰ Pollsters found that the public favoured the development of the hydrogen bomb by a four-to-one margin.¹²¹ Truman was personally the subject of much lobbying, with recommendations from the JCS, the head of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Senator

¹¹⁸.ibid., p. 303

¹¹⁹.Pearson and *The New York Times*: Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 84; Murrow and Baruch: Lilienthal, *Atomic Energy Years*, January 28 & 29 1950

¹²⁰.Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 526

¹²¹Gallup, *The Gallup Poll*, p. 888

Brien MacMahon (Democrat from Connecticut), and others.¹²² He may have made up his mind sometime in the third or fourth week of January.¹²³

On 31 January 1950, the day that the H-bomb directive and attached authorisation of a review were submitted, the three committee members went to see Truman. Lilienthal began to explain the committee's findings, and to express his personal reservations about fusion weapons. There was little need. Truman, cutting off Lilienthal in mid-argument, asked if the Soviets might be working on such a bomb (which they had been doing since 1948,¹²⁴ without American knowledge). Once Truman was informed that American intelligence was not sure and that the Soviets just might be building a hydrogen weapon, he immediately ordered the development of the H-bomb,¹²⁵ and publicly announced his decision later in the day.¹²⁶

¹²²Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 84

¹²³Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 155, claims that Truman had made up his mind at least 10 days before the meeting

¹²⁴Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 299

¹²⁵Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 91

¹²⁶Statement by the President on the Hydrogen Bomb, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, p. 138

3.3 The Writing of NSC-68

Acheson and Johnson differed in their approach to producing the top-to-bottom review, authorised by the H-Bomb agreement. As we have seen, Acheson had helped orchestrate the decision for the review, hoping to use the review-writing exercise to argue the case for increased spending on conventional forces. Specifically, he wanted to build a broad coalition for military expansion in the bureaucracy and the White House, before launching a campaign in Congress and the press to gain the necessary funds.¹²⁷ He delegated his role to Nitze, who, with Kennan no longer on the Policy Planning Staff, and unable to interfere, willingly worked to implement the Secretary's ideas, and met with Acheson daily during the drafting of the review to keep him apprised of its status.¹²⁸ Johnson seems not to have felt that the exercise would be remembered as one of the most critical points of his tenure, judging by his decision to delegate Defense's role to Major General (retired) James Burns (assistant to the SecDef for Foreign Military Affairs), and then to not keep himself advised of its progress.

Burns consulted the JCS, who declined to participate, but the JCS did assign part of their staff, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC), to the exercise. With Burns's consent, Major General Truman

¹²⁷.Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 499 Although the team at first planned on making large parts of their report public, and therefore referred to the project as Operation CANDOR, Acheson decided during its creation that it would be more useful to write it as a top-secret internal memorandum.

¹²⁸.Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 94

Landon, the Air Force member of JSSC, took charge of the Defense portion of the project. Once Burns, who worked directly for Johnson, took himself out of authority, no one was officially speaking on behalf of the Secretary of Defense. Since it was long-standing policy of the Chiefs that no one, not even their staff, formally spoke for them, the Defense team was liberated from having to follow official policy and could challenge Johnson's assumptions if it chose.¹²⁹ It is quite possible that the Chiefs, in contact with allies at State, had planned all along to use the review-writing exercise to attack Johnson, and had orchestrated the delegation of the task to a nominally independent body. The Chiefs, whose approval of the review would be necessary if it was to be held in any esteem by the civilian leadership of the Truman administration, were kept apprised of the document's nature on a regular basis during its drafting,¹³⁰ and must have approved, and perhaps even influenced, the decision by Landon and his staff to argue the case for increased funding, which was unsurprising given that they were personally opposed to Johnson and politically opposed to his budgets.

Once delegated, the members of State and Defense organized what they termed the State-Defense Policy Review Group. Nitze and Landon played critical roles.¹³¹ The group would meet numerous

¹²⁹Hammond, "NSC-68"

¹³⁰ibid.

¹³¹Judging by those meetings whose minutes are in FRUS, 21 men participated in the exercise. From NSC:

times before submitting its report in April, and create several drafts in the process.¹³²

At the initial meetings of the drafting team, Landon's group from the Defense Department submitted a potential draft that was based on existing appraisals of American military capabilities. These were optimistic in their portrayal of American power, relative to the estimates from the State Department.¹³³ However, Landon seemed to State Department officers to have little faith in his own paper,¹³⁴ which might have been the result of pressure from Johnson, who could only cut budgets if he could maintain the perception that the US was not falling behind the Soviets in military power. The State Department members of the groups, who viewed the exercise as a means to advocate an arms build-up, were unwilling to accept anything that might indicate that such a build-up was unnecessary. At first Landon

James Lay, Jr. (Exec. Sec. of NSC) and S. Everett Gleason (Dep. Exec. Sec. of NSC) From PPS: Paul Nitze, George Butler, Carlton Savage, Harry Schwartz, Robert Tufts, and R. Gordon Arneson. Other State participants: Adrian Fisher (Legal Advisor) and Joseph Chase (Staff Member, Office of the Undersec. of State) From Defense: Burns, Landon, Najeeb E. Hallaby (Director, Office of Foreign Military Affairs), Robert LeBaron (Adviser to Sec. Def. on Atomic Energy), and Lt. Colonel William Burke. As consultants, six men were brought in for one meeting each: the physicists J. Robert Oppenheimer and Ernst Lawrence, AEC member Henry Smyth, Chester Barnard (former consultant to the State Dept.'s Committee on Atomic Energy), James Conant (former head of the Manhattan Project), and Robert Lovett (former Asst. Sec. of War and former Undersec. of State). Only three of these men, Nitze, Arneson, and Landon, attended all the meetings. FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, Records of Meetings of the State-Defense Policy Review Group, February 27, March 2, March 10, March 16, and March 20 1950

¹³²It seems possible that the draft that Nitze asked John Paton Davies, of the PPS, to write on February 2, concerning the probability of war with the USSR, made a substantial contribution. FRUS, 1950, Vol. 1, Record of the Eighth Meeting (1950) of the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State, February 2 1950, pp. 142-143 Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 94, credits Davies and Robert Hooker, as well as Tufts, all from PPS, with helping write NSC-68.

¹³³Hammond, "NSC-68", p. 299

¹³⁴ibid., p. 299

would not consider writing any document that recommended an increase of more than \$5 billion per annum,¹³⁵ but upon consideration, and consultation with the Chiefs, Landon's team consented to the State Department's plan for writing a document that advocated a reversal of Johnson's cost-cutting measures.

The result was a sixty-seven page essay preaching the virtues, for the United States, of gaining conventional military superiority over the Soviet Union. It was officially titled "A Report to the President Pursuant to the President's Directive of January 31, 1950", until Truman authorised its approval by the NSC, when it was renamed National Security Council Paper 68 (NSC-68).

NSC-68 barely mentioned or ignored entirely certain subjects one would expect to be covered in a review of national defence, such as logistics, training, troop morale, and tactics, because these topics were not necessary to the cause. The only relevant information for the team were observations or measurements which showed the Soviet Union to be expansionist, unstable, and better armed than the United States. The intention, Acheson later wrote, was "to so bludgeon the mass mind of 'top government' that not only could the President make a decision but that the decision could be carried out". To do so meant using forceful prose: "The task of a public officer seeking to explain and gain support for a major policy is not that of the writer of a

¹³⁵.Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 94

doctoral thesis. Qualification must give way to simplicity of statement, nicety and nuance to bluntness, almost brutality, in carrying home a point."¹³⁶ Nitze's instructions to his writing team were to "hit it hard".¹³⁷

What resulted was a forceful and thorough argument, marked by anti-Communist vitriol, using the strongest possible language. It was, at times, self righteous (the United States was a "free society founded on the dignity of the individual" whereas the Soviet Union was a "slave" state), occasionally prone to philosophical pretensions ("Soviet ideas and practices run counter to potentially the best and the strongest instincts of men, and deny their most fundamental aspirations"), and alarmist throughout ("the issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfilment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself"). It was considered necessary to exaggerate justifiable concerns many American officials had over the existence of an assertive, powerful, and nuclear armed, government in Moscow, in order to make the report effective.¹³⁸

Nitze's team wanted to gain agreements on seemingly common sense assumptions before postulating their potentially radical

¹³⁶.Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 374-75

¹³⁷.quoted in Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 497

¹³⁸.Nitze would later defend the language used in a 1975 interview by explaining that "Today, I think you would write that question about the freedom of the individual, and the freedom of states to develop as they want, somewhat differently. . .One goes back to the period of '49-'50. This was really a passionate belief on the part of those of us who were working on this statement, on the part of Mr. Truman. I think there's less of that today." HSTL, Oral History #454 (Paul Nitze), volume 2, page 253

conclusion. The basic assumptions involved judgements as to the ease with which the present prominent position of the United States in world politics could evaporate, the intentions of the Soviet leadership, and the existence of a preponderance of Soviet conventional power. The conclusion was that an arms build-up of massive proportions was necessary.

The first of the nine sections, explaining the background of the "present world crisis", was designed to show that American power could not be taken for granted, that the nature of international politics dictated that swift shifts in status could occur abruptly. NSC-68 stated:

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.¹³⁹

Sections two through four were designed to show that the two major states to have come out of the previous war in a position of enhanced strength had antithetical visions of society. The fundamental purpose of the US government was "to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the

¹³⁹.NARA, record group 273, NSC-68, April 14, 1950

dignity and worth of the individual". On the other hand, the Soviet government sought

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.¹⁴⁰

The "conflict in the realm of ideas and values" between the two powers would make a peaceful settlement of major international issues unlikely.

Sections five, six, seven, and eight compared the political intentions and military capabilities of the US and the USSR. Repeating the theme of Soviet aggressiveness, NSC-68 found the Kremlin's aim in world politics to be "the elimination of resistance to its will and the extension of its influence and control" to those areas currently under non-Communist government. Not wishing to split hairs in ascertaining the precise reasons for this policy, NSC-68 simply ascribed a combination of three possible motivating factors.

[The Kremlin] is inescapably militant because it possesses and is possessed by a world-wide revolutionary movement, because it is the inheritor of Russian imperialism and because it is a totalitarian dictatorship.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ibid., NSC-68 admitted that the Soviet leaders sought "to retain and solidify their absolute power, first in the Soviet Union and second in areas now under their control." This hierarchy of Soviet interests was the result of Bohlen's persuasion of Nitze. Nitze had wanted to stress Soviet expansionism. Bohlen wished to state that the Soviets placed primary emphasis on the continuation of their regime, secondary emphasis on maintaining domination of their satellite nations, and considered expansionism only a tertiary factor. Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 98; Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men*, p. 498

¹⁴¹NARA, record group 273, NSC-68, April 14 1950

The Soviets did not view coexistence with the non-Communist world as possible, believing that "the most mild and inoffensive free society is an affront, a challenge and a subversive influence" that might appeal to the Soviet citizens suffering under the CPSU's dictatorship.¹⁴²

Conducting its policy in an "utterly amoral and opportunistic" manner, the Kremlin placed no limit on the means to achieve its ends.¹⁴³ It usually made use of Communists abroad, a powerful espionage service, and the popular appeal of its anti-colonial ideology amongst the peoples of the non-western world. The only factors militating against Soviet use of military force were expediency and practicality.

The Soviets were presently enlarging their armed forces, in case a moment should arise in which it would be expedient and practical to use them. The USSR had a commanding lead in conventional firepower, NSC-68 argued, and the termination of the American atomic monopoly removed an essential guarantee of western security. Relying on reports by intelligence organisations in the military and in the CIA, and especially the JCS report cited in section 2.5 of this dissertation, NSC-68 predicted that, in the event of war, the Soviets would be capable of successfully conquering vast tracts of territory at

¹⁴².ibid.

¹⁴³.ibid.

various points along the frontiers of Soviet power, in, among other places, Scandinavia, Central Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. NSC-68 also attempted to give quantitative evidence of the growing Soviet atomic capability.¹⁴⁴

Although the economic deficiencies of the Soviet economy, the inherent inflexibility of the Marxist-Leninist system, the distrust of the Communist government by citizens of the USSR, and the nationalisms present in the "satellite" states of Europe potentially weakened the power of the leaders in the Kremlin, these factors would not, according to NSC-68, lead to a demise in the power of such leaders unless "an adversary which effectively affirmed the constructive and hopeful instincts of men" was willing to exploit them.¹⁴⁵

Section nine, offering "possible courses of action", posed the question of whether the US was willing to be that nation that stood up to the Soviet Union, whether it was willing to arm itself to contain Stalin's ambitions.¹⁴⁶ Time, according to NSC 68, was running out. As Soviet power was waxing, America's ability to counter it was waning.

There were four possible options:

- a) continuation of current policies, with current and currently projected programs for carrying out these policies;
- b) isolation;
- c) war; and

¹⁴⁴.ibid.

¹⁴⁵.ibid.

¹⁴⁶.ibid.

d) A more rapid building up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world than provided under a, with the purpose of reaching, if possible, a tolerable state of order among nations without war and of preparing to defend ourselves in the event that the free world is attacked.¹⁴⁷

All of these choices, according to NSC-68, were unpalatable, and all but the last were unacceptable.

A continuation of the present funding levels would ensure that the west would fall further behind the USSR militarily, endangering western security and accepting enormous losses in the event of a war.

NSC-68 claimed that

The relative military capabilities of the free world are declining, with the result that its determination to resist may also decline and that the security of the United States and the free world as a whole will be jeopardized [if current funding policies are carried out].¹⁴⁸

There was also a psychological danger in allowing the Soviets to gain too much of a lead on the United States in military capabilities.

Should the belief or suspicion spread that the free nations are not now able to prevent the Soviet Union from taking, if it chooses, the military actions outlined in Chapter V, the determination of the free countries to resist probably would lessen.¹⁴⁹

Isolationism, the second option, was also dangerous.

With the United States in an isolated position, we would have to face the probability that the Soviet Union would quickly dominate most of Eurasia, probably without meeting armed

¹⁴⁷.ibid.

¹⁴⁸.ibid.

¹⁴⁹.ibid.

resistance. It would thus acquire a potential far superior to our own, and would promptly proceed to develop this potential with the purpose of eliminating our power¹⁵⁰

The third option was initiating hostilities with the USSR. This was the Air Force's preventive war doctrine, although NSC-68 did not mention that service by name.¹⁵¹ NSC-68 concluded that an American preventive attack would not "force or induce the Kremlin and the Kremlin would still be able to use the forces under its control to dominate most or all of Eurasia", leading to "a long and difficult struggle during which the free institutions of Western Europe and many freedom loving people would be destroyed and the regenerative capacity of Western Europe dealt a crippling blow."¹⁵²

Apart from this, however, a surprise attack upon the Soviet Union, despite the provocativeness of recent Soviet behavior, would be repugnant to many Americans. Although the American people would probably rally in support of the war effort, the shock of responsibility for a surprise attack would be morally corrosive. Many would doubt that it was a "just war" and that all reasonable possibilities for a peaceful settlement had been explored in good faith. Many more, proportionately, would hold such views in other countries, particularly western Europe and particularly after Soviet occupation, if only because the Soviet Union would liquidate articulate opponents. It would, therefore, be difficult after such a war to create a satisfactory international order among nations. Victory in such a war would have brought us little if at all closer to victory in the fundamental ideological conflict.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰.ibid.

¹⁵¹.ibid.

¹⁵²ibid.

¹⁵³.ibid.

The potential of negotiating with the Soviet Union was discussed, but the authors of NSC-68 intentionally chose not to make negotiations a separate option. They did not want to give Truman the impression that he faced a choice between negotiations and an arms build-up. They preferred that he see an arms build-up as necessary for any success in negotiations.

NSC-68 posited that negotiations with the Soviet Union would only work if the US and its allies used military superiority to put the Kremlin in a position where there was little choice for Soviet leaders but to negotiate. The terms that NSC-68 stipulated that the US use as its minimum demands in negotiations with the USSR were not ones the Soviets would agree to unless the Soviets were given little other choice. NSC-68 admitted that agreement "by the Soviet Union [was] impossible without such a radical change in the Soviet policies as to constitute a change in the Soviet system." To be precise, the negotiating stance of the United States, according to NSC-68, should have been to demand the seven concessions that Secretary of State Acheson mentioned in his 16 March 1950 speech:

1. Treaties of peace with Austria, Germany, Japan and relaxation of pressures in the Far East;
2. Withdrawal of Soviet forces and influences from satellite area;
3. Cooperation in the United Nations;
4. [UN] Control of atomic energy and of conventional armaments;
5. Abandonment of indirect aggression;
6. Proper treatment of official representatives of the U.S.;
7. Increased

access to the Soviet Union of persons and ideas from other countries.¹⁵⁴

It was unrealistic to have expected the Soviets to agree to these in the current climate, in which the Soviets seemed to be improving their global position.

Without an arms build-up, negotiations would be to the detriment of the west. Moscow had a distinct advantage in bargaining leverage in any peace conference, according to NSC-68, due not only to its military superiority, but also its political structure. The Soviets could "know more about the realities of the free world's position than the free world [could] know about its position" because of the secrecy in the USSR.¹⁵⁵ The Soviets also did not have to worry about the desires of allies or public opinion. Negotiating would mean tacitly accepting Soviet transgressions of the Yalta arrangements, thereby both psychologically weakening the populace at a time when it needed to be warned of the Soviet threat, and giving Moscow the impression of lack of resolve. Besides, there was virtually nothing the west could offer the Soviets that would not contribute to their ability to defeat western society. Any loss of territory would be not only an economic,

¹⁵⁴ibid. NSC-68's hostility to negotiating with the Soviet leadership seems to have coincided with Truman's. In a 20 April 1950 meeting with Trygve Lie, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Lie asked Truman to consider talking with Stalin. Truman responded that the experience of Potsdam had left him completely disillusioned as to the usefulness of such meetings. After Lie persisted, Truman relented only to the extent that he would allow Stalin to come to Washington, insisting that he would not attend a meeting anywhere else. Truman probably knew that any trip by him outside the US might create the perception that he was appeasing the Soviets, something that his domestic political opponents could eagerly take advantage of. He may also have known that Stalin was loath to travel without a division of troops to protect him, and that it was very unlikely that he would visit Washington. Stalin never did. BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson (1949-1953), Memorandum of Conversation with the President and Mr. Lie, 20 April 1950

¹⁵⁵NARA, record group 273, NSC-68, April 14 1950

but, far more importantly, a psychological blow to anti-Communists around the world.

What was needed was an arms build-up, so that the US would have "the military power to deter, if possible, Soviet expansion, and to defeat, if necessary, aggressive Soviet or Soviet-directed actions of a limited or total character."¹⁵⁶ The US could then use the threat of force to contain Soviet ambitions along the entire perimeter of the Soviet-dominated world, compelling the leadership in Moscow to discontinue its violent opportunism, and hopefully stifling Soviet ambitions until the current Kremlin leadership was replaced by moderates.¹⁵⁷ If the Soviets were prevented from destroying non-Communist societies, the grip the Communist party had on power would eventually erode, as the Kremlin struggled with limited means to keep its citizens from trying to recreate the western world within the Soviet sphere. "The existence and persistence of the idea of freedom is a permanent and continuous threat to the foundation of the slave society"¹⁵⁸ and, if free societies were protected, liberty would prevail in due time.

Needs were defined as "superiority" for the US and its allies over the Soviet bloc "both initially and throughout a war". The United States

¹⁵⁶.ibid.

¹⁵⁷ibid. It was felt that the American adoption of such a stance would merely represent "the current Soviet cold war technique used against the Soviet Union."

¹⁵⁸ibid.

did not possess this, and could not achieve it without a mobilisation of enormous proportions.

As Nitze would later say, forcing the Soviets to modify their international policies would require "more power than to win military victory in the event of war."¹⁵⁹ Because Acheson did not want to scare Truman away from NSC-68's conclusions before the President had digested the themes of the document, no proposed budgets were offered.¹⁶⁰ In private, Nitze told Oppenheimer, and other attendants at a policy group meeting, that to supply western Europe alone with a reasonable amount of conventional armaments might require \$40 billion, almost three times the United States's annual military budget.¹⁶¹ His estimate may have been influenced by his participation, in August of the previous year, in a British-American planning team that had, according to Nitze's later recollection, "estimated that the cost of the military equipment for a force strong enough to hold the Rhine was \$45 billion".¹⁶²

Although NSC-68 did not specifically call for the stationing of American troops in particular areas, the description of a militarised containment made it implicitly clear that the build-up of American

¹⁵⁹FRUS, 1952-54, Volume 2, 14 July 1952, p. 59

¹⁶⁰Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 96

¹⁶¹FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, Record of Meeting of the State-Defense Policy Review Group, Department of State, February 27 1950, pp. 168-175

¹⁶²as quoted in Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 66

forces could make possible a strategy of forward defence. American leaders would have the option, should they choose to use it, of being able to defend against Soviet encroachment in what were rapidly becoming the front lines of the Cold War, those places where the USSR and its allies bordered American allies, be it in Central Europe, the Middle East, or East Asia.

To relax Truman's knee jerk fiscal authority, the authors lobbied the President by mentioning all three methods by which the government could find the funds: "increased taxes", "reduction of federal expenditures for purposes other than defense and foreign assistance", and debt. Using Keynesian terminology, the authors wrote that the government could drive the economy to "full capacity" with borrowed funds and maintain it there without inflation through the use of price controls, as had been attempted in the Second World War. "One of the most significant lessons of our World War 2 experience", NSC-68 stated, "was that the American economy, when it operates at a level approaching full efficiency, can provide enormous resources for purposes other than civilian consumption while simultaneously providing a higher standard of living."¹⁶³ Nitze himself probably did not believe this, since he had claimed in an 11 October 1949 NSC

¹⁶³NARA, record group 273, NSC-68, April 14 1950 What NSC 68 failed to mention was that the arms build-up for World War Two was a special circumstance. The Depression was almost as bad in 1940 as it had been at the start of the decade, and capacity, in all private sectors was generally so under-utilised that vast increases in armaments production could occur without necessarily dampening consumer power. Even in that special circumstance, WW2 still led to many shortages and, in certain cases, price controls merely led to a decrease in the quality of consumer goods.

meeting that "it might be necessary . . . to lower rather than to raise civilian standards of living in order to produce arms as against consumer goods",¹⁶⁴ but the authors realised the usefulness for their cause of economic doctrines which had been previously used by the left to justify public works and relief programs in the 1930's. The use of controls was still well regarded in Truman era, with a 1948 poll finding that 47% of the general public favoured price controls.

NSC-68 made little effort to explain how the US economy was to grow while paying for an arms build-up, perhaps due to the expectation that, one way or the other, the Cold War would soon end, and because the authors probably felt that talk of long term growth would hurt their cause.

It is difficult to assess the originality of NSC-68. In using vigorous anti-Communist proclamations, it differed only in degree from previous Truman administration statements of policy.¹⁶⁵ In assuming that the Soviets were opportunistic and amoral, and in accepting the existence of Soviet conventional military superiority, it merely restated the accepted wisdom in the corridors of power in Washington.¹⁶⁶ In positing that the political confrontations between West and East would continue "until a change occurs in the nature of

¹⁶⁴.as quoted in Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 67

¹⁶⁵.NSC 20/4 makes similar assumptions about Soviet aggressive intent FRUS, 1948, Volume 1, part 2, p. 667

¹⁶⁶.for example, see FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Basic US Security Resource Assumptions, June 1, 1949, pp. 339-345; FRUS, 1950, Volume 4, Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State: Recent Soviet Moves, February 8, 1950, pp. 1099-1101

the Soviet system",¹⁶⁷ it followed in the footsteps of Kennan, whose long telegram had stated that containment would exist until it helped bring about structural change in the USSR. However, NSC-68, unlike the long telegram, unlike subsequent efforts by Kennan to elaborate on that document, unlike either the majority or the Old Guard opposition in Congress, unlike the Secretary of Defense, and unlike the President, claimed that in order to carry out the policy of containment, it was necessary to embark on a build-up of sufficiently radical size to gain superiority over the Soviets in conventional military forces, and to be willing to use them to prevent any expansion of Soviet influence. This differed from Kennan's suggestions that economic and diplomatic policies alone were sufficient and that only certain key regions were absolutely vital, it differed from Kennan's assumptions that the balance of power was stable and American resources were too limited to increase the nation's military power, it differed from the Congressional majority's reliance on nuclear weapons, it differed from the Old Guard's emphasis on an Asia first policy, and it differed from Johnson and Truman's faith that they could wage the Cold War while winning the annual budget battles. The document that began circulating amidst

167.NSC-68 assumed that this could come about if the United States created "a situation to which the Kremlin would find it expedient to accommodate itself, first by relaxing tensions and pressure and then by gradual withdrawal." NARA, record group 273, NSC-68, April 14 1950

the upper echelons of power in Washington had the potential to alter the thrust of American foreign policy.

3.5 The Truman Administration's Reaction to NSC-68

Nitze and his staffers knew that the more signatures of approval they could collect on the document from leading officials, the more inclined Truman would be to pay attention to it when it was submitted to him, and the more difficult he would find it to reject it. So they invited all of the civilian service secretaries, the JCS, and various luminaries from the atomic and foreign policy establishment to briefings. The Chiefs of Staff, having known of and approved of the direction of the document, required little persuasion. The report preached to the converted. With the partial exception of Bradley, they had been advocating greater military spending already, and they readily signed the document. Getting the other signatures required more work. The State-Defense Policy Group met one or two individuals at a time, realising that to bring more in would increase the possibility of discord and hamper their ability to explain the document in a manner most appropriate for the audience. Sometimes giving unspecific understandings that the document would be

amended to take into account any misgivings of the individual concerned, Nitze and his men then got the desired signatures.¹⁶⁸

One of the most critical signatures would, of course, be that of the Secretary of Defense. On 22 March 1950, Johnson and the Joint Chiefs were invited to a meeting to discuss a preliminary draft of NSC-68. To avoid press attention, they entered through the basement, and went to Nitze's office. Accounts of what happened in that room vary in details, but it is possible to attempt some reconstruction.¹⁶⁹ By most accounts, Nitze and Acheson began explaining the document, which they had intentionally avoided showing to Johnson, with the exception of a vague two-page summary. Johnson asked if Acheson had read it, to which the reply was affirmative. Knowing that his bureaucratic and personal rival had been a part of the project must have alerted Johnson that the report could be designed to work against his interests. Johnson told Acheson that he did not like being called into conferences without being given the opportunity to read the report. Always leery of things coming from the State Department, Johnson had even more reason to be angered when he realised how Nitze and Acheson were trying to use the fact that so many in his own Pentagon had already signed it to put him into a corner where he

¹⁶⁸.FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, Records of Meetings of the State-Defense Policy Review Group, February 27, March 2, 10, 16, and 20, especially see Nitze's comments to Barnard and Smyth in March 10 meeting; Ernest May, "NSC 68: The Theory and Politics of Strategy", *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1993)

¹⁶⁹.Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, pp. 94-95; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 373; Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 500; Hammond, "NSC-68", pp. 322-323; Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 8

would look foolish if he rejected it. He became livid, stood up, banged his fists on the table, shouted that he had not known of the document's formulation, argued that the document had been an attempt by members of his own department and his enemies at State to circumvent his authority, and stormed out of the room. The meeting had lasted only approximately fourteen minutes.

Once back at the Pentagon, however, Johnson realised that by siding against his service chiefs, who had endorsed it, he would make himself seem unable to control his own department. The report was going to be completed no matter what Johnson did. The State Department team had told the President of Johnson's boorish behaviour at the meeting, and had received Truman's approval to complete the writing of the report. As Acheson would later snigger, "Johnson was not left in a strong position."¹⁷⁰ Nitze had used the last week in March, while Johnson was in The Hague attending a conference of NAT defence ministers, to drum up even more support for the document at the Pentagon.¹⁷¹ In addition, Johnson was coming under increasing public scrutiny for his cost-cutting measures. Joseph and Stewart Alsop, well-connected sibling journalists whose editorials were nationally syndicated, launched a campaign in March 1950 to vilify Johnson, claiming that his cuts were leaving America

¹⁷⁰.Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 374

¹⁷¹.Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 95

unprepared for a potential war with the Soviet Union. Perhaps receiving information from Johnson's many enemies in the armed forces and the State Department, they cited significant decreases in available warships, submarines, light bomber groups, troop transport groups, and other critical assets.¹⁷²

Probably realising that there were no precise budget recommendations or specific recommendations for deployments in NSC-68 that could come back to haunt him if he signed it, Johnson relented.¹⁷³ On 11 April, he added his signature.

During the creation of the document, Nitze, using caution and the rigorous application of rules regarding security clearances, had done his best to ensure that those who might oppose an arms build-up were denied access to the document.¹⁷⁴ This included those in the Department of the Treasury and the Bureau of the Budget whose bureaucratic role was to place the needs of the economy first, and those State Department officials who opposed an arms build-up,

¹⁷²The Alsops maintained their advantage in gaining scoops by dining with high-ranking officials, such as Secretary of the Army Pace, Justice Felix Frankfurter, and Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk, any of whom might have been willing to help attack Johnson's budgeting policies. Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 161

The Alsops' first column opposing the budgeting must have touched a raw nerve in Johnson, for the day after its publication he passionately defended himself, claiming that he would work to achieve economies in defence "if it takes me to my dying breath", and stating that the economies he was creating were based on elimination of waste and duplication, as shown by the dismissal of 157,542 civilian employees of the Department who, he said, were unnecessary. PRO FO 371/81692, AU 11917/4, Memorandum from Sir O. Franks, 13 March 1950

¹⁷³Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 358, claims that NSC-68 was so vague that Johnson might have approved it because he was not aware that Nitze was thinking in terms of funding increases on such a vast scale.

¹⁷⁴May, "NSC 68"

usually preferring aid and diplomacy. After Kennan, in his new role as Counselor, advised against the proposed build-up in February, claiming that "drastic measures to reduce the exorbitant cost of defense" were needed, Acheson had sent him away on a fact-finding trip to Latin America to get him out of the country when the important discussions took place.¹⁷⁵ Bohlen, who had some doubts about Nitze's perceptions of the Soviet Union, was not recalled from Paris to discuss the document, as had been considered, and did not read the final document until 1951.¹⁷⁶

However, once the document was submitted to the White House, Truman, following procedure for any wide-ranging proposal, had drafts distributed to critical high-ranking officials throughout the Executive Branch. Many comments were submitted to Truman on the matter. NSC-68 was neither uniformly heralded as a panacea nor was it wholly discarded. It did not "bludgeon the minds of top government" into advocating radical changes in military spending, as Acheson had hoped. Within State, there was much criticism. The head of European affairs, George Perkins, felt that the existing

¹⁷⁵.ibid., p. 13; Kennan's report from the trip is in *FRUS*, 1950, volume 1, and is also summarised in his *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, although in neither does he accuse Acheson of planning the trip to remove him from the country. Kennan's "drastic measures" quote from Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 496. Although Kennan had originally been responsible for persuading Acheson to allow Nitze to become a PPS member, it appears that their policy differences led Kennan to personal differences with his replacement, whom he would later consider as being militaristic and simplistic in his numerical approach to Soviet-American comparisons. Nitze, in return, considered Kennan naive in his certainty that the USSR would not initiate military action, and privately accused Kennan of opposing the arms build-up primarily because it might relieve the diplomatic corps of its leading role in dealing with the Soviets.

¹⁷⁶.Bohlen, *Witness*, p. 290

American measures in Europe, economic and political, were sufficient. So did his assistant, Llewellyn Thompson.¹⁷⁷ Budgeting advisors also expressed reservations. The Deputy Chief of the Division of Estimates in the Bureau of the Budget, William Schaub, wrote a critique of NSC-68 a month after it was submitted. He was concerned by the unwillingness of Nitze's team to delineate the nation's commitments, the lack of attention to non-military solutions, the attempt to link individual freedom to the all too flexible concept of "self determination", and the failure to explain how the United States could pay for the version of containment the report proposed. But

the gravest error of NSC/68 is that it vastly underplays the role of economic and social change as a factor . . . we cannot win the Cold War by a predominant reliance on military force even if combined with large scale dollar assistance. Nor is it sufficient to add preachments of the concepts of democracy in terms too sophisticated for understanding or too remote from the particular issues foremost in the minds of peoples. Only as we develop methods for capitalizing on the emerging social pressures can we beat the Russians at their most dangerous game and safely take advantage of a rising tide of nationalism.¹⁷⁸

All of these critiques would not have mattered much to the authors of NSC-68 if only the President had listened to the document's recommendations. He did not. Harry Truman signed the document on April 11, which theoretically made it policy, but signing such a

¹⁷⁷Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 357

¹⁷⁸FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, pp. 298-306 memorandum by Schaub to Lay, May 8, 1950

general outline of beliefs, with little in the way of formal proposals, did not entail the assumption of any firm commitments. On the critical matter of budgets, Truman did not ask for an arms build-up. On the contrary, even after approving NSC-68, he pushed for a \$13.5 billion defence budget for fiscal 1951, the lowest in the post-World War Two era. As part of his efforts to get the budget package down to that sum, he exhorted Johnson in a memo of 20 April 1950 that "I am sure as I sit in the President's chair that we have material on hand, probably rusting in some instances, that will mount up to half a billion dollars."¹⁷⁹ Truman announced in a 4 May 1950 press conference that "The defense budget next year will be smaller than it is this year, and we are continually cutting it by economies. And we are not alarmed in any sense of the word."¹⁸⁰ When told nineteen days later by Frederick Lawton, the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, that the Bureau had a number of serious questions concerning NSC-68, Truman, according to Lawton's record, "indicated that we were to continue to raise any questions that we had on this program and that it definitely was not as large in scope as some of the people seemed to think", and also told Lawton to use his own judgement in deciding whether to press the JCS to complete the fiscal 1951 ceilings in time.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹.quoted in Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 514

¹⁸⁰.*Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, The President's News Conference of May 4, 1950, p. 286

¹⁸¹.HSTL, Frederick Lawton Papers, Box 6, Folder on Meetings with the President, Memorandum for the Record, May 23, 1950

At a news conference on 20 May, Truman responded to a query on the defence budget by stating that a "ceiling has been placed upon it."¹⁸² In June, Truman told the New York Times correspondent Arthur Krock that he still wanted to keep the lid on defence expenditures.¹⁸³ He also re-emphasised his optimism, declaring that the outlook for world peace was greater than at any time since V-J Day.¹⁸⁴ On the seventh of that month, Nitze, frustrated in his efforts to increase military funding, left Washington for a vacation.¹⁸⁵ Later, on 22 June, Truman was asked at a press conference how he felt about the 70 group air force some in Congress were proposing. Truman responded "I am opposed to an air force group for which we can't pay." Could we pay for a 70 group air force, the reporter inquired. "No, we cannot", the President responded.¹⁸⁶ The US military continued to shrink, reaching post-World War Two lows in manpower and readiness. As of 30 June 1950, there were 593,167 Army personnel on duty,¹⁸⁷ an extremely small increase on the Army personnel levels of fiscal 1948, and less than half the number that had

¹⁸².*Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, The President's News Conference of May 25, 1950, p. 440

¹⁸³.Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 504

¹⁸⁴.*Newsweek*, "Peace and the High Cost Thereof", June 12 1950

¹⁸⁵.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 358

¹⁸⁶.*Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, The President's News Conference of June 22, 1950, p. 487

¹⁸⁷Congressional Service Quarterly, *Congress and the Nation*, p. 265

been in the Army at the time of Pearl Harbor. As of that day, Air Force manpower was 411,277,¹⁸⁸ and combined Navy manpower was 450,780,¹⁸⁹ with the Navy total being the lowest level reached in the post-World War Two era.¹⁹⁰

The lack of forces was so glaring that Navy Chief of Staff Admiral Forest Sherman had informed Acheson, Johnson, and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in April that the US should consider abandoning American military commitments in Japan and Okinawa, and withdrawing to a defensive perimeter based on Guam and the Philippines.¹⁹¹ In the weeks before the Korean War began, the Navy was mothballing ships, and was planning to reduce the number of operating aircraft.¹⁹² Admiral Sherman announced that financial limitations would prevent the Navy from constructing any aircraft carriers in fiscal 1951, despite the fact that the increasing size of war planes made a larger carrier necessary.¹⁹³ In the first few days of the Korean War, the Navy would find that it did not have as many shells as the Chinese had junks (wooden sailing vessels common to China at

¹⁸⁸The Department of Defense, as quoted in Congressional Service Quarterly, *Congress and the Nation*, p. 265

¹⁸⁹Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 39

¹⁹⁰*The World Almanac 1993*, p. 693

¹⁹¹BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson (1949-1953), Memorandum of Conversation, 24 April 1950

¹⁹²PRO FO 371/90987, AU 1213/1, Naval Attaché's Annual Report on the US Navy for the Year 1950

¹⁹³*The New York Times*, "Combat Airplanes Increasing In Size", June 25 1950, p. 17

the time), and that, in the event of a predicted Chinese invasion of Taiwan, the Chinese would succeed.¹⁹⁴

There was no concurrent movement in Europe towards rearmament, either. The North Atlantic Treaty council meeting of May 1950 was tame,¹⁹⁵ the agreements on co-ordination were slow in developing, and the issue of German rearmament was dead.

