

HOW THE COLD WAR WAS PLAYED

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THE dates May 22, 1947, and May 22, 1972, span exactly 25 years. On May 22, 1947, President Truman signed a congressional bill committing the United States to support Greece and Turkey against Soviet designs, and the United States thereby assumed overtly the direct leadership of the West in the containment of Soviet influence. Twenty-five years later to the day, another American President landed in Moscow, declaring to the Soviet leaders that "we meet at a moment when we can make peaceful coöperation a reality."

Viewing the past 25 years of the cold war as a political process, this study seeks to evaluate the conduct of the two competitors and to draw some implications from the experience of a quarter-century's rivalry for the future of U.S.-Soviet relations. Its purpose is thus neither to seek the causes of the cold war nor to assign moral or historical responsibility for it.

To accomplish the above, two preliminary steps must be taken. The first is to identify the principal phases of the cold war, viewing it as a process of conflict and competition. The purpose of the periodization is to delineate phases of time in which the competitive process was dominated by a discernible pattern of relations; in its simplest form, this involves identifying phases in which one or the other side seemed to hold the political initiative, either on the basis of a relatively crystallized strategy and/or through more assertive behavior.

Second, it is necessary to focus on several dynamic components at work in the competitive process, the interaction of which shaped the relative performance of the two powers. Reference will be made within the several phases of the competition to the relative international standing of the two rivals, to their relative economic power, to their relative military power, and to the relative clarity and purposefulness of national policy, including the degree of domestic support for that policy.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that this writer sees the cold war as more the product of lengthy and probably ineluctable historical forces and less as the result of human error and evil. Two great powers, differentiated by divergent centuries-long experience and separated by sharply differing ideological

perspectives, yet thrust into political proximity as a consequence of the shattering of the earlier international system, could hardly avoid being plunged into a competitive relationship. In brief, this was less a matter of Stalin or of Dulles and more of de Tocqueville.

PHASE I—SHAPING OF THE CONFRONTATION, 1945–1947

This phase was essentially a preliminary one. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was yet directly pitted against the other. Within both societies active debates concerning the likely nature of postwar developments were yielding conflicting estimates and advice: in the United States the issue came out in the open with the Truman-Wallace split; in the Soviet Union there were overtones of it in Zhdanov's more militant posture, while the Varga debate about the postwar prospects of capitalism—though more muted than the corresponding discussions in the United States—indicated analytical disagreements concerning the future of the capitalist system.

Neither side thus was yet operating on the basis of clear-cut policies, backed by firm domestic support. Internal U.S. divisions continued into the presidential campaign of 1948, and it was only in 1947–1948 that a more crystallized American view emerged, backed by bipartisan support. George Kennan's famous article in *Foreign Affairs* of July 1947 represented in that respect a historic watershed. On the Soviet side, while the assumption of Western hostility was deeply ingrained in the official ideology, widespread popular disaffection, economic dislocations and the gradual reimposition of Stalinist controls after relative wartime relaxation—all reflected a very basic domestic weakness of the system as a whole, sharpening for Stalin the dilemmas of moderation or militancy (with the latter apparently advocated not only by Zhdanov but in very early postwar phases also by Tito and his associates in Jugoslavia and Bulgaria).

The international context in which the emerging hostility was crystallizing was clearly to America's advantage. While the Soviet Union emerged from the war with vastly enhanced prestige, with much accumulated good will even within the United States, and with highly subservient and influential Communist parties playing key roles in such countries as France and Italy, the Soviet position in the world was still very inferior to that of the United States. The Western Hemisphere was firmly in the

American grip; Africa and the Middle East were politically controlled by America's allies (with American economic assets expanding particularly rapidly in the Middle East); the southern Asian arc was still part of the British Empire, while Iran already in 1946 was seeking U.S. political assistance against the Soviet Union; Nationalist China was striving to consolidate its authority; and Japan was subject to an exclusive U.S. occupation.

Economically and militarily, the relationship favored the United States, though the military aspect was clouded by some uncertainties. The United States emerged from the war with its GNP actually increased, while the Soviet Union, on the other hand, had suffered grievously during the war and by 1947 its GNP was probably less than one-third that of the United States (roughly equal to that of contemporary India or China).

The military picture was not as clear-cut. Neither side could afford to maintain the enormous forces that were at its disposal at the conclusion of the war. American armed forces, which at their peak numbered some 12.3 million men, were rapidly demobilized because of domestic political pressures and economic need. By 1947, American ground forces had shrunk to only about 670,000 men. At their peak, Soviet armed forces numbered about 11.3 million men. Contrary to postwar myths, the Soviet Union did not refrain from large-scale demobilization, which was an economic necessity, given wartime devastation and enormous manpower losses; by 1947 the Soviet Union had only approximately 2.8 million men under arms.

For political reasons, the Soviet government chose to keep its demobilization a secret. As a result, contemporary Western estimates of Soviet military strength were considerably higher than reality. The element of uncertainty in the military relationship was also introduced by the U.S. monopoly in atomic bombs. Presumably because of this fact, it suited the Soviet Union not to disabuse the West of the otherwise politically costly notion that it was only the United States (and Great Britain) that disarmed following the war. This provided an important counter to the American atomic monopoly, perhaps inhibiting the American side from exploiting it politically. Moreover, in the immediate postwar era there was considerable uncertainty both as to the actual destructiveness of the new atomic weapons and the American capacity to deliver these weapons on Soviet targets. Because of lags in production and the termination of some atomic facili-

ties, the U.S. atomic stockpile by 1947 was well under 100 bombs, with a cumulative damage-inflicting capacity roughly equal to that imposed on Nazi Germany during World War II, and thus not on a scale sufficient to guarantee the effective destruction of the Soviet Union.

Both sides were thus in an ambiguous position. Unsettled political and social conditions in the West as well as the Soviet advantage on the ground favored the Soviet Union in the event of hostilities in Europe. The U.S. nuclear monopoly as well as the vastly superior American economy—not to speak of the general exhaustion of the Soviet society—boded ill for the Soviet Union in the event of any protracted conflict. The standoff that followed, in a variety of limited confrontations, was the logical outcome, especially given the absence of directly conflicting political goals. The West, vastly overestimating Soviet strength, did not contest Soviet primacy in Central Europe, fearing instead a Soviet push westward. The Soviet Union, preoccupied with consolidating its wartime gains and concerned lest the West exploit its weaknesses, only half-heartedly probed the newly established perimeters.

PHASE II—SOVIET PROBES, 1948–1952

The confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union crystallized during the next phase. Within both societies there emerged a form of political consensus: in America the crushing defeat of Henry Wallace and the appearance of bipartisan support for an actively anti-Soviet policy signaled the end of postwar uncertainty; in the Soviet Union (as well as in Eastern Europe) the imposition of Stalinist terror created an atmosphere of a beleaguered camp (“imperialist encirclement”) dominated by implacable ideological hostility toward its rivals.

