

A CONSISTENCY OF PURPOSE:  
POLITICAL WARFARE AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY  
OF THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

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A Dissertation  
submitted to the Faculty of the  
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degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in History

By

James M. Ludes, M.A.

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James M. Ludes

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.

This dissertation is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

Aviel Roshwald  
Thesis Advisor

[Signature]  
Signature

22 April 2003  
Date

David Painter  
Committee Member

[Signature]  
Signature

4/22/03  
Date

Michael Brown

[Signature]

22 April 03

Catherine Evtuhov  
Director of Graduate Studies

[Signature]  
Signature

4/29/03  
Date

This dissertation has been accepted by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

[Signature]  
For the Dean

4/30/03  
Date

**A CONSISTENCY OF PURPOSE:  
POLITICAL WARFARE AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY  
OF THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION**

James M. Ludes, M.A.

Thesis Advisor: Aviel Roshwald, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The Eisenhower administration's use of political warfare in its national security strategy reveals a consistency of purpose: Eisenhower and Dulles came to office committed to the use of political warfare. It was, in their view, a key component of cold war. Over the course of the following years, the administration adjusted the tactics of political warfare in Eastern Europe and around the world to meet specific contingencies, in response to specific developments, and based on assessments of what worked best.

Political warfare was part of a long-term strategy to win the Cold War. The U.S. response to specific events in Hungary must be viewed in this context as well. In the critical days of 1956, Eisenhower was not concerned about the fate of a specific East European country. He was focused on how developments there would shape the broader cold war. The U.S. response to the Hungarian revolution was part of the long-term strategy, not an indication of failed policy. The revolution provided further indictment of the Soviet Union's oppressive ways, and confirmed the most recent thinking of the administration's favored means of approach as specified by the Millikan

Committee. The lack of controversy or NSC discussion about political warfare in the second administration is an indication of how intimately woven into the fabric of the administration's approach political warfare had become. Eisenhower had specifically requested that only controversial issues should be addressed in the NSC. Political warfare was no longer controversial inside the administration: it was a critical function of their efforts.

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I am also indebted to the staffs of the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas, and the Seely G. Mudd Library at Princeton University. Portions of the research for the dissertation were made possible by the generous support of the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 1: Introduction.....   | 1   |
| Chapter 2: Eisenhower and Dulles.....  | 14  |
| Chapter 3: Political Warfare and the Eisenhower<br>Administration's National Security Strategy, 1953 | 71  |
| Chapter 4: National Security Strategy and Political<br>Warfare: 1953-1956                            | 149 |
| Chapter 5: U.S. Policy During the 1956 East European<br>Uprisings and their Aftermath                | 249 |
| Chapter 6: Political Warfare in the Second Term, 1957-1960.....                                      | 314 |
| Chapter 7: Conclusions.....  | 359 |
| Bibliography.....  | 377 |



## Chapter 1 Introduction

At 4:00 AM local time, November 4, 1956, Soviet military units attacked Budapest, Hungary, bringing to an end the regime of Imre Nagy and the short-lived Hungarian Revolution. From the earliest days after the reimposition of Soviet control, critics have used the timid reaction of the United States to the Soviet crackdown to criticize the administration of Dwight David Eisenhower for political opportunism in the 1952 election and the abandonment of Hungarian patriots who only sought to do America's bidding.

In general, such critics fall into two broad categories. The first explanation, which has dominated the literature since 1956, sees the administration's use of liberation rhetoric as empty and meaningless in that concrete policies and deeds did not follow mere words.<sup>1</sup> These authors often lament the failure of the United States to do more in the face of Soviet aggression. The second explanation, embodied in recent scholarship, is more nuanced and portrays the use of rhetoric in a slightly more favorable light. According to these analysts, the Eisenhower administration had great hopes for the impact of its rhetoric on Soviet power in Eastern Europe as part of a

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see A. W. DePorte, *Europe Between the Superpowers: The Enduring Balance*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Roger S. Whitcomb, *The Cold War in Retrospect: The Formative Years* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998); and Richard A. Melanson and David Mayers, ed., *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

broader political-psychological effort. These authors, however, conclude that enthusiasm for liberation rhetoric was diminished in the Hungarian case due to either concern about rising Soviet power<sup>2</sup> or bad timing, as the concurrent Suez Canal crisis deflected U.S. power in the crucial days of mid-autumn 1956.<sup>3</sup>

The foregoing dichotomy does not capture the subtlety of historical interpretations, however. Bennett Kovrig's work on the subject demonstrates this point. Despite the Eisenhower administration's best intentions, Kovrig condemns its timidity and caution given the provocative nature of its rhetoric. In Kovrig's analyses, the Eisenhower administration misused rhetoric and psychological operations because it refused to back those operations with force in the crucial days of October/November 1956. While conceding a host of reasons for the U.S. refusal to act, Kovrig notes the important role played by threat perception and the administration's belief that U.S. military power in Europe had declined relative to the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The most recent example of such analysis is Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000). See also László Borhi, "Rollback, Liberation, Containment or Inaction? U.S. Policy and Eastern Europe in the 1950s," *Journal of Cold War Studies* Volume 1, Number 3 (Fall 1999), 67-110.

<sup>3</sup>For example, see Richard B. Gregg, "The Rhetoric of Distancing: Eisenhower's Suez Crisis Speech, 31 October 1956" in Martin J. Medhurst, *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994); and Cole C. Kingseed, *Eisenhower and the Suez Crisis of 1956* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup>See Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991); and Kovrig, *Myth of*

These competing explanations of U.S. policy<sup>5</sup> warrant serious attention, but ultimately fail to consider the role Eisenhower and his closest advisors intended rhetoric and psychological operations to play in a long-term Cold War strategy. By their very approach, these authors assume a single issue, single country focus at odds with our broader understanding of the Eisenhower administration's foreign policy, as first suggested by Fred Greenstein more than 20 years ago.<sup>6</sup> This shortfall in existing accounts of U.S. policy warrants an examination of the relationship between political-psychological efforts, including rhetoric, and U.S. national security strategy during the Eisenhower administration.

### **RELATED LITERATURE**

In 1953, the Eisenhower administration developed a long-term strategy to put maximum pressure on the Soviet Union at a sustainable cost to the United States. The basis of this strategy and the thinking that went into it are the subject of Robert R. Bowie's and Richard H. Immerman's *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an*

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*Liberation: East Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics since 1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

<sup>5</sup>I thank Bernard I. Finel for suggesting a simple framework for the existing literature.

<sup>6</sup>Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982).

*Enduring Cold War Strategy.* Bowie and Immerman recount the “Solarium Exercises” and the assumptions on which the Eisenhower administration founded its Cold War foreign policies. Solarium—named for the sun room in the White House where the exercises were born in an off-the-record discussion on 8 May 1953—grew from a series of discussions between Eisenhower and his closest national security advisors on the best long-term strategy for the United States to pursue in the Cold War.

After considering options ranging from aggressive rollback to continued containment, the National Security Council adopted a containment strategy which recognized the mid-term military stalemate and relied on nuclear deterrence to prevent the outbreak of a major war. Despite prodding by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to consider rollback, the option never received serious consideration, in part because both Eisenhower and Dulles understood that even if a war to liberate Eastern Europe were successful, the means of modern war would destroy that which they sought to free.<sup>7</sup> The national security strategy of the United States was not limited to military means, however. The strategy also included economic, political, and psychological means of confronting the Soviet Union. “Liberation” still would play an important role, but Eisenhower envisioned a very different type of liberation from that which had rescued Europe from the Nazis eight years earlier, and rhetoric would be an important tool for

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<sup>7</sup>Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 158-177.

the task.

Psychological operations in the Eisenhower administration, however, are generally portrayed as the sum-total of U.S. policy—rather than as a tool of strategic policy—by those scholars to examine U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe and the Hungarian revolution in particular.<sup>8</sup> When these authors turn their attention to the events of 1956 in Hungary, they conclude that psychological operations in the first Eisenhower administration, and the associated rhetoric of liberation, were either cynical and irresponsible or sincere but deterred.

Scholars who depict cynicism in U.S. policy portray U.S. psychological operations and liberation rhetoric as meaningless and irresponsible. According to some, liberation was empty of meaning as a concrete policy option from the earliest days of the administration. In the early summer of 1953, popular unrest in East Germany provoked a crack-down by Soviet forces. As Roger Whitcomb notes,

In the face of these events, Eisenhower and Dulles took no action other than to ratchet up propaganda activities in support of the rebellion. But with the failure of the administration to do more than offer verbal support for the workers' uprising, the essential limits on what America could actually do became apparent. Thus, in Germany, the professed policy of liberation and rollback came to be seen for what it really was—empty rhetoric. Liberation politics had

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<sup>8</sup>For example, see Kovrig, *Myth of Liberation*; Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges*; Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Borhi, "Rollback, Liberation, Containment or Inaction? U.S. Policy and Eastern Europe in the 1950s;" 67-110; and Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956*.

failed its first significant test.<sup>9</sup>

Whitcomb's depiction is typical of those authors who condemn the Eisenhower administration's failure to marshal anything but rhetoric to aid East European uprisings.<sup>10</sup> These authors and commentators see rhetoric and "liberation politics" as salves for American public opinion, election year gimmicks, and shibboleths.

Ultimately, scholars who dismiss the use of political-psychological operations and liberation rhetoric provide a variety of explanations for the U.S. refusal to act in Hungary in 1956.<sup>11</sup> Bennett Kovrig outlines the case against U.S. intervention in Hungary in *The Myth of Liberation*. First, geography limited U.S. options because someone's sovereignty would have to be compromised to move U.S. forces into the country. Second, the United States would have had to intervene without Alliance

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<sup>9</sup>Whitcomb, *The Cold War in Retrospect*, 149.

<sup>10</sup>For example, see Melanson and Mayers, ed., *Reevaluating Eisenhower*, 4. Unlike Medhurst, Melanson and Mayers see rhetoric as only words, especially contrived for the 1952 presidential campaign. See Richard A. Melanson, "The Foundations of Eisenhower's Foreign Policy: Continuity, Community, and Consensus," in Melanson and Mayers, eds., *Reevaluating Eisenhower*, 31-64, especially 55.

<sup>11</sup>Even those scholars who examine the Eisenhower administration's conduct of foreign policy or international security in general—with no particular examination of psychological operations—offer explanations of U.S. inaction in 1956. These authors emphasize structural deterrents in the international system, including respect for the Soviet sphere of influence. See for example DePorte, *Europe Between the Superpowers*; and Agnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér, *From Yalta to Glasnost: The Dismantling of Stalin's Empire* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). Others point to the rift in NATO due to the Suez Canal crisis. As an example, see Cole C. Kingseed, *Eisenhower and the Suez Crisis of 1956* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 81.

participation. Third, U.S. conventional force strength was insufficient for the task at hand.<sup>12</sup>

There are other scholars, though, who do not dismiss U.S. psychological operations or rhetoric so quickly.<sup>13</sup> These scholars depict an Eisenhower administration more keenly aware of the value of words and the fragility of the Soviet system to psychological gambits. Recently, Gregory Mitrovich examined covert psychological operations in the Eisenhower administration in his work *Undermining the Kremlin*.<sup>14</sup> Unlike Kovrig, who suggests the decision not to intervene stemmed as much from the immediate circumstances in late October and early November 1956 as from permanent challenges like geography, Mitrovich concludes the Eisenhower administration backed away from provocation—and ultimately intervention—as perceptions of Soviet strength increased, notably with the advent of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, nearly two years before the crisis broke.<sup>15</sup>

Collectively, these “liberation” scholars provide a menu of explanations for the lack of a meaningful U.S. response in 1956 despite the incendiary public pronouncements of the first Eisenhower administration. They do so, however, without

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<sup>12</sup>Kovrig, *Myth of Liberation*, 189.

<sup>13</sup>See for example Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower's War of Words*.

<sup>14</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, especially 155-176.

examining the relationship between the strategy crafted for the United States by the Eisenhower administration, the use of psychological operations—including the use of liberation rhetoric—and U.S. non-intervention policy in Hungary.

In addition, very few studies have actually extended their scope beyond the events of 1956. Failure to do so ignores the opportunity of assessing the Hungarian revolution, and its political-psychological consequences, in context. The evidence will indicate that, in fact, the tragic events of 1956 were important positive developments from a “cold war” perspective.

### **THE PROCEDURE**

The foregoing literature review reveals a need for strategic-level analysis of the U.S. response to the 1956 Hungarian revolution. Such an examination of U.S. policy—before, during, and after the crisis—will consider whether there is a profound consistency in the Eisenhower administration’s policy toward Eastern Europe. This dissertation will consider the basis for U.S. policy in Hungary, the immediate response of the United States during the crucial weeks in late October and early November 1956, and the longer-term consequences for U.S. policy.

To analyze the Hungarian revolution from a strategic-level, this dissertation will begin with an examination of the beliefs and backgrounds of the two most



important strategic-decision makers at the time: President Dwight David Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Drawing on primary sources available from the Eisenhower Presidential Library and the Seeley G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, as well as the works of Eisenhower and Dulles themselves and the vast secondary literature on the subject, this portion of the dissertation will examine the broad outlines of Eisenhower's and Dulles' beliefs about the nature of international politics, the Cold War, and the most appropriate policies for the challenges of their time. Special attention will be paid to what each man meant when referring to a policy of "liberation."

The dissertation will then move to an examination of the international system itself, the structure of international politics, and the prevailing limits on U.S. action. This section of the dissertation will draw on the work of Bowie and Immerman to discuss the 1953 Solarium Exercises and the formulation of U.S. national security strategy in the first Eisenhower administration. In doing so, the dissertation will build on the work of Martin Medhurst to examine the use of rhetoric as a weapon in the Eisenhower administration and the practical application of "liberation" policies. While building on the work of other historians, this portion of the dissertation will also draw heavily on the holdings of the Eisenhower Library, the Mudd Library, and the National Archives.

With the foundation of U.S. policy established, this dissertation will trace the

development and modification of U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe, in general, and Hungary in particular between 1953 and 1956. This section will examine competing contemporaneous analyses of the superpower balance, the menu of options available to the Eisenhower administration, and the execution of policy.

Then, this dissertation will turn to the Hungarian revolution itself. After a brief examination of the roots of the uprising and the events which led to crisis, we will examine the immediate U.S. response to the revolution, the crackdown, and the interaction with the competing crisis in Suez. This discussion, based predominantly on primary sources, will seek to discern links between the specific actions of the administration during the revolution to the broad strategy adopted in 1953, and whether or not decision makers were aware of these links in 1956.

Then, the dissertation will examine the impact of the revolution on U.S. policies in Eastern Europe. Specifically, it will study the effect on U.S. goals, policy, and strategy as well as the effect on international information programs, administration rhetoric, intelligence estimates, defense planning, and the superpower relationship. This discussion will be based primarily on original sources, including documents from the Eisenhower Library, the Mudd Library, and the National Archives.

Such a study will complement, amend, and correct the existing literature on the subject. In the first place, the dissertation will complement the existing literature by raising analysis to the strategic level where long-term goals and value judgements

shaped the Eisenhower administration's analysis of the Soviet threat and the best means to combat it. Secondly, this dissertation demonstrates a close relationship between U.S. policy before the revolution and the decision-making of U.S. policy makers during the crisis. Ultimately, this dissertation has the potential to correct some aspects of the existing literature. U.S. policy toward the Hungarian revolution has not been analyzed from a strategic perspective. Here, we will consider it in light of the long-term strategy adopted in 1953—a strategy that emphasized the long-term strengths of the United States and the mid-term military stalemate of the Cold War—to balance the competing explanations of U.S. inaction which cite the Suez Crisis, spheres of influence, the regional military balance, or betrayal by the United States. Only through an understanding of Eisenhower's strategy can one fully understand U.S. action (and inaction) in Hungary.

At its most basic level, this dissertation relies on an interpretation of Eisenhower and his administration as rationally motivated actors. Such an assumption is justified given what we already know about Eisenhower's decision making in both the Second World War and the presidency. Still, critics will charge that the rhetoric of liberation was politically inspired by the needs of the 1952 presidential campaign. Such an assertion cannot be discounted. In fact, the Republican party went to great lengths to craft an activist foreign policy that would distinguish their policy proposals as morally superior and more effective than the policies of their Democratic

counterparts. They appear to have been successful. When the 1952 vote-counting was done, the Republican party had undermined a traditional Democratic constituency, in the words of Kovrig, “reducing that party’s Polish vote from 70 to around 50 percent.”<sup>16</sup>

Still, two important factors suggest that Eisenhower’s strategy and the use of rhetoric must be viewed from a rational perspective. First, Eisenhower’s desire for an activist foreign policy was not an election year gimmick. In fact, he chose to run as a Republican in 1952 because he feared other likely Republican candidates, notably Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, would return the United States to its isolationist tradition. Given Eisenhower’s experience in two world wars, he was unwilling to see the country withdraw again from the world it had helped create. Second, as a candidate, Eisenhower urged his closest advisors and political allies to carefully distinguish between the rhetoric of peaceful liberation and any promise of armed liberation. Therefore, even in the heat of the 1952 presidential campaign, Eisenhower sought to avoid over-stating the nature of U.S. liberation policy. This distinction was not always clear to everyone, then or now. This dissertation will, then, also seek to clarify the meaning of liberation in the policies and rhetoric of the Eisenhower administration.

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<sup>16</sup>Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 48. It should be noted, however, Eisenhower won by an enormous landslide majority and it is not clear how much of this shift in party loyalty resulted from the politics of liberation or General Eisenhower’s personal appeal.

Fundamentally, this dissertation will analyze—not judge—the Eisenhower administration’s policies in Hungary based on strategy, not the rhetoric which formed a piece of that strategy. In doing so, it will consider the implications of rhetoric and propaganda for policy and probe the self-enforcing potential of a strategy which may inform elite opinion and policy choices by its very means.

## Chapter 2 Eisenhower and Dulles

“No nation’s foreign policy can be ascertained merely from what its officials say. More important are the philosophy of its leaders and the actual manifestations of that philosophy in what is done. By putting such pieces together a reliable conclusion can usually be reached.”<sup>1</sup>

John Foster Dulles, 1946

Dwight David Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles were the products of different worlds. At 19, Eisenhower knew the fields and back roads in and around Abilene, Kansas. He and his older brother had agreed to take turns paying the other’s way through college, two years at a time. While his brother studied, Eisenhower worked at the Belle Springs Creamery in his home-town. Dulles, in contrast, at the age of 19 took leave of his studies at Princeton University and traveled with his grandfather, John Watson Foster—who had served as secretary of state to President William Henry Harrison—as a secretary-clerk on the Chinese delegation to the 1907 Hague Peace Conference.<sup>2</sup>

The future president, a product of the American plains, and his secretary of

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<sup>1</sup>John Foster Dulles, “Thoughts on Soviet Foreign Policy and What to Do About It,” *Life*, 3 June 1946, 113.

<sup>2</sup>Anthony Clark Arend, *Pursuing a Just and Durable Peace: John Foster Dulles and International Organization* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 5; Ronald W. Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (New York: The Free Press, 1982), 10-11.

state, a product of the Eastern establishment, had very little in common in their early adult years. Much would change in their lives and in the history of the world over the next 40 years. Ultimately, they formed the closest of professional relationships, forged upon a common understanding of the world, the role of the United States in it, and the best means to prevail in a struggle against a formidable foe.

This chapter will examine the understanding of international challenges each brought to their common relationship, the campaign of 1952, and the offices of President of the United States and Secretary of State, respectively. In fact, Eisenhower and Dulles were of like mind on fundamental issues in the early Cold War. They both believed the United States should draw upon its own spiritual strength to play a dynamic role in the world. By setting a positive example to the rest of the world, pursuing a policy of positive action short of war, and building on bipartisan support at home, the United States would not merely contain Soviet power, but begin a journey on the path to victory in the Cold War. In short, they advocated a grand strategy of which psychological operations would be one part.

### **EISENHOWER'S VIEW OF THE WORLD**

Eisenhower had a well developed understanding of the world and the problems facing the United States prior to his decision to run for president. As a career-soldier,

Eisenhower had seen service around the world. Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, he served in the Phillipines as an aide to Douglas MacArthur. During the war itself, he rose to Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces, overseeing the invasion of France and the Western assault on Germany. After the war, he served as Army Chief of Staff, President of Columbia University, during which time he served as de-facto chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and then returned to active military service as the first Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. These experiences gave him a first-hand knowledge of the international system, and specifically the military element of the early Cold War, unmatched by his political rivals.

### **Eisenhower's Analysis of the Soviet Threat**

In the years between the end of World War II and his campaign for the presidency, Eisenhower's estimation of the Soviet Union evolved from a position of cautious optimism about great power cooperation, to outright concern over Soviet intentions.<sup>3</sup> Eisenhower resisted, however, alarmist calls about the military threat of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, he noted that the Soviets found success not in open aggression but in subversion and political warfare. According to Chester J. Pach, Jr., and Elmo Richardson, "In 1947, for example, [Eisenhower] chided a planning committee of the

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<sup>3</sup>See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 1 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 447-454 and 467-469. See also Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower* (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation, 1999), 368-371.



Joint Chiefs of Staff for recommending ‘a . . . virtual mobilization for war’ to counter Soviet ambitions. Instead, he advocated a program of preparedness that focused on ‘strengthening the economic and social dikes against Soviet communism rather than . . . preparing for a possibly eventual, but not yet inevitable war’.”<sup>4</sup> After President Harry S Truman pronounced U.S. support for free people threatened by communist subversion and aggression everywhere, Eisenhower expressed concern that the Truman Doctrine would prove unsustainable. According to Pach and Richardson, Eisenhower “thought that the United States should try to head off international crises through ‘positive, forehanded, and preventative action.’ Otherwise a series of costly international emergencies would overtax the American economy as well as increase Soviet power. Meeting the Soviet challenge, in short, required balancing military strength against economic capacity.”<sup>5</sup> Fred Greenstein quoted an Eisenhower diary entry from January 1949 which read, “We must hold our position of strength without bankrupting ourselves.”<sup>6</sup>

Stephen Ambrose, writing “in the parlance of the day,” called Eisenhower

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<sup>4</sup>Chester J. Pach, Jr., and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* Revised Edition (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 12.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>6</sup>Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982), 48n.

“soft’ on the Soviets, much softer than Truman,”<sup>7</sup> but also “running parallel” to the president’s opinions.<sup>8</sup> By September 1947, Eisenhower’s opinions had evolved, and he observed in his diary that “Russia is definitely out to communize the world. . . . It promotes starvation, unrest, anarchy, in the certainty that these are the breeding grounds for the growth of their damnable philosophy.”<sup>9</sup> Eisenhower agreed that the United States should confront Soviet ambitions, but he sought to move beyond the Truman administration’s policy of containment. He believed the United States should pursue policies “over the long run to win back areas that Russia had already overrun.”<sup>10</sup> This early support for a policy of liberation dovetailed with then General Eisenhower’s support for non-military economic and political assistance to Western Europe.<sup>11</sup> Together, they demonstrate Eisenhower’s view that the struggle with the Soviet Union had both military and non-military elements.

### **Eisenhower and the Perils of Modern War**

Eisenhower eschewed the unnecessary use of force. He had a deeply held

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<sup>7</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 227.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in *ibid.*, 233.

<sup>10</sup>Quoted in *ibid.*, 233.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

conviction—shared by John Foster Dulles, as we shall see—that modern war was so destructive as to have virtually no practical value. In a 1946 letter to his father-in-law, Eisenhower wrote of his concern over:

the readiness of people to discuss war as a means of advancing peace. To me this is a contradiction in terms . . . I believe that another war, even if resulting in the complete defeat of the enemy, would bring in its wake such grave disorder, dissatisfaction, and physical destruction that we would be almost certain to lose that for which we fought—namely, the system of free enterprise and individual liberty.<sup>12</sup>

In 1950, Eisenhower delivered an address, as president of Columbia University, to assembled faculty and graduate students of the university, entitled “World Peace—A Balance Sheet.”<sup>13</sup> The speech provides an insight into Eisenhower’s own thinking on the great issues of the day—all the more so because this speech predates his association with Dulles and can be ascribed, therefore, with greater certainty to Eisenhower than the campaign speeches of 1952.

Echoing his earlier private comments, the general noted that, “After the world-wide devastation that grows daily more possible, none may be able to distinguish between the victor and the vanquished of a future conflict.”<sup>14</sup> Robert Bowie and

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<sup>12</sup>Quoted in Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 1, 450.

<sup>13</sup>The text of the speech is published in *Peace with Justice: Selected Addresses of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 1-24.

<sup>14</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, “World Peace—A Balance Sheet,” *Peace with Justice*, 11. For a concise discussion of Eisenhower’s post-war views on the limited utility of armed force, see William B. Pickett, *Eisenhower Decides to Run: Presidential Politics and Cold War Strategy* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), 9-17.

Richard Immerman have provided additional insight:

Eisenhower arrived at this point of view incrementally and logically. The lesson he learned from reading Clausewitz's *On War* three times as a young officer in Panama serving under Fox Connor was that the maxim that war is but an extension of politics by other means must not be divorced from the parallel one: the means must be in proportion to the ends. What Eisenhower came to realize was that the nuclear revolution made this proportional relationship impossible. As he wrote to his son, John S. D. Eisenhower, as early as 1946, 'The readiness of people to discuss war as a means of advancing peace . . . is a contradiction of terms.'<sup>15</sup>

It would be inaccurate, however, to portray Eisenhower as a pacifist. In his address at Columbia, Eisenhower looked back critically on Munich, as many of his generation did, noting it "was a greater blow to humanity than the atomic bomb at Hiroshima."<sup>16</sup> The great fault in Munich, according to Eisenhower, was not that it bought peace, but that it had done so at the cost of the freedom of millions. He said,

Suffocation of human freedom among a once free people, however quietly and peacefully accomplished, is more far-reaching in its implications and its effects on their future than the destruction of their homes, industrial centers, and transportation facilities. Out of rubble heaps, willing hands can rebuild a better city; but out of freedom lost can stem only generations of hate and bitter struggle and brutal oppression.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 48.

<sup>16</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, "World Peace—A Balance Sheet," *Peace with Justice*, 2-3.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

In short, Eisenhower asserted that there were some things worth fighting for: “Far better to risk a war of possible annihilation than grasp a peace which would be the certain extinction of free man’s ideas and ideals.”<sup>18</sup> His recollection of events in the 1930s was laced with clear parallels to contemporaneous developments in Eastern Europe—references not lost on an educated audience in 1950.

Eisenhower was not naive about the nature of global politics. Throughout the period between the war and his presidency, he continued to define a role for U.S. military power, even short of war. In 1951, for example, Eisenhower told members of the media that an Alliance-wide military buildup would prompt the Soviet Union to consider disarmament proposals seriously.<sup>19</sup>

Still, Eisenhower rejected the idea that provocative acts, particularly those which risked general war, could further U.S. aims.<sup>20</sup> For example, in reflecting on his post-election trip to Korea, Eisenhower noted the desire of some, including Korean President Syngman Rhee, to launch a massive offensive to rid the peninsula of Chinese troops. Eisenhower knew such an effort would require attacks across the Yalu River into China, risking escalation of the conflict. “At this time—December 1952—,” he wrote, “it had been tacitly accepted by both sides, including all of the Allied

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>19</sup>Herbert S. Parmet, *Eisenhower and the American Crusades* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 43.

<sup>20</sup>See Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 1, 512-513.

governments providing troops for the war, that we were fighting defensively and would take no risks of turning the conflict into a global war, which many feared would occur should we undertake offensive operations on a scale sufficient to win a decisive victory.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Eisenhower and The Role of Political-Psychological Tools**

Eisenhower favored action over stagnation or reaction. By the middle of 1942, Russian pleas for assistance were growing louder each day. Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall arrived in London in late-July to discuss the prospects of an attack on the French coast at the earliest possible date to relieve pressure on the Russians.

Eisenhower was skeptical that such an assault would provide any relief on the Eastern front. However, he and General Mark Clark, the commander of the U.S. corps in England at the time, finally told Marshall “that if the Russians were in bad shape and that an attack on the French coast would have a material effect in assisting the Russians, we should attempt the job at the earliest possible date—regardless.”<sup>22</sup>

Neither Eisenhower nor Clark were sure of success, but they believed they would “have

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<sup>21</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1963), 95, emphasis mine.

<sup>22</sup>Dwight Eisenhower, 22 July 1942, in Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1981), 72-73.

a fighting chance.”<sup>23</sup>

The point here is not that Eisenhower was sympathetic to Soviet pleas for assistance or that he was a good soldier willing to take on the impossible if ordered to do so. It is, rather, that Eisenhower understood, years before even considering a run for the presidency, the psychological importance of positive action. Eisenhower confided in his diary:

We have sat up nights on the problems involved and have tried to open our eyes clearly to see all the difficulties and not to be blinded by a mere passion for doing something. However, this last factor alone is worth something. The British and American armies and the British and American people need to have the feeling that they are attempting something positive. We must not degenerate into a passive and mental attitude.<sup>24</sup>

Dulles would share Eisenhower’s appreciation for positive action. It would help shape their approach to the Soviet challenge.

Beyond the concerns of morale, Eisenhower also understood the power of perception. In late 1946, as the United States wrestled with a coal shortage and the prospect of using the Army to keep social peace, Eisenhower confided in his diary his own discouragement over the country’s inability to settle its internal economic problems. The general understood the international ramifications of domestic U.S. problems, noting, “If we are not healthy, we can communicate no health to the

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

world.”<sup>25</sup>

Eisenhower referred to political-psychological strength in almost religious terms: he praised the spiritual strength of the British people in the summer of 1940, and argued it was that strength that had enabled Britain to withstand the withering assault of Hitler’s *Luftwaffe*. He noted the debt owed to the British people by the rest of the free-world: “Their decision to fight on gave freedom a new lease on life and gave all free peoples more space in time to destroy a vicious dictator and regain an opportunity to work out an enduring peace.”<sup>26</sup> Eisenhower used this recollection of British resistance and spirit in the face of intimidating odds to call attention to the pessimism he saw in the West and the fear of Soviet power. He recalled how history was replete with examples of would-be despots who relied on brute-power to achieve their aims. Their tenure, however, was always limited, said Eisenhower. In the face of these historic challenges, countries must prepare for war, but pursue peace.<sup>27</sup>

### **Eisenhower and Grand Strategy**

From Eisenhower’s pre-presidential speeches, diaries, and writings, we see the beginnings of a grand-strategic approach that would shape his presidency. His

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<sup>25</sup>Eisenhower, 2 December 1946, in Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries*, 139.

<sup>26</sup>Eisenhower, “World Peace—A Balance Sheet,” 4.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 5-6.



concerns were not limited to military preparedness or national might, but to the broadest measures of power, including political-psychological factors.<sup>28</sup>

Eisenhower believed that the United States also had to provide an example to the rest of the world, rekindling its own spiritual strength and purpose, and eschewing the temptations of ostentation and consumption. Perhaps responding to a growing isolationist sentiment in the United States, Eisenhower said in his speech at Columbia that peace would require U.S. leadership, for no other country could marshal the “resources, stamina and will needed to lead what at times may be a costly and exhausting effort.”<sup>29</sup> He asked, rhetorically, “Unless we rekindle our own understanding, can we hope to make Marxist devotees see that things of the spirit—justice, freedom, equality—are the elements that make important the satisfaction of man’s creative needs?”<sup>30</sup> Later in the same address he proclaimed, “For without the example of strength, prosperity, and progress in a free America, there is nothing to inspire men to victory in today’s struggle between freedom and

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<sup>28</sup>According to Abbot Washburn, a White House aide to C.D. Jackson, Eisenhower’s primary advisor on political-psychological warfare, Eisenhower’s interest in psychological operations stemmed from the General’s experience with them during the Second World War. In brief, Eisenhower believed they had shortened the war and saved lives. Abbot Washburn, phone interview with author, March 20, 2003.

<sup>29</sup>Eisenhower, “World Peace—A Balance Sheet,” in *Peace with Justice*, 10.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

totalitarianism.”<sup>31</sup>

Eisenhower did not believe peace could be achieved in the signing of treaties or in a thunder-strike of international understanding. “Peace,” he said, “is more the product of our day-to-day living than of a spectacular program, intermittently executed.”<sup>32</sup> Ultimately, Eisenhower saw world opinion as the key to international peace: “Neither palsied by fear nor duped by dreams but strong in the rightness of our purpose, we can then place our case and cause before the bar of world opinion—history’s final arbiter between nations.”<sup>33</sup>

### **DULLES’S VIEW OF THE WORLD**

John Foster Dulles spent a considerable amount of his life and energy dedicated to examining the problems confronting the United States and the international community. Prior to the outbreak of World War II in Europe, Dulles published a book which stressed that international peace did not mean blind defense of the status quo. True peace required a mechanism for peaceful change. Absent such a mechanism, peace would always be threatened by any minor challenge to the prevailing order. In

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 24.

1938, Dulles was specifically concerned with the coming war in Europe. Like so many others, it seems the future Secretary of State believed Germany should have been allowed to regain some of its dignity after Versailles. When he wrote the book, he was not aware of all that would transpire in the coming seven years, but he was focused less on the immediate causes of dispute in the 1930s than on a systematic examination of international relations.<sup>34</sup>

Dulles maintained his interpretation of the relationship between war, peace, and change, however, when he published a new work in 1950. In his second volume, Dulles was concerned about the Soviet Union's threat to the United States. Fundamentally, Dulles viewed the Cold War as a battle for hearts and minds: propaganda was the weapon of choice for the Soviet Union, and should be for the United States as well. Nothing was beyond symbolic meaning in the Cold War, and everything would be given such meaning by the Soviet Union if the United States did not learn to take the initiative in a battle of ideas.

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<sup>34</sup> Dulles did not specifically address the issue of appeasement in his 1939 book. The issue for the future Secretary of State was what mechanisms should the international community provide to allow for change in the international system without fundamentally upsetting the system itself. The nuances of this issue will be discussed subsequently. As Richard Immerman has noted, Dulles was mindful of the culpability of the nations who sought vengeance at Versailles, but he condemned resolutely the aggression of Germany, Italy, and Japan throughout the 1930s. See Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 19.

## **Dulles's Analysis of the Soviet Threat**

Dulles studied the Soviet Union, its ideology, and its vulnerabilities. His book, *War or Peace*,<sup>35</sup> examined the international system, the history of the inter-war years, the Second World War, and the emergence of the newest peril to the United States, Soviet Communism. His argument was organized logically and clearly, the work of an active mind and a trained lawyer. He stated the problem posed to the United States, in other words the danger posed by Soviet Communism.<sup>36</sup> He explained and considered the efficacy of current U.S. policies to confront the problem.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Dulles concluded his book with corrective remedies for U.S. policy.<sup>38</sup> The book was, in short, an indictment of Soviet Communism and the measures taken by the United States to counter its adversary. As Richard Immerman noted, a policy of containment, “by definition . . . a commitment to defending the status quo. . . . violated Dulles’ dictum that the dynamic triumph over the static.”<sup>39</sup> In Immerman’s words:

For people’s whose priority was recovery and security, in other words for Europeans, such a violation was acceptable as a pragmatic expedient. But it was not acceptable, even temporarily, to the peoples of

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<sup>35</sup>John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950).

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 1-21.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 23-172.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 173-266.

<sup>39</sup>Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 31.