Truman sent a letter to the NSC on 12 April, requesting the Council to consider NSC-68, and to "provide me with further information on the implications of the Conclusions contained therein. I am particularly anxious that the Council give me a clearer indication of the programs which are envisaged in [NSC-68], including estimates of the probable cost of such programs."¹⁹⁶ The NSC decided to organise an ad hoc committee to meet the President's request at its April 20 meeting.¹⁹⁷ Initial estimates were supposed to be finished by 1 July and final estimates by 1 November. There is scant evidence that

¹⁹⁴.Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 166

¹⁹⁵ Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (December 1980),p. 571

¹⁹⁶HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 207, folder on 55th meeting, Letter from Truman to Lay, April 12 1950

¹⁹⁷.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 207, Minutes of the 55th Meeting of the National Security Council, April 20 1950 The committee consisted of senior representatives designated by each NSC member, as well as the Secretary of the Treasury, the Economic Cooperation Administrator, the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. This group was, with the exception of two people (Gleason and Lay), different from the one that had written NSC-68. They produced, with much help from the Department of Defense, a document which, unlike NSC-68, was detailed in its budgetary estimates. It became known, upon its completion in September, as NSC 68/1, and later was updated by revisions known as NSC 68/2, NSC 68/3, etc.

Truman was planning on heeding these estimates even when they were produced. Perhaps the single characteristic most commented upon by Truman's associates was his decisiveness.¹⁹⁸ When he wanted something done, he did it. The expected completion times of the estimate suggests that Truman did not wish for higher defence expenditures.

Truman also seems to have been unaffected by the pressure from the arms build-up faction after he chose to reject their proposals for budget increases. On May 15 and May 22 1950, columns by Ernest Lindley in *Newsweek* contained predictions that 1952-1954 would be a period of maximum danger from the Soviet threat, a prediction contained in NSC-68.¹⁹⁹ It is unclear if Lindley came to this conclusion himself (it was not very different from the conclusions reached by the publicly printed report by the President's Commission on Air Policy in 1948) or if, as the historian Ernest May suggests, it was leaked to him.²⁰⁰ Possibly, some of the men advocating the arms build-up, not content with the President's reaction, created the leaks to coerce Truman. If so, they probably meant the leak as a shot across Truman's bow. Although NSC-68 was not yet named in public print, it would be apparent to Truman what could come next: an account in

¹⁹⁸.Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 83; Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 155; Bohlen, *Witness*, p. 301; Larson, *Origins* provides a psychological explanation of Truman's desire to make decisions swiftly

¹⁹⁹.*Newsweek*, "Is There Real Danger of War?" and "A Long Cold War", both by Ernest Lindley, May 15 and May 22 1950

²⁰⁰.May, "NSC 68", p. 14

the newspapers about how the President was dangerously cutting military expenditure against the advice of many of the senior advisors and military chiefs.²⁰¹ Such a story could be detrimental to the President's popularity. Whatever the cause of the Lindley article, Truman pushed ahead, oblivious to attacks on his defence policy.

Despite Truman's reluctance to agree with its budgetary implications, NSC-68 has come to be seen by many historians as significant.²⁰² They are right in so thinking. It was significant enough that its delivery to top officials must be included amongst the series of critical events both foreign (the Berlin blockade, the discovery of the Soviet A-bomb, the fall of China, and the signing of the Sino-Soviet treaty) and domestic (the start of the McCarthyite witch-hunts, and the Old Guard's assault on Truman's softness) that, when combined with the ideological, bureaucratic, political, and personality-related dispositions of the American leadership, helped foster an environment in which American-Soviet relations were considered in militaristic terms.

However, this is not to say that NSC-68 caused the arms build-up. It was merely one more factor fostering an environment in which an arms build-up could be contemplated, and the arms build-up did not

²⁰¹.ibid., p. 14

²⁰².for example, Melvyn Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1947-1953* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), has referred to NSC-68 as "one of the most important national security documents of the Cold War" p. 93

for another example, see Gaddis, *Strategies*, chapter 4

result from its conclusions. Had it not been for the events in Korea, it is unlikely that serious increases in military budgets would have occurred at all. It seems doubtful that Truman would even have agreed to the mild \$3 billion per annum increase in appropriations that the estimates committee was considering before 25 June,²⁰³ and unthinkable that he would have implemented the over \$30 billion per annum increase that took place during the Korean War.²⁰⁴ It is also improbable that the US would have supported a militarisation of the North Atlantic Treaty. Johnson informed the Senate in the weeks before the Korean invasion that no integrated command or treaty organisation was contemplated.²⁰⁵ As Acheson would later write, "it is doubtful whether anything like what happened in the next few years [after the drafting of NSC-68] could have been done had not the Russians been stupid enough to have instigated the attack on South Korea".²⁰⁶ The fact that the NSC "adopted the conclusions of NSC-68

²⁰³.\$3 billion statistic: Wells, "Buildup", p. 183 The judgement on Truman's likely behaviour is my own.

²⁰⁴.for an alternative view of Truman's reactions to NSC 68, see Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, p. 384. Huntington suggests that Truman believed in the recommendations of NSC-68, but did not allow Congress to be informed of NSC-68 because he felt that an arms build-up was not "politically feasible" at the time. Thus, Huntington concludes, "in the spring of 1950 the Administration, in effect, had two defense policies: a public one embodied in the thirteen billion dollar defense budget recommended for the next fiscal year and a private one embodied in NSC-68. This duality was ended only by the outbreak of the Korean War." Huntington gives no sources for this argument, nor does he mention that it was Truman who was the bigger cost-cutter than Congress, having opted to not spend money that Congress had authorised for the Air Force the previous year. Nor does Huntington explain the logic of Truman opting to ask for extra cuts in the defence budget in May 1950.

²⁰⁵.BLHC, Public Statements of the Secretaries of Defense, Part 1: The Truman Administration, microfilm reel 215, Selective Service Extension Act of 1950 and Manpower Registration and Classification Act, Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, June 1, 5, and 8, 1950, p. 40

²⁰⁶.Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 374

as a statement of policy" in September 1950²⁰⁷ makes it appear that they did not consider it to be a statement of policy previous to the Korean conflict.

NSC-68 was written without a single Congressman or Congressional aide on the staff, and there seems to have been no concurrent activity in Congress that would have led to the same conclusions without the Korean War. After being given a peek at the finished document, Senator Walter George refused to be persuaded.²⁰⁸ In the period immediately before the Korean War, Senator Millard Tydings (Democrat from Maryland), was proposing a world disarmament conference, and Senator McMahon hoped for the abolition of nuclear weapons through a "moral crusade for peace" combined with a \$50 billion "global Marshall Plan".²⁰⁹ In the weeks after NSC-68's completion, the Senate watered down Truman's request to extend the expiring draft from a three year extension to a two year one.²¹⁰ Despite Acheson's tour of the nation, where he made the case for the arms build-up by trying to shock his audience with evidence of Soviet military power, the truth, as Charles Bohlen later explained, was that without the Korean War

²⁰⁷.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, President's Secretary's Files, Box 209, Minutes of the 68th Meeting of the National Security Council, September 29th, 1950

²⁰⁸.Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 503

²⁰⁹.Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 377-378

²¹⁰.BLHC, Public Statements by the Secretaries of Defense, Part 1: The Truman Administration, microfilm reel 215, p. 666, "Selective Service Extension Act of 1950 and Manpower Registration and Classification Act", June 1, 1950

there was absolutely no chance that [NSC-68's] recommendations for huge increases in defense spending would [have been] adopted. It would have involved additional tens of billions in appropriations, increased taxes, and all the disadvantages which accompany a large increase in armaments. In a democracy such as ours, with diverse groups competing for government funds, it was hardly likely that in time of peace any Congress would seriously consider such an increase in the military budget.²¹¹

Was NSC-68 "one of the most important documents in the nation's history", as Dean Acheson termed it?²¹² It depends on the extent that one feels NSC-68 was responsible for the arms build-up of 1950-1951, which was indeed one of the most critical events in the history of American foreign policy. The more inclined one is to believe this, the more inclined one might be to consider NSC-68 to have been the equivalent of the Monroe Doctrine or of the Fourteen Points, and certainly the equivalent of the Truman doctrine or the New Look, which posited changes in basic strategic doctrine that were no more radical than the arms build-up envisaged by Nitze's team.

NSC-68's prescience is easier to judge. In light of subsequent events in Korea, and the evidence from Soviet archives of Moscow's efforts to help start that war, NSC-68 was fairly accurate in its portrayal of a totalitarian state willing to use military means for political ends, and in light of the US Army's difficulties in the early stages of that war, it

²¹¹Bohlen, *Witness*, p. 291

²¹²quoted in Norman Graebner, "NSC 68", *The Harry S. Truman Encyclopedia*, pp. 261-62

was very accurate in its estimation that the US was not militarily prepared to achieve containment.

3.6 Work on the Fiscal 1951 and Fiscal 1952 Defence Budgets Before the Korean War

Defence budgets are the result of many factors: political, economic, strategic, technological, intelligence-related, and others. They are the sum of these various factors made concrete, specific statements of a government's beliefs about the importance and nature of its national security apparatus. As such, they demonstrate, perhaps better than do memoranda, the true policy of a government. The work on the fiscal 1951 and fiscal 1952 defence budgets in the months before the Korean War demonstrate concretely that the creators of the American defence budgets, Congressional, Presidential, bureaucratic, public, and other, were not yet committed to an arms build-up. These budgets were similar to those immediately preceding them. Although there was considerable public debate as to the status of American military power relative to the Soviet Union, there was not a consensus in favour of a budgeting increase. The budget process operated in the usual manner, within Truman's designated ceilings,

and without a visible impact by those, such as the working group that created NSC-68, who were working for a momentous change in military funding.

Following orders, General Eisenhower and the Joint Chiefs of Staff submitted details of a proposed fiscal 1951 budget to the Department of Defense in August 1949.²¹³ On 15 September 1949, the Department of Defense announced its proposed budget, based substantially on the Eisenhower recommendations. It was for approximately \$13.04 billion,²¹⁴ just over the \$13 billion ceiling expressed for Fiscal Year 1951 in NSC-52/1.²¹⁵ Over the next few months, the Department made adjustments that increased the proposed amount to \$13.394 billion.²¹⁶ Following the usual procedure, Truman had the Bureau of the Budget investigate the proposal. The Bureau trimmed the budget down to approximately \$13.078 billion.²¹⁷ The actual amount to be requested from Congress was to be \$873 million less, with the money

²¹³.DDEL, Eisenhower Pre-Presidential Papers, box 62, Louis Johnson folder, memo of August 26 1949

²¹⁴.NARA, record group 330, entry 80, fiscal 1951 file, memorandum from the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson), December 16, 1949

²¹⁵.FRUS, 1949, Volume 1, Report by the National Security Council; Government Programs in National Security and International Affairs for the Fiscal Year 1951, September 29, 1949, pp. 386-393

²¹⁶NARA Letter for the Director of the Bureau of the Budget from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, Sept. 15, 1949, in record group 330, "Fiscal Year 1951 budget" folder.

²¹⁷.NARA, record group 330, entry 80, fiscal 1951 file, memorandum from the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson), December 16, 1949

the President had refused to spend the previous year being used to cut the budget.²¹⁸

This proposed budget was to be divided as follows: \$4.018 billion for the Army, \$3.881 billion for the Navy, \$4.433 for the Air Force, and \$746 million for other purposes, such as the contingency fund, retirement pay, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.²¹⁹ Under the budget, the plan was to have a 630,000 man Army with 10 under strength divisions, 12 separate regiments and 48 anti-aircraft battalions, a 239 warship Navy, 2 Marine divisions at 36% strength, a combined Navy-Marine personnel of 461,000, and a 48 wing Air Force with 416,000 personnel.²²⁰ All these personnel levels were well below the ceilings allowed the administration under the Selective Service Act.²²¹ The 48 wing plan, which was for 20 strategic bomber groups, 16 Tactical Air Support groups, and 12 Air Defense groups, was forced on the Air Force by Johnson, despite the opposition of both Secretaries of the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington and Thomas Finletter, the later taking over in April 1950, each of whom supported the Air Force's contention that 70 wings was the minimum

²¹⁸.HSTL, Frederick Lawton Papers, Box 5, Folder entitles "Budget, National, FY 1951", Memorandum of Mr. Lawton's Telephone Conversation with Mr. Pace from Key West, Florida, on December 9 and 10, 1949

²¹⁹.NARA, record group 330, entry 80, box 32, fiscal 1951 file, letter by Loftis to Johnson, December 16, 1949

²²⁰.Condit, *Test of War*, p. 224; Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 20

²²¹.BLHC, Public Statements by the Secretaries of Defense, Part 1: The Truman Administration, microfilm reel 215, "Selective Service Extension Act of 1950 and Manpower Registration and Classification Act"

requirement.²²² As it was, many of the 48 groups operated below full strength.²²³

From January to March 1950, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees heard testimony on the budget and considered administration proposals.²²⁴ Johnson continued to push for economy, claiming that by removing waste and duplication, his office was actually providing the combat force with greater funding. The House Committee seems to have been reasonably satisfied with this line of argument, and they brushed aside Eisenhower's modest proposal, made before the Senate on 29 March, to spend an additional \$500 million for the defence of Alaskan air bases, some modernisation of Army equipment, reinforcement of anti-submarine warfare efforts, and improvements in mobilisation programs.²²⁵ The only budget increase of significance that passed was Johnson's April 1950 request for an additional \$300 million for Air Force and Navy aircraft procurement and \$50 million for destroyers and special anti-submarine warfare ships,²²⁶ and even this constituted a proposed increase of less than three percent.

²²²PRO FO 371, 90989, AU1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

²²³.ibid.

²²⁴.Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 21

²²⁵.ibid., p. 23

²²⁶Condit, *Test of War*, p. 224

Only in the Senate did some cracks begin to appear in the economy program, as evidenced by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee's recommendation, on June 20, to raise the total of new obligational authority to nearly \$15.6 billion.²²⁷ The basic purpose of the increase, however, was for greater spending on strategic air capabilities, not on conventional forces, and the decision was not a great victory for the authors of NSC 68.

Work on the fiscal 1952 budget followed similar patterns. In February of 1950, Johnson laid down planning guidelines. Manpower was to be the same as it was then thought it would be at the end of fiscal 1951: 1,500,000 men.²²⁸ The funds would also be similar to what was then planned for fiscal 1951: a 10 May estimate was for a \$13.7 billion budget.²²⁹

This was obviously contrary to the massive increase proposed in NSC-68 the month before.²³⁰ As we have seen, Johnson had signed that document reluctantly and seems never to have agreed with its conclusions. He specifically informed his staff on 25 May that they could proceed without letting NSC-68 interfere.²³¹

²²⁷Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 25

²²⁸Condit, *Test of War*

²²⁹NARA record group 330, cd 380 memorandum from Secretary Johnson to the Service Secretaries, February 22, 1950, as cited in Condit, *Test of War*

²³⁰Condit, *Test of War*, p. 244

²³¹NARA memorandum from the Secretary of Defense to service Secretaries, record group 330, Assistant to SecDef and DepSecDef files, NSC-68 folder, May 25, 1950

3.7 Traitors, Spy Hunts, and Growing Dissension, Early 1950

The foreign policies of the United States, in which containment of Communism was a primary element, could not avoid being affected by the outburst of anti-Communist hysteria at home. This outburst, which began with the unmasking of several Americans working for the Soviet Union in 1949 and early 1950, would create a sense of paranoia, changing the domestic context within which foreign policies would have to be made.

Two spy cases were particularly important. The first, in the US, was the case of Alger Hiss. Hiss, an official at the State Department who had been a friend of Acheson and of the Roosevelt family, had become sympathetic to the Communist cause in the 1930's, and had secretly supplied the Soviets with information. Always denying his guilt, Hiss had insisted on a trial to prove his innocence, which ended on 20 January 1950 with his conviction on charges of perjury.

The second case, in Britain, involved Dr. Klaus Fuchs, a German immigrant who held British citizenship. Fuchs was an atomic scientist who had intimate knowledge of the bomb. He was arrested on 3 February by the British authorities for giving atomic secrets to

the Soviets. Soon afterward, Fuchs admitted his guilt.²³² Further investigations that spring would reveal a number of American accomplices of Fuchs who had also worked on the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb during World War Two, such as Harry Gold and Alfred Slack.²³³

In the minds of much of the public, the Soviet development of a weapon of mass destruction was linked with the revelation of the atomic spies.²³⁴ The increasing distrust of anyone involved with domestic Communist parties led to a famous spy hunt, the United States Senate espionage investigation that became known as the McCarthy hearings due to the visibility of the most rancorous member, Senator Joseph McCarthy (Republican from Wisconsin). While these inquiries were almost useless for practical purposes (some real spies were found, but by the Federal Bureau of Investigation), they played an important role in raising the tension level in the United States. On 9 February, six days after the arrest of Fuchs, McCarthy gave a speech in front of the Ohio County Republican Womens' group in Wheeling, West Virginia. He accused the US State Department of being infested with "205 known Communists". McCarthy constantly altered his claims against the

²³².Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 422

²³³.*The Washington Post*, "Syracuse Chemist Arrested on Spy Charge", Associated Press, June 16 1950, p. 1

²³⁴.Soviet atomic physicists would later claim that they had produced two bomb designs in 1949, one an imitation based on information from the Soviet agents in America, which was tested, and the other of their own design. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*

State Department, and generally used unproven rumours and allegations as the sole source of evidence. However, Truman's opponents in the Senate, seeking any means to discredit the President, encouraged McCarthy. The Senator's charges received sufficient attention to warrant the creation of a Senate investigatory committee, to be chaired by Senator Millard Tydings (Democrat from Maryland).²³⁵ Tydings felt that publicly investigating McCarthy's claims would destroy McCarthy's popularity. He underestimated the public's willingness to trust McCarthy.

McCarthy touched the paranoia lurking in the US. The message he had was that things were getting so bad for what he termed the "Democratic Christian World" on every front, from China, to Eastern Europe, to the Soviet A-bomb, that they could not be explained any other way than by a conspiracy theory.²³⁶ McCarthy attacked Acheson, career diplomats in the State Department, government personnel whom he hoped could be linked to Communism using information in their government dossiers, the Democratic Party, and, especially, what he perceived to be a powerful left-wing establishment dominating the intellectual life of the country. Truman,

²³⁵The other members of the Tydings Committee were Theodore Francis Green (Dem., Rhode Island), Bourke B. Hickenlooper (Rep., Iowa), Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. (Rep., Massachusetts), and Brien McMahon (Dem., Connecticut)

²³⁶McCarthy quote from Leffler, *Specter*, p. 93

claimed McCarthy, was a "prisoner of a bunch of twisted intellectuals who tell him what they want him to know."²³⁷

Attitudes towards Communism were hardening. In 1946, the biggest criticism of Truman's loyalty programs had come from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and liberals in his own party, such as the old New Dealers Abe Fortas and Ben Cohen, who claimed the programs were undemocratic and repressive.²³⁸ In the next few years, public perceptions changed so much that these same programs were criticised for being insufficient. McCarthy's efforts were supported by the Hearst, McCormick, and Scripps-Howard newspapers.²³⁹ The Republicans used the Communism in government issue to excoriate the administration, and the young Richard Nixon successfully ran for the Senate on a campaign against domestic Communism. The ACLU began co-operating with secret FBI operations to investigate Communists,²⁴⁰ and American universities began dismissing faculty members who refused to pledge that they were opposed to Communism.²⁴¹

²³⁷.quoted in Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 164

²³⁸Hamby, *Beyond*, p. 190

²³⁹.Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 165

²⁴⁰Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and the Secrets*, (New York: Plume, 1991), pp. 437-9

²⁴¹.*The Los Angeles Times*, "UC Regents Fire 157 Refusing to Sign Non-Communist Letter", June 24 1950, p. 1

3.8 The Return of the Old Guard

In 1950, the bipartisan agreement on foreign policy collapsed. Republican Congressional leaders who had pursued a co-operative bipartisan foreign policy since 1942, with the expression "politics stops at the water's edge" used to explain the preference to minimise public debate on international affairs, so as to avoid casting doubt on US policy abroad,²⁴² were replaced. An older faction of Republicans, which had been fairly dormant for almost a decade, returned to positions of influence. They were known as the "Old Guard".

Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, who had been the most prominent of the bipartisan Republicans, became ill in late 1949 and his enfeeblement led to a decline of his influence. Another bipartisan Republican, Senator John Foster Dulles, of New York, lost his seat in a special election held in the autumn of 1949.²⁴³ Old Guard members sensed an opportunity for power. In late December, 1949, Senator Kenneth Wherry (Republican from Nebraska), proclaimed that he wanted no more commitments "made by bipartisan bigwigs".²⁴⁴

²⁴²quote on "water's edge" from Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), p. 504

²⁴³ H. Bradford Westerfield, *Foreign Policy and Party Politics: Pearl Harbor to Korea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 371

²⁴⁴*ibid.*, p. 372

Senator Robert Taft (Republican from Ohio), generally acknowledged as the leader of the Old Guard, chimed in, on 8 January 1950, "There isn't any bipartisan foreign policy and there has not been any for the past year."²⁴⁵

The Old Guard were believers in limited federal spending and limited foreign intervention. They were opposed to the new breed of foreign policy activists and liberal spending Republicans typified by Thomas Dewey. Old Guard members had been a potent force in the era before Pearl Harbor, helping to pass neutrality legislation. Many of them were bitter about the way, as they saw it, that Roosevelt had manoeuvred the nation into war in 1941 (many of the Old Guard had spent the period immediately before the war fighting Roosevelt's efforts to aid Britain and actively contain Japan, and several books published after the war claimed that the Roosevelt administration had received intelligence on a coming Japanese attack and did little to stop it) and about his decision to focus on Europe once that war began instead of Asia (which some felt was involving the nation in a dispute which was not vital for America in order to save Britain, for which Roosevelt was considered to be overly fond). The Old Guard was particularly opposed to the European multi-lateralism that Acheson favoured, since they felt that it put Europeans in a position to order or restrict American actions while the United States was paying the

²⁴⁵*The New York Times*, January 9 1950

largest share. Taft had voted against the ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty, believing that it was "more likely to lead to war than to peace", and was convinced that "there is no threat" to Western Europe "at this time".²⁴⁶ The Old Guard's views on foreign aid might have best been summed up by Senator William Jenner (Republican from Indiana), who felt that aid represented "the squandering of American resources and manpower down the ratholes of Europe and Asia".²⁴⁷

Not only were the Old Guard men convinced that an alliance and aid relationship with Europe was harmful to America's interests, they also feared that any alliance or military commitment would necessarily lead to a defeat of their domestic economic policies of free markets unfettered by excessive regulation, taxation, or debt. As evidence they cited the Second World War, which had increased the federal government's portion of GNP, created vast debt, and led to the regulation of all major industries and the introduction of wage and price controls.

The Old Guard members were not opposed to a powerful non-Communist Western Europe, nor to bringing western Europe into closer trade ties with the US and Britain, nor to European economic recovery, as their opponents sometimes claimed. However, they saw

²⁴⁶.Taft in letter of 18 September 1949, quoted in Walter LaFeber, "NATO and the Korean War: A Context", *Diplomatic History* (Fall 1989)

²⁴⁷.quoted in Ronald Caridi, *The Korean War and American Politics: The Republican Party as a Case Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968)

American attempts to "buy" the type of Western Europe that all agreed would be in America's best interest as overly damaging to America's economy, and prone to tie the US to positions beyond its control.

The Old Guard's senior members tried to fashion a broad anti-Truman coalition. They found a good deal of support in the "China Lobby", an informal network of activists, businessmen and politicians (mostly Republicans) who wished to see a more anti-Communist stance in America's China policy, for reasons political, commercial, and ideological. The evacuation of the Kuomintang forces to Taiwan in 1949, and the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship of 14 February 1950 did little to lessen the support for the Nationalist regime, and may have increased the vocality of its proponents. Differences between genuine isolationists and those Old Guard members who were simply anti-militarist and/or sceptical towards Europe were smoothed over. Even old progressives, liberal pacifists from the early years of the century, were active in working against Truman.²⁴⁸

This coalition impeded State Department designs. It tried to block the aid funds for western Europe that were necessary as a quid pro quo to gain the agreement of European governments to organise their defences in accordance with American war plans. It also supported the efforts of the Senate committee on Communism investigating

247. Robert Griffith, "Old Progressives and the Cold War", *Journal of American History* (September 1979)

individuals in the Foreign Service accused of being in the employment of the USSR.

Truman took the Old Guard's challenge seriously. In a March 1950 letter to a cousin he said

I am in the midst of the most terrible struggle any President ever had. A pathological liar from Wisconsin [McCarthy] and a blockheaded undertaker from Nebraska [Wherry] are trying to ruin the bipartisan foreign policy. Stalin never had two better allies in this country.²⁴⁹

He attempted to counter the Old Guard's influence by hiring Dulles as a consultant to the State Department in April.²⁵⁰ The ex-Senator was promptly dispatched to Japan to help in the negotiations of a peace treaty, in the hope that his participation would better enable future Senate ratification.²⁵¹ Truman also lent his efforts to support a plan by Senator Connally to create eight foreign affairs subcommittees, one for each section of the State Department, so as to allow greater liaison between Congress and State.²⁵² Truman increased his efforts to gain support for his administration's foreign policy, making a ten day trip by rail across the nation, delivering 57 speeches in 12 states, publicly defending his record, as shown by the

²⁴⁹.quoted in Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 168

²⁵⁰.*ibid.*, p. 168

²⁵¹.*ibid.*, p. 169

²⁵².Statement by the President Announcing Steps Taken to Develop a Bipartisan Approach to Foreign Policy, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, p. 273

Greek-Turkish aid program, the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty, while warning against isolationism.²⁵³

The Old Guard responded vigorously. They renewed their efforts to grant aid to Taiwan by blocking, as a protest measure, the passage of an aid bill for Korea. Former President Herbert Hoover, an icon for Old Guard supporters, even recommended that the United Nations be reorganised to exclude Communist states.²⁵⁴

This renewal of the Old Guard's strength posed a challenge to the authors of NSC-68 and their plans to increase defence spending. However, there was one place outside the western hemisphere that the many members of the coalition led by the Old Guard felt strongly enough about to reverse their general antipathy towards foreign intervention: East Asia. A war there could really gain across the board support for an arms build-up.

²⁵³. *Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, 1950*; Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 175

²⁵⁴. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 176

TRANSFORMATION

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4.1 The Truman Administration's Decision to Enter the Korean War

On 25 June 1950, after more than a year of border skirmishes between the two Korean republics, the North Korean (DPRK) Peoples' Army opened a large offensive, attacking South Korea with armoured penetrations and amphibious landings,¹ supported by air strikes. The Soviet equipped forces rapidly pushed deep into South Korea, driving back the South Korean (ROK) troops in harsh fighting. Without anti-aircraft guns, without tanks, and with shorter-range artillery than the invaders, all equipment the US had denied South Korea in order to prevent it from attacking the North, the South Koreans could provide only nominal resistance.² Although some American officials had

¹*The New York Times*, June 26 1950, see map on p. 2 with accompanying captions; or see map on p. 59 of Schnabel and Watson, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Volume 3: The Korean War, Part 1* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1979)

²Matthew Ridgway, *The Korean War*, (New York: DaCapo, 1967), p. 17 The ROK Air Force had requested its

warned of just such a possibility, the attack caught the Truman administration by surprise, as did the ability of the North Korean forces to dominate the field of battle.

The Soviet press hailed the North Koreans as liberators, and joyously claimed that the advancing DPRK forces were being greeted by the local populace with "shouts of welcome, bouquets of flowers, and flags of the Korean People's Democratic Republic".³ However, Moscow's joy was soon to be qualified as the Soviets discovered something they quite likely had not expected: the US was about to intervene in the war, and would begin a world-wide build-up of arms.

There was little reason for the Soviets to expect the Americans to intervene in Korea. In February, 1948, the National Security Council had determined that "Korea is of minor strategic importance", and that the maintenance of US forces in Korea would "require a military and financial long term cost and risk far out of keeping with the strategic benefit."⁴ After the withdrawal of the US 7th Infantry Division in 1949, the only American military presence in Korea was an advisory group, which, according to Pentagon contingency plans,

first combat aircraft from the US, but these had not yet arrived. Schnabel and Watson, *Chiefs*, p. 42

³.*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, "People of South Korea Greet People's Army Soldiers", July 22 1950 (translation of a *Pravda* article of June 28 1950)

⁴.NARA, record group 273, National Security Council Mill 9, "United States Foreign and Domestic Policy in Furtherance of National Security", February 25 1948, p. 7

was to be withdrawn in the event of war.⁵ During the debate on policy towards the Chinese Civil War, the administration had decided that mainland Asia was not the place to fight. The US had neither the political will to become militarily involved in the turmoil of post-war mainland Asian politics, nor the forces in existence to carry out such a policy.

But, within days of the North Korean invasion, Harry Truman impulsively decided to send American forces to repulse the North Korean onslaught. This American intervention was not only made with little regard for existing policies, it even contradicted those policies. As General Vernon Walters would later claim, "If a Soviet KGB spy had broken into the Pentagon or the State Department on June 25, 1950, and gained access to our most secret files, he would have found the US had no interest in Korea. But the one place he couldn't break into was the mind of Harry Truman."⁶

Truman, worn down by foreign policy setbacks, such as the Soviet development of atomic weapons, the Communist victory in China, and the signing of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty, and annoyed at being harassed by his political opponents on the issue of internal spying, was tired of being pushed around by events, and seems to have seized on the Korean War as a means to wrest control of affairs,

⁵.Harry G. Summers, Jr., "The Korean War: A Fresh Perspective", *Military History*, (April 1996), p. 24, and Robert O'Neill, *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945-1960*, (New York: MacMillan, 1986), p. 115

⁶.quoted in Summers, "Perspective", p. 25

to end the contradiction in policy indicated by his signing of NSC-68 but neglecting its goals. He also felt that the reputation of the US amongst its allies was at stake.⁷ Truman was not in a mood to allow the Korean campaign to develop on its own, even if that was the pre-planned course of events. Hearing of the invasion while taking care of family business at his house in Independence, Missouri, Truman, in the decisive and energetic fashion that he was famous for, set in motion a policy of action. He told Acheson by telephone the morning after the North Korean attack that he wanted to "stop the sons of bitches no matter what". He flew back to Washington promptly, thinking, according to his later recollection, of the failure to stop the aggressions in the 1930's, in Manchuria, in Ethiopia, and in Austria, while on board the aircraft.⁸ During the limousine ride from Andrews Air Force Base to the White House, he told Acheson and Under Secretary of State James Webb, "By God, I'm going to let them have it".⁹ Over the next few days, in a series of meetings with his military and political subordinates, he committed America to war.¹⁰ First he directed the shipment of aid to the ROK government. Second, he

⁷.Robert J. McMahon, "Credibility and World Power: Exploring the Psychological Dimension in Postwar American Diplomacy", *Diplomatic History* (Fall 1991); Leffler, *Specter*, p. 100; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 405

⁸.Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 333

⁹.quoted in Michael Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur: The Far Eastern General*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 185; and in Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, p. 508

¹⁰.The minutes of most of these meetings are in BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Korean Situation, June 26, 1950

commanded US air and naval units to intervene in South Korean airspace and territorial waters. Third, he approved the use of warplanes on missions north of the 38th parallel. Fourth, he agreed to send US troops to hold vital ROK airfields and port facilities. Fifth, and most dramatically, he issued the order, on 30 June, for American troops to fight the North Koreans. To these actions were added a strengthening of American forces in the Philippines, a sped-up delivery of material to the French in Indochina, and the sending of the 7th Fleet to patrol the Straits of Taiwan, in a bid to prevent the Beijing regime from carrying out the invasion of Taiwan that it was planning.¹¹ A motion to build an international fighting force was introduced in the UN General Assembly by the US. It passed.

Truman was not restrained by his advisers. With the partial exceptions of Johnson, Nitze, Bradley, and Secretary of the Army Frank Pace,¹² most administration personnel made little effort to challenge the President's view. It is interesting but not fulfilling to

¹¹*Time*, July 3 1950, "Beyond Subversion", p. 7 The 7th Fleet consisted of 1 aircraft carrier, 2 cruisers, 12 destroyers, and 4 submarines. On the first day of the invasion MacArthur began sending fighter planes to the South Korean Air Force. *Time*, July 3 1950, "War in Asia", p. 14 Truman mentioned, but never acted on, the possibility of "taking Formosa back as part of Japan and putting it under MacArthur's command". BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Korean Situation, June 26 1950

¹²for Johnson: Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, p. 198; Condit, *Test of War*, p. 49; *Washington Post*, "Johnson Gives Witness Cues", June 28 1950, p. 4

for Nitze: HSTL, Oral History #454 (Paul Nitze), p. 262. Nitze claimed that although he was obviously for the arms build-up he was "less enthusiastic about reacting" to the attack than others because of the work he had done with the JCS showing America's unpreparedness to fight a conflict beyond what was considered its perimeter of action. He did approve of involving the UN in the conflict.

for Bradley and Pace: BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson (1949-1953), Item 0643, Memorandum of Conversation, 25 June 1950

speculate on what their attitudes would have been had Truman not come back from Missouri proclaiming his desire to punish the North Koreans for their invasion. As it was, they might have been overwhelmed by the wave of public desire for action in the crisis. Or their desire to escape Truman's legendary temper might have caused them to hide any misgivings they might have had about the intervention. With advance warning of how the President had reacted to the invasion, his staff backed him in his rigorous stance.¹³ Pentagon generals, realising how weak the US military was, were reluctant to be drawn into the war,¹⁴ but dutifully obeyed the orders of the Commander-in-Chief.

It is by no means clear that Truman's decision was predictable, seeing that some of his choices were at odds with what other leading figures seem to have either expected or desired, and it was only through rapidity of action that he accomplished the desired result. Truman only cursorily consulted Congressional leaders about his decisions. He acted so fast that Senator Taft complained that Congressmen were being presented with the use of American ground forces as an accomplished fact.¹⁵ In the two days after the North

¹³.Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 536

¹⁴.O'Neill, *High*, p. 116

¹⁵.Speech by Robert Taft in the Senate, 28 June 1950, text in *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 1950, pp. 613-17; Acheson had a series of conversations with Senators in the days after the invasion to inform them of events, but made sure that decision making authority stayed with the President. BLHC, *Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson*

Korean invasion, most Congressmen and Senators had been unsure about future action, often hoping that the United Nations could resolve the crisis. Few had any firm plans, many making general statements of support for South Korea.¹⁶ The Senate Republican Policy Committee was divided in its recommendations, with Senator Millikin (Republican from Colorado) claiming that "the incident should not be used as a provocation for war", while less partisan Senators such as Margaret Chase Smith (Republican from Maine) preferred to support American action in Korea.¹⁷ Newspaper editorials were similarly divided, with some, such as the *Denver Post* and *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, advocating American military participation as part of a UN force, while others, such as the isolationist *Chicago Tribune*, warning that the US should not participate in the war, and most giving general but not specific advice to somehow contain the new North Korean plunge.¹⁸ One newspaper article, produced by the United Press, a national press organisation with extensive Washington connections, inaccurately but confidently predicted on the first day of the war that "the United States will not put its armed forces into any direct action in the Korean conflict."¹⁹

^{16.}*The New York Times*, "Congressmen Back Moves Made By US", Clayton Knowles, June 26 1950, p. 1; *The Los Angeles Times*, "Members of Congress Surprised by Invasion", by the Associated Press, June 26 1950, p. 2

^{17.}*The Economist*, "Strange Bedfellows", July 8, 1950

^{18.}*The New York Times*, "Comments by Press of Nation on Korean Situation", June 27, 1950, p. 16, has excerpts from sixteen newspapers across the nation.

^{19.}*The Los Angeles Times*, "Where American Forces Are Stationed in Orient", by the United Press, June 25 1950, p. 1

The Joint Chiefs were startled by the President's tough talk the day after the invasion,²⁰ and even the American soldiers who were first sent in to Korea were surprised by Truman's decision.²¹ But Truman's decisiveness helped consolidate a sense of purpose in the public, which, with the exception of some of the bitterest Truman haters, seized on Truman's moves with ardent fervour. As the *New Republic* explained, "when Truman's executive order [to intervene in Korea] hit the wires, Washington took a new look at the President. It found that he had fooled them even more than he did on Election Day 1948."²² Polls taken by the State Department indicated that in the wake of the North Korean attack, 75% of the American public approved sending troops to Korea.²³ Faced with a President elevated to new heights of popularity, and perhaps seduced by the mood of assertiveness themselves, the Congressional leaders, including even the Old Guard, decided not to oppose US involvement. Had a debate on a declaration of war taken place, it is possible that the Old Guard would have tried to embarrass the administration, but unlikely that they would have contested Truman's key decisions.

²⁰Schaller, *MacArthur*, p.185

²¹Summers, "Perspective", p. 25 Summers was one of those soldiers.

²²July 10 1950 edition, quoted in Geoffrey Perrett, *A Dream of Greatness: The American People, 1945-1963* (New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1979), p. 163

²³LaFeber, "NATO"

4.2 The Truman Administration's Decision to Begin an Arms Build-Up

The Korean War was viewed by almost all American political leaders in a Cold War context. It was thought that the Soviet Union bore responsibility in initiating it, and that in doing so the Kremlin was raising the stakes in the poker game of world politics, replacing a cautious policy of fifth-column activities and coups with one of piecemeal warfare. The Soviets had acted in a less restrained manner than American analysts had considered likely. There was no guarantee that they would abstain from making moves elsewhere.