The cold war now became primarily an American-Soviet affair. By 1947 the United States had assumed responsibility for British undertakings in Greece and Turkey and, more generally, taken the lead in fashioning the strategy of the West. American goals were succinctly expressed in the concept of “containment.” Essentially, the strategy rested on two premises: Soviet expansion must be halted, by both military and political means; and this in turn would create the preconditions for an eventual mel-
lowing or even breaking up of the Soviet system. Soviet actions indicated an accelerated effort to subordinate Eastern Europe to

full Soviet control, while Soviet probes in Berlin and Korea appeared to have been aimed both at the consolidation of existing Communist power and, had an American response been lacking, also the expansion of the Soviet sphere.

During this phase, the United States continued to enjoy the decisive advantage in economic power and international influence, though its relative military position in some respects actually worsened. The U.S. economy grew during this phase to over \$400 billion (in 1966 dollars), and the United States was able to undertake a massive program in injecting its capital into Western Europe, thus reinforcing a vital political link. Soviet postwar recovery was pressed energetically and the Soviet economy passed its prewar levels with the GNP crossing the \$150 billion mark (in 1966 dollars) by the time of Stalin's death.

The international climate was similarly skewed to U.S. advantage. The coup in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin blockade, the defection of Yugoslavia (with its overtones of Soviet bullying), the purge trials in Eastern Europe and eventually the invasion of South Korea all created a distinctly anti-Soviet mood. In some respects, however, this was misleading. Probably a more accurate measure of international attitudes was provided by the February 1951 vote condemning the Chinese intervention in the Korean War. The pro-U.S. vote was 47 to seven with ten abstentions. India and Burma joined the Soviet Union in opposition to the resolutions, while Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Algeria and Afghanistan abstained. The southern arc of the Eurasian continent was thus beginning to divorce itself from a clear-cut identification with the United States.

Heightened international tensions, especially after the outbreak of Korean hostilities, prompted both powers to step up their military preparedness. Paradoxically, the tendency in the West at the time—in contrast to the earlier phase—was somewhat to underestimate Soviet strength. Soviet ground forces were being built up rapidly in order to offset any Western atomic threat. Soviet defense spending—despite a decline to under \$30 billion in 1948 from its wartime high of about \$50 billion—was still more than twice that of the United States, and Soviet armed forces grew in manpower to almost five million men by the time of Stalin's death, a figure approximately one million above prevailing Western estimates and considerably in excess of the U.S.

1.6 million men under arms. American defense spending did not rise until the Korean War (having dropped precipitously from over \$70 billion in 1945 to under \$12 billion by 1950), but then it did so rapidly, exceeding by 1952 in total dollar value Soviet military allocations.

More important in the shifting military relationship was the development by the Soviet Union of the atomic bomb. That development came earlier than American planners had expected and by 1951 the Soviet Union already possessed a modest stockpile of atomic bombs (numbering about 60 weapons, or roughly one-tenth of the U.S. stockpile). Increasingly binding U.S. political and military commitments to Europe were hence designed to cancel any advantage the Soviet Union could derive from this new situation and thus to preserve the inherent asymmetry in the American-Soviet relationship.

On balance, this phase of the cold war can be said to have involved clashes reflecting a more assertive Soviet pattern of behavior, with the United States essentially responding to perceived threats. The consequence of the clashes were three major developments, all to U.S. advantage: the launching of Western economic recovery and the shaping of a new political coalition; the initiation of a rapid U.S. military build-up designed to erase the Soviet advantage on the ground; the rebuff of the Soviet Union in two, and possibly three, crisis areas: Berlin, Korea and Yugoslavia. Soviet military power was effective only in shielding the Soviet political predominance in Eastern Europe, an area not even actively contested by the West.

The historical significance of the Korean War, in addition to its crucial impact on U.S. rearmament, poses an especially tantalizing question: to what extent was it merely a Soviet miscalculation, based on the assumption of U.S. disengagement from the mainland of Asia and perhaps also stimulated by Stalin's desire (reflecting long-standing Russian interests) to transform a united Korea into a Soviet dependency (instead of a Chinese or eventually a Japanese one), and to what extent was it a calculated move deliberately designed to stimulate American-Chinese hostility? Stalin's suspicions of China are well documented, while the predominant U.S. inclination prior to the Korean War was to seek some sort of an accommodation with the new government on the Chinese mainland. In any case, the opportunity to stimulate a head-on clash between America and China must have been

welcomed by Stalin, and deservedly so. The ensuing 20 years of American-Chinese hostility were certainly a net gain for the Soviet Union.

PHASE III—ASSERTIVE RHETORIC VS. POLICY OF STATUS QUO, 1953–1957

The coincidence of apparent external successes with domestic political change in the United States (not only in leadership but, even more notably, in ideological climate) led to the next phase in the rivalry, a phase seemingly dominated by greater U.S. assertiveness.

The new American policy, articulated by the winning Republican side during the presidential election of 1952, seemed to signal a basic departure from the U.S. strategy of containment: the adoption, instead, of an offensive “policy of liberation” designed to roll back the Soviet Union from its newly acquired East European satellites.

Soviet leaders had cause to view this change in American tone with some anxiety. Their insecurity was doubtless heightened by a series of internal crises, the cumulative effect of which was to sharpen the contrast between the self-confident and, on the whole, self-satisfied America of the early Eisenhower years and the troubled Russia torn by post-Stalin dissensions. A grave and enduring political crisis ensued in the wake of Stalin’s death, with internecine conflicts consuming the energies of the top Soviet leaders. Its eruption precipitated a marked decline in the effectiveness of Soviet control over Eastern Europe—the area at which the new U.S. policy ostensibly pointed—and it sparked a series of violent uprisings. Finally, Soviet uncertainty about the future of Sino-Soviet relations caused Soviet leaders to redress the more overtly irritating aspects of the relationship established between Stalin and Mao in 1949, but without quieting entirely Soviet anxieties about the future.

More urgent from the Soviet point of view was the fact that during this phase the United States was beginning to acquire a strategic capability for inflicting significant damage on the Soviet Union which, coupled with the generally more crusading mood of Washington, seemed to lend credibility to the offensive character of U.S. policy. U.S. military spending, though it declined somewhat from the Korean War peak of \$61 billion, stabilized around the mid-\$30 billion mark during the first Eisenhower administration, while manpower under arms ranged from 3.5 mil-

lion to 2.8 million men. In effective manpower, the Soviet Union still retained a considerable edge (almost 2 to 1), since by 1955 its armed forces numbered some 5.7 million men, with Soviet defense spending for this period estimated as roughly equivalent to \$30 billion per annum. The big margin, strategically and politically, was in respective nuclear vulnerability. The United States proclaimed itself committed to the doctrine of massive retaliation, and the modernization and expansion of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) did create during this phase, probably for the first time, a situation of high Soviet vulnerability to a large-scale U.S. atomic attack. By 1955, the U.S. nuclear-weapons bomber fleet capable of undertaking two-way attack missions on the Soviet Union had grown to about 400 aircraft, and the total number of U.S. bombers capable of executing an atomic attack on the Soviet Union was in the vicinity of 1,350; the corresponding Soviet figures were only about 40 and 350 respectively.