Asia and elsewhere in the developing world, to those for whom the status quo meant colonial subjugation. Containment offered nothing dynamic, positive, or 'spiritual' to satisfy the nationalist aspirations and economic grievances of subjugated peoples. This allowed the Soviets to masquerade as champions of freedom and progress. . . .<sup>40</sup>

The exposition of the problem by Dulles featured a call to peaceful action.

Dulles noted that man had long exerted great effort in times of war. His book, sounded the trumpets of action for peace.<sup>41</sup> In other words, Dulles believed the United States should mount a campaign for peace worthy of a great adversary. His assessment of the Soviet threat de-emphasized the military challenge,<sup>42</sup> focusing, instead, on Communist methods, particularly the use of propaganda and mis-information.<sup>43</sup> Time and again, the work returned to consider the irregular means of communist aggression: political subversion, information campaigns, rhetoric, and infiltration.<sup>44</sup> The Soviets, he argued, preferred to promote class warfare. In that pursuit, "Soviet Communism has developed over the years a world-wide organization thoroughly trained in the arts of propaganda,

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>41</sup>John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, 3-4

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>44</sup>Examples can be found throughout the work. For a consideration of the value of the United Nations in the face of propaganda, see John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, 43-44, and 66-67; on the liability of European colonialism in the face of Soviet propaganda, see pages 75-76; and for the value of the Marshall Plan in the face of Soviet propaganda, see pages 100-105.

penetration, espionage, sabotage, and subversive warfare.”<sup>45</sup>

While he never used the expression, it is clear from his writing in *War or Peace* that John Foster Dulles conceived of the Cold War as a battle for the hearts and minds of people around the world. In discussing the United Nations, he noted its value as “an influence far more persuasive than military force; namely the force of world opinion.”<sup>46</sup> In considering the likelihood of a Soviet military offensive in Europe, he discounted the notion as foolish when the Soviets were “making vast gains in a ‘cold’ war where their techniques were as superior to ours as guns are to bows and arrows.”<sup>47</sup> In John Foster Dulles’ mind, the Cold War was a political battle to be waged for political ends via political means short of the use of force. Propaganda, rhetoric, and symbolism were immensely important to such a struggle.

### **Dulles’s Views on the Perils of Modern War**

Similar to Eisenhower, Dulles concluded that the Cold War would have to be waged by means short of the use of force. Even before the advent of nuclear arms, the future secretary of state expressed his belief that modern war was too destructive to serve as an effective means of advancing national interests. Written prior to the Second World

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<sup>45</sup>John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, 113.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 115.

War, his first book, *War, Peace, and Change*,<sup>48</sup> was an effort to understand the faults in the international system that led some to resort to force. In short, he concluded that if the international system did not allow for peaceful change, war would emerge as the only means available to address grievances. He wrote, “The peoples of the world emerged from the World War with the clear conviction that war in its new character was no longer tolerable. . . . Despite the League of Nations and the Pact of Paris the war system still prevails and all peoples live under its menace. There has been no alteration of the conviction that the character of war has so changed that it should no longer be tolerated.”<sup>49</sup> He went on to discuss the challenge of replacing force in the international system. He wrote,

Such a result cannot be accomplished by the stroke of a pen or by the wish of man’s heart. We cannot remove force and leave a vacuum. We must first know the nature and significance of that which we would remove. When this has been determined there then arises the task of reorganizing our society, within the limits permitted by human nature, so as to substitute for force some other procedures.<sup>50</sup>

In this brief passage, Dulles demonstrated his conviction that wars had become so costly they could not be pursued and suggested that there were other mechanisms which might replace the use of force in the international system.

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<sup>48</sup>John Foster Dulles, *War Peace and Change* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939).

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

## **Dulles and The Role of Political-Psychological Tools**

Like Eisenhower, Dulles displayed a keen appreciation for the power of perceptions and symbolism. In December 1947, he and his wife traveled through France to learn first-hand the political and economic situation. He found a once-great nation economically prostrate and on the verge of political collapse. The train which carried him and his wife was rerouted due to sabotaged tracks.<sup>51</sup> In Paris, the City of Lights, he found darkness as utilities produced no electricity and running water was not to be found. Industry “was at a standstill.”<sup>52</sup>

In Washington, Congress debated the passage of an Interim Aid bill which would provide assistance to France. As passage neared, word spread that Congress would attach conditions to the bill requiring specific actions from France. The rumors worried the French government, for they gave credibility to Communist propaganda asserting the United States sought to reduce France to colonial status.<sup>53</sup> Dulles wrote, “I got a telephone connection to my brother, Allen, in the United States, and through him conveyed to Senator Vandenberg and to Representative Herter an idea of the critical nature of the situation.”<sup>54</sup> As a result, the Interim Aid legislation passed

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<sup>51</sup>John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, 106.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*



without conditions. While Dulles' account may be self-centered, it does reveal his sensitivity to the power of perception and the danger of propaganda.

Like Eisenhower, Dulles saw the Cold War as a war. There would be a winner, but in the interim, bipartisanship in foreign policy was as crucial in the post-war years as they had been during the Second World War. "Winning a war is important," wrote Dulles. "But winning peace is equally important. Also the winning of a 'cold' war is as important as the winning of a hot war."<sup>55</sup>

When he turned to his assessment of U.S. policies toward the Soviet Union since 1945, Dulles depicted a Soviet Union which had made great gains since the end of the Second World War, consolidating and strengthening its position throughout Eastern Europe and in Asia as well. Dulles saw potential dangers within Communism itself that might threaten the Soviet hold.<sup>56</sup> But ultimately, he concluded, U.S. policies up to that point had been insufficient to weaken the Soviet hold on its satellites.<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, in the Soviets' own methods, as seen by Dulles, lay the roots of a means to counter Communist strengths. Soviet methods, wrote Dulles, consisted of a "combination of fraudulent propaganda, terrorism, class war and civil war, and finally a cutting off of the people from contact with *outside sources that might give them*

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 163.

*spiritual encouragement and hope for ultimate freedom from despotism.*”<sup>58</sup> With the benefit of hind-sight, we see in this passage the suggestion that means should be exploited to maintain contact with those who might thirst for freedom within Soviet-dominated lands. If the Soviet Union sought to sever contact between the areas it dominated and the rest of the world, the United States should strive to maintain contact on its own in order to preserve a spirit of resistance in hopes of eventual liberation. In his examination of post-war successes and failures, success against Communism in France, Italy, and Berlin stemmed from the spirit and desires of the people most threatened, “and because other free peoples showed a spirit of solidarity with them.”<sup>59</sup> In other words, post-War political victories in Western Europe owed as much to American solidarity and moral support as to the strength of American arms.

Dulles saw many advantages going to the Soviet Union: communism benefitted from a global propaganda effort with universal appeal; the Communist Party itself was organized for indirect political action; and, perhaps most importantly, Soviet Communism had “the advantage of the offensive . . . [and] no counteroffensive to fear, either in propaganda or in ‘cold war’.”<sup>60</sup> Like Eisenhower, Dulles believed the United States must initiate a program of positive action.

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 163-164, emphasis mine.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 155.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 165.

Dulles believed the primary threat from the Soviet Union came in the form of ideas. He wrote, “Marxism is materialistic and atheistic. But the Communist party sees clearly the power of ideas, and the leaders attach great importance to slogans that appeal to men everywhere.”<sup>61</sup> He believed that the Soviet Communist leadership’s “. . . propaganda [was] a method of warfare.”<sup>62</sup> In this view, the division of Europe was more than a military issue. To Dulles, the Iron Curtain’s imperviousness to information and factual news was “an essential technique, not merely to cut off the peoples behind it from contact with the outer world, but also to prevent those outside, who are slated to be fooled by Communist propaganda, from learning the truth.”<sup>63</sup>

Ultimately, the Soviets were granted the offensive because neither the United States nor its allies had any means of taking the initiative.<sup>64</sup> “Soviet Communism,” wrote Dulles,

is free to concentrate upon the offensive and to pick the time and place for decisive action because it does not have to worry about any counteroffensives, even though, within the existing area of its control there are weak spots. Those whom Soviet Communism is fighting are tied down to defensive action on battlegrounds selected by Soviet Communism.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 170-171.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 171.

In Dulles' estimation, the problem for the United States—and other democratic societies—was that they were either at war or at peace. The Cold War, in his view, was neither war nor peace, but something in between, and military preparation alone would not suffice. Dulles was resoundingly critical of the militarization of U.S. policy. “We are devoting billions in money,” he wrote, “and our highest talent in preparation for a fighting war—a war that may never come. Meanwhile, we are being encircled and the strength of our society is being undermined by the ‘cold war’ that is here, and which could finally defeat us.”<sup>66</sup>

When he turned to prescriptions for U.S. policy, Dulles had laid the foundation for a policy of action, primarily in the political-psychological realm. “It is time to think in terms of taking the offensive in the world struggle for freedom and of rolling back the engulfing tide of despotism,” wrote Dulles. To win the Cold War, Dulles called for bipartisanship in U.S. foreign policy, a revitalized United Nations, greater Western military unity, new policies in Asia, and the development of non-military capabilities.<sup>67</sup> As part of this last need, Dulles urged a rethinking of reliance on military means, and called for “an overall strategy that takes into account of all the realities, the nonmilitary as well as the military.”<sup>68</sup> In part, Dulles' call for non-military means of confronting

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 175-176.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 176.

the Soviet Union stemmed from his belief that absent viable alternatives, some in the West would ultimately conclude that a shooting war with the Soviet Union was the only solution. “But another world war,” Dulles concluded, “whatever the military outcome, would make it almost certain that totalitarianism of some kind would be the victor over any survivors.”<sup>69</sup>

But in considering a propaganda or political offensive, Dulles was unclear in *War or Peace* as to whether the effort would be aimed for the prospective prey of Soviet Communism or the already captive. He wrote:

At the moment we have little in the way of influence to project into the vast fields which lie beyond the reach of our military or economic power. We are not generating the dynamic faith, the ideas, needed to touch the spirits and to arouse the hopes of the peoples of the world who are the prey of predatory Communism. If we would break the ever-tightening noose, there is need for spiritual qualities which can give our influence greater scope.<sup>70</sup>

The subsequent history suggests Dulles was sincere in his prescriptions for U.S. action. The call for bipartisanship was furthered by Eisenhower’s decision to run for the presidency, effectively blocking the isolationist wing of the Republican party from gaining power. Dulles’ desire for enhanced world organization and regional organizations took form in the proliferation of security pacts during the Eisenhower administration. Dulles’ desire for greater Western unity found expression in the

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 176-177.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 177.

Eisenhower administration's early and prolonged support for European integration. In Asia, Eisenhower presided over the end of the war in Korea.

Dulles' final prescription, non-military techniques to confront Soviet Communism, would be crucial. In his twentieth chapter, "New Techniques," the future-secretary of state detailed his assessment of Soviet weaknesses and the means the West might pursue to exploit them. The West's initial problem was its inability to maintain contact with those people captive behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>71</sup> But despite external appearances, Dulles believed there were areas of rot within the Soviet system. For example, he cited the reception of German forces in the Ukraine during the early weeks of the Second World War, where they were welcomed as liberators. The operation of the Soviet Union as a police state indicated to Dulles that tension was inherent within the system. The Orthodox faith was repressed. He estimated that there were 15 million prisoners in Soviet concentration camps. In Eastern Europe, Dulles noted the influence of the Roman Catholic church, and the love of country which would breed hatred of Russian domination.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe showed particular signs of discord: Russians had to run the police organs in Czechoslovakia; Tito had rejected Stalinism; and refugees poured out of the

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<sup>71</sup>John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, 242.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 243.

Soviet zones of Germany.<sup>73</sup>

Dulles wanted to exploit these problems within the Soviet system. He wrote:

Even today, the Communist structure is overextended, over rigid, and ill founded. It could be shaken if the difficulties that are latent were activated.

‘Activation’ does not mean armed revolt. The people have no arms, and violent revolt would be futile. Indeed, it would be worse than futile, for it would precipitate massacre. We do not want to do to the captive peoples what the Soviet Union did to the Polish patriots in Warsaw under General Bor. They were incited by the Russians to revolt against the Germans, and the Soviet army stood nearby, content to watch their extermination by the Germans, feeling that, in the process, both Nazi Germany and free Poland were being weakened. We have no desire to weaken the Soviet Union at the cost of the lives of those who are our primary concern.

There is, however, a duty to prevent whole peoples from being broken in mind and in spirit, which is what Soviet Communism seeks.<sup>74</sup>

With such an appeal, the task in Dulles’ mind was to break the Soviet Union’s monopoly on information behind the Iron Curtain. He blasted the West’s lack of preparedness in this area:

Soviet Communism, as we have seen, has developed both organization and techniques. It has its schools for agitators; it has its radios; it has its influence, open and secret, in the press, radio, and movies of the free world; it has its trained agents and its spies.

We on our side have few ways of getting ideas or information behind the Iron Curtain or finding out what goes on there. We have spent many billions of dollars during the last five years getting ready for a possible war of bombs, planes, and guns; but we have spent little on *the war of ideas* in which we are deeply engaged and are suffering

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 247.

reverses that cannot be canceled out by any amount of military power.<sup>75</sup>

Dulles was unsatisfied with the organization of the U.S. government to conduct information campaigns. In his opinion, the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe were insufficient to the task at hand.<sup>76</sup> He called for an information czar within the U.S. government, noting the importance of giving “high authority and strategic direction to the efforts to frustrate the fraudulent propaganda by which Soviet Communism softens-up its intended victim, and the terrorism and false propaganda by which it consolidates its hold.”<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, Dulles sought to exploit the weaknesses within the Soviet system by applying pressure to the regime.<sup>78</sup> He wrote:

The despotism of Soviet Communism needs to be subjected to the pressures which would come if we spread everywhere truth and hope and the conviction that the American people are uncompromisingly dedicated to the cause of human liberty and will not be willing to sacrifice that cause in an effort to make a self-serving ‘deal’ with the despot master of the captive peoples.

Under the pressure of faith and hope and peaceful works, the rigid, top-heavy and over-extended structure of Communist rule could readily come into a state of collapse.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 249, emphasis mine.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 249-250.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 250.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 252.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.



For Dulles, writing in 1950, “liberation” was not about physical liberation, but rather a “world battle to liberate the souls and minds of men.”<sup>80</sup>

But to successfully marshal the energies to sustain a political offensive against the global threat of Communism, Dulles believed the American spirit must be re-awakened. Dulles envisioned a type of spiritual re-awakening, hearkening back to the example the country’s founders thought the United States should be to the rest of the world. “The ‘conduct and example’ of which our founders wrote are no longer a beacon light to those who live in the deep shadows cast by a mighty despotism. We have no message to send to the captive peoples to keep their hope and faith alive.”<sup>81</sup> The first order of business then, was to revitalize the spirit of the American experiment. “There is no use having more and louder Voices of America,” Dulles concluded, “unless we have something to say that is more persuasive than anything yet said.”<sup>82</sup>

### **Dulles and Grand Strategy**

In May 1952, Dulles published an article in *Life* magazine, “A Policy of Boldness.”<sup>83</sup> This openly critical article rejected the foreign policies of the Truman administration as

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 250.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 259.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 261.

<sup>83</sup>John Foster Dulles, “A Policy of Boldness,” *Life*, 19 May 1952, 146-157.

needlessly costly and unproductive. After retracing the U.S. reactions to Soviet post-war initiatives in places like Greece, Turkey, Western Europe, and Korea, Dulles rejected “containment” as too reactive, of indefinite duration, and insufficient purpose.<sup>84</sup> He urged action, quoting Demosthenes’ address to the Athenians in 351 BC:

Shame on you, Athenians . . . for not wishing to understand that in war one must not allow oneself to be at the command of events, but to forestall them. . . . You make war against Philip like a barbarian when he wrestles. . . . If you hear that Philip has attacked in the Chersonese, you send help there; if he is at Thermopylae, you run there; and if he turns aside you follow him to right and left, as if you were acting on his orders. Never a fixed plan, never any precautions; you wait for bad news before you act.<sup>85</sup>

The first issue to be addressed, in Dulles’ mind, was the military balance. Dulles argued the only viable, effective solution here was collective defense. As he put it, “that is for the free world to develop the will and organize the means to retaliate instantly against open aggression by Red armies, so that, if it occurred anywhere, we could and would strike back where it hurts, by means of our choosing.”<sup>86</sup> But Dulles commented that the enormity of the communist threat—in terms of geography and manpower—meant that military preparedness alone would be insufficient and fiscally

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 146.

<sup>85</sup>Quoted in Ibid., 146.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 151.

untenable.<sup>87</sup> He noted, “Once the free world has established a military defense, it can undertake what has been too long delayed—a political offensive.”<sup>88</sup>

In 1952, the political offensive Dulles championed was very similar to that which he had prescribed in *War or Peace*. Dulles called attention to “three truths.” First, “the dynamic prevails over the static;” second, “nonmaterial forces are more powerful than those that are merely material;” and third, there was a natural moral law which determined success and failure over the long-term in all endeavors.<sup>89</sup> Dulles urged the United States to “let these truths work in and through us. We should be *dynamic*, we should use *ideas* as weapons; and these ideas should conform to *moral* principles.”<sup>90</sup>

A dynamic policy would benefit U.S. foreign policy by signaling to nations on the periphery of the Soviet orbit that the United States would not “contain” them, as well, to a long cold war cut-off from their neighbors and trading partners indefinitely. “As a matter of fact,” noted Dulles,

some highly competent work is being done at one place or another, to promote liberation. Obviously such activities do not lend themselves to public exposition. But liberation from the yoke of Moscow will not occur for a very long time, and courage in neighboring lands will not be

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<sup>87</sup>See Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 39.

<sup>88</sup>Dulles, “A Policy of Boldness,” 152.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 153-154.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 154 [emphasis in original].

sustained, *unless the United States makes it publicly known that it want and expects liberation to occur*. The mere statement of that wish and expectation would change, in an electrifying way, the mood of the captive peoples. It would put heavy new burdens on the jailers and create new opportunities for liberation.<sup>91</sup>

The tasks Dulles outlined in the *Life* article are very similar to the tasks he would define in the 1952 Republican Party platform.<sup>92</sup> And again, Dulles invoked the historic sense of American mission,

This nation was founded by men of lofty purpose. They were not content merely to build here a snug haven but they sought to create a political system which would inspire just government throughout the world. Our Declaration of Independence, as Lincoln said, meant ‘liberty, not alone for the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all time.’ We have always been, as we always should be, the despair of the oppressor and the hope of the oppressed.<sup>93</sup>

Eisenhower recalled his selection of Dulles as “obvious.” In addition to John Foster Dulles’ considerable record of accomplishment, the two men shared “substantial agreement,” in Eisenhower’s words, on the problems confronting the international community.<sup>94</sup> According to Greenstein, “the two men held virtually identical beliefs

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid. [emphasis in the original].

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 154-157. The crafting of the 1952 Republican Party Platform plank on foreign policy was a complex negotiation between Senator Robert A. Taft, leading the right wing of the Republican Party, and the more moderate faction headed by Eisenhower. Dulles, in fact, served as a bridge between the two camps. See Robert A. Divine, *Foreign Policy and U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960*, (New York: New Viewpoints, 1974), 23-37.

<sup>93</sup>Dulles, “A Policy of Boldness,” 160.

<sup>94</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 86.

about the ‘Soviet threat’.”<sup>95</sup> In fact, the future president and his secretary of state agreed on the need for spiritual strength in the West, the role of the United States as a model to the rest of the world, the role of public opinion in international relations, the need to balance security with fiscal solvency, the importance of bipartisanship in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, the role of the United States in the world, and the need for positive action in the face of the Soviet threat via a means short of armed conflict.

### **THE CAMPAIGN OF 1952**

Eisenhower began setting the parameters of his administration’s policies in his very first political speech. In declaring his candidacy for the presidency in 1952, Eisenhower addressed an assembled crowd in his hometown of Abilene, Kansas. He struck two themes of significance to this study: America’s military strength and America’s economic strength. He pledged to protect both. “Today,” said Eisenhower, “America must be spiritually, economically, and militarily strong, for her own sake and for humanity. She must guard her solvency as she does her physical frontiers. This means elimination of waste, luxury, and every needless expenditure from the national budget.”<sup>96</sup> In giving equal standing to economic and military security, Eisenhower

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<sup>95</sup>Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand Presidency*, 52.

<sup>96</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 33.

began to limit the range of options his administration would be able to choose from once in power. In his recent study of Eisenhower's decision to run for president in 1952, William B. Pickett argues Eisenhower sought to keep U.S. policy and politics in the center—eschewing isolationism, while avoiding military adventures and a “garrison state” that would threaten the U.S. economy and American civil liberties.<sup>97</sup> Pach and Richardson wrote that in foreign affairs, Eisenhower campaigned for a “reliable internationalism and a careful balancing of resources against commitments.”<sup>98</sup> In other words, Eisenhower promised a strategic approach to U.S. foreign and defense policies that would balance means and ends—the basic elements of strategy.

Eisenhower resisted political temptations and those who urged he run for president for nearly 10 years before committing to run in 1952.<sup>99</sup> But this is not to say he was above politics or divorced from them. As president of Columbia University in 1948, he began to express concern over a paternalistic view of the federal government, and alarm over the temptations of isolationism so common to American history, temptations which in the late 1940s found material expression in reduced military strength.<sup>100</sup> Still, Eisenhower's aversion to political office waned as he took up the job

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<sup>97</sup>Pickett, *Eisenhower Decides to Run*, 194.

<sup>98</sup>Pach and Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 23.

<sup>99</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 4-25.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

of NATO Commander only to confront members of Congress who sought to limit the president's freedom of action in confronting the challenge posed by the Soviet Union. From one senator, Eisenhower "gained the impression—possibly a mistaken one—that he and some of his colleagues were interested, primarily, in cutting the President, or the Presidency, down to size."<sup>101</sup> In his memoirs Eisenhower noted his acute disappointment and resentment "toward those who seemed . . . to be playing politics in matters . . . vital to America and the Free World."<sup>102</sup> Ultimately, according to Eisenhower, it was a concern that the leading elements of the Republican party failed to appreciate the dangers of the post-war world coupled with a sense of duty to nation that led him to enter politics in 1952.<sup>103</sup> This concern was shared by Dulles whose books and articles at the time were filled with calls for bipartisanship in foreign policy.

The foreign policy section of the Republican Party Platform of 1952 was

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 14, *sic*.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>The most recent, comprehensive discussion of Eisenhower's decision to run for president is Pickett, *Eisenhower Decides to Run*. Eisenhower's own account can be found in Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), 361-372 and 377-378. See also Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, especially 259-267; Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand Presidency*, 46-52; Parmet, *Eisenhower and the American Crusades*, 33-56; and Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 1, 497-498. See also Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower* (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation, 1999), 391-392. General Andrew Goodpaster, a former White House aide and confidant of Eisenhower's, has made the same contention. Andrew Goodpaster, personal interview with author, March 20, 2003.

drafted by John Foster Dulles.<sup>104</sup> It borrowed many of the themes Dulles wrote about in the preceding years, particular in his May 1952 article in *Life*, “A Policy of Boldness.”<sup>105</sup> It dedicated the Republican party to waging and winning peace.<sup>106</sup> The platform itself never used the word “liberation” in reference to Eastern Europe or any Soviet Satellite, but the document did repudiate any secret U.S. agreements<sup>107</sup> to acquiesce in the enslavement of people to Communist oppression. Furthermore, the document promised that a Republican administration would look “happily forward to the genuine independence of those captive people.”<sup>108</sup> In pursuit of that day, the Republicans pledged to “again make liberty a beacon light of hope that will penetrate the dark places. That program will give the Voice of America a real function. It will mark the end of the negative, futile and immoral policy of ‘containment’ which

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<sup>104</sup>See, for example, Charles E. Bohlen, Interview by Philip A. Crowl, 23 June 1964, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 9).

<sup>105</sup>Dulles, “A Policy of Boldness,” *Life*, 146-157.

<sup>106</sup>*National Party Platforms, 1840-1972* compiled by Donald Bruce Johnson and Kirk H. Porter, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 498.

<sup>107</sup>The Republican Party’s repudiation of secret agreements grew from suspicion over the Yalta agreement. For a detailed consideration of the role of “Yalta Myths” in U.S. post-war politics, see Athan G. Theoharis, *The Yalta Myths: An Issue in U.S. Politics, 1945-1955* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1970), especially 130-153.

<sup>108</sup>*National Party Platforms, 1840-1972*, 499.



abandons countless human beings to a despotism of godless terrorism, which in turn enables the rulers to forge the captives into a weapon” aimed at the United States.<sup>109</sup> In sum, the Republicans promised to invigorate the “contagious, liberating influences . . . inherent in freedom.”<sup>110</sup> They believed such influences would “inevitably set up strains and stresses within the captive world which will make the rulers impotent to continue in their monstrous ways and mark the beginning of their end.”<sup>111</sup> In the process, the United States would “become again the dynamic, moral and spiritual force which was the despair of despots the hope of the oppressed.”<sup>112</sup> This task, asserted the Republicans, bore the true promise of peace.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 499.

<sup>113</sup>According to Robert A. Divine, the Republican platform, also bore striking resemblance to the foreign policy proposals of Senator Robert A. Taft, who outlined his own thinking on the subject in 1951. Divine notes two pillars in Taft’s foreign policy strategy: reliance on a strong Navy and Air Force, and an “ideological offensive against Communism, including propaganda aimed at Eastern Europe and, in Taft’s words, “an underground war of infiltration in Iron Curtain Countries.” See Divine, *Foreign Policy and U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960*, 8-11, especially 9. An alternative explanation of the 1952 Republican campaign links the party platform to the anti-communist frenzy associated with Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. In this interpretation, Eisenhower’s embrace of the plight of people in Eastern Europe was part of an effort to salve the concerns of the Republican right-wing. See Jeff Broadwater, *Eisenhower and the Anti-Communist Crusade* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 26-53.

According to Stephen Ambrose, Eisenhower chose to accept the Republican party platform, including its assertive foreign policy planks, in an effort to unify the party.<sup>114</sup> In fact, Eisenhower struggled with loose talk of war and had some doubts about the efficacy and propriety of promising “liberation” to people behind the Iron Curtain. Ambrose asserts, however, that Eisenhower’s political instincts overruled any moral compulsions as the “rewards were too great to ignore.”

Liberation was what the Old Guard wanted to hear; it helped disassociate Eisenhower from Yalta and FDR; it would bring thousands of voters of Eastern European backgrounds in the GOP camp for the first time.<sup>115</sup>

But it is important to note that the platform, whatever motives and interpretations are associated with it, did nothing to restrict Eisenhower’s support for the post-war collective security and defense institutions he had worked to created. As Greenstein observed:

The phrase ‘collective security’<sup>116</sup> best describes his major short-run policy aim—that of welding a sturdy cold war coalition of Western and other non-Communist nations. This coalition, he was convinced, could not merely be military. It needed a solid political, economic, and ideological framework. He believed that if such a coalition could be achieved, there would be a greater likelihood of attaining the most fundamental long-run need of mankind, international harmony. Given time and Western steadfastness, ‘world communism’ might lose its

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<sup>114</sup>Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, 273. See also Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 43.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>116</sup>Greenstein here conflates “collective security” with “collective defense.”

monolithic expansionistic qualities, and a strong, resourceful West could then take the lead in dissipating the cold war. And detente, he was convinced, would have to occur eventually to prevent the ultimate catastrophe—global nuclear war.<sup>117</sup>

According to Robert A. Divine, the Eisenhower campaign stumbled over how to present liberation in the general election campaign. On August 25, 1952, Eisenhower delivered a speech to the American Legion convention in New York City in which he marshaled all the rhetoric conjured by Dulles about liberation. Late the following day, Dulles expanded on the topic in a press conference where he described liberation as a process involving propaganda to stir dissent, the supply of freedom fighters in Eastern Europe, and the acceptance of newly liberated nations by the rest of the free world.<sup>118</sup> The ensuing, negative domestic and international reactions led the campaign to tone-down the rhetoric in a subsequent speech by Eisenhower in Philadelphia on September 4, 1952. In this iteration, Eisenhower stressed the peaceful nature of liberation.<sup>119</sup>

On October 8, 1952, candidate Eisenhower gave an important foreign policy speech in San Francisco, California.<sup>120</sup> The speech reveals much about Eisenhower's

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<sup>117</sup>Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand Presidency*, 47.

<sup>118</sup>See Divine, *Foreign Policy and U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960*, 50-51.

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>120</sup>The entire discussion is based on the text of the speech released to the press "Text of the Address by Dwight D. Eisenhower, Republican Nominee for President,

conception of the Soviet threat, the limits on American power, and the best means to prevail. After discussing the prospects for peace in Korea and indicting the conduct of policy in the Truman administration, Eisenhower turned his attention to the broader challenge posed by the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Eisenhower saw three possible policies for the United States: appeasement; war; and “cold war.” Appeasement he characterized as “folly.” War, the general called “stupidly aggressive.” The final option, as Eisenhower saw it, was to “prosecute the ‘cold war’ . . . with vigor and wisdom.”

The greatest limit on American power, at the time, was the horror of modern war. Eisenhower noted, “Modern war is not a conceivable choice in framing national policy. War would do unthinkable damage to every moral and material value we cherish. War is the last desperate resort when freedom itself is at stake.” Conducting a cold war, in Eisenhower’s mind, served one purpose, “to escape the horror of its opposite—war itself.”

Still, the Republican presidential nominee depicted the political struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union as a war that could be won. He said, “The prerequisite to winning any victory is a single-minded determination to get the job done, a single minded dedication to that job. Without such determination and

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Delivered at San Francisco, Calif., Wednesday, Oct. 8, 1952,” Ann Whitman File, Speech Series, Box 2, September 25, 1952-October 13, 1952 (3), Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS, henceforth DDEL.

dedication, there can be no victory, but only a stalemate, only a road uphill paved with excuses and evasion. So to our task we must bring the quality of vigor.”

Eisenhower told the assembled audience that a cold war required the use of “all means short of war, to lead men to believe in the values that will preserve peace and freedom. Our aim in ‘cold war’,” he said, “is not conquest of territory or subjugation by force. Our aim is more subtle, more pervasive, more complete. We are trying to get the world, by peaceful means, to believe the truth. That truth is that Americans want a world at peace, a world in which all peoples shall have opportunity for maximum individual development.” Eisenhower was calling for a psychological crusade, in his own words, a “struggle for the minds and wills of men.”

Eisenhower explained his broad definition of “psychological warfare.” To him, psychological warfare was much more than a propaganda campaign. He criticized the Truman administration for failing to grasp that propaganda alone was insufficient, that a psychological effort was needed on a “national scale.” To conduct such a campaign, Eisenhower identified his first task as “the selection of broad national purposes and the designation within those purposes of principal targets.” Subsequently, “Every significant act of government should be so timed and directed at a principal target, and so related to other governmental action, that it will produce the maximum effect.”

Eisenhower understood he was suggesting a reorganization of the government for this purpose, a restructuring of the National Security Council, and the close coordination of

policies across cabinet departments and government agencies.

Eisenhower detailed the tools in this Cold War struggle for hearts and minds, including “diplomacy, the spreading of ideas through every medium of communication, mutual economic assistance, trade and barter, friendly contacts through travel and correspondence and sports—these represent some of the political means to support essential programs for mutual military assistance and collective security.” In short, no task of government, corporation, or private citizen lacked political value in the Cold War. These myriad countless tasks, when combined with the American industry and military might, would seize the first objective in this struggle: “to render unreliable, in the minds of the Kremlin rulers, the hundreds of millions enslaved in the occupied satellite nations.”

It is critical to dissect what Eisenhower did and did not say. To be clear, Eisenhower called for a political campaign to undermine Soviet confidence in the fealty of the population in Eastern Europe. He did not call for an East European uprising. He did not call for Eastern Europe to throw out its occupiers. In stark, simple terms, Eisenhower wanted to put worry into the minds of the Soviet leaders that they could not rely on the people of Eastern Europe in the event of war. The result, concluded Eisenhower, would be “triumphs” for peace, “no less than war.”

To conduct a psychological campaign of this sort, Eisenhower outlined four tasks. First, the United States would have to adopt a national ‘cold war’ strategy that

was “unified” and “coherent.” Second, the United States would have to view the Cold War as “a chance to gain victory without casualties, to win a contest that can quite literally save peace.” In other words, win the ‘war’ without actually fighting. Third, the United States would have to realize that every word, every deed, as well as things not said or not done, had political meaning and would “affect the minds and wills of men and women” everywhere. Finally, the country needed “a man of exceptional qualifications to handle the national psychological effort.” This man would have the “full confidence and direct access” to the president.

Throughout this psychological effort, Eisenhower reminded his listeners, the United States would “continue to help free people stay free,” oppose additional Communist aggression, and “give to those already enslaved hope that will enable them to continue resisting the oppressor until his hold can be gradually weakened and loosened from within.”

The San Francisco speech was important, for in it, Eisenhower articulated explicitly his conception of the Cold War as a political struggle where psychological warfare would prove most effective. He eschewed any notion of pre-emptive war. He identified an organizational process for conducting this type of warfare. He provided an expansive definition of psychological warfare that encompassed every type of endeavor conducted by the government or by private citizens. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he called for a national strategy to draw together all the relevant

activities of the public and private sectors to mount a national strategy designed to win the Cold War.<sup>121</sup>

On the night he won election to the presidency, Eisenhower was well aware of the international situation. In his view at the time, the United States faced a difficult task in its confrontation with the Soviet Union. The new president led a nation that, in the years after the victory of 1945, had let sentimentalism and political passion reduce the considerable might of the U.S. military. While America “brought the boys home,” Eisenhower believed the Soviet Union had revealed its treacherous ways in Eastern Europe, South America, and Asia. In fact, Eisenhower’s conception of the world as president-elect was well-developed. The United States and the Soviet Union led “two power blocs facing each other across the globe, the danger vastly multiplied by a growing arsenal of enormously destructive weapons on both sides.”<sup>122</sup> The United States detonated its first hydrogen bomb days before the 1952 election. The Soviet Union would follow suit in August 1953.<sup>123</sup> Eisenhower realized the United States

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<sup>121</sup>For a further discussion of the 8 October speech by Eisenhower, see Robert L. Ivie, “Eisenhower as Cold Warrior,” in Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower’s War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 1994), 7-25.

<sup>122</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 33. For Eisenhower’s account of the salient developments in international relations from the conclusion of the Second World War to November 1952, especially in the U.S.-Soviet relationship, see pages 76-83.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.



would not find refuge behind its oceanic borders and faced a determined foe bent on ruling “the world by any means, if necessary by force.”<sup>124</sup> After returning to New York from his post-election trip to Korea, Eisenhower said in a statement to reporters, “We face an enemy whom we cannot hope to impress by words, however eloquent, but only by deeds—executed under circumstances of our own choosing.”<sup>125</sup>

In making this statement, Eisenhower expressed a frustration borne of post-war international disputes with the Soviet Union. Still operating under the premise of a monolithic Communist threat, Eisenhower sought policies of action rather than reaction. Such a positive approach to the problems of the early Cold War fit well with the logic and writings of his would-be Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles.