The day after the North Korean attack, the President told senior political advisor George Elsey that he was "more worried about other parts of the world" than Korea, especially the Middle East.²⁴ He asked Secretary of the Army Pace on 28 June to pay special attention to Soviet activities in the vicinity of Yugoslavia and in northern Europe.²⁵ The same day, he directed the National Security Council to re-examine "all policies affecting the entire perimeter of the USSR".²⁶

²⁴Schaller, *MacArthur*, p. 187

²⁵Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 341

²⁶quoted in Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 48

A cause of concern for all administration officials was the perceived parallel between the North Korean armed forces, prepared and equipped by the Soviets to attempt national unification, and the East German armed forces, who seemed similarly trained.²⁷ The NSC felt that a renewed blockade of Berlin, or a blockade of Vienna, could not be ruled out,²⁸ and they were told by the National Security Resources Board that the demands of the Korean campaign would make another airlift impossible.²⁹ Several of the Eastern European nations were enlarging their military forces, under the auspices of former Soviet military personnel who served as Defence Ministers,³⁰ and the possibility of the Soviets using these satellite armies to restore Soviet dominance over breakaway Yugoslavia had to be considered. Rear Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, the Director of the CIA, told the National Security Council Consultants' Meeting on 29 June that he considered a Bulgarian attack on Yugoslavia to be the most likely contingency.³¹ Kennan added that Soviet forces might join in.³²

²⁷.Bohlen, *Witness*, p. 304

²⁸.FRUS, Draft Report by the National Security Council, July 1 1950, Volume 1, pp. 331-338

²⁹.FRUS, Statement by the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board (Symington) to the National Security Council, July 6, 1950, Volume 1, 1950, pp. 338-341

³⁰.*The Los Angeles Times*, "Bulgarian Troops Near Yugoslavia", by the Associated Press, June 24 1950, p. 1

³¹.FRUS, Memorandum of National Security Council Consultants' Meeting, Thursday, June 29 1950, 11:30 AM, 1950, Volume 1, pp. 324-326; According to the historian Richard Crockatt, Stalin cancelled plans to conquer Yugoslavia in July 1950 after the US intervention in Korea convinced him that the Soviets might meet an armed response. Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War*

³².FRUS, Memorandum of National Security Council Consultants' Meeting, Thursday, June 29 1950, 11:30 AM, 1950, Volume 1, pp. 324-326

Bulgarian troop movements near the border had already become public knowledge,³³ and the Soviet press had begun comparing Tito to Goering.³⁴

General MacArthur informed Johnson that he thought a move on Iran would be next.³⁵ In a 1 July meeting, the NSC also fretted over the possible seizure of power by the Tudeh Party of Iran, which was sympathetic to the USSR, and the possibilities of Chinese Communist actions in Korea, the Straits of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, Tibet, Indochina, or Burma.³⁶ Since the Chinese regime was considered to be strongly influenced by the Kremlin, it was assumed that the Soviets could persuade the Chinese to probe the anti-Communist world anywhere along the vast Chinese borders.

There were large differences of opinion amongst US analysts over the likelihood of direct Soviet involvement in any of these possible

In another NSC Consultants' Meeting (pp. 327-331) of that day, Kennan added, and the other participants agreed, that present NSC policy in the event of a Soviet attack on Yugoslavia was only to provide limited assistance to Tito. However, various participants at the meeting commented that an attack on Yugoslavia, or Iran, or Germany might be the first step should the Soviets decide to launch World War III.

Bohlen and Kennan both claimed, in their memoirs, *Witness to History* and *Memoirs, 1950-1963*, that together they lobbied against the prevailing belief that Korea represented the first event in a new phase of Soviet foreign policy. However, Kennan, as cited above, was worried about Soviet military action at this time. According to Isaacson and Thomas, both Kennan and Bohlen hedged their bets, writing that they thought Soviet military action was unlikely, but, lacking the confidence in this belief to say it categorically, warning that it was possible. *Wise Men*, p. 512

³³.*The Los Angeles Times*, "Bulgarian Troops Near Yugoslavia", by the Associated Press, June 24 1950, p. 1

³⁴.*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, May 20 1950, p. 27 (translation of a Pravda article of April 1 1950)

³⁵.BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson (1949-1953), Item 0673, Memorandum of Conversation, 26 June 1950

³⁶.FRUS, Draft Report of the National Security Council, July 1 1950; 1950, Volume 1, pp. 334-35

military actions, but virtually no one ruled Soviet participation out entirely. To quote the NSC:

[Our] analysis has been predicated on the assumption that the Kremlin does not intend to engage in a general war in the near future for the reasons stated in NSC-68. That assumption may be wrong.³⁷

In the event that it was to be shown wrong, the lack of American forces would be glaring. On 14 July, Acheson told the Cabinet that the United States lacked the means to meet the Soviet threat. The initial setbacks in the Korean War showed this.

It is becoming apparent to the world that we do not have the capabilities to face the threat, and the feeling in Europe is changing from one of elation that the United States has come into the Korean crisis to petrified fright. People are questioning whether NAT really means anything, since it means only what we are able to do. Our intentions are not doubted, but our capabilities are doubted.³⁸

He continued

In this situation the question is what the United States can do to affect these trends. Obviously it must do all possible to deal with the Korean situation and other present dangers, but it must do more now. Prompt action is worth more than perfect action. In the very early days of next week some action must be announced.³⁹

³⁷.for discussions on perceptions of Soviet intentions in the immediate aftermath of the North Korean attack, see FRUS, Memorandum of National Security Council Consultants' Meeting, Thursday, June 29 1950, 11:30 AM, and Draft Report of the National Security Council, July 1 1950; both in 1950, Volume 1, pp. 324-326, and 331-338

³⁸.BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson, Statement Before the Cabinet on Korean Crisis, July 14 1950

³⁹.ibid.

The actions that Acheson wanted the President to announce consisted of asking for more money for the armed forces, and "if it is a question of asking for too little or too much, he should ask for too much".⁴⁰ Acheson had stated these pleas in a very dramatic fashion because of his concern that other parts of the executive branch did not seem to realise the scale of the radical changes in policy that would be necessary to reorient the American economy towards military production. The mid-year report by the Council of Economic Advisors, which was predicated on the assumption that the fighting in Korea would remain localised, and that the President need not be granted any emergency powers, particularly incensed Acheson.⁴¹ He wanted the fighting in Korea to remain localised, but was not content with any assumption that it would remain so. Nothing less than the deployment of a large conventional force to Central Europe, for an indefinite duration, would satisfy the Secretary.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, seriously considering the possibility that an all-out war would shortly arise,⁴² were similarly inclined. Although they still felt that American atomic superiority and manufacturing capacities would enable the US to achieve victory in such a war, they feared that the Soviets were rapidly increasing both the production of

⁴⁰.ibid.

⁴¹.Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 420

⁴².David S. McLellan and John W. Reuss, "Foreign and Military Policies", *The Truman Period as a Research Field*, Richard Kirkendall,(Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1967), p. 75

nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them on to American forward bases and US industrial centres, in an effort to nullify the US atomic deterrent and/or bomb out of existence the American economic advantage.⁴³ If the Soviets could negate the American atomic advantage and seize Western Europe, they would attempt to assimilate the trained workforce and industrial infrastructure into a Moscow-centred sphere of influence. "If Soviet Russia ever controls the Eurasian land mass," warned Bradley, "then the Soviet-satellite imperialism may have the broad base upon which to build the military power to rule the world."⁴⁴ The need for an arms build-up seemed obvious.

Apparently shaken by the North Korean attack, Truman became more involved in foreign and military policy formulation. He attended more NSC meetings, and scheduled regular meetings with Bradley.⁴⁵ His views grew increasingly hawkish, due to the events in Korea, perhaps combined with the months of steady efforts by Acheson and his allies to wear him down on the issue of defence spending. His conversion became evident in his personnel decisions. He chose Gordon Dean, known for his aggressive attitudes about the use of atomic weapons, to fill the vacancy as Director of the AEC,

⁴³.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 370

⁴⁴.quoted in *ibid.*, p. 370

⁴⁵.*ibid.*, p. 363; Another new trend was begun when the Secretaries of the Services began meeting in informal "Joint Secretaries" meetings to discuss international political affairs. PRO FO 371/81692, AU 11917/11, Memorandum from Sir Oliver Franks, 28 July 1950

named General Walter Bedell Smith, known as one of the toughest men in the Army, to replace Hillenkoetter, who had gained a reputation for being unassertive, as director of the CIA, and began using Stuart Symington, long an advocate of military spending, to coordinate the movement of the supplemental defence budgets (see section 4.5) through Congress.⁴⁶ Foreign policy meetings took on more of a military character.

Most men in the executive branch who had opposed increasing arms budgets before the war either lost power or shifted their opinions in the summer of 1950. Louis Johnson, despite initially opposing the use of American troops in Korea, grudgingly accepted the need for an arms build-up after Truman ordered it. As we will see, even this would not be enough to save his job. James Webb, who had been a proponent of limited military spending when he was Director of the Bureau of the Budget, had, after becoming Under Secretary of State and working in the heart of the pro-armament camp, become a crusader for the ideas of NSC-68.⁴⁷ Bohlen, who had been relatively dovish on the subject of an arms build-up when discussing NSC-68 a few months before was, by July, recommending the mobilisation of the National Guard under federal control, a

⁴⁶Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 363; Smith had been publicly mentioned as a candidate to replace Hillenkoetter even before the war, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1950*, The President's News Conference of June 1, 1950, p. 452; for Symington: PRO FO 371/81692, AU 11917/11, Memorandum from Sir Oliver Franks, 28 July 1950

⁴⁷Yergin, *Shattered*, p. 405

program of controls to allocate raw materials to war industries, new weapons development programs, increases in military aid to Europe, and the creation of new production capacity for military equipment.⁴⁸

On 13 July, Bohlen summarised the new administration thinking:

the character of the new Soviet inspired aggression has revealed various interpretations as to Soviet intentions. However, despite these differences in estimate, all studies on this subject which have been conducted in State and Defense agree on the following conclusions:

1. The Soviet Union has the military capacity at the present time of taking, or inspiring through satellites, military action ranging from local aggression on one or more points along the periphery of the Soviet world to all-out general war.

2. While estimates of probabilities of Soviet action vary it is completely agreed that there is not sufficient evidence to justify a firm opinion that the Soviet Union will not take any one or all of the actions which lie within its military capabilities . . .

It is therefore obvious that it is urgently necessary for the US to initiate measures necessary to bring about a rapid build-up of the United States military position both in manpower and in production.⁴⁹

Incoming reports from the Korean battlefields were a factor in causing Truman to radically increase military spending. Less than 24 hours after the North Korean attack, he asked Bradley about the

⁴⁸.FRUS, 1950, Volume 4, pages 1220-21, Memorandum by Mr. Charles E. Bohlen, Minister to France, Temporarily in Washington, 13 July 1950. see the enclosure entitled "US Actions Required to Minimize the Likelihood of Soviet Aggression or of New Soviet-Inspired Aggression and to Deal With Such Aggression if it Occurs"

⁴⁹.FRUS, 1950, Volume 4, pp. 1220-21, Memorandum by Mr. Charles E. Bohlen, Minister to France, Temporarily in Washington, 13 July 1950.

Dean Acheson apparently was so impressed with the wording of this memorandum that he used part of it in his declaration on the Korean Crisis to the Cabinet the next day. BLHC, Official Meetings and Conversations of Dean Acheson, Statement Before the Cabinet, July 14 1950

availability of extra recoilless rifles to send to the Far East and was informed that there was a shortage of both the rifles and the ammunition.⁵⁰ The lack of rifles would prove to be just one of the problems facing the US Army. Despite the administration's public pronouncements to the contrary,⁵¹ the condition of the first American ground units to arrive in Korea indicated the woeful state of American conventional forces. They were occupation troops from Japan, used to a soft life of mild duties, cheap civilian labour to perform base functions, and an often pleasurable lifestyle more akin to a colonial occupation army than a modern combat force. They had to use, as their basic weapons, such pre-1945 equipment as the M-1 rifle, the Browning Automatic Rifle, .30 and .50 calibre machine guns, 75 mm recoilless rifles, 2.36 inch bazookas, 105mm howitzers, and Pershing and Sherman tanks.⁵²

The North Koreans attacked with Soviet T-34 tanks, off the sides of which American 75mm shells exploded harmlessly. Given their age, they sometimes did not explode at all. There was insufficient ammunition for the 105mm guns to destroy the tanks that the 75mm guns could not destroy. Antitank mines were unavailable.

⁵⁰.BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Korean Situation, June 25 1950

⁵¹.HSTL, The Papers of Stephen Springarn, box 28, folder entitled "Defense Production Act of 1950". See the 19 July speech for examples of how Truman tried, in public, to make the situation on the peninsula seem better than it was. Truman also claimed in his memoirs that the performance of the US forces constituted "a glorious chapter in the history of the American Army", but most contemporary accounts show otherwise. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 345

⁵²Weigley, *Army*, p. 502; Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, pp. 223-224, and 235

Communications broke down as scarce telephone wire was lost during successive retreats, and radios kept going dead because they also dated from World War II, and were too dilapidated for the task.⁵³ When the Americans committed light tanks to battle, they lost ten almost immediately.⁵⁴

There were so few American troops available that General MacArthur, commander of the UN forces, ordered the integration of Koreans directly into the ranks of the US Army.⁵⁵ The military, lacking sufficient aircraft to transport the troops it did have to Korea, had to sign contracts with commercial airliners.⁵⁶ Tactical bombing was poor, aerial reconnaissance abilities were far below World War Two standards, and maps were difficult to find.⁵⁷ According to General Matthew Ridgway,

Every division was short 1500 rifles and all its 90mm. tank guns, missing three infantry battalions out of nine, lacking one firing battalion out of three in the divisional artillery, and all regimental tank companies.⁵⁸

⁵³Weigley, *Army*, pp. 503 and 507 This is the standard view of the initial stages of the Korean conflict. For an alternative view, see Schaller, *MacArthur*, which claims that the US always had superiority of men and equipment, but that MacArthur's use of them in the initial stages of the war was questionable.

⁵⁴*Newsweek*, "Angry U.S. Girds for Rough War", July 24 1950

⁵⁵Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964) p. 337

⁵⁶*The Wall Street Journal*, "Commercial Airlines To Fly Men, Supplies To Korea For US", July 6 1950, p. 1

⁵⁷for Air Force's tactical bombing: PRO FO 371/90987, AU 1213/1, Air Force Attaché's Annual Report on the US Navy for the Year 1950

reconnaissance and maps: Stueck, *Korean War*, p. 128

⁵⁸Ridgway, *War*, p. 34

The mountainous terrain, poor roads, and a swift-moving enemy who often manoeuvred at night and hid by day forced the Americans into a fluid infantry-based type of warfare utterly different from what American defence planners had envisioned. The Pentagon had decided not to plan for the possibility of a localised conventional war, deciding that budgetary limitations dictated that it focus everything on a possible total conflict in which nuclear weapons would be used early and often.⁵⁹ But Truman never approved the use of atomic weapons in the Korean War, and would not allow bombing of the Communists' bases of manufacture and supply, in the USSR and the PRC. The bombing of North Korean cities which did occur on a vast scale⁶⁰ was of little immediate aid to the American troops on the ground. The United Nations forces, composed primarily of Koreans and Americans, (soon to be joined by ground forces from thirteen other nations and assorted naval and medical support from several others) were hurled backwards by the oncoming North Korean forces.⁶¹ The US Army's 24th Infantry Division, which entered Korea with 16,000 soldiers on 1 July, had only 8,660 men left by 22 July.⁶² In one seventeen day period of almost constant fighting, the division

⁵⁹.Hammond, "NSC-68" p. 289

⁶⁰.Bruce Cumings, *War and Television* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 158 claims that up to two million North Koreans may have died as the result of the strategic bombing offensive on that country.

⁶¹.*Newsweek*, "Angry U.S. Girds for Rough War", July 24 1950, Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, p. 290 For information on the reasons each of the UN nations had for sending troops, see Stueck, *Korean War*

⁶².Summers, "Perspective", p. 26

was forced to retreat seventy miles.⁶³ Major General William Dean, its commander, became detached from his forces in the July 20 battle for Taejon, and, in an embarrassment to the Army, became the highest-ranking American officer ever captured by a foreign army.⁶⁴

The decision to engage in a large arms build-up was made during this crucial period between the North Korean invasion and Operation CHROMITE, the UN's amphibious landing at Inchon on 15 September. The North Korean attack weakened the Truman administration's faith that the Soviets would not initiate war, but, just as importantly, it was the US losses in this stage of the war, to an army of a relatively small and poor nation, that made clear just how unprepared the American military would have been in the event of a war with the Soviets, and helped convince Washington of the necessity of an arms build-up on a vast scale.

The timing of the attack, coming less than a year after the discovery of the Soviet atomic bomb, seemed to suggest a linkage between Soviet military capabilities and willingness of Communist nations to engage in hostilities. Although in retrospect reports of a possible general war seem unduly alarmist, it is easy to see how the thinking of key officials, clouded by exaggerated criticisms of subversion at

⁶³Ridgway, *War*, p. 27

⁶⁴ibid., p.27

home, genuine reports from a war abroad, and haunted by inadequate military power, could lead to an arms build-up.

In the first few days of July, Truman cancelled the \$13 billion ceiling on the defence budget, and ordered the Pentagon to work out a new appropriations bill.⁶⁵ On July 11, Johnson told the JCS to defer work on fiscal 1952 in order to handle the present need to reassess fiscal 1951 needs.⁶⁶ The Army wanted three new divisions to replace forces being assigned to the Korean operation, the Navy wanted to take four aircraft carriers out of mothballs, and the Air Force wanted to have funds to make use of the combat planes it had in storage.⁶⁷ The requests were accommodated, and Truman turned to Congress to gain support for an even larger build-up. On 19 July 1950, he asked the legislatures for a \$10 billion supplemental military budget, almost as much as that year's entire planned fiscal defence budget. As we will see in the section on fiscal 1951, it passed easily. The same day, he also ordered a strengthening of the NSC, to better co-ordinate

⁶⁵.*The Wall Street Journal*, "Korea Strife to Cost US Taxpayer Billions; Pentagon Staff Starts Totting Up New Expenses", Merle Gulick, July 10 1950, p. 2

⁶⁶.Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 41

⁶⁷.*Time*, July 17 1950, "What It Takes", p. 11

On the issue of Air Force planes in storage, this article claims that there were 4,600 combat planes in reserve, and Robert Lovett, in his OSDH Oral History claimed that there were seas of parked aircraft stored at bases in the American west. However, neither of these sources mentions that most of these were WW2 leftovers whose usefulness in modern combat varied widely.

policy, and suggested Congress consider a program to allocate materials and restrict consumer credit.⁶⁸

To flesh out these forces, manpower was increased dramatically. Truman ordered a new draft, and by 17 July twenty thousand men had been called on to serve.⁶⁹ On 6 July, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Johnson recommended, and Truman approved, the raising of authorised Army strength from 630,000 to 680,000.⁷⁰ On 14 July, he approved another recommendation, to increase authorised strength to 740,500, and on 19 July he approved an increase to 834,000.⁷¹ This new Army was to have 11 divisions, 12 separate regiments, and 72 anti-aircraft battalions.⁷² Truman also approved a proposal to call four National Guard divisions into active federal service on 31 July.⁷³ In the second half of 1950, the size of the American armed forces swelled from 1,460,000 personnel to 2,360,000.⁷⁴

On September 9, Truman announced that a combat-ready American army would be deployed to Europe.⁷⁵ This was only the third time

⁶⁸.Anna Kasten Nelson, "President Truman and the Evolution of the National Security Council", *Journal of American History* (September 1985), p. 373; Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 348

⁶⁹.*Time*, July 17 1950, "What It Takes", p. 11

⁷⁰.Gough, *Mobilization*, p. 3

⁷¹.*ibid.*, p. 4

⁷².Poole, *Chiefs*, p. 42

⁷³.Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, p. 348

⁷⁴.Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report of the Secretary of Defense, July 1 to December 31, 1950*, p. 1

⁷⁵.*Public Papers of the Presidents; Harry S. Truman, 1950*, Statement by the President Upon Approving an Increase in U.S. Forces in Western Europe, September 9, 1950

the US had sent such an army, and this was the first time that it was done while Europe was at peace.

On 1 August 1950, little more than a month after the start of the Korean War, and during the period of tremendous effort by the administration to augment all military capabilities, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised Secretary Johnson that goals for the manufacture of atomic weapons should be sharply increased.⁷⁶ Johnson forwarded this request to the President. His proposal was seconded by Senator McMahon of the Atomic Energy Committee on 3 August.⁷⁷

Truman agreed to look into the recommendations, and assigned a joint Department of Defense-Atomic Energy Commission team to investigate.⁷⁸ The team used Joint Chiefs of Staff suggestions on military needs and Atomic Energy Commission recommendations on feasible costs and availability of fissionable materials. The final report, finished in September, concluded that the nation should expand nuclear production to meet higher targets by 1956.⁷⁹ The report was given to Truman and the rest of the National Security Council, and on 9 October Truman approved the recommended

⁷⁶.Condit, *Test of War*, p. 468

⁷⁷.*ibid.*, p. 468

⁷⁸.FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, Memorandum by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, August 8, 1950, p. 570

⁷⁹.Condit, *Test of War*, p. 469

expansion, for \$2.5 billion over 6 years.⁸⁰ He would later approve further increases: \$1.06 billion in the second supplemental bill for fiscal 1951 defence, and \$59 million in the fourth supplemental bill for fiscal 1951 defence.⁸¹ The Atomic Energy Commission surpassed the WW2 Manhattan Project in size and scope.⁸²

United States national security expenditures jumped from 4.6% of Gross National Product in fiscal year 1950 to 6.9% in fiscal year 1951 and 12.7% in fiscal year 1952. The majority of this enlargement of the military would not end when the Korean War did. In fact, military expenditure remained at least 9% of GNP per annum (nearly double the fiscal year 1950 total) through 1962,⁸³ and at least 5% of GNP per annum continuously until the mid-1990's. Over the first two decades of the Cold War, the United States defence budget was, on average, approximately half the size of the entire British economy.⁸⁴ After armistice negotiations had begun in Korea, and the level of world tension had slightly eased, Truman would claim that in planning defence spending, his administration had not caved in to "extremists"

⁸⁰.*ibid.*, p. 469

⁸¹.*ibid.*, p. 469 Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, claims (p. 561) that there was a January 1952 program bigger than the October 1950 one.

⁸².Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 373

⁸³Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 359

⁸⁴.Martin Walker, *The Cold War and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 139

who, in the initial stages of the Korean War had advocated an even larger build-up.⁸⁵ However, as officials of his own administration would later point out, the most important reasons that the arms build-up in fiscal 1951 had not been even greater were fears of bottlenecks in production, the necessity to lay a firm base of capital expenditure before production could rise, and the general desire to make the build-up as efficient as possible. Truman himself admitted that, when inflation was discounted, the increase in military spending in the first year of the arms build up (fiscal 1951) was almost half of the increase in the first year of the Second World War, an outstanding testimony to just how huge the later arms build-up was.⁸⁶

By 1952, according to Secretary of the Air Force Thomas Finletter, the value of American plant facilities and equipment used for military production, was greater than "the 1950 total combined assets of General Motors, Standard Oil of New Jersey, United States Steel, and American Telegraph and Telephone combined."⁸⁷ That same year, US News & World Report magazine described the military's economic holdings as a \$200 billion investment, "more than four times the present book value of all the plants and equipment of all US

⁸⁵.Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371/90951, AU 1104/3

⁸⁶.*ibid.* Truman claimed that the increase had been approximately \$30 billion, whereas the WW2 buildup, in 1951 prices, had amounted to approximately \$75 billion.

⁸⁷.quoted in John Swomley, *The Military Establishment* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 101 Standard Oil of New Jersey would later develop into Exxon.

manufacturing corporations."⁸⁸ In the days before the Korean War, General Marshall had warned Congress that if it failed to pass a \$1.2225 billion assistance program, western Europe might be overrun, forcing the US to become an armed camp, spending as much as \$30 billion per annum on the military.⁸⁹ Within months, the administration was requesting more than \$40 billion for an annual defence budget.

The "situations of strength" group had won the debate on armaments policy. The start of the Korean War, and the difficulties the American troops sent to Korea encountered, were the levers that enabled them to pass their legislation. It would be difficult to imagine a more perfect conflict for their purposes. It was perceived as an act of naked aggression by an ally of Moscow, which served to provoke both public and Presidential opinion. Even more, it was on mainland Asia, which was perhaps the only region outside the Western Hemisphere where some of the Congressional Republicans would consent to the use of American force. It would have been difficult for any Congress to turn down military appropriations proposals at the start of a war of unknown duration, and at a time when many believed that Korea would be a mere precursor to a larger conflict. General Bradley must have understood this mood when he testified

⁸⁸.quoted in *ibid.*, p. 102

⁸⁹.*Newsweek*, "Arms and More Arms", June 19 1950

in the House of Representatives on 25 July 1950, pressuring Congress for funds by claiming that "the cost [of the arms build-up] will be heavy, but not as heavy as the war which, we are now convinced, would follow our failure to rearm".⁹⁰

It is difficult to overestimate the impact of this arms build-up. It was a new phase of containment. Without the Korean War, or an incident similar to it, it is doubtful that America would have adopted such a strong stance on world wide security issues. Bohlen's comment, quoted in the first sentence of this dissertation, is on target. Although Truman would later claim, in an official address to Congress asking for military funds, that the decision to ask for an increased military budget "should have - and, though no doubt in smaller measure, would have - been taken" even in the absence of the Korean War, the evidence suggests otherwise.⁹¹ It is worth repeating Truman's claims, mentioned in the introduction, in a January, 1953 discussion with a journalist, in which he talked about Stalin's decision to allow the North Koreans to invade South Korea: "It's the greatest error he made in his whole career. If he hadn't made that mistake, we'd have done what we did after World War I: completely disarmed. And it would have been a cinch for him to take over the European nations, one by one." Instead of this, Truman said the beginning of the Korean War

⁹⁰.quoted in Wells, "Buildup", p. 185

⁹¹.for the Truman quote, see Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July, 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371 90951, AU 1104/3

had these far reaching results: "It caused the rearmament of ourselves and our Allies. It brought about the North Atlantic Treaty [sic]. It brought about the various Pacific alliances. It hurried up the signing of the Japanese Peace Treaty. It caused Greece and Turkey to be brought quickly into the North Atlantic Alliance."⁹²

Truman specifically stated, when sending wartime requests for armaments to Congress, that the funds would be used for a general build-up and overseas deployments to Europe, and not just war costs. Even in the days immediately preceding the Inchon landing, in a time when the American forces were backed into a corner of South Korea and seemingly almost driven into the sea, Truman felt he had to balance General MacArthur's requests for troops in Korea with the needs of Europe. The overriding basis on which to judge policy was the strategic comparison with the Soviets world-wide, not the situation in Korea. NSC-68/1 stated that "the programs which have been initiated pursuant to the President's message to the Congress of 19 July 1950, constitute an initial implementation of the long term United States build up as well as of specific measures to meet the situation in Korea. The invasion of Korea imparts a new urgency to the appraisal of the nature, timing, and scope of programs designed to attain the objectives outlined in NSC-68. The ending of the Korean

⁹².Interview of Truman by Carleton Kent, *The Washington Sun-Times*, 16 January 1953

operation, however, will not appreciably effect these [budget] estimates."⁹³

In particular, the balance of power in Europe disturbed the Truman administration. In August of 1950, American civilian and military officials in Germany informed Washington that in the event of conflict in Germany, "forces in order of 3 Allied divisions with necessary support troops would be required to defeat the 55,000 present DDR [East Germany] paramilitary troops; and in the event the latter increase to a maximum strength of 150,000, forces in order of 5 Allied divisions with necessary support troops would be required",⁹⁴ all of this not including the possibility of fighting Soviet forces. The primary goal of the arms build-up was to create a conventional defensive force capable of fighting the Communists at the border between the two German states. While it would be an overstatement to claim that Truman followed a Europe first policy just as Roosevelt did in the Second World War, it is true that certain new items, like the B-50 medium bomber and the C-124 transport, were deployed against the potential Soviet menace in Europe, rather than sent to Korea.⁹⁵ As

⁹³NARA, record group 273, National Security Council Paper 68/1, 21 September 1950, p. 1

⁹⁴FRUS, 1950, Volume 4, pp. 867-888, (quote from p.884), Paper Prepared by the United States High Commissioner for Germany (McCloy), the Commander in Chief, Europe (Handy), and the United States Commander, Berlin (Taylor), August 29 1950

⁹⁵B-50 bomber: PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951, see Appendix C

Note that this appendix clearly shows that fighter and reconnaissance aircraft were overwhelmingly more likely to be in the Far Eastern Air Force than in Europe at the end of 1950.

early as 7 July 1950, a request by MacArthur for additional forces was rejected, due, in part, to the need to build-up the armies in Europe,⁹⁶ leading MacArthur to later complain: "the Far East was again at the bottom of the list . . . I could obtain only a trickle of soldiers from Washington, under the plea that they were needed in Germany".⁹⁷

Germany was given greatest priority, due mostly to its critical economic importance, but also perhaps to perceptions of Soviet intentions. It was believed that the Soviet Army was positioned with its strongest force in East Germany, and little or no Soviet troop strength in Bulgaria and Hungary. A successful tap on the Soviet communications line from their embassy in Vienna, created by the British in 1949 and made more effective by the CIA's success at building an electronic deciphering machine in 1951, confirmed this.⁹⁸

During fiscal years 1951-53 (a period from July 1, 1950 to June 30, 1953), the United States spent \$116.9 billion on national security expenditures. The Korean War, almost all of which was fought during this period, is estimated to have directly absorbed only approximately 40 to 50 billion dollars.⁹⁹

C-124 transport: Robert Dorr, "Thermonuclear Legacy", p. 66

⁹⁶MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, p. 337

⁹⁷.*ibid.*, p. 337

⁹⁸.Martin, *Wilderness*, p. 76

⁹⁹Total Military Spending: sum of annual military budgets, listed in Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 359. He uses information from the Statistical Abstract of the United States.

4.3 The Primacy of the Arms Build-Up in American Strategy, 1950-1951

The Korean War was a seesaw affair; with each side taking turns in winning. There were five phases. The first phase, one of almost total victory for the North Koreans, lasted from 25 June to 15 September 1950, during which time the North Koreans pursued the South Koreans and the United Nations forces into a small beachhead at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. The second phase began with the UN landing at Inchon, a port near Seoul, and was a period of success for MacArthur's forces, with the UN force driving north of the 38th parallel. The third phase began with the massive Chinese attack of late November 1950, which pushed the UN forces below the 38th parallel. The fourth phase of the war saw this Chinese attack blunted, and somewhat reversed, by a series of UN victories in the spring of 1951, which stabilised the front near the original line, all this leading to the fifth phase, a period of more than two years of protracted

\$40 billion estimate: Claudia D. Golden, *Encyclopedia of American Economic History*

\$50 billion estimate: Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 504

Millett and Maslowski also estimate that "the administration eventually spent 60 percent of the FY 1951-1953 defense budgets on general military programs and 40 percent on waging the war." p. 490

trench warfare with little movement in what the UN termed the main line of resistance, fought during the armistice negotiations. While American war aims regarding Korea were subject to change as the front lines shifted, American aims globally changed very little during the entire war.

The primary American foreign policy aim during the Korean War was to reverse the perceived disadvantage in the conventional balance of power between, on the one hand, the USSR and its allies and, on the other, those states willing to join the growing anti-Stalinist crusade known as containment. It was the Soviet Union that was considered the main basis of comparison, and central Europe that was considered the most important potential loss. The war aims on the Korean peninsula were of secondary importance and subject to change, with the administration first seeking to unify Korea under the ROK government, and then settling for an indefinite splitting of the peninsula when it became apparent that the cost of unification might be a war of immense scale against revolutionary China.

While the decisions in the theatre of operations were based on concern about China, it is worth repeating that the American military build-up had much more to do with the perception of Soviet power. Despite the fact that the Chinese intervention caused major American losses and ensured that the war would end with the situation resembling the status quo ante-bellum, rather than result in a unified Korea under the ROK government, it did not have as decisive an

impact on American global strategy as the 25 June invasion of South Korea by North Korea. As Acheson's remark that "we are fighting the second team, whereas the real enemy is the Soviet Union"¹⁰⁰ would indicate, the administration's goal was oriented towards the Soviets, and was to build up the necessary force to deter, or, failing that, win a future war with them.

Most plans for an arms build-up had been approved before the Chinese intervention, and the world-wide arms build-up was to continue, at full pace, even after armistice negotiations began in Korea. In late September 1950, when it seemed likely that the Korean War would soon be over, the Truman administration had approved NSC-68/1, which planned to spend over \$40 billion per year in fiscal 1952, 1953, and 1954. It claimed that these "estimates of forces are based on the assumption that hostilities in Korea will terminate in fiscal year 1951", strong evidence that the build-up was already meant to be global in nature and indefinite in duration.¹⁰¹ The National Security Council approved NSC-68/2, a fleshed out version of this, on 30 September 1950.¹⁰² The Truman administration had become convinced of the need to prepare for a Soviet military threat by the attack on South Korea and by the weakness of the first American

¹⁰⁰FRUS, 1950, Volume 7, Acheson meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense, December 3 1950, p. 1326

¹⁰¹NARA record group 273, National Security Council Paper 68/1, September 21 1950, p. 13 for estimates of cost, p. 14 for prediction on Korea

¹⁰²NARA record group 273, National Security Council 68/3, December 8, 1950, p. 14

forces sent to Korea, and maintained this conviction even after feared Soviet thrusts into Yugoslavia and Iran thankfully failed to materialise.

The battles in Korea constituted only one of three elements that absorbed the bulk of the military spending, the other two being the American military deployment to Europe and investment for a long-term development of military technology. This last category included basic and applied research, and the creation of production capacities. As late as June of 1951, a full year after the beginning of American involvement in Korea, and a few weeks before the beginning of armistice talks there, the Office of Defense Mobilization would claim that "Military production is still mainly in the 'tooling up' stage -- the period during which orders are placed, blueprints drawn, subcontracts worked out, and production lines organized."¹⁰³ That this was so was not primarily a result of sloppy planning. Rather, the build up - its goals, its funding, and its organisation - was based on preparation for a potential war several years in the future. More weapons could have been produced during 1950-51 if the administration had been determined at any cost to circumvent the bottlenecks of limited machine tools, and too few engineers and draftsmen. However, the demand was not so immediate, and it was

¹⁰³.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Central Files; Confidential Files, box 16, folder on the Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20 1951, page II-1

more cost efficient to create a smoothly rising curve in military preparedness, investing in research and design, rather than produce larger quantities of existing weapons.

The Chinese intervention only accelerated existing trends. After the Chinese counter-offensive began, the President, operating on the advice of the National Security Council, ordered the build-up, which he had already approved, to be completed by 30 June 1952, instead of 30 June 1954, as originally planned.¹⁰⁴ This wasn't because of an anticipated need for more force in Korea, since planners were still operating on the assumption that the conflict there would end by 30 June 1951.¹⁰⁵ It was because the Truman administration assumed the Chinese intervention was indicative of a more aggressive policy by Soviet allied nations everywhere.

The Korean War was so useful to the arms build-up faction that there has been speculation that the armistice negotiations were intentionally prolonged in order to complete the deployment of US forces to Europe. As Ambrose has written, in light of the official claim that the armistice negotiations were prolonged because of differences over the rights of repatriated prisoners to choose their place of return, "Congress would not accept a policy of intervention in Europe and isolation in Asia. As it was, Truman was in trouble

¹⁰⁴Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 109

¹⁰⁵Condit, *Test of War*, p. 247

because he spent most of the money Congress voted for defense on NATO at a time when most Americans assumed that the effort was going into Korea. If the Korean War came to a sudden end, so would NSC-68 and the entire program that went with it. It was necessary to keep the small war going until rearmament was complete. This was the meaning of the American rejection of a Soviet offer on June 23 [1951] for a pure and simple military armistice in the field."¹⁰⁶ While evidence to support this claim was not found during the writing of this dissertation, it cannot be wholly rejected. However, Truman may also have been affected by the bad publicity the Americans and British had received in 1945 for repatriating Russians captured in Germany to Stalin.

4.4 Expansion of the Fiscal 1951 American Defence Budget After the Start of the Korean War

As we have seen, the pre-Korean War proposals for a fiscal 1951 budget suggested that fiscal 1951 would have little quantitative or qualitative difference from the previous two budgets. Before the

¹⁰⁶Stephen Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 130

budget had passed, however, the North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel.