The Soviet atomic insecurity was heightened still further by the continuing economic gap and by persisting international isolation. On the international plane, despite stepped-up Soviet activity, the isolation of the Soviet Union remained as complete as it had been since the days of the early fifties. The economic asymmetry also remained roughly what it had been at the time of Stalin's death: if anything, the gap widened slightly in absolute figures, with the U.S. GNP reaching in 1955 the figure of \$508 billion (in 1966 dollars), and the Soviet Union increasing its to about \$185 billion. Relatively, the Soviet Union moved up somewhat, with a GNP about 36 percent of that of the United States. None the less, the death of Stalin and the subsequent temptation on the part of competing Soviet leaders to cater more to domestic aspirations prompted a debate whether to enhance the Soviet standard of living, necessarily at the expense of defense budgeting.

However, the U.S. side during this phase also began to be increasingly apprehensive about its security. Even the very limited Soviet striking power created, for the first time, some domestic U.S. vulnerability to a Soviet nuclear attack. This heightened sense of insecurity was reinforced by the unexpectedly rapid Soviet acquisition of an H-bomb, with the Soviet Union testing an operational weapon before the United States. A special RAND study concluded that even with an inferior striking power the Soviet Union might be able to launch a devastatingly

effective first strike against the American Strategic Air Command bases.

The combination of domestic and international strains led the Soviet side to initiate a series of steps pointing toward a *détente* in East-West relations. Even before Stalin's death, the Soviet side hinted that it might be willing to explore the possibility of a reunited but neutralized Germany, and some of the post-Stalin successors appeared to have been inclined to pursue this path. More significant was the Soviet readiness to conclude a peace treaty with Austria, resulting in the withdrawal of Soviet forces from that country. Khrushchev's accommodation with Yugoslavia terminated that particular crisis, while "the spirit of Geneva"—following the 1955 summit meeting—prompted on both U.S. and Soviet sides publicly announced troop cuts.

On the Soviet side, the critical turning point, prompting the termination of this particular phase in the cold war and initiating a new one, probably came with the October-November crisis of 1956. The almost total U.S. passivity in the face of enormous Soviet indecision regarding what seemed for a while like the imminent collapse of Soviet rule throughout Eastern Europe apparently convinced the Soviet leaders that American assertiveness was in fact only a domestically expedient myth. The skillful Soviet exploitation of the unprecedented allied differences over the Suez affair also fed Soviet optimism, and a novel tone of assertiveness increasingly began to be heard from the Kremlin.

This phase of the cold war was thus essentially one of missed U.S. opportunities. It was the American side which failed to capitalize on the political and military momentum generated by the repulsion of Stalin's probes—either by exploiting to its own advantage the surfacing Soviet weaknesses or by taking advantage of the Soviet interest in a *détente*. The doctrine of massive retaliation, accompanied by cuts in U.S. ground forces, left too narrow a margin between the extremes of war or peace for the U.S. policy-makers to exploit the U.S. strategic preponderance. The post-1953 Soviet anxiety about U.S. capabilities and intentions now gave way to a radically different Soviet reading of the rivalry. If during 1953 to 1956 the Soviet Union can be said to have exaggerated its own strength in order to deter the United States from acting assertively, from 1957 on the Soviet leaders were inclined to exaggerate their own strength in order to exploit it on behalf of a more assertive Soviet behavior.

PHASE IV—PREMATURE SOVIET GLOBALISM, 1958–1963

“The East Wind Prevails Over the West Wind”: These words uttered in the Kremlin by Mao Tse-tung in late 1957 set the tone for the next phase of the cold war. The Soviet concept of *détente* changed accordingly. If in the early fifties it was primarily designed to shore up a threatened status quo, in the late fifties it was meant to help effect a change in it. Soviet leaders thus sought to combine summit diplomacy from a position of apparent strength with a recourse to open threats in order to compel the removal of the United States from Berlin, still the most sensitive spot in the East-West relationship.

Soviet international activity acquired for the first time a distinctly global range. Soviet involvement in the Middle East was widened and politically deepened; Soviet ties with North Africa expanded; the Soviet Union became deeply involved in the Congo crisis, and it developed close political and even some ideological links with the new African governments of Mali and Guinea; the Soviet Union provided extensive support to President Sukarno of Indonesia, and—most symbolic of its new policy—the Soviet Union began to aid, though at first rather cautiously, the new Castro government in Cuba.

If Mao Tse-tung’s remarks can be said to have set the tone for the next phase, perhaps the key signal—in any case, so interpreted by the other side—was provided by Khrushchev’s so-called “national liberation struggle” speech of early 1961. Delivered almost literally on the eve of the inauguration of the new U.S. President—and read avidly by him—his speech represented for the United States what almost a decade earlier Dulles’ concept of the “policy of liberation” probably meant to the Soviet leaders: an ominous warning of an activist policy based on force, even if not exercised through the application of direct force.

What Khrushchev appeared to be saying was that the balance of power had tipped; that ideologically decisive change could now be effected by “national liberation struggles” carried on under the protective umbrella of Soviet power; that Communist gains could be securely protected; and that the West would have to yield even in Berlin, where Soviet tactical advantages could be asserted under the protection of the newly acquired Soviet strategic capabilities. In effect, Khrushchev’s policy seemed emulative of Dulles’: “massive retaliation” would deter U.S. counter-

actions, enabling the desired changes to be effected at a lower threshold of risk.

This more assertive policy was pursued in an international atmosphere which, for the first time since World War II, was turning distinctly less favorable to the United States. By 1960, the United States was finding itself in a minority on the China question (*i.e.* those abstaining as well as opposed to the U.S. position were now more numerous), and on the defensive on such issues as Cuba or the Congo. The question of Cuba became for the United States (especially after the débâcle of the Bay of Pigs) what Hungary had been earlier for the Soviet Union: a source of embarrassment and strain.

All of this contributed to an atmosphere which seemed to pit an energetic and assertive Soviet Union against a fumbling and defensive America. Though John F. Kennedy assumed the presidency after waging a campaign in which American weakness (particularly the so-called missile gap) was one of his principal charges, events shortly after the inauguration seemed to bear out the self-confident mood of Soviet leaders. U.S. ineptitude during the abortive invasion of Cuba was followed shortly thereafter by American passivity when the Soviet Union took unilateral action to partition Berlin effectively.