But Eisenhower insisted rhetoric used to advocate such a positive policy would clearly emphasize its peaceful intent. In fact, Eisenhower restrained Dulles’ enthusiasm for liberation rhetoric during the campaign. In a 1964 interview, Eisenhower noted,

[Dulles] made a speech—I believe at Buffalo—in which he talked about the captive nations—Eastern Europe—and I remember I called him up and said: ‘Senator, there’s one thing you omitted in your speech up there, that we agreed on, and I think it was just inadvertent.’ He said that our country was ready to use all means to secure the liberation of these countries, and we had agreed at that time that we should say, ‘should use all peaceful means,’ and he promptly said, ‘Yes’; He said: ‘It’s just a complete oversight.’ And so I was afraid that he’d probably

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 78.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 97.

got a little bit more belligerent [sic] than I thought was justified, but not at all.<sup>126</sup>

When pressed by the interviewer as to whether or not there was any “disagreement between you as to the liberation of the captive people,” Eisenhower replied: “No. None. Both of us agreed. I used such expressions as ‘the conscience of the United States would never be at ease until these states had the right of self-determination,’ and that ‘our country was ready to use all peaceful means’ and all that sort of thing. And we never did drop that subject as long as I was in office.”<sup>127</sup> Dulles himself, as noted previously, emphasized the peaceful meaning of liberation in his discussion of non-military methods to confront the Soviet Union in *War or Peace*.<sup>128</sup>

Some contemporaries and some historians were critical of the Eisenhower campaign’s use of liberation rhetoric, including U.S. Diplomats, Charles Bohlen<sup>129</sup> and Averell Harriman,<sup>130</sup> as well as the historians Bennet Kovrig<sup>131</sup> and John Lewis

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<sup>126</sup>Dwight Eisenhower, Interview by Philip A. Crowl, 28 July 1964, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 7).

<sup>127</sup>Ibid. (Trans. page 7-8).

<sup>128</sup>See Dulles, *War or Peace*, 247.

<sup>129</sup>Charles E. Bohlen, Interview by Philip A. Crowl, 23 June 1964, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 9).

<sup>130</sup>Averell Harriman, Interview by Philip A. Crowl, 16 July 1966, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton

Gaddis.<sup>132</sup> These individuals claim the use of liberation rhetoric can be ascribed primarily, if not exclusively, to domestic political considerations stemming from the 1952 presidential campaign.<sup>133</sup> The problem in assessing such claims stems from the fact that in a democracy, policies require political support. As Jacob Javits put it, “It’s a happy time for a politician when he says what he thinks and it can win votes, and my impression of Dulles is that he was doing both.”<sup>134</sup> In Eisenhower’s case, too, the body of evidence in his own writings and comments to friends suggests a broad congruence between his thoughts and the platform as embodied by the writings of John Foster Dulles, despite some specific areas of disagreement. Furthermore, the subsequent history reveals the call for a psychological offensive was more than election year posturing.

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University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library (Trans. page 11-12).

<sup>131</sup>See Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 48. In fact, Kovrig asserts the Republican party undermined a traditional Democratic constituency, “reducing that party’s Polish vote from 70 to around 50 percent.”

<sup>132</sup>See John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 128.

<sup>133</sup>See Divine, *Foreign Policy and U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960* and Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, especially 275.

<sup>134</sup>Jacob K. Javits, Interview by Philip A. Crowl, 2 March 1966, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library (Trans. page 10).

## WORDS AND DEEDS IN CONTEXT

Eisenhower and Dulles followed their own rhetoric with action and deeds prior to the inauguration of Eisenhower in 1953. Dulles supported European recovery efforts because of his concern over the Soviet threat.<sup>135</sup> The future secretary of state worked behind the scenes and in public venues throughout the latter half of 1945 and 1946 to secure political support from Congressional Republicans for loan packages to the British designed to jumpstart the British recovery.<sup>136</sup> These actions were consistent with his latter enthusiastic support of the Marshall Plan. While he quibbled with some of the practical applications of the plan, Dulles was in full agreement with its objectives and purpose.<sup>137</sup> Dulles testified on the subject before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He opined, “I say, first of all, that I am for the Plan. In certain respects I think the State Department proposal can be improved. . . . But this is not the time to be a perfectionist.”<sup>138</sup> Dulles, in other words, quibbled with the tactics, but not the strategy. Beyond congressional testimony, Dulles contributed to the passage of the Marshall plan through his influential position with the Federal Council of Churches.

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<sup>135</sup>Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles*, 331.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, 321-324.

<sup>137</sup>*Ibid.*, 349-351.

<sup>138</sup>Quoted in *Ibid*, 353.

Through this organization and its nation-wide network of churches, Dulles rallied public support for passage of the plan.

In contrast, Dulles opposed the Truman Doctrine, despite initial praise for it. In short, Dulles worried that the plan would distract the public, U.S. policy makers, and the Congress (and the resources they controlled) from the underlying source of peril in Europe: the slow pace of European recovery and unification. Like Eisenhower, Dulles worried that the cost of constant reaction and perry to each Soviet thrust would be prohibitively high in the long-run without going to the heart of the problem.<sup>139</sup> As Eisenhower put it, assistance to Greece and Turkey required “political, economic, and psychological” elements in addition to military aid. “The greatest of all,” concluded Eisenhower, was “the human spirit. . . . Without this, no amount of military strength can preserve freedom.”<sup>140</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles shared a commitment to the collective defense promised by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Serving as the Alliance’s first supreme commander, Eisenhower believed NATO promised to raise Western Europe’s strength while also advancing European integration.<sup>141</sup> Dulles concurred. Despite some initial

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<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 349.

<sup>140</sup>Quoted in Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 44.

<sup>141</sup>See Ibid., 50.

misgivings about the pact, Dulles became an effective champion of the Alliance.<sup>142</sup> As a prominent, but private, citizen, Dulles again exerted positive influence in favor of NATO through the Federal Council of Churches, and in speeches, and State Department media events as well as Congressional testimony.<sup>143</sup> In the Summer of 1949, Dulles was appointed to the U.S. Senate by New York Governor Thomas Dewey to replace Senator Robert Wagner who retired due to health problems. In his first address to his new Senate colleagues, Dulles delivered a robust defense of the North Atlantic Treaty and participated in securing passage of the \$1.4 billion Military Assistance Program designed to give the Alliance real meaning.<sup>144</sup>

Both Eisenhower and Dulles backed their words about the ideological nature of the Cold War with concrete action. In the words of Bowie and Immerman,

An illuminating example of Eisenhower's abiding commitment to prosecuting an ideological campaign against the Soviet Union was his acceptance of future CIA legend Frank Wisner's invitation to become a sponsoring member of the National Committee for Free Europe, an organization devoted to organizing, supporting, and inspiring 'captive peoples' living behind the Iron Curtain. Among the committee's initial activities was the sponsorship of a series of lectures, whose concluding speaker was John Foster Dulles. The organization, Dulles said, reflected his "oft-expressed view that we can only win this 'cold war' if we take the *offensive*; and that we can only win *peacefully* if we take the

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<sup>142</sup>See Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power*, 358.

<sup>143</sup>See *Ibid.*, 390.

<sup>144</sup>Dulles' support is most notable because it broke the Senate's tradition of appointed members serving their term with great humility. Nonetheless, Dulles' record on this account is consistent with his extensive post-war writings. See *Ibid.*, 395-397.

offensive with moral, and not merely material, weapons.” This was Eisenhower’s “oft-expressed view” as well.<sup>145</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles made important contributions in the development of early Cold War strategies. But their contributions were not supreme. In fact, their opinions and concerns reflect the growing discussion in elite U.S. opinion over the conduct of the Cold War. The division is perhaps best viewed in context of the difference between George F. Kennan’s views of containment and Paul Nitze’s militarization of the concept in NSC-68.<sup>146</sup>

The vision shared by Eisenhower and Dulles bore a strong resemblance to Kennan’s ideas on the Soviet threat and the nature of the Cold War. As John Lewis Gaddis has noted, Kennan believed “. . . the objective of containment should be to limit Soviet expansion, and that communism posed a threat only to the extent that it was the instrument of that expansion.”<sup>147</sup> Like Eisenhower and Dulles, moreover, Kennan did

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<sup>145</sup>Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 52, emphasis in the original.

<sup>146</sup>For a discussion of the development of U.S. national security strategy in the Truman administration see Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992). For specific discussion of the development of a national psychological strategy in the Truman administration, see Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America’s Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000) and Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America’s Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).

<sup>147</sup>John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 34.

not expect the Soviets to risk war in pursuit of the political objectives.<sup>148</sup> Again, according to Gaddis, Kennan believed “Stalin was no Hitler; he had no fixed timetable for aggression and would prefer, if possible, to make gains by political rather than military means. . . . More serious [than armed invasion] was the possibility of conquest by psychological means.”<sup>149</sup> Kennan termed these psychological means “unofficial,” taking place on a “subterranean plane” in his “Long Telegram.” They included such efforts as utilizing communists and fellow-travelers throughout the world, emboldening liberal elements in Western societies, using international organizations and churches as well as friendly governments to shape the international system and agenda.<sup>150</sup> The purpose of these unofficial policies and practices would be to pave the way for official action by the Soviet government. In Kennan’s own words, “In general, all Soviet efforts on unofficial international plane will be negative and destructive in character, designed to tear down sources of strength beyond reach of Soviet Control [sic].”<sup>151</sup>

Later in the “Long Telegram,” Kennan called for a long-term strategy to meet the Soviet challenge. He wrote, “Problem of how to cope with this force is

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>See George F. Kennan, “The Long Telegram” Moscow Embassy Telegram #511, 22 February 1946, in Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, eds., *Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 58-59.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid., 60.



undoubtedly greatest task our diplomacy has ever faced and probably greatest it will ever have to face. . . . It should be approached with same thoroughness and care as solution of major strategic problem in war, and if necessary, with no smaller outlay in planning effort. I cannot attempt to suggest all answers here. But I would like to record my conviction that problem is within our power to solve—and that without recourse to general military conflict [sic].”<sup>152</sup> Eisenhower and Dulles, as we have seen, agreed.

Kennan concluded the “Long Telegram” with four observations and five recommendations for U.S. policy. He called for firmness and resolve in containing Soviet power—although he used no such term in this instance. He noted that since Soviet power lagged behind aggregate Western power, Western resolve would prove very effective. Kennan questioned the long-term viability of the Soviet system, especially after Stalin’s death. In other words, he suggested, like Dulles, areas of weakness within the Soviet system. Kennan also wrote, “All Soviet propaganda beyond Soviet security sphere is basically negative and destructive. It should therefore be relatively easy to combat it by any intelligent and really constructive program [sic].”<sup>153</sup> When he turned to the issue of U.S. policy, Kennan recommended a calm, detached assessment of the Soviet challenge; an effort at informing the American

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<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 62.

public about the real nature of the Soviet Union and Soviet-American relations; improved American spirit, morale, and resolve to meet the Soviet Challenge; a positive message of progress for the rest of world; and “Finally . . . courage and self confidence to cling to our own methods and conceptions of human society. After all, the greatest danger that can befall us in coping with this problem of Soviet communism, is that we shall allow ourselves to become like those with whom we are coping [sic].”<sup>154</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles, as we have seen, agreed.

Kennan’s prescriptions for a psychological strategy, however, differed in tone and intent from those offered by Dulles. Where Dulles advocated an aggressive psychological strategy to shake the foundation of the Soviet Union and hearten the free people of the West, Kennan’s preferred psychological strategy seems more defensive and reactive initially. Gaddis drew together Kennan’s public writing as well as his teaching notes and public comments to form a broader picture than that presented by the “Long Telegram” or “X Article.”<sup>155</sup> Gaddis shows Kennan to be content to strengthen the resolve of the West while the international system stabilized along regional centers of power.<sup>156</sup> In a second phase, Kennan’s strategy would become more activist. As Gaddis put it:

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 61-63.

<sup>155</sup>X [George F. Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* XXV (July 1947): 566-582.

<sup>156</sup>See Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 41-41.

The second stage of Kennan's strategy, once the balance of power had been restored, was to seek to reduce the Soviet Union's ability in the future to project influence beyond its borders. That influence had been extended in two ways: (1) through the installation, primarily in Eastern Europe, of communist governments subservient to Moscow; and (2) through the use, elsewhere in the world, of communist parties which at that time were still reliable instruments of Russian foreign policy. The United States should try to counter these initiatives, Kennan argued, by encouraging and where possible exploiting tension between the Kremlin leadership and the international communist movement."<sup>157</sup>

The natural place to exploit these tensions, argued Kennan, was Eastern Europe.<sup>158</sup>

It is unclear how familiar Eisenhower and Dulles were with Kennan's writing on a first hand basis. Historians have asked this question before about Eisenhower only to conclude that there is no archival evidence that then-General Eisenhower read any of Kennan's works first hand.<sup>159</sup> As Robert Immerman has noted, "There was a striking similarity between Dulles' outlook in 1946 and that of George Kennan."<sup>160</sup> Beyond that, there is a lengthy personal correspondence between Kennan and Dulles

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<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>159</sup>Geoffrey Perret wrote, "Although there is no evidence that Eisenhower ever read Kennan's original telegram, it is hardly possible that he wasn't aware of it in some form. At a minimum, he would have been briefed on it by the State Department." For a broader discussion of Eisenhower's role in the development of the early Cold War strategy, see Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower*, 368-371. The quote in this note is found on page 370. Stephen Ambrose also says Eisenhower did not read the "X" article in *Foreign Affairs*. See Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 1, 449.

<sup>160</sup>Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 29.

despite apparent personal animosity.<sup>161</sup> Still, when the Eisenhower administration turned to develop its national security strategy in a series of staff efforts known as the “Solarium Exercises,” Kennan was asked to chair one of the working groups.

## CONCLUSION

Eisenhower and Dulles conceived of the Cold War in similar terms. While Eisenhower’s understanding grew from an intuitive sense of the challenges facing the United States and Dulles’ understanding was the result of years of dedicated study, the two men arrived at remarkably similar conclusions: the United States faced a formidable military and political adversary in the Soviet Union; given the destructiveness of modern war, aggressive policies and preemptive wars were folly. The Soviet Union, then, had to be confronted in a cold war where political means pursued political ends. In such a contest, the United States would need to marshal a national psychological warfare effort wedded to a strategy for success in the Cold War.

In confronting the Soviet challenge, both Eisenhower and Dulles rejected the notion that armed superiority was of supreme value. Dulles articulated his reasons succinctly as early as 1946. In the first place, he noted that Soviet leaders would not be intimidated by force. Second, crushing Soviet communism would divide the United

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<sup>161</sup>The letters are part of the John Foster Dulles Papers at Princeton University.

States, and the West, internally, as “many Americans sympathize with the professed social goals of the Soviet experiment. . . .”<sup>162</sup> More importantly, Dulles emphasized the fact that any conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States must be won in the battle of ideas. “Even if we did crush it,” wrote Dulles in the second part of a *Life* magazine article in 1946, “that would prove nothing. That would not end the challenge to a society of personal freedoms. On the contrary, it would probably intensify that challenge, for the Soviet experiment would then seem to have succumbed not to our merit, but to our might. New disciples of that faith would spring up everywhere.”<sup>163</sup> He continued:

No program is fruitful if it is merely *against* some one or some thing. Successful programs are those which are constructive and creative in their own right. What we need at this critical juncture is an affirmative demonstration that our society of freedom still has the qualities needed for survival. We must show that our free land is not spiritual lowland, easily submerged, but highland that, most of all, provides the spiritual, intellectual and economic conditions which all men want. Upon such a program all true Americans could agree, and it would peacefully achieve our purpose.<sup>164</sup>

In 1952, ‘cold war’ was still a new phrase composed of an adjective and a noun.

Today, “Cold War” is the name given to an era of superpower competition and

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<sup>162</sup>John Foster Dulles, “Thoughts on Soviet Foreign Policy and What to Do About It,” 120.

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, 120.

confrontation. To Eisenhower and Dulles, however, the phrase meant a struggle via all means short of armed conflict to sway world opinion, capture hearts and minds, to protect the United States, and to undermine the Soviet Union. The president and his secretary of state had called for the formulation of an American grand strategy to prevail in a cold war. Political-psychological warfare would be an important, though not exclusive, element of that strategy.

### **Chapter 3**

## **Political Warfare and the Eisenhower Administration's National Security Strategy, 1953**

*"We must acquire proficiency in defense and display stamina in purpose."*  
President Dwight David Eisenhower, First Inaugural Address, January 20, 1953

Dwight David Eisenhower viewed the Cold War in very different terms from his predecessor Harry S Truman. Where the Truman administration prepared for a year of "maximum danger" and launched audacious covert operations behind the Iron Curtain, Eisenhower viewed the Cold War as a long-term political struggle. His national security strategy reflected his view of the struggle with the Soviet Union, and the way the United States would conduct its psychological strategy, then termed "political warfare," changed as well. The dramatic operations of the Truman years were replaced by an emphasis on message, symbolism, and rhetoric—in short, information conveyed by a variety of means.

The change in tactics was underway before the new president came to office, in part because the practitioners of psychological warfare in the Truman administration had confronted their failed operations. But through a process of formal policy reviews, the Eisenhower administration forged a new national security strategy which included a very important role for political warfare, primarily in the guise of a sustained

information campaign.<sup>1</sup>

## **EISENHOWER TAKES OFFICE**

The Cold War emerged during the presidency of Harry S Truman. Wartime suspicion between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union gave way to discord and open hostility in the peace that followed. The policies of the Truman administration evolved with the post-war relationship and established a legacy with which Eisenhower and his administration would have to cope.

The Truman administration first adopted a policy of political containment, as advocated by George F. Kennan and discussed in Chapter 2. By the time the Eisenhower took office in January 1953, however, the Truman administration's policies had evolved into a militarized version of containment, first articulated by Paul Nitze in NSC-68.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rather than “information campaign” or “political warfare” or “psychological warfare,” Walter L. Hixson prefers the term “cultural infiltration.” Although he distinguishes “cultural infiltration” from “psychological warfare” the former is actually one instrument of the later. See Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), ix.

<sup>2</sup>A good, brief discussion of the Truman administration's policies and their evolution is found in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 25-126. A more thorough examination is Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).



Psychological operations were an important part of the Truman administration's Cold War strategy.<sup>3</sup> They were predicated on the administration's overall view of the Cold War as moving toward a culminating event or "year of maximum danger." As a result, the political warfare efforts of the administration were broad in scope and audacious in their ambition. They were also tremendously ineffective.<sup>4</sup> The result was that by 1952, the Truman administration's most passionate advocates of political warfare were convinced such actions held little hope for success in the Cold War.

In 1951, NSC 114 suggested that 1953, not 1954, would be the year of maximum danger.<sup>5</sup> As the U.S. military position deteriorated with the growth of Soviet atomic forces, the United States would need to rely more heavily on psychological warfare. The psychological warfare elements of NSC 68 were re-emphasized. NSC

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<sup>3</sup>A brief general overview of the psychological efforts of the Truman administration can be found in Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 1-21. For examinations of the differences between political warfare and propaganda in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, see Shawn J. Parry Giles, "Rhetorical Experimentation and the Cold War, 1947-1953: The Development of an Internationalist Approach to Propaganda," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 448-467; and Shawn J. Parry-Giles, "Militarizing America's Propaganda Program, 1945-1955," in Martin J. Medhurst and H.W. Brands, eds., *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 95-133.

<sup>4</sup>For an excellent discussion of the Truman administration's psychological warfare efforts, see Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America's Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000). An additional excellent account is that of Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 85.

114/2 set forth five tasks for the foreign information and educational exchange program of the State Department. These tasks were enumerated as follows:

The first task is to multiply and to intensify psychological deterrents to aggression by Soviet Communism, whether in the form of outright action by the armed forces of the Soviet Union, of Communist China or of the satellites of the Soviet Union, or in the form of the subversion of existing free governments by civil forces acting on behalf of Soviet Communism.

The second task is to intensify and to accelerate the growth of confidence in and among the peoples and the governments of the free world, especially in Western Europe, including Western Germany, in the capability successfully to deter aggression of Soviet Communism or to defeat it should it nonetheless occur and to inspire concrete international, national and individual action accordingly.

The third task is to combat, particularly in the Near and Middle East and South and Southeast Asia, extremist tendencies threatening the undermining of the cohesion and the stability of the free world and the withdrawal of governments and peoples into neutralism.

The fourth task is to maintain among the peoples held captive by Soviet Communism, including the peoples of the Soviet Union, hope of ultimate liberation and identification with the free world and to nourish, without provoking premature action, a popular spirit disposed to timely resistance to regimes now in power.

The fifth task is to maintain among peoples and governments traditionally linked with the United States, particularly in Latin America, a continued recognition of mutual interdependence and to promote national and individual action accordingly.<sup>6</sup>

Psychological warfare, however, was not left simply to the Department of State.

In fact, its scope required a new inter-agency planning board: the Psychological

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<sup>6</sup>“Progress Report on the National Psychological Effort for the Period July 1, 1952, through September 30, 1952” PSB D-34, October 30, 1952, Folder PSB Documents, Master Book of Volume IV (9), NSC Staff Papers, NSC Registry Series, Box 16, DDEL.

Strategy Board (PSB). Its task was to coordinate the multitude of tasks across the government dedicated to a psychological offensive against the Soviet Union. The scope of this effort indicates the seriousness with which the Truman administration took the task, and reflects further the basic assumptions guiding U.S. government policy at the time. According to Gregory Mitrovich,

The Truman administration considered aggressive covert action the key to achieving U.S. objectives before the time that Soviet atomic capabilities threatened to make them too risky. . . . [S]uch activities included propaganda, economic warfare, sabotage, demolition, “subversion against hostile states,” and support for underground resistance forces and guerilla movements, and were the prime methods to win the cold war. Administration strategists intended to foment revolutionary activity within the Eastern European satellites and sought to undermine communist power even within the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

For Eisenhower, however, the Cold War would not be won or lost in months or years as the Truman administration feared, but rather it would be decided over the course of decades. As a result, Eisenhower believed all U.S. policy, from defense posture to psychological efforts, required redesign to become sustainable and more effective over a long-cold war. Prior to departing the United States for Europe as Supreme Allied Commander in 1950, Eisenhower told Congress, “We have to devise a scheme that we can support if necessary over the next 20 years, 30 years, whatever may be the time necessary, as long as the threat, the announced threat of aggression remains in the

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<sup>7</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 59-60.

world.”<sup>8</sup> Upon his election to the presidency, Eisenhower set his administration about this task.

### **COMING TO OFFICE: 1953**

Eisenhower viewed the Cold War as a student of strategy, and with an appreciation for the need to balance ends and means. According to John Lewis Gaddis, the new president “had strong convictions of his own on the proper relationship of ends and means,”<sup>9</sup> the building-blocks of strategy. Gaddis recalled Eisenhower’s study of Clausewitz as a young officer and noted,

The major premise Eisenhower retained from reading the Prussian strategist was that in politics as well as in war, means had to be subordinated to ends; effort expended without purpose served no purpose other than its own perpetuation. As President [sic.] Eisenhower regularly lectured press conferences on this point: “[W]e are now conducting a cold war. That cold war must have some objective, otherwise it would be senseless.” And that objective had to be more than merely “victory,” because a victory gained without regard to costs and effects, especially in a nuclear age, could be as devastating as defeat. “Remember this: when you resort to force as the arbiter of human difficulty, you don’t know where you are going; . . . if you get deeper and deeper, there is just no limit except what is imposed by the

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<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 45.

<sup>9</sup>Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 135.

limitations of force itself.”<sup>10</sup>  
The result was that Eisenhower eschewed talk of war, particularly preventive war. And he rejected any policies that failed to consider the required resources and associated costs.

When Eisenhower took office in January of 1953, he repeatedly emphasized several key points to associates which would shape U.S. policy under his leadership. First, and foremost, Eisenhower concluded the Cold War was not simply a problem of military defense. Second, the national security and defense plans developed in his administration would not be based on concerns over a coming year of maximum danger. Accordingly, the third key point—a corollary to the second—made by Eisenhower, was that the Cold War would not be short. Finally, Eisenhower believed that part of the solution lay in the important field of international information activities. In emphasizing these points to key lieutenants, Eisenhower began to set the parameters for a series of strategic reviews his administration would conduct in the spring and

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 135. In a note accompanying this passage, Gaddis quoted from the diary of James Hagerty, which recorded comments Eisenhower made off-the-record to a group of senior military officers in Quantico, Virginia on June 19, 1954. Eisenhower said, “No matter how well prepared for war we may be, no matter how certain we are that within 24 hours we could destroy Kuibyshev and Moscow and Leningrad and Bakhu [sic.] and all the other places that would allow the Soviet to carry on war, I want you to carry this question home with you: Gain such a victory, and what do you do with it? Here would be this great area from the Elbe to Vladivostok and down through Southeast Asia torn up and destroyed without government, without its communications, just an area of starvation and disaster. I ask you what would the civilized world do about it? I repeat there is no victory in any war except through our own imaginations, through our own dedication and through our work to avoid it.”

summer of 1953.

### **The Non-Military Aspects of Cold War**

Dwight David Eisenhower took the presidential oath of office on January 20, 1953.

His inaugural address that day struck many of the same themes first presented in the presidential campaign, particularly on the nature of the Cold War and the importance of the American spirit in the struggle for freedom. War was inconceivable, for just as science had made great humanistic progress in the first half of the century, so too, Eisenhower said, “Science seems ready to confer upon us, as its final gift, the power to erase human life from this planet.” In the face of this peril, Eisenhower asserted a role for every American in securing freedom. In the campaign, Eisenhower had asserted that no act of government, institution, or individual was too small in the struggle against Communism; in his inaugural address, Eisenhower repeated, “The men who mine coal and fire furnaces and balance ledgers and turn lathes and pick cotton and heal the sick and plant corn, all serve as proudly, and as profitably, for America as the statesmen who draft treaties and the legislators who enact laws.” Later in his address, he concluded, “And so each citizen plays an indispensable role. The productivity of our heads, our hands, and our hearts is the source of all the strength we can command,

for both the enrichment of our lives and the winning of the peace.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, U.S. security in the post-Second World War world would stem not from its armed forces exclusively, but from the entire spectrum of its endeavors.

When he wrote his memoirs, Eisenhower recalled coming to office with five basic convictions shaping his approach to defense planning. The first assumption Eisenhower held was that “the composition and structure of our military establishment should be based on the assumption that the United States on its own initiative would never start a major war.”<sup>12</sup> As a result, Eisenhower reasoned U.S. forces would have to be large enough to sustain an initial attack. Second, Eisenhower reiterated his conviction—more than an assumption—that “modern global war would be catastrophic beyond belief. . . .”<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, Eisenhower foresaw forces primarily designed to deter conflict. Eisenhower’s third assumption echoed his and Dulles’s words and speeches prior to and during the campaign of 1952. Eisenhower wrote,

A third was that national security could not be measured in terms of military strength alone. The relationship, for example, between military and economic strength is intimate and indivisible. What America needed, I felt, was a fully adequate military establishment headed by

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<sup>11</sup>Dwight David Eisenhower, “Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1953, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953* (Washington, DC: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1960), 1-8.

<sup>12</sup>Dwight David Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), 446.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 446.

men of sufficient breadth of view to recognize and sustain appropriate relationships among the moral, intellectual, economic, and military facets of our strength. . . . They would, of course, have to realize that the diabolical threat of international communism—and our problems in meeting it—would be with us for decades to come.<sup>14</sup>

The fourth assumption Eisenhower brought to the country's defense was his belief that U.S. forces needed to be “modern, designed to deter or wage the type of war to be expected in the mid-twentieth century.”<sup>15</sup> Finally, Eisenhower's fifth assumption was “that United States security policy should take into account the need for membership in a system of alliances.”<sup>16</sup> This final assumption was based as much on economic as military or political considerations.

Collectively, Eisenhower's five assumptions demonstrate the new president's conviction that while there was a very important role for the U.S. armed forces to play in the Cold War, their might alone could not guarantee victory.<sup>17</sup> These assumptions would help determine the defense department's “New Look” strategy. But they would

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Walter Hixson, in contrast, laments the primacy given to the military element of the Cold War and criticizes it as “the most sweeping constraint on a more effective use” of political—what Hixson calls “cultural”—warfare. See Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, xiii. Hixson, like others, however, misses the point, that there were a spectrum of policy tools available to the administration and each had its advantages and disadvantages. Eisenhower balanced these strengths and weaknesses by incorporating them all into a broad national security strategy.



also guide the overall shape of the administration's national security strategy and the conduct of the country's diplomacy.

### **A Long Cold War**

In early February 1953, Eisenhower delivered his first State of the Union message to Congress. He echoed some of the sentiments of the campaign, calling for pro-active policies designed to seize the initiative in the Cold War. Reflecting on the course of U.S. policies since 1945, Eisenhower said,

We have learned that the free world cannot indefinitely remain in a posture of paralyzed tension, leaving forever to the aggressor the choice of time and place and means to cause greatest hurt to us at least cost to himself.

This administration has, therefore, begun the definition of a new, positive foreign policy.<sup>18</sup>

In the same address before Congress, Eisenhower expressed his early thoughts about defense planning for the long-haul. The president said, "Our problem is to achieve adequate military strength within the limits of endurable strain upon our economy. To amass military power without regard to our economic capacity would be to defend ourselves against one kind of disaster by inviting another."<sup>19</sup>

Eisenhower was determined to shift the government's cold war planning away

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<sup>18</sup>Dwight David Eisenhower, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," February 2, 1953, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953*, 13.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

from the notion of a year of maximum danger.<sup>20</sup> He wrote to U.S. Representative Errett Scrivner, (R-KS), on June 30, 1953,

I should like to re-emphasize that our plan for national security, in contrast to earlier programs, envisages a long-range undertaking capable of continuing national support. It seeks to avoid the exceedingly costly, demoralizing, short-range effort premised upon an imaginary date of maximum danger and incapable of being sustained for a prolonged period. It will provide us with solid military force based on a dynamic economy, both capable of rapid expansion in an emergency.<sup>21</sup>

Eisenhower's conviction on the need to re-craft government programs for success over the long-haul<sup>22</sup> was much more than mere lip-service to a member of Congress. To his close friend and the chief of staff at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe, Alfred Gruenther, Eisenhower warned that the Cold War would be a long struggle with the Soviet Union. He wrote,

As you know, we are trying to bring the total expenditures of the

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<sup>20</sup>Eisenhower had rejected the notion of a year of maximum danger well before running for the presidency. He believed, based on his own personal relationship with officers in the Soviet military, that the Soviet Union would not want to destroy itself. Andrew Goodpaster, personal interview, March 20, 2003.

<sup>21</sup>Eisenhower to Errett Power Scrivner, June 30, 1953, published in Louis Galambos et. al. eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The Presidency: The Middle Way* Volume XIV (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 341-342.

<sup>22</sup>At issue was whether or not time was on the side of the United States in the political contest with the Soviet Union. It was a topic considered in a Special Intelligence Estimate, "Probably Long Term Development of the Soviet Bloc and Western Power Positions," July 8, 1953, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 1196-1205. The answer was one of decided uncertainty: in some respects the Soviet Union would have an advantage over time, in other respects, the United States would. In other words, the estimate was "special" in name only.

American Government within reasonable limits. This is not because of any belief that we can afford relaxation of the combined effort to combat Soviet communism. On the contrary, it grows out of a belief that our organized, effective resistance must be maintained over a long period of years and that this is possible only with a healthy American economy.”<sup>23</sup>

In rejecting the idea of a coming year of maximum danger, Eisenhower most clearly distinguished his Cold War planning from that of his predecessor. It was a distinction that would have consequences in every aspect of national security planning.

### **International Information Activities**

Eisenhower had long expressed his belief in the value of information campaigns. He reiterated his convictions on numerous occasions. Prior to his inauguration, for example, Eisenhower met British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Eisenhower told Churchill he believed it their “duty . . . to convince dependent peoples that their only hope of maintaining independence, once achieved, was through cooperation with the free world, which sought no domination of any kind over them.”<sup>24</sup> Convincing people, of course, requires persuasion, the stock-and-trade of political warfare.

The new president chose no-less an important occasion than his first State of the Union Address to reiterate the importance he placed on international information

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<sup>23</sup>Eisenhower letter to Alfred Gruenther, May 4, 1953, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 3, DDE Diary December 1952-July 1953 (3), DDEL.

<sup>24</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 97.

activities and other efforts aimed at winning the “cold war.” He said,

Careful formulation of policies must be followed by clear understanding of them by all peoples. A related need, therefore, is to make more effective all activities of the Government related to international information.

I have recently appointed a committee of representatives and informed citizens to survey this subject and to make recommendations in the near future for legislative, administrative, or other action.

A unified and dynamic effort in this whole field is essential to the security of the United States and of the other peoples in the community of free nations. There is but one sure way to avoid total war—and that is to win the cold war.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Jackson Committee**

The committee to which Eisenhower referred in his first State of the Union Address was the President’s Committee on International Information Activities, also known as the Jackson Committee for its chairman, William Jackson—the former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Truman administration.<sup>26</sup> In point of fact, Eisenhower was concerned enough about the conduct of U.S. information activities abroad to begin organizing the committee in late November 1952, just weeks after winning election.<sup>27</sup>

The committee’s mission was to survey the international information policies of

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<sup>25</sup>Dwight David Eisenhower, “Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union,” February 2, 1953, 18.

<sup>26</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 124.

<sup>27</sup>Eisenhower to James Selden Lay, Jr., January 24, 1953, published in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 10-11, n 2.

the United States and recommend improvements in their formulation and conduct. In his letter of authorization to the executive secretary of the National Security Council (NSC), Eisenhower wrote:

I have authorized and directed [the committee] to make a survey and evaluation of the international information policies and activities of the Executive Branch of the Government and of policies and activities related thereto with particular reference to the international relations and the national security of this country. It shall make recommendations to me for such legislative, administrative, or other action, respecting the said policies and activities as in its opinion may be desirable.

It has long been my conviction that a unified and dynamic effort in this field is essential to the security of the United States and of the other people in the community of free nations.<sup>28</sup>

The Jackson Committee report, released on January 30, 1953,<sup>29</sup> began with a survey of the Soviet threat, the nature of the struggle between Soviet Communism and Western democracy. It noted the psychological strategy of the Soviet Union and observed that political warfare would be critical to the Soviet effort, because “the isolation of the United States as a preliminary to its destruction or domination is a major goal of Soviet policy.”<sup>30</sup> The Jackson Committee recommended, in turn, that the United States fight fire with fire. It urged the United States to mount a political offensive of its own. “The

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>29</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 124.

<sup>30</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter One (Abridged), “The Nature of the Conflict,” NSC Staff Papers, Psychological Strategy Board Central Files Series, Box 22, PSB 334 President’s Committee on International Information Activities (PCIIA) (1), DDEL, 1.

United States must, therefore, adopt,” the report’s authors concluded, “not only those policies necessary to its military security, but also those essential to the creation of world conditions consistent with the maintenance of these free institutions.”<sup>31</sup>

In retrospect, the Jackson Committee report emerges as a transitional document. It provided a critique of the Truman administration’s use of political warfare,<sup>32</sup> but also blended many of the pre-presidential opinions of Eisenhower and Dulles with the conclusions that would shape the conduct of formal policy reviews that dominated the planning of national security in the spring and summer of 1953.<sup>33</sup>

### *The Military’s Role in Cold War*

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>32</sup>Gregory Mitrovich asserts the Jackson committee assailed the “misuses of psychological warfare by the Truman administration.” He notes that three committee members, William Jackson, Gordon Gray, and Robert Cutler, “had intimate knowledge of the policy process within the [Truman] administration and all left office deeply disgruntled at the administration’s failure to develop a coherent strategic concept and national psychological program.” See Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 124-125.