Congress immediately granted the DoD permission to spend funds from the fiscal 1951 budget. After Johnson lost his policy battle against the use of ground forces in Korea, he seems to have decided that he could no longer afford to be a budget cutter. He delegated to the services the right to spend fiscal 1951 money on July 14,¹⁰⁷ while Congress continued to work on the budget. By the time it passed, on September 6, 1950, the \$14.680 billion budget¹⁰⁸ was vastly insufficient, since more than that had already been spent on the war.¹⁰⁹ Truman told Frederick Lawton, his Director of the Bureau of the Budget, that he was dissatisfied, but had to sign it, given the needs of the war.¹¹⁰

As we have seen, support was very high on Capitol Hill for the war and a general arms build-up, and the Truman administration had little trouble finding funds. The only proposal to blunt the thrust of the arms build-up that the sceptical Taft felt comfortable enough to make in the mood of pro-military hysteria following the start of the war was that the tax increases to pay for the funds should be

¹⁰⁷Condit, *Test of War*, p. 225

¹⁰⁸PRO FO 371/90989, AU1225/1, "Annual Report on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

¹⁰⁹Condit, *Test of War*, p. 224

¹¹⁰HSTL, Papers of Frederick Lawton, Box 6, Folder on Meetings with the President, Memorandum for the Record, September 6 1950

proposed before the November elections. Truman, devoted to balanced budgets, happily obliged.¹¹¹

Harry Truman perceived the events in Korea to mean that the Soviet Union was openly challenging the west militarily. He wanted more arms and armies everywhere. On July 19, he publicly announced that he would soon ask Congress for \$10 billion in military appropriations supplemental to the budget.¹¹² As we will later see, he also used this date to launch his bid for price and wage controls. The new willingness of both the executive and the legislative branch to dole out money for an arms build-up led Acheson to proclaim on 21 July that "I do not recall any period of four weeks in the history of the United States when so much has been accomplished."¹¹³

However, it seems that although Truman changed his views on the necessity for large standing armies overseas, he would never relinquish his distrust of the professional officer corps. He would back huge new defence appropriations spending, but would dole out the money in individual packages for specific plans. The President told Frederick Lawton, his Director of the Bureau of the Budget on July 22, not to put "any more money than necessary at this time in the hands of the Military."¹¹⁴ Truman considered it possible that the

¹¹¹PRO FO371/81692

¹¹²Condit, *Test of War*, p. 225

¹¹³*Department of State Bulletin*, July 31 1950 The quote was from a July 21 press conference.

¹¹⁴Condit, *Test of War*, p. 227

military would use the war as an excuse to fund every conceivable unnecessary project, such as those his World War Two Committee on Procurement had uncovered. Fraud, duplication, and waste had to be avoided.

The money would have to come from specific supplemental appropriations bills. There would be four of these in fiscal 1951.

The Pentagon, in response to Truman's request, unveiled the first proposal, for \$10.6 billion. This developed into the first supplemental bill. Truman trimmed it to approximately \$10.487 billion and submitted it to Congress on July 24. It provided \$4.535 billion for the Air Force, \$3.064 billion for the Army, \$2.648 billion for the Navy, and an additional \$240 million contingency fund.¹¹⁵

Then the Department of Defense, due to the urgency of the war, submitted requests for more funds to the President on July 29. These were for \$950 million for naval aircraft, \$85 million for Army construction projects, \$90 million for similar Navy projects, and \$35 million more for the contingency fund (for a total of \$1.16 billion).¹¹⁶ On the recommendation of the Bureau of the Budget, Truman

¹¹⁵Testimony by Louis Johnson, Secretary of Defense, in Congress, July 25 1950, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, The Supplemental Appropriation Bill for 1951: Hearings, 81 Congress, second session (1950), 4, 8

PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

¹¹⁶Condit, *Test of War*, p. 227

trimmed \$4 million from the Navy projects and submitted the \$1.156 billion request to Congress on August 4.¹¹⁷

Rather than pass the new requests separately from the first proposed package, Congress combined the two. The House of Representatives passed the two, intact, as one bill, for approximately \$11.643 billion.¹¹⁸ The Senate then added \$93.188 million in extra appropriations, to cover new requests for wool clothing, ship construction facilities, Naval medical care, and other items.¹¹⁹ A conference settled the final amount at approximately \$11.729 billion.¹²⁰ This supplemental defence appropriations request was combined with a number of other funding requests. These included a request for more than \$4 billion dollars in supplemental foreign aid, plus new money for all sorts of domestic, non-defence needs. The new bill totalled approximately \$17 billion.¹²¹ Among other things, it provided funds for an expansion of the Air Force to 58 groups.¹²² It passed on September 27.¹²³

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, p. 227

¹¹⁸.HSTL, White House Bill File, box 81, Senate "Calendar No. 2571", p. 2

¹¹⁹.*ibid.*, pp. 18-21

¹²⁰Condit, *Test of War*, p. 227

¹²¹.HSTL, White House Bill File, box 81, Senate "Calendar No. 2571", pp. 1-2

¹²².PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

¹²³Condit, *Test of War*, p. 227

The preparation of the second supplemental appropriations bill began before the first one had even passed. On August 24, Secretary of the Army Frank Pace informed Johnson that the Army wanted a bigger force. He claimed that the first supplemental appropriations bill had been based on the use of 4 divisions in Korea, but the US would soon be using 8. Also, the Army was spending money on equipping the South Koreans, for which there had been no mention in either the fiscal year defence budget or the supplemental appropriations act. Pace declared that the Army would run short of funds in five major areas between the end of September and the middle of December.¹²⁴ Johnson and Pace brought up this matter with the President, but Truman decided that he should not introduce another appropriations bill until at least the middle of November. Some military assistance funds were diverted to the Army in the mean time.

The Joint Chiefs got to work on producing an appropriations package that could be ready by mid-November. The first stage, establishing target needs, was accomplished on September 22. It based needs on the assumptions that the Korean War would be over by June 30 1951, and that priority would go to Korea (this would seem to be obvious in war time, but of course the administration was more

¹²⁴NARA, memorandum from the Secretary of the Army for the Secretary of Defense, August 24 1950, record group 330, CD 111, also a memo from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), September 7 1950, record group 330, CD 111 (1951)

interested in building up American capacities generally, and particularly in Europe). The Army was to have 17 divisions and 1,263,000 personnel by the end of fiscal 1951, with all overseas units and half of all domestically based units to be at 100% strength and the rest at 85%, the Navy to have 322 major war ships, 12 carrier groups (with naval combat units to be at 85% strength), and 689,000 sailors, the Air Force to have 70 wings and 688,000 personnel, and the Marine Corps to have 166,000 men.¹²⁵ Funding such a program, if passed, would cost approximately \$20 billion.

Having signed defence bills for over \$25 billion in September alone, Truman was concerned about costs. Fearing restrictions from the President (this was especially likely given the Army's success in the immediate stages after the September 15 Inchon amphibious landing), the JCS scaled back the plan on November 13 by removing 1 Army division and 2 Air Force wings, and eliminating the planned rehabilitation of certain reserve factories.¹²⁶ The 68 wing Air Force was to have 25 strategic bomber groups, 28 tactical air support groups, and 15 air defence groups.¹²⁷

¹²⁵NARA, memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, September 22 1950 record group 218, CCS 370

¹²⁶NARA memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, November 13 1950, record group 330, CD 111 (1951)

¹²⁷PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

The JCS cuts were not enough trimming for the President. He had the Bureau of the Budget cut the JCS plan by almost 50%, reducing it to \$10.9 billion. However, war in Korea intervened again. The Chinese attack, beginning November 25 (before the bill had been introduced in Congress), created a new hunger for funds. The supplemental bill was rewritten, this time for a budget of slightly more than \$16.845 billion,¹²⁸ and introduced in Congress on December 1.¹²⁹ It was part of a package including appropriation bills for the Atomic Energy Commission (\$1.05 billion), the Selective Service System, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Coast Guard, the Bureau of Public Roads, the Subversive Activities Control Board, and others, all forming a package of more than \$18.081 billion in spending.¹³⁰ The supplemental defence budget bill was to have the following costs: Military personnel - \$1.687 billion, Operation and Maintenance - \$3.935 billion, aircraft procurement - \$1.888 billion, ship procurement - \$381 million, other procurement - \$6.325 billion, and other expenses.¹³¹ When related costs were added to the aircraft procurement budget, the total was approximately \$2.144 billion.¹³² This was to be added to

¹²⁸HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Bill File, box 84, folder on bill files, January 4 to January 6 1951, Senate "Calendar No. 2679", chart on p. 2

¹²⁹*Public Papers of the Presidents; Harry S. Truman, 1950*, Special Message to the Congress Requesting Additional Appropriations for Defense, December 1 1950

¹³⁰House of Representatives, 81st Congress, 2nd Session, Report No. 3193, Second Supplemental Appropriations Bill, 1951, December 15, 1950, as contained in PRO FO 371/90963

¹³¹.ibid.

¹³².ibid.

previous procurement funds that the Air Force was saving, giving the Air Force an estimated \$9 billion in cash and contract authority for the purchase of aircraft.¹³³ Considering that these funds were to buy planes in addition to the more than 1,400 military aircraft previously purchased and paid but not yet delivered, it is clear that the increase in air power was on a radical scale.¹³⁴ It was expected that the rate of aircraft construction would increase 500% in one year.¹³⁵

Even more staggering however, were the Army's costs. The Army was to receive a total of more than \$9.211 billion, compared to the Navy's \$2.979 billion, and the Air Force's than \$4.603 billion.¹³⁶ A comparison of these figures shows the trend after the beginning of the Korean War to reconstruct the ground forces, which had lost most budget battles with the Air Force in the pre-Korea era when relying on atomic bombing capacities was the prime military policy.

Coming as it did during what was certainly the most critical point of the war, and at what, with the possible exception of the Cuban missile crisis, was perhaps the most dangerous point of the Cold War, the bill brought out many questions about American foreign policy in general. For three weeks Congress grilled senior administration

¹³³.*ibid.*

¹³⁴.*ibid.*

¹³⁵.*Public Papers of the Presidents; Harry S. Truman, 1950, Radio and Television Report to the American People on the National Emergency, December 5 1950*

¹³⁶HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Bill File, box 84, folder on bill files, January 4 to January 6 1951, Senate "Calendar No. 2679", pp. 15-16

officials about the future. Why did the US need the money? Why not more money, on the scale of World War II? Why, the China Lobby asked, not pursue an expanded war in Asia? Marshall, Deputy Secretary of Defense Lovett, and Bradley testified on behalf of the administration that the budget was just right, since it meant a commitment to establishing the facilities for a long term build up that might or might not prove necessary, and not an unnecessary expansion of funds that would be squandered.¹³⁷

The 81st Congress delayed the bill until 2 January 1951, its last day of existence, but passed the bill intact, along with two other defence bills.¹³⁸ One was a \$3.1 billion civil defence bill, with the money to be spent by federal, state, and local agencies.¹³⁹ The other authorised the President to modify defence contracts so as to start construction, using some of the funds just appropriated.¹⁴⁰ Truman signed these bills despite the fact that he was concerned with language in the authorisation bill that could be interpreted as preventing the

¹³⁷.Condit, *Test of War*, p. 239

¹³⁸HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Bill File, box 84, folder on bill files, January 4 to January 6 1951, Senate "Calendar No. 2679", chart on p. 2

The Wall Street Journal, "What's News-World Wide", January 3, 1951, p. 1

¹³⁹.*The Wall Street Journal*, "What's News - World Wide", January 3, 1951, p. 1, "Washington Checklist", same day, p. 9

¹⁴⁰.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Bill File, folder on bill files from January 4 to January 6 1951, box 84, Truman's message to Congress on January 6, 1951, p. 1

executive branch from transferring properties between military and civilian departments without express Congressional approval.¹⁴¹

There was a third supplemental defence appropriations bill that did not include any funds for the military.¹⁴² It was for approximately \$365 million, doled out to 18 agencies, for civil defence, for the Voice of America radio network that transmitted American propaganda, and for other Cold War items.¹⁴³ One of its provisions was the Kem amendment. This declared that until the war in Korea was over, the US would not provide aid to any nation that traded items considered "useful" in the manufacture of military equipment with Soviet bloc states.¹⁴⁴ The Kem amendment was a source of friction within NATO, since some European governments considered the eastern European nations and the USSR to be valuable trading partners, and feared that a strict interpretation of the amendment might even make the importation of such basic items as coarse grains and timber from the USSR difficult.¹⁴⁵ The amendment seemed, to its critics, to confirm Soviet claims that American aid was a means to reorient European trade across the Atlantic. Truman, who vocally opposed the

¹⁴¹.ibid.

¹⁴².Condit, *Test of War*, p. 240

¹⁴³.PRO FO 371/90904, AU 1013/25, Weekly Political Summary by Sir Oliver Franks, 2 June 1951

¹⁴⁴.PRO FO 371/90929, AU 1052/11, Memorandum from Evasion on Visit of American Senators, 9 July 1951

¹⁴⁵.ibid.

amendment, managed to delay its implementation while trying to create alternative legislation.¹⁴⁶

The fourth supplemental defence appropriations bill of fiscal 1951 was for \$6,642,668,000, of which \$6,379,000,000 went to the Department of Defense, and \$59 million to the Atomic Energy Commission.¹⁴⁷ It was signed into law on 31 May 1951.¹⁴⁸ This brought total fiscal year military spending to \$48,201,500,000.¹⁴⁹ This roughly equalled the total Department of Defense appropriations for the four previous fiscal years (1947-1950).¹⁵⁰

During the fiscal year, there had also been a \$4 billion bill for new military assistance, passed on August 1.

Johnson, with his typical aggressiveness, sought to control the arms build up from his office in the Pentagon. He told the service secretaries and the Joint Chiefs on July 3 that they were not to seek individual appropriations bills from Congress, or to make any public speeches. Everything would have to go through the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Johnson also tried to interfere in the President's

¹⁴⁶.ibid.

¹⁴⁷.*The World Almanac, 1952*, p. 223; Condit, *Test of War*, p. 240, although Condit rounds the figure to \$6.380 billion

¹⁴⁸.*The World Almanac 1952*, p. 223

¹⁴⁹.ibid., p. 223; Condit, *Test of War*, p. 241, claims that the total fiscal year appropriations were actually \$48.182 billion, a slightly lower figure than the one given here.

¹⁵⁰.Condit, *Test of War*, p. 240

directives on Far Eastern policy, with Johnson preferring to give MacArthur a much looser rein when making public pronouncements on foreign policy. Still feuding with Acheson, Johnson proposed to Presidential Assistant Averell Harriman that they should co-ordinate attempts to remove Acheson, in the hope that Harriman would become the next Secretary of State, but Harriman balked at the proposal.¹⁵¹

Johnson's efforts at consolidating power in his own hands convinced Truman that Johnson needed to be fired if the administration was to have the unity necessary to complete the arms build-up. Johnson had served his purpose in banging heads together at the Pentagon during the harsh inter-service bickering in the late 1940's, and he had helped consolidate the power of the Office of Secretary of Defense, which under Forrestal had been weak. But the press blamed Johnson for the poor showing of the army in the first few weeks of the Korean campaign, since he had been so publicity hungry as a budget cutter in the time preceding the war. The British Naval Attache in Washington referred to him as "one of the most unpopular men in the United States".¹⁵²

¹⁵¹.Rudy Abramson, *Spanning the Century: The Life of W. Averell Harriman, 1891-1986* (New York: William Morrow, 1992), pp. 456-457

¹⁵².PRO FO 371/90987, AU 1213/1

Truman asked Johnson to resign in September (Truman later claimed he had made up his mind to fire Johnson in late June). Truman had to bring Johnson back a second time and order him to resign, since Johnson, ever assertive, was trying to find a way to avoid resigning. On hearing the news of Johnson's departure, Acheson and Nitze had a champagne toast.¹⁵³ Johnson went to work at the Washington office of the law firm Steptoe and Johnson, a company he had served with in his first job in Clarksburg, West Virginia before the First World War.

Truman nominated George Catlett Marshall, former Chief of Staff of the US Army and Secretary of State, to replace Johnson. This led to a loud uproar from China Lobby Republicans, who claimed that Marshall had not been energetic enough in preventing Mao's rise to power.¹⁵⁴ But there was so much support from other Congressmen for the ageing war hero that Truman was able to get legislation overturning the section of the 1947 National Security Act that barred someone who had been on active duty within the past 10 years from taking the post that was supposed to represent civilian control of the military.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³Nitze, *Hiroshima to Glasnost*, p. 105

¹⁵⁴.Congressional Quarterly Service, *Congress and the Nation*, p. 261

¹⁵⁵.*ibid.*, p. 261

4.5 The Fiscal 1952 American Defence Budget

The fiscal 1952 American arms budget was transformed by the Korean War. As we have seen, the proposals for fiscal 1952 under consideration in early 1950 were for a budget similar to that of 1950, but the war changed that, more than tripling its eventual size.

In the first hectic months of the war, work on fiscal 1952 was slow. On 10 August, Johnson informed his staff that work on fiscal '52 would have to be delayed until fiscal 1951 could be reconsidered and the costs of NSC-68 calculated.¹⁵⁶ These calculations, which took the form of NSC-68/1, NSC-68/2, etc. became the basis for budgeting fiscal 1952 through fiscal 1955. These documents set targets, but it was recognised that these were likely to be modified, and had value primarily as a starting point for all discussions.

As we have seen, the new fiscal 1951 budget was passed on 6 September 1950. As one of Johnson's last tasks as Secretary of Defense, he ordered the resumption of fiscal '52 preparations on 13 September 1950.¹⁵⁷ By this time, NSC-68 was being fleshed out. On 21 September, NSC-68/1 was finished.

¹⁵⁶NARA memorandum from the Secretary of Defense for service secretaries, record group 330, CD 381, August 10, 1950

¹⁵⁷NARA memorandum from the Secretary of Defense to the service Secretaries, record group 330, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense files, "Supplemental Approval July and December 1950" folder, September 13 1950

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, armed with knowledge of planned funding, now came up with estimates of troop levels. On 22 September 1950, they estimated fiscal 1952 manpower at 1,350,000 for the Army, 863,000 for the Air Force, 712,000 for the Navy, and 170,000 for the Marines.¹⁵⁸

The fiscal '52 budget was similar to the supplemental 1951 budgets in that plans kept changing as the situation in Korea changed. It seemed in the early autumn that the war would soon be won, so Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett instructed the Chiefs to lower their estimated needs.¹⁵⁹ The Chiefs did this on 13 November, decreasing their troop estimates from 3.1 million to 2.8 million.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, this still was estimated to cost almost \$40 billion in fiscal 1952, a massive increase that was accounted for by the global build-up, not costs in Korea.

Once the People's Republic of China intervened on a large scale in November, all of the estimates had to be revised upwards. It was decided to hasten the build-up. NSC-68/4, completed in December 1950 to replace NSC-68/2, called for the completion of the build-up by the end of fiscal 1952 (June 30, 1952) rather than the end of fiscal 1954

¹⁵⁸NARA memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Secretary of Defense, record group 218, CCS 370, September 22 1950

¹⁵⁹Condit, *Test of War*, p. 245

¹⁶⁰NARA memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, record group 330, CD 111 (1951), November 13 1950

(30 June 1954).¹⁶¹ The Joint Chiefs of Staff were informed of this at a 6 December meeting,¹⁶² and sent detailed estimates of fiscal 1952 force goals to the National Security Council on 14 December.¹⁶³ These called for an 18 division Army, 397 major combat vessels for the Navy, and 95 wings for the Air Force.¹⁶⁴ Considering that before Korea the JCS had been pleading for a fiscal 1952 force of 10 divisions, 281 major combat vessels, and 58 wings, the scope of the changes in late 1950 is clear.¹⁶⁵ In fact, this period, immediately after the Chinese counterattack, may have marked the point where budgetary estimates reached their maximum in the entire 1945-1960 era. Lovett informed the Bureau of the Budget on 20 December that the planned budget for fiscal 1952 might end up being \$60 billion, which would have been a nearly five fold increase in two years.¹⁶⁶

The Bureau of the Budget and the President thought these new figures were too high. As we have seen, Truman decided almost immediately after the Chinese counterattack that his administration would not widen the war, and would be willing to accept a divided Korea if it meant an end to the conflict. Although new funding to

¹⁶¹NARA, record group 273, NSC-68/2 and NSC-68/4, 1950

¹⁶²FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, pp. 474-77, December 6 1950 memorandum attached to the December 14 1950 memo from Marshall to the President.

¹⁶³FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, December 14 1950, p. 474

¹⁶⁴Wells, "Buildup", p.185

¹⁶⁵.ibid., p.185

¹⁶⁶NARA, record group 330, cd 111 (general), December 20 1950

blunt the Chinese counterattack was necessary, the war could still be contained. Much of the funding was going to Europe, and the situation, already perceived as extremely dangerous there, had not become radically more so with the Chinese intervention. Only the date of completing the build up had to be changed, not the scope of the build up. It was still believed that the US had to focus on a long term strategy of containment of the Soviet Union, which involved an end to the fighting with the Chinese, a maintenance of American economic well being, and the creation of the physical plant to keep the American military strong for years into the future. Truman was worried that too much spending would have an adverse inflationary impact, and he ordered the Bureau of the Budget to discuss lowering the planned fiscal 1952 budget with the Department of Defense.

These talks, in early 1951, took place at a time when the Department of Defense was preoccupied with completing the supplemental bills to flesh out the fiscal '51 budget, and it was a long time before fiscal '52 could be finished. It was not until April that a compromise was worked out: the Truman administration decided to introduce a budget to Capitol Hill, on April 30, 1951, for \$56.2 billion, not including a separate \$4.5 billion bill for military construction.¹⁶⁷ Although the Korean War at this time was in one of its bloodiest stages, the administration confidently expected that its attrition

¹⁶⁷NARA, record group 330, cd 111 (1952), letter from the Director of the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of Defense, April 23 1951

campaign would soon force the Chinese to negotiate, and so the budget was based on the (as it turned out) accurate prediction that any fighting in Korea during fiscal '52 would be on a smaller scale than at present. Therefore, war supplies, such as ammunition, were not as favoured as much as long-term investments in technology. The military was to spend less on armament in breadth and more on armament in depth.

The armistice negotiations in Korea, which were to last until July of 1953, began in July of 1951, and the level of fighting died down. Although American forces faced a significantly lower level of conflict than before (there were sporadic battles over hills, fought mostly to win bargaining leverage), Truman still pushed for the continuation of the arms build-up. The build-up had never been primarily about Korea. Rather, it had always been, primarily, an attempt to build a conventional force in central Europe that would end the Soviet advantage there, and, as Truman informed Congress days after the armistice negotiations had begun,

We have no reason to believe that the events in Korea have fundamentally changed the basic Soviet intentions . . . we must press on to build our defenses.¹⁶⁸

Congress seemed to agree. The House passed a version of the Truman budget for approximately \$56 billion, and the Senate passed a

¹⁶⁸Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, text available in PRO FO 371/90951, AU1104/3

budget for approximately \$59.5 billion in September.¹⁶⁹ When a joint House-Senate committee finally produced the fiscal 1952 military budget in October of 1951, more than three months after the start of the fiscal year, it was for approximately \$56.94 billion.¹⁷⁰ In addition, the public works bill was slashed to \$3.9 billion before being passed.

The Air Force created its 95-wing program (surpassing the 70 wings it already had), and won theoretical approval to eventually expand to 143 wings.¹⁷¹

The fiscal 1952 budget represented a stage of military preparedness that would be representative of American doctrine for the next several decades. While the actual production of many weapons was not completed until well into fiscal '53, '54, or even '55, it was fiscal '52 that saw the fleshing out of deployed divisions, the atomic research, and all the other components of the arms build-up.

¹⁶⁹PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/40, Weekly Political Summary by Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 8-14 September 1951

¹⁷⁰PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/44, Weekly Political Summary by Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 6-12 October 1952

Note that Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 494, claims that the fiscal 1952 budget appropriated \$20.6 billion for the Air Force, \$13.2 billion for the Army, and \$12.6 billion for the Navy. Condit, *Test of War*, p. 258, claims that the budget was for \$55.5 billion

¹⁷¹.Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 494

GLOBALISATION

5.1 American Deployment to Europe and the Promise of German Rearmament

Western European governments generally supported the American decision to intervene in Korea because it showed American willingness to prevent Soviet expansion.¹ The British sent a sizeable contingent of troops to Korea, both, as a Foreign Office memorandum put it, "in order to safeguard the future of the United Nations Organisation, and to deter the Soviet Union from attempting aggression elsewhere (e.g. in Persia)".² However, the critical result of

¹.BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject Meeting of the NSC in the Cabinet Room at the White House, June 28, 1950

The Los Angeles Times, "Korea War Shakes Democratic World", by the Associated Press, June 27 1950, p. 2; *The Los Angeles Times*, "Dutch Ministers Confer on Korea Invasion Crisis", by the Associated Press, June 26 1950, p. 6

².PRO FO 371/84058, Foreign Office Memorandum of 26 June 1950

the war, for Britain and for the rest of Europe, did not lie in Korea, nor in the UN, nor in Persia, but in Germany. It was the question of how to address the Soviet preponderance of military power along the dividing line between the two German states that most vexed Western Europe in 1950-1955. The important result of the war was the development of a new NATO combat-ready army in the eastern areas of the Federal Republic of Germany, with six divisions of US troops deployed.³ These American forces, and the US military aid funds, shifted the balance of power on the continent. As Churchill said towards the end of the war, "Korea does not really matter now. I'd never heard of the place until I was seventy-four. Its importance lies in the fact that it has led to the re-arming of America".⁴

The inclination, present before the Korean conflict, to lobby Washington to at least maintain, and perhaps increase, American military commitments in Europe, became a primary foreign policy objective of most European NATO governments after June 1950. The American occupation forces in Germany, and the three bomber groups in England, did not constitute a powerful fighting force, and the North Korean outburst suggested that the world situation might soon become more violent.

³The British commitment to maintain four divisions in NATO came later, in 1954, as part of the settlement reached with the French on the issue of German rearmament.

⁴quoted in Bruce Cumings and Jon Halliday, *Korea: The Unknown War* (London: Viking, 1988), p. 204

Europeans were well aware of the weaknesses of existing armies in Western Europe, and had never been comfortable with the reliance on the atomic deterrent, even before the Soviets achieved atomic fission. No matter who decided to use nuclear weapons, the Europeans considered it probable that the bombs would be dropped on Europe, maybe by the Americans as a means of destroying Soviet forces as they advanced across Europe, and maybe by the Soviets, either as a military tactic or in retaliation for US strikes on the Soviet Union. It was not beyond reason to imagine that the Americans would bomb European industrial areas rather than allow them to fall into Soviet hands. Wanting American economic and military capacities to balance their power with the Soviet bloc, but not wanting this power to be manifested through the use of nuclear weapons, the Europeans actively sought greater American commitments of conventional forces in central Europe.

The potential parallel between what had happened in divided Korea, and what the East German Army could try in divided Germany, was not lost. Walter Ulbricht, the Communist party leader in East Germany, had even hinted at this when he had claimed that "if the Americans in their imperialist arrogance believe that the Germans have less national consciousness than the Koreans, then they have fundamentally deceived themselves".⁵ The fact that the Soviet

⁵.quoted in Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p. 124

military was holding large scale manoeuvres in East Germany at the time of the North Korean invasion seems to have heightened fears.⁶

There were opponents of the American deployment within Europe, mostly the same people who had opposed the creation of NATO. The hard left, a number of nationalists on the right, and members of Communist parties manipulated by Moscow argued that the United States was guilty of unnecessary meddling. There was also a sizeable minority of the public that feared that by intervening against the Communists in Korea and by sending troops to Europe, the Americans might provoke the Soviets into war.

The majority, however, sided with the thrust of Truman's policy. The Norwegian Ambassador, Wilhelm Morgenstierne, told Acheson that the Norwegians felt that the benefits of the American policies far outweighed the risks.⁷ The Berlin newspaper *Der Abend* claimed that a defeat of the west in Korea would mean "that the Kremlin would be tempted more strongly to continue the series of unpunished attacks with new actions of surprise".⁸ *The Economist*, of London, describing Truman's speech regarding the use of force to prevent Soviet sponsored aggression, wrote "That is the voice of Palmerston . . . the warning has gone out - to the east German Bereitschaften, to the

⁶.*The New York Times*, "Germans Warned On Russian Move", Jack Raymond, June 28 1950, p. 9

⁷.BLHC, Official Conversations and Meetings of Dean Acheson, Memorandum of Conversation, Subject Korean Crisis, June 30 1950

⁸.quoted in *The New York Times*, "Germans Warned on Russian Move", Jack Raymond, June 28 1950, p. 9

Cominform conspiring against Tito, to the would-be 'liberators' of south-east Asia. The policy of encouraging situations of strength is serious."⁹ In 1953, the French newspaper *L'Aurore* would opine: "What would have happened if Truman had given a free hand to the Communists in Korea? It seems clear enough to us. After Korea it would have been Indochina. After Indochina it would have been the whole of Southeast Asia. And what would have then prevented the Communists, faced with disarmed nations, from attacking Europe?"¹⁰ As Bohlen would later write, "after Korea, where the Communist section of a divided country launched a military assault on the non-Communist section, a mere pledge on paper was no longer enough. Europe overreacted to Korea as much as, or more than, the United States."¹¹ Western European political leaders hoped that American troops might placate public worries, and perhaps send Moscow the message of firmness that needed to be sent.

Consequently, the Truman administration's desire, following the start of the Korean War, to create a preponderance of NATO conventional power in Europe coincided precisely with European goals. The result would be the creation of a large American combat force in Germany that would remain for decades.

⁹*The Economist*, "Test Case", July 1 1950

¹⁰quoted in Stueck, *Korean War*, p. 345; for similar fears, also see *Los Angeles Times*, "Italians Alarmed About Korean War; Fear New Conflict", June 26 1950, p. 2

¹¹Bohlen, *Witness*, p. 304

The second major issue in the build-up of NATO forces was the rearmament of Germany, which proved to be more controversial. Before the Korean War, the British and the Dutch had already been discussing German rearmament, with the Dutch States General [Parliament] even publicly debating it,¹² but neither side had come out directly in favour of it. The Dutch Prime Minister, Dirk Stikker, declared on 13 May 1950 that German rearmament was "premature", and that "it is essential that the defence of Western Europe be strengthened first".¹³ In the US, German rearmament had been privately considered by the State Department in late 1949,¹⁴ General Bradley had commented publicly that, from a strictly military point of view, German rearmament was desirable,¹⁵ and even John McCloy, the American High Commissioner in Germany, had hinted, in March 1950, that if there was a build-up of western Europe in general,

¹².PRO FO 371/85087, C2436, "Report and Comment on the Attitude in the Dutch Parliament on the Rearmament of Germany", from Sir P. Nicholls, 4 April 1950

¹³.PRO FO 371/85087, C3360, "Notes From Which M. Stikker Spoke on May 13th 1950 at the Meeting of the 3 Foreign Ministers", 13 May 1950

¹⁴Leffler, *Preponderance*, chapter 8 The US publicly denied it was considering German rearmament in this era. For an example, see PRO FO 371, 85048, C3183G, "Draft Brief on German Defence Question for the Secretary of State at the Foreign Ministers Talks", 11 May 1950

The British government had been considering admitting Germany to NATO even before the Korean war

PRO FO 371, 85048, C3136G, 28 April 1950, also see, in the same folder, C2416, 4 April 1950, by the British Chiefs of Staff Committee, which recommended that "the Chiefs of Staff should inform the Foreign Office of the military advantages of creating a German Army."

¹⁵.PRO FO 371/85087, C3856, "General Bradley's Attitude Towards Re-Arming Western Germany", 7 June 1950

German rearmament could be considered.¹⁶ However, Truman had termed a proposal for rearming Germany "as wrong as can be" as late as 16 June 1950.¹⁷

He rapidly changed his mind on the issue after the start of the Korean conflict nine days later. The possible detrimental effects of a rearmed Germany, such as a potential regrowth of German militarism and/or a West German effort to reunite Germany, still existed, but the potentially positive impacts of having German armies at hand in the event of a war with the Soviets now outweighed the negatives. There was also strong pressure from both the military and Congress to encourage German rearmament. Congressional approval for appropriations allowing a deployment of US forces in Europe and/or increased US military aid to Europe would be difficult to obtain if the impression existed that the United States would be paying a disproportionate share of the expenses for the defence of Europe. The Truman administration became so pro-German rearmament that it rejected proposals for a partial German rearmament. These included suggestions for enlisting Germans into the American Army, increasing the monetary contribution of the Germans to NATO, or building a paramilitary force similar to the East German Volkspolizei, which the British were for. Washington considered them to be

¹⁶.PRO FO 371/85087, C2093, "Question and Answer By Mr. McCloy on Mr. Churchill's Statement Supporting a German Armed Force", 24 March 1950

¹⁷.HSTL, Memorandum from the President to the Secretary of State, National Security Council Meeting 60, 16 June 1950, President's Secretary's Files, Box 208

insufficient and/or not agreeable to the Germans.¹⁸ A proposal sent to the White House by McCloy calling for German rearmament within a pan-European Army, was dismissed as being too difficult and time consuming to implement.¹⁹

Tapping into the vast German economy was vital for the arms build-up effort, but Adenauer's government was not willing to provide the extra funds unless they were for German forces. Adenauer sensed what American polls of the German populace revealed: that the German people wanted rearmament, and that this desire more than compensated for their fears that rearming might aggravate tensions.²⁰ The German government had been concerned, even before the Korean War, that it was not being told by the occupying powers of their plans in the event of the war,²¹ and was sufficiently shocked by American defeats in the first few weeks of the Korean War that it began demanding explanations of how the US intended to succeed in the event of a war with the Soviets in Europe.²² By September, Adenauer

¹⁸.proposal for the enlistment of Germans into the American Army, and the British *Volkspolizei* proposal are mentioned in Thomas A. Schwartz, "The 'Skeleton Key' - American Foreign Policy, European Unity, and German Rearmament, 1949-54", *Central European History* (December 1986), p. 374

¹⁹.*ibid.*, pp. 375-76

²⁰.DDEL, The Pre-Presidential Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, box 75, McCloy folder, 29 January 1952 pamphlet entitled "German Evaluations of NATO", see especially p. 20 for general support for rearmament

Despite this general support for rearmament, there was some concern that many of the younger Germans had become so pacifist after the War that they were opposed to conscription. PRO FO 371/85058, C679

²¹.PRO FO 371, 85048, C3136G, 28 April 1950

²².Schwartz, "Skeleton", p. 374

was requesting that "13 armoured divisions [be] transferred to the Eastern borders of the Federal Republic" as rapidly as possible. Otherwise, "the Soviets will take advantage of our defenselessness in order to begin a preventive intervention in Germany".²³ However, this new sense of desperate need did not necessarily place Germany at the whim of the NATO powers. On the contrary, Germany's bargaining leverage was increased. With the outbreak of the war, the British and the Dutch rapidly came to favour German rearmament. Knowing that most NATO countries wanted German forces allowed the Adenauer government to use the possibility of a German military contribution as a negotiating ploy, insisting that Germany gain a voice in NATO planning, and proposing a direct link between the formation of German military units and the removal of controls by the International Ruhr Authority.²⁴ Adenauer was so assertive that he virtually dictated the terms for German rearmament. In one meeting McCloy made 122 concessions to obtain Adenauer's co-operation, leading some to joke that "Adenauer is the real McCloy".²⁵

The biggest obstacle to German rearmament was the French, who had one eye on the western balance of power with the Soviets and the other on the French balance of power with Germany. They wished to

²³.quoted in LaFeber, "NATO"

²⁴.*The New York Times*, "Big Four to Meet, Schuman Asserts", by Howard Callender, December 13 1950; *The Wall Street Journal*, "What's News- World Wide", 3 January 1951, p. 1

²⁵.LaFeber, *American Age*, p. 522

prevent the inclusion of Germany in the North Atlantic Treaty and to avert a revival of the German Army. The French government announced that "it is quite impossible to even discuss the question of a restoration of Germany's military forces".²⁶ To ally with Germany against the Soviets would be to contravene France's experiences of the first half of the century, during which time it was usually the Russian Empire/Soviet Union that guaranteed French security against German ambitions. The French saw German rearmament as a slippery slope. They had been persuaded to allow German production of material for NATO units, and had even consented to allowing the West German state to have a police force.²⁷ If they also consented on German rearmament as a NATO nation, would they eventually be asked to agree to ever larger increases in German military power, and then see German leaving NATO to become an independent and dominant force in Europe? The issue was not merely political for the French; there was an emotional distrust of the Germans. It was less than six years since German occupation had ended. Jules Moch, the French Minister of Defence, had lost two sons in a German concentration camp, a fact which he used to explain his antagonism towards the German military in talks with Frank Pace, the American Secretary of the Army.²⁸

²⁶.quoted in PRO FO 371, 85048, C3183G, 11 May 1950 Quoted statement made February 24 1950

²⁷.Stueck, *Korean War*, p. 71

²⁸.ACMH, Senior Officer Oral History Program, Frank Pace, section one, p. 30, and section three, p. 16

In early September, 1950, at the New York meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Johnson proposed a package offer by which the Europeans would have to accept German rearmament and increase their own military spending, in order to induce the United States to send four divisions to Europe. This is not that different from what would eventually occur, but it would occur by Johnson's design. As we have seen, Johnson was soon fired for other reasons and replaced by George Marshall. Marshall, in agreement with Acheson, felt that although a US offer of troops and German rearmament were both desirable, it did not make sound diplomatic sense to link the two issues, since doing so would make it appear that the US was being overly forceful, and so he decoupled them.²⁹ On 12 September 1950, at the NATO Council Meeting in Washington, Acheson, without prior consultation with the French or the British,³⁰ formally proposed German rearmament without directly mentioning American deployment. Marshall, and his British counterpart, Manny Shinwell, spent the conference lobbying the French, especially Moch, to agree to defence at the Rhine and to a German military. They succeeded on the first count but Moch was a tough sell on German rearmament, at first denying that the Federal Republic of Germany should be allowed to have even a paramilitary force.³¹ Only after Marshall bluntly told

²⁹.Kaplan, "NATO", pp. 8 and 10

³⁰.Schwartz, "Skeleton", p. 377

³¹.Slowe, *Shinwell*, p. 252

the French that American aid to France would be decreased if they did not cooperate on the German rearmament issue did Moch agree to a German force, and even then he insisted that it consist of less than one brigade, making it the smallest force in NATO except for the Icelandic one.³² The tripartite communiqué announcing the decisions showed the lack of complete agreement on the rearmament issue, promising to study "the participation of the German Federal Republic in the common defense of Europe", but referring to German units as "mobile police forces" designed to maintain "internal security".³³

After the conference, the French, realising that they were in the minority on the German rearmament issue (the Belgians and Luxembourgers provided what Bevin termed "half-hearted support" for the French), sought to create a compromise plan to avoid the possibility of full German rearmament being thrust upon them by the British and the Americans.³⁴ On 24 October 1950, they announced a new proposal, the Pleven Plan, named after French Prime Minister Rene Pleven. A 100,000 man pan-European army would contain German troops, and would be commanded by someone who would also be in charge of the various national forces of NATO countries in

³².ibid., pp. 252-53

³³.quoted in Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History* (London: Cornell University Press, 1984)

³⁴.the Bevin quote is from LaFeber, "NATO"

Europe.³⁵ There would be no German General Staff. The plan was designed to help resolve the perceived need for a conventional deterrent against the Soviets while restricting German control over a German force. The French hoped that the plan would help satisfy the American demands for German participation, but that the actual pan-European force would be small, and slow to develop.³⁶ The British Foreign Office was prepared to explain the Pleven Plan to the Germans, but did not feel that it was mandatory for the Germans to participate.³⁷ The Americans barely accepted it in theory, but wanted more German military help than the French had planned for.