Yet the underlying reality of the relationship was more complex than its appearance, and that underlying reality was to surface before long. Politically, the change in the U.S. leadership did bring to the top a new and younger élite, which gained increasing self-confidence and which proceeded rapidly to build up U.S. military power. Within the Soviet Union, on the other hand, Khrushchev's personal position remained far from consolidated, with internal political struggles surfacing again, with unprecedented public displays of continued disagreement within the leadership manifesting themselves at the Twenty-second Party Congress. Moreover, the increasingly bitter struggle with China further complicated Soviet decision-making, both forcing the Soviet Union to compete with China's militancy and somewhat reducing the Soviet Union's own room for maneuver.

The Soviet rate of growth also began to wobble in the early 1960s. Moreover, the American economy, after the slowdown of the second half of the fifties, began to accelerate, so much so that not only the absolute but even the relative gap between the two economies widened between 1961 and 1965.

Most significant of all, however, were developments in the military field. This phase marked the beginning of a new strategic competition, with power measured increasingly by the number of missiles capable of inflicting strategic damage on the respective homelands of the two rivals. On the Soviet side, the number of men under arms actually decreased during these years. By 1960, the level had dropped to some 3.6 million men, and Khrushchev even proposed to cut it down further to 2.4 million. At the same time, Soviet military expenditures continued to rise, to approximately \$40 billion per annum, with the priorities put on modernization of equipment, and particularly on expansion of Soviet missile strength.

The atmosphere created by Soviet boasting was very conducive to highly exaggerated U.S. estimates of Soviet power. In 1960, Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) strength was semi-officially estimated as already around 100 missiles, and publicly was projected to reach the impressive figure of 500 missiles by 1961. In fact, during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 the Soviet Union had only about 70 liquid-fueled ICBMs (of somewhat dubious reliability) capable of being targeted on the United States, and it did not reach the 500 mark until 1966-67. The new Kennedy administration, responding to what appeared to be both aggressive Soviet intentions as well as capabilities, sharply increased U.S. defense spending, passing the \$50 billion mark in 1962. Both U.S. strategic and conventional forces were reinforced. The former were designed to deny the Soviet Union the advantage of strategic threat; the latter were designed to meet head-on the new threat of insurgency and to enable the United States to wage the so-called 2½ wars, *i.e.* both in Asia and Europe simultaneously. The United States was in fact widening its strategic edge. At the time of the Cuban missile crisis, the United States was in a position to deliver several times as devastating an attack on the Soviet Union as the Soviet Union could on the United States, even though by then American civilian losses might have been on the prohibitive scale of some 30 or so million fatalities.

From the Soviet point of view, however, the politically decisive factor was the realization by the Soviet decision-makers of the fact that their society was several times more vulnerable than the American. This imposed a constraint on the Soviet use of strategic pressure even on behalf of moves in areas where the

Soviet Union enjoyed a tactical advantage, as for example in Berlin. Furthermore, the rapid increase by the United States in NATO's nuclear strength (by some 60 percent in 1961 to 1963, as a consequence of deployment, according to Secretary McNamara, of "thousands of U.S. warheads") meant that a European confrontation would quickly become a strategic one.

It was this asymmetry in power that led the Soviet Union to introduce medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) covertly into Cuba. Mikoyan confirmed this to a closed meeting of Communist ambassadors, held in Washington after the Cuban missile crisis (as recounted later by the Hungarian chargé present). By early 1962, the top Soviet leaders knew that in fact they did not have the strategic advantage they had claimed (and that American leaders *knew* this as well). What is even more important, the Soviet leaders probably knew what American leaders at the time could not yet know: that during the next several years the strategic gap would further widen in U.S. favor.

The Cuban confrontation was thus in all likelihood a last desperate gamble to achieve a payoff for an assertive Soviet strategy undertaken back in 1958. But that strategy rested on an insufficient base of power; it did not enjoy a sufficiently dynamic economic foundation or the backing of an adequately developed military technology; and it overestimated the revolutionary potential for global radical change. As events during the next phase were to demonstrate, conditions were not yet ripe for a Soviet policy that was meant to be both global and revolutionary. The casualty of this policy was the East-West détente, which seemed within grasp in 1958 or 1960; the consequences were the massive U.S. strategic build-up of the early 1960s and a new phase in the cold war, a phase dominated by increased U.S. assertiveness.

PHASE V—THE CRESTING OF AMERICAN GLOBALISM, 1963–1968

The ideology for American globalism was provided by John Kennedy's inaugural address; American preponderance was dramatized by the Soviet backdown during the Cuban confrontation in 1962; the globalist policy came into its own during Lyndon Johnson's presidency, which coincided with the high watermark of the progressive post-World War II expansion of a worldwide U.S. presence.

The Soviet backdown in Cuba was widely regarded as signaling a protracted setback to Soviet global ambitions. American

predominance was taken for granted, and American strategic superiority was blissfully portrayed as unchallengeable. Secretary McNamara went so far as to assert in 1965 that the "Soviets have decided that they have lost the quantitative race, and they are not seeking to engage us in that contest. It means there is no indication that the Soviets are seeking to develop a strategic nuclear force as large as ours."¹

However, the new phase did not involve a return to the mutual hostility of the fifties. Indeed, American global assertiveness was initially accompanied by a stepped-up search for accommodation with the Soviet Union. The test-ban agreement of 1963 and the establishment of the Washington-Moscow "hot line" represented major breakthroughs, signaling the growing recognition on the part of both powers of their stake in somehow stabilizing the arms race. On the political plane, the new phase saw also a more active U.S. interest in developing closer ties with Eastern Europe. President Kennedy stressed during his electoral campaign the desirability of peaceful economic and cultural engagement with Eastern Europe, and President Johnson carried this approach even further, altering in October 1966 the postwar U.S. priorities in Europe. Heretofore German reunification had been held to be the precondition for a European settlement; henceforth, East-West reconciliation was seen as laying the basis for a European settlement, eventually pointing to some resolution of the German question. Moreover, East-West reconciliation, it was expected, would help to increase East European independence from Soviet control.

If confident self-assertiveness was characteristic of the American mood during the initial years of this phase, anxiety and ambiguity appear to have dominated the Soviet outlook. At first, the change from Khrushchev to Brezhnev-Kosygin coincided with a distinct sense of letdown. The heroic competition with America—economic, political and even spatial—had clearly ended in a defeat, symbolized toward the end of the decade by the American landing on the moon. The Soviet leaders were evidently jolted by the directness of the 1962 American threat of a strategic attack on the Soviet Union, and the Cuban débâcle doubtless contributed to Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964. In addition, there is circumstantial evidence indicating that the post-Khrush-

¹ *Congressional Record*, Vol. III, Part 6, 89th Congress, 1st session, April 7, 1965, p. 7271.

chev Soviet leaders concluded that world affairs more generally were in a "reactionary" or "counterrevolutionary" phase, with the United States instigating the various international setbacks for "progressive" forces, deprived of Soviet nuclear protection. That appears to have been the meaning attached by Soviet leaders to the fall of Goulart in March of 1964 in Brazil, of Ben Bella in June of 1965 in Algeria, of Papandreou in July of 1965 in Greece, of Nkrumah in February of 1966 in Ghana, and of Sukarno in March of 1966 in Indonesia—all statesmen whom Khrushchev had actively cultivated. In the words of the official organ of the Italian Communist Party (August 4, 1967):

For the policy of the *status quo* and the attempts to divide the world into zones of influence between the two super-powers, U.S. imperialism is gradually substituting a revised and corrected re-edition of the old policy of *roll back*, giving birth, within the framework of nuclear coexistence with the USSR (caused by reasons of *force majeure*), to a series of local interventions (economical, political, military) designed to modify the world equilibrium by means of setting up reactionary regimes, or by support given to them, and liquidation of the progressive forces and movements in individual countries.