<sup>33</sup>One historian, J. Michael Hogan, links the content of the Jackson Committee report to the speeches and public pronouncements of legendary pollster George Gallup. Hogan wrote: “Declassified in 1986, the top-secret Jackson Committee report echoed Gallup on everything from the need to reorganize American propaganda efforts, to the appropriate types of propaganda themes, to the principles of persuasion that must guide effective propaganda.” See J. Michael Hogan, “The Science of Cold War Strategy: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Eisenhower Administration’s ‘War of Words,’” in Martin J. Medhurst and H. W. Brands, eds., *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 134-168, especially 149.

The pre-presidential opinions which resonated in the report were many, including the belief that while there was an important role for the military to play in the Cold War, the problem was not exclusively military. In fact, the Jackson Committee argued that the Soviet Union should be expected to make its greatest effort not on the battlefield, but in the battle of ideas.

The report noted that the first pre-requisite of successful political warfare was military security. This was so, the committee reasoned, because the Soviet leadership was rational and readily deterred but also cognizant of the political vulnerabilities of the West. They wrote, "It is our belief that the Soviet rulers will strive to avoid general war, primarily because of fear that their regime could not be maintained in power after a devastating atomic attack and because the opportunities for expansion of political warfare still seem good."<sup>34</sup> The report continued, "We believe, therefore, that provided the United States and its allies maintain a strong military position, general war can be avoided and that the greatest danger of Soviet expansion lies in political warfare and local communist armed action."<sup>35</sup>

Even in cold war, however, there was a role for the military. It was vital to deter the Soviet military threat and counter its political consequences. In that respect,

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<sup>34</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter One (Abridged), "The Nature of the Conflict," 4.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

military security, in the committee's view, was an important pre-requisite for a successful political warfare campaign.<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, the United States "has undertaken large programs of military assistance to other countries, is strengthening its alliances with other free nations and is developing its own military strength."<sup>37</sup>

Ultimately, although the Jackson Committee concluded military measures were necessary, it also concluded they were not sufficient given the nature of the Soviet challenge. The report's authors wrote,

Military programs, however, are not only very expensive but are, by themselves, inadequate. It has become increasingly clear that the vulnerability of a country to direct or indirect aggression and its ability to resist them are closely related to its underlying political, social, and economic health. For this reason, the United States is seeking, by a wide variety of cooperative measures, to help the free world gain not only military strength, but also moral, political and economic strength. In places like Berlin, Korea, and other areas where direct comparison of conditions under free government and communist control can be readily made, it is especially important that the United States seek to assure that the comparison is favorable to the free way of life by providing economic assistance and by otherwise strengthening morale in the free area.<sup>38</sup>

### *Soviet Vulnerabilities*

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<sup>36</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 3 (Abridged), "The United States Program for World Order," 18.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 9-10.



Similarities between the Jackson Committee findings and the views of Eisenhower and Dulles were not limited to the nature of the cold war. The committee also shared John Foster Dulles's pre-secretarial views about the vulnerabilities ready for exploitation within the Soviet system. These vulnerabilities spread across all the features of Soviet society and directly countered many of the system's supposed strengths.<sup>39</sup> For example, the international communist apparatus, much feared as a source of Soviet strength, was itself vulnerable to political warfare. The report's authors wrote,

In fighting this apparatus, the policies and programs of the United States are of primary importance. These include programs of economic and military assistance, cooperation for mutual security, support for the United Nations, resistance to communist aggression in Korea, support for resistance by others in Indochina and Malaya and support of the European Defense Community and the Schuman Plan.<sup>40</sup>

More specifically, the report continued,

These policies and programs have been and can be effectively supplemented by political warfare operations. By helping to expose the true nature of communist activities, by penetrating, undermining and dividing the foreign apparatus and by hampering its access to funds, the basic weakness of the apparatus can be exploited: that it is subservient to the Kremlin and employed as an instrument of conquest and domination.<sup>41</sup>

The report urged the United States to capitalize on

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<sup>39</sup>The Jackson Committee Report discussed Soviet strengths in political warfare at length. See *Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter Two (Abridged), "The Soviet Drive for World Domination," 1-8.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

the gap between communist ideology and Soviet practice. . . . The failure to produce the extra bowl of rice, or to carry through a satisfactory land reform program, or to meet the many specific desires and remedy the many specific grievances of the subject peoples is highly important material for political warfare, not only within the communist countries but also in the free nations in which communism is making head-way.<sup>42</sup>

The Jackson Committee report observed a number of internal weakness ripe for exploitation as well in the Soviet system. The first was the totalitarian nature of the regime. In the aftermath of Stalin's death, the United States could hope to exploit tensions within the regime's leadership thereby weakening its internal cohesion.<sup>43</sup> The internal relationship within the Communist bloc was also a source of potential weakness in the Soviet system. The committee observed:

Soviet exploitation has created resentments among the captive peoples. Satellite rulers maintain themselves in power only by force and are dependent on the support of the Kremlin. A struggle for power in the Kremlin may make it difficult for the Soviet regime to act promptly and decisively toward the satellites and there may be corresponding struggles within these countries. As a result, opportunities may arise for satellites to break away from the Kremlin, though this would seem unlikely before an internal Kremlin conflict had reached an advance stage.<sup>44</sup>

*Political Warfare and National Security Strategy*

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the authors of the Jackson Committee report

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 11.

shared the view held by Eisenhower and Dulles that political warfare could not be viewed as an independent element of national security strategy.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, committee members were mindful that the political warfare strategy they examined was an essential, though not exclusive part of a broader national security strategy still under development. They wrote, “In considering the conduct of national security policies and the role and contribution of political warfare, the Committee has examined the program for world order within which political warfare plays its part. . . . We recognize that these policies are now being reviewed and revised. The essential objectives, however, will not be changed.”<sup>46</sup> They acknowledged that the specifics of U.S. policy in the Eisenhower administration were under review, but pressed ahead confident in their belief that the overall objectives of U.S. policy would not change.

But the members of the Jackson Committee hoped the Eisenhower administration would be able to provide better executive leadership in the area of political warfare. They noted, for example,

There is still no unanimity of opinion regarding the over-all mission of the United States information agencies. Some consider the mission to be the dissemination of truth, particularly about the United States; some emphasize the importance of winning friends for the United States; and others view the information service as a weapon against communism. These differing points of view have emerged in the prolonged public debate on the mission of the information program [and] have

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<sup>45</sup>Abbot Washburn, phone interview with author, March 20, 2003.

<sup>46</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 3 (Abridged), “The United States Program for World Order,” 2.

contributed to the uncertainty and confusion among information personnel which has proved such a serious handicap to the development of a coordinated and purposeful program.<sup>47</sup>

The committee continued:

The dissemination of truth is not enough. Friendship for the United States is neither a prerequisite to nor a guarantee of action in the interest of the United States. Anti-communist propaganda may antagonize more foreigners than it convinces. While all of these elements have a legitimate place in an information program, the Committee believes that any program supported by government funds can only be justified to the extent that it assists in the achievement of national objectives.<sup>48</sup>

In other words, the information program must be tied to a national strategy and national goals.

The committee demanded clarity of purpose in the pursuit of U.S. information goals. They wrote:

The primary and over-riding purpose of the information program should be to submit evidence to the peoples of other nations that their own aspirations for freedom, progress and peace are supported and advanced by the objectives and policies of the United States. The efforts of all media—radio, press and publications, motion pictures, exchanges of persons, and libraries and information centers—should be directed to this end: to show the identity of our goals with those of other peoples. These goals and desires which we hold in *common* must be explained in ways that will cause others to *join* with us in achieving them.<sup>49</sup>

This objective can be achieved only on the basis of clear and consistent statements of the American position on major issues. Too

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<sup>47</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 5 (Abridged), “Propaganda and Information Activities in the Free World,” 3-4.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, emphasis in the original.

often the United States speaks with a multitude of voices. Conflicting interpretations of national objectives are a serious handicap to successful persuasion in foreign countries.<sup>50</sup>

But the Jackson Committee report did not simply reiterate the position of the 1952 campaign. It also introduced new features to the administration's discussion of political warfare and made important policy recommendations on content and organization.

### *Multiple Audiences*

Among its tasks, the report examined with great precision the goals and methods of the Soviet political warfare offensive. They concluded that the Soviets sought to isolate the United States internationally and to raise the specter of war so as to intimidate the American public from international engagement and the European public from friendship with the United States. The organization of the international system made such a tactic possible. The committee noted that the Cold War was fought by coalitions: one "imposed" by the Soviet Union, the other "voluntary . . . led by the United States."<sup>51</sup> This characteristic of the Cold War had two profound implications for the conduct of U.S. policy. First, the United States could not guarantee its security in isolation from the rest of the world. Second, the Soviet Union should be expected to

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter One (Abridged), "The Nature of the Conflict," 5.

“intensify its efforts to isolate the United States and to promote the dissension within and between members of the free coalition and also attempt to exploit the weaknesses and gain control of other non-communist countries.”<sup>52</sup> One resulting conclusion was that U.S. information campaigns would need to be aimed at the country’s allies as well as its adversaries.

Not surprisingly, the Jackson Committee placed a priority on the need for U.S. political warfare to contribute to free-world cohesion. “The United States program,” wrote the committee, “as developed and modified by the President and the National Security Council, is designed to build growing strength and cohesion in the free world, so that the free nations will have the unity of purpose and action, backed by power, to create a world order of free and peaceful nations. The ultimate objective of the United States program is the eventual inclusion of the countries now comprising the Soviet system in such a world order.”<sup>53</sup>

Accordingly, the U.S. government, the committee said, needed to respond to Soviet gambits with multiple audiences in mind: the populations in allied nations, in the Soviet satellites, in the non-committed world, and even within the United States. The perception of U.S. policy in each had a direct effect on developments in the others.

In the Jackson Committee’s opinion, the need to consider policy with multiple

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>53</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 3 (Abridged), “The United States Program for World Order,” 17.

audiences in mind affected the most fundamental elements of U.S. strategy, even something as basic as deterrence. After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the two competing systems,<sup>54</sup> the committee outlined the basis for its policy recommendations. First, it ruled on the use of force as a viable option, noting that the committee recognized, “as the President has said, that the only way to win a third World War is to avoid it, the United States will attempt to conduct itself so that general war can be avoided while it moves toward its objectives.”<sup>55</sup> Second, the United States should seek to contain the Soviet Union, lest leaders in Moscow be able to alter the global balance of power in their favor. “Further expansion of the Soviet system would risk the creation of a situation in which no adequate free coalition could be assembled,” wrote the committee, reflecting the broad consensus of observers inside and outside the administration. They continued, “Therefore, the first task of United States policy is to prevent such expansion. This will involve continuous efforts to strengthen the military power, political unity, and the economies of the free nations.”<sup>56</sup> But reflecting Eisenhower’s concerns over the fiscal burdens of unlimited military containment, the Jackson committee noted that “the United States and its allies may not have the capability to prevent by local action the further expansion of the Soviet system at

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 3-8.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

various points which are under attack or threatened, notably in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The United States and other free nations may, therefore, find themselves dependent on the threat of general war to deter Soviet expansion into such areas.”<sup>57</sup>

Domestically, the political/psychological dynamic at work here was double-edged. It was important to give the Soviets reason to pause in the face of American military power, but the Jackson Committee members also realized the need to reassure Americans of their own military security, lest their fear and insecurity limit the conduct of American foreign policy overseas. The committee opined, “In light of the growing Soviet atomic capability, therefore, the development of more effective air and civil defenses at least for the continental United States may become a precondition for continuing freedom of action.”<sup>58</sup>

Internationally, the task confronting U.S. political warfare planners extended far beyond public reassurances. As of 1951, the Jackson Committee noted from NSC documents that five specific tasks were assigned to the managers of U.S. international information activities to achieve the overall goal of deterring Soviet military operations. These tasks were:

- (1) To increase psychological deterrents to communist aggression.
- (2) To intensify, particularly in Western Europe, the growth of

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 9.



- confidence in the free world's ability to stop communist aggression.
- (3) To combat neutralism, particularly in Asia.
  - (4) To maintain hope of liberation among the peoples behind the Iron Curtain.
  - (5) To maintain, particularly in Latin America, a recognition of the mutual interdependence of this area and the United States.<sup>59</sup>

The Jackson Committee report also made specific recommendations on the appropriate tone and content of U.S. information campaigns. The Jackson Committee surveyed the performance of U.S. information programs abroad. It recommended specific changes in the conduct of operations, particularly, by the Voice of America (VOA) in the Soviet Union, but praised U.S. efforts in Eastern Europe and Germany, in particular. Drawing from International Information Agency guidelines, the committee noted three VOA objectives in Eastern Europe:

1. To maintain hope and prevent demoralization under the weight of Soviet oppression by (a) providing continuing evidence of United States and free world concern for their fate; (b) emphasizing growing western strength; (c) reiterating our faith in their eventual liberation; (d) expressing our belief that the Soviet-dominated order will not meet the test of history.
2. To resist the inroads of Sovietization, particularly of satellite youth, by articulating the national and religious traditions of the area, and educating them concerning the meaning of free institutions.
3. To provide reliable, objective and relatively full coverage of developments in the United States and the free world, and accurate commentary on communist activities in the satellites.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 5 (Abridged), "Propaganda and Information Activities in the Free World," 2-3.

<sup>60</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 4 (Abridged), "Operations Against the Soviet System," 5.

Point three is significant. The United States government should seek, the committee suggested, to draw a clear comparison between the Free World and the Soviet Satellites. Drawing attention to Soviet abuses in the satellites was not intended to stir unrest in Eastern Europe, however. In fact, the committee observed latent indicators of unrest already prevalent throughout Eastern Europe. The report observed:

The attitude of the Russian and satellite peoples toward their rulers is another major weakness, especially in times of crisis. Millions of Soviet citizens were ready, for example, to regard the Germans as liberators in World War II. The suppression of religion is an important source of discontent, especially in the satellite counties. The large scale use of terror and slave labor is also a divisive force within the Soviet system.<sup>61</sup>

The report noted, however, that as long as the police and military remained loyal to the regime, there would be little opportunity to exploit this particular vulnerability in Soviet dominated lands themselves. “However,” the report concluded, “the attitude of the regime toward religion and the use of terror and of slave labor are elements of weakness which *can be used to discredit the Soviet system in many countries of the free world.*”<sup>62</sup> Even propaganda efforts evolving from Soviet weaknesses in Eastern Europe would focus on strengthening non-communist regimes in the West, as opposed to toppling regimes in the East.

The assessments of the Soviet threat in the Jackson Committee report was not

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<sup>61</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 2 (Abridged), “The Soviet Drive for World Domination,” 12.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 12-13. Emphasis added.

revolutionary or particularly novel. In fact, they were quite common at the time, and would have been accepted by the Truman administration as well. Still, they formalized the thinking on the threat within the administration, and supported practical decisions on government organization for the threat.

### *Organizational Recommendation*

The committee made one additional significant contribution to the administration's conduct of political warfare. In the committee's views U.S. propaganda and information efforts had suffered in the years since the Second World War due to a variety of factors, including lack of central direction. Despite the establishment of the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) in the Truman administration, the overall international information campaign lacked coordination. The failure to coordinate efforts between various government agencies had resulted in missed opportunities "to take the offensive in global propaganda campaigns. Too often the program has been merely defensive. Lack of coordination has resulted in the haphazard projection of too many and too diffuse propaganda themes. No single set of ideas has been registered abroad through effective repetition."<sup>63</sup> For example, in the spring of 1953, the Eisenhower administration was surprised to learn that there had been no real

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<sup>63</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 5 (Abridged), "Propaganda and Information Activities in the Free World," 6.

concentration within the PSB on what would happen if Joseph Stalin died.<sup>64</sup> Instead of focusing on day to day operations, the Jackson Committee wanted “headquarters staffs of all agencies engaged in information work [to] concentrate more on the conception, planning and coordination of global campaigns. . . .”<sup>65</sup>

As a result of these concerns, the Jackson committee recommended “Creation, within the NSC, of an Operations Coordinating Board [(OCB)], with general responsibility for coordinating the development by departments and agencies of detailed plans for the carrying out of national security policies.”<sup>66</sup> The OCB was composed of the Under-Secretary of State as Chairman, and included the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Director for Mutual Security, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Special Assistant to the President for Cold War Strategy, initially C.D. Jackson<sup>67</sup> The OCB, in fact, was created by Executive Order No. 10483 on September 2, 1953.<sup>68</sup> In the word’s of Fred Greenstein, “The OCB’s job was to see that decisions did not just go into files in the form of re-edited policy papers, but actually

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<sup>64</sup>Abbot Washburn, phone interview with author, March 20, 2003.

<sup>65</sup>*Jackson Committee Report*, Chapter 5 (Abridged), “Propaganda and Information Activities in the Free World,” 6.

<sup>66</sup>“Summary—Jackson Committee Release,” DDE Papers as POTUS, Administration Series, Box 21, Jackson, C.D. 1953 (2), DDEL.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>“Editorial Note,” published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984), 455.

resulted in plans for carrying out the decided policies.”<sup>69</sup>

This blending of the new and the old made the Jackson Committee report significant, for it formally introduced many of the ideas and issues identified by Eisenhower and Dulles in the years and months prior to the election into the formal proceedings of the administration. These issues would be revisited again as the staff of the National Security Council worked to develop a new national security strategy. As Walter Hixson wrote, “The major contribution of the committee, William Jackson observed in 1956, ‘was its insistence that this area was not separate or separable in the organization and conduct’ of foreign policy.”<sup>70</sup> And in the words of another scholar, the Jackson Committee’s work, “played a very important role in the Eisenhower administration’s deep devotion to propaganda, revealing how this presidential administration developed new strategies for undertaking the propaganda offensive against the Soviet Union.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982). The role of the OCB is also discussed in Bradley H. Patterson, Jr., “Eisenhower’s Innovations in White House Staff Structure and Operations,” in Shirley Anne Warshaw, ed., *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 37-38.

<sup>70</sup>Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 24.

<sup>71</sup>Parry-Giles, “Military America’s Propaganda Program, 1945-1955,” 111.

## THE SOLARIUM EXERCISES

On May 8, 1953, Eisenhower met with his national security team in the White House solarium to discuss the broad outlines of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. John Foster Dulles began the discussion with a critical assessment of the Truman administration's legacy. He believed that unless the United States fundamentally shifted its policies from the static to the dynamic, the Soviet Union would slowly sap the United States of its vigor and strength and prevail.<sup>72</sup> Dulles believed the United States had three choices before it. The first involved a global ultimatum: the United States would, in essence, draw a line and tell the Soviets that if any country on the U.S. side of the line fell to communism, either through open hostilities or subversion, the United States would consider that a "*casus belli*." Dulles recognized this policy would risk general war. Alternatively, the United States could draw such a line in Asia only, and provide the same stipulation to the Soviets. Dulles believed this policy would not necessarily risk general war, but would require considerable effort and stamina.<sup>73</sup>

Dulles knew Eisenhower's attitude to policies that risked general war. He knew the president would reject these options outright since anything that risked such a war would be adventurous and irresponsible. Dulles had sought to lay the ground for his

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<sup>72</sup>Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 124.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

third policy option: the “policy of boldness” discussed in the campaign. Dulles urged policies that would make the Soviets think more of keeping what they had instead of expanding their power. He wanted to pursue policies to undermine the Soviet Union, and transform “Stalin’s monolith” by making it “a ‘loose alliance’ with greatly diminished capabilities certain to break apart.”<sup>74</sup>

The discussion between Dulles and Eisenhower which ensued is illustrative of the points of view of the two primary policy makers in the administration. It has been recounted by Bowie and Immerman. They wrote,

While the others remained mostly silent, a dialogue ensued between Dulles and Eisenhower. The president agreed that “the present policy was leading to disaster.” He disagreed that time was America’s enemy, however, because he did not share Dulles’s bleak assessment of the state of the alliance. Hence he rejected the need to accept the risk of general war that both of Dulles’s “drawing the line” options entailed.

Moreover, in expressing his preference for his third option, and dropping the modifier “peaceful” that Eisenhower had insisted that he use during the campaign, the secretary of state seemed to the president to parallel the views of Nitze and NSC 68. The successes that Dulles considered so imperative to shift the cold war’s momentum, Eisenhower said, would come about when the populations of both the East and West “see freedom and communism in their true lights.” That “will take time, but it must be done.” When Dulles replied that “talk about ‘liberty’ doesn’t stop people from becoming communist,” Eisenhower fired back, “It’s men’s minds and hearts that must be won.”<sup>75</sup>

The discussion did not end there, however. Eisenhower believed it warranted

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 124-125.

continuation in a more formal process and instructed the NSC to assemble “teams of bright young fellows” to develop arguments and propose programs to support one of three policy options.<sup>76</sup>

### **Solarium Instructions**

On May 9, 1953, the president’s special assistant for national security affairs, Robert Cutler, issued instructions on the formulation of the three Solarium Task Forces. Each task force had a discreet policy alternative to develop and present before the president and his advisors. The instructions setting the “Solarium Exercise” in motion demanded advocacy—in addition to analysis—from the task forces.<sup>77</sup> Subsequent instructions also demanded that panel participants consider appropriate criticisms of their specific policies.<sup>78</sup>

### *Task Force A*

Task Force A was instructed to make the case for continuing “the general policy, towards the USSR and its bloc, which has been in effect since 1948; as modified by the

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 125-126.

<sup>77</sup>Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, May 9, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 324.

<sup>78</sup>See “Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium,” June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 364.



determination expressed in NSC 149/2 (April 29/53) to bring the Federal budget into balance as rapidly as is consistent with continuing our leadership in the free world and barring basic change in the world situation.”<sup>79</sup> The policy option assigned to Task Force A, according to the memo, was “defensive; it seeks to contain Soviet power by building positions of indigenous strength throughout the free world; it trusts by such show of strength to deter Soviet power from aggression until the Soviets shall decay from internal weaknesses inherent in despotic government; it relies that time is on the side of the free world—that if we can ‘last out’ the Soviets will deteriorate and fail.”<sup>80</sup>

On June 1, 1953, the Directing Panel of the NSC provided functional instructions to each task force. “Alternative ‘A’” was instructed to examine a policy outlined as follows:

a. The policy of the United States as elaborated more fully in NSC 153, would be:

- (1) To maintain over a sustained period armed forces to provide for the security of the United States and to assist in the defense of vital areas of the free world;
- (2) To continue to assist in building up the economic and military strength and cohesion of the free world; and
- (3) Without materially increasing the risk of general war, to continue to exploit the vulnerabilities of the Soviets and their satellites by political, economic, and

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<sup>79</sup>Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, May 9, 1953, 325.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

psychological measures.<sup>81</sup>

Task Force A was instructed to consider time an “advantage of the free world.”<sup>82</sup> The Directing Panel posited and Task Force A was to consider that over time, U.S. and Western power would increase while Soviet relative power would decrease “to a point which no longer constitutes a threat to the security of the United States and to world peace.”<sup>83</sup> This option also included the use of military force to “deter and oppose further expansion of the Soviet bloc . . . even at the grave risk of general war. . . .” although such conflicts would seek to be “localized.”<sup>84</sup>

#### *Task Force B*

Task Force B was instructed to consider a policy that threatened recourse to general

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<sup>81</sup>“Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium,” June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 364. An earlier version of these instructions can be found in Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, May 9, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 325.

<sup>82</sup>“Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium,” June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 364.

<sup>83</sup>“Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium,” June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 364-365.

<sup>84</sup>“Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium,” June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 365. Bowie and Immerman discuss the instructions to each task force as well. For a discussion of the instructions to Task Force A, see Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 125-126.

war with the Soviet Union explicitly if any country not under Communist control fell victim to communist aggression.

The functional instructions given to Task Force B in early June 1953, posited:

a. The policy of the United States would be:

- (1) To complete the line now drawn in the NATO area and the Western Pacific so as to form a continuous line around the Soviet bloc beyond which the U.S. will not permit Soviet or satellite military forces to advance without general war;
- (2) To make clear to the Soviet ruler in an appropriate and unmistakable way that the U.S. has established and is determined to carry out this policy; and
- (3) To reserve freedom of action, in the event of indigenous Communist seizure of power in countries on our side of the line, to take all measures necessary to re-establish a situation compatible with the security interests of the U.S. and its allies.<sup>85</sup>

In other words, Task Force B was to develop ideas to support Dulles's "drawing the line" option.<sup>86</sup> The policy under consideration by Task Force B, postulated that the administration would:

make clear in an appropriate way that the United States has 'drawn a line' about such areas and that we would consider the fall to Communism of any country on our side of such line as grounds for the United States to take measures of our own choosing, including offensive war.

This alternative might be worked out on a grand scale or on a lesser scale. In the first case, the fall of a country on our side of the line

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<sup>85</sup>"Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium," June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 365.

<sup>86</sup>Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 126.

to Communism would be a *casus belli* against the USSR. In the second case, the line might be drawn in a region, such as Asia; and the fall of a country on our side of the line to Communism would involve war against Communist China (but not necessarily global war).<sup>87</sup>

### *Task Force C*

Task Force C was designed to prepare options to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities in the context of broader policies under study by Task Forces A and B. “The objective of such positive alternative,” noted the memorandum, “is to produce a climate of victory, disturbing to the Soviets and their satellites and encouraging to the free world.”<sup>88</sup>

This was the “policy of boldness” favored by Dulles during the campaign and in the discussion in the White House sun-room which initiated the entire exercise. The task force’s mission, then was to defend the policy of “liberation.” The mission was simply stated: “to force the Soviets to shift their efforts to holding what they already have rather than concentrating on gaining control of additional territories and peoples and, at the same time to produce a climate of victory encouraging to the free world.” The task force was to consider policies to “(1) To increase efforts to disturb and weaken the Soviet bloc and to accelerate the consolidation and strengthening of the free

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<sup>87</sup>Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, May 9, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 326.

<sup>88</sup>Memorandum for the Record by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, May 9, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 326.

world, (2) To create the maximum disruption and popular resistance throughout the Soviet Bloc.” Members of Task Force C were told that “this policy is not designed to provoke a war with the Soviet Union, [but] it involves a substantial risk of general war.”<sup>89</sup>

### **General Instructions**

The same memo which provided functional instructions to the task forces, also provided general guidance to shape their deliberations. The project’s purpose, stated the document, was “to formulate and present alternative courses of action which the United States might presently or in the future undertake with respect to Soviet power.”<sup>90</sup> The Directing Panel also prohibited the project participants from considering four specific policy alternatives that ranged from isolationism to advocacy of world government to preventive war and specifically eschewed any “course of action which would, as a deliberate choice, rely solely upon the economic and military strength of the United States.”<sup>91</sup> In other words, the panels would need to consider comprehensive strategies that drew on all of the country’s strengths.

The task forces were given 16 specific instructions about issues to consider

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<sup>89</sup>Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 126.

<sup>90</sup>“Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium,” June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 360.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 362.

such as the sequence of potential policy options, the economic impact of alternative policies, and potential political costs. Three specific issues warrant specific attention.

In particular, the panel asked,

k. To what degree would the proposed actions affect the risk of general war?

l. Would the proposed actions weaken or strengthen the cohesion of the Iron Curtain coalition? What effect would these actions have on the people of these countries? What steps can be taken to enlist the support of populations behind the Iron Curtain?

m. In the event action is directed toward an area now behind the Iron Curtain, what disposition is to be made of the area in the event of success? What are the problems created by (1) success, (2) failure?<sup>92</sup>

These questions demonstrate the relatively cautious, and thoughtful approach of the Eisenhower administration to the development of its national security strategy. They sought to understand the ramifications of their policy choices, perhaps more systematically than any administration since the end of the Second World War.

As Bowie and Immerman put it, each task force was instructed to consider “Forces needed, costs in manpower, dollars, casualties, world relations; intelligence estimates; time-tables; tactics in every part of the world while actions were being taken in a specific area; relations with the UN and our Allies; disposition of an area after gaining a victory therein; influencing world opinion; Congressional action required.”<sup>93</sup>

The task forces were composed of senior policy experts from throughout the

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 363.

<sup>93</sup>Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 125.

government and were matched to the specific teams on which they participated based on their subject area expertise. George Kennan, for example, was a prime participant in Task Force A.<sup>94</sup>

### **Final Presentation of Solarium Reports to NSC**

Ultimately, the Solarium task forces reported on July 16, 1953, to the president and the National Security Council. Their presentations provided a systematic overview of the policy options available to the United States, from containment to rollback.

Eisenhower found the Solarium Exercises tremendously worthwhile. He noted areas of similarity in the presentations. Task Force C, it seemed to him, included the recommendations of Task Force B.<sup>95</sup> In fact, there was considerable overlap in the panels work. Prior to the formal presentation of the task forces' work, the chairman of Task Force B noted, "The essence of Policy B is that it adds to Policy A the sanction of general war," and does so publicly with a warning to the Soviet Union.<sup>96</sup> And the chairman of Task Force C noted that his group would "make some use of B's technique

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>95</sup>July 16, 1953, Project "Solarium," DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 3, DDE Diary, December 1952-July 1953 (1). DDEL.

<sup>96</sup>"Notes Taken at the First Plenary Session of Project Solarium, Washington, June 26, 1953," published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 391.

of threatening the sanction of general war.”<sup>97</sup> George Kennan, the chairman of Task Force A commented to his colleagues that there were similarities between A and B and A and C, although his colleagues pointed out other subtle differences of importance. While option A, for example, did not rule out the recourse to general war, B and C made the warning of general war an explicit part of U.S. policy.

Inspired by the common elements in each task force report, Eisenhower asked that each task force seek to come together and suggest a common framework blending the elements of each.<sup>98</sup> When the task force members protested that their programs could not be blended, Eisenhower instructed Robert Cutler, his assistant for national security affairs to work out a solution. In the end, Cutler worked out a compromise that presented a summary of the task force reports to the NSC for further consideration.<sup>99</sup>

While the Solarium Exercises did not produce any dramatic new options for exploration, they did crystalize thinking within the administration, and particular in

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 392.

<sup>98</sup>Andrew Goodpaster, personal interview with author, March 20, 2003.

<sup>99</sup>Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 138. It should be noted, however, that the Directing Panel of Project Solarium foresaw a possible need for synthesis of the different policy options at the earliest stages of the endeavor. See, for example, “Paper Prepared by the Directing Panel of Project Solarium,” June 1, 1953 published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 362. The Solarium Reports have been published, see “Summaries Prepared by the NSC Staff of Project Solarium Presentations and Written Reports,” undated, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 399-434.



Eisenhower's mind. Ultimately, the president repeated in his notes his long-held concern over any future general war. He wrote, "Global war as a *defense* of freedom almost contradiction in terms."<sup>100</sup> He worried, "the only thing worse than losing a global war was winning one," as the resulting loss of liberties would destroy the very things for which they fought.<sup>101</sup>

It is significant to note that each of the three policy alternatives examined in the course of Solarium contained an important role for the tools of political warfare. Eisenhower was acutely aware of this fact. In hand-written notes, the president observed that the plan presented by Task Force C required, "above all—public opinion," both "at home" and "abroad."<sup>102</sup>

The exercises helped to clarify the administration's overall position on the limits of political warfare. By prohibiting policies which risked general war, the president ended the active consideration of the most ambitious elements of Dulles's favored "policy of boldness." On this point, Bowie and Immerman wrote, "According to Goodpaster, in fact, Eisenhower's decision 'against the rollback policy . . . was

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<sup>100</sup>July 16, 1953, Project "Solarium," DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 3, DDE Diary, December 1952-July 1953 (1), DDEL, [sic.] emphasis in original.

<sup>101</sup>"Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, (Cutler), July 16, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 397.

<sup>102</sup>July 16, 1953, Project "Solarium," DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 3, DDE Diary, December 1952-July 1953 (1), DDEL.

finalized at the time of the Solarium exercise.”<sup>103</sup> But abandoning “rollback” as the policy objective in Eastern Europe did not curtail Eisenhower’s enthusiasm for political warfare nor for using that means to pursue other U.S. ends in the struggle with the Soviet Union.

After considering the Solarium reports at its meeting on July 30, 1953, the National Security Council instructed the Planning Board to draft a new national security strategy based on the results of the work done by the task forces.<sup>104</sup> Staff work continued throughout the late summer of 1953. But the Solarium Exercises were important in and of themselves in that they provided further evidence of the widespread support for the use of psychological tools within the U.S. government, and the administration of Dwight David Eisenhower. Every strategic policy alternative considered in the Solarium project contained a policy of robust use of psychological tools. Taken together, Solarium and the Jackson committee report isolated the major themes and elements which would shape the Eisenhower administration’s approach to national security.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 127.

<sup>104</sup>“Memorandum for Discussion at the 157<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, July 30, 1953” published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 435-440. See also “Memorandum by the Executive Secretary of the Policy Planning Staff (Watts),” August 12, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 441-442.

<sup>105</sup>Abbot Washburn, phone interview with author, March 13, 2003.

## EAST GERMAN UPRISING, JUNE 1953

Events in Eastern Europe did not wait for the administration to draft a new national security strategy. In June of 1953, civil disorder spread across the Soviet controlled sector in Germany. The reaction of the Eisenhower administration to the riots in Berlin and Pilsen in June of 1953 reveal the thinking of the administration's psychological warriors. To planners in the Eisenhower White House, these uprisings demonstrated vulnerabilities ripe for exploitation.<sup>106</sup> A memo prepared for C.D. Jackson, the president's special assistant for psychological operations, suggested a broad range of options.

Notably, the memo emphasized using the uprisings, and the Soviet response, for political and psychological gain. George A. Morgan, acting director of the Psychological Strategy Board at the time, wrote to Jackson,

We should give all possible moral support to the East Berliners' efforts to improve their conditions, in order to help them achieve actual benefits or to stimulate further Soviet repression. This latter would in turn provide us with ammunition at forthcoming political conferences (Bermuda, Korea, etc.), but care should be taken to avoid neutralist

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<sup>106</sup>Tensions between activists like C.D. Jackson and more conservative members of the executive branch, particularly in the Department of State, made the administration's lack of response less certain than it may appear. See Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 180-183.

suspicion of the U.S. as instigators of the East Berlin uprisings.<sup>107</sup>

Morgan continued,

It would be psychologically significant at this juncture to capitalize on the Berlin developments in other parts of Eastern Europe, especially where some resistance has shown its head, such as Czechoslovakia, Rumania, etc., stressing that 'such (in East Berlin) is the way Soviet tyranny answers the workers' demands for a decent standard of living.' This line should be played in the Far East too.<sup>108</sup>

For those responsible for the administration's psychological strategy, then, the East German uprisings provided more fuel for the fire rather than a cautionary note about the limits of American power. In another internal PSB document, the author noted, "The more we can commit the communists either to give in to the Germans and/or to reverse themselves and take more repressive measures, the more we will put them on the defensive."<sup>109</sup>

The United States government, then, was more interested in using the uprisings and Soviet reprisals for further propaganda value than it was concerned for the welfare of the people of Berlin. At the same time, however, the administration sought to avoid the unnecessary loss of life. The memo noted,

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<sup>107</sup>Memo for C. D. Jackson from George A. Morgan, Subject: Berlin, June 18, 1953, Jackson, C.D.: Records, 1953-1954, Box 3, Germany, DDEL.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Memo for George A. Morgan through Mallory Browne from John M. Anspacher, June 17, 1953, Jackson, C.D.: Records, 1953-1954, Box 3, Germany, DDEL.