The Soviets reacted to the talks on German rearmament with virulent public attacks. The Kremlin hoped to split the western alliance by appealing to west Europeans opposed to a renewal of German arms.³⁸ Given the strong anti-Soviet sentiments in the wake of Korea, these appeals came to naught.

The Americans and the British placed new pressure was placed on the French after the 25 November Chinese counter-offensive in Korea, when the war scare in both Europe and the US intensified.³⁹

³⁵.Kaplan, "NATO", p. 8

³⁶.ibid.

³⁷.PRO FO 371/85058, C8126, "The Policy That Should Be Adopted To-wards German Rearmament by His Majesty's Government", 8 December 1950

³⁸.Gerhard Wettig, "The Soviet Union and Germany in the Late Stalin Period, 1950-3", *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1945-53*, edited by Francesca Gori and Silvio Pons (London: St. Martin's Press, 1996)

³⁹.These new fears were acute in France. In December, the assistant to Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, asked an American official "Do you really think we are going to be in war in three months?"

Adenauer, taking advantage of the Anglo-American insistence on German rearmament, told a journalist on 11 December 1950 that

we must insist on full equality with regard to arms and command. This is necessary in order to counter the impression that our soldiers are to be used merely as cannon fodder. Without heavy equipment German troops would have no chance of defending themselves and without their own commanders they would consider themselves second-class soldiers.⁴⁰

If a plan for a partial German rearmament, under which German units did not have equality with their NATO counterparts, was put forth, Adenauer declared that "we would find ourselves in the unfortunate position of having to reject it."⁴¹

The French government persisted in its desire to contain German power. On 12 December 1950, the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, declared that German military units would at no time "be at the disposition of a German government".⁴² The French still insisted, either in spite of or because of Adenauer's declaration, that all German forces be within the pan-European army, added that no

Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, p. 487

Charles de Gaulle, living in retirement, commented privately in November of 1950 that "the war is spreading and will not stop. France will not recover in time, will be invaded, bombed. . . there will be atomic attacks, hunger, deportation." Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The Ruler, 1945-1970* (London: Harvill, 1992) translated by Alan Sheridan, p. 147 The statement was made to Georges Pompidou on 14 November 1950.

⁴⁰,quoted in PRO FO 371/85058, C7996, "Dr. Adenauer's Conditions for the Participation of Germany in Western Defence", 12 December 1950

⁴¹,ibid.

⁴²,quoted in *The New York Times*, "Big Four to Meet, Schuman Asserts", Howard Callender, December 13 1950

German units were to have more than 1,000 men,⁴³ and demanded a stronger American presence to balance the German forces. The next day, 13 December, in London, under the shadows of the major UN setbacks against the Chinese in Korea, NATO negotiators pushed the French into a compromise arrangement: German divisions would be created, under an integrated NATO command structure, with a strong American presence in Europe.⁴⁴ The conferees decided to postpone the Plevin Plan until a January conference in Paris,⁴⁵ but British and American doubts about the plan had already been leaked to the press.⁴⁶ The French appear to have been dragged into the London agreement by the British and the Americans; the very next day the French proposed to postpone the implementation of the new agreement until a four power conference of all the occupying powers of Germany had been convened and the issue of German rearmament had, once again, been considered.⁴⁷ The French had tried, in private talks with the British and the Americans, to justify the proposal for a four-power conference by claiming that if the Communists were willing to intervene with Chinese troops in Korea, they might be willing to intervene with Soviet troops in Germany to prevent

⁴³.*The New York Times*, "Atlantic Harmony on Bonn Complete", Clifton Daniel, December 14 1950

⁴⁴.*ibid.*

⁴⁵.*ibid.*

⁴⁶.*The New York Times*, "Britain For Speed in Arming Europe", Clifton Daniel, December 15 1950

⁴⁷.*The New York Times*, "European Defense Faces New Hurdle", Drew Middleton, December 15 1950

German rearmament.⁴⁸ This proposal was rejected by the other NATO powers, who were not going to let the French prevent the German rearmament they had already agreed to on paper.

The French continued attempting to implement the Pleven Plan. Although the Americans and the British would have preferred the immediate creation of German units, they accepted the delays and complications inherent in creating a pan-European army, desiring continued French co-operation in NATO and sure that German rearmament was inevitable. The attempted implementation of the Pleven Plan, under the name European Defence Community, would be delayed and, ironically, destroyed before birth by the French National Assembly in 1954. German rearmament did not occur until 5 May 1955.

During the critical talks over German rearmament, the Americans and the British tried to prevent any involvement by the Soviets. In December 1950, Moscow declared its desire for a four-power conference to discuss the demilitarisation of Germany, in accordance with the Potsdam accord.⁴⁹ Hoping to pressure the west, Stalin also published ominous warnings on the inadvisability of German rearmament.⁵⁰ The Truman administration feared that the Soviets

⁴⁸.PRO FO 371/85058, C8057, 11 Dec 1950, conversation was on 8 Dec 1950

⁴⁹.*The Wall Street Journal*, "East-West Meeting", January 4, 1951, p. 6 Stalin's offer was a counter-proposal to the western powers' invitation for a conference on world affairs.

⁵⁰.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 286

would try to use a conference to side with the French to prevent German rearmament. The Soviet and French proposals for conferences having come almost simultaneously, it seemed that there was an understanding between the French and the Soviets, either tacit or explicit, to work together against German rearmament. This could undermine the fragile agreement with France to trade US deployments to Germany for French approval of German rearmament. It could introduce chaos into the administration's European policies, and upset relations with Adenauer's government in Germany.

The administration followed NSC-68's proposals and declined the Soviet invitation, hoping that after the build-up of forces in Western Europe, the Atlantic nations could then negotiate with the USSR from a situation of strength. The administration felt that it needed the ability to effectively dominate each step of a military escalation crisis with the Soviets if it was to be able to bargain effectively.

It was decided by the member nations of NATO that Eisenhower, then President of Columbia University in New York City, was to come back into active service to become the first NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR). The SACEUR title was intentionally chosen because it recalled the victorious Anglo-American Supreme Allied Command of the Second World War. Truman officially notified Eisenhower of the offer on 19 December

1950.⁵¹ The SACEUR post was the highest position except for the NATO Military Committee, which was (and still is) composed of one member of each nation, usually the Chief of Staff of the armed forces.⁵² It would become a NATO policy to give the SACEUR post to an American General.

Eisenhower was sent on a fact-finding mission through the Western European and Canadian capitals in January. Returning to the United States, he told Truman that he wanted 10 to 12 American divisions, to be part of a 50 to 60 division NATO force.⁵³

On 1 February, he informed Congress that no limit should be placed on the number of American troops to be sent to Europe and that a 40 division allied force, composed mostly of French troops, was a good goal for 1953.⁵⁴ The issue of how many divisions were to be sent to Europe became an issue of close Congressional scrutiny. It was not to be resolved until April, as we shall see. Meanwhile, the French continued to work to lessen the extent of German rearmament. During a visit to the US on January 29 and 30, 1951, French Premier Rene Pleven succeeded in getting the Americans to agree to a five to

⁵¹.DDEL, Dwight D. Eisenhower Pre-Presidential Papers, box 116, Truman folder, note dated December 19 1950

⁵².NATO Information Service, *NATO: Facts and Figures*, p. 196

⁵³FRUS, 1951, Volume 3, p. 455, notes on a 31 January 1951 meeting at the White House. Condit, *Test of War*, claims that Ike wanted 20 divisions. see p. 340

⁵⁴.*Facts on File 1951*, p. 35

one ratio of non-Germans to Germans in NATO forces.⁵⁵ Plevén expressed his concern to American officials that German rearmament might lead to war, either because the Soviets would see the move as a threat and launch a pre-emptive strike or the Germans, once rearmed, might leave NATO and attempt to unify Germany.⁵⁶ In a March 1951 visit, French President Vincent Auriol repeated these points.⁵⁷

Truman responded that the US still possessed enough of an atomic edge to deter the Soviets from attacking in the immediate future. The administration does not seem to have seriously considered the possibility of Adenauer launching a war to reunite Germany. The important thing was to rearm rapidly to a position of strength so that when the time of maximum danger was reached in a couple of years, the west would be in a solid position.⁵⁸ The Americans appear to have realised that the French were not prepared to sabotage the sovereignty of Germany, or to sabotage NATO, or even to withdraw from NATO at this time. This meant that the French had little leverage to use to enforce their views on German rearmament. Had the French pulled out of NATO over the issue of German rearmament, it quite possibly might have had the opposite impact on

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 35, Plevén stated these views in a speech on January 30 at the National Press Club.

⁵⁶ FRUS, 1951, Volume 4, Minutes of Truman-Plevén conversations, January 30, 1951, p. 319

⁵⁷ FRUS, 1951, Volume 4, Minutes of Truman-Auriol conversations, March 29 1951, p. 366

⁵⁸ Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 410

intentions, making the allies more likely to rely on German military power.

Attempting to prevent German rearmament would also have cost France one of its highest priorities: a pan-European economic organisation. On May 9, 1950, Schuman had announced the plan for the integration of French and German coal and steel industries that he had secretly broached with the German government. During the 1950-1951 talks on German rearmament, the Germans attempted to link the completion of the plan with rearmament. The French decision to accede to a German armed force helped pave the way for the signing of the European Coal and Steel Community agreement in April.

On 19 May 1951, part of the US 4th Division, the first of four Army divisions to be sent to Europe as part of NATO under the command of General Eisenhower, departed from New York City.⁵⁹ By 1952, the American presence in Western Europe had increased to six divisions, 503 aircraft, 82 warships, all involving approximately 260,800 personnel, more than 20,000 more than were being used in the Korean conflict at that time.⁶⁰

There was an arms build up throughout NATO in the Korean War era. Between 1949 and 1951, military spending as a percentage of

⁵⁹.*The World Almanac 1952*, p.225

⁶⁰.Summers, "Perspective", pp. 22-23; Summers includes the National Guard's 28th and 43rd Infantry Divisions as part of the 6 divisions. Summers adds that at peak strength, in July 1953, there were 302,483 American personnel in Korea. p. 25

gross national product rose from 2.7% to 4.3% in Belgium, and from 3.9% to 5.7% in Italy, from 5.9% to 8.7% in the United Kingdom, and from 5.7% to 9.7% in France.⁶¹ The total manpower of NATO increased by three million men in three years.⁶²

Fuelling the world wide arms build-up was American aid, which we will discuss in a later chapter.

Although changes took time, with American Congressional approval of troops to Europe not coming until the spring of 1951 and genuine German rearmament, including the creation of a German general staff, being delayed until 1954, the winter of 1950-51 was the decisive time in creating a combat capable NATO force. Depending on what source is to be believed, total defence expenditure by European NATO powers either leapt from \$3 billion per annum to \$8 billion after the start of the Korean war,⁶³ or increased from \$5.3 billion to \$8.2 billion in approximately one year,⁶⁴ or was much greater than these sums. According to the historian Peter Slowe, the United

⁶¹Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 412; In addition to all these arms build-ups, there was Japanese rearmament. While still occupied (the formal power of the American military government was not terminated until 1952), Japan was rushed into remilitarization to meet the perceived Soviet threat. The US military government ordered the creation of a National Police Reserve in early July 1950, composed of 75,000 men and designed to be a precursor for a genuine military establishment. The Japanese Navy participated in the Korean War secretly, using minesweepers to clear harbours in the Sea of Japan in preparation for American amphibious attacks in 1950. K. Arakawa, "The Cold War and the Foundation of the Japanese Self Defense Force", p. 1; Cumings and Halliday, *Unknown*

⁶²Stueck, *Korean War*, p. 5

⁶³HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Central File; Confidential Files, box 16, folder on Office of Defense Mobilization report to the President for the Second Quarter of 1951, page VII-3 of the preliminary draft, June 20 1951

⁶⁴Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 412

Kingdom alone was spending 4.7 billion pounds (equivalent in 1951 exchange rates to approximately \$13.16 billion) per annum in 1951.⁶⁵

According to the memoirs of one of the early British NATO leaders, Hastings Ismay, the number of NATO divisions increased from 15 to 35 during 1951, and operational aircraft from 1,000 to 3,000.⁶⁶ Another source, the American historians Allan Millett and Peter Maslowski, claim that the number of NATO divisions was far less, reaching 25 divisions only in 1953, of which only 15 were in central Europe, but that the number of NATO aircraft was 5,200 by 1953.⁶⁷ Whatever the actual figures, it should be noted that actual fighting ability of forces can not be measured strictly in terms of divisions, since much depended on the technology, the leadership, the morale, and countless other factors. As far as equipment went, the American Army divisions were generally far ahead of their European counterparts, costing two to three times as much to equip and maintain.⁶⁸ However, American Marine divisions receiving the same amount of funding, and British Army divisions receiving far less, did

⁶⁵Slowe, *Shinwell*, p. 259

⁶⁶Hastings L. Ismay, *NATO: The First Five Years*, p. 102

⁶⁷Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 496

⁶⁸HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Central File; Confidential Files, box 16, folder on Office of Defense Mobilization report to the President for the Second Quarter of 1951, page VII-5 of the preliminary draft, June 20 1951

a better job of handling the Chinese counterattack of November 1950.⁶⁹

5.2 The War Scare and the Domestic Attacks on Truman's Policy

In the winter of 1950-51, America fell into a mood of anger, gloom, fear, and frustration. There was a bloody war of attrition with no hope of victory in Asia, made worse by the feeling that the nation was being frustrated and mocked by the real enemy, the Soviets, and yet the country's hands seemed tied, incapable of resolving the problem. Not since the later stages of the War of 1812 had America been in the position of fighting a war that had little or no prospect of absolute victory.

Fear was everywhere. In the autumn of 1950, local authorities began to designate certain buildings as air raid shelters.⁷⁰ David Lilienthal, recently resigned from the directorship of the AEC, was asked by friends to recommend places to move to that would be safe from atomic bombing.⁷¹ The administration tried to allay public fears by

⁶⁹.Two authors who share this opinion are Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, (see especially p. 417), and Max Hastings, *The Korean War*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987)

⁷⁰.*The Times of London*, "Raid Shelters in New York", October 19 1950, p. 3

⁷¹.David Lilienthal, *The Journals of David E. Lilienthal; Volume III: The Venturesome Years, 1950-1955*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 29-34

announcing that it was protecting the skies over New York City with the latest jet fighters. Look magazine ran a cover story entitled "Could The Reds Seize Detroit?".⁷²

Many, not understanding Truman's decision to wage a war of limited means for limited ends, took their frustrations out on the administration. The White House was deluged with telegrams calling for an all out war on Communist countries, the dismissal of Acheson, and even the resignation of Truman.⁷³ Calls for widening the war were popular. Senator Lyndon Johnson said that he foresaw "a time when we will decide that we have had enough of indecisive fighting - of battles without victories."⁷⁴ Several Senators hinted that the atomic bomb should at least be considered. Senator Owen Brewster (Republican from Maine), in a debate over his suggestion that discretion over the use of the bomb be given to General MacArthur, suggested that his opponents didn't respect the position of the "100,000 American boys now in the hills of Korea . . . denied the use of the one weapon which might save the lives of thousands."⁷⁵ Two local draft supervisors in Montana were replaced after they publicly declared that they would not draft any more men until the United

⁷².Walker, *Cold War*, p. 69

⁷³.The original telegrams can be read at the Truman Library.

⁷⁴.PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/44, Weekly Political Summary by Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 6-12 October 1951

⁷⁵.*The New York Times*, "Senators Battle on Atom Bomb Use", by C. P. Trussel, December 2 1950

States used the atomic bomb in Korea, which they saw as preferable to sending more young Americans there.⁷⁶

Others took their frustrations out by engaging in a natural attitude of people at war: denigrating the enemy. Anti-Communism reached a fever pitch. There were anti-Communist movies, such as *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (1951), anti-Communist books, such as the Mickey Spillane series, which sold 13 million copies by 1951 by celebrating the killing of "Red sons-of-bitches", there were anti-Communist comic books,⁷⁷ and one gum company, instead of producing baseball cards, created a "Fight the Red Menace" series of cards.⁷⁸ The Cincinnati Reds baseball team even changed its name, temporarily, since the word "reds" had become so pejorative.⁷⁹

The language of government became increasingly strident. Few argued with Truman's choice of words in referring to the "Soviet imperialists".⁸⁰ Nor did anyone raise an eyebrow when the Secretary of Defense stated that "the Soviet government threatens the peace of the world",⁸¹ or when a Congressman claimed that the American people faced a choice between "slavery to a heartless and pitiless

⁷⁶.*The New York Times*, "2 Draft Aides Replaced", produced by the Associated Press, December 23 1950

⁷⁷.books and the comic books: Manchester, *Glory*, chapter 18; movie: Walker, *Cold War*, p. 69

⁷⁸.Walker, *Cold War*, p. 69

⁷⁹.Manchester, *Glory*, p. 567

⁸⁰.Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371/90951, AU 1104/3

⁸¹.Department of Defense, Semiannual Report of the Secretary of Defense, July 1 to December 31, 1950, p. 1

dictator like Stalin, or great sacrifices to preserve the liberties of mankind".⁸² Five people who wrote "PEACE" on a wall in Brooklyn, New York, were sent to jail because the judge suspected they were Communists.⁸³ The Soviets were powerful, Stalin was dictatorial, the eastern European states had been violently brought under Moscow's control, the US was at war with a Soviet ally, and the popular perception was that Moscow was not to be given the benefit of the doubt in international affairs.

The anti-Communist hysteria was bolstered by some long-standing ethnic prejudices. Retired Lieutenant General Clarence Huebner, serving on the Central Intelligence Agency's Office of National Estimates, informed his co-workers that since the Russians were animals who had little regard for human life, they would crash their fighter aircraft into American bombers in the event of an American strategic raid on the Soviet Union.⁸⁴ Huebner's ideas were neglected by the other office members. Eisenhower, trying to explain his calmness in the midst of crisis, wrote in a private letter that "It is just not sensible to think that 190 million backward Eurasians can conquer

⁸².quote by John Taber, (New York), in Congressional Record of the House of Representatives, 1950, page 16816

⁸³.LaFeber, *American Age*, p. 523

⁸⁴.Sherman Kent, *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays*, edited by Donald Steury, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1994), p. 150

Huebner had been commander of the First Infantry Division, the famous "Big Red One" at Normandy, and was deputy commander of US occupation forces in Germany for a time, serving under General Lucius Clay.

ACMH, Senior Officer Debriefing Program, General Maxwell Taylor, section three, p. 16

the entire western civilization with its great history and its great economic, political and material resources".⁸⁵

The Republican opposition, taking advantage of much of the public frustration, sharply criticised the administration in the Senate. The gains in the November 1950 elections, in which the Democratic majority had been reduced from 12 (54 to 42) to 2 (49 to 47), bolstered the confidence of the Republican leadership.⁸⁶ Republican Senators castigated Acheson for the speech he had made on January 12 1950 at the National Press Club, a speech in which he had declared that the American defence perimeter in Asia was to the east of Korea (they failed to also castigate MacArthur, despite the fact that he had earlier proclaimed the same thing).⁸⁷ They also ridiculed the Truman administration for its indecisiveness: first the administration had decided to cross the 38th parallel and then, when met by force, it had decided to pursue a limited war. This opened the administration to charges of being confused or even of appeasement, and from the most hostile opposition, to charges of treachery. On 15 December 1950, the Republican leadership publicly asked for the resignation of Acheson.⁸⁸ Coming as it did during the one of the most crucial weeks in post-war

⁸⁵.DDEL, Pre-Presidential Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, box 60, Ismay folder, note of January 3 1951

⁸⁶.Williams, *Senate*, p. 44

⁸⁷.MacArthur: *The New York Times*, March 2 1949

⁸⁸.*The New York Times*, "Acheson Influence in Europe Cut on Eve of Brussels Defense Talks", by Raymond Daniel, December 16 1950

European history, a week that saw the western nations agree to rearm Germany and send American combat forces to Europe, the attacks on Acheson made it clear that the Truman administration's decision to take the nation in a new direction would lead to a showdown with domestic opponents.

5.3 The "Great Debate"

The Truman administration's decisions from June 1950 to the spring of 1951, such as sending troops to Korea, pushing for higher arms budgets, increasing military aid to Europe, supporting the rearmament of Germany, deploying combat ready armies to that nation, and extending the alliance system, represented a turning point in American foreign affairs. Some of the goals, many of the priorities, and a dramatic part of the means of American policy were altered. Although Truman tried to appear consistent for public relations purposes, he was forced, as are all statesmen to varying extent, to constantly analyse and react to shifts in world politics, and there were numerous reversals in policy, leading to the creation of a new form of containment by 1951.

It would have been surprising had such changes not run into opposition. Given the American constitutional system, and the

relatively transparent nature of its political processes, long held tenets of American policy, such as small peacetime military budgets or limited peacetime involvement in European power politics, could not be abandoned without a public rethinking of American international practices.

This rethinking had happened behind closed doors through most of 1950, within the corridors of power at the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon, during the debates over the hydrogen bomb, NSC-68, the Korean campaign, and the militarisation of NATO. In the winter of 1950-51, against the wishes of Truman, this great rethinking of American priorities spilled out into the public sphere and the legislative chambers.

The initial decision by the US that it was willing to send troops to Europe had been made in the desperate days before the Inchon landing in September 1950, at a time when much of the Congress was united strongly behind any anti-Soviet act by the President, and made little effort to interfere.⁸⁹ However, the Chinese intervention in Korea, and the subsequent embarrassing revision of war aims by the US, made the Truman administration seem vacillating and unsure of geopolitical strategy to much of the public, and political opponents sought to take advantage of the opportunity.

⁸⁹Ronald Powaski, *The Entangling Alliance: The United States and European Security, 1950-1993* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 12

On 19 December 1950, Truman formally announced that a US force would participate in a North Atlantic alliance military under Eisenhower's command, and that an additional 70,000 troops were to be sent to Europe. The next day, former President Herbert Hoover countered with a very sharp criticism, and with his own proposals for American strategy. He claimed that American ground forces would not be capable of stopping a Soviet attack if one took place. Europe would become "the graveyard of millions of American boys and would end in the exhaustion of this Gibraltar of western civilization." Whether or not there was war, the deployment of troops would waste precious American resources. He preferred to see the Europeans prepare their armies, with the US focusing on using air and sea forces to protect the Western Hemisphere, and he wanted to withhold military aid from Europe until there was more evidence that Europe was willing and able to defend itself.⁹⁰ This speech was the beginning of what was termed "the Great Debate" by the journalists of the day.

Hoover's speech was applauded enthusiastically by those disparate elements that were angry or confused about the Truman administration's handling of international affairs. Many Americans were frustrated by the lack of success in Korea, and quite a few saw the decision to wage a limited war there as senseless. They could not

⁹⁰Herbert Hoover, "Our National Policy In This Crisis", 20 December 1950, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, (January 1 1951), pp. 165-167; The Soviets printed a full copy of this speech in *Pravda*, according to endnote #98 in Chapter 13, Holloway, *Bomb*

tolerate the Truman administration's focus on limited wars and foreign deployments, either because they were policies for the passive and the patient, and therefore lacking the appeal of military action, or, conversely, because the policies were foolhardy, recklessly expending American money and blood in Europe and Korea with no guarantee of success.

Any formulation of foreign policy requires an evaluation of a nation's ideas, interests, and ideology. For many who valued the heritage of the US as a revolutionary state, detached from the European traditions of alliance politics, the administration's decisions to revise the tenets of Washington's farewell address were unforgivable. In this sense, the great debate had some similarities with the one concerning ratification of the Versailles treaty in 1919-20. Both of the Democratic Presidents tried to couch their efforts in terms of advancing American political values, such as free trade and representative democracy, abroad, but were countered by traditionalists at home who felt that involvement in an international political order that was dominated by national interest politics was bound only to end with the United States futilely spending its blood and capital for peoples who would never be converted to alien American political notions, and that such policies would only serve in the long term to weaken the United States, and therefore American principles.

These feelings, while not held by the majority, were particularly popular in traditional isolationist segments of the population, where suspicions persisted that American participation in either/both of the World Wars had represented an American sacrifice for a continent which had already begun to destroy itself. Arnold Lunn, a British writer who travelled across the United States in the autumn of 1950, observed that:

If isolationism is reborn it will owe its rebirth to the growing conviction, particularly in the Middle West, that American Capitalism is financing European Socialism without getting any adequate recognition or thanks, and that American G.I.'s are expected to fight for a Europe which the Europeans are too apathetic to defend.⁹¹

Much of the Great Debate took the form of conservatives casting Truman and, particularly, Acheson, as men who unpatriotically placed the interests of Europe above the interests of America; the administration was willing to send American boys to die in Korea just to get enough anti-Communist hysteria whipped up to help the Europeans.

Leading the attack, the Old Guard launched a desperate battle to prevent this new, expanded, form of containment from being adopted. It was never totally clear what containment was to be replaced with, since the Old Guard allied itself with a collection of various interests: some China Lobby, some isolationist, others semi-

⁹¹PRO, FO 371/90929, Memorandum from Sir Edward Plowden to Sir Roger Makins, 9 January 1951, see enclosed note by Lunn, p. 6

isolationist, others preferring an all out war on China, others a preventive strike against the Soviet Union. This disparate group, most popular in the Mid-west and West but backed by such Washington notables as the journalists Walter Lippman and Arthur Krock, was united only by the vehemence with which they viewed the Acheson containment strategy.⁹²

Buoyed by the 100 to 1 ratio of pro-Hoover to anti-Hoover letters his office received after the ex-President's speech, Taft attacked Truman's plans in a 10,000 word speech delivered in the Senate on 5 January 1951. Taft was willing to send a small force to Europe, feeling that it was necessary as a symbol of American determination. He was adamant about maintaining a ceiling much smaller than Truman wanted on the size of the force. He asserted that the Europeans seemed less fearful of a war with the Soviets than the Americans, and that Americans "have no business going over there trying to prod them into a great military program which, in my opinion, is almost certain to produce war".⁹³ He was particularly incensed by the manner in which the administration was ignoring the Senate. The US troops were supposed to serve under a North Atlantic Treaty command, and the administration was citing article three of the treaty as indicative of the power to form such a command. Taft argued that

⁹².Lippman and Krock: PRO FO 371/90903, AU 1013/1, Weekly Political Summary by Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 30 December 1950

⁹³.quoted in PRO FO 371/90903, AU 1013/2, Weekly Political Summary by Sir Oliver Franks, 6 January 1951

article three established no such right, and that the administration should seek Senate approval of the package deal with the European allies before embarking on its policies. With Truman's unilateral decision to send troops to Korea in June being followed by a unilateral declaration of a state of national emergency on 15 December, which gave the President wide powers over the setting of economic controls and the imposition of a draft, being followed by the President's unilateral troops to Europe announcement, Taft feared that the United States was drifting away from its constitutional principles, and remaking itself into a garrison state with overly strong central authority.⁹⁴ In the hope of countering the President's strategy with one of his own, Taft proposed a ceiling of 20% on the percentage of American forces that could be sent overseas. It was preferable, claimed Taft, to strengthen American air power, as Congress had suggested when it was over-ruled by the Truman administration on the issue of a 48 group Air Force, bolster US sea power, and allow the Chinese Nationalists and the Europeans to provide the land power.⁹⁵ This speech by Taft was the strongest single threat to the American arms build-up offered by any American since June 25 1950. Taft admitted as such in the speech:

The key to all the problems before this Congress lies in the size of our military budget. That determines the taxes to be levied.

⁹⁴.Powaski, *Entangling*, p. 14

⁹⁵.Walter Millis, "Sea Power: Abstraction or Asset?", *Foreign Affairs* (April 1951), p. 371, Williams, *Senate*, p. 53

It determines the number of boys to be drafted. It is likely to determine whether we can maintain a reasonably free system and the value of our dollar, or whether we are to be weakened or choked by Government controls which inevitably tend to become more arbitrary and unreasonable.⁹⁶

Following Taft's lead, Senator Kenneth Wherry (Republican from Nebraska) introduced a resolution in the Senate on 8 January 1951 proposing that troops should not be deployed to Europe until Congress voted to do so, directly contradicting Truman's stance that the constitution gave the President proper authority to deploy troops abroad. According to Wherry, Truman was backing away from the assurances he had given the Senate, during the ratification process for the North Atlantic Treaty, that US troops would not be sent to Europe.⁹⁷ The same day, Truman jumped into the fray with a not very well disguised attack on the Hoover faction in his annual State of the Union address to Congress.⁹⁸ On 11 January, Representative Coudert (Republican from New York) introduced into the House a proposal almost identical to Senator Wherry's, requiring Congressional approval to send American military personnel abroad.⁹⁹

Although the Old Guard was overwhelmingly Republican, the Great Debate was by no means a strictly partisan affair. Some Republicans, such as William Knowland, Earl Warren, Thomas

⁹⁶.quoted in Williams, *Senate*, p. 53

⁹⁷.Powaski, *Entangling*, p. 15

⁹⁸.PRO FO 371/90903, AU 1013/4, Weekly Political Summary by Sir Oliver Franks, 13 January 1951

⁹⁹.*ibid.*

Dewey, Harold Stassen, Henry Cabot Lodge, and John Foster Dulles sided with the administration on NATO policy. Some Democrats, such as Senators George and Douglas, sided with the Old Guard in demanding Congressional approval for the troops to be sent.¹⁰⁰ The debates on military aid to Europe in 1949 had shown that some Southern Democratic Senators, such as McClellan (Arkansas), Long (Louisiana), Johnston (South Carolina), and Byrd (Virginia), could be sympathetic to the Republican Old Guard.¹⁰¹ This pattern now threatened to repeat itself.

The Great Debate was centered in the Senate, where Wherry's resolution was debated in committee from 23 January, and where the Old Guard called Acheson for testimony and continuously grilled him, looking to put the administration's policies in disrepute. Acheson thought condescendingly of a number of the Senators, which helped to keep the pitch of the debate at the highest possible level of distrust and discord.¹⁰²

The Old Guard focused on three questions. The first was whether the US could afford waging a militarised containment campaign on two fronts, Europe and Korea. The second was the strategic value of such a strategy compared to other options. The third was the constitutionality of Truman's decision. The administration helped

¹⁰⁰.Manchester, *Glory*, p. 557

¹⁰¹.Williams, *Senate*, pp. 40-41

¹⁰².for Acheson's ideas on Senators, see James Reston, *Deadline: A Memoir*, (New York: Random House, 1991)

remove the thrust of much of the Old Guard's attack on the first issue by having Secretary Marshall announce, on 15 February 1951, that only four more divisions would be sent to Europe, one armoured and three infantry, bringing the total US Army force under NATO command to six divisions,¹⁰³ all part of the 7th Army.¹⁰⁴ On the second issue, the administration had to counter the charges made by Taft that any major war with the Soviets would be decided primarily by the exchange of nuclear weapons, and that sending any troops to Europe would be sentencing them to death for little or no strategic benefit. To counter this, Acheson, using language similar to that of NSC-68, and stressing the key points the administration had come to adopt in the immediate aftermath of the North Korean attack, warned the Senate of the threat of proxy warfare, in which the Soviets could gamble on the success of a successful satellite attack in Europe, knowing that "the free nations could respond only with weapons of all-out general war, or not at all."¹⁰⁵ Acheson's appearances were buttressed by an administration publicity blitz that included numerous appearances by the popular and supportive Eisenhower in the Senate. The third question was never fully resolved, perhaps because Truman could not afford to wage unnecessary battles. The Senate decided to vote on the

¹⁰³NARA, record group 330, cd 371, memorandum from JCS to Secretary of Defense (Marshall), January 29 1951

¹⁰⁴Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 496

¹⁰⁵quoted in Powaski, *Entangling*, p. 16

issue of troops to Europe, and added a clause that declared that the President would have to gain their approval before any extra forces could be sent to overseas. This was termed the McClelland amendment, after its author. It was never clear how binding this would have been, since Truman never forced a showdown on his constitutional authority. It is not even clear if the Senate's vote on the troops to Europe issue was necessary, but Truman, while not admitting that his actions were in any way unconstitutional, did not make a large issue out of the matter. The McClelland amendment passed by 49 to 43 and the resolution in favour of deployment passed on 4 April 1951, coincidentally the second anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, by a vote of 69 to 21, with 6 abstentions, thus ending the Great Debate.

The course of the Great Debate had, in no small way, been governed by events in Korea. In the first few weeks of winter, as the Chinese counter-offensive continued to gain ground in Korea, the popularity of proposals for extreme change in American policy had been high. Calls for a withdrawal from Korea and/or western Europe, perhaps in addition to a build-up of forces domestically were common. Another popular option had been the opening of a general war with China, not limited geographically or in war aims to the Korean peninsula. The fact that so many people took these ideas seriously, including Senators such as Wherry and Styles Bridges (Republican

from New Hampshire)¹⁰⁶ and that so many people were prone to swing from one view to the other despite their seeming contradictory nature, indicates how intensely frustrated the American body politic had been with the existing policy, which required patience, firmness, and endurance, all with little hope of immediate payoff. But the course of the Great Debate changed as the situation on the battlefield developed. The Chinese armies were slowed in January and thrown back in April. The Truman administration's popularity, which had been at rock bottom in December, was slowly on the upswing. The seeming inability of the US to control events or contain the Communist hordes was slowly replaced by a new faith that containment was working, deflating the hopes of the Old Guard to lead a popular uprising against the administration.

5.4 The Birth of American Global Power

There will always be a debate as to when the US became a global power. Some may choose to date it at the turning points of World War Two, such as the battles of the Atlantic and of Midway, others at

¹⁰⁶Bridges claimed, in early January, that the choice lay between opening a second front against China and withdrawing from Korea. Wherry recommended in early January that if other member states of the UN did not send in more troops, the US should pull out of Korea within 15 days. PRO FO 371/90903, AU 1013/2, Weekly Political Summary by Sir Oliver Franks, 6 January 1950

the time of the Bretton Woods conference and the founding of the new financial order near the end of the Second World War, others at the time that Truman decided to replace British influence in Greece and Turkey in 1946, others much later, in the late 1950's and early 1960's when large sections of European empires in Africa and Asia were decolonised. It is argued here that although there were many critical points in the process, the most important date one can give as to the beginning of the globalist American military-industrial complex is the summer of 1950, when the Truman administration began its arms build-up.

The expansion of American influence can be seen in four respects. One is the expansion of US military commitments through deployments of troops and forces. The second is the proliferation of treaty commitments committing American forces in the event of war. The third measurement is the change in American spending on aid programs. The fourth measurement is the growth in non-combat US operations in foreign nations.

As for Army deployments, besides the obvious and huge American deployment to central Europe, which would last four and a half decades (and still counting), there was a deployment to South Korea, where American troops are still stationed, guarding against a possible strike from the north. The Air Force saw an even more widespread deployment at this time, with Strategic Air Command acquiring the use of bases in the Azores, Iceland, Lybia, Morocco, Newfoundland,

Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, amongst other places.¹⁰⁷ For the Navy, the decision to station the US Seventh Fleet in the Straits of Taiwan would prove difficult to undo. The US risked war over Taiwan in the crises over Quemoy and Matsu Islands in the 1950's, and even as late as the 1970's found that it was necessary for prestige purposes to force the government in Beijing to recognise American interests on both sides of the Straits of Taiwan before recognition of the PRC could take place.