Soviet confidence was even further damaged by the widening rift with China, by the surfacing of liberal sentiments in Czechoslovakia, and by the shattering defeat by Israel of Nasser's army, equipped and trained by the Soviet Union (including the embarrassing capture by the Israelis of some Soviet military advisers). The international gains of the preceding years appeared everywhere to be in jeopardy, with the prematurely assertive Soviet globalism prompting not only the massive U.S. military build-up but the global political American counteroffensive.

The Soviet response was, accordingly, cautious. In effect, for a while the new Soviet team did not have a foreign policy beyond that of retrenchment and very ad hoc responses to new situations. The drift contributed to a rather widespread sense of malaise, and perhaps even emboldened the Chinese to step up both their anti-Soviet polemics and border tensions.

However, as in the Soviet case during the preceding phase, American global assertiveness obscured a reality which was becoming steadily less favorable to the American side. The mounting U.S. engagement in the war in Vietnam, transforming what initially appeared to be a relatively limited shoring-up operation into a more massive and costly intervention, significantly reduced American freedom of action, prompted severe strains in the U.S.

economy and society, absorbed much of the U.S. defense budget, and weakened the U.S. international position. As a result, America neither translated into deeds the vision held up in President Johnson's 1966 speech on East-West reconciliation in Europe nor made the slightest move to complicate the Soviet decision to occupy forcibly in August 1968 the increasingly liberalized Czechoslovakia. Similarly, diplomatic passivity marked the U.S. posture in the Middle East, with the result that before long the Soviet Union was able to reestablish and even widen its badly shaken position in the Mediterranean area.

In the meantime, Soviet diplomacy with regard to the Vietnam War became increasingly skillful. Its essence can be described with the words: "exploitation of opportunities" and "reduction of risks." The war had the effect of increasing disproportionately the U.S. stake in Soviet good will, and at the same time it significantly decreased American international standing.

On the economic plane, the situation was more mixed. The American economy continued to grow steadily, but the Soviet economy regained much of its forward momentum and resumed its upward climb relative to the United States. By 1967, the U.S. GNP stood at \$762 billion; the Soviet at \$372 billion, or 49 percent of the U.S. total, although the Soviet economy continued to be plagued by operational inefficiency and lack of adequate technological innovation. However, inflationary trends were beginning to beset the United States, with the war in Vietnam making it increasingly difficult for the United States to pursue its domestic programs of social renewal.

The biggest change, however, was to come in the military relationship. On the surface, U.S. supremacy seemed secure. In 1965, Defense Secretary McNamara estimated that in terms of delivery systems "we have a superiority of approximately 3 or 4 to 1. . . . In qualitative terms, it's impossible to come up with a precise evaluation but it far exceeds 3 or 4 to 1. . . . The programs we have under way are more than adequate to assure our superiority in the years ahead." By 1968, the steady build-up in U.S. ground forces also gave the United States for the first time in the history of the rivalry a lead in the number of men under arms (3.5 million *vs.* 3.47 million). However, this particular increase was due primarily to the Vietnam War, as was also the case with the continuing increase in U.S. military expenditures from \$52 billion in 1965 to over \$80 billion in 1968.

In reality, despite Secretary McNamara's extraordinary optimism, the military balance was quietly shifting away from U.S. supremacy. It gradually became clear that some time earlier in the decade—presumably some time before the Cuban crisis, though the outcome of the crisis obviously reinforced the decision—the Soviet leadership decided to respond to the American missile build-up with one of its own, thereby eventually making good on Khrushchev's premature claims. Soviet defense spending moved steadily upward, crossing the \$50 billion mark in 1967 and reaching \$55 billion in 1968, thereby effectively matching and even surpassing U.S. defense spending, outside of the Vietnam War effort. By 1968, Russia (with some 900 operational ICBMs and America leveling off at 1,054) was well on the way to erasing the margins of superiority authoritatively claimed by Secretary McNamara three years earlier.

Though by 1968 the United States still enjoyed a marked strategic edge (especially in strategic bombers—over 600 to less than 200 for the Soviets—and submarine-launched missiles targetable on respective homelands—656 to 45), in reality both sides had the capacity to destroy each other as viable societies, with neither possessing a decisive first-strike capability. Although this changed relationship imposed on both sides a far greater obligation than heretofore to take closely into account the likely consequences of any unilateral application of force on the international scene, it meant a greater change for America, till then relatively invulnerable.

Most important of all, however, was the conjunction between this change and the collapse within the United States of the post-war consensus concerning foreign affairs. Like the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin, by the latter part of the sixties the United States found itself in the midst of a deep political crisis, involving major convulsions within the ruling élite and a general crisis of social values. With the Vietnam War precipitating a divisive national debate about foreign policy aims, the U.S. global engagement became increasingly devoid of positive domestic support. As a result, the initiative thus gradually passed to the Soviet side.

PHASE VI—THE SHAPING OF A MIXED RELATIONSHIP, 1969—

Just as Khrushchev's fall from power ushered in a period dominated by American assertiveness, Johnson's fall from power in

1968 opened a new phase, dominated by rising Soviet self-confidence and expanding global involvement. Soviet analysts began to evaluate the world again in terms of the general crisis of capitalism, and Soviet leaders—though much more cautious in their pronouncements than Khrushchev—were apparently concluding that the world was again shifting from a quiescent state into a dynamic condition, more favorable to “revolutionary” than to “reactionary” trends.

This new phase also saw the consequence of a policy that was no longer primarily regional or handicapped—as had been particularly the case under Khrushchev—by a vast disproportion between ends and means. Exploiting both the domestic American malaise and the Vietnam conflict, the Soviet leaders proceeded to fashion their own equivalent of the earlier Kennedy-Johnson combination of American globalism and bridge-building. The wider scope of the new Soviet strategy involved a rather different kind of policy from that pursued earlier by Khrushchev: his was not only globally premature but globally undifferentiated, spreading thinly still thin Soviet resources, relying heavily on economic aid and ideology. His successors, putting more reliance on diplomacy and military presence, exploiting nationalism even while significantly reducing Soviet economic aid (and concentrating it on a few key targets), not only have been pursuing a more selective strategy, but have appeared to focus it on the vast Eurasian continent: isolating China in the East, and flirting with Japan; consolidating the Soviet position in South Asia, while the United States was tied down to the war in Vietnam; expanding their presence in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East; and seeking to draw Western Europe into closer economic and political ties—hopefully pointing to the “Finlandization” of Western Europe. Continentalism rather than, as in the past, either regionalism (focused on Europe almost entirely) or premature globalism (undifferentiated in form), was the central character of the new Soviet policy.