It will be extremely important to use discreet German outlets to warn the East Berliners and the East Germans for that matter, against exposing themselves to armed force which would achieve nothing, or to sudden reversals of communist policy which would find them out on a limb. In other words, the Easterners should neither get themselves shot in their enthusiasm nor take measures on which they cannot follow through and would leave them at the mercy of the communist authorities at some future date.<sup>110</sup>

Eisenhower and Dulles had struggled in the 1952 campaign to balance the call for liberation with the responsibility of protecting those they sought to make free. When the theoretical discussion of the campaign became real in 1953, the administration still struggled to resolve the tension in its policies.

Finally, the memo noted that at least three East Berliners had been wounded in the first day of rioting. The author suggested that if any of those wounded died, the United States should seek to “martyrize” that person “throughout the world.”<sup>111</sup>

On June 18, 1953, the National Security Council discussed the disturbances in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Among the actions decided by the council, the NSC instructed the PSB “to prepare, for urgent Council consideration at a special meeting if necessary, recommendations as to policies and actions to be taken during the next sixty days to exploit unrest in the satellite states revealed by the recent East

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

German and Czechoslovakian riots.”<sup>112</sup>

On June 25, 1953, Eisenhower wrote Konrad Adenauer in response to the latter’s letter of June 17 detailing the disturbances in Eastern Europe. Eisenhower gave no hint of U.S. response, but affirmed the U.S. commitment to peaceful unification of Germany.<sup>113</sup>

Ten days later, the National Security Council produced a report on “United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States.” It noted that on June 25, the National Security Council met and approved the PSB’s recommendations in their totality with only minor alterations. Notably, however, the NSC insisted on placing greater emphasis on “passive resistance” in Eastern Europe.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>Memorandum for the Psychological Strategy Board, June 19, 1953, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (2), DDEL.

<sup>113</sup>Eisenhower to Konrad Adenauer, June 25, 1953 published in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, The Presidency: The Middle Way*, Volume XIV, 325-326. For a discussion of U.S. policy toward Germany, and in particular the question of German unification, see Klaus Larres, “Preserving Law and Order: Britain, the United States, and the East German Uprising of 1953,” *Twentieth Century British History* vol. 5, no. 3 (1994): 320-350. See also Valur Ingimundarson, “The Eisenhower Administration, the Adenauer Government, and the Political Uses of the East German Uprising in 1953,” *Diplomatic History* vol. 20, no. 3 (1996): 381-409; David G. Coleman, “Eisenhower and the Berlin Problem, 1953-1954,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* vol. 2, no. 1 (2000): 3-34; and on the uses of political warfare after the uprising, see Christian F. Ostermann, “‘Keep the Pot Simmering’: The United States and the East German Uprising of 1953,” *German Studies Review* vol. 19, no. 1 (1996): 61-89.

<sup>114</sup>NSC-158, “A Report to the National Security Council by the Acting Executive Secretary on United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States,” June 29, 1953, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern

In point of fact, it was Secretary Dulles and the president who expressed concern in the NSC meeting about insufficient emphasis on “passive, as opposed to active, resistance.”<sup>115</sup>

The NSC discussion reveals one change in Dulles’ views: the United Nations was not effective as a stage for argument. As the minutes of the NSC meeting reveal, Dulles “spoke of the proposal to bring up in the UN the brutal Russian repression of the uprisings in East Germany. He pointed out the very great danger involved in the attempt to make the UN a propaganda forum when we could not hope for any concrete results. We castigate the Russians for this kind of behavior in the UN, and we must be careful not to open ourselves to the same charge by raising the repression issue.”<sup>116</sup>

Interestingly enough, Eisenhower disagreed, in part, with Dulles. In his speech at Columbia in 1950, Eisenhower had called the UN a vital institution at which to make the West’s case before the court of world opinion. As the NSC minutes related, “While agreeing with the Secretary’s point, the President insisted that careful consideration be given to the question of raising this issue in the UN. Was it a ‘good issue’ in itself, quite apart from the propaganda value which it offered? If it was a good substantive

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Europe (2), DDEL.

<sup>115</sup>“Discussion of the 151<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, June 25, 1953,” June 26, 1953, AWF, DDE Papers as POTUS, NSC Series, Box 4, 151<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the NSC, June 25, 1953, 11, DDEL.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

issue, we should certainly not hesitate to raise it.”<sup>117</sup>

Despite the disagreement between Eisenhower and Dulles, the NSC authorized the following:

- (1) Psychological Objectives
  - (a) To nourish resistance to communist oppression throughout satellite Europe, short of mass rebellion in areas under Soviet military control, and without compromising its spontaneous nature.
  - (b) To undermine satellite puppet authority.
  - (c) To exploit satellite unrest as demonstrable proof that the Soviet Empire is beginning to crumble.
  - (d) To convince the free world, particularly Western Europe, that love of liberty and hatred of alien oppression are stronger behind the Iron Curtain than it has been dared to believe and that resistance to totalitarianism is less hopeless than has been imagined.
- (2) Courses of Action—Phase I (Requiring less than 60 days to initiate)
  - (a) In East Germany and other satellite areas, where feasible, covertly stimulate acts and attitudes of resistance short of mass rebellion aimed at putting pressure on communist authority for specific reforms, discrediting such authority and provoking open Soviet intervention.
  - (b) Establish, where feasible, secure resistance nuclei capable of further large-scale expansion.
  - (c) Intensify defection programs, aimed at satellite police leaders and military personnel (especially pilots) and Soviet military personnel.
  - (d) Stimulate free world governmental, religious, and trade union activities capable of psychological effect behind the Iron Curtain, such as: (1) International campaign to honor martyrs of the

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<sup>117</sup>Ibid.



- East German revolt. (2) Free trade union denunciation of Soviet repression and demand for investigation of basic economic and labor conditions.
- (e) Reemphasize U.S. support for German unity based on free elections followed by a Peace Treaty.
  - (f) Implement NSC 143/2 (Volunteer Freedom Corps) completing discussions as soon as possible with Allied governments.
  - (g) Consider bringing Soviet repression of East German revolt before the UN.
  - (h) Launch black radio intruder operations to encourage defection.
  - (i) Encourage elimination of key puppet officials.
- (3) Courses of Action—Phase II (Requiring lengthy preparation contingent upon developments)
- (a) Organize, train and equip underground organizations capable of launching large-scale raids or sustained guerilla warfare when directed.
  - (b) Consider U.S. advocacy of (1) free elections in the satellites and association with the Western European community, with emphasis on economic cooperation and rehabilitation, and (2) subsequent withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, Austria, and the satellites.
  - (c) Consider new forms of covert organizations based on concepts of: (1) Stimulating Soviet officer conspiracy to establish honorable peace with the West. (2) Cooperation between satellite resistance elements and nationalists in non-Russian Soviet Republics. (3) Cultural appeals to Soviet intellectuals.
  - (d) Consider inclusion of USSR nationals in Phase II of Volunteer Freedom Corps project.
  - (e) Consider large-scale systematic balloon

propaganda operations to the satellites.<sup>118</sup>

The handling of the German uprising in 1953 reveals that the administration did not view the disturbances as an opportunity to split East Germany from the Soviet sphere. Instead, the administration viewed the uprising as an opportunity to further psychological operations, primarily in the West as part of an effort to strengthen western unity.<sup>119</sup>

The valuable sources of propaganda which grew from the Soviet response to the uprisings was significant. In the National Security Council meeting on June 25, 1953, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles noted that the Soviet Union would no longer be in a position to promise free elections in Germany but the United States was.<sup>120</sup>

The full PSB report reflects some of the concern within the administration and the nature of U.S. policies toward Eastern Europe during the earliest of disturbances in

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<sup>118</sup>NSC-158, "A Report to the National Security Council by the Acting Executive Secretary on United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States," June 29, 1953, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (2), DDEL.

<sup>119</sup>The West German government's handling of the crisis in the context of the American policy is considered in Ingimundarson, "The Eisenhower Administration, the Adenauer Government, and the Political Uses of the East German Uprising in 1953," 381-409.

<sup>120</sup>"Discussion of the 151<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, June 25, 1953," June 26, 1953, AWF, DDE Papers as POTUS, NSC Series, Box 4, 151<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the NSC, June 25, 1953, 10.

the Soviet satellite states. The PSB noted that the Kremlin was left with a difficult dilemma. In conceding certain points to the German protesters, they made themselves vulnerable in other satellite states where discontent fomented. The net result, concluded the PSB was that the United States faced a unique moment. They wrote,

This communist dilemma, plus the indications that popular resentment in all the European satellites is near the boiling point, plus the discrediting of the German puppet regime and the revelation that Soviet power in Eastern Germany has no basis but naked force, plus the demonstration furnished by the German rebels that defiance of Soviet authority is not always equivalent to suicide, adds up to the greatest opportunity for initiating effective policies to help roll back Soviet power that has yet come to light.<sup>121</sup>

The report continued,

We must, of course, bear in mind that popular uprisings in the satellites cannot cope with effective military force. The only counteraction here is other military force which the West will not now use. However, the use of military force by the Soviet [sic.] to deal with revolt in a satellite state is a confession of major defeat for their policy, and in areas where there is no Soviet military force present, as in Czechoslovakia, popular uprisings may reach a point where the local military force is unwilling to intervene, thus creating a situation in which the Soviet [sic.] would be forced to cross an international boundary to make its force applicable. In certain situations it is conceivable that the Soviet [sic.] might be reluctant to take this step, especially if it considered there was any danger of the revolutionary infection spreading to its own armed forces.<sup>122</sup>

Despite the vulnerabilities in the Soviet system put on display by the uprisings of June,

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<sup>121</sup>Psychological Strategy Board, "Interim U.S. Psychological Strategy Plan for Exploitation of Unrest in Satellite Europe," June 29, 1953, NSC Staff Papers, NSC Registry Series, Box 16, PSB Documents, Master Book of Volume IV (1), 4-5, DDEL.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

1953, the psychological warriors in the White House understood the limits of their power: a mass uprising could be crushed by military force and the West, particularly the United States, would not do anything to halt it.

Although the East German uprisings occurred and the U.S. response took shape prior to the conclusion of Solarium and the drafting of NSC 162/2, the U.S. response was fully consistent with the policies that would ultimately be embraced as official U.S. policy. There was little Washington could do without risking general war, and this was a risk neither Eisenhower nor Dulles would take.<sup>123</sup> Instead, the United States mounted a program of food aid to the people of East Germany which served both political<sup>124</sup> and humanitarian purposes.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>On Dulles' views on the East German uprising, see Michael A. Guhin, *John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and his Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 177-178.

<sup>124</sup>For an excellent discussion of U.S. policy and the 1953 East German uprising, especially the psychological success of the food program which succeeded in driving a wedge between the East German regime and the population, see Christian Ostermann "Working Paper #11: The United States, the East German Uprising of 1953, and the Limits of Rollback," available online as part of the Cold War International History Project at [www.cwihp.si.edu](http://www.cwihp.si.edu).

<sup>125</sup>The program itself was the cause of internal debate in the administration between those who thought it provided propaganda value, and those who thought it provided humanitarian value. In fact, it provided both. For a thorough consideration, see Ingimundarson, "The Eisenhower Administration, the Adenauer Government, and the Political Uses of the East German Uprising," 185-190.

## NIE 99 AND NSC 162/2

By the autumn of 1953, the intelligence community and the Eisenhower administration had completed their long-range reviews of the Soviet threat and U.S. policy. The two resulting documents were significant for they concluded that the primary threat to the United States, as of 1953, came in the form of Soviet political warfare. The country, could, as a result, re-cast its military forces in a “New Look” relying on deterrence and nuclear weapons as a means of economizing for the long-haul. The U.S. government would prepare for a “new look” in political warfare as well.

### **NIE-99**

National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)-99 was published on October 23, 1953. In examining the world situation over the ensuing two years, the document’s authors concluded, “The USSR will continue its cold war against the Free World, largely through a vigorous political warfare campaign.”<sup>126</sup> Beyond that, the estimate foresaw two years of gradually reducing tensions between East and West. Instead of an opportunity to sit back, the NIE warned that a relaxation in tensions would “present a new challenge to the Free World. While over the longer run the very diversity of the

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<sup>126</sup>National Intelligence Estimate (NIE-99), October 23, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 551. In this conclusion, it differed little from NIE-65, June 16, 1953, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, Volume VIII, 1188-1192, esp. 1191.

Free World may lend it a flexibility and potential for growth that will constitute a source of strength, over the next two years this diversity may prove a source of weakness.”<sup>127</sup> The authors continued, “We believe that in a situation of reduced international apprehensions and [Eastern] Bloc emphasis on divisive tactics, there is a danger of a weakening in the unity of the Free World.”<sup>128</sup> If the NIE was to be believed, then an important task for the United States would be to pursue policies designed to strengthen the cohesion of the West.

The NIE also predicted that “Bloc political warfare capabilities, through exploitation of Western political and economic vulnerabilities, encouragement of anti-Westernism and nationalism in underdeveloped countries, and utilization of the world-wide network of Communist parties, will remain great.”<sup>129</sup> The NIE continued:

During the period of this estimate, the Communist leaders will conduct a vigorous political warfare campaign to undermine the Western power position. At present the Kremlin seems to be trying to give the impression that it has adopted a more conciliatory policy than that followed in Stalin’s later years. The Kremlin may hope by such tactics to relax the vigilance of some Western states, to encourage dissension between the U.S. and its allies, and to delay the progress of Western rearmament. We cannot predict how long such comparatively conciliatory tactics will continue; we believe that harsh courses of action similar to those pursued by the Kremlin in the past will reappear

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<sup>127</sup>National Intelligence Estimate (NIE-99), October 23, 1953, 552.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 553.

whenever the Kremlin deems them advantageous.<sup>130</sup>

The NIE warned that the Soviets might be willing to reach negotiated settlements on minor issues in the interest of international perception, but they would not make any good-faith proposals to resolve any of the outstanding major issues with the West.<sup>131</sup>

NIE-99 warned that the major diplomatic challenge for the United States between 1953 and 1955 would be maintaining the unity of the Free World. The authors wrote,

During the next two years the Free World will have difficulty in maintaining its strength in the face of Soviet divisive tactics and probable reduced apprehensions of East-West conflict. In contrast to the Kremlin's ability to control or influence the close-knit Soviet Bloc, the U.S., as leader of the anti-Soviet powers, faces the complex problems of dealing with the loose anti-Soviet coalition and the agglomeration of other nations of varying neutral tendencies which together make up the Free World. To many of this latter group, particularly the Middle and Far Eastern countries, the East-West struggle seems less important than the solution of their internal problems and the assertion of their independence of the chief Western Powers.<sup>132</sup>

The challenges of leading the West, however, were not limited exclusively to the nature of free political regimes. The United States and its allies perceived the Soviet threat differently, warned the authors of NIE-99. Its authors concluded that as a result, the United States "will have greater difficulty holding together an anti-Soviet coalition and

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 554.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 555.

in securing increased Free World armed strength. The leveling off of the U.S.'s own rearmament effort and the decline in many of its foreign aid program also lessens the sense of urgency abroad."<sup>133</sup>

The United States, then, was faced with a challenge of navigating a course in its international relations that balanced the concerns of its allies and friends with its own interests, while not appearing isolationist. The NIE concluded this was in part an issue of perception:

Influence groups in many Free World countries, including several U.S. allies, doubt the stability, moderation, and maturity of U.S. policy. On the one hand, there is fear the U.S. will shift to a 'go-it-alone' policy or even retreat to isolationism, on the other that the U.S. will involve the Free World in war. These doubts and fears offer a fertile field for Soviet divisive tactics, and the new Soviet regime may be more successful than Stalin in exploiting them.<sup>134</sup>

NATO, warned the NIE, was not immune from these problems. The authors of the estimate warned, "The USSR will attempt to undermine popular support for the NATO alliance and for rearmament, in particular the program to rearm West Germany. These efforts, together with increased Soviet nuclear capabilities, continued intra-European differences, and European disagreements with the U.S. over cold war policies, may lead to more nationalist and neutralist attitudes in Western Europe."<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 555-556.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 556-557.



Secured from military exploits over the next several years, the National Intelligence Council expected the primary threat from the Soviet Union to be in the guise of an aggressive political warfare campaign to split the politically diverse Western coalition. U.S. national security strategy would be shaped, in part, to counter this very challenge.

### **NSC 162/2**

The National Security Council met on October 7, 1953 to discuss a draft national security statement that had grown out of several months of staff study and review. Two opposing camps had emerged in the development of the draft. One side favored emphasizing the strengthening of U.S. defenses regardless of the cost to the economy while the other side emphasized preserving the economy. It was a somewhat ironic internal debate for an administration whose president had ran for office one year previously on a platform of “Security and Solvency.” Ultimately, the members of the NSC distilled the debate down to a statement of the nature of the Soviet threat. The president provided the solution by pointing to language already existing in the draft that said, “the basic problem of national security policy was to ‘meet the Soviet threat to United States security’ and ‘in doing so to avoid seriously weakening the United States economy or undermining our fundamental values and institutions.’”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 165<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, October 7, 1953, undated, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 514-534, especially 522.

Eisenhower had campaigned in 1952 promising an administration dedicated to security and solvency. The campaign slogan was, itself, a basic statement of strategy, implying a dynamic relationship between means and ends that Eisenhower believed sincerely. Making strategy is the art of relating means to ends. Eisenhower understood that despite its wealth, the United States did not have an infinite pool of resource from which to marshal its defense. Accordingly, sound planning and prudent choices would relate means to ends and provide the foundation for a durable national security strategy. These considerations guided much of the president's thinking through the policy reviews of the spring and summer of 1953. By autumn, the administration had arrived at its basic statement of national security strategy known as NSC 162/2.

The Eisenhower administration's first statement of national security strategy began with a basic statement of strategy, which echoed the campaign's calls for security with solvency. The strategy began by expressing "General Considerations," and the "Basic Problem of National Security Policy." The NSC identified the "Basic Problem of National Security Policy," as:

- a. To meet the Soviet threat to U.S. security.
- b. In doing so, to avoid seriously weakening the U.S. economy or undermining our fundamental values and institutions.<sup>137</sup>

The NSC identified numerous elements of the Soviet threat to the United

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<sup>137</sup>"Basic National Security Policy," NSC 162/2, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 578.

States. They included the Soviet Union's military power; and Moscow's "control of the international communist apparatus and other means of subversion or division of the free world."<sup>138</sup> The threat then was not simply a military threat, but one with military and political elements that needed to be addressed.

Soviet peace gestures were not taken seriously. NSC 162/2 noted "The various 'peace gestures' so far have cost the Soviets very little in actual concessions and could be merely designed to divide the West by raising false hopes and seeking to make the United States appear unyielding."<sup>139</sup>

After considering the continued growth of Soviet military power, especially in the form of atomic weapons,<sup>140</sup> NSC 162/2 turned to the European satellites and notes:

5. a. The recent uprisings in East Germany and the unrest in other European satellites evidence the failure of the Soviet to fully subjugate these peoples or to destroy their desire for freedom; the dependence of these satellite governments on Soviet armed forces; and the relative unreliability of satellite armed forces (especially if popular resistance in the satellites should increase). These events necessarily have placed internal and psychological strains upon the Soviet leadership. Nevertheless, the ability of the USSR to exercise effective control over, and to exploit the resources of, the European satellites has not been appreciably reduced and is not likely to be so long as the USSR maintains adequate military forces in the area.

b. The detachment of any major European satellite from the Soviet bloc does not now appear feasible except by Soviet acquiescence or by war.

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<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 578.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 579.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 579-580.

Such a detachment would not decisively affect the Soviet military capability either in delivery of weapons of mass destruction or in conventional forces, but would be a considerable blow to Soviet prestige and would impair in some degree Soviet conventional military capabilities in Europe.<sup>141</sup>

Despite the NSC's belief that psychological tools would be ineffective in detaching a Soviet satellite state for the Eastern bloc—as the foregoing concedes—it still had faith in the value of political warfare in the Cold War. In the first place, a psychological campaign would help secure the political unity of the West in the face of Soviet efforts to divide the NATO allies. Secondly, a psychological campaign might exploit weaknesses in the Soviet bloc that when coupled with other pressures within the Soviet system might lead to policies in the best interest of the United States without necessarily destroying the Soviet Union.<sup>142</sup>

The NSC believed the Soviet Union was unlikely to launch an offensive war against the West, although there were some scenarios in which miscalculation or over-reaction were recognized as potential triggers to major war between the two blocs.<sup>143</sup> Instead, the Soviet were expected to rely heavily on irregular tactics. The NSC concluded:

The USSR will continue to rely heavily on tactics of division and subversion to weaken the free world alliances and will to resist the

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 580.

<sup>142</sup>See Ibid., 581, especially paragraph 8.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 580-581.

Soviet power. Using both the fear of atomic warfare and the hope of peace, such political warfare will seek to exploit differences among members of the free world, neutralist attitudes and anti-colonial and nationalist sentiments in underdeveloped areas. For these purposes, communist parties and other cooperating elements will be used to manipulate opinion and control governments wherever possible. This aspect of the Soviet threat is likely to continue indefinitely and to grow in intensity.<sup>144</sup>

Just as NIE-99 and the report of the Jackson Committee<sup>145</sup> concluded, the most likely threat to the West, including the United States, was, therefore, the potential of Soviet political and psychological efforts to disrupt NATO and the cohesion of the free nations of the world.

To defend against the Soviet threat, NSC 162/2 required sufficient military forces and the “maintenance of a sound, strong and growing economy, capable of providing through the operation of free institutions, the strength described . . . over the long pull and of rapidly and effectively changing to full mobilization.”<sup>146</sup> An adequate defense, also required “Maintenance of morale and free institutions and the willingness of the U.S. people to support the measures necessary for national security.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 581.

<sup>145</sup>The link between the Jackson Committee report and the threat assessment in NSC 162/2 is made by Kenneth A. Osgood, “Form Before Substance: Eisenhower’s Commitment to Psychological Warfare and Negotiations with the Enemy,” *Diplomatic History* vol. 24, no 3 (Summer 2000), 423-424.

<sup>146</sup>“Basic National Security Policy,” NSC 162/2, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 582.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

NSC 162/2 recognized that the protection of U.S. national security required the support and active participation of the major industrialized powers. As a result, it was crucial for U.S. allies to believe that every element of U.S. national security strategy, including the potential use of atomic weapons, was in the best interest of “mutual security and defense against the Soviet threat.”<sup>148</sup> In the interest of allied cohesion, the NSC held open the possibility of negotiated settlements with the Soviet Union.<sup>149</sup>

NSC 162/2 noted the unique problems in allied public opinion. In Europe, the NSC observed, there was discomfort with U.S. leadership: “Many consider U.S. attitudes toward the Soviets as too rigid and unyielding and, at the same time, as unstable, holding risks ranging from preventive war and ‘liberation’ to withdrawal into isolation. . . . These allied attitudes materially impair cooperation and, if not overcome, could imperil the coalition.”<sup>150</sup> Allied publics were also gripped by fear of general war and what such an eventuality would mean for them. When this fear was combined with concern over the burden the United States asked its allies to bear in NATO, both politically and economically, the NSC observed great preference for some sort of

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 583.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 584. Kenneth A. Osgood asserts that this point is crucial to understanding the Eisenhower administration’s conduct of arms control negotiations as a critical aspect of its Cold War strategy. See Osgood, “Form before Substance: Eisenhower’s Commitment to Psychological Warfare and Negotiations with the Enemy,” 405-433.

<sup>150</sup>“Basic National Security Policy,” NSC 162/2, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954: National Security Affairs*, Volume 2, Part 1, 586.

negotiated settlement with the Soviets. “This pressure has increased,” noted NSC 162/2, “with recent ‘peace gestures’ of the new Soviet leadership, which has made very endeavor to exploit it. Whether these hopes are illusory or well-founded, they must be taken into consideration by the United States.”<sup>151</sup>

NSC 162/2 also identified “Uncommitted Areas of the World” as vital to the struggle in the Cold War. While not first-rank nations in 1953, they still held enormous reserves of man-power, raw materials, and potential. Their siding with either the Soviet Union or the United States and their respective allies was considered potentially decisive in the Cold War.<sup>152</sup> The challenges to U.S. policy in these areas was vast. The authors of NSC 162/2 wrote:

In many of these uncommitted areas, forces of unrest and of resentment against the West are strong. Among these sources are racial feelings, anti-colonialism, rising nationalism, popular demand for rapid social and economic progress, over population, the breakdown of static social patterns, and, in many cases, the conflict of local religious and social philosophies with those of the West.<sup>153</sup>

The response of U.S. policy to these dynamic challenges could not be reduced simply to U.S. dollars. Instead, the NSC recognized the need for broad-based political campaigns to curry favor in the developing world. Such a policy was expressed in NSC 162/2 in the following terms:

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<sup>151</sup>Ibid., 587.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid.

Outside economic assistance alone cannot be counted on either to solve their basic problems or to win their cooperation and support. Constructive political and other measures will be required to create a sense of mutuality of interest with the free world and to counter the communist appeals.<sup>154</sup>

Information campaigns, then, were aimed at four audiences: in Western Europe to buttress political support for U.S. policies; in the United States, so the public would pay the cost of the Cold War (addressed in NSC 162/2,<sup>155</sup> and elaborated upon by Eisenhower elsewhere); in the “Uncommitted” world, to bind them better to the West; and behind the Iron Curtain.

When the document turned to policy conclusions, the NSC noted that the likelihood of direct armed aggression by the Soviet Union against the United States or its allies was unlikely in the years immediately ahead. The larger threat was political.

The NSC warned:

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

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 587-588.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 590. After acknowledging that the pursuit of such policies required the support of the American people, NSC 162/2 states: “Accordingly, the American people must be informed of the nature of the Soviet-Communist threat, in particular of the danger inherent in the increasing Soviet atomic capability; of the basic community of interest among the nations of the free world; and of the need for mobilizing the spiritual and material resources necessary to meet the Soviet threat.”



enhanced by their increased atomic capability.<sup>156</sup>

Political considerations permeate NSC 162/2. In addition to strong defensive and offensive military forces, the NSC emphasized the power of perception, not just for the worst-case scenario, but also to maintain the allied coalition. “Such a strong security posture is essential to counter the Soviet divisive tactics and hold together the coalition. If our allies were uncertain about our ability or will to counter Soviet aggression, they would be strongly tempted to adopt a neutralist position, especially in the face of the atomic threat.”<sup>157</sup> In that vein, NSC 162/2 argued, “In the interest of its own security, the United States must have the support of allies”<sup>158</sup> for military basing and manpower, but also because “The loss of major allies by subversion, divisive tactics, or the growth of neutralist attitudes, would seriously affect the security of the United States.”<sup>159</sup>

Accordingly, the NSC concluded that U.S. policy must “be designed to retain the cooperation of our allies, to seek to win the friendship and cooperation of the presently uncommitted areas of the world, and thereby to strengthen the cohesion of the

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<sup>156</sup>Ibid., 590-591.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 591.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid.

free world.”<sup>160</sup>

In terms of specifics, the NSC recommended:

- a. Our allies must be genuinely convinced that our strategy is one of collective security. The alliance must be rooted in a strong feeling of a community of interest and firm confidence in the steadiness and wisdom of U.S. leadership.
- b. Cooperative efforts, including equitable contributions by our allies, will continue to be necessary to build the military, economic and political strength of the coalition and the stability of the free world.
- c. Constructive U.S. policies, not related solely to anti-communism, are needed to persuade uncommitted countries that their best interests lie in greater cooperation and stronger affiliations with the rest of the free world.
- d. To enhance the capacity of free world nations for self support and defense, and to reduce progressively their need for U.S. aid, the United States should assist in stimulating international trade, freer access to markets and raw materials, and the healthy growth of underdeveloped areas. In this connection, it should consider a modification of its tariff and trade policies.
- e. In subsequent fiscal years economic grant aid and loans by the United States to other nations of the free world should be based on the best interests of the United States.<sup>161</sup>

In its calculations, the NSC addressed the political implications of every U.S. action. They stated that the U.S. military was over-extended due to its many deployments. But they conceded that there was little to be done immediately as “any major withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe or the Far East would be interpreted as a diminution of U.S. interest in the defense of these areas and would seriously undermine

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<sup>160</sup>Ibid., 591-592.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., 592.

the strength and cohesion of the coalition.”<sup>162</sup> As a result, it was a task for “diplomacy” to communicate the value accrued to the coalition from the repositioning of U.S. forces, and to convince all concerned that any repositioning did not indicate that the United States would not rally to any ally’s defense.<sup>163</sup>

In reducing the Soviet threat, the United States would improve its own international position, and seek to limit Soviet power through diplomacy while maintaining the capability to counter any Soviet aggression with a robust military response.<sup>164</sup> Beyond that, however, the United States would also rely on covert and overt campaigns to limit and reduce Soviet power and prestige. NSC 162/2 stated:

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

- a. Take overt and covert measures to discredit Soviet prestige and ideology as effective instruments of Soviet power, and to reduce the strength of communist parties and other pro-Soviet elements.
- b. Take all feasible diplomatic, political, economic and covert measures to counter any threat of a party or individuals directly or indirectly responsive to Soviet control to achieve dominant power in a free world country.
- c. Undertake selective, positive actions to eliminate Soviet-Communist control over any areas of the free world.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Ibid., 593.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 594-595.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 595.

The document went on to say,

- a. Measures to impose pressures on the Soviet bloc should take into account the desirability of creating conditions which will induce the Soviet leadership to be more receptive to acceptable negotiated settlements.
- b. Accordingly, the United States should take feasible political, economic, propaganda and covert measures designed to create and exploit troublesome problems for the USSR, impair Soviet relations with Communist China, complicate control in the satellites, and retard the growth of the military and economic potential of the Soviet bloc.<sup>166</sup>

In pursuing its policies, “The United States and its allies must always seek to create and sustain the hope and confidence of the free world in the ability of its basic ideas and institutions not merely to oppose the communist threat, but to provide a way of life superior to Communism.”<sup>167</sup>

The NSC anticipated that the document that would be known as NSC 162/2 might be over-taken by events. The strategy’s final paragraph noted that its conclusions were only valid “so long as the United States maintains a retaliatory capability that cannot be neutralized by a surprise Soviet attack.”<sup>168</sup>

The Eisenhower administration prepared for its political warfare offensive by creating an additional organization beyond the OCB: the United States Information Agency (USIA). As noted earlier, the OCB served to coordinate policies across the

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<sup>166</sup>Ibid..

<sup>167</sup>Ibid.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

executive agencies of the United State government, so that initiatives or policy pronouncements in one area would not over-shadow or counter-act important political warfare initiatives in another. The Jackson Committee, in conjunction with the work of the Advisory Committee on Government Reorganization, chaired by Nelson Rockefeller, provided the impetus to create an independent government agency dedicated to international information activities: the U.S. Information Agency (USIA).<sup>169</sup> USIA served to concentrate U.S. overseas information programs in one bureaucracy.<sup>170</sup>

Shawn J. Parry-Giles explained USIA's mandate as articulated in an internal White-House memorandum of September 30, 1953. According to Parry-Giles:

USIA's broadcasts were to 'present a full exposition of the United States actions and policies.' The OCB determined that while 'the tone and content should be forceful and direct,' a 'propagandists note should be avoided.' In order to cultivate the ethos of a news agency, OCB concluded that VOA broadcasts should 'consist of factual news reporting supplemented by commentaries designed to provide sober and responsible interpretations of events . . . policies . . . and actions of the United States.'<sup>171</sup>

Closest to the president, however, was the man he promised to appoint during the 1952

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<sup>169</sup>Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 25.

<sup>170</sup>Not all thought this organizational innovation was effective. See *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>171</sup>Parry-Giles, "Militarizing America's Propaganda Program, 1945-1955," 114.

campaign: a special presidential assistant on psychological warfare, C. D. Jackson.<sup>172</sup>

With an advocate in the White House, OCB, USIA, and the covert operations of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Eisenhower administration had designed a “new look” in political warfare to compliment the more heralded one in defense. The U.S. government now had a robust political warfare capability designed to wage cold-war from the headlines to the shadows.

Eisenhower continued to take personal interest in U.S. information programs as president. In a letter to William Benton of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eisenhower noted his belief that U.S. needs in information programs fell into “three broad categories.

The first of these is a need for accurate statement of the American position on great questions and problems, embellished only by giving the facts, circumstances and conditions that have brought about the formulations of the policy. This particular function must be done so accurately, with such careful regard for the truth, that it will come to be respected and trusted throughout the world. To my mind this is the real function of the Voice of America. . . .

Another need is the job of representing the American story throughout the world, to friends and enemies alike. It is hopeless to do this by lecturing and pontification. It must be done in many ways. And in most of it the hand of government must be carefully concealed, and, in some cases I should say, wholly eliminated. . . .

A great deal of this particular type of thing would be done through arrangements with all sorts of privately operated enterprises in the field of entertainment, dramatics, music, and so on and so on.

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<sup>172</sup>For an excellent discussion of C.D. Jackson and his relationship with Eisenhower, see H.W. Brands, Jr., *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower's Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 117-137.

Another part of it would be done through clandestine arrangements with magazines, newspapers and other periodicals, and book publishers, in some countries. This entire part must be carefully segregated, in my opinion, from the official statement of American position before the world.

Finally, there is a part of this picture that involves deeds rather than words—the helping out with gifts of wheat or money or Point IV programs, or anything else of related character. These things have a direct impact, and they must be carefully coordinated with all other efforts to present America accurately to the eyes and ears and hearts of the world.<sup>173</sup>

On the subject of deeds, one historian urges others to consider the “transformation of the Mutual Security Program from a military assistance to an economic aid program for Third World nations. . . .”<sup>174</sup>

In the day-to-day conduct of foreign policy, Dulles impressed some with his appreciation of the value of information and its use. One participant in off-the-record meetings Dulles held with reporters noted the use of timed leaks by the secretary. He rejected the notion that Dulles used leaks to buttress his own reputation in the media, and instead insisted, “I think the aim was diplomatic, that he was using it as an

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<sup>173</sup>Eisenhower letter to William Benton, May 1, 1953, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 3, DDE Diary December 1952-July 1953 (3), DDEL.

<sup>174</sup>Quote is verbatim from Stephen G. Rabe, “Historiography: Eisenhower Revisionism: A Decade of Scholarship,” *Diplomatic History* vol. 17 (Winter 1993): 97-115. The historiography from which this quote is drawn references Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower’s Foreign Economic Policy, 1953-1961* (Baltimore, 1982), 7-9, 140, and 207-209.

instrument of power.”<sup>175</sup>

Some historians look at the efforts of the Eisenhower administration and dismiss them as well intentioned, but never reaching their full potential. Walter Hixson, for example, cites the decision to create USIA outside of the State Department as evidence of the administration’s failures. He writes:

The decision to remove the information program from the State Department, however, ensured a certain marginalization of the overseas effort. Contrary to the Jackson committee’s wishes, psychological considerations would not assume a position as the vital “fourth area” along with economic, political, and military affairs in the nation’s overall foreign policy. Despite his own belief in the centrality of propaganda, Eisenhower acquiesced to Dulles’ desire for a separate information agency.<sup>176</sup>

More critically, Hixson laments what he sees as an early pattern in the Eisenhower administration’s handling of its foreign policy and psychological warfare. In Hixson’s words:

A pattern had thus been set at the outset of the Eisenhower administration: the president, an enthusiastic proponent of the overseas program, compromised his own views in deference to Dulles, who perceived the information program as a nuisance as well as a potential threat to his own ability to conduct the nation’s foreign policy.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup>Richard H. Rovere, Interview by Richard D. Challener, 21 January 1965, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 4).