As for security agreements that the US signed, the Korean War set off a boom in mini-NATO's. In August and September, 1951, at the San Francisco Conference, the US and Japan signed security arrangements that would last longer than the Cold War. Simultaneously, at the same conference, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States created a new tripartite alliance (ANZUS),¹⁰⁸ and the US and the Philippines signed a bilateral defence pact.¹⁰⁹ The Republic of China, located on Taiwan, also signed a mutual security arrangement with the US.¹¹⁰ The fear of Communist encroachment in southeast Asia led to negotiations for a security agreement there, which was accomplished in 1954 with the creation of the South East

¹⁰⁷.Wells, "Buildup", p. 193

¹⁰⁸.PRO FO 371/90947, AU 1075/1

¹⁰⁹.PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/38, Weekly Political Summary by the Ambassador, Sir Oliver Franks, 25 August to 31 August 1951

¹¹⁰.Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 503

Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO), which allied the ANZUS states with Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan, Britain, and France.¹¹¹ These commitments had been desired by some of the governments involved, such as Australia and the Philippines, before the Korean War, but the US was unwilling to pursue them until the North Korean invasion radically altered American security planning.¹¹²

Aid increased both in scale and in geographic scope. Nations that had previously not been considered suitable for aid, such as Yugoslavia, were reconsidered.¹¹³ The US was drawn deeper into an aid race with the Soviet Union in what would come to be known in the 1960's as the "Third World". By early 1951, the two superpowers were competing in their aid efforts to provide famine relief to India.¹¹⁴ This helped lead to the Colombo plan for civilian aid to the nations of South Asia. The Truman administration also increased funding for the "Point Four" program, so named because of it was the fourth point that Truman mentioned in his January 1949 inaugural address. The intensified sense of competition with the Soviet Union led to the September 1950 passage of a \$26.9 million bill.¹¹⁵ Eventually, Point

¹¹¹.George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-75* (New York: 1979) p. 45
Neutralist Burma, India, and Indonesia refused to join, and South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos were forbidden from joining by the terms of the Geneva Accords, which ended the French war in Indochina.

¹¹².Stueck, *Korean War*, p. 73

¹¹³.PRO FO 800, Herbert Morrison Papers, folder 660, Telegram from Foreign Office to Washington, 7 June 1951

¹¹⁴.PRO FO 371/90904, AU 1013/21, Weekly Political Summary by Sir Oliver Franks, 12 May 1951

¹¹⁵.Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 510

Four would give much larger sums of technical assistance for agricultural projects in Latin America and elsewhere.

Even more important was military aid, which was given to fund the arms build-up amongst NATO powers, to bolster the ROK forces, and to help allies fighting Communist insurgencies, such as the Philippines, then fighting the Huk guerrillas.¹¹⁶ The aid not only fleshed out the containment policy throughout the world, it also helped fashion the anti-Soviet nations into a more united bloc, by building NATO and other allied armies around standard American types of equipment and weapons. Perhaps most importantly, military aid was a carrot dangled to help convince the allies to work towards a more rigorous defence posture, persuading them that it was possible to create a realistic deterrent to Soviet military action. Truman convinced Congress of the necessity of the aid programs by telling them that "the cost of supplying equipment through our aid programs is only a fraction of the cost of raising a comparable force ourselves."¹¹⁷ Military aid had been given on a fairly large scale even before the United States decided to embark on its own arms build-up, but became massive afterwards. Within days of the North Korean invasion, Congress passed a \$1.222 billion military aid bill, and the administration began shipping more weapons to the Philippines,

¹¹⁶.Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, p. 210

¹¹⁷.Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, PRO FO 371/90951, AU 1104/3

Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, and the French authorities in Indo-China.¹¹⁸ The total amount of American equipment supplied to allies, from March 1950 to the end of June 1951, was 1.5 million tons, not including aircraft and naval vessels.¹¹⁹ According to the Office of Defense Mobilization,

The bulk of this equipment, 930,000 tons, has been shipped to the countries of western Europe; 400,000 tons have gone to the Middle East, and 170,000 tons to the Far East. The major items of equipment already transferred include: 4,000 tanks and combat vehicles, 2,500 major artillery pieces, 16,500 general purpose vehicles, 850 aircraft, 150 naval vessels and small craft, small arms, mortars, recoilless rifles, bazookas, electronic equipment, [and] millions of rounds of ammunition.¹²⁰

A training program was created to teach more than thirteen thousand foreigners how to use the equipment,¹²¹ and American military missions were created where before there had been none, such as in Saudi Arabia. All of this occurred before the creation of the Mutual Security Program, which received \$8.299 billion in fiscal 1952, the first year of its operation.¹²²

¹¹⁸.*The Wall Street Journal*, "What's News-Worldwide", July 1 1950, p. 1 *The Wall Street Journal*, "Weapons for Asia: Secret Decision Made To Divert Arms From Europe to Far East", Ray Cromley and Glenn Snyder, July 5 1950, p. 1

¹¹⁹.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Central Files; Confidential Files, box 16, folder containing the Report by the Office of Defense Mobilization to the President for the Second Quarter of 1951, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, page VII-8

¹²⁰.*ibid.*

¹²¹.Department of Defense, Semiannual Report of the Department of Defense, July 1 to 31 December 1950, p. 2

¹²².PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/42 and AU 1013/44, Weekly Political Summaries by Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 22-28 September 1951 and 6-12 October 1951; Truman, in his mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371/90951, AU 1104/3, had asked for approximately \$8.5 billion, but Congress had cut this sum.

Between 25 June 1950, the start of the Korean War, and 1 January 1953, the United States government appropriated \$15.9 billion for foreign military assistance.¹²³ This should be compared to the approximately \$12 billion that the US spent on the entire Marshall Plan over three years of existence.

The aid race took a new leap with the death of Stalin in March 1953. Stalin had been wary of aiding any agency that was not under his direct control, whether it was a foreign Communist party or a neutral government, unless he could see a direct tangible benefit. But his successors were more flexible, and during the 1950's they increased the scope of Soviet assistance to the non-aligned nations, such as Egypt, Laos, Yemen, Afghanistan, and India, none of which were Communist at the time.¹²⁴ It would seem that at least part of the reason for such a decision by the Soviets was to counter American aid programs.

As for non-combat operations, it was the Korean War era which saw the spectacular growth in espionage on the Soviet Union, and non-combat operations designed to weaken it. The US Air Force established new listening posts, with technologically advanced radio interception equipment, along Soviet borders.¹²⁵ More boldly, it

¹²³.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report by the Director of Defense Mobilization to the President, January 1, 1953, p. 6

¹²⁴.Bruce Porter, *The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet Arms and Diplomacy in Local Wars, 1945-1980*, (Cambridge University Press, 1984)

¹²⁵.Richelson, *Spies*, pp. 258-260

extended its covert overflights of the USSR, which continued throughout the 1950's, despite the casualties of those airmen whose planes were shot down.¹²⁶

An even larger expansion took place at the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), which was in charge of various overseas operations, and was a forerunner of the Directorate of Operations. The OPC's budget grew from \$4.7 million to \$82 million between 1949 and 1952,¹²⁷ and OPC personnel in the same period increased from 302 to 2,812,¹²⁸ in addition to 3,142 overseas contract employees.¹²⁹ The CIA supported groups in Sovietized Europe that opposed Moscow's control, and had more than 40 covert operations ongoing in Central Europe by 1952.¹³⁰ Once the Korean War began, and MacArthur was forced to recant his order prohibiting CIA activity in his jurisdiction in the Pacific,¹³¹ the Agency began to play a major role that region, including support for organisations in mainland China that were fighting to prevent a full consolidation of power by the Communists.¹³² By that year, the OPC was operating out of 47 foreign

¹²⁶.ibid., pp. 260-262

¹²⁷.Andrew, *President's Eyes*, p. 193

¹²⁸.ibid., p. 193

¹²⁹.Wells, "Buildup", p. 193

¹³⁰.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 491

¹³¹.Wells, "Buildup", p. 193

¹³².Cumings and Halliday, *Unknown*, p. 163

stations, training guerrillas, engaging in covert actions, and laying the groundwork for the rest of the Cold War.

5.5 The USSR Initiates an Arms Build-Up, 1950-1951

Although Stalin was advising the Chinese during the Korean War that "Americans are not capable of waging a large-scale war", and "Americans don't know how to fight",¹³³ it seems that this was said for political reasons, to deflect Chinese requests for more Soviet military aid on better terms, and to rally the Chinese to continue the struggle. The increase in Soviet military budgets in the time reveals more concretely the Soviet concern over American military expansion.

In 1950, Soviet military expenditure rose by approximately 16%, from an estimated \$13.4 billion to an estimated \$15.5 billion.¹³⁴ The year 1951 saw enormous increases in military expenditure, as the Soviet military budget grew to \$20.1 billion.¹³⁵ This was an increase of almost 30%, the largest percentage change for the Soviets in the 1945-

¹³³.Record of Conversation Between Comrade I. V. Stalin and Zhou Enlai, 20 August 1952, translated text in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issues 6-7, Winter 1995/1996, pp. 10-14

¹³⁴.Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, chart on p. 495

¹³⁵.ibid.

1970 period.¹³⁶ Although Soviet military expenditures had been rising even before this time, the increase in the rate of growth suggests a reaction to the events in the west.

The Americans had made little effort to disguise the fact that they were building up their forces. On the contrary, the open nature of American society, and the desire to use the arms build-up as a warning to the Soviets, dictated that it would not be done in secret. The approximate size and deployments of American troop formations were mentioned in American newspapers of the day.

Anglo-American communications and memorandum of conference talks, particularly the Attlee-Truman meeting in Washington in early December 1950, were probably divulged to the Soviet leadership by Donald Maclean, the head of the British Foreign Office's American desk from 1 November 1950, and a spy for Moscow.¹³⁷ The senior intelligence officer for the US Joint Chiefs of Staff would later estimate that "It would appear that very nearly all US-UK high level planning information prior to 25 May 1951 [the date that Maclean, fearing that his cover was about to be blown, fled to the Soviet Union] must be considered compromised."¹³⁸ The Soviets also made use of the work of Kim Philby, the MI6 liaison officer in Washington.

¹³⁶.ibid. The increase was still not enough to prevent the Soviets from falling behind the US as the world's largest spender on defence.

¹³⁷.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 285

¹³⁸.quoted in Martin, *Wilderness*, p. 63

Filtering this obtained information through the ideological, cultural, and personal lenses through which the Kremlin leadership observed the US, the Soviets seem to have concluded that the arms build-up was an event of great importance, one which threatened the security of the Soviet Union. Soviet concern can be seen by the order, in 1950, by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, to strengthen border defences, and to create air defence lines along Soviet borders for early warning of air attack.¹³⁹ The stationing of 20,000-25,000 troops in Siberia, along the North Korean border, in 1951, and the army manoeuvres in East Germany in August 1952, seem to have sprung from a similar desire to prepare for all contingencies.¹⁴⁰ There had been 2.8 million men in uniform in 1948. By the spring of 1953, there were nearly 6 million.¹⁴¹ Soviet press coverage of the American arms build-up was voluminous, indicating that the Soviet government sought to warn its citizens that there would be shortages ahead as the Soviets attempted to match western force increases.¹⁴²

In addition to swelling in size, the Soviet Army continued to make rapid strides in modernisation. In 1950, the R-2 ballistic missile was

¹³⁹.Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 28 and 30

¹⁴⁰.*ibid.*, pp. 28 and 32

¹⁴¹.Seaton, *Soviet Army*, p. 161. Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, gives a figure, quoted from Khrushchev in 1960, of 5.7 million men in 1955. p. 333

¹⁴².for example of Soviet press coverage of the US arms build-up, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, December 16 1950, "US Economy Goes on Wartime Footing", p. 34 (translation of a *Pravda* article of October 31 1950)

completed, the Soviet rocket brigade, specialising in tactical surface to surface missiles, was upgraded to a division,¹⁴³ work started on the SS-3 surface to surface missile,¹⁴⁴ and development of the Mya-4 bomber, named "Bison" by the Americans, began.¹⁴⁵ In 1951, the Soviets developed their first computer.¹⁴⁶ In the spring of 1952, Stalin ordered the production of 100 new tactical bombers.¹⁴⁷

The Soviets also enhanced their networks of undercover operatives, most of them recruited from Communist parties. According to the memoir of Pavel Sudoplatov, one of the KGB officers in charge of organising such activities, in 1952 Stalin requested more effort to create an anti-American network, believing that many of the ethnic minorities of the United States would willingly work against America for nationalist reasons.¹⁴⁸

Allied armies were not neglected. Stalin insisted, at a conference of European Communist leaders in Moscow in January 1951, that Communist nations increase military preparedness.¹⁴⁹ The

¹⁴³.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 30

¹⁴⁴.*ibid.*, p. 29

¹⁴⁵.*ibid.*, p. 29

¹⁴⁶.*ibid.*, p. 31

¹⁴⁷.Holloway, *Bomb*, endnote #126 of Chapter 13

¹⁴⁸.Sudoplatov, *Tasks*, p. 332

¹⁴⁹.Holloway, *Bomb*, pp. 286-87 Holloway also considers the possibility that this speech may have been part of a more complex game, in which Stalin, who often suspected eastern European Communist parties of being infested with western spies, did this knowing, and even hoping, that western intelligence services would reach the conclusion that a build-up was happening in the east. That way, the western Europeans would continue to insist that the Americans focus on Europe, which was Stalin really wanted: a way to minimise the risk of

Czechoslovakian Army alone almost doubled in 1950-1951, from 140,000 men to 250,000.¹⁵⁰ By the end of the Korean War, in July 1953, the armed forces of the Soviet satellite states totalled approximately 1.5 million men.¹⁵¹ The cost was enormous, and it is possible that the anti-Soviet demonstrations in East Germany in June 1953 were partly a result of the heavy economic burden of this build-up.

The Soviets expanded their peace offensives, using offers of negotiations and Soviet press attacks to blame the west for initiating the arms race,¹⁵² and using diplomatic means, such as the offer to have a new four power conference, to interfere with the package agreement on US troops to Europe and German rearmament.¹⁵³

The Soviets knew, from Maclean's work, that the Americans were not willing to widen the war in Korea, either geographically through the bombing of China or tactically through the use of nuclear weapons. Although the Kremlin had be careful to avoid any abrupt changes that would alter American plans the way the outbreak of the Korean War had done, the Soviets could reasonably operate with the knowledge of what limits the west was prepared to allow them to go.

America's escalating the conflict in Korea. Holloway admits that this is speculative.

¹⁵⁰.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 241

¹⁵¹.Stueck, *Korean War*, p. 5

¹⁵².for example, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, "Harold Stassen's Crooked Game", December 2 1950

¹⁵³.*The Wall Street Journal*, "East-West Meeting", January 4 1951, p. 6 Stalin's offer was a counter-proposal to the western powers' invitation for a conference on world affairs.

They were thus free to support China and North Korea's efforts to continue the war if this was judged to be in the Kremlin's best interests.

The Soviets seem to have felt that the end of the Korean war would allow a more rapid concentration of US forces in Central Europe, as opposed to Ambrose's belief, cited above, that the end of the war would have caused a relaxation in US public attitudes towards the Soviet threat, thereby weakening the ability of the Truman administration to complete its efforts to build-up forces. Until Stalin's death in March 1953, the Kremlin strongly encouraged the Chinese to continue fighting the Americans in Korea.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴see translations of Soviet-Chinese discussions, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issues 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996) pp. 94-119

THE BUILD-UP: WHAT & HOW

6.1 Financing the American Arms Build Up

There were two fundamental choices to be made about financing the arms build-up. The first was to choose the appropriate mix of debt, taxation, and/or domestic spending cuts. The second was deciding what government controls, if any, were necessary to hold down inflation and suppress consumer demand.

The first question produced a divergence in opinion between the executive and legislative branches of the federal government. The President's preference was obvious, given his dislike of debt, his attempts to raise taxes before the Korean War, and his interest in maintaining many of the post-New Deal programs that gave funds to farmers, the elderly, and other groups considered at risk of poverty.¹ Truman termed his attitude toward funding the arms build-up a "pay as you go" stance. A majority in Congress preferred debt funding, as

¹.for Truman's proposed tax increases, see Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 488 and elsewhere

had been used during the Second World War. The result was a compromise: some taxes, some debt, and no new domestic spending programs.

Congress passed three small tax bills during the war but refused to pass Truman's big one in 1952.² The nation went from having small annual surpluses to small deficits during the war. Certain Fair Deal programs that Truman wanted were stillborn.

One reason the Fair Deal did not expand was a lack of attention, which can be seen in Truman's 1951 State of the Union address, almost entirely devoted to the war in Korea. Truman told a press conference that "first things come first, and our defence programs must have top priority."³ The Fair Deal was probably dead anyhow, given the nature of the 82nd Congress, elected in November 1950. The Democrat majority was smaller, with a higher proportion of Southern conservative Democrats. In the very first week of its meeting, in January 1951, a majority of 92 Democrats and 152 Republicans in the new Congress showed its attitude by strengthening the power of the House Rules Committee to prevent

²Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope* The tax increase passed in January of 1951 raised the regular corporate tax rate two points to 47%, and provided an effective "excess profits tax rate" of 77%. *The Wall Street Journal*, January 3 1951

The tax increase passed in October of 1951 raised income taxes approximately 12%, and made further increases in the excess profits tax and in excise taxes. This added approximately \$5.75 billion in revenue, making it the second largest tax increase in American history. PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/44, Weekly Political Summary by Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 6-12 October 1951

³as quoted in Hamby, *Beyond*, p. 442

new legislation from reaching the floor.⁴ The Rules Committee was dominated by senior Southern Democrats who rivalled the Northern Republicans in their opposition to reform. Certain key Truman proposals, such as government health insurance for the elderly, probably would not have passed even in peace-time.

Thus, Truman had little choice but to abandon his proposals. As the historian Alonzo Hamby has explained, Truman had limited room to manoeuvre: "He had to choose between an almost certainly foredoomed attempt to build a Fair Deal majority in Congress and an effort, for which the odds were good, to salvage the internationalist coalition."⁵ The arms build-up, and in particular the arms build up in central Europe, became the crucial battle for Truman, and his legislative skills and political capital were devoted towards that end.

The second major issue was the threat of inflation. The government sought to dampen demand, so prices would not rise when the supply of non-military goods decreased. Taxation was one method, government controls on prices another, with the later winning more support in Congress.

Truman had been an advocate of government controls on prices, rents, interest rates, and wages. He had appealed for them even in

⁴*The Wall Street Journal*, "Truman Was Handed His First Rebuff By the New 82nd Congress", January 4 1951, p. 1

⁵Hamby, *Beyond*, p. 442

peacetime, including an effort to regulate consumer credit in 1948.⁶ The use of controls was one of the key proposals of Truman's January 1949 State of the Union address.⁷ Truman's support for the controls seems to have been based at least partially, on his lifelong distrust of big business. He sometimes blamed inflation on "profiteering".⁸

Truman also feared that hoarding by a public afraid of future rationing or inflation would create shortages and inflation. In his July 19, 1950 radio address, timed to coincide with the submission of his Defense Production Bill to Congress, Truman said that "We have to fear only those shortages which we ourselves artificially create . . . If prices should rise unduly because of excessive buying or speculation. . . I will not hesitate to recommend rationing and price control. . . we need laws which will insure prompt and adequate supplies for military and essential civilian use. I have therefore recommended that the Congress give the government power to guide the flow of materials into essential uses, to restrict their use for non-essential purposes, and to prevent the accumulation of unnecessary inventories."⁹ Although he was still hesitant about beginning controls

⁶During the 1948 election campaign, Truman had ordered the convening of a special session of Congress, which had a Republican majority, and dared them to pass legislation controlling consumer credit, prices, rents, and other elements of his Fair Deal legislation. This was on July 26 1948. Nothing had come of this campaign tactic. McCollough, *Truman*, p. 651

⁷Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 488

⁸see HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 144, folder entitled "Defense Production Act", August 23 1951 message to Congress for one example

⁹HSTL, The Papers of Stephen Springarn, box 28, folder entitled "Defense Production Act of 1950"

on consumer goods at this time, Truman was asking for, and would receive, the power to enact such controls when and if he felt that the situation demanded it.

Truman created the Economic Stabilization Agency (ESA) to prepare for the time when his administration would begin price controls. It was headed by Alan Valentine.

On January 26, 1951, the ESA announced a wage and price freeze to take effect on all but a handful of goods and services. The limits were based upon average prices and wages for the December 19, 1950 to January 25, 1951 period.¹⁰ A few days later, the ESA clarified its position by allowing that set wage increases according to contract could occur as planned, despite the wage freeze.¹¹ Price controls were placed on nearly all consumer products, with agricultural goods being singled out for particular stringency.

Controls on wages covered almost every occupation. In May of 1951, the Wage Stabilization Board even informed major league baseball teams that they could not pay any player more than the top salary the club had paid anyone in 1950.¹²

Controls were not unopposed. The opposition claimed that controls were a substitution of less efficient bureaucrats for more efficient

¹⁰*The World Almanac 1952*, p. 205 Truman would later claim that the controls were "successful. Following the price-wage freeze of January 26, prices generally levelled off and some even turned downward." HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 144, Defense Production Act folder, August 23 1951 message to Congress, p. 1

¹¹*The World Almanac 1952*, p. 206

¹²*ibid.*, p. 217

capital markets, that industrial planning agencies would cost more than they ever were able to save, that the real cause of inflation was excess printing of money, and that controls violated the rights of individuals to conclude contracts independent of government harassment. They also feared that the controls would become permanent. However, the anti-controls group was as doomed as its counterpart anti-NATO group. The popularity of the war in its initial stages enabled Congress to grant the President discretionary authority at the outset of the war.

It was not just the war. Many liberals had been demanding, even in peacetime, strict controls to prevent inflation and profiteering, management of industry to prevent duplication or shortages, and higher taxes on businesses to slow demand and prevent harmful new taxes on the working poor. Chester Bowles, Senator Hubert Humphrey (Democrat from Minnesota), and most of the liberal press (including *The New Republic*, *The New York Post*, *Nation*, and *The Progressive*) advocated the use of controls in 1950.¹³ A more obvious example of this could be seen across the Atlantic, where a bill was proceeding through the House of Commons to nationalise the British steel industry, which passed approximately two weeks after the ESA had introduced its wage and price freezes. This represented the increased popularity of government management of economic affairs

¹³Hamby, *Beyond*, pp. 415-418

in the years following the New Deal, the growing popularity of Keynesian ideas, and the seeming success of managed industry during the Second World War.

After some time passed, and the public began to complain more about the restrictions, these controls would become as unpopular as the World War Two ones. Inflation had not been stopped: a report by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to the Congress in December of 1950 claimed that inflation had already cut the value of the sums appropriated for the military since the beginning of the Korean War by approximately \$3 billion.¹⁴ A Senate report found that "eleven basic raw materials used by the military show an average increase in price from April 1950 to December 1950 of 72.3 percent."¹⁵

As early as April of 1951, the Congress, against the President's wishes, amended the Defense Production Act to require higher price ceilings.¹⁶ Truman opposed the changes, feeling that the threat of inflation was still severe, and that price increases at a time when wages were still set low would be unfairly cruel to the poor.¹⁷ But his opposition might have contributed to his increasing unpopularity in polls taken towards the end of his Presidency. The Republicans,

¹⁴.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Bill File, box 84, folder on bill January 4 to January 6 1951, Senate "Calendar No. 2679", p. 3

¹⁵.ibid.

¹⁶.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 144, folder entitled "Defense Production Act", Truman message to Congress of August 23 1951, p. 2

¹⁷.ibid., p. 3

reading the polls, would make controls a campaign issue in 1952, but in 1950 this was the distant future.¹⁸

A problem was that except for the use of controls in the world wars, the federal government, used to operating in a relatively capitalist system, had few existing mechanisms to put controls into place and enforce them. So, on 15 December 1950, Truman created an umbrella agency that oversaw the various regulatory agencies, boards, and offices. This was the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM). Charles E. Wilson, the chief executive of General Electric and former chairman of Truman's advisory committee on civil rights, was picked to be ODM director.¹⁹ In addition, Wilson headed the National Advisory Board on Mobilization Policy, a group that, beginning on 9 April 1951, met once a month in the presence of Truman.²⁰ The board discussed manpower problems, wages, trade with Communist nations, handling legislation dealing with controls, and procurement issues.

¹⁸Truman's use of controls encountered stiff opposition. Conservatives complained in a manner similar to its previous opposition to the New Deal and World War Two controls, claiming that they represented a defeat for the American belief in private enterprise. The controls were not part of the American tradition of capitalism and businessmen felt threatened that their pre-eminent status would be undermined by a new wave of government planning. Charles Wilson, the head of General Motors defended the limping performance of GM and most American industry by deflecting blame on the administration: "The present emergency is being used to promote regimentation under the false assumption that this is the best way to get the job done. . . All regimentation is fatal to a free society." The anti-controls attitude was made part of the Eisenhower campaign, and Wilson would become Eisenhower's Secretary of Defense, but the attacks did little to stop the Democrat Congress and President from enacting the controls. Wilson quote from DDEL, Pre-Presidential Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, box 124, Wilson folder, copy of a speech entitled "The Camel's Nose is Under the Tent", October 10 1951, p. 2

¹⁹This Charles E. (for Edward) Wilson is not the same man as Charles E. (for Erwin) Wilson, who was head of General Motors and Eisenhower's Secretary of Defense.

²⁰HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, General File, box 131, folder entitled "National Advisory Board on Mobilization Policy", and President's Secretary's Files, box 142

Another voice on mobilisation policy was the National Security Resources Board (NSRB). The NSRB had been created in the 1947 National Security Act, the same measure that had created the National Security Council. Like the NSC, the NSRB was staffed by men from various branches of government. Also like the NSC, the NSRB was supposed to be a forum where various bureaucracies resolved issues by creating working papers and ideas that could act as a guide to the President and the rest of the Executive branch. The NSRB spent its three years creating policy papers suggesting the granting of specific economic powers to the government in the event of emergency. These received Presidential approval but were limited in impact until the war broke out.²¹ These included proposals on implementing price controls, fostering managed defence production, and managing the nation's supply of commodities, such as rubber and tin.

Early in the war, the Congress elevated the status of the NSRB, which was chaired by W. Stuart Symington, to have power to modify production in various ways. Symington was a former Secretary of the Air Force and Senator from Missouri, who was known for being liberal on domestic policies. He would become the biggest hawk in the administration on the Korean War, writing memos warning of imminent war for survival.

²¹.see the many proposals on stockpiling and mobilisation in: HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Central File, Confidential Files; boxes 27 and 28, 10 folders on NSRB

Spin-offs from these organisations led to the creation of a whole new section of bureaucracy rivalling the "alphabet" agencies of the New Deal. Truman formed the Health Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) to advise the NSRB,²² the Wage Stabilization Board (WSB) and the Office of Price Stabilization (OPS) to act in concert with the ESA, and a number of ODM committees, such as the ODM Committee on Manpower Policy. These were separate from the various Department of Defense boards that dealt with procurement.

6.2 The Arms Build-Up and the Economy

The US economy boomed at the start of the arms build-up. The immediate impact of the increase in government spending was to drive production up and increase employment. There was an accompanying inflation, due to severe shortages in both goods and labour markets. In constant prices, gross national product grew by more than 5% from the second half of 1950 to the first half of 1951, industrial production increased 10% in the same period, unemployment fell to the lowest level since the Second World War, hours worked per week increased from 40.5 hours in June 1950 to 40.8

²²HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 131, folder entitled "National Security Resources Board", letter from Rusk (Chairman of HRAC) to the President, September 22 1950

hours a year later, living costs increased 9%, and wholesale prices increased 16%.²³ The increased hiring from the war boom more than offset the negative impacts on job growth that the accompanying increases in taxation and the falling sales of consumer products may have caused.

This spurt in national production was, at least partially, a continuation of a peace-time upturn in productivity that had begun in late 1949 and carried through 1950. On to this small boom was added the expansion in military orders, beginning in the second half of 1950. Part of the financing for the new orders stemmed from increases in the federal debt, postponing the potential negative impact on the economy of taxation. The result, as shown by an April 1951 survey by the Federal Trade Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission, was a record business year in 1950 (the previous record was 1948). The 17% gain in corporate sales easily surpassed the 13% increase in costs, leading to a 61% gain in pre-tax income and a 42% gain in post tax income. The jump in annual corporate income was from \$14.4 billion to \$23.2 billion.²⁴

Perhaps due to the nature of weapons procurement, in which competitive bidding did not exist on certain technical goods, and in which prices could be based on a cost plus profit basis, rather than on

²³.Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371/90951, AU 1104/3, HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, Report to the President by the Director of Defense Mobilization, box 148, January 1 1953, p. 7

²⁴.*The World Almanac 1952*, p. 220

a market price, those corporations manufacturing military goods, and the workers they hired, could benefit immensely. The aviation industry, steel producers, communications and radar manufacturers, and certain other firms broke profit records. Lockheed, Bell Aircraft, General Electric, Boeing, and United Aircraft were particularly successful in winning contracts.²⁵ Lockheed saw its backlog of orders double in the first six weeks of the Korean conflict.²⁶ The value of aircraft production in the United States increased from less than \$2 billion in 1949 to approximately \$8.5 billion in 1953, and employment in that industry rose from 281,000 to 779,100.²⁷ It was a similarly rosy time for producers of certain strategic materials, of which the military's consumption rose from \$1 billion over the 1946-1950 to \$7 billion in the 1950-1953 period.²⁸ In the last six months of 1950, the Army Ordnance Tank and Automotive Center in Detroit placed more than \$3 billion in orders for vehicles and spare parts, more than the total amount for the entire first year of the Second World War.²⁹

²⁵ *The Wall Street Journal*, "Air Force Negotiating With GE", and "Lockheed to Reopen Bomber Plant", both on p. 16, January 5 1951, *The Wall Street Journal*, "Helicopters Again: Rescue Jobs in Korea Boom Military Demand for 'Flying Windmills'", January 5 1951, p.1

Boeing manufactured aircraft for the military throughout the Cold War, and managed to refit one aeroplane designed for the military, a refueler, into the 707 passenger jet.

²⁶ Rae, *Climb*, p. 197

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 198

²⁸ Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 493

²⁹ *The Wall Street Journal*, "Over \$3 Billion of Vehicles, Parts Ordered in Detroit Since July, Army Ordnance Official States", January 5 1951, p. 16, see squib on p. 1 for WW2 fact

These profits fuelled research and development spending in heavy industries.

Areas around defence plants benefited. Due to many factors, including the existence of "right to work" laws, and pressure from the federal government, which sought to minimise the risk of foreign attack through the dispersal of facilities, manufacturers had, during and after the Second World War, located many of the new plants in the south and west, away from the old manufacturing heartland of the northeast and the midwest.³⁰ McDonnell-Douglas, North American Aircraft, and Hughes Aircraft all had plants in California, Lockheed manufactured in California and Georgia, Boeing was in Washington, and Temco, Chance-Vought, Convair, and Bell Helicopters had plants in Texas.³¹ The arms build-up quickened the trend towards the enhancement of the economic power of the former Confederate states and the west.³²

The impact on firms not producing goods for the military was less salutary. If a firm wasn't making war goods, it still had to pay the

³⁰Rae, *Climb*, pp. 196-197; Weinberg, *World At Arms*, p. 494

³¹Rae, *Climb*, chapter 9; Walker, *Cold War*, pp. 139-140

³²Southern states also benefited from the increasing use of domestic military facilities, a disproportionate number of which were in the South. Southern Congressmen, being elected in a region that was only legally bipartisan, could count on long terms of service. This gave them committee and subcommittee chairmanships, which gave them greater pork-barrelling abilities. It was natural, given the Southern military tradition, that this should include the creation of military bases. The military found that the weather allowed easy year round training of personnel. In 1950, 13 out of the 14 permanent bases of the Tactical Air Command were in states that had been in the Confederacy, and 1 was in California. Among the Strategic Air Command bases east of the Mississippi River, none was farther north than Savannah, Georgia. PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951, Appendixes G and H

"excess profits" tax. Although it might benefit from having its labour costs held down by the controls, there were many types of rising costs that were not controlled, such as the cost of capital and the cost of imported items, despite the fact that it was often illegal to raise prices. As was the case with other examples of price controls, manufacturers often found that it was possible, in a market of excess demand, to decrease the quality of items and still sell them. This lowering of the quality of goods happened at all stages of the production process, hurting manufacturers who relied on other firms for parts as much as it hurt the consumer.

For the large automobile manufacturers, the growth of military contracts was more than offset by the difficulties of competing in a civilian market in which car prices were controlled, steel scarce, and disposable income nearly stable. In January 1951, Chrysler, Studebaker, and Packard announced production cuts of approximately 20%.³³ The same month, Chevrolet and Lincoln decreased production.³⁴ In June, General Motors and Studebaker announced temporary shutdowns of plant, effecting more than 164,000 employees. On 9 July, Chrysler announced an indefinite layoff of 20,000 workers.³⁵

³³. *The Wall Street Journal*, "Production Cutbacks: Chrysler Production to Fall 20% . . .", January 3, 1951, p. 16

³⁴. *The Wall Street Journal*, "What's News-Business and Finance", January 4 1951, p. 1

³⁵. *The World Almanac 1952*, p. 229

When adjusted for inflation, the non-defence economy was smaller after the build-up began than before. Many people, especially those living in regions that did not benefit from the expansion of war goods production, tended to be net losers. Inflation, as always, was particularly cruel to people whose wages or pensions were not indexed to price increases. Even Truman admitted that "more than half the families of the nation had no income gains between early 1950 and early 1951, and almost one-fifth suffered actual declines".³⁶

The increased taxes and inflation that were a part of the arms build-up ate much of the extra income the American public may have earned during the Korean War period. Disposable real income in the fourth quarter of 1952 was hardly higher than it had been in the first quarter of 1950, despite the fact that the economy had boomed during the time leading up to the war, and had continued to grow once the war began.³⁷ As the Director of Defense Mobilization explained in January 1953,

Average income, after adjustment for changes in the buying power of the dollar, has risen by 3 percent before taxes [since the beginning of the war]. After deducting the increased taxes necessary to help pay for the defense program, the average disposable income has increased slightly, from an annual rate of

³⁶.Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371/90951, AU 1104/3

³⁷.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, Report to the President by the Director of Defense Mobilization, box 148, January 1 1953, p.7

\$1,297 in the last quarter before Korea to an estimated \$1,337 in the quarter just ended.³⁸

A three percent rise in almost three years was significantly less than mean increases for most of the twentieth century.

Due in large part to the arms build-up, the US economy went from being a net exporter to being a net importer. With the rise in production being more than balanced by the increased purchases by the military, the period witnessed increases in raw materials imports to build war goods, but no corresponding increases in production of consumer goods for export. The increase in arms shipments, accounting for only approximately 6% of total exports in October 1950, was not enough to make up for the slack in other goods.³⁹

During the mobilisation period, raw materials accounted for approximately two-thirds of American imports.⁴⁰ The vast majority of these goods were earmarked for military use. The allocation of steel, copper, and aluminium for the consumer sector was decreased by as much as 60% during the war.⁴¹

American imports of lead grew almost 25% from 1949 to 1950,⁴² American rubber imports went from \$41 million in September 1950 to

³⁸.*ibid.*, p. 7

³⁹.*The Wall Street Journal*, "Trade Turnabout: 1951 May See 12 Month Imports Top Exports First Time Since 1893", January 3 1951, p. 1

⁴⁰.*ibid.*

⁴¹.PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/39, Weekly Political Summary by the Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 1 to 7 September 1951

⁴².*The Wall Street Journal*, "Trade Turnabout: 1951 May See 12 Month Imports Top Exports First Time Since

\$60 million the next month,⁴³ and American copper imports nearly doubled in the same period.⁴⁴ Much of these dollar increases in purchases was due to the inflation that hit these commodities particularly hard due to the arms build-ups throughout the world.

The inflation in other goods, although comparatively small, was another cause of the trade deficit, at least with nations that had lower inflation. As the British Foreign Office concluded, "the domestic inflation [in the US] may well make it easier for United Kingdom exporters to find markets for their goods in the United States."⁴⁵ Between 1949 and 1951, the US went from being a net exporter of steel to Europe to being a net importer.⁴⁶

Another factor contributing to the trade deficit was the administration's use of controls to decrease exports of materials considered vital to defence. These included cotton and certain metals.⁴⁷

Much of capital and brain power was invested in building war plants, crowding out non-defence industries that might have had

1893", January 3 1951, p. 1

⁴³.ibid.

⁴⁴.ibid.

⁴⁵.PRO FO 371 90951, AU 1104/2, Memorandum from Mr. Steel, in Washington, March 2 1951

⁴⁶.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, box 16, White House Central File, Confidential Papers; folder for the Second Quarterly Report by the Office of Defense Mobilization to the President, preliminary draft, June 20 1951, page VII-3

⁴⁷.*The Wall Street Journal*, "Trade Turnabout: 1951 May See 12 Month Imports Top Exports First Time Since 1893", January 3, 1951, p. 1

more profitable export capabilities than defence goods. Defence industries had great needs for importing certain raw materials, but political limitations prevented unlimited sale of military equipment abroad. Assessing the impact of trade deficits on economies has proven much more difficult than explaining the reasons for their existence. However, the nature of the American trade deficit, in which the excess of imports was used to produce war goods rather than building up other industries, seems to be almost wholly negative in strictly economic terms.

Another impact of the US trade deficits was the expansion of dollar supplies outside the United States, which were either invested in American banks or in the growing international dollar markets. This was made more possible by the Bretton Woods arrangements of the World War Two era, which had made the dollar the key currency in the world exchange system.

The arms build-up also led to a labour shortage. The war spending drove unemployment down, and the controls on wages made it difficult for firms to hire workers away from existing jobs by offering increased pay. One means of addressing the problem was importing labour from Latin America. Negotiations were made between the State Department and various Central and South American

governments in San Francisco in December 1950, which led to agreements on the subject.⁴⁸

Leaders of organised labour tried to use the labour shortage to help their supporters. They objected to many wage freezes, complaining that the combination of accelerated government purchases of defence products and fixed low wages were allowing big industry to engage in ruthless profiteering at the expense of the worker. This led to their refusals to participate in government planning boards and to strikes, which Truman met with force.