This strategy coincided with the American reexamination of its foreign policy. The redefinition of American policy by 1972 was clearly leading the United States into increased reliance on a triangular pattern of politics, exploiting the Sino-Soviet cleavage to gain increased leverage in bilateral American-Soviet relations. In response, the Soviet Union, obviously concerned about the new Washington-Peking relationship, sought to bal-

ance the negative consequences of any American-Chinese accommodation through its own initiatives vis-à-vis Washington, designed to convince the American side of the greater desirability of an American-Soviet accommodation. Beyond that, the Soviet Union appeared to be still counting on the possibility of a more pro-Soviet leadership emerging in China after Mao; in the meantime Soviet military pressure on China did result in the cooling down of Chinese border pressures. None the less, China came to represent a growing source of Soviet security concerns, necessitating a major redeployment of forces and re-allocation of resources.

The military dimensions of the American-Soviet relationship during this phase have been dominated by a new element of uncertainty. The pace of the Soviet strategic and tactical build-up, as well as intensive development of home civil defense, appeared to indicate a desire to acquire a war-fighting capability in the context of parity—which, if attained, could give the Soviet Union a significant edge in any protracted crisis-bargaining. Soviet defense spending continued to rise (crossing the \$55 billion mark by the late sixties), while American defense expenditures outside of the Vietnam War remained unchanged. With the American strategic forces on a plateau since 1967, the Soviet Union was able by 1970 roughly to match the United States in the strategic sector, while some of its programs could even be interpreted as seeking to obtain by the mid-1970s a decisive first-strike capability. Moreover, the Soviet Union made major strides toward the acquisition of effective naval power and long-range air- and sea-lift capabilities, and began to develop the argument (in the words of one Soviet commentator) that these forces would be able in the future to induce a U.S. recognition of “the inevitability and irreversibility of the social changes dictated by the will of the peoples.”

The result was that both powers were now checking each other, and—more dangerous—their power frequently overlapped (as in the Mediterranean). This prompted heightened pressures on them to develop more stable rules of behavior (*e.g.* the 1972 agreement on avoidance of naval incidents), but it also increased the probabilities of friction.

The improved Soviet military posture was purchased at a very high economic price, especially given the continuing disparity between the two economies. With a GNP in the early 1970s of

about \$500 billion (or under one-half that of the United States), the Soviet Union was attempting to match—perhaps even exceed—the U.S. military effort, with the costs and complexity of that effort growing at an almost exponential rate. Increased Soviet interest in somewhat moderating the military competition was doubtless thus stimulated in part by economic pressures, even if some sectors of the Soviet leadership (especially the military) may have continued to press in favor of a military posture that at a minimum assured the Soviet Union a reliable war-fighting capability and at the maximum eventually a decisive first-strike capability.

None the less, this most recent phase in the American-Soviet relationship also saw increased Soviet optimism concerning longer-range economic prospects. In 1971 Premier Kosygin even revived—though in a moderated form—the earlier Soviet prognosis of an eventual victory over the United States in economic competition. U.S. economic difficulties and tensions between America and her European and Japanese allies reinforced the Soviet expectations, even though the Soviet economy continued to suffer from inadequate scientific-technological innovation for which it sought remedies in periodic domestic economic reorganizations and in increased technological importation from the more advanced West.

What made for even greater uncertainty about the eventual outcome of this particular phase was the increasing importance of domestic political changes within both systems. The new bipolar checking relationship, even though it heightened the risks of a crisis, also meant that both sides were being pushed by the very nature of the checking relationship into a new competition, one in which the domestic performance of the two systems was becoming an increasingly vital aspect of the competition. Their respective abilities to cope with the rising demands for the implementation of the concepts of liberty and equality (the former more in the Soviet Union; the latter more in the United States) was becoming an important ingredient in a competition that was now less a purely traditional one and more and more part of a global political process, increasingly inimical to sharp demarcating lines between the foreign and the domestic.

In this regard, both sides were plagued by major intangibles. Turbulent change in America made for uncertainty about the character of America's involvement in world affairs and that, in

turn, nurtured some of the Soviet optimism about the historical significance of this particular phase in the rivalry. Soviet—particularly Great Russian—nationalism was obviously attracted by the prospect of the Soviet Union emerging as the number-one world power, and this feeling, even more than ideology, provided the social propellant for sustained competition with the United States. Yet change in the Soviet Union, less visible and more repressed, is also taking place, and its eventual surfacing could have enormous implications. Increased social demands for a higher standard of living, intellectual dissent, generational unease, rising tensions between Great Russian nationalism and the more aroused nationalisms of the non-Russian nations, coupled with the conservative reaction of the ruling party élite—all cumulatively increased the importance of domestic considerations in Soviet foreign policy decision-making.

The combined effect of increasing external complexity (symbolized by Vietnam for the United States and by China for the Soviet Union) and of rising domestic demands was to pressure both powers into limited but expanding accommodations. The number of bilateral U.S.-Soviet agreements continued to expand, and the process culminated in May 1972 with the Moscow summit. That meeting was held within days of an act of U.S. military compulsion directed largely against the Soviet Union: the mining of North Vietnamese ports. The Soviet failure to respond indicated the high Soviet political stake in the accords, even though these agreements involved calculated gambles on both sides.

In essence, the Moscow accords represented a clear short-term political gain for the Soviet side, and a short-term strategic gain for the American side; in the longer run, they could turn out to be politically more beneficial to the American side, provided the longer run does not see the strategic relationship skewed to a considerable Soviet advantage. On the political plane, the agreements involved an American acknowledgment of U.S.-Soviet parity as well as the legitimization of postwar Soviet gains in Eastern Europe (symbolized also by the related visit by Nixon to Warsaw, the first presidential visit to a capital of an East European state not defying Moscow). In the longer run, the process of accommodation could dilute Soviet ideological militancy, provided that the relationship of strategic parity is not upset. In that strategic relationship the agreements had the effect of halting the quantitative momentum of the Soviet deploy-

ment while leaving open the competition in its qualitative aspects, where the United States remains clearly superior; in the longer run, however, the existing Soviet quantitative advantage could become quite significant if the qualitative U.S. lead is erased.