<sup>176</sup>Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 27.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 26. Abbot Washburn seemed both to endorse and to contradict this view. He called Eisenhower a “master” of political-psychological issues, but conceded hostility between the new “advertising goons” at USIA and the “stuffy” diplomats at



The problem with Hixson's criticisms, however, in particular his lament that political warfare failed to assume its position as the "fourth area" of struggle with the Soviet Union is that the author makes these claims without reference to either NSC 162/2 or NIE 99 which clearly stated that political warfare was the primary area of conflict with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Hixson's criticisms also neglect Eisenhower's conviction, in contrast with Truman's, that the Cold War would last decades, not a year or two or five.

In contrast, Shawn J. Parry-Giles argues that political warfare was tailored for Eisenhower's executive control. According to Parry-Giles, collectively, the reforms of policy and bureaucracy in the Eisenhower administration's first several months in office conformed to a "militarized" model for political warfare.<sup>178</sup> Parry-Giles elaborated on its consequences:

This pyramid of propaganda operations allowed Eisenhower to serve as commander in chief of the propaganda program, with the White House functioning as the central command post. In the end, this structure served to lessen outside congressional interference and to expand presidential powers.<sup>179</sup>

The accomplishments of 1953 for the Eisenhower administration were significant. In the words of J. Michael Hogan:

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the department of state. Abbot Washburn, phone interviews with author, March 19, 2003 and March 20, 2003.

<sup>178</sup>Parry-Giles, "Militarizing America's Propaganda Program, 1945-1955," 111.

<sup>179</sup>Ibid.

Radically changing the mission and the character of American propaganda, Eisenhower and his propaganda advisers brought a whole new attitude toward propaganda to the White House. Moreover, they changed the information program in way that shaped the character and direction of the Cold War for years to come.<sup>180</sup>

Hogan continued:

Unlike the “Ike” of conventional wisdom, Eisenhower did not stand aloof from the planning of his administration’s Cold War propaganda strategy. He instigated a debate over propaganda by appointing the Jackson Committee in the first place, and he closely monitored the committee’s work. When the committee finished its report, Eisenhower worked hard to implement its recommendations. When both the atomic scientists and some of his closest propaganda advisers pushed for candor about the horrors of an atomic attack, Eisenhower personally rejected the idea, insisting on his more “positive” alternative: Atoms for Peace. In the area of Cold War planning, at least, Eisenhower hardly seemed the “passive negative” president criticized by James David Barber. Instead, he was the “intelligent, decisive, and perceptive” Ike of the revisionist portrait, the Ike for whom rhetoric was an important “weapon in the arsenal of the Cold War.”<sup>181</sup>

Policy, however, is not made in a vacuum. In the years to come, personalities and international developments would shape the administration’s use of political warfare in many ways. But from the earliest days of the administration, the use of political warfare was an intimate aspect of the administration’s over-all national security strategy.

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<sup>180</sup>Hogan, “The Science of Cold War Strategy,” 135.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid., 162.

## CONCLUSIONS

Over the course of the administration's first ten months, President Eisenhower and his advisors studied, reviewed, and revised the basic assumptions of U.S. national security policy, the role of information campaigns and political warfare; they instituted important reforms, appointed prominent and capable personnel, and committed the administration to wage "cold" war.

The administration's review of international information programs, the Jackson Committee, produced a report of great scope. It examined the range of possible threats to U.S. national security and ultimately concluded the primary threat came in the form of political warfare which threatened to isolate the United States from its friends, alienate it from vast regions of current and former European colonies, and undermine the will of the American people to shoulder the responsibilities of international leadership. The committee recommended a U.S. political warfare offensive to counter the threat posed by the Soviet Union, and aimed at the multiple audiences the Soviet campaign held at risk.

The 1953 riots in Berlin revealed the tensions in the administration's preferred use of psychological means. U.S. policy, in essence, required a certain amount of tension in the international system to persuade domestic and international public opinion that strong policies were necessary, and their associated costs must be borne.

An incident like the Berlin disturbances could only help the United States make its case. But at the same time, the United States sought to avoid actions and statements that would lead to the senseless loss of life. It was a fine-line to walk in the conduct of policy.

In issuing NSC 162/2, however, the administration committed itself to a national security strategy predicated on the political-psychological dimensions of the Cold War. The United States would maintain a robust military deterrent, but it would also rely on psychological and political means to advance U.S. interests. In 1953, this policy continued to rely on propaganda and covert measures to foment discontent within the Soviet sphere. Within a year, however, the tactics used to pursue this policy would begin to change. Still, Eisenhower had delivered on his campaign promises of 1953: the United States was organized to wage cold war, and international political-psychological considerations had risen to the highest level of executive decisions as the best means to advance U.S. interests.



A CONSISTENCY OF PURPOSE:  
POLITICAL WARFARE AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY  
OF THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME TWO OF TWO

A Dissertation  
submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
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Doctor of Philosophy  
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By

James M. Ludes, M.A.

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## Chapter 4 National Security Strategy and Political Warfare: 1953-1956

*“Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.”*

In his memoirs, Dwight David Eisenhower recalled a Latin inscription he kept on his desk in the Oval Office: *“Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,”* (Gently in manner, strongly in deed).<sup>1</sup> Some critics of the Eisenhower administration’s cold war policies would find the inscription ironic and might argue, in fact, that Eisenhower’s policies would be best reduced to an inscription that read “Strong in word, weak in deed.”<sup>2</sup>

The conclusions advanced by these authors are inaccurate in two key respects. First, in a political warfare strategy, words are deeds and can be very powerful weapons in a battle of ideas. Second, and perhaps more fundamentally, these critics, with the

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<sup>1</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963) 148.

<sup>2</sup>There are numerous critics of the Eisenhower administration’s conduct of national security strategy, particularly the administration’s handling of Eastern Europe. While none used this specific expression, it is an accurate and defensible depiction of their view of the Eisenhower administration’s conduct of policy. For example, see Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991); and Kovrig, *Myth of Liberation: East Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics since 1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). Ronald R. Krebs, *Dueling Visions: U.S. Strategy Toward Eastern Europe under Eisenhower* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America’s Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Scott Lucas, *Freedom’s War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); and László Borhi, “Rollback, Liberation, Containment, or Inaction? U.S. Policy and Eastern Europe in the 1950s,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1999): 67-110.

exception of Gregory Mitrovich, tend to view U.S. policy towards Eastern Europe as a singular issue independent of competing policy priorities. From their perspective, the Eisenhower administration's policy toward the Soviet- dominated areas of Eastern Europe can and should be judged without reference to broader national security considerations.

In fact, the Eisenhower administration's policy toward Eastern Europe was but one sub-policy of the over-arching national security strategy first articulated in 1953. While specific issues would bubble up to the surface in terms of immediate priority given real world exigencies, no policy issue confronted by the National Security Council between 1953 and 1956 can be seriously considered without reference to the broader, over-arching national security strategy first articulated in NSC 162/2.

U.S. policy towards Eastern Europe was no different. It must be viewed in the strategic context Eisenhower and his advisors confronted over the years in question. As assessments of the international system shifted, due to political or military-technical developments, be they the decline of McCarthyism, the process of de-Stalinization, or the growth of Soviet nuclear capabilities, the administration modified its national security strategy and the whole slate of policies which derived from the broader statement of strategy.

In this light, the Eisenhower administration's conduct of policy in Eastern Europe is understood as one element in a broader cold war campaign to build western



political unity and military might, while exploiting Soviet vulnerabilities. Over the period examined in this chapter, the administration came to realize that these discreet policy goals had occasional unintended consequences and contradictory outcomes. As a result, the administration engaged in a nearly continuous process of refinement and modification seeking to balance multiple, sometimes competing, U.S. interests.

This chapter will survey the conduct of U.S. national security strategy in the period from 1953 to mid-summer 1956. In doing so, it will demonstrate that U.S. policies in Eastern Europe and the use of political warfare instruments in general must be viewed in the context of the larger Cold War and the broader policy goals of the administration.

## **1953**

### **Rhetoric and political warfare**

Rhetoric was a crucial element in the Eisenhower administration's conduct of cold war.<sup>3</sup> According to Martin Medhurst,<sup>4</sup> Eisenhower, despite a reputation as a poor

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<sup>3</sup>For an insight into Eisenhower's speech-writing, see Meena Bose, "Words as Signals: Drafting Cold War Rhetoric in The Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations," *Congress and the Presidency* vol. 25, no. 1 (1998): 23-41.

<sup>4</sup>Of the historians and scholars to have studied the Eisenhower presidency, Martin Medhurst has done more to advance the understanding of Eisenhower's use of rhetoric as an element of political warfare than anyone else. A scholar of speech communication, Medhurst brings an appreciation for the value of words and symbols to

orator, used rhetoric with skill and to great effectiveness. Understanding Eisenhower's use of rhetoric, which Medhurst defines as "both language as action and action as language,"<sup>5</sup> is crucial to understanding the administration's conduct of the Cold War.

Medhurst wrote:

For Eisenhower rhetoric was a productive art—productive of something beyond itself. It was an instrument, a weapon to be used in the ongoing Cold War, not a fine art to be admired. Indeed, Eisenhower had no use whatsoever for speaking just for the sake of speaking. James David Barber recorded a standard Eisenhower response when asked to give a speech: "What is it that needs to be said? I am not going out there just to listen to my tongue clatter!" When Eisenhower spoke, he did so for a reason.<sup>6</sup>

*The "Chance for Peace"*

The death of Joseph Stalin on March 5, 1953 offered the new administration a unique opportunity to seize the initiative in the Cold War through the use of rhetoric, and gave the president a reason to speak.<sup>7</sup> Eisenhower appreciated that any statement he made

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the study of Eisenhower's conduct of cold war. Among his other works, see *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Strategic Communicator* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993) and the edited volumes *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994) and, co-edited with H.W. Brands, *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup>Martin Medhurst, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Strategic Communicator*, 72.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>7</sup>The bureaucracy churned on this issue for several months with numerous studies, comments, and opinions. For a representative sample, see documents published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII (Washington, DC: GPO, 1988), 1080-1144. For an interesting discussion that dates the genesis of the address to a meeting at Princeton University in May 1952, see "Paper Prepared by Walt Whitman Rostow,

after Stalin's death would be "a psychological and not a diplomatic move."<sup>8</sup> Five weeks later, on April 16, 1953, Eisenhower launched a major rhetorical and political campaign in a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. This speech, known as the "Chance for Peace," was designed to appeal to a global audience, not just the people of the Soviet Union or the United States. It was the first effort by the administration to seize the initiative in the Cold War from the Soviet Union and it sought to exploit the internal divisions in the Soviet regime following Stalin's death.<sup>9</sup>

According to Eisenhower, the proposals in his "Chance for Peace" speech were "deliberately specific," not in the expectation that the Soviet response would be favorable, but to "put the nation's deepest aspirations in the record, where they could

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology," May 11, 1953, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 1173-1183. See also Walt Whitman Rostow, *Europe After Stalin: Eisenhower's Three Decisions of March 11, 1953* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982). In addition, see Klaus Larres, "Eisenhower and the First Forty Days after Stalin's Death: The Incompatibility of Detente and Political Warfare," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* volume 6, number 2 (July 1995): 431-469; and John J. Yurechko, "The Day Stalin Died: American Plans for Exploiting the Soviet Succession Crisis of 1953," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 3 (May 1980): 44-73. For a discussion of the trans-Atlantic policy debate, see M. Steven Fish, "After Stalin's Death: The Anglo-American Debate over a New Cold War," *Diplomatic History* vol. 10, no. 4 (1986): 333-355.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Robert L. Ivie, "Eisenhower as Cold Warrior" in Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower's War of Words*, 13.

<sup>9</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 148. For a detailed discussion of the "Chance for Peace Speech" and its exploitation by the new White House organization for political warfare, see Shawn J. Parry-Giles, "Militaryizing America's Propaganda Program, 1945-1955," in Medhurst and Brands, eds., *Critical Reflections on the Cold War*, 115-123.

be examined and studied by all the world, including the Russians.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, Eisenhower was using his speech as part of his administration’s information campaign to demonstrate the peaceful intent of the United States to allies and foes alike.

Eisenhower’s challenge<sup>11</sup> to Stalin’s successors was political. His speech depicted the United States as peace loving and noted the epochal moment embodied in Stalin’s death. With the tension of the post-war years in mind, Eisenhower asked “is there no other way the world may live?”<sup>12</sup> The answer Eisenhower wanted to hear was embodied in a range of policies the Soviet Union could embrace. They included Soviet consent to the Austrian peace treaty and the release of prisoners of war still held from the Second World War.<sup>13</sup>

More than these specifics, however, Eisenhower articulated a positive vision of the world that would challenge the Soviet Union to respond. This vision embraced the idea of a European community, the free movement “of persons, of trade, and of

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<sup>10</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 148.

<sup>11</sup>Medhurst discusses the use of public challenges by Eisenhower, in particular the “Chance for Peace Speech” in Medhurst, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Strategic Communicator*, 78-80.

<sup>12</sup>Address “The Chance for Peace” Delivered Before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 183.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 184.

ideas.”<sup>14</sup> It envisioned a democratic, free, and united Germany. It foresaw the independence of the peoples of Eastern Europe. And it predicated itself on “the reduction of the burden of armaments” through “the most solemn agreements.”<sup>15</sup>

With such a positive vision established, Eisenhower again returned to the question which repeated like a refrain in his speech: how would the Soviet Union respond? A classic technique in political warfare is to frame the issues of the debate in such a way as to draw benefit from any response or, indeed, a lack of response. If the Soviet Union were to embrace the specific proposals offered in Eisenhower’s speech, the administration could claim, rightly, that the Soviet Union had joined them in the quest for meaningful peace. But as Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs, such an outcome was not expected. If the Soviet leadership endorsed elements of the president’s proposals, the United States would seize the initiative in the Cold War and be positioned to press its advantage. Finally, if the Soviet Union refused to pursue any of the American proposals, the United States would be in a position to counter any Soviet “peace offensives” with the public record of Soviet resistance to sincere American proposals—a valuable asset in the battle for hearts and minds around the world.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>See Robert L. Ivie, “Eisenhower as Cold Warrior” in Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower’s War of Words*, 18; and Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 325-326. For a more critical assessment, see Lucas, *Freedom’s War*, 205.

Eisenhower stated this explicitly in his speech when he said:

The test is clear.

There is, before all peoples, a precious chance to turn the black tide of events. If we failed to strive to seize this chance, the judgement of future ages would be harsh and just.

If we strive but fail and the world remains armed against itself, it at least need be divided no longer in its clear knowledge of who has condemned humankind to this fate.<sup>17</sup>

The psychological warriors in the administration followed this public challenge with measures to ensure that the whole world was aware of it and the Soviet response.<sup>18</sup>

Robert L. Ivie described the tasks associated with this information campaign:

The domestic press, radio, and television would have to be prepared for the message, as would foreign press representatives in Washington. A full text of the speech would be cabled to the heads of U.S. missions abroad, with a covering memorandum from the State Department to explain the text's importance and to insure that it would be called to the attention of colleagues in the diplomatic corps as well as the foreign and prime ministers of host countries. . . . Furthermore, USIS missions and the public affairs or press attachés of the U.S. missions would be instructed to have the full text of the speech translated and distributed widely in pamphlet form throughout each country. U.S. ambassadors would hold press conferences emphasizing the essential points of the president's message, and the International Information Administration would prepare editorials and feature articles "to be fed to foreign journalists who may want to make these ideas their own." Further steps were envisioned to coordinate with Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, as well as the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, the CIA, all of Eisenhower's cabinet officers, the information chiefs of the various government departments and agencies,

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<sup>17</sup>Address "The Chance for Peace," 187-188.

<sup>18</sup>The organization used to exploit the president's speech is detailed in an internal memo "Staff Support for PSB Implementation of NSC Action 734 d (3)," March 19, 1945, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 1135-1136..

and others. Films of the president's speech were distributed worldwide, and motion pictures were produced to explain and dramatize Eisenhower's essential points.<sup>19</sup>

The great effort given to disseminating Eisenhower's "Chance for Peace" speech, asserts Medhurst, is further evidence "that the speech itself was a carefully crafted piece of Cold War propaganda."<sup>20</sup>

### *"Atoms for Peace"*

The rhetorical exercise was repeated in late 1953 with the president's address before the United Nations General Assembly on December 8.<sup>21</sup> This address, known as "Atoms for Peace" served two purposes: one to educate the American public about the atomic peril posed by the Soviet Union; and the second, to publicly challenge the Soviet Union to either accept an American initiative<sup>22</sup> or reject an apparent path to

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<sup>19</sup>Ivie, "Eisenhower as Cold Warrior" in *Eisenhower's War of Words*, 12-13.

<sup>20</sup>Martin Medhurst, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Strategic Communicator*, 79.

<sup>21</sup>The full text of the speech can be found in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), 813-822.

<sup>22</sup>The "Atoms for Peace" speech proposed an International Atomic Energy Agency as a repository of nuclear materials and expertise, contributed to by the nuclear powers, as a means of spreading the peaceful potential of the atom.

peace.<sup>23</sup> Like the earlier “Chance for Peace” speech, the psychological warriors distributed the speech widely. A March 1, 1954 review of USIA programs in 1953 noted, “over 300,000 copies in 10 languages of the highlights of the President’s UN speech on atomic energy were distributed by 263 U.S. business firms in their regular correspondence going overseas.”<sup>24</sup>

According to Medhurst, the global appeal of these U.S. challenges made moot the fact that they produced little in the way of diplomatic achievement.<sup>25</sup> According to Robert L. Ivie, these speeches collectively served to gird American policies in the target audiences identified in the 1953 policy reviews: behind the Iron Curtain, in allied countries, especially in Western Europe, in the non-aligned world, and in the United States. These speeches were “designed to bolster public opinion by characterizing

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<sup>23</sup>Ivie, “Eisenhower as Cold Warrior” in *Eisenhower’s War of Words*, 19. For further discussion of the “Atoms for Peace” proposal, see Joseph F. Pilat, Robert E. Pendley, and Charles K. Ebinger, eds., *Atoms for Peace: An Analysis after 30 Years* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985); and Richard G. Hewlett and Jack M. Holl, *Atoms for Peace and War* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989). See also David Tal, “Eisenhower’s Disarmament Dilemma: From Chance for Peace to Open Skies Proposal,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* vol. 12, no 2, (2001): 175-196, and Kenneth A. Osgood, “Form Before Substance: Eisenhower’s Commitment to Psychological Warfare and Negotiations with the Enemy,” *Diplomatic History* vol. 24, no 3 (2000): 405-433.

<sup>24</sup>NSC 5407, Part 7 – The USIA Program (August 1, 1953-December 31, 1953), White House Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 4, NSC 5407 (6) Status of U.S. National Security Programs on December 31, 1953, DDEL, 3.

<sup>25</sup>Medhurst, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Strategic Communicator*, 80.



America's Cold War policy, including its dangerous dependence on nuclear deterrence, as the only option remaining after several good-faith initiatives for peace were rebuffed by an intransigent and untrustworthy adversary."<sup>26</sup> They also served to put the onus for the Cold War on the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup>

### **NSC 174: U.S. Policy toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe**

The rhetoric of the "Chance for Peace" and "Atoms for Peace" speeches was designed to appeal to broad, international audiences. The administration also developed more specific policies for specific regions, including Eastern Europe. These policies too, however, were designed in accordance with the parameters articulated in NSC 162/2.

The NSC predicated U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe on several assumptions. For one, they believed anti-communism thrived as a barrier to Soviet consolidation of control in the region due to two reasons: the recent memories of political and civil freedoms and the "continued refusal of the West to accept the permanence of the imposed satellite regimes. . . ."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ivie, "Eisenhower as Cold Warrior" in *Eisenhower's War of Words*, 13.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>28</sup>NSC 174 Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, December 11, 1953, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 111-112. *FRUS* published the proposed policy. The actual policy statement was adopted on December 23, 1953 with

In addition, the planners recognized the value and limits of Tito's break with the Soviet Union. For example, the report observed that the evolution of a regime akin to Tito's in Yugoslavia would be unlikely to develop anywhere else in the region, but that Tito's success in Yugoslavia provided the West with a propaganda tool of the first-order.

Ultimately, the report concluded there was little prospect of freeing any of the satellites from Soviet control. The NSC observed, "The detachment of any major European satellite from the Soviet bloc does not now appear feasible except by Soviet acquiescence or by war."<sup>29</sup>

The policy conclusions which flowed from this analysis were many. The document stated:

It is in the national security interests of the United States to pursue a policy of determined resistance to dominant Soviet influence over the satellites in Eastern Europe and to seek the eventual elimination of that influence. Accordingly, feasible political, economic, propaganda and covert measures are required to create and exploit troublesome problems for the USSR, complicate control in the satellites, and retard the growth of the military and economic potential of the Soviet bloc. Decisions on such measures to impose pressures on the Soviet bloc should take into account the desirability of creating conditions which will induce the

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only one minor, two-word, change in the original draft text.

<sup>29</sup>NSC 174 Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, December 11, 1953, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 113.

Soviet leadership to be more receptive to acceptable negotiated settlements.<sup>30</sup>

The “Long-range” goal of U.S. policy was “The eventual fulfillment of the rights of the peoples in the Soviet satellites to enjoy governments of their own choosing, free of Soviet domination and participating as peaceful members of the free world community.”<sup>31</sup>

In the short term, however, U.S. policy sought to “disrupt the Soviet-satellite relationship, minimize satellite contributions to Soviet power, and deter . . .” aggressive Soviet policies worldwide by forcing Soviet leaders to concentrate on problems in their own sphere. In addition, U.S. policy sought to create “conditions favorable to the eventual liberation of the satellite peoples.” More ominously, the United States would “lay the groundwork, as feasible with reasonable risk, for resistance to the Soviets in the event of war.”<sup>32</sup>

Eisenhower’s mandate against policies that relied on or risked war permeated NSC 174, particularly its discussion of “Courses of Action.” It noted:

Use appropriate means short of military force to oppose, and to contribute to the eventual elimination of, Soviet domination over the satellites; including when appropriate, concert with NATO or other

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

friendly powers, resort to UN procedures, and, if possible, negotiation with the USSR.<sup>33</sup>

In terms of “liberation”, U.S. policy sought to “encourage and assist the satellite peoples in resistance to their Soviet-dominated regimes, maintaining their hopes of eventual freedom from Soviet domination, while avoiding. . .” a range of undesired outcomes, including “premature revolt,” expectations or perceptions of a U.S. commitment to liberation on a specific time-frame, as well as any “incitement to action” which would be counter to U.S. interests.<sup>34</sup>

The Eisenhower administration preferred the evolution of free, democratic regimes in Eastern Europe. But it was not averse to other alternatives, and official policy held open the prospect of U.S. aid and support to “national communist” movements—such as Tito’s.<sup>35</sup>

Above all, U.S. policy makers wanted options so that U.S. policies could be best suited to opportunities as they arose. Accordingly, the United States would pursue flexible economic policies in Eastern Europe, continue diplomatic relations in Eastern Europe, cultivate relationships with exile groups but not recognize any governments in

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 114-115. Ronald Krebs discusses the alternative policy goals pursued by the Eisenhower administration in Ronald R. Krebs, *Dueling Visions: U.S. Strategy toward Eastern Europe under Eisenhower* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2001).

exile, pursue propaganda opportunities, and monitor the situation.<sup>36</sup>

The staff report which accompanied the draft of NSC 174 makes clear why the United States could not commit to the armed liberation of Eastern Europe. The report's authors considered three alternative courses of action: liberation by force, acquiescence in Soviet domination to concentrate on containment in other regions, and a third, middle course that acknowledged the current Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, but refused to recognize it as permanent or acceptable and tailored specific policies to current circumstances.<sup>37</sup> The staffers rejected, as Eisenhower had, the notion of armed liberation. They wrote:

A deliberate policy of attempting to liberate the satellite peoples by military force, which would probably mean war with the USSR and most probably would be unacceptable to the American people and condemned by world opinion, cannot be given serious consideration.<sup>38</sup>

Instead,

The United States should, however, direct its efforts toward fostering conditions which would make possible the liberation of the satellites at a favorable moment in the future and toward obstructing meanwhile the processes of Soviet imperialism in those areas.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>NSC 174 Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, December 11, 1953, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 115.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 124-125.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 125-126.

The NSC would rely on propaganda, information campaigns, and political warfare in all of its forms as the means of executing this policy.<sup>40</sup>

### **Information Campaigns in Practice**

The Eisenhower administration's enthusiasm for information campaigns is well documented, as demonstrated by the Jackson Committee's work, the creation of the Operations Coordinating Board, and the organization of USIA, as well as the personal commitments of Eisenhower and Dulles to the work of the Committee for a Free Europe, including Radio Free Europe. Despite this enthusiasm, USIA was only one policy instrument at the president's disposal, supporting one aspect of the broader national security strategy.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>41</sup>For a good examination of the multitude of activities undertaken in political warfare during the Eisenhower administration, see Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). For a recent examination of the role of U.S. broadcasting, see Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, 2000). Although Puddington worked for RFE in the 1980s, the account is reasonably balanced. See also Sig Mickelson, *America's Other Voice: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (New York: Praeger, 1983); Leo Bogart, *Premises for Propaganda: The USIA's Operating Assumptions in the Cold War* (New York, Free Press, 1976); Donald Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting: The Limits of the Limitless Medium* (New York: Praeger, 1982); Robert Pirsein, *The Voice of America* (New York, Arno Press, 1979); Gary Rawnsley, *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and Voice of America in International Politics, 1956-1964* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); K.R.M. Short, ed., *Western Broadcasting over the Iron Curtain* (London: Croon Helm, 1986); Thomas Sorensen, *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda* (New

Not surprisingly, an administration promising security and solvency made budget cuts in its first year. In the case of USIA, the fiscal year 1954 budget constituted a 37% decrease from the previous fiscal year. The more than one-third reduction in operating funds for the new bureaucracy meant that USIA's leadership began its tenure by reorganizing and streamlining the agency's operations. Overseas library programs were slightly reduced, from 184 libraries operating in 65 countries to 158 libraries in 63 countries. Other programs were cut more aggressively. The film program, for example, incurred a 50% reduction and content was changed from "Americana" to more strident anti-communist appeals. The operations of Voice of America were reduced by 25%, with attention focused on operations in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe where only radio provided access to the population. Short-wave broadcasts in the free world were eliminated and energies re-directed to local networks in those regions. Spending by region was cut almost uniformly by one-third, except in Europe where USIA operations were reduced by almost 50%.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the restraints imposed by budgetary limitations, USIA's efforts continued to support the national security strategy of the administration. The agency's

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York: Harper and Rowe, 1968); J. Gerrit Gantvoort, "Lifting the American Iron Curtain: Cultural Exchange with the Soviet Union and National Security, 1955-1956," in Joann P. Krieg, ed., *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 183-196; and James Critchlow, *Radio Hole-in-the-Head: Radio Liberty* (Washington, DC: The American University Press, 1995).

<sup>42</sup>NSC 5407, Part 7 – The USIA Program (August 1, 1953-December 31, 1953), 3.

operations were shaped to the unique needs of target audiences around the world. In Western Europe, for example, USIA broadcasts aimed at fostering free-world unity and cohesion.<sup>43</sup> In Eastern Europe, in contrast, USIA sought:

to nourish popular resistance in this area to Soviet policies and programs in order to impede the consolidation of Soviet control over the people and Soviet exploitation of the regions resources; and to strengthen faith and confidence in the eventual liberation of that area from Soviet domination.<sup>44</sup>

The “liberation” rhetoric of the 1952 campaign received repeated hearings in USIA programs in 1953. According to the agency’s own account, it:

exploited developments during the period to emphasize, for example: U.S. conviction concerning the certainty of the eventual triumph of freedom; our resolve to restore liberty to the countries of Eastern Europe; U.S. desire to see free, unfettered elections in the European countries under Soviet domination; the growing unity and strength of NATO; the success of Tito in sustaining Yugoslavia’s independence and emergence; the U.S. Escapee Program as concrete evidence of continuing U.S. interest and concern for the welfare of the Soviet-satellite nations and of their nationals escaping to freedom.<sup>45</sup>

More ominously, however, USIA information programs emphasized, particularly in the wake of the June 17 disturbances in East Germany, that resistance to the communist regimes and the Soviet Union was not futile. In fact, “USIA efforts were directed at encouraging the view that Soviet power in the satellite world is not impregnable, that

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.



resistance manifested by the East Germans had achieved concrete successes and that the potentials of popular resistance are greater than many had dared imagine.”<sup>46</sup>

In these broadcasts, the USIA was guilty of distorting the truth about popular resistance to Soviet power without considering how such rejoinders could be interpreted in a restive population. Where Eisenhower’s rhetoric before the National Association of Newspaper Editors and the United Nations had set political traps for the leaders of the Soviet Union, the rhetoric of USIA in 1953 encouraged popular resistance to Soviet authority and power as productive. There was a considerable difference between the rhetoric employed by the USIA and the president in 1953. But both examples were fully consistent with the stated national security policy in the first year of the Eisenhower administration.

## **1954**

The Eisenhower administration’s conduct of national security strategy and political warfare in 1954 featured a notable and profound reconsideration of the content and intent of U.S. information programs and political warfare initiatives. In the course of that year, the administration recognized that the vitriol of its programs to undermine the authority of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe would not and could not achieve the

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

stated objectives of U.S. policy in the short-term. By the end of the year, a committee of outside experts concluded U.S. exploitation of Soviet vulnerabilities required a more sophisticated and subtler approach. By 1955, the NSC would sanction these conclusions in formal U.S. policy. Throughout this process, however, the link between overall strategy and the conduct of policy remained intact.

### **Evolution in National Security Strategy**

Approximately one year after Stalin's death, some in the administration began to consider whether or not the United States could increase the pressure on the Soviet Union, particularly in Eastern Europe. Country experts at the Department of State criticized this notion in a memo to the White House on March 2, 1954. They noted that some thought more aggressive policies were possible "since the chances of Soviet military aggression during 1954 are lower than they have been for a long time."<sup>47</sup> While they conceded that the prospect of Soviet aggression had diminished and that circumstances may permit more aggressive—though undefined—policies, they did not believe that the Soviet regime would sit by idly and not respond to any U.S. action deemed hostile to their interests. They wrote:

However, . . . it would be extremely dangerous to assume that the USSR, because of internal difficulties or trouble in the satellites, is so

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<sup>47</sup>Memorandum for the White House, March 2, 1954, DDE Papers as POTUS, Administration Series, Box 22, Jackson, C.D. 1954, DDEL.

weakened that it will not under any circumstances resort to war. In our view, present Soviet internal problems are no more difficult than they have been for sometime; what has changed in [sic.] the willingness of the regime to do something to correct these difficulties. There is no evidence that Soviet control over the satellite countries has been significantly weakened or that the strength of the satellite armed forces is less than it has been previously. We consider that the USSR will continue actively to press a campaign of political warfare against the free world and that it would not hesitate to resort to force against any action on the part of the United States or its allies which it considered to be a sufficiently serious threat to its own position.<sup>48</sup>

But U.S. policy was not about to become more aggressive. To the contrary. As 1954 progressed, a series of intelligence assessments and program evaluations led the administration to tone down its rhetoric, particularly in Eastern Europe, and adjust its message.

### **Intelligence Assessments**

In mid-June of 1954, the NSC issued “tentative guidelines” for U.S. policy under NSC 162/2 for Fiscal Year 1956. The estimate of the Soviet threat used to shape these guidelines was based on two national security estimates, NIE 11-5-54 and NIE 13-54. There was little change from the intelligence community’s political assessment of the Soviet threat from mid-1953. The estimate of Soviet military capabilities, however, had “been raised substantially.”<sup>49</sup> Primarily, the American intelligence community

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>“Tentative Guidelines Under NSC 162/2 for FY 1956,” June 14, 1954, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954* volume II, National Security Affairs, part 1

highlighted the growth in Soviet nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.<sup>50</sup>

The intelligence community feared the growth in Soviet nuclear capabilities threatened to complicate the numerous political challenges facing the United States. Despite the growth in its nuclear forces, the Soviet Union had not abandoned its political warfare capabilities. Indeed, the estimates said that Soviet “capabilities for pursuing their objectives by action short of general war appear at least as great, and possibly greater than, a year ago.”<sup>51</sup>

The ensuing policy discussion over the summer months of 1954<sup>52</sup> revolved around how U.S. policy would change given the increase in Soviet nuclear capabilities and the associated increased threat in political warfare.<sup>53</sup> The discussion culminated in

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(Washington, DC: GPO, 1984), 650.

<sup>50</sup>See the chart in *Ibid.*, 651-652.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 653.

<sup>52</sup>Gregory Mitrovich concludes that the United States abandoned aggressive political warfare measures in 1954 because of the increased threat posed by Soviet nuclear forces. See Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 163.

<sup>53</sup>For a representative sample of this discussion see “Tentative Guidelines Under NSC 162/2 for FY 1956,” June 14, 1954; the agency studies prepared in support of NSC 5422; “Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson),” June 23, 1954; “Memorandum of Discussion of the 204<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council,” June 24, 1954; “Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie) to the Secretary of State,” August 4, 1954; and “Memorandum of the Discussion at the 209<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council,” August 5, 1954; published in *FRUS, 1952-1954* volume II, National Security Affairs, part 1, 649-715. Mitrovich, in contrast, argues that the revised threat assessments, by December of 1954, compelled the NSC to conclude that the primary threat posed by the

NSC-5422, and provided programmatic guidance under the basic outline of policy set forth in NSC-162/2.

The strategic challenge facing the United States had not fundamentally changed, and as a result, the broad outlines of U.S. policy remained consistent. Instead of fearing the costly, drawn out nature of modern conventional war, the United States now faced the costly immediacy of a well-armed nuclear rival. This change in the intelligence estimate of the Soviet Union did not alter the fundamental principles of U.S. policy, but it did present new political and military challenges reflected in NSC-5422.<sup>54</sup> The NSC worried, for example, that western political cohesion, tenuous in the face of a massive conventional threat, would break in the face of the growing Soviet nuclear threat. Breaks in this cohesion, the NSC reasoned, would invite Soviet “penetration and subversion, particularly in the underdeveloped areas of the world.”<sup>55</sup>

The administration’s response to these developments remained consistent with the policy set forth in NSC 162/2. The United States would prepare for military conflict as a deterrent to the Soviet Union, but pursue all means short of war to secure

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Soviet Union was military rather than ideological. See Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 163.