When choosing board members, Truman had split the seats along what he considered politically practicable lines: one third of members from union leadership, one third from business leadership, and one third from government. Union leaders, suspecting the other two sides were lined up against them, staged a walkout in the spring of 1951, after the majority sided against them on several important wage disputes. But the unions may have underestimated the impact that the mobilisation campaign had on the President. Phillip Murray, a President of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, had once claimed that Truman was the "best friend labor ever had in the White House,"⁴⁹ and union leaders probably assumed that Truman had to be somewhat sympathetic to union needs because organised labour

⁴⁸. *The New York Times*, "US Seeks Import of Latin Workers", Lawrence Davies, December 16 1950

⁴⁹. quoted in *The Washington Evening Star*, "Labor Independence at Polls Hailed by Truman in Interview", John Herling, January 14 1953 Murray did not mention that in 1946, Truman tried to draft striking railway workers into the Army to break their resistance.

contributed so many votes for Democrats. However, each time a union in an industry considered important to the arms build-up struck rather than accept the proposals of the Wage Stabilization Board, Truman chose to side against the strikers.

The first time he did so was over the walkout in the copper mining and smelting industry, in August of 1951, when 58,000 men struck, cutting the production of copper, a key war good, by 3,000 tons a day.⁵⁰ One of the key unions was suspected in some sources of having Communist sympathisers in its leadership, which heightened concerns about national security.⁵¹ The unions were forced to obey a federal injunction to return to work while their contract was negotiated under the terms of the Taft-Hartley Act, a piece of legislation much resented by unions.⁵²

The biggest strike was in 1952 in the steel industry. Approximately 600,000 workers stopped going to the plants on April 7.⁵³ This was at a critical juncture of the arms build-up, since fiscal 1952 was the second half of a two-year build-up that had initially been designed to take four years. Perhaps influenced by the British nationalisation of

⁵⁰.FO 371, 90905, AU 1013/38, Weekly Political Summary by the Ambassador, Sir Oliver Franks, 25 August to 31 August 1951

⁵¹.ibid.

⁵².PRO FO 371, 90905, AU 1013/39, Weekly Political Summary by the Ambassador, Sir Oliver Franks, 1 September to 7 September 1951

⁵³.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Director of Defense Mobilization, August 1 1952

steel, Truman attempted to place the steel industry under the control of the federal government the day after the strike began, and ordered the workers to show up to work. The Army occupied the major steel mills and flew the American flag from the buildings.

Before his decision, Truman had asked the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Fred Vinson, whether it was legal. Vinson told him it was, but later found himself in a minority on his own court (supposedly a sympathetic court composed of FDR and Truman appointees), which ruled 6 to 3 against the President's authority in the matter. Truman chose not to provoke a constitutional crisis and backed down. The strike lasted until 25 July.⁵⁴ The Director of Defense Mobilization estimated that "20 million ingot tons of steel" were not produced due to the stoppage. "As a result of the loss of production, steel output in 1952 is expected to reach only 90 million tons, 14 percent less than in 1951".⁵⁵ A previous report by the same department had estimated Soviet steel production at 39 million tons a year.⁵⁶ Although "the impact of the loss of [American steel] production has been partially absorbed by the consumption of inventories, which at the beginning of the stoppage were at an

⁵⁴.ibid.

⁵⁵.ibid.

⁵⁶.HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Central File; Confidential Files, box 16, folder on Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Management, preliminary draft, page VII-1.

Western Europe was estimated to have 55 million tons per year of steel production, and the United States to have 108 million tons

abnormally high level", the strike meant "that 20 to 30 percent of the deliveries of hard goods" and "35 percent of the larger caliber ammunition" would not be completed.⁵⁷

6.3 Civil Defence and Other Preparations for a Major War

Truman had asked the National Security Resources Board, even before the Korean War, to make plans so that in the event of a major conflict, the government could build key facilities, evacuate certain government agencies, stockpile commodities and take control of designated radio stations. Once the conflict in Korea began, the vast public fear of nuclear war made these plans seem antiquated, and the government had to think of new ways to allay public fears of a nuclear apocalypse.

The Truman administration developed the Radar Defense Organization (RDO), designed to protect the United States from air attack. Although the Soviets did not yet have bases near enough or bombers with range enough to attack the US (Alaska was not yet a state), both the military and the general public were concerned about the future. The RDO had barely developed beyond the planning

⁵⁷.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Director of Defense Mobilization, August 1 1952

stage before the Korean War, but by the end of 1950 thirteen aircraft control and warning groups, each with radar, were in service.⁵⁸ To coordinate the efforts of these groups, and to give greater priority at the planning level to radar alert and interception of enemy aircraft, the Air Force created the Air Defense Command on January 1 1951.⁵⁹ Not to be outdone, the Army created its own anti-aircraft command.⁶⁰

In 1952, the Truman administration decided to construct a Distant Early Warning (DEW) line of radar installations across Alaska and northern Canada.⁶¹ Although the Air Force was not optimistic about its ability to destroy incoming planes, the DEW line would, according to plan, give enough warning to enable bombers to take off and disperse, maintaining a strong nuclear retaliatory capability.⁶²

Civil defence plans depended largely on evacuation of cities. The evacuation idea was taken so seriously that Acheson even suggested, in June 1952, that if the Truman administration was to carry out decisive policies in Korea, Indochina, and Berlin, then it might be preferable to begin evacuations.⁶³ One NSRB project involved planning for the possibility of an air attack on the nation's capital,

⁵⁸.PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", March 5 1951

⁵⁹.*ibid.*

⁶⁰.PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, p. 13

⁶¹.Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 495

⁶².*ibid.*

⁶³.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 489

including plans for evacuations of those agencies that didn't have to be in Washington. Truman endorsed a version of this, but it was defeated in Congress.⁶⁴ Another NSRB proposal was to give incentives for corporations to locate any new factories at least three miles from existing businesses, so as to minimise damage in the event of the nuclear bombing of the United States.⁶⁵ This was proposed in the belief that relocation of plant might prove more cost effective than civilian evacuation and/or air defence.

Security from terrorist attack was also a major concern. The Tennessee Valley Authority banned visitors to many of its installations and ordered guards to survey traffic using the highways on its dams.⁶⁶

⁶⁴HSTL, Papers of Harry S. Truman, White House Central File, Confidential Files, box 28, see memos to various agencies on September 25 1951, in folder 7 on the NSRB

⁶⁵Friedberg, "Garrison" This was before thermonuclear devices. The destruction radius of atomic weapons was still relatively small.

⁶⁶*The New York Times*, "TVA Bans Visitors", produced by United Press, December 17 1950

6.4 The American Arms Build-Up: What Conventional Forces Did it

Buy? The extent of the American arms build-up can best be seen using figures given by the Director of Defense Mobilization:⁶⁷

	<u>Before 25 June 1950</u>	<u>1 January 1953</u>
Army Divisions:	10	21
USMC Divisions:	2	3
USAF Wings:	48	approximately 100
Navy Warships:	over 200	over 400
Carrier Groups:	7	16

These numbers only reflect half of the arms build up: they represent the quantitative differences, rather than the qualitative development of new military equipment. In fact, while most of the ground fighting in Korea was done with World War II leftovers (this was true for both sides), the United States was slowly preparing to build a new fighting force, both in conventional and nuclear forces.

In the US, the 25 June 1950 to 1 January 1953 period saw 7 new models of combat aircraft, 8 new models of guns, 8 new models of

⁶⁷HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report by the Director of Defense Mobilization to the President, January 1, 1953, p. 2

Note that in addition to the 10 divisions, the pre 25 June 1950 Army also had 12 separate regimental size units, but that the 1 Jan 1953 divisions were all at full strength, which the 25 June 1950 may not have been.

ammunition, 10 new models of combat vehicles, and 15 new models of radar equipment come into production.⁶⁸

The first step was the conversion of factories. At the end of the Second World War, the United States government had placed many of the factories it had built to produce war goods into either a "Departmental Reserve" (run by the Department of Defense) or a "National Industrial Reserve". Those in the later category were sold, but only under the stipulation that they must be maintained so as to allow the government to reconvert them to military production within 120 days.⁶⁹ Out of 438 plants, 354 were reconverted during 1950-51.⁷⁰ The delivery of end-items and construction activity went from half a billion dollars per month before Korea, to \$1.5 billion per month by June 1951, to \$4 billion per month by June of 1952.⁷¹ The rate of orders coming in was superior to the output of finished goods from late 1950 until 1952.⁷² Between the fourth quarter of 1950 and the third quarter of 1951, manufacturers' shipments of military transportation equipment more than doubled, shipments of electrical machinery to the military increased more than 600%, shipments of fabricated metal

⁶⁸.*ibid.*, see graph on p. 3

⁶⁹.HSTL, White House Central Files; Confidential Files, box 16, folder for the Second Quarterly Report by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, pp. II-6 and II-7

⁷⁰.*ibid.*, pp. II-6 and II-7

⁷¹.*ibid.*, p. II-1

⁷².*ibid.*, p. II-2

products to the military increased more than 900%, and shipments of non-electrical machinery to the military increased by more than 1,000%.⁷³

By June of 1951, the Office of Defense Mobilization could claim that "the Department of Defense has programmed nearly \$6 billion for additional plant expansion. Of this amount, about \$2.5 billion is sponsored by the Army, \$1.6 billion by the Navy, and \$1.8 billion by the Air Force. Nearly half the planned expansion of facilities under this program is to serve for the production of aircraft, nearly 20 per cent for tank-automotive production, and the remainder is for producing guided missiles, weapons, ammunition, and other items."⁷⁴

The average work week in aircraft plants increased from 40 to 45 hours,⁷⁵ but this still wasn't enough to catch up to new orders. New plants were created. Production worker employment in the aircraft and aircraft parts industry in the first 11 months of the Korean War alone increased from 185,000 to 350,000.⁷⁶ Deliveries increased by two-thirds in the first year of the war, and had to be tripled in the

⁷³.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report by the Director of Defense Mobilization to the President, January 1 1952, see graph on p. 8

⁷⁴.HSTL, Harry S. Truman Papers, White House Central File, Confidential Files, box 16, folder on the Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, page II-7

⁷⁵.*ibid.*, p. II-3

⁷⁶.*ibid.*, p. II-3

second year of the war just to catch up to demand.⁷⁷ In the month of June 1952 alone, the aircraft industry delivered 768 warplanes.⁷⁸

These were not just any warplanes. Jet engines, electronics, and new alloys had completely revolutionised aircraft construction. The F-86 had more than 700% more horsepower than the P-51, one of the best fighter aircraft of the Second World War. Whereas the P-51 had a maximum speed of 440 miles per hour, weighed 9,340 pounds, and could climb to a maximum altitude of 36,491 feet, the F-86 had a maximum speed of over 671 miles per hour, weighed 13,885 pounds, and could climb to approximately 50,000 feet.⁷⁹ The average airframe weight of a warplane in 1940 was 3,850 pounds, and in 1951 the average airframe weight was approximately 9,000 pounds.⁸⁰

Other commonly produced warplanes were the Air Force's F-84 fighter bomber, and Navy fighters such as the F10F, which came into production in early 1953.⁸¹ The new fighters replaced the solid F-80, which was responsible for the majority of enemy kills in the first six months of the Korean War,⁸² when the enemy relied heavily on

⁷⁷.*ibid.*, pp. II-2 and II-3

⁷⁸.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, August 1, 1952, p. 9

⁷⁹.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report by the Director of Defense Mobilization to the President, January 1, 1952, p. 8

⁸⁰.Rae, *Climb*, p. 198

⁸¹.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, August 1, 1952, p. 10

⁸².PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché",

swarms of inferior Soviet made Yak fighters.⁸³ The twin-jet F7U Cutlass was one of the primary carrier-based fighters.⁸⁴ Another jet-powered carrier-based fighter, the Phantom, was designed during the Korean War arms build-up and went into production shortly afterwards.⁸⁵

The first supersonic American fighter planes, the F-101 and the F-102, were also designed during this time, and were put into production in 1954.⁸⁶ Another field of research during the Korean War era, which would similarly pay dividends later, was the beginning of research into the replacement of steel with titanium.⁸⁷

Because airborne operations were thought to be likely in a future major war, the C-119 was introduced. It could carry 64 fully equipped paratroopers, and had a range of more than 2,000 miles with a 9 ton load.⁸⁸ Even bigger transports were in the works by 1951.⁸⁹

5 March 1951, Appendix L

⁸³.PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, 16 February 1951, p. 17

⁸⁴.Rae, *Climb*, p. 189

⁸⁵.*ibid.*, p. 188

⁸⁶.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Director of Defense Mobilization, August 1 1952

⁸⁷.PRO FO 371/90985, AU1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, February 16 1951, p. 17

⁸⁸.HSTL, Harry S. Truman Papers, White House Central File, Confidential Files, box 16, folder on the Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, pp. II-12

⁸⁹.*ibid.*, pp. II-12

The Air Force didn't just add planes, it reorganised itself, trying to improve on its weaknesses in tactical air support by making the Tactical Air Command an independent command, directly responsible to the Air Force Chief of Staff.⁹⁰

Besides aircraft, tank production was the big item. In the early stages of the Korean War, the United States Army had suffered from a distinct lack of armoured vehicles. The only operational tanks in East Asia had been M-24 Chaffee reconnaissance tanks, which did not have effective guns,⁹¹ and which were destroyed in large numbers by the Soviet T-34's.⁹² These were soon augmented by World War II era M-4A3E8 Sherman medium tanks that Army ordnance in Tokyo hurriedly rebuilt,⁹³ and some M-26 Pershing medium tanks and M-46 Patton tanks shipped to the front in July and August of 1950,⁹⁴ bringing the total number of United States battle tanks in Korea to a little over 500 by the end of August 1950.⁹⁵ While this was enough to give the United Nations forces tank superiority in the theatre, (the M-46 Pattons were particularly good at destroying the T-34⁹⁶) it meant a

⁹⁰.PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", March 5 1951

⁹¹.Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, p. 50

⁹².PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, February 16 1950, p. 13

⁹³.Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, p. 50

⁹⁴.*ibid.*, p. 50

⁹⁵.*ibid.*, p. 50

⁹⁶.PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, February 16 1950, p. 13

serious depletion of all American tanks elsewhere, and it was obvious to the administration that if the nation was to engage in the arms build-up and world-wide deployment that was planned, tanks would have to be one of the first items specified for production.

By March of 1951, three months ahead of schedule, the first tanks ordered in the aftermath of the outbreak of hostilities came off the production line.⁹⁷ The plan was for a 1,600% increase in tank production in the first two years following June 1950.⁹⁸ The T-41 light tank, designed to destroy the enemy's medium tanks, came into production in July 1951, with a 76mm gun, and a maximum speed of 35 mph.⁹⁹ For medium tanks, the M-47, one of the main production line tanks, was replaced by the T-48, which first came off the assembly line in May of 1952.¹⁰⁰ The T-48, for which the Chrysler Corporation was the main producer, had heavier armour, an improved turret, longer cruising range, and a lower silhouette than the M-47.¹⁰¹ The tank, at its beginning, had a weight of 45 tons and mounted a 90mm gun.¹⁰² For heavy tanks, work on a planned 55 ton model, with a

⁹⁷.HSTL, White House Central Files: Papers of Harry S. Truman, box 16, folder on the Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, p. II-3

⁹⁸.ibid., p. II-3

⁹⁹.PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, February 16, 1950, p. 12

¹⁰⁰.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, August 1, 1952, p. 9

¹⁰¹.ibid.

¹⁰².PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, February 16 1950, p. 12

120mm gun, was undertaken during the war.¹⁰³ New improvements gave all tanks greater fire control.¹⁰⁴

There were scores of other developments in conventional forces. One was the use of helicopters on a regular basis. A January 1951 Wall Street Journal article described the growth of the helicopter production business: "Before Korea, US manufacturers hadn't built more than 1,000 of these planes all told-including all the military 'copters produced in World War Two. Today producers have orders for close to 600 of them and there's talk of hundreds more. Producers had a \$20 million a year business just before the Korean fighting started. Since then well over \$150 million of orders have blossomed on their books."¹⁰⁵ The main helicopters produced during the period were the Bell H-13, Hiller H-23, Sikorsky HRS-1, and Sikorsky HO3S-1.¹⁰⁶ Approximately 1 in 7 American casualties in the Korean War was evacuated by helicopter,¹⁰⁷ and the "choppers" also rescued downed pilots from behind enemy lines or in the water.¹⁰⁸ The US Navy

¹⁰³.ibid., p. 12

¹⁰⁴.HSTL, White House Central Files: Papers of Harry S. Truman, box 16, folder on the Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, p. II-10

¹⁰⁵.*The Wall Street Journal*, "Helicopters Again: Rescue Jobs in Korea Boom Demand For 'Flying Windmills'", January 5 1951, p. 1

¹⁰⁶.Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, pp. 136-137

¹⁰⁷.ibid., p. 40

¹⁰⁸.*The Wall Street Journal*, "Helicopters Again: Rescue Jobs in Korea Boom Demand For 'Flying Windmills'", January 5, 1951, p. 1

ordered its first purpose designed submarine spotting helicopters in the early Korean War period.¹⁰⁹

Another development was the expansion in the use of napalm (an acronym for naphthenic and palmitic acids), a jellied gasoline. Whereas before Korea, napalm had been used in flame-throwers and only rarely in bombs or in anti-tank combat, during the arms build-up its use and production were made common. According to one history, "During the course of the [Korean] war Far East Air Force alone expended 32,257 tons of napalm".¹¹⁰

Given the focus the Soviets were placing on armoured attacks, anti-tank warfare was critical. A fortnight before the Korean campaign, the first production of ammunition for the new 3.5 inch bazooka began.¹¹¹ This weapon went into mass production with the beginning of the war, replacing the 2.36 inch model which had proved ineffective at stopping tanks. Despite the larger barrel size, the new bazooka weighed less,¹¹² had an effective firing range of 450 yards against tanks, could penetrate 6 to 8 inches of armour, and still be

¹⁰⁹.ibid.

¹¹⁰.Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, p. 196

¹¹¹.PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, February 16, 1950, p. 12

¹¹².HSTL, White House Central Files: Papers of Harry S. Truman, box 16, folder on the Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, p. II-11

easily operated by one man.¹¹³ The 105mm recoilless rifle, another tank killer, replaced the 75mm model.¹¹⁴

There were numerous, smaller advances. A new entrenching tool replaced the shovel, and a new body armour, using plastic armour plates made of laminated layers of glass cloth filaments bonded under pressure to form a hard surface, termed "Doron" was produced, although its use was limited.¹¹⁵ The Navy began an immense warship-building program. In the second half of 1950 alone, the Navy commissioned 2 battleships, 2 heavy cruisers, 2 light aircraft carriers, 4 heavy aircraft carriers, 6 submarines, 7 escort carriers, 8 oilers, 13 frigates, 42 minesweepers, 54 destroyers, and a large number of transports, cargo ships, and landing craft,¹¹⁶ in addition to commissioning vessels from the reserve fleet.¹¹⁷ In the period from 25 June to 3 October 1950 alone, the Navy recommissioned 62 vessels.¹¹⁸

¹¹³.PRO FO 371/90985, AU 1201/1, Military Attaché's Annual Report for 1950, p. 12

¹¹⁴.*ibid.*, p. 12

¹¹⁵.for Doron, see Summers, *Korean War Almanac*, p. 53

for other products, see HSTL, White House Central Files: Papers of Harry S. Truman, box 16, folder on the Second Quarterly Report to the President by the Office of Defense Mobilization, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, p. II-11

¹¹⁶.PRO FO 371/90987, AU 1213/1, Naval Attaché's Annual Report on the US Navy for the Year 1950

¹¹⁷.*ibid.*

¹¹⁸.PRO FO 371/81723, AU 12110/1, "Expansion of US Armed Forces - Testimony of Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Sherman, Before House Armed Services Committee on Oct. 3rd, About the Navy's Share of the Revised Programme", from Sir O. Franks, 11 Oct 1950

During the Korean War, construction began on a new class of super-carriers, beginning with the 76,000 ton USS Forrester.¹¹⁹

There were other major Navy projects. Research began for an atomic-powered submarine during the arms build-up,¹²⁰ and by the spring of 1952, Truman was able to celebrate the laying of the keel at a Groton, Connecticut shipyard.¹²¹ The Navy also researched a sonar system for mine location, automatic diving and depth control systems for submarines, a gyro-compass that could be used in latitudes above 70 degrees, improved systems for providing electrical power on aircraft carriers, and a new anti-submarine torpedo to be launched from helicopters, named the Mark 43.¹²² In a multinational effort involving the Canadians and the British, the US Navy also worked towards creating anti-torpedo devices, which included research of towed explosives and noise making decoys.¹²³ The Navy increased production of existing jet aircraft, such as the F3D-1 "Skyknight", the

¹¹⁹.Charles Morris, *Iron Destinies, Lost Opportunities: The Arms Race Between the USA and the USSR, 1945-1987* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 85

¹²⁰.HSTL, White House Central File, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Confidential Files; box 16, folder for the Second Quarterly Report by the Office of Defense Mobilization to the President, preliminary draft of June 20, 1951, p. II-9

¹²¹.Hamby, *Man of the People*, p. 606

¹²².PRO FO 371/90987, AU 1213/1, Naval Attaché's Annual Report on the US Navy for the Year 1950

¹²³.*ibid.*

F9F-4 "Panther", and the F9F-2 "Banshee",¹²⁴ and worked towards equipping all its carriers with jet aircraft.¹²⁵

In addition to funding all the new combat forces, the US arms build-up financed a vast expansion of the military's signals intelligence. During the Korean War, the inability of American intelligence personnel to integrate into Korean society, combined with the clever use of disinformation by the North Koreans, made human intelligence gathering of limited use. In its place, the military spent money building up their technical spying abilities, in fields such as radio interception and aerial photo reconnaissance. Due both to the need to co-ordinate this growing empire and the need to prevent bickering among the services, the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), which was supposed to help the services cooperate but had little authority, was remodelled into a new organisation, the National Security Agency (NSA).¹²⁶ The NSA, whose existence was secret, began operations on November 4, 1952, a date intentionally chosen since it was election day, when the attention of the press would be elsewhere.¹²⁷

¹²⁴.ibid.

¹²⁵.*The New York Times*, "Combat Airplanes Increasing in Size", Frederick Graham, June 25 1950, p. 17

¹²⁶.Andrew, *President's Eyes*, p. 197

¹²⁷.ibid., p. 197

6.5 The Expansion of the American Nuclear Arsenal and Delivery Systems

During the arms build-up coinciding with the Korean War, the United States increased its stockpile of nuclear weapons, invested large sums in improving the means of delivering them, enhanced the quality of existing atomic weapons by making more productive use of fissionable materials, and, as a result of the hydrogen bomb research program that had been an ongoing concern since before the Korean War, detonated the first experimental fusion bomb.

As we have seen, Truman approved the spending of vast sums on the nuclear establishment. Two major increases in the first year of the Korean War totalled more than three and a half billion dollars.

Two major new plants were built: a \$500 million gaseous diffusion plant at Paducah, Kentucky, and the \$1.2 billion Savannah River production plant in South Carolina.¹²⁸ The construction of the two plants required 11% of one year's American nickel production, 33% of one year's hydrofluoric acid, and 34% of one year's stainless steel production.¹²⁹ The two new plants consumed more electricity than the Tennessee Valley Authority, Hoover, and Grand Coulee dams

¹²⁸.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report by the Director of Defense Mobilization to the President, January 1, 1952, p. 9; Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, claims (p. 561) that both the plants were gaseous diffusion plants

¹²⁹.Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 561

could have provided had they been devoted to the purpose.¹³⁰ To make use of the plants, the United States made arrangements with foreign producers of uranium, such as Canada, South Africa and the Belgian Congo, and subsidised mineral exploration, helping produce extraordinary new quantities of weapons-grade uranium domestically and in Canada.¹³¹ The American stockpile of nuclear weapons, which consisted of 250 bombs at the end of 1949, grew to 298 bombs in 1950, 832 in 1952, 1,161 in 1953, 1,630 in 1954, and 2,422 in 1955.¹³² By 1962, the number would be 27,100.¹³³

The first successful American laboratory test of fusion occurred on 8 May 1951,¹³⁴ the first successful American test of a boosted fission weapon occurred just 16 days later,¹³⁵ and the first fusion explosion was the MIKE test of 1 November 1952, done at Eniwetok Atoll in the central Pacific.¹³⁶ By 1 March 1954, with the CASTLE test of the Bravo

¹³⁰.*ibid.*, p. 561

¹³¹.FRUS, 1950, Volume 1, Summary Log of Atomic Energy Work, undated, pp. 580-587, Arneson to Marten, December 4, 1950, pp. 591-592, Arneson to the Secretary of State, December 14 1950, p. 593; Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 493

¹³².1949: Callahan, *Dangerous Capabilities*, p. 78; 1952, 1953, and 1954: Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 329; 1950 and 1955: Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 562

¹³³.*ibid.*, p. 562

¹³⁴.Barry Steiner, *Bernard Brodie and the Foundations of American Nuclear Strategy*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1991), p. 252

¹³⁵.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 300

¹³⁶.Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 504 The test occurred at 7:15 AM local time, which made it 31 October in the United States, a date used in many sources.

bomb, the US had a hydrogen weapon small enough to be loaded into in a bomber.

The military believed that just as important as augmenting the destructiveness of atomic weapons was improving the means of delivering them to the site of attack. Means already existed in some quantity, since the strategic bombing fleet had received more attention than any other part of the American military in the period from Hiroshima to the beginning of the Korean War, when American military doctrine gave primary emphasis to atomic weapons. However, these were judged insufficient for the new nuclear capabilities, and a modernisation of the SAC fleet was commenced.

In early 1950, the Air Force had three bomber groups equipped with B-36's, twelve bomber groups with either B-29's or B-50's, and five Strategic Reconnaissance groups.¹³⁷ The B-29 was the oldest bomber, and its 4,000 mile range would have limited its ability to attack sites deep in the heart of the massive Soviet Union in the event of war; the B-50, which derived from it, was little better.¹³⁸ It was only the B-36 bomber which was considered suitable, given its 8,000 mile range.¹³⁹ Its development was the achievement of a long effort to create a true intercontinental bomber. That effort had begun early in the Second

¹³⁷.PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

¹³⁸.Freedman, *Evolution*, p. 64

¹³⁹.*ibid.*, p. 64

World War, when American planners were concerned about the possibility of a German conquest of Britain and the rest of Europe, which might have necessitated trans-oceanic sorties.¹⁴⁰ The number of B-36's in SAC grew from 38 as of the end of 1950 to 185 by the end of 1953.¹⁴¹ The B-36, however, was disliked by the Air Force because of the altitude at which it flew.¹⁴²

In 1951, the B-36's began to be replaced by B-47's,¹⁴³ which would be the main medium-range American bomber of the 1950's. By the end of 1952, the US was producing B-47's at the rate of one per day, and assembly lines in two new plants were nearing completion.¹⁴⁴ By the end of 1953, SAC had 329 B-47's,¹⁴⁵ and by 1959 there more than 2,500 in service, constituting the vast majority of the Strategic Air Command fleet.¹⁴⁶ The design of the B-47 had begun in 1945, but development was slow until the Korean War, when it was rushed into mass production. It was the first all jet bomber.¹⁴⁷ Its introduction truly marked the beginning of a new era, in which the World War

¹⁴⁰.Weinberg, *World At Arms*, p. 541

¹⁴¹.Wells, "Buildup", p. 191

¹⁴².Freedman, *Evolution*, p. 64

¹⁴³.DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster, (OH-477), p. 4

¹⁴⁴.Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 489

¹⁴⁵.Wells, "Buildup", p. 191

¹⁴⁶.Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 562

¹⁴⁷.Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 494

Two era bombers, and their derivatives, were replaced by aircraft of a new level of expense and technology. One Office of Defense Mobilization report asserted that

A B-47 is made up of some 72,000 parts exclusive of nuts, bolts, and rivets. The B-47 requires 40 miles of wiring compared to 10 miles for the B-29. A B-47 contains over 1,500 electrical tubes. The wing skin must be tapered in thickness throughout its entire length from five-eighths inch at the body joint to three sixteenths inch at wing tip. The first B-47 plane required 3,464,000 engineering man-hours compared to 85,000 man hours for the first production model of the B-17. Equipment and material in the new planes are tested to operate in temperatures ranging from 65 degrees below zero to 160 degrees above.¹⁴⁸

Three other important bombers were in the process of being created during the arms build up of the Korean War era. One was the supersonic B-58, which would eventually surpass the B-47 in performance.¹⁴⁹ The B-57, a British designed bomber, came into American production in 1953.¹⁵⁰ The B-52, which would eventually become a principal long range bomber of the American fleet, and was still an important part of operations during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, was conceived during the Truman administration and deployed

¹⁴⁸.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report by the Director of Defense Mobilization to the President, January 1, 1952, p. 9

¹⁴⁹.DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster, (OH-477), p. 4

¹⁵⁰.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Director of Defense Mobilization, August 1 1952

in June 1955.¹⁵¹ It was a high altitude bomber propelled by eight jet engines, and was distinguished by its in-flight refuelling capacities.

SAC grew into a juggernaut during the Korean War period. At the end of 1950, SAC had 16 permanent bases, all located in the US.¹⁵² By the beginning of 1952, SAC had nineteen bases domestically and one abroad, and by the end of that year SAC was using thirty bases domestically and eleven abroad.¹⁵³ The number of SAC bombers would leap from 668 at the end of 1951 to 2,500 bombers in the mid-1950's, to more than 3,000 by 1959.¹⁵⁴ Personnel rose from 85,473 at the end of 1950 to 170,982 by the end of 1953.¹⁵⁵ Aerial refuelling measures had been perfected by 1950.¹⁵⁶ During the Korean War era, SAC engaged in a never-ending effort to keep bombers in the sky at all times. The Air Force claimed that this was done to minimise the possibility that an enemy would believe that it could wipe out the atomic capabilities of the United States in a series of sudden strikes. Potential enemies, according to the Air Force, would know that even in the event of an atomic attack on the United States, the US would still possess the ability to retaliate with weapons of mass destruction.

¹⁵¹.DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster, (OH-477), p. 4; also Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, p. 329

¹⁵².PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951, Appendix H

¹⁵³.Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, p. 494

¹⁵⁴.1951 and 1959: Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 562; mid-1950's: Robert Dorr, "Legacy", p. 65

¹⁵⁵.Wells, "Buildup"

¹⁵⁶.Ferrell, "Alliance", p. 29

Critics of the Air Force, such as the other two major services, claimed that the Air Force favoured strategic bombing because it allowed them to play first fiddle, rather than engaging in support actions for other services.

SAC's powers grew immensely when the Air Force received permission to veto any suggestions on the target list of sites to be bombed in the event of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. They grew yet more when General Curtis LeMay, chief of SAC, gradually won the ability to create his own target planning, separate from the other elements of the Air Force, becoming essentially autonomous by 1955.¹⁵⁷ Although LeMay's decision to keep all bombing plans within the tightest of circles was ostensibly done for purposes of secrecy, it represented a loss in national cohesiveness. Overall war strategy would have required that the government make firm decisions as how best to limit the ability of the enemy to fight war. This would have meant keying all resources on damaging particular economic sectors or occupying critical strategic locales, which could not be done with SAC detached from the rest of the military at the planning level. As time went by, however, this problem would become less critical. The destructive power of the US and Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal would become so great that each was capable of destroying literally thousands of sites, so that it was no longer a question of where to aim

¹⁵⁷.Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 560

but rather a fact of life that nuclear war essentially meant the death of nations. By 1952, the Air Force already had war plans to attack 5,000 to 6,000 sites in the event of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and by the early 1960's, Secretary of Defense Robert MacNamara would be talking about placing ceilings on the size of the US nuclear arsenal, since a stage of what he termed "mutually assured destruction" had been reached.¹⁵⁸

The desire of the older services to prevent themselves from becoming outmoded, combined with the development of new technologies enabling man to shrink atomic weapons into small warheads, meant that new means of delivering atomic weapons were developed. The Navy created an atomic bomb so small that it could be carried by a single seat Navy Douglas A4D-1 Skyhawk attack jet.¹⁵⁹ It also produced atomic depth charges.¹⁶⁰ The Army, also seeking its own niche in nuclear affairs, designed and constructed a 280mm cannon capable of firing nuclear projectiles, which it successfully tested in the Nevada desert in May 1953.¹⁶¹ Although the cannon was deployed to Germany, it never became a critical part of America's nuclear delivery capabilities, partly because it was so unwieldy it

¹⁵⁸.1952: Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 561; MacNamara: Dorr, "Legacy"

¹⁵⁹.Dorr, "Legacy", p. 64

¹⁶⁰.Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 561

¹⁶¹.Condit, *Test of War*, see caption on last page of photo insert between pp. 418 and 419; According to Hansen, *Forces*, the US began to study tactical nuclear weapons for use on the battlefield in 1949. p. 5

occasionally tipped over.¹⁶² The Army also developed the Davy Crockett, described by one historian as "essentially an atomic hand grenade".¹⁶³ However, the real wave of the future for all the services, and the greatest beneficiary from the development of small warheads, was to be rocketry.

Rockets were already being developed with conventional warheads in mind. In 1950, the Department of Defense created the position of Director of Guided Missiles, to advise the military on missile research, production, and development.¹⁶⁴ By September, 1951, the US military was experimenting with guided missiles,¹⁶⁵ and by June 1952, the first three American guided missiles were in assembly line production: the Nike, a liquid-fuel-powered surface to air missile, the Corporal, a liquid fuel powered surface to surface missile, and the Matador, a jet engine powered surface to surface missile.¹⁶⁶ The connection to the improvements in nuclear energy was obvious. Tactical use of rockets was more possible after the shrinking of fission warheads, and strategic rocketry was aided by the production of fusion warheads. Before work progressed on the hydrogen bomb, a rocket's high

¹⁶².DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster (OH-477), p. 3

¹⁶³.Dorr, "Legacy", p. 64

¹⁶⁴.PRO FO 371/90989, AU 1225/1, "Annual Report for 1950 on the US Air Force, Prepared by the Air Attaché", 5 March 1951

¹⁶⁵.HSTL, The Papers of Matthew Connelly, Set 1:Cabinet Meetings, meeting of September 21, 1951. The new Secretary of Defense, Robert Lovett, mentioned this in a Cabinet meeting.

¹⁶⁶.HSTL, President's Secretary's Files, box 148, Report to the President by the Director of Defense Mobilization, August 1, 1952. p. 10

average distance from the target meant that most atomic weapons would fall miles away from their designated targets. Given the enormous cost and slow schedules involved in atomic bomb production, this led the military to prefer bombers. But even before the fusion weapon was created, analysts realised that the enormous killing radius of the H-bomb made it possible to miss a target by 10 miles and still destroy it.¹⁶⁷ Consequentially, the US produced intermediate range nuclear capable missiles in the mid-1950's, intercontinental range ballistic missiles in 1958 (a year after the Soviets), and had a Polaris submarine, the USS George Washington, equipped with 144 nuclear missiles that could be launched from under the surface of the oceans, at sea in 1960.

The Americans also continued to improve their knowledge of how to operate in a nuclear battlefield, at the cost of immense human suffering. Soldiers were exposed to atomic blasts from measured distances during experimental nuclear tests in the Nevada desert in November 1951.¹⁶⁸ These tests supplemented the many experimental nuclear injections that had been carried out, often on unknowing patients at government hospitals and clinics, since 1945. Many of the people who were exposed would later suffer health damage from the

¹⁶⁷.Manchester, *Glory*, p. 575

¹⁶⁸.PRO FO 371/97579, AU 1011/2, "Annual Political Review of the United States of America for the Years 1950 and 1951", 19 May 1952; Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb*, p. 326

tests. This included civilians from nearby areas (rural Nevada was a favourite site) who lived in the fallout areas.

6.6 1953-54: Truman Leaves Office and American Military Spending Stabilises at a High Level

Eisenhower, after resigning from the military in the summer of 1952, was elected President in November 1952, inaugurated in January 1953, and was Commander in Chief at the time of the final armistice in Korea of July 1953.

When working for the Truman administration, Eisenhower's positions on military funding had been quite moderate. As we have seen, Eisenhower had been quite willing to work for the Truman administration in cutting defence budgets during 1948-49, with the exception of some small disagreement over one of Truman's 1950 ceilings. He had followed the general consensus on spending.¹⁶⁹ After Korea began, Eisenhower again seems to have followed the crowd. He fully supported the build-up that he supervised in Europe. In a letter that he wrote for Truman but never sent, Eisenhower even

¹⁶⁹Eisenhower told Louis Johnson in 1949 that "I am glad you have taken the bull by the horns in your drive for real economy". DDEL, Eisenhower Pre-Presidential Papers, Box, 62, Johnson folder, memo of August 16 1949

recommended an expansion of conscription and consideration of direct controls, which had not yet been implemented.¹⁷⁰ According to his aide, General Andrew Goodpaster, the only thing in NSC-68 that Eisenhower disagreed with was the contention that there would be a maximum year of danger in the early 1950's.¹⁷¹

There was little in the Presidential campaign that could reliably predict Eisenhower's attitude towards military armaments. On the one hand, Eisenhower pleased the Old Guard Republicans by making a campaign promise that became known as the "Morningside agreement". It was a pledge with Senator Taft to reduce the defence budget by five billion dollars a year.¹⁷² On the other hand, Eisenhower's team, during the same campaign, used rhetoric indicating that an Eisenhower administration would consider the use of a "roll back" strategy of removing Soviet influence from eastern Europe.¹⁷³

Once in the Oval Office, Eisenhower sought to create his own foreign policy, which the administration termed the "New Look". The New Look, theoretically, was different from the Truman policy of

¹⁷⁰.DDEL, Personal Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, box 116, Truman folder, note dated December 16, 1950. It is a good thing for Eisenhower that he never sent this letter. If he had, the Democrats could have used it against him in the 1952 Presidential campaign, when Eisenhower made the elimination of direct controls one of the main planks of his platform.