This is why there is a sensitive interdependence between the political and the strategic aspects of the Moscow agreements, and the character of the next phase in the competitive relationship will be very much affected by the degree to which the U.S. Congress recognizes the interdependence. There is little reason to doubt that the Soviet leadership is sensitive to it.

CONCLUSIONS

Several broader observations emerge from our analysis of the different phases of the cold war. They are as follows:

Cyclical pattern: The American-Soviet relationship appears to have been punctuated by alternating offensive and defensive phases, with neither side demonstrating the will or the capacity for sustained political momentum. After the initial skirmishing had gradually given way to a sharper rivalry, the Soviet Union adopted a more offensive policy during the years 1948 to 1952; the United States then gained the initiative and appeared to be on the political offensive during the years 1953 to 1957; the Soviet Union in turn became more assertive and maintained an offensive posture between 1958 and 1963; that policy collapsed in 1963, and between 1963 and 1968 the United States pursued an activist global policy; however, by the late sixties the Soviet Union regained its momentum, while the United States was experiencing "an agonizing reappraisal" of its foreign policy. This has initiated the present phase in the relationship.

As the Soviet side gained in strength and self-confidence, its policies—both strategic and political—tended to emulate the American. In many respects, Soviet policy during the premature fourth phase was imitative of the American during the third phase; American reliance on "massive retaliation" and "the policy of liberation" were later matched by Soviet nuclear threats and promises of support for "national liberation struggles." Similarly, the present phase of the relationship has seen strong reverse overtones of the political and strategic postures adopted by the United States during the fifth phase.

Relative performance: In a narrow sense, the Soviet performance may be said to have been superior to the American, at

least in so far as the relative Soviet position improved considerably. From a general position of inferiority (in the context of reciprocal hostility) the Soviet Union has moved to a level approaching a global condominium with the United States (in the context of a more mixed coöperative-competitive relationship); there are probably still some Soviet leaders arguing on behalf of preponderance as the Soviet goal for the next stage, and this is what makes the present phase so very critical. However, such a judgment must be qualified by the consideration that both sides succeeded in their basic defensive aims, even though in the last several years the Soviet Union has pierced southward (into the Middle East and Asia), through the weakest parts of the perimeters drawn by the U.S. policy of containment. (The rebuff Moscow has recently suffered from Egypt modifies but does not substantially change the picture.) Moreover, the Soviet leaders did botch up their alliance relationship with China, whereas the American side showed greater skill in maintaining complex alliance relationships.

Given the nature of the Soviet system, Soviet leaders have been in a better position than the American policy-makers to exploit politically whatever assets they had at their disposal. In that sense, Soviet policy has tended to be somewhat freer from objective restraints than the American. The Soviet Union thus adopted offensive postures when opportunity seemed to beckon, even if at a relative disadvantage in two or even three of the four comparable elements noted during each phase: relative international influence, respective military and economic power, domestic cohesion on behalf of national policy. In contrast, the United States has tended to become more assertive only when all or most of these factors were favorable, as the following table indicates:

Phase I	1945-1947	Preliminary Skirmishing
	1	international standing U.S. advantage
	2	military power probably a Soviet advantage
	3	economic power overwhelming U.S. advantage
	4	domestic policy base uncertainty in both
Phase II	1948-1952	Soviet Union Assertive
	1	international standing U.S. advantage
	2	military power marginal Soviet advantage?
	3	economic power decisive U.S. advantage
	4	domestic policy base U.S. advantage

Phase III	1953-1957	United States	Assertive
	1	international standing	U.S. advantage
	2	military power	U.S. advantage
	3	economic power	U.S. advantage
	4	domestic policy base	U.S. advantage
Phase IV	1958-1963	Soviet Union	Assertive
	1	international standing	declining U.S. advantage
	2	military power	uncertain U.S. advantage
	3	economic power	U.S. advantage
	4	domestic policy base	probable U.S. advantage
Phase V	1963-1968	United States	Assertive
	1	international standing	marginal U.S. advantage
	2	military power	clear U.S. advantage
	3	economic power	U.S. advantage
	4	domestic policy base	declining U.S. advantage
Phase VI	1969-	Soviet Union	Assertive
	1	international standing	roughly equal
	2	military power	marginal U.S. advantage?
	3	economic power	U.S. advantage
	4	domestic policy base	Soviet advantage

On the whole, throughout the relationship, both sides have been essentially prudent and restrained. Each has avoided pushing the other beyond the point of no return. In this regard, note must be taken of the extraordinarily salutary effect of nuclear weapons; in a more traditional setting, without the restraining effect of nuclear weapons, it is likely, given mutual hostility and occasionally very sharp provocations, that a major American-Soviet war would have occurred.

Missed opportunities: It is only natural that in a highly complex relationship between two remote powers, divided not only by distance but by ideology and culture, there should occur a number of instances in which one side has misinterpreted the intentions of the other, or miscalculated the anticipated reactions (or nonreactions) of the other, or simply interpreted as key signals actions or statements which perhaps were not meant to be key signals.

In addition, one may also speculate concerning major opportunities that each side failed to exploit in order to alter fundamentally the relationship. Two such missed opportunities stand out. The first was America's. It involved the years 1953 to 1957 when the Soviet world was in the deepest disarray. A more active policy, combining a willingness to contrive a new European re-

lationship (including perhaps a neutralized Germany) with a credible inclination to exploit Soviet difficulties in Eastern Europe, might have diluted the partition of Europe and maybe even transformed the rivalry into a less hostile relationship. Instead, the U.S. policy was one of rhetorical assertiveness, pointing toward the "liberation" of Eastern Europe, but in fact preoccupied with building up NATO, including within it a rearmed West Germany. Both the cold war and the division of Europe were thereby perpetuated.

The other key missed opportunity appears to have come not long afterwards. Precisely because by 1958 the United States had given overt indications of a willingness to settle for the status quo, there seems to have existed an "objective" opportunity for a real détente. Instead, the Soviet leaders, who themselves had earlier fostered the détente (largely, it appears, for tactical reasons: to deflect U.S. hostility at a time of considerable U.S. preponderance), now decided to exploit what they construed to be an American psychological and political weakness to achieve a major breakthrough. The initiation of the Berlin crisis produced several years of acute tensions, launching in turn the massive U.S. strategic build-up of the Kennedy years, escalating the arms race, setting in motion the U.S. counteroffensive, and postponing by almost 15 years any abatement in U.S.-Soviet hostility.

The role of military power: Because the two powers avoided a direct war, it is extremely difficult to assess the actual importance of absolute and relative military power to the unfolding pattern of competition. To the extent that judgment may be hazarded, it appears that one of the key reasons why every offensive phase has failed to attain its apparent objectives has been that the offensive side either lacked, or considered itself lacking, the needed margin of superiority in order to extract a decisive political advantage. The value of military power has thus been primarily defensive, but defensively it may well have been the critical factor.