<sup>54</sup>NSC 5422/2, August 7, 1954, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954* volume II, National Security Affairs, part 1, 716.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.* For a political scientist’s perspective on this claim, see James G. Richter, “Perpetuating the Cold War: Domestic Sources of International Patterns of Behavior,” *Political Science Quarterly* vol 107, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 271-301.

its population, its allies, and to earn friends in the non-aligned world.<sup>56</sup>

While the nature of the military threat had changed, the overall political challenge had not. In fact, the NSC noted:

An immediate and most serious threat to the free world is further Communist expansion through subversion, indirect aggression and the instigation or exploitation of civil wars in free world countries, as in Indochina, rather than direct armed aggression.<sup>57</sup>

The U.S. response to this threat could not, the NSC recognized, be exclusively military. Instead, the challenge called for “a flexible combination of political, psychological, economic, and military actions.”<sup>58</sup>

Accordingly, U.S. policies in this environment should be designed, said the NSC, to build political strength and cohesion in the free world, to maintain U.S. military capabilities, to negotiate disarmament when it offered a prospect of success, and to encourage economic freedom around the world. The 1953 focus on liberation, however, vanished. Instead, the 1954 programmatic guidance noted, rather dispassionately:

Although the time for a significant rollback of Soviet power may appear to be in the future, the U.S. should be prepared, by feasible current actions or future planning, to take advantage of any earlier opportunity

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<sup>56</sup>NSC 5422/2, August 7, 1954, published in *FRUS, 1952-1954* volume II, National Security Affairs, part 1, 717-719.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 719.

to contract Communist-controlled areas and power.<sup>59</sup>

### **International Information Efforts Failing, but Vital**

Over the summer of 1954, the NSC and the OCB drew two critical lessons from their 18 months of experience with international information programs, particularly radio broadcasting. The first lesson was contradictory: the broadcasts were failing, in large measure, to reach their intended audiences, despite the vital political importance of the broadcasts themselves.<sup>60</sup> Ironically, efforts in the Soviet Union and the satellite states were more effective, despite jamming and counter-measures, than broadcasts in the free world. In the Soviet orbit, the OCB believed U.S. broadcasting efforts were achieving their objectives of “of helping to maintain hope, to sow seeds of doubt about the Communist regime, to spread news withheld by the regime, and to create a favorable climate of opinion for the eventual furtherance of our foreign policy objectives behind the Iron Curtain.”<sup>61</sup> In other areas of the world, however, the OCB judged U.S. efforts

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 720.

<sup>60</sup>The NSC 169 Study: An Estimate of the Effectiveness of U.S. International Broadcasting, Abstract of the Summary Report, July 29, 1954, NSC Staff Papers, OCB Central File Series, Box 4, OCB 000.77 [Radio Broadcasts] (File 3) (12) [August-November 1954], DDEL.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

to be “. . . with certain notable exceptions, not effective.”<sup>62</sup>

The second conclusion drawn by policy makers in 1954 struck to the heart of U.S. policy, not just the methods of executing that policy. The restrictions present in U.S. policy prevented the government’s agencies from taking aggressive actions more likely to bring about rapid change in the status of the East European satellites.

The NSC’s assessment of over-all U.S. policy noted the real limits on American action written into U.S. strategy documents, particularly NSC 162/2 and NSC 174.

Echoes of Eisenhower’s concerns about aggressive action limited the U.S.

government’s ability to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities. The authors of the NSC review noted:

Effective implementation of certain of the courses of action stipulated in NSC 174 is inhibited by the cautions and limitations written into that document, by the practical difficulties of operating effectively on any scale in or into the denied areas and by the fact that the results of aggressive action to carry them out would seriously risk producing results in conflict with other U.S. policy objectives. Thus, while the policy objectives of NSC 174 remain valid as long-term goals, the ability of the U.S. to take direct action towards achieving those objectives is limited.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.. For a more detailed examination of USIA program in the first six months of 1954, see NSC 5430, Part 7 – The USIA Program (January 1, 1954 through June 30, 1954), White House Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 5, NSC 5430 (5) Status of U.S. National Security Programs on June 30, 1954. See also Progress Report on NSC 174, United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, July 7, 1954, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (4), DDEL.

<sup>63</sup>Progress Report on NSC 174, United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, July 7, 1954, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51,



In fact, the NSC staff members who authored the report pointed directly to Eisenhower's admonition to avoid any policies which raised the risk of general war with the Soviet Union. They continued:

In the implementation of NSC 174, there are a number of factors which limit the actions which can be undertaken by the government. There are policy problems, e.g., the objective to restore freedom and roll back Soviet power in the satellites, but at the same time to avoid provoking war with the USSR, to ease international tensions, cooperate with our allies and avoid premature revolt.<sup>64</sup>

A footnote later in the document where the authors consider roll-back efforts in greater detail goes further, noting, "For example, account should be taken of the undesirability of provoking the liquidation of important resistance movements or of creating false hopes of U.S. intervention."<sup>65</sup>

Practical problems plagued U.S. policy as well. In seeking to influence events in Eastern Europe, the United States faced tightly-controlled borders, radio jamming, and robust political policing. As a result, U.S. actions "and planning must be largely confined to overt diplomatic action," wrote the reports authors, "encouraging passive resistance, trying to keep alive the hopes of the satellite peoples, and propaganda and information sent into the area by radio, balloon, rocket or infiltrated [sic]."<sup>66</sup> In

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Eastern Europe (4), DDEL.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid..

looking ahead, the NSC anticipated only changes in the nature of spreading the propaganda to target audiences. The report's authors expected little to change in the policy or substance of U.S. efforts.<sup>67</sup>

The OCB reviewers were even more realistic about the efficacy of information campaigns in Eastern Europe. They noted:

Actions can be taken and are taken to maintain the hopes of the captive peoples, through diplomatic, propaganda and other information activities. The maintenance of the strength and unity of the free world has a real impact behind the Iron Curtain; every successful resistance to Communist expansion has its effect. These are, however, mainly in the nature of holding actions so far as the satellites are concerned and the hard facts of the situation make it unrealistic to expect that conspicuous progress towards achieving the long-range policy objectives of NSC-174 will be made under present circumstances.<sup>68</sup>

The most direct solution to the failings of U.S. information programs to have any reasonable chance for success in achieving their stated objectives in the short-term might have led some to simply cancel them in their entirety. But despite their failings to communicate effectively with any population, these broadcasts were still deemed vital. The mere existence of the broadcasts sent a powerful political message, particularly behind the Iron Curtain. Even if jamming prevented listeners from hearing the broadcasts regularly, the mere knowledge that the West wanted to transmit to the populations in Eastern Europe communicated an important political psychological

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 136.

message.<sup>69</sup> Still, if the United States were to continue its efforts to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities, the Eisenhower administration needed a better understanding of what it could actually exploit.

### **Evolution, not Revolution: The Millikan Report**

Over the course of the summer of 1954, representatives of the departments of State and Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency met to discuss how the United States could best exploit Soviet vulnerabilities. After initial staff discussions, the NSC asked Professor Max Millikan of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to chair a senior committee to examine Soviet vulnerabilities.<sup>70</sup> The committee was to prepare a paper which would identify “Soviet vulnerabilities by categories (geographical, political, etc.)” and list those which the United States could exploit with current capabilities, as well as those that could be exploited with enhanced capabilities or additional resources.<sup>71</sup> The committee was not expected to make specific proposals or prioritize the vulnerabilities as the decision to pursue such exploitative policies would be

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<sup>69</sup>The NSC 169 Study: An Estimate of the Effectiveness of U.S. International Broadcasting, Abstract of the Summary Report, July 29, 1954, NSC Staff Papers, OCB Central File Series, Box 4, OCB 000.77 [Radio Broadcasts] (File 3) (12) [August-November 1954], DDEL.

<sup>70</sup>Memorandum for the Under Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Director of Central Intelligence, August 13, 1954, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (4), DDEL.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

context-specific.<sup>72</sup> In other words, the NSC wanted a shopping list of Soviet vulnerabilities it could exploit should events warrant.

The committee's report, dated November 30, 1954, received unqualified and remarkable endorsement by the president's closest advisers. The president's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Robert Cutler, transmitted the report to Eisenhower in its entirety with a covering memo calling it "the *best* original paper which has come to the Planning Board during your administration."<sup>73</sup> Cutler wrote:

This report is especially notable for its *thoroughly realistic* approach to the problem of vulnerabilities. . . . Because of this realistic approach, the conclusions of the report necessarily throw out all kinds of measures which have been discussed and advanced in past years, but which fail to meet one or more of these three criteria. . . .

It is interesting that while the development of this report began last summer, much of its thinking and conclusions run parallel to views which you have been expressing in more recent months.<sup>74</sup>

The Millikan report was circulated to members of the national security council on January 18, 1955. Due to the praise it received from the administration and its subsequent impact on NSC policy, the report warrants extensive consideration here.

The committee began with a basic definition of "vulnerability" in cold war, a

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Cutler to Eisenhower, December 17, 1954, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (4), DDEL, emphasis in the original.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

definition Cutler heralded to Eisenhower upon receipt of the report.<sup>75</sup> It said that a vulnerability existed only when three features were present: a weak characteristic of the society to be exploited; an American objective, in other words something to be achieved in exploiting that weakness; and tools by which the United States could take advantage of the weakness.<sup>76</sup> The committee authors noted, for example, that U.S. efforts often assumed that any activity that caused trouble for the Soviet Union was good for the United States without any other context.<sup>77</sup> The report also observed, “It has likewise been often assumed that it will be possible for us to find instruments short of war capable of effectively exploiting any major ‘weakness,’ if only we are ingenious enough. We think there are broad areas where this is impossible.”<sup>78</sup>

More importantly, the Millikan report challenged the basic conception of political warfare to that time. Millikan and his committee members pointed out that the traditional concept of exploiting vulnerabilities, “making bad things worse,” posed little promise for success in the Cold War because it failed to identify positive

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Report on the Exploitation of Soviet Vulnerabilities, November 30, 1954, circulated as an Annex to NSC 5505, January 18, 1955, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (5), DDEL, 1.

<sup>77</sup>For example, see NSC 174 itself. NSC 174 Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council on United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, December 11, 1953, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 114.

<sup>78</sup>Report on the Exploitation of Soviet Vulnerabilities, November 30, 1954.

alternatives to the status-quo.<sup>79</sup> Instead, the committee advocated a political warfare strategy designed to present alternatives to the Soviet Union, its leaders and people, as well as the citizens of Eastern Europe. In doing so, the United States had the best hope of advancing three of its four primary political warfare objectives: “that is reduce the chance that [Soviet] leaders will *choose* war, increase the chance that they will agree to a quick cease fire in the event of war on terms compatible with the U.S. interest, and increase the chance of changes over time in Russian policy, revolutionary or evolutionary, which will stably reduce their threat to us.”<sup>80</sup>

The Millikan report was significant in another respect as well. It suggested that the Soviet Union had legitimate policy objectives. The actual expression in the report was “we believe [denying the recourse to armed aggression] to be the only way of encouraging any Soviet leadership to explore constructively other ways of achieving legitimate Russian objectives.”<sup>81</sup> In 1954-1955, the premise of the NSC giving consideration to “legitimate Russian objectives” is significant. It suggests a mellowing in the internal discussions of the NSC about the threat posed by the Soviet Union. It also suggests that the administration was drawing away from its most strident Cold War positions. Having accepted the notion of legitimate objectives of communist

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

states, then, “the bulk of our political warfare efforts,” wrote the committee, “must go into portraying for leaders and people a positive conception of the realistic and attractive alternatives open to them, consistent with our interests.”<sup>82</sup> In fact, the authors went on to say that U.S. and Soviet interests could intersect. They wrote: “we see as the key ‘vulnerability’ of the Soviet system the fact that realistic and attractive alternatives to present Soviet policy consistent with both American and Russian long-run interests do in fact exist.”<sup>83</sup> The key was to tailor U.S. policy and rhetoric to influence the decisions Soviet leaders would make in their own perceived interests. Over time, the authors believed, such efforts would diminish the Soviet threat to the United States.<sup>84</sup>

Ultimately, the Millikan report outlined a new approach for the United States to pursue in political warfare. It was composed of two parts: the first was the effective maintenance of a U.S. military deterrent to further Soviet aggression, a familiar

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 12. From a domestic political perspective, it is worth noting that this policy emerged after the peak of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s “red scare.” That said, Eisenhower’s primary concerns with McCarthy did not stem from policy issues, but rather concern over executive branch privilege and the direction of the Republican party. For discussion, see Anthony James Joes, “Eisenhower Revisionism and American Politics,” in Joann P. Krieg, ed., *Dwight David Eisenhower: Soldier, President, Statesman* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 283-296, esp. 288-289. See also Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 306-309, 316-318, 347-353, and 364-367.

element in U.S. policy. The second, novel part would consist of

the attempt to promote evolutionary changes internally in the Soviet Bloc in directions consistent with our interest. This we would pursue first by measures designed to expand the field of realistic and attractive alternatives perceived by the people and by various levels of the bureaucracy and second by measures designed to persuade them to adopt alternatives in our interest.<sup>85</sup>

Millikan and his cohorts envisioned four elements in this strategy: information policy; special operations; military policy; and diplomatic and economic policy.<sup>86</sup> Each element featured more subtle characteristics. For example, sources of popular discontent in the Eastern bloc would be attacked “not as inherent features of the Communist state correctible [sic.] only by revolution but as mistaken practical policies which could be readily modified if the leadership would only consent to do so and which in any event are not really necessary to their legitimate ends.”<sup>87</sup>

Suggestions would be broadcast by radio and distributed by a variety of means to this end. In addition, the committee urged the U.S. government to back rhetoric with deeds. They wrote:

The line would emphasize the possibilities of coexistence and urge the regime to try a variety of measures moving in this direction, such as sending Soviet technicians to many more international conferences, cooperating with us on technical and other studies, and the like. We

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<sup>85</sup>Report on the Exploitation of Soviet Vulnerabilities, November 30, 1954, 56-57.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.



would emphasize (and political policy would have to be changed to permit this) that we welcomed visits by Soviet citizens for cultural, scientific, and even recreational purposes and were even prepared to subsidize such interchange.<sup>88</sup>

In making these proposals, the United States would not abandon its basic position on the inherent evil of the Soviet system, but it would emphasize that concrete changes in Soviet policy were possible, in line with the long-term interests of the Soviet people. Expectations of reform could be raised to higher levels in some areas of the Soviet bloc, in the satellites, for example, than in the Soviet Union itself.<sup>89</sup>

Significantly, the Millikan committee rejected an appeal to mass revolution as part of this strategy. If the United States were to make such an appeal, the result would be to undermine its own ambition of making evolutionary change possible and realistic. If the United States appeared to be threatening revolution, the target country's leadership, then, would only conclude that the U.S. was hostile to any "communist" regime, regardless of its ideological hue.

The tools at the administration's disposal were many. Radio, of course, would continue to play an important role. Rumors spread by U.S. agents could raise expectations of better living standards, increased opportunities for private farming, or "increased availability of consumer goods."<sup>90</sup> Articles could be published in western,

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid, 58.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid, 59.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 60.

communist journals that suggested alternative administrative methods and the United States might find other ways to provide political advice to dissidents in Eastern Europe.<sup>91</sup>

Such a strategy, however, would exclude sabotage, arming of revolutionary groups, and the like. The Millikan Committee noted that such efforts would make bureaucrats less likely to experiment and push for reform in practical policy issues.<sup>92</sup>

The Millikan Committee report signals a transition from a political warfare strategy of indictment and incitement to one of alternatives and evolution. Where U.S. political warfare strategies in the first two years of the Eisenhower administration focused on laying bare the evils of the Soviet system, the Millikan report urged the adoption of softer rhetoric designed to appeal to mid-level bureaucrats who might be inclined to alter policies, now or in the future, in a manner that would be in the best interests of the people of the United States and the Soviet Union (or other East European regimes) as well. It suggested, at that time, that the U.S. criticism with the Soviet Union should be based less on ideological grounds than on practical issues associated with the administration of modern, industrial societies.

The Millikan report is a manifesto of very subtle political warfare intended to achieve its purposes over the long haul while retaining flexibility to respond to crises

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 60-61.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 62.

and other developments. It is also an indication that, as the administration concluded in other studies, existing efforts were not likely to succeed, and that hope for “liberation” or “roll back” would have to await long-term developments. In 1954, Eisenhower believed that meant “half a century.”<sup>93</sup>

The moderation of the Millikan Committee report coincided with new conclusions about U.S. efforts in Eastern Europe. The administration continued to review the efficacy of a determined effort to “detach” an “important satellite” from the Soviet bloc. On December 30, 1954, the OCB working group assigned the task of assessing such a policy delivered its grim prognosis. It urged the board to adopt the following position:

- a. At present, given the strength of the Soviet position, no major Soviet satellite presents vulnerabilities of such extent that their exploitation can be expected to result in its detachment from the Soviet bloc.
- b. U.S. capabilities under present conditions are not sufficient to accomplish the detachment of any major Soviet satellite by means short of war.
- c. Unless the power balance between the United States and the Soviet Union changes drastically in our favor, there is little likelihood of detaching a major satellite at any time without grave risk of war except by negotiation. The only satellite which now lends itself to possible detachment by this means is East Germany. If an effort against this satellite were to be undertaken with any hope of success it would require a concentration of political, economic, and psychological pressures directed to this end. Such a concentrated effort should now be undertaken with East Germany as the target.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change*, 452.

<sup>94</sup>Analysis of the Situation With Respect to Possible Detachment of a Major European Soviet Satellite, December 30, 1954, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954,

When the Operations Coordinating Board met to discuss the working group's conclusions, the president's special assistant for national security affairs, Robert Cutler, expressed his displeasure with the group's suggestion that East Germany be targeted for detachment. In the first place, Cutler pointed out, the issue in Germany would not be one of "detachment" but one of "unification." More importantly, Cutler did not think a staff working group should deal with such matters of "high policy."<sup>95</sup> Beyond this, however, the general conclusions and analysis by the working group—specifically, that there was no prospect of detaching a major satellite short of war—were accepted by the OCB.<sup>96</sup> In short: the most grandiose, dramatic ambitions of the administration in Eastern Europe were acknowledged to be divorced from the reality of the political and military situation. This assessment, coupled with the Millikan report and the emerging consensus on U.S. policy found further expression as the administration revised its national security strategy in 1955.

The Millikan report amounts to a revelation that alters the understanding of the Eisenhower administration's national security strategy. Recently, Gregory Mitrovich has asserted that the administration backed away from its most grandiose political

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Volume VIII, 143.

<sup>95</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Operations Coordinating Board, January 5, 1955, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII, 156.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, 159. See also "Analysis of the Situation with Respect to Possible Detachment of a Major European Soviet Satellite," January 5, 1944, published in *FRUS*, 1955-1957, Volume XXV (Washington, DC: GPO, 1990), 8-9.

rhetoric in Eastern Europe because of the Soviet hydrogen bomb.<sup>97</sup> Traditionally, other historians have argued that the Hungarian revolution forced the United States to abandon its most vitriolic statements on Eastern Europe.<sup>98</sup> The Millikan report—untreated in the major works on the subject<sup>99</sup>—illuminates the fact that U.S. policy was shaped by internal factors and policy reviews as much as by external factors. Furthermore, the formal policy shift is more decisively dated to a period nearly two years before the Hungarian uprising.

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<sup>97</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*. This development cannot be discounted, however. Andrew Goodpaster, personal interview with author, March 20, 2003.

<sup>98</sup>See Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges*; Kovrig, *Myth of Liberation*; Kenneth Kitts and Betty Glad, “Presidential Personality and Improvisational Decision Making: Eisenhower and the 1956 Hungarian Crisis,” in Shirley Anne Warshaw, ed., *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 183. See also Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 86; and Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom*, 89.

<sup>99</sup>Kovrig, Mitrovich, Krebs, Lucas, and Hixson. For example, see Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 167, note 212 which reads, in part, “An editorial note in *Foreign Relations of the United States* states that NSC 5505 was based upon a study chaired by Max Millikan of the Center for International Studies at MIT.” But there is no further analysis of the Millikan report or its impact. Regarding the shift in policy, however, Hixson’s case is the broadest, arguing that simultaneous to the most strident anti-communist policies of the administration, a dual course began to emerge as early as 1953 and Eisenhower’s “Chance for Peace Speech.” See Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 87-94. Ultimately, though, Hixson also concludes that the Hungarian revolution marked the demise of aggressive political warfare in the Eisenhower administration.

**1955**

### **NSC Policy Changes and Revisions**

Two factors shaped the administration's review of national security strategy in the late months of 1954,<sup>100</sup> the estimate of Soviet nuclear capabilities,<sup>101</sup> and the recommendations of the Millikan committee. In fact, no less a source than Robert

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<sup>100</sup>On October 11, the NSC Executive Secretary forwarded to NSC members a draft working paper that provided a summary of U.S. national security policy to date. See "Working Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Planning Board," published in *FRUS, 1952-1954* volume II, National Security Affairs, part 1, 740-759. The assessments developed throughout the executive branch in support of the review of NSC 162/2 began to come into the NSC in November. See "Paper Prepared by the Director of the Foreign Operations Administration," November 9, 1954; "Paper Prepared by the Department of State," November 15, 1954; "Paper Prepared by the Director of Central Intelligence," November 18, 1954; "Paper Prepared by the Director of Defense Mobilization," no date; "Memorandum by the Director of the U.S. Information Agency to the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs," November 19, 1954; "Memorandum by the Secretary of Defense to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council," November 22, 1954; "Memorandum of Discussion at the 225<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC," November 24, 1954; and NSC 5440, "Draft Statement of Policy Prepared by the National Security Council Planning Board," December 13, 1954; "Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense," December 17, 1954; and "Memorandum of Discussion at the 229<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC," December 21, 1954; published in *FRUS, 1952-1954* volume II, National Security Affairs, part 1, 770-785. Note: the main division, notably between the secretary of state and the Joint Chiefs of Staff was that Dulles felt the United States had done well in the two years of cold war since the 1952 election; the JCS, however, viewed U.S. successes to date as insufficient and likely to lead to the West's defeat by 1960.

<sup>101</sup>For elaboration of this point, see H. W. Brands, "The Age of Vulnerability: Eisenhower and the National Insecurity State," *The American Historical Review* vol. 94, no 4 (October 1989): 963-989.

Cutler, Eisenhower's national security advisor, informed the president of the strong influence exerted by the Millikan report on the content of NSC 5501.<sup>102</sup> Millikan's impact on the specific policies toward Eastern Europe would be no less significant.

### **NSC 5501**

NSC 5501 was the first formal revision of national security strategy since the formal reviews of 1953 produced NSC 162/2. The policy statement produced in 1955, however, differed in important respects from its predecessor. Where the administration's first statement of national security strategy began with a simple statement of balancing U.S. means and ends, NSC 5501, adopted formally on January 7, 1955,<sup>103</sup> began with an intelligence estimate<sup>104</sup>—a general survey of the international situation, with special focus on Soviet atomic weapons capabilities.<sup>105</sup> In turning to Eastern Europe, the document held little hope for real change in its estimate:

The stability of the USSR and its hold over the European satellites are unlikely to be seriously shaken over the next few years, despite

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<sup>102</sup>Cutler to Eisenhower, December 17, 1954, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (4), DDEL, emphasis in the original.

<sup>103</sup>For the NSC discussion of the policy, see Memorandum of Discussion at the 230<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, January 5, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, National Security Policy, 9-24.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>105</sup>NSC 5501, Basic National Security Policy, January 7, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, National Security Policy, 25-26.

measures which the U.S. may find it feasible to take to weaken Soviet control. However, the control system of the USSR will continue to be faced with important problems (such as discontent in the satellites, agricultural difficulties, and pressures for satisfying consumer wants), some of which may be susceptible to a limited degree of exploitation from the outside.<sup>106</sup>

In actuality, the basic terms of reference expounded upon in NSC 5501 differed little from NSC 162: the United States and its allies were required to maintain robust defensive forces in both conventional and nuclear arms in order to deter open Soviet aggression and lay the framework for broader successful political alternatives to armed conflict.<sup>107</sup> The NSC believed that the Soviets were unlikely to initiate a general war with the United States in the period from 1955-1960, and noted that the primary tactic employed by the Soviet Union since Stalin's death had been the "peace offensive" political warfare campaign.<sup>108</sup> This was believed to be the Soviets' most effective tool to sow dissent in the West. As a result, NSC 5501 stated, "It will be a major task, therefore, to maintain the necessary unity and resolution of the free world coalition whenever and wherever the Soviets press their 'peace offensive.'"<sup>109</sup> The threat posed by subversion and political warfare remained, in the estimation of the NSC, the free

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 29-30.



world's "most serious challenge and greatest danger in the next few years."<sup>110</sup>

In some ways, NSC 5501 stated with greater clarity than NSC 162/2 the centrality of the political challenge facing the United States in the Cold War. Given that the United States had no feasibly realistic means with which to reduce Soviet military capabilities, the challenge ultimately was one of politics and persuasion: the stuff of political warfare. NSC 5501 states:

Hence, U.S. policies must be designed to affect the conduct of the Communist regimes, especially that of the USSR in ways that further U.S. security interests and to encourage tendencies that lead them to abandon expansionist policies. In pursuing this general strategy, our effort should be directed to:

- a. Deterring further communist aggression, and preventing the occurrence of total war so far as compatible with U.S. security.
- b. Maintaining and developing in the free world the mutuality of interest and common purpose and the necessary will, strength and stability, to face the Soviet-Communist threat and to provide constructive and attractive alternatives to Communism, which sustain the hope and confidence of free peoples.
- c. Supplementing a and b above by other actions designed to foster changes in the character and policies of the Soviet-Communist bloc regimes:
  - (1) By influencing them and their peoples toward the choice of those alternative lines of action which, while in their national interests, do not conflict with the security interests of the U.S.; and
  - (2) By exploiting differences between such regimes, and their other vulnerabilities, in ways

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 30.

consistent with this general strategy.<sup>111</sup>

The over-all strategy remained predicated on a long-term view of the Cold War, and the importance of every element of statecraft—from military to propaganda—for success.<sup>112</sup> The political warfare elements of the strategy ranged from encouraging international economic development to dispute resolution in the free world.<sup>113</sup>

But in providing basic guidance for the conduct of U.S. political warfare, the NSC introduced two developments worth noting. First, the NSC stopped referring to “political warfare” and instead referred to a “political strategy against the communist bloc.”<sup>114</sup> The name change is not a simple case of semantics. For the substance of the discussion of this “political strategy” in NSC 5501 reveals a much less strident policy agenda. The political strategy would be crafted to accomplish three things:

(a) reduce the likelihood of aggression, (b) to influence, in ways favorable to U.S. and free world interests, decisions and developments

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<sup>111</sup>NSC 5501, Basic National Security Policy, January 7, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, National Security Policy, 31. It should be noted that the original draft of paragraph C made no explicit reference to the peoples of the Soviet Bloc. This was changed in the NSC meeting on January 5, 1955, at the suggestion of John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles. Eisenhower concurred, noting that “Even in dictatorships . . . some attention had to be given to public opinion.” See Memorandum of Discussion at the 230<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, January 5, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, National Security Policy, 13.

<sup>112</sup>NSC 5501, Basic National Security Policy, January 7, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, National Security Policy, 31-32.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, 36.

within the Communist bloc, such as toward greater emphasis on internal problems, and ( c ) to foster long-run trends which might lead to basic changes in the outlook or character of Communist regimes.<sup>115</sup>

The council continued:

In pursuing this strategy, the U.S. should seek (a) to convince the Communist regimes that alternatives exist to their present policies which would be acceptable to the U.S. and which they might come to consider compatible with their basic security interests, (b) to give to the Communist regimes a clear conception of the true U.S. and free world purposes and uncompromising determination to resist Communist aggressive moves, and ( c ) to exploit in ways consistent with this strategy, differences within the Soviet system or between the USSR and other members of the Communist bloc.<sup>116</sup>

NSC 5501 drew heavily on the work of the Millikan Committee and envisioned a policy of encouraged evolution rather than fomented revolution.<sup>117</sup>

#### **NSC 5505/1**

Three weeks after issuing NSC 5501, The National Security Council adopted NSC

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid..

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>This policy development was not met without skepticism, particularly in the Department of Defense. In a memo which was very cautious, and ambiguous in its overall conclusions, the defense member of the NSC planning board wrote, "While not averse to exploiting Soviet weaknesses as if they were only 'mistaken' practical policies of the Soviet Government, the Defense Member believes that such an approach must not inhibit continued efforts to keep hammering, in and out of the Soviet Union, on the inherent evils of the Soviet Communist system." See Memorandum for the Executive Secretary, NSC, from C. H. Bonesteel, III, January 10, 1955, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (4), DDEL.

5505/1 at its meeting on January 27, 1955. Eisenhower approved the policy four days later on January 31. Like NSC 5501, this policy document, “Exploitation of Soviet and European Satellite Vulnerabilities” drew heavily from the Millikan report. In fact NSC 5505/1 included a six page summary of the Millikan Committee report and the NSC transmitted both the final policy statement and the entirety of the Millikan report to the special committee appointed to coordinate the policy.<sup>118</sup>

NSC 5505/1 began by reiterating the basic principles of U.S. national security strategy established in NSC 5501. In particular, it noted that U.S. efforts to deter Soviet aggression were supported by other efforts to “foster change in the character and policies of the Soviet-Communist bloc regimes” by methods consistent with those advocated by Millikan and his committee members.<sup>119</sup> In particular, “by influencing them and their peoples toward the choice of those alternative lines of action which, while in their national interests, do not conflict with the security interests of the U.S. . .

. . .<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>The special committee consisted of Nelson A. Rockefeller, C.D. Jackson’s successor as Special Assistant to the President and committee chair, and the Undersecretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the Director of Central Intelligence, among others. See NSC 5505/1 “Exploitation of Soviet and European Satellite Vulnerabilities,” January 31, 1955, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (6), DDEL.

<sup>119</sup>NSC 5505/1 “Exploitation of Soviet and European Satellite Vulnerabilities,” January 31, 1955, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (6), DDEL, 1.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 1-2.

The echo of the Millikan report is ubiquitous in this, the latest NSC approach to exploiting Soviet vulnerabilities. NSC 5505/1 notes that in exploiting discontents behind the Iron Curtain, “Such discontents and other problems can be exploited only if the U.S. (1) has or can develop a capability for such exploitation and (2) will thereby advance a specific objective within this capability.”<sup>121</sup> Like the Millikan report, NSC 5505/1 also stresses the need to increase “popular and bureaucratic pressures” for “evolutionary rather than revolutionary change.”<sup>122</sup> Formally, NSC 5505/1 adopted the Millikan report’s most significant recommendation which stated that the United States should:

Generally depict the causes of the discontents and other problems which are to be exploited not as inherent conditions reparable only by revolution but as conditions susceptible to correction by the regime if it should choose to take the necessary action.<sup>123</sup>

While such principles to guide U.S. political warfare in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had never been so clearly articulated previously, this statement of principles was noteworthy because it suggested that the administration should abandon the most vitriolic of its rhetoric in favor of political statements and positions that were more accommodating of Soviet regimes, but with the intent of reforming them.

In considering the exploitation of vulnerabilities in Soviet satellite states, the

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

NSC considered the value of encouraging open revolution there. The NSC considered this issue in the summary of the Millikan report incorporated into NSC 5505/1. They wrote:

Barring external military aid and intervention, no anti-regime revolt in the Satellites could succeed at present. The United States is not now prepared to undertake such aid and intervention. Accordingly, although it is in the interest of the U.S. to foster conditions which, in the event of either general war or changed circumstances may be favorable to revolt (or related activities, such as sabotage, partisan movements, etc.), it is not in U.S. interest at the present time to encourage revolution as a major element of its strategy toward the Satellites.<sup>124</sup>

A major reason the United States would not openly support revolution in Eastern Europe, however, stemmed from the administration's desire to give political leaders in the region the opportunity to evolve their regimes.<sup>125</sup> The NSC reasoned, like the Millikan committee had months earlier, that if the United States rejected *any* type of communist regime, it would only harden the position of those regimes and lessen the prospect of reform or the emergence of more moderate leaders. By removing the threat of inciting revolution, the United States sought to promote a relaxing of tensions where policy alternatives and alternative leadership were not only possible but realistic outcomes.

But U.S. political warfare in Eastern Europe remained predicated on the ability

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

of the West to defend itself and its allies from Soviet aggression. Political warfare was not a substitute for preparedness, diplomacy, or a sound economy.<sup>126</sup>

In approving NSC 5505, members of the National Security Council voiced concern over its emphasis on evolutionary, rather than revolutionary change in the Soviet system. Vice President Nixon, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles, and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles each raised concerns that the emphasis on evolution rather than revolution not limit U.S. options if the pursuit of revolutionary change had the potential for success. While the president's National Security Advisor Robert Cutler assured the NSC that revolution was not precluded as a goal of U.S. policy, Eisenhower had already made the point moot earlier in the discussion by observing, "The United States was not in a position to state that it would promote revolution in the Soviet Union. What we must try to do is win 'these guys' over."<sup>127</sup> Accordingly, Eisenhower liked the general line of the policy document and believed it important to advance the national security of the United States.

### **The Geneva Summit**

NSC 5501 and NSC 5505/1 set the stage for a noticeable thaw in relations with the

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<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>127</sup>Discussion of the 234<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, January 27, 1955, Anne Whitman File, DDE Papers as POTUS, NSC Series, Box 6, 234<sup>th</sup> Meeting of NSC, January 27, 1955, DDEL.

Soviet Union, peaking with the Geneva Summit of 1955. The more subtle, evolutionary aspects of U.S. policy were on full display in the summer of 1955 when the heads of state of the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France met in the Swiss city in the shadow of Mount Blanc. The Heads of Government meeting in Geneva in the summer of 1955 ushered in the “spirit of Geneva.” For the United States and its political warfare officials, it was a mixed blessing.<sup>128</sup>

Prior to the summit, the NSC approved NSC 5524/1 “Basic U.S. Policy in Relation to the Four Power Negotiations.”<sup>129</sup> The policy statement covered the vast

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<sup>128</sup>The following text details the negative consequences of the Geneva summit for the conduct of political warfare. The positive outcome of the summit, however, was the president’s “Open Skies” proposal and speech. If the proposal had been accepted, it would have established the foundation for aggressive disarmament efforts as each country would be able to conduct reconnaissance over-flights of one another and thereby rule out preparations for war. The political warfare effort which accompanied the speech were very similar to those associated with the “Chance for Peace” and “Atoms for Peace” speeches in 1954 and will not be discussed here. For an excellent discussion of the “Open Skies” speech as propaganda in the broader psychological strategy of the administration, see Hogan, “Eisenhower and Open Skies: A Case Study in Psychological Warfare,” in Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower’s War of Words*, 137-155.

<sup>129</sup>NSC 5524/1 “Basic U.S. Policy in Relation to Four Power Negotiations,” July 11, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume V (Washington, DC: GPO: 1988), 287-298. The process of crafting this policy statement sparked considerable discussion. See, for example, Memorandum from the Director of Intelligence (Dulles) to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Lay), July 1, 1954, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume V, 247-252; and Memorandum of Discussion at the 254<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, July 7, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume V, 268-286. The main issues of contention focused on whether or not then current Soviet positions indicated any real change in Soviet policy or intention.



array of policy difference between the United States and the Soviet Union, ranging from German unification to disarmament. In considering the U.S. position toward Eastern Europe, NSC 5524/1 reiterated the goal of U.S. policy as articulated in NSC 174: “the elimination of Soviet control over the satellites” without recourse to armed force.<sup>130</sup> NSC policy asserted that the U.S. government must maintain its position and articulated specific counter-points to anticipated Soviet demands. Most critically, events would prove, the NSC expressed in simple terms the complexity of the ambiguity which had entered U.S. policy statements over Eastern Europe. “The U.S. should seek every opportunity to weaken or break the Soviet grip on part of all of the satellite area,” stated the document. The U.S. should do so while maintaining “flexibility of means in the pursuit of this objective.” Finally, the NSC noted the crucial role of perception. They wrote: “The U.S. must avoid in all circumstances any action that even appears to indicate any abandonment of this objective.”<sup>131</sup>

Regrettably, the “spirit of Geneva” which followed the meeting of the heads of state produced unanticipated, deleterious consequences on the U.S. political warfare program and public attitudes in Eastern Europe. Nelson Rockefeller, C.D. Jackson’s replacement as special assistant to the president, was well aware of this point and wrote to the Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles that:

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<sup>130</sup>NSC 5524/1 “Basic U.S. Policy in Relation to Four Power Negotiations,” July 11, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume V, 295.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*

The people of the Satellite countries are experiencing growing uneasiness in the aftermath of the Four Power Conference over the idea that the West may be preparing to “sell them down the river” as part of a general relaxation of tensions with the USSR.<sup>132</sup>

The East Europeans were not completely wrong in their assessment. A pre-summit document from John Foster Dulles to Eisenhower detailed what Dulles thought the U.S. position should be on Eastern Europe. He wrote:

My idea is that we should raise the question but not insist upon its being a subject for future negotiation but rather emphasize that if in fact the Soviets wish to reduce tension with the United States, they must deal with the problem which our people feel is covered by war agreements which have been violated and which feeling is constantly kept alive by the many American citizens who derive from these areas. Probably, in private conversation, you can do more along this line than can be done in formal conference.<sup>133</sup>

While the issue of the captive nations was still important to Dulles, it was not a significant enough reason to abandon an overall improvement in East-West relations. In fairness, however, Eastern Europe was not the only policy issue facing the Eisenhower administration at Geneva. The NSC went so far as to consider the “popular pressures” on Allied governments to produce a “reduction of tension and some form of East-West settlement. . .” especially given international concerns “over

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<sup>132</sup>Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant (Rockefeller) to the Director of Central Intelligence (Dulles), August 5, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 65.

<sup>133</sup>Memorandum From the Secretary of State to the President, June 18, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume V, 239.

the risks of nuclear war.”<sup>134</sup> In other words, although Eastern Europe received considerable attention in the counsels of government prior to and during the Geneva meeting, it was but one issue amid a litany of others—just as it was in the overall consideration of national security strategy.

After the conference, however, officials within the Eisenhower administration felt compelled to counter the prevalent perception in Eastern Europe that the United States had ceased championing the regions independence from Moscow. Specifically, Rockefeller proposed a series of initiatives to assert to the populations behind the Iron Curtain that long-term U.S. policy had not changed, nor would it.<sup>135</sup> Rockefeller enclosed an OCB staff memorandum which detailed specific texts and statements issued by both the United States and the Soviet Union at Geneva that might be used as part of a political warfare campaign against the Soviet Union.<sup>136</sup>

Rockefeller and Alan Dulles were not alone in thinking in terms of a renewed political campaign in the aftermath of Geneva. The secretary of state, too, made such a case, during a conversation with Eisenhower on August 11, 1955. According to

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<sup>134</sup>NSC 5524/1 “Basic U.S. Policy in Relation to Four Power Negotiations,” July 11, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume V, 290.

<sup>135</sup>Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant (Rockefeller) to the Director of Central Intelligence (Dulles), August 5, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 65.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, 67.

Dulles's memorandum of the conversation, he even reached back to his book<sup>137</sup> on the role of change in the international system:

I expressed the view that the new atmosphere meant not a perpetuation of the status quo but rather the greater opportunity for change. The 'security' arguments of the Soviet Union had been down-graded and they did not have the same justification for 'security' for holding on to East Germany and the satellites. The important thing, I said, was to make it perfectly clear that we did not identify increased hope of peace with increased solidification of the status quo but rather the contrary, and that we now expected there to be changes in the European situation, as evidenced by the unification of Germany and greater freedom for the satellites. I referred to my book "War, Peace and Change"[sic] as indicating my great belief that we could not have peace for long unless there was peaceful change.<sup>138</sup>

Eisenhower agreed with Dulles on the need for this approach, and promised to work it into a speech he planned to give to the annual convention of the American Bar Association on August 24.<sup>139</sup> Eisenhower did so noting, "We must not think of peace as a static condition in world affairs. That is not true peace, nor in fact can any kind of a peace be preserved that way. Change is the law of life, and unless there is peaceful change, there is bound to be violent change."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>John Foster Dulles, *War Peace and Change* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939).

<sup>138</sup>Memorandum from the Secretary of State's Special Assistant (Hanes) to the Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy), August 12, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 71.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup>Address at the Annual Convention of the American Bar Association, Philadelphia, August 24, 1955, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the*

The OCB prepared an analysis of the psychological implications of the Geneva Heads of Government meeting. They argued that the United States emerged from the summit strengthened in its claim to the rest of the world of its devout interest in peace. However, audiences in Eastern Europe, the OCB concluded, in accordance with others, were disappointed by the results of Geneva. Improved relations between the East and West without any hint of liberation could only mean that the United States and its western partners were willing to forsake the East Europeans in the interest of international harmony with the Soviet Union.<sup>141</sup> In the words of the OCB report:

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Geneva for the captive peoples is the clear and unmistakable evidence that the Western powers, even the United States, will not resort to war, or threat of war, to liberate Eastern Europe. The resultant loss of hope, however unrealistic, for early liberation, by force if necessary, which is still widely held among the captive populations will undoubtedly lead to weakening of the spirit of resistance.<sup>142</sup>

Despite this set-back in the morale of the captive peoples, however, the OCB believed

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*United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1955* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1959), 210. The speech is all the more remarkable because it echos many of the statements made by Eisenhower and Dulles in their public lives well before 1952 and thereby demonstrates the continuity in their thinking on the nature of the Cold War.

<sup>141</sup>See the assessment in report by the Operations Coordinating Board, "Psychological Implications of Geneva for U.S. information Programs," August 31, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 72-73. Note as well, that despite the improved relations, the OCB still believed there existed a considerable political warfare threat from the Soviet Union. See *ibid.*, 73.

<sup>142</sup>"Psychological Implications of Geneva for U.S. information Programs," August 31, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 74.

there existed opportunities arising from the proposals at Geneva to reinforce ties behind the Iron Curtain through the exchange of ideas, magazines, books, and newspapers as well as people. Any such exchange program, the OCB warned, would have to be coordinated in such a way as to avoid giving a sense of legitimacy to the regimes in Eastern Europe.<sup>143</sup>

The “spirit of Geneva” produced even further problems for the Eisenhower administration’s conduct of information campaigns. The United States government then viewed, and so expressed at Geneva, that the Soviet Union controlled the international communist apparatus. The OCB described the dilemma for U.S. information programs this way:

If we are to be realistic about the source and control of the world-wide communist conspiracy, we cannot avoid tracing responsibility to the Soviet Union, and in certain contexts, to individual leaders of the Soviet Union—*with whom we shall be negotiating over the next few months*. To what extent can the aims, motives and operations of international communism be attacked and questioned, without reflecting on the good faith and intentions of individual Soviet leaders?<sup>144</sup>

The OCB crafted a carefully orchestrated information response to the Geneva conference. They called for a restatement of basic U.S. policies and intentions in Eastern Europe, a continued policy of objective comment on developments in the satellites themselves, and policies to demonstrate that the peaceful unification of

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<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 75, emphasis in the original.

Germany within NATO would pose no threat to Eastern Europe itself. In other words, the OCB recommended seizing the initiative and crafting the “spirit of Geneva” as an opportunity to advance the cause of peace and justice without resort to violence.<sup>145</sup> At the same time, the OCB recommended against reducing the political warfare effort against international communism, and sought to incorporate the exchanges of people and ideas discussed at Geneva into the broad outlines of U.S. information strategy.<sup>146</sup>

Despite these policy statements in Washington, the “spirit of Geneva” continued to be twisted by the propaganda organs of the East-European regimes. An internal State Department memo on the subject recounted the efforts of the Polish regime to discredit the U.S. promise of liberation and cited the Geneva meeting as an indication of the West’s acceptance of the regimes in Warsaw and other East European capitals.<sup>147</sup> The memo’s author, George Lister, recommended that the U.S. position at the follow-on foreign ministers’ meeting should emphasize that there could be no real settlement between the United States and the Soviet Union “without a satisfactory

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<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 78. Theodore Streibert discussed one possible approach, early in its development with Eisenhower on September 4, 1955. See Streibert to John Foster Dulles, September 15, 1955, JFD Papers, General Correspondence and Memoranda Series, Box 3, Folder 11, Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University.

<sup>147</sup>See Memorandum from George T. Lister of the Office of Eastern European Affairs to the Director of the Office (Beam), September 28, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 82-83.

settlement of the satellite question.”<sup>148</sup> He put it in the starkest of terms:

At all events I am afraid the Communist propaganda machine has been so active, clever, and well coordinated since the Geneva Conference that we must now take a stubborn stand on the satellites at the next Geneva meeting or suffer a major psychological defeat in Eastern Europe.<sup>149</sup>

According to reports from Hungary, that is just what the United States received.

The demoralization suffered after the heads of government meeting in Geneva was followed by the November foreign ministers’ meetings. The only positive development at this second meeting, in East European eyes and according to the U.S. legation in Hungary, was that there was more acrimony among the foreign ministers than there had been among the heads of government.<sup>150</sup> As the telegram put it:

Over-all results meeting were therefore disheartening, demonstrating as far as Hungarian concerned that Iron Curtain still solidly in place and that neighboring Yugoslavia and Austrian events, which gave them much natural encouragement, took place in another world. [sic.]<sup>151</sup>

The result, according to the legation, was a deep pessimism over their fate spreading through the people of Hungary. Again in the words of the legation:

Over-all result is that media today face much more skeptical audience in Hungary and one, moreover, whose hopes for liberation from Communist yoke have been badly shattered in recent months. Real

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>See Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, December 1, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 100.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.



danger which faces us now appears to Legation to be that captive peoples will steadily grow more and more resigned to fate of living under Communism and, concomitantly, increasingly of opinion that it would be preferable to put more into their work and into government-sponsored programs in hope that by so doing they can better their own living standards and improve their general lot.<sup>152</sup>

The results of the meetings between the governments had produced little, and the news of the development of a Soviet hydrogen bomb clouded the sentiment in Hungary. The legation strongly suggested that the United States undertake “some positive action as opposed to words” to “give succor to [the] Hungarian people now and help lift them out of their current mood.”<sup>153</sup> Specifically, the U.S. legation in Hungary suggested that the United States raise the issue of removing Soviet troops from Hungary and Rumania.

### **Policy Evolution**

By the autumn of 1955, it was clear to administration officials that a disconnect existed between the stated U.S. objective in Eastern Europe and the broader, evolved national security strategy found in NSC 5501/1. In a memorandum for the chairman of the OCB, dated September 30, 1955, Nelson Rockefeller noted the differences between NSC 174 and NSC 5501/1. He wrote, “the policies set forth in NSC 5505/1 (based on the general strategy outlined in NSC 5501/1, ‘Basic National Security Policy,’

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<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 100-101.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 101.

especially paragraph 26-c) reflect a somewhat subtler strategy and different emphasis than the policy conclusions underlying NSC 174.”<sup>154</sup> This memo, in fact, urged the head of the OCB, on behalf of the Planning Coordination Board, to request that the NSC “review NSC 174 and NSC 5505/1 in the light of and subsequent to revision of NSC 5505/1.”<sup>155</sup>

The memo itself is important as more than a simple record of decision in the Eisenhower administration. It also reveals the extent to which the planning for national psychological activities had become so compartmentalized as to begin to lose currency: Eisenhower, who came to office promising to closely link the work of the administration to an effective psychological strategy had replaced C.D. Jackson with Nelson Rockefeller, a man whose personal gifts for the task at hand were small in comparison to his predecessor. Where Jackson had the president’s ear, often, Rockefeller was left to write memos to coordination bodies to request action by yet higher decision-making bodies. This seems as much a product of Nelson Rockefeller’s position in the administration as anything else.

Eisenhower found it difficult to replace C.D. Jackson. Jackson had served with Eisenhower in the second world war, on the campaign trail, and in the earliest councils

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<sup>154</sup>Memorandum for the Chairman, Operations Coordinating Board, from Nelson Rockefeller, September 30, 1955, NSC Staff Papers, Planning Coordination Group Series, Box 1, #4 NSC 174, U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, DDEL.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid.

of the administration. Jackson, who was certainly a gadfly in the administration, viewed his job description as “get things done.” He worked with hardly any staff and devoted his time to serving as champion for various ideas within the administration.<sup>156</sup> Rockefeller, in contrast to Jackson, appeared more interested in building an empire for himself within the White House staff. It was an ambition not lost on John Foster Dulles, who resented and resisted Rockefeller’s impudence.

In fact, the appointment of Nelson Rockefeller, and Rockefeller’s handing of his position, riled Dulles who did not appreciate what he saw as Rockefeller’s attempts to undermine the position of the Secretary of State and the State Department.<sup>157</sup> The correspondence and memoranda by Dulles seem to suggest some tension in the relationship from its earliest days. By mid-July 1955, however, the problem had reached a crescendo as Dulles was very concerned with the advice Rockefeller felt free to give the president. On July 12, 1955, Rockefeller and Dulles met and discussed a booklet prepared by Rockefeller, dated July 11, 1955, and given to President Eisenhower. The booklet, “Psychological Strategy at Geneva,” in Dulles’s words, “involved making proposals with reference to the handling of the various matters that

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<sup>156</sup>For a discussion of the role C.D. Jackson played in the White House, see H.W. Brands, Jr., *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower’s Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 117-137.

<sup>157</sup>When asked, Abbot Washburn confirmed the strains between John Foster Dulles and Nelson Rockefeller and the negative impact that had on the administration’s conduct of political-psychological warfare. Abbot Washburn, phone interview with author, March 20, 2003.

might come up at Geneva. In many cases, these proposals were not in accord with State Department policy.”<sup>158</sup>

Dulles was not amused, and he let Rockefeller know it:

I have grave question as to the propriety of the President getting this kind of advice from sources outside of the State Department. I said that the Secretary of State was supposed to be the principal advisor of the President with relation to foreign affairs, but that if he was getting advice on the whole gamut of international issues from Mr. Rockefeller, that would put us into a competitive position which I did not think was good organization. I said that there had been Presidents who did get much of their advice from private advisers, ignoring the State Department, but that that was not my idea, nor was I disposed to be Secretary of State under those conditions.<sup>159</sup>

After the Geneva Summit, Dulles and Rockefeller met again. Rockefeller apologized for his actions prior to the summit. Dulles conceded the level of frustration Rockefeller must feel when “brilliant ideas” were “scrapped because of factors which were discovered through careful staffing.”<sup>160</sup>

But Dulles also bristled at the growing White House staff Rockefeller was hiring. His organizational chart listed more than 45 personnel.<sup>161</sup> White House

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<sup>158</sup>Memorandum of Conversation with Nelson A. Rockefeller, 12 July 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

<sup>161</sup>Memorandum for the President, Organization and Personnel Report—Relating to Psychological Aspects of International Understanding and Cooperation, 27 July 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18,

assistant Roc O'Connor even reminded Dulles that "C.D. Jackson operated without any staff at all."<sup>162</sup>

On July 30, 1955, Dulles met with White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams. They discussed the difficulty Dulles had with Rockefeller. Dulles recalled:

I said that my conception of the proper job of someone like Rockefeller was to scrutinize the vast number of suggestions which flowed into the White House through letters and personal visits, out of which there were nuggets of value; that ideas which seemed of value should then be brought by Rockefeller to the attention of the agencies primarily concerned, which would usually be either State, AEC, or CIA, and then if after initial scrutiny in the organized agency, they still seemed to have value, to press them on to definitive consideration. I gave as an illustration in this field C.D. Jackson's activities which had resulted in the "Atom's for Peace" plan.

I said, however, that I found it unacceptable for Nelson Rockefeller to build up a big staff of his own for the purpose of advising the President in the field of foreign relations. I considered the Secretary of State was the President's principal adviser in this field and that so far as I was concerned if he ceased to be that, I would no longer be interested in being Secretary of State. I referred to the papers which Rockefeller had given the President as his recommendations as to how the Geneva Conference should be conducted.<sup>163</sup>

Dulles made the same general case to Eisenhower on August 5, 1955, but did not raise

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Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>162</sup>Memorandum for the Secretary, 13 July 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>163</sup>Memorandum of Conversation with Governor Adams, 30 July 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

the specter of his departure as he had to both Adams and Rockefeller previously.

According to Dulles's notes on the meeting, the President "expressed some surprise at the size and complexity of the proposed staff and said that he had been unaware of all these arrangements."<sup>164</sup>

Where once grandiose efforts to jump-start psychological warfare received hearty support, Dulles reacted coolly to initiatives suggested by Rockefeller, pointing out administrative problems with proposed programs. One example came in the proposal presented to Eisenhower by Theodore S. Replier, Executive Secretary of the Advertising Council. Replier spent six months in 1955 traveling around the world and studying the broad dynamics of the international situation as an Eisenhower Fellow. Upon his return, he met with President Eisenhower and presented a broad plan for psychological action.<sup>165</sup> According to White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams, the president expressed great interest in Replier's proposal, and asked several staff members, including the head of USIA, Theodore Streibert, and Nelson Rockefeller to

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<sup>164</sup>Memorandum of Conversation with the President, 5 August 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>165</sup>For the details of the Replier proposal, see Theodore S. Replier, Memorandum, August 3, 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

meet with Replier to develop the idea further.<sup>166</sup>

Eisenhower's reaction to the Replier plan was enthusiastic. He noted some problems in the execution of the plan, but overall Eisenhower "said that in general, he was in complete agreement and that it represented his long-time thinking, in illustration of which he read passages from *Crusade in Europe* which indicated his conviction that the war against Communism would not be won by military means but through combating the deprivations of humanity on which Communism feeds."<sup>167</sup> Eisenhower then set his staff the task of developing the idea.

Dulles, in contrast, was not enthusiastic at all. He noted administrative difficulties, the overlapping nature of the proposal involved numerous agencies not used to working together, such as the Agriculture Department and the Atomic Energy Commission. Furthermore, Dulles did not believe that even if one were to resolve the administrative problems, the program had much promise for success. He wrote, "I am not sure that the effect would be very dramatic as long as the whole was no greater than its several part." He also discounted the essential feature of the Replier plan—the creation of a fund for peace financed by disarmament. In short, Dulles rejected the

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<sup>166</sup>Memorandum for the Secretary of State from Nelson Rockefeller, 5 August 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>167</sup>The President's Reaction to the Replier Proposal, August 3, 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

entire plan.<sup>168</sup>

The same day Dulles met with Eisenhower to express his concerns over Rockefeller's expanding role in the counsels of state, Eisenhower made his choice clear and backed his secretary of state. In contrast to the president's recorded reaction to the Repplier proposal, Eisenhower told Rockefeller he was unimpressed and dismissed it as the all too common notion that the "president should make a speech" and chastised Rockefeller for bringing it to him without having "staffed" the proposal "sufficiently."<sup>169</sup> The president wrote:

In the whole general subject of *psychological warfare*, the critical need of the president is for coordination. Hundreds of people have ideas affecting it; almost every returning traveler can tell the government exactly what should be done to save the nation. Some of these ideas are good and of course others are generated right here in the government itself. The problem is to get the proper staff work of government—not of a special agency—on them so that we may achieve true coordination. The Defense Department affects psychological warfare day by day, present and future. The same is true, of course, of MSA, a lot of activities of ODM, Commerce, Agriculture, and above all, state.

The problem is to have the effect of all these operations directed toward a common goal; the right hand must know what the left hand does.

The critical—the absolutely vital—mission of yourself and your office consists of the follower:

- (a.) establishment of such splendid relationship with all concerned departments that new ideas can be examined

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<sup>168</sup>Dulles to Rockefeller, 10 August 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, Subject Series, Box 6, Folder 18, Rockefeller, Nelson, 1954-55, at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>169</sup>Eisenhower to Rockefeller, August 5, 1955, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 11, DDE Diary, August 1955 (1), DDEL.



from every viewpoint and when necessary the result presented to me.

- (b). keeping in close contact so to the established or probable effect of every governmental action upon our standing in the world, and,
- (c). keeping each department informed as to what the others are doing in this respect, as well as keeping me informed.

Every economic, security and political policy of the government manifestly is one of the weapons (or should be) in psychological warfare. Obviously most central or special agencies should or could [not?] keep an adequate staff for handling these matter. If it attempted to do so, it would at best be duplication and at worst utter confusion. Consequently, we want thinking and coordination and follow-up.

Someday when we both find ourselves with some free time—if ever—I should be glad to talk to you about the matter, if this hastily written memorandum does not seem clear to you.<sup>170</sup>

By the end of 1955, however, Rockefeller had tendered his resignation.

### **Political Warfare In Practice**

By early 1955, USIA reported success in broadening its international broadcasting efforts. Reflecting the rhetorical evolution of the Eisenhower administration in the second half of 1954, the U.S. Information Agency's "operations reflected American reactions to nuclear age developments and emphasized more heavily America's devotion to peace and the need for unity and strength to maintain it."<sup>171</sup> In addition,

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<sup>170</sup>Ibid.

<sup>171</sup>NSC 5509, Part 6 "The USIA Program," White House Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 5, NSC 5509 (7) Status of U.S. National Security Programs on December 31, 1954, DDEL.

“The Agency launched a cultural campaign to make the American way of life better understood and capitalized on the series of Free World accomplishments which strengthened unity of purpose and resolved long-standing differences.”<sup>172</sup> In addition to campaigns to discredit the Soviet Union and communism in general, “the Agency attempted generally to offer audiences more positive concepts in its output, showing that the U.S. is not merely or even primarily concerned with opposing Communism but stands for things which humanity values, and devotes itself to human progress.”<sup>173</sup>

The emphasis on cultural programs which emerged in USIA in 1954-1955 reflected a belief that U.S. values could best be defined and understood overseas if audiences were made aware of the United States public’s attitudes and concerns. One effort to use cultural tools in this way came in the late 1954 tour of *Porgy and Bess* in Yugoslavia and the Middle East. The production “created new perspectives . . . for a Communist-led people sensitive to reports of American race prejudice and exploitation.”<sup>174</sup>

By mid 1955, the USIA grappled with issues of “adaptation and adjustment” to

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<sup>172</sup>Ibid. For a brief discussion of the beginning of U.S.-Soviet cultural exchanges, see Hans N. Tuch, *Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 125-139.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid. For more on the foreign policy challenges posed by U.S. racial inequality, see Cary Fraser, “Crossing the Color Line in Little Rock: The Eisenhower Administration and the Dilemma of Race for U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History* vol 24, no. 2 (2000): 233-264.

changes in Soviet tactics and to the inclusion of West Germany in NATO which resulted in growing neutralist sentiments in U.S. allies.<sup>175</sup> The challenge was described by the NSC in this way:

The favorable impression created by the new Soviet tactics has increased the difficulties faced by USIA in persuading other peoples to accept American policies of building up Free World strength to counter the threat posed by the massive military power of the Communist bloc. As the Soviet posture appeared to grow less threatening, and the danger of war seemed less immediate, it became increasingly difficult to persuade Europeans that the necessary sacrifices demanded by our military counter-measures were a matter of immediate urgency.<sup>176</sup>

The challenge for USIA was in maintaining the resolve of citizens in Western Europe to bear the burden of armaments in the face of a softening Soviet posture. Looking forward, USIA saw its task to be one of bolstering the Free World's willingness to maintain military strength while political leaders pressed for the resolution of international disputes.<sup>177</sup>

Broadcasting efforts in Eastern Europe were described as follows:

Information programs directed to the satellite countries continued to emphasize (a) that the U.S. cannot reconcile itself to continued Soviet domination of the nations of Eastern Europe, such domination being a cause of tension; (b) that the U.S. desires the restoration of true liberty

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<sup>175</sup>NSC 5525, Part 6 "The USIA Program," White House Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 6, NSC 5525 (6) Status of U.S. National Security Programs on June 30, 1955 (6), DDEL.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid..

<sup>177</sup>Ibid.

to that area so that the captive satellite peoples may again enjoy governments and institutions of their own choosing; and ( c ) that increased Western strength as exemplified by the Paris agreements has significance for the future of Eastern Europe.<sup>178</sup>

Specific developments in Central and Eastern Europe received additional attention from USIA, particularly the Soviet agreement to the Austrian state treaty, and “the Kremlin’s respect of Yugoslavia’s independent course of action.” These developments were used by USIA to suggest that the Soviet Union recognized Western strength and resolve, and that these accommodations “may have ramifications of significance” to others in Eastern Europe.<sup>179</sup>

The administration continued to use food as a weapon in its political campaign against the Soviet Union. In early March, 1955, Eisenhower authorized the offer of food aid to Albania through the league of Red Cross Societies. According to his press secretary:

The President’s statement said we were offering this food through the Red Cross and such a move would put the Albanian Government on the spot. If they refuse, their peoples will know of it and Russia will then be forced to ship in some food. If they accept, our packages will clearly be as coming from the United States and the Albanian people will know where the food come.

This is similar to the move we made last year in the Danube flood countries which was very effective propaganda in those

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<sup>178</sup>Ibid..

<sup>179</sup>Ibid.

countries.<sup>180</sup>

One technique used by the political warfare planners in the Eisenhower administration was to try to discredit the local leaders in each of the satellites by using the Voice of America to repeatedly identify “selected officials” as representatives of the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1955, Rakosi was the “logical target” in Hungary. As the State Department reminded the U.S. legation in Hungary, “longstanding VOA practice” was to “miss no opportunity” to “remind listeners [that] satellite regimes as [a] whole represent [the] interests of [the] Kremlin rather than those of local populations.”<sup>181</sup>

Finally, the United States continued to support a number of other programs,<sup>182</sup> including a program for escapees from the Eastern bloc,<sup>183</sup> and commentary on Soviet

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<sup>180</sup>Diary Entry by the President’s Press Secretary (Hagerty), March 4, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 11-12.

<sup>181</sup>Telegram from the Department of State to the Legation in Hungary, March 21, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 15.

<sup>182</sup>For an overview of the State Department’s role in the U.S. effort to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities in Eastern Europe, see “Memorandum from George T. Lister of the Office of Eastern European Affairs to the Officer in Charge of Polish, Baltic, and Czechoslovak Affairs (Trivers),” October 20, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 85. Lister, in particular, emphasized that the Department of State’s primary role in these efforts consisted of “providing information, suggestions, advice and guidance for other branches and agencies of the Government. . . .” *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>183</sup>See “Paper Prepared by the Interdepartmental Escapee Committee,” November 2, 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 95.

economic programs in Eastern Europe.<sup>184</sup>

By the end of 1955, a range of military technical<sup>185</sup> and political developments combined to influence U.S. policy in profound ways. Political warfare and military preparedness remained the foundation for cold war. But the specific approach to political warfare had been modified to stress positive alternatives to the Soviet system in the hopes of inspiring evolution, not revolution. Just as developments in military technology and operational experience led to changes in the military's planning and preparations, so too had the administration's experience with political warfare inspired revision. Eastern Europe remained an area of key concern, but it was only one area competing with the rest of the world for attention and resources in the U.S. policy making community.

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<sup>184</sup>See Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, December 13, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 104-105.

<sup>185</sup>For example, note the State Department's concern over the development of Soviet ballistic missile capabilities. See Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State, no date, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 154-160. By the end of December, the Office of Defense Mobilization, Defense Working Group, had issued its report, "Achieving and Maintaining U.S. and Free-World Technological Superiority over the USSR," December 20, 1955, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 173-177.

## 1956

### **NSC 174 Progress Report**

The OCB delivered its progress report on NSC 174 to the NSC on February 29, 1956. The report provided a thorough list of the actions taken by the United States between May 1, 1954 and February 29, 1956 to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities in Eastern Europe. The actions included the presentation of charges against the Soviet regime at the International Court of Justice; information campaigns; food aid, the “exploitation of indications of internal conflict” among leaders in the region; high-profile public statements by U.S. leaders, especially the president and the secretary of state; support for organizations such as the Free Europe Committee; the expansion of cultural ties with “the peoples of the Soviet European satellites;” and so forth.<sup>186</sup> Every one of these initiatives focused on the political and psychological aspects of the East-West struggle: it was, in short, a partial catalog of the battle for hearts and minds in the first term of the Eisenhower administration.

But the report held no hope for a quick resolution to the challenge posed by Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. The OCB concluded, frankly, “There is no evidence of progress toward [the] long range objective” of “eventual fulfillment of the

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<sup>186</sup>“Progress Report on NSC 174, United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe,” February 29, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957* Volume XXV, 121.

right of the peoples of the Soviet satellites to enjoy governments of their own choosing, free of Soviet domination.”<sup>187</sup> In other words, “Independence.”<sup>188</sup>

Still, the OCB praised the efforts of VOA, Radio Free Europe, and the Crusade for Freedom. The OCB believed these efforts had served American interests well, if only marginally, in keeping “alive in these peoples their sense of connection with the West and with Free World ideals, and also to sustain their alienation from the Communist regimes.”<sup>189</sup> The frequent angry denouncements of such efforts by communist officials seemed to the OCB to offer further evidence of the effectiveness of their political warfare instruments.<sup>190</sup>

Not surprisingly, the “spirit of Geneva” was cited as a “major problem” in the OCB’s review of U.S. policy to date. The West’s focus on securing a German settlement “had the effect of making the people in the Satellites feel that their future was being subordinated.”<sup>191</sup> The problem was further exacerbated, according to the OCB, by the admission of several satellite regimes to the United Nations.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>187</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid..

<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>190</sup>Ibid.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>192</sup>Ibid., 125.



Ultimately, the OCB concluded that any effort to pry Eastern Europe free of Soviet domination would require long, tireless, and patient effort. But that necessary time-span posed problems of its own. The OCB worried that as time passed, the hope for liberation would falter and individuals would be more likely to reconcile themselves to the regimes in place. The OCB warned, "It must be regarded as a major problem in the implementation of NSC 174 that any movement toward a relaxation of tensions between East and West is bound to be widely interpreted in the satellites as a weakening of Western determination to achieve their liberation from Soviet control and a disposition to accept their status as permanent."<sup>193</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. policy was plagued by conflicting approaches. On the one hand, NSC 174, still the guiding document for U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe, advocated a more aggressive policy which would have the United States encourage "organized resistance" to "basically alter the status of the satellites."<sup>194</sup> On the other hand, however, the OCB observed:

In the absence of a cold war climate, many of the courses of action would be difficult to pursue. For example, those intended to encourage anti-communist activities and passive resistance are somewhat incompatible with a détente. Likewise, efforts to bring about a basis for a negotiated settlement and to encourage evolutionary changes in satellite regimes, as proposed for existing policy (particularly under NSC 5505/1), are not always compatible with programs intended to

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<sup>193</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid..

keep alive the hopes and aspirations of the captive peoples.<sup>195</sup>

The NSC discussed the OCB review of its policy toward Eastern Europe on March 22, 1956. Under Secretary of State Herbert Hoover explained the challenges confronted by the OCB in its review of NSC 174. He noted, plainly, that the United States had “achieved very little in terms of concrete gains. Circumstances limited us to ‘playing for the breaks’ and doing our best to maintain the morale of the populations of the satellite states.”<sup>196</sup> Hoover urged the NSC to review the policies, especially in light of the news of Khrushchev’s speech in February.<sup>197</sup>

Eisenhower joined the discussion. He accepted the basic conclusions of the OCB review and the NSC discussion, but urged members not to become resigned to failure in Eastern Europe. He said, “We mustn’t be less aggressive in pursuing our objectives simply because we had thus far not achieved the progress we would like to see.”<sup>198</sup> Allen Dulles echoed the president’s remarks and observed that the fact the Soviet Union had not consolidated its position in Eastern Europe further indicated some level of success in U.S. policy and actions. Eisenhower went further and noted that history had demonstrated that no country could dominate a sizeable foreign land-

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<sup>195</sup>Ibid.

<sup>196</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 280<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, March 22, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957* Volume XXV, 128.

<sup>197</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>198</sup>Ibid.

mass and population without repeating the actions of the United States which “virtually exterminated the population” of Native Americans.<sup>199</sup>

### **Changes in world situation and threat assessments**

The process of review which eventually led to the issuance of NSC 5602/1 began in the autumn of 1955. The reasons for revising the then current policy, NSC 5501, were articulated by the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State. In short, they believed that Soviet conduct had evolved in such a way over the course of 1955, exhibiting greater flexibility and less international acrimony, that there would be decreasing “fear of overt Soviet aggression,” coupled with “greater horror of nuclear war. . . .”<sup>200</sup> In particular, the planning staff noted:

The underlying concepts of NSC 5501 were designed for a world situation in which flexibility had just begun to mark Soviet policy, in which the requirements of free world strength and cohesion had begun to shift from safeguards against imminent aggression to preparations for long-term competition, and in which the U.S. had begun to ready itself for the possibility of negotiations with Soviet-Communist power.<sup>201</sup>

A National Intelligence Estimate dated November 1, 1955 concurred in the State Department’s assessment of the shift in the basic estimate of the current world

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<sup>199</sup>Ibid.

<sup>200</sup>Department of State General Comments on NSC 5501, October 3, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957* Volume XIX, 123.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid., 123.

situation. The authors of the estimate observed:

The salient feature of the present global situation is a change in the character of the East-West conflict. Three factors appear to have brought about this change: the growing number and destructiveness of nuclear weapons, the growth of Western strength and unity in response to the postwar Communist threat, and (at least partly as a result) the subsequent shift in Bloc tactics.<sup>202</sup>

The primary concern of intelligence experts and national security planners at the time was what the arrival of nuclear plenty between the superpowers meant for the Cold War.<sup>203</sup> The November 1 NIE reflected this concern. This military-technical development coincided with, and some speculated reinforced, a shift in Soviet policy away from belligerence to greater flexibility and more subtle political challenges.<sup>204</sup>

In essence, NIE-100-7-55 depicted a world growing increasingly stable, despite the menace of super-power confrontation. Although the Soviet Union had problems of its own, in agriculture and consumer goods, for example, the regime itself was stable

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<sup>202</sup>NIE 100-7-55, "World Situation and Trends," November 1, 1955, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 131.

<sup>203</sup>Although the Soviet Union had detonated its first atomic bomb during the Truman administration, by the mid-1950s, both the United States and the Soviet Union possessed sufficient thermo-nuclear weapons and delivery systems to threaten the destruction of both Western Civilization and the Soviet regime. This realization overshadowed and influenced national security policy making in the Eisenhower administration from 1954 onwards. Since an NIE reflects the consensus opinion of the intelligence community, a wonderful example of this thinking is NIE 100-7-55, "World Situation and