¹⁷¹.DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster (OH-477), p. 2

¹⁷².HSTL, Oral History #454 (Paul Nitze), p. 306

¹⁷³.DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster (OH-477), p. 14.

containing Soviet influence through the maintenance of a large standing army deployed globally. The New Look was based on building more cost effective nuclear weapons instead of armies, and entailed a willingness to threaten the use of nuclear weapons in virtually any situation. This idea was not novel. In some ways this was a reversion to the days of the American atomic monopoly. Even during the Korean era arms build up, some analysts, such as Senator McMahon (Democrat from Connecticut), the chairman of the atomic energy committee in the Senate, General Curtis LeMay, head of SAC, and Thomas Finletter, the Secretary of the Air Force, had advocated such a stance. McMahon had gone so far as to claim, in 1951, that if atomic weapons were mass produced, the cost of each would be less than that of a medium tank, and that concentration on nuclear production could lead to savings of \$30 billion per year by the end of a three year period.¹⁷⁴ The idea of a larger nuclear deterrent had even been part of the Truman administration's policy, as we have seen. The difference between Eisenhower and Truman, in their attitudes towards the role of nuclear weapons, lay in clarity and emphasis, the new President being more amenable both to reliance on nuclear weapons, and to the policy of directly threatening their use in certain situations.¹⁷⁵ Throughout the post-Nagasaki period of the Truman

¹⁷⁴.PRO FO 371/90905, AU 1013/41, Weekly Political Summary by Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks, 15-21 September 1951

¹⁷⁵.Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p. 100; However, as the Korean War showed, one thing Truman did firmly decide on was the fact that all decisions regarding the use of nuclear weapons would have to be made by the

administration, the military planned on using atomic weapons in the event of a major war with the Soviets. However, the issue of exactly when they would be brought into use in other situations was never clearly decided, which has led the historian John Lewis Gaddis to comment that "the President and his advisors were as uncertain about what they could actually do with nuclear weapons when they left office in 1953 as they had been in 1949", the year the American atomic monopoly ended.¹⁷⁶ Gaddis sees Truman as being confused between a "war fighting" strategy of constructing tactical nuclear weapons so as to enable the US to initiate the use of nuclear weapons without threatening nuclear annihilation, and a "war avoidance" strategy of planning for nuclear overkill in order to deter any conflict. Eisenhower chose the later.¹⁷⁷ His NSC authorised the Joint Chiefs of Staff to conduct war planning on the assumption that nuclear weapons, both tactical and strategic were to be used wherever it was convenient to do so.¹⁷⁸ The new administration considered the use of nuclear weapons in Korea (1953),¹⁷⁹ IndoChina (1954),¹⁸⁰ and even in

President.

¹⁷⁶.*ibid.*, p. 100

¹⁷⁷.*ibid.*, p. 231

¹⁷⁸.Steiner, *Brodie*, p. 159

¹⁷⁹.Eisenhower threatened the use of the bomb during the negotiations of the armistice. After the armistice, it became American policy to plan on using atomic weapons against North Korean supply centres should the Communist forces breach the demilitarised zone in Korea, a policy which the British government agreed to. FRUS, 1952-1954, Volume 5, Section 2, p.1739

¹⁸⁰.Dorr, "Legacy", pp. 64-65

the Quemoy and Matsu islands. The problem with the Truman version of containment, or so the new administration saw it, was that it allowed the Soviets to choose the time and place of their aggression so that it would occur wherever they had conventional superiority. Furthermore, the deployment of US troops to every corner of the globe was vastly expensive. As John Foster Dulles, now the Secretary of State, explained it: "we cannot build a 20,000 mile Maginot line or match the Red Armies, man for man, gun for gun and tank for tank at any particular time or place their general staff selects. To attempt that would mean real strength nowhere and bankruptcy everywhere."¹⁸¹ What the Eisenhower administration was going to do, according to Dulles, was to engage in a scaling back of deployed forces and the adaptation of a first use nuclear policy. Thus, the administration could respond to Soviet threats in an asymmetrical manner, choosing not only the time and place but also the seriousness of the American response. This concept of containment based on a nuclear threat to the enemy's homeland was termed "massive retaliation" by Dulles.¹⁸²

To what extent did the new team carry out these reforms? Dulles and Eisenhower engaged in much rhetoric to convince the Soviets that massive retaliation was a genuine statement of policy, as seen by Eisenhower's claim that "where these [nuclear] things can be used on

¹⁸¹as quoted in Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 121

¹⁸²Although the idea was present earlier, Dulles didn't use the term "massive retaliation" until a speech in New York in January 1954.

strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else."¹⁸³ Eisenhower even used hints that he was considering using nuclear weapons as a means of inducing the Chinese to reach a settlement at Korea, although the military itself was opposed to this. It is not known how much of an effect this had. It is also not known how much of all this talk was honest and how much was for deterrent effect. However, it appears that the Eisenhower team wasn't as successful in re-orientating military policy as they said they wanted to be.

The Eisenhower administration's military policy was really not that different from Truman's. This became apparent to those in the administration as early as the summer of 1953, with the conclusion of "Operation Solarium". Solarium was conducted, on Eisenhower's orders, at the National War College and in the basement of the White House. Three teams were created to debate three policy options and present them to the President: a continuation of Truman's containment (strangely enough, this team was headed by Kennan, who had resigned because his ideas of containment differed from the Truman administration), a deterrence strategy of massive retaliation in the event of any negative change in the spheres of influence, and a "rollback" strategy, dependent on propaganda and covert activity,

¹⁸³Remark made in a press conference of March 16 1955, as quoted in Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 149

designed to shrink the Soviet sphere of influence.¹⁸⁴ The last one was dumped entirely,¹⁸⁵ although some members of the public did not become aware of this until the events in Hungary in 1956. Eisenhower combined the first two, and modified them with an insistence on lowering costs. Some of the means but virtually none of the ends of the Truman administration were altered. The goal of lower costs was given a high priority, but could not be pursued as vigorously as it had been previous to the Korean conflict, given that the administration would not forfeit the deployment of large American conventional forces in Europe and Korea.

Despite the fact that the administration wanted reductions in troops, it does not seem to have pursued a withdrawal of US troops from Europe with any vigour. The Eisenhower National Security Council's first blue print, entitled "Basic National Security Policies and Programs in Relation to Their Costs",¹⁸⁶ stated: "The national security programs for Fiscal 1954 and Fiscal 1955 will provide greater force strength than we have today -- in the United States, in NATO, and in the Far East." A planned reduction in personnel was limited to slightly over 250,000, the most the administration considered possible

¹⁸⁴Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 146 In The Oral History of Andrew Goodpaster (OH-477) at the Eisenhower Library, p. 13, Goodpaster defines the second group as essentially advocating a spheres of influence arrangement.

¹⁸⁵DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster (OH-477), p. 14

¹⁸⁶NARA record group 273, NSC-149/2, April 29 1953

without sacrificing its ability to live up to the commitments it had chosen.¹⁸⁷

The small efforts the administration did make towards replacing troops with nuclear power were heavily resisted, in Congress, the military establishment (General Maxwell Taylor, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, even published a book in 1957 criticising the massive retaliation strategy¹⁸⁸), and, most importantly, by the NATO allies. At this time, the European members of NATO preferred American conventional forces and would have little to do with a first use nuclear policy. In answer to a recommendation in June 1954 to make a stronger and more clear commitment to a first use atomic policy, Dulles replied "If we do so, very few of our allies will follow us. . .the tide is running against us in the channel of this tough policy. If we are to continue to pursue it we shall lose many of our allies, and this in itself compels a reappraisal of our policy."¹⁸⁹ The discovery in August 1953 that the Soviets had developed a thermonuclear device, at a time when the Americans hadn't yet downsized their own to be a working bomb, certainly helped put a damper on any plans to rely on the nuclear deterrent.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷This was from a total of 3,505,661. NARA, record group 273, NSC 149/2, April 29 1953, p. 1

¹⁸⁸Maxwell Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1974)

¹⁸⁹FRUS, 1952-54, volume 15, minutes of NSC meeting of June 24, 1954, p. 694 By the 1960's, however, NATO had adopted a "flexible response" strategy that entailed a willingness to use any weapon available if it saw fit to do so.

¹⁹⁰Gaddis, *End*, p. 67

There were some savings that resulted from the replacement of conventional forces with nuclear weapons and the end of the Korean War. The fiscal 1961 military budget, the last one created in the Eisenhower administration, was smaller, even in nominal terms, than the fiscal '53 military budget, which was Truman's last. By any conventional economic theory, this certainly had a very beneficial impact upon the economy and upon tax payers' disposable income.

However, it would be a mistake to view the "New Look" as a radical alteration of policy. Although American planners continuously talked about eventually withdrawing the Army from Europe, the four extra divisions sent to Europe in the winter of 1950-51 would remain there long after the Eisenhower Presidency.¹⁹¹ The massive retaliation idea didn't change the fact of large scale conventional forces in Germany and Korea, only the scope. In fact, as some historians, such as Marc Trachtenberg, have suggested, the increasing of the nuclear component of NATO strategy actually made an American withdrawal of conventional forces from Europe less possible.¹⁹² Before the nuclear build up, the NATO allies could assume that the US would come to their aid, in the event of a grand war, with large conventional forces from North America. Once a large nuclear defence had been created, the Europeans feared that the US would be too quick to rely on

¹⁹¹DDEL, Oral History with Andrew Goodpaster, (OH-37). p. 97 Goodpaster, speaking in 1967, commented that the level of US forces was the same then, and had been continuously, since 1951.

¹⁹²Trachtenberg, "Nuclearization", p. 165

nuclear weapons, and were therefore opposed to the withdrawal of American forces. Without wanting to upset the Atlantic alliance, the US continued to maintain large deployments in Europe.

6.7 1953-54: Stalin Dies, and Soviet Military Spending Continues to Rise

Similar to the United States, the Soviet Union, after a change in leadership (Stalin died on March 5, 1953) and the end of the Korean War, engaged in military reform without reverting to what would have been considered normal peace time defence spending by most nations. Although accurate information is difficult to come by, it seems that the Soviets reduced the manpower of their military to pre-Korean War levels in the mid-1950's,¹⁹³ but the offsetting costs in new weapons development kept military spending on an upward bound trajectory, slowly closing the gap between American and Soviet military expenditure.¹⁹⁴

Laventri Beria, the head of the most important Soviet internal security agency (the English initials for its name changed over the

¹⁹³.ACMH, file 091, folder entitled "Soviet Union", planned presentation of December 4, 1961, by Major General A. R. Fitch, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, p. 1

¹⁹⁴.Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, chart on p. 495

years from NKVD to MGB to KGB), and chief of the Soviet atomic programs, was probably the most important man in the Soviet Union immediately after Stalin's passing. On the day that Stalin died, Beria made himself head of the Ministry of the Interior in addition to his existing jobs, giving him powers even greater than those possessed by Georgi Malenkov, who was Prime Minister. Malenkov had nominally been the second most important man in the Soviet Union during Stalin's last period, but this had meant little in the Kremlin environment, where titles often meant nothing. On June 26, 1953, Beria was arrested in a Presidium meeting by a group of armed generals, led by Marshal Zhukov. The group included Leonid Brezhnev, a future General Secretary, and the coup itself was almost certainly orchestrated by Nikita Khrushchev, who would dominate Soviet politics for the next decade, and the Minister of Defence, Bulganin. After Beria's arrest, the military-industrial complex found itself in a greater position of power than at any time in previous Soviet history. It immediately set about gaining control of nuclear weapons, for the first time, and reorganising itself.¹⁹⁵

Khrushchev and his military allies in the coup had strong ideas on increasing the pace of Stalin's modernisation. The plan was to lessen the number of men in uniform, and use the savings to improve mobility, nuclear weapons, nuclear delivery systems, air defences,

¹⁹⁵.Hansen, *Forces*, p. 21

and the Navy. The changes introduced were so bold that the 1953-1960 period would come to be known as the "Revolution in Military Affairs" within the Soviet military establishment.¹⁹⁶

In the Army, Khrushchev's reforms brought about a more technologically advanced force. The unarmoured trucks which had been used to transport the infantry in the armoured and mechanised divisions were increasingly replaced with armoured personnel carriers.¹⁹⁷

The hydrogen bomb project, which had begun in 1948, even before the first successful Soviet A-bomb test, was completed under Khrushchev.¹⁹⁸ Beria had written an order, in May of 1953, to test the new weapon.¹⁹⁹ Malenkov informed the world on 8 August 1953 that the Soviets were capable of fusion, and the Soviets successfully tested the device on 12 August 1953, at Semipalatinsk. Despite the fact that the Soviets had a limited stockpile of fission bombs (experts are not sure, but one recent western estimate believes the stockpile may have been less than 50²⁰⁰), the Soviet hydrogen bomb may have given Moscow near parity with the US in nuclear weapons, at least for a few months. While the Soviet H-bomb was only 400 kilotons, less than

¹⁹⁶.*ibid.*, p. 21

¹⁹⁷.*ibid.*, p. 4

¹⁹⁸.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 299

¹⁹⁹.Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks*, p. 363

²⁰⁰.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 322

either the 500 kiloton American fission weapon exploded at the IVY test of November 1952 and much less than the 10,000 kiloton American hydrogen weapon used in the MIKE test, the Soviet bomb, based on lithium deuteride, was small enough that, with simple redesigning, it could be loaded on to a bomber and dropped, whereas the American fusion weapon, not using lithium deuteride, was too large to be placed in an aircraft.²⁰¹ The US would not achieve a lithium deuteride explosion until the CASTLE test of March 1, 1954.²⁰² The 400 kiloton explosion, 20 times greater than that of the first Soviet atomic bomb, was enough to create a 5 kilometre wide lake of glazed earth.²⁰³ Its radioactive fallout was such that the American government was made rapidly aware of the fact that the Soviets had indeed exploded a thermonuclear device of significant magnitude (the Americans guessed 500 kilotons).²⁰⁴ The Soviet hydrogen explosion convinced the mathematician John Von Neumann, a

²⁰¹.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 307, contends that the Soviet H-bomb was bomber capable; Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 523, contends that Andrei Sakharov's comments years later show that the weapon exploded in August 1953 was six months away from being bomber capable.

²⁰².Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 541 The device tested has been alternately termed *Shrimp* and *Bravo*. Due to miscalculations, the explosion was more powerful than expected, reaching 15 megatons, and endangering the scientists, military men, and even Japanese fishermen who happened to be in the vicinity. It was the largest thermonuclear explosion ever for the United States.

²⁰³.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 307

²⁰⁴.*ibid.*, p. 308 gives the 500 kiloton statistic. Holloway claims that it was not clear to the Americans whether it was a fusion weapon or fission weapon using a thermonuclear boost.

Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 524, quotes American physicist Carson Mark, who claims that the US team, after studying the fallout from the Soviet explosion (nicknamed Joe 4 by the Americans), "managed to speak of an object physically similar to what Joe 4 must have been", even reaching the accurate conclusion that the Soviet weapon had been a single stage bomb using alternate layers of uranium and lithium deuteride, in which compression was achieved with high explosives rather than radiation.

member of the American atomic research establishment, that "from 1945 to 1949 there was a uniform time lag of about four years between us and the Soviets in our favor . . . This time lag seems to me to be now hardly more than one year".²⁰⁵ The Soviet nuclear arsenal grew to 1,050 weapons by 1959 and 3,100 by 1962.²⁰⁶

The methods of delivering these weapons continued to improve. The Tu-16, nicknamed Badger by the Americans, and the Tu-95, nicknamed Bear, were part of the fleet by 1955,²⁰⁷ being useful because of their heavier load capacities and greater range than the Tu-4. The Tu-95 had intercontinental range.²⁰⁸ Help for the Soviet bomber forces in the event of war may have come from the fact that Soviet spies had persuaded a Dutch Air Force officer stationed at NATO headquarters to give them a "friend or foe" device that enabled radar operators to differentiate incoming planes.²⁰⁹

Similar to the Americans, the Soviets were realising at this time that missiles were potentially more lethal than bombers. By December of 1953 the Presidium had approved the development of three strategic missile projects: the R-5 and two versions of R-11, one for the Navy and one for the Army (Americans termed the R-5 the SS-3, the R-11

²⁰⁵.quoted in Rhodes, *Dark Sun*, p. 526

²⁰⁶.*ibid.*, p. 570

²⁰⁷.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 324

²⁰⁸.Conversation with Donald Steury, CIA History Staff, September 12 1995

²⁰⁹.Sudoplatov, *Tasks*, p. 363

Navy missile the SS-N-3, and the R-11 Army missile the SCUD).²¹⁰ The R-5 had a range of over 1,000 kilometres, approaching that of the first intercontinental ballistic missile, which the Soviets would develop by 1957.²¹¹

Missile development was not limited to offensive applications. Over 3,000 R-113 anti-aircraft missiles were deployed around Moscow, beginning in 1954.²¹² The Soviets placed such a heavy emphasis on rockets and air defence that they actually created entirely new services to carry out these tasks. After the changes, the Soviets had five military services: Army, Navy, Air Force, Strategic Rocket Force, and Air Defense.

As part of the doctrinal change, with its new emphasis on fighting a war in a nuclear age, the Soviets engaged in experiments and training to prepare for the nuclear battlefield. Beginning on September 14, 1954, at the Totskoe testing ground in the South Urals Military District, the Soviets simultaneously held exercises involving 44,000 troops while setting off an atomic explosion in the vicinity.²¹³ Once again, the comparison with the United States is obvious.

²¹⁰.Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 324

²¹¹.Harriet Fast Scott and William Scott, editors, *The Soviet Art of War; Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p. 125; Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 313

²¹².Holloway, *Bomb*, p. 324

²¹³.*ibid.*, p. 323

In another doctrinal change, the Navy was no longer used primarily for defence, as it had been under Stalin. The Soviets challenged the western powers in constructing vessels for the high seas. This was a fateful act, reminiscent of the shipbuilding boom in the waning years of the Czars'. Work began on a navy that could maintain self-sustaining fleets on lengthy missions far from home waters. It is possible to speak of quantity of combat vessels, but this is not that important, considering that the Soviets had always manufactured so many ships. By 1955, not long after Stalin's death, the Soviet Navy had 3 battleships, over 25 cruisers, 135-150 destroyers and destroyer escorts, and 370-400 submarines²¹⁴, but these varied in quality. The important factor over the next two decades would be the improvement in performance, with the use of missiles (both surface-launched and submarine-launched), nuclear-powered vessels, and anti-submarine warfare technologies. By the 1970's, the Soviets would introduce their first aircraft carrier, the *Kiev*, to help support these fleets, and by the early 1980's the Soviets would begin developing a new class of aircraft carriers that could handle larger, higher performance aircraft.²¹⁵

Another improvement was that the military planned to receive help from covert Soviet networks abroad in the event of war. By the

²¹⁴.ACMH, History Resources Center, file 091, folder entitled "Soviet Union", article from the United States Naval Institute Proceedings, June, 1955, by Rear Admiral E. M. Eller, entitled "Soviet Bid for the Sea", p. 623

²¹⁵.CIAH, CIA National Intelligence Estimate 11-15-82/D, "Soviet Naval Strategy and Programs Through the 1990's", March 1983, pp. 7, 8, 26, 32

summer of 1953, groups were being prepared to assist the Soviets by sabotaging western nuclear weapons storage facilities, centres of communications, logistics, or supply in the event that a war should ever occur.²¹⁶ These were run by some of the same men who had been successful in operating partisan warfare against the Germans in the Second World War.²¹⁷

²¹⁶Sudoplatov, *Tasks*, chapter 12

²¹⁷.ibid.

CONCLUSION

The American arms build-up of the Korean War era can only be understood as part of the larger shift towards a more assertive containment policy. Changes in American security obligations, changes in the status of German and Japanese military power, huge increases in American foreign aid, and the arms build-up itself were interrelated parts of an important alteration in American policies. How important? James Reston, the famous *New York Times* correspondent, called this shift "the decisive point in the politics of the twentieth century".¹ It was a momentous step in the direction of a bipolar world, dominated by two "superpowers", that characterised international politics for the next forty years. Although the European empires were transformed into looser forms of associations only slowly, the American show of force in Korea, the deployment of

¹Reston, *Deadline*, pp. 145-146

troops around the world, and the new security treaties all indicated a future in which the US would play a wider role. The dramatic shift, which was seen by the Americans as a counter to Soviet actions, was, to use poker terminology, seen and raised by the Kremlin, leading to an arms race that in scale, scope, and technology, dwarfed all previous ones. Even after the end of the Cold War and its related arms race, the impact of the American arms build-up persists. The decisions of 1950-1951 forged a political culture in the United States in which America sought to prevent possible repeats of the June 25 scenario by using deployments and alliances. This culture, despite much criticism, survives. There have been ten American administrations since 1950, and not one of them has come close to ending American involvement in NATO or removing American troops from Europe, or Korea.

This culture grew from the ideological, bureaucratic, and economic outlooks of Americans, especially those in the foreign policy establishment, but its ultimate source was abroad. It is difficult to imagine an arms build-up and global deployment on the scale of 1950-1951 without the events in continental Europe and the Asian Pacific region from 1939 to 1950. The arms build-up was the result of perceptions of the inherent violence of the international order, and considerations of Soviet power. The international order was unstable, as shown by the civil wars in China and Korea, and Soviet power existed. Although its nature, size, and intent were viewed through

the hazy lens of political culture through which all foreign events must be viewed, it is important not to mistake the lens itself as the ultimate cause of action.

To critique the arms build up, one must ask whether a preponderance of Soviet military power actually existed, and whether such power, if in existence, needed to be addressed through a build-up of American forces abroad. There is no consensus on these questions from historians, nor may there ever be. At the risk of oversimplification, there are four possible answers: "yes" to both questions, "no" to both, "yes/no", and "no/yes". Since a "no" answer to the first would settle the issue, the "no/no" and "no/yes" answers may be combined into one for purposes of investigation.

Consider a very rough grouping of historians into these three remaining schools of thought. One is the orthodox view, first espoused by the famous men of the day, such as Acheson, Churchill, and de Gaulle, who publicly warned of the threat of the Soviet military and advocated balancing it through military preparations. Supporters of this view tend to feel that the crushing losses of Task Force Smith, the first American force to land in Korea in the summer of 1950, is evidential proof of the necessity of the arms build-up. The orthodox view is the domain of the Truman sympathisers, who are

plentiful given the recent popularity of biographies of the man, such as those by Hamby and McCollough.²

In July 1951, Truman himself provided one of the first orthodox historical accounts of the arms build-up when he reminisced on events of the previous year, concluding that

never before have free men in such large numbers acted together in advance to prevent a supreme crisis. Never before on so vast a scale have free men assumed great risks voluntarily, so that even greater risks may not descend upon them involuntarily. Never before has there been so deep and widespread in the hearts of mankind the feeling that the price of peace is the willingness to fight for justice.³

This message was repeated, in its essentials, for the rest of his life.

Another example of the pro-arms build-up group is the team of Allan Millett and Peter Maslowski, authors of *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, which concludes that

in two years [1951-1953] NATO had become at least the equal to the Soviet forces deployed in East Germany . . . Critics of this militarization of American diplomacy believed the rearmament policy was an exaggerated reaction to an overestimated Soviet threat. But the Russia of 1950-1953 was Stalin's domain, and conventional wisdom gave Moscow the power to control its Communist collaborators in Europe and Asia. The Truman administration, buffeted at home by its political enemies and growing disillusionment over the war, won a lasting victory for the Free World.⁴

².Hamby, *Man of the People*; McCollough, *Truman*

³.Truman's mid-year Economic Report to Congress, 23 July 1951, text contained in PRO FO 371/90951, AU 1104/3

⁴.Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, pp. 496-497

A second school of thought argues that there was an overwhelming Soviet conventional preponderance of power in central Europe, but that various constraints, both internal and external, and both voluntary and involuntary, prevented the Soviets from ever using this force in the field of battle. Supporters of this view stress that the Soviets possessed the capabilities to overrun western Europe, but, given the nature of the world system, lacked the intentions. This group does not argue against the existence of a large Soviet force in central Europe, but argues that this force was, in an age of atomic warfare and industrial battles, not a decisive factor in the real balance of power. An example of this view is George Kennan's February 1947 speech at the Council of Foreign Relations. Kennan suggested that, in reacting to the existence of the Soviet military presence in central Europe, there were better options than creating a large NATO armed force. Kennan began by explaining his famous 1947 "X" article:

What I was then advocating for our government was a policy of 'containment' of Soviet expansionist pressures, a policy aimed at halting the expansion of Soviet power in Central and Western Europe.

I viewed this as primarily a diplomatic and political task, though not wholly without military implications. I considered that if and when we had succeeded in persuading the Soviet leadership that the continuation of these expansionist designs not only held out for them no hopes of success but would be, in many respects, to their disadvantage, then the moment would have come for serious talks with them about the future of Europe.

But when, some three years later [1950], this moment had arrived-when we had made our point with the Marshall Plan, with the successful resistance to the Berlin blockade and other measures- when the lesson I wanted to see us convey to Moscow had been successfully conveyed, then it was one of the great disappointments of my life to discover that neither our government nor our Western European allies had any interest in entering into such discussions at all. What they and the others wanted from Moscow, with respect to the future of Europe, was essentially "unconditional surrender". They were prepared to wait for it. And this was the beginning of the 40 years of cold war.

Those of my opponents of that day who have survived into the present age would say, I am sure: "You see, we were right. The collapse of the Soviet system amounted to the unconditional surrender we envisaged- an involuntary one if you will, but surrender nevertheless. And we paid nothing for it."

To which I should have to reply: `But we did pay a great deal for it. We paid with 40 years of enormous and otherwise unnecessary military expenditures.¹⁵

The third school of thought seeks to refute the belief that the Soviet military enjoyed a preponderance of power.⁶ A representative view is that of Matthew Evangelista, who, in his article "Stalin's Post-War Army Reappraised", claims that:

The New York Times, "The Failure of Our Success", George F. Kennan, March 14 1994 Kennan claims to have been relatively consistent in supporting this view, but, as indicated in section 4.2, it seems that in the immediate aftermath of the North Korean attack, he was, at least, not vociferous in voicing these views and, at most, co-operative in the decision to view Soviet intentions as being considerably more militaristic than had been previously thought. Kennan may also be underrating his "opponents", when he claims that they believed that America would pay nothing for the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was obvious, even to supporters of the arms build-up, that huge prices would have to be paid, and that the Truman administration had to balance the costs of the arms build-up with the gains. For examples, see Truman's memoranda to Lawton in the Lawton Papers, HSTL

⁶views of historians of American foreign relations in the era of the Cold War are sometimes grouped, for ease of debate, into "orthodox", "revisionist", and "post-revisionist" schools of history, which are close to, but not completely approximate, to terming these groups pro or anti containment, with "post-revisionist" tending to be synthesisers of these views. For a survey of these groups, see Cumings, "Revising Postrevisionism"

It seems now that the Soviet military threat was considerably exaggerated during this period. Indeed, the notion of an overwhelmingly large Soviet Army facing only token western forces was inaccurate. Moreover, it appears that Soviet troops were not capable of executing the kind of invasion feared in the West during the late 1940's, due in part to strictly military considerations, and also the fact that many of them were engaged in nonmilitary tasks instead of in training for an offensive.⁷

The problem of reconciling these views, and judging the need for the arms build-up, may never be resolved. While access to Soviet archives has led some scholars to note a reluctance on the part of the Kremlin to engage in any military activities at this time,⁸ it must be remembered that policy memorandum from an earlier period cannot resolve hypothetical cases. The Truman administration did not know what would happen without an arms build-up. It did not possess the hindsight the future provides, nor could it rely on accurate intelligence regarding the Kremlin's intentions. Even if such access had existed, intentions were liable to change rapidly, more rapidly than military preponderances of power could be altered, and the Truman administration might have considered some sort of arms build-up necessary anyhow. In the end, the administration decided to assume the worst about the Soviets.

This dissertation has tried to show that a preponderance of Soviet power did exist. In the late 1940's, none of the non-Communist

⁷.Evangelista, "Post-War Army"

⁸.Zubok and Pleshakov, *Kremlin's Cold War*

powers had military forces in the field capable of taking on the Soviets. After the explosion of a Soviet atomic bomb, American nuclear superiority became increasingly questionable. Once the Soviets had blatantly supported an ally's use of force in Korea, the possibility that the Soviets would try this again, using East Germany, could not be discounted. The Truman administration had little choice but to react to the intelligence reports it was receiving, which showed the Soviets to have a preponderance of power.

To consider how poorly the American troops, shuttled in from occupation duty in Japan, fared in the first two and a half months of the Korean War, before the Inchon landing, against a North Korean Army that received small quantities of up to date Soviet equipment, is to shed light on how the occupation troops in Germany might have performed against the main Soviet force. Unless the US had remained aloof from the Korean War, and therefore abandoned an effort to contain Soviet power, some sort of arms build-up was necessary.

The Truman administration was correct, in retrospect, in believing the Soviet military to be the strongest conventional fighting force in the world in the late 1940's, capable of conquering large portions of western Europe had it tried. Whatever else may be said of the American decision to engage in a massive arms build up, this appraisal of the Soviet military, when combined with the international tension that led European governments to lobby Washington for a

deployment of forces to Europe, makes Truman's decision understandable, and appropriate.

The decision to proceed with submitting larger arms budgets to Congress rested with Truman, and not his advisers, and was not inevitable. While it is critical to emphasise the political culture that Truman had to operate within, and that he was in many ways a product of, it should also be said that, at the crucial moments, it was he who had to provide the leadership, and that a different President might have led the nation towards a vastly different course of action. The bureaucracy failed to initiate the arms build-up when it tried to do so, in the period beginning in 1949, and continuing through the completion of NSC-68 in April 1950. The President was firmly in control of his constitutional authority, and Truman's famous "The Buck Stops Here" sign on his desk can be seen as symbolic of the decision-making apparatus in the Truman administration.⁹

But if the arms build-up was not an example of rule by bureaucracy, was it a perfect example of the immense powers over foreign policy formulation that, according to some political scientists, American presidents have had since the Second World War? Was it an example of the "Imperial Presidency"? Deploying troops to Korea in such rapid fashion, without asking for formal Congressional approval, is

⁹It was not unusual for Truman to take the lead. As the political scientist Samuel Huntington has described, "virtually all the great Congressional debates on foreign policy in the Truman administration took place after the executive had committed the nation. The decisions on the Berlin Airlift, the hydrogen bomb, Formosa policy, the Korean War, the proclamation of national emergency [in December 1950], the troops to Europe, the firing of MacArthur all tended to follow this pattern." Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 383

surely one of the prime examples of Presidential authority in the history of American foreign policy. The arms build-up, however, was different. It required a larger amount of co-operation with Congress and with all elements of the federal government, especially in the Pentagon, and even, in many cases, with state and local government. The scale of the arms build-up was possible only because of the vast support the public was willing to grant the government once Truman committed forces to Korea. Had Truman wanted to submit larger defence budgets than he did to Congress before the Korean War, he may have had enough support to have them passed, but only if the increases were on a reasonable scale, and not the exponential scale that they were in 1950-1952. The war presented the military with a window of opportunity for its enlargement, and it was only because of the war that Truman could accomplish his task of creating a monumental expansion of the American armed forces. At no other time during the Cold War was the American public so seized with anti-Communist fervour. One only has to scan the newspapers of the grim autumn and winter of 1950-1951 to realise this. For example, consider the headlines over a two-day span, December 1 and 2, 1950, in *The New York Times*: "Greatest Peril for US: Western Civilization Faces Destruction if Threat From East Is Not Met Boldly", "Crisis Spurs City Defense Activity; Fear of New War Grips Populace", "President Warns of Atom Bomb In Korea If Soviet Vetoes Plan", "Feinberg Act Barring

Red Teachers Upheld by State Court of Appeals", "US Casualties at 31,028", "House Bill Proposes Coordinator of Civil Defense With Wide Power", "Senators Battle Over Atomic Bomb Use", "Truman Asks 18 Billion For Arms; Reds Push Toward New UN Line; MacArthur Calls Curbs A Handicap", and "All Out War Force Sought By Truman".¹⁰ These were the top stories in what was considered one of the least sensationalist and generally liberal of the nation's major newspapers.

The rising tide of resentment towards the USSR existed before the war, due in large part to the perceived setbacks for American post-war plans, attributed to Soviet selfishness. The Soviets had already been viewed as potentially threatening, and the revelation of ideologically motivated spies within the American atomic establishment had already created a "red scare" of sorts. However, this fervour was turned towards the goal of an armed America by Truman's decisions, including the one to go to war in Korea, and the one to focus on central Europe as the focal point of American diplomacy. Truman led in initiating the arms build-up, only to find that the momentum behind it became so great that the administration soon found itself trailing in the wake of public opinion. Compared to both the Republican opposition and the American cultural institutions, the administration in the winter of 1950-1951 appears, in hindsight, relatively calm. Truman's stance on military spending was,

¹⁰. *The New York Times*, December 1 1950, December 2 1950

for a time, actually more restrained than the Congress. Unsurprisingly in a period when the leader of American ground forces in East Asia was recommending laying a belt of radioactive cobalt across the Korean peninsula to stop Communist advances, and when some in the Senate supported his favourable attitudes towards the use of the atomic bomb, and when to be labelled sympathetic to Communism was tantamount to career suicide, many Congressmen considered Truman's suggested budgets to be far too modest.

Most Americans supported the arms build-up. Even among the minority opposed to the deployments abroad and to the new alliance commitments, there was still considerable support for increasing America's military power. Indeed, after Truman himself became grossly unpopular in the last two years administration, due to corruption scandals amongst his cronies, the seeming futility of the peace talks in Korea, and the general lack of growth in living standards described earlier,¹¹ the arms build-up remained popular. In December of 1951, Truman's approval rating in polls sunk to just 23 percent,¹² and yet the primary domestic political opponent of the Truman arms build-up, Senator Taft, found himself losing his grip of his own party, which slowly abandoned him for Eisenhower's military credentials. Taft was not replaced by a new generation of

¹¹The Republican platform of 1952 was known as K1-C2, short for Korea, crime, and corruption.

¹²Leffler, *Preponderance*, p. 447

anti-military populists. The next three Presidential elections, 1952 through 1960, saw the major candidates trying to outdo each other in efforts to appear hardest against foreign Communism.

Thus, the debate moved on. The issue of arming the US to an unprecedented level in peace-time, and deploying that new force abroad, was settled. In its place were arguments about whether and how to use that force to contain Soviet power. The dispute over creating combat forces was replaced, in the next two decades, by disputes over whether to use those forces in the Straits of Taiwan, in Lebanon, in Laos, in Cuba, and in Vietnam. The Cold War had come of age, and the race for victory was on.

APPENDIX A

US National Security Expenditures

Fiscal Year*	Budget, billions \$**	As a Share of GNP
1945	81.6	38.5%
1946	44.7	21.4%
1947	13.15	7.0%
1948	13.0	5.0%
1949	13.1	5.1%
1950	13.1	4.6%
1951	22.5	6.9%
1952	44.0	12.7%
1953	50.4	13.8%
1954	46.6	12.8%
1955	40.2	10.1%
1956	40.3	9.6%
1957	42.8	9.7%
1958	44.4	9.6%
1959	46.6	9.6%
1960	45.9	9.1%
1961	47.4	9.1%
1962	51.1	9.1%
1963	52.3	8.9%
1964	53.6	8.5%

* The US government's fiscal year was measured, before the 1970's, from July 1 to June 30

** These figures exclude veterans' benefits

Data is from Gaddis, *Strategies*, p. 359. Gaddis's data is from *Historical Statistics of United States*, and *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, published by the US Bureau of the Census

APPENDIX B

COMPARATIVE NUCLEAR STOCKPILES

Year	USA		USSR
	Weapons	Megatonnage	Weapons
1945	2	.04	-
1946	9	.18	-
1947	13	.26	-
1948	50	1.25	-
1949	170	4.19	1
1950	299	9.53	5
1951	438	35.25	25
1952	841	49.95	50
1953	1,169	72.80	120
1954	1,703	339.01	150
1955	2,422	2,879.99	200
1956	3,692	9,188.65	400
1957	5,543	17,545.86	650
1958	7,345	17,303.54	900
1959	12,298	19,054.62	1,050
1960	18,638	20,491.17	1,700
1961	22,229	10,947.71	2,450
1962	27,100	12,825.02	3,100
1963	29,800	15,977.17	4,000
1964	31,600	16,943.97	5,100
1965	32,400	15,152.50	6,300
1966	32,450	14,036.46	7,550
1967	32,500	12,786.17	8,850
1968	30,700	11,837.65	10,000
1969	28,200	11,714.44	11,000

Soviet megatonnage statistics are not available; total stockpile includes strategic and tactical weapons. Data is from Norris, "Stockpiles", pp. 58-59

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