However, it is noteworthy that in the two phases in which the United States has appeared to be the more assertive partner in the relationship, it was the United States that enjoyed an unambiguous military advantage. Thus it might be said that America has been more inclined to rely on military superiority as the basis for political assertiveness, even though she has abstained from direct military probes of the opposite camp. On the other

hand, the Soviet Union, even though militarily weaker, has been more inclined in its offensive phases to probe militarily or to use military pressure for political objectives, provided the overall context seemed to create favorable political circumstances and the basis for political confidence.

Until now, the stability of the relationship has not been tested by an assertive Soviet policy conducted in the context of clear Soviet military superiority.

The unclear but present danger: The acceptance of numerical parity in the American-Soviet military relationship raises two uncertainties about the future. The first pertains to the ability of the two political systems to engage effectively in protracted crisis-bargaining, bargaining which in the setting of relative parity would test to a far greater extent than ever before the psychological and political staying power of the two systems. A major crisis between the two powers would be likely to have especially unsettling consequences in the United States, which heretofore based its deterrence of the Soviet Union on a significant margin of superiority. Since what the Russians could undertake prudently has depended in the past on what they thought they could do safely, the erosion of American superiority and the coincident overlapping of power could have the effect of widening the margins of Soviet initiatives.

It is noteworthy that the Soviet Union has apparently tried to terminate rapidly third-party conflicts lest they escalate into big-power confrontations. However, Soviet dilatory tactics during the India-Pakistan war of 1971 stood in contrast with the Soviet behavior during the earlier warfare of 1965, not to speak of Soviet eagerness to dampen the Middle East war of 1967, and their unwillingness to provide Egypt with offensive arms. Thus we simply do not know to what extent Soviet prudence in the past was primarily a function of Soviet weakness rather than an enduring aspect of Soviet behavior.

The second uncertainty arises out of the Moscow SALT agreements of May 1972. The agreements permit qualitative improvements in the context of quantitative parity. These improvements—much more difficult to verify than quantitative expansion—could eventually threaten the parity arrangement. Indeed, because improvements in quality are more difficult to verify, anxieties may again arise unless additional agreements, providing for more verification and additional limitations (especially in

regard to testing) are not forthcoming within the next few years.

The next several years in the American-Soviet relationship are likely, therefore, to be very critical. They will determine whether the competitive relationship can be both stabilized and balanced by more coöperative elements, as indicated by the several U.S.-Soviet accords announced in late May 1972, or whether the competition will again assume an essentially hostile character. In the latter case, the outcome of a crisis between the two powers would depend not only on the relative power position of the two sides but also on the ability of their respective political systems to maintain domestic support for crisis-bargaining in the context of enormous psychological stress.

The present character of the relationship: During phases two and three, the relationship between the two rivals operated within the context of bipolar politics conducted on the basis of unified blocs. Phases three, four and five saw the gradual emergence of polycentric politics, conducted in the context of bipolar but still rather asymmetric power. Perhaps the best way to conceptualize the present phase of the relationship is to say that it involves a bipolar checking power relationship, operating in the context of a multiple state interplay, with the Peking-Washington-Moscow triangle providing the critical political interplay. The relationship involves some overlapping power, with its potential for dangerous frictions, while the multiple state interplay (replacing the earlier bloc confrontations) makes for a more extensive but less intensive rivalry, balanced by increased coöperation in certain specialized areas. Moreover, the Moscow agreements of 1972, while not terminating the rivalry, do involve a significant codification of "the rules of the game" under which the rivalry is to be conducted, and thus signify a change toward a more mixed relationship.

In that relationship, the Soviet Union now possesses strategic power of a global character, but it still lacks the other attributes of a truly global power. Its policy and thrust remain that of a continental character, and preponderance over the Eurasian continent currently appears to be its central objective. On the American side, the earlier policy of containment is being recast into a more complicated structure in which other states—notably China, Japan and, hopefully, a more united Europe—are to help in offsetting the Soviet Union.

It hence appears unlikely that the earlier Pax Americana will

give way in the foreseeable future to a new Pax Sovietica. Aside from that fact that the Soviet Union is economically far from being a global power, even its military might still lacks the truly global character of American military resources and deployment at the high point of American globalism. More important still, Pax Americana, to the extent that it ever existed, was in large measure the product of the genuine desire of many nations to commit the United States after World War II to global involvement.

In fact, and contrary to the recent wave of conspiratorial, Manichean, or simply economically determinist historical "re-visionism" of the cold war, Pax Americana was as much the product of non-Americans egging the United States on as of American design. Moreover, nuclear proliferation, the appearance of the new American-Chinese-Soviet triangular relationship, as well as the enormous varieties of revolutionary change in the less-developed nations, simply preclude the kind of world preponderance that the United States at one time enjoyed.

The wider picture: The American-Soviet competition in the years ahead will be influenced to a degree greater than heretofore by domestic factors as well as by changes in the global context. For much of the cold war, both powers were able to superimpose the primacy of their competitive relationship over domestic aspirations, while the existence of hostile blocs and the enormous disproportion between American and Soviet power on the one hand and the rest of the world on the other, reduced the significance of outside factors.

In the context of the bipolar checking relationship and of the emerging multiple state interplay, both societies are facing increasingly articulate social demands, and in both societies a new planetary consciousness is emerging, focusing on the common stakes of all mankind. Moreover, in both societies there is mounting awareness of the overwhelming complexity of social change in the developing parts of the world and a growing concern about the ability of existing international arrangements to cope with these problems effectively. Neither the American nor the Soviet leaderships can fully control domestic change or superimpose their will on international developments, though for the time being the Soviet leadership is in a better position to manipulate and contain its domestic pressures for change. It is doubtful, however, that this relative advantage will be retained indefinitely.

In addition, the Soviet Union confronts the unique challenge posed by China. China challenges both Soviet revolutionary purity and territorial integrity. The very scale of that challenge defies rational calculation and compensates for the obvious relative industrial and strategic weakness of the Chinese threat. It has already induced major Soviet strategic investments and troop redeployments. And there is little likelihood that in the years ahead China will cease to be a source of great Soviet concern.

The combination of global and domestic complexity—assuming that in the meantime the bipolar checking relationship is not suddenly skewed militarily in favor of one party—may over time induce progressively a more coöperative American-Soviet relationship, particularly in regard to a whole host of new problems confronting mankind. The agreements of 1972 already suggest that the cold war is gradually being transformed from an implicitly apocalyptic conflict to an explicitly relativistic competition; both sides are bound by a common stake not only to avoid a major war but partially to regularize the rivalry.

This changing character of the competition—from a direct and antagonistic rivalry into a more mixed relationship increasingly responsive to international and internal influences—is more in keeping with a pluralist view of the world than with the monochromatic Soviet conception. In the longer run, the combined effect of international pluralism and domestic pressures may therefore have a deeper effect on the nature of the Soviet system than of the American, provided that in the meantime the American system proves responsive to the need for *both* internal innovation and external staying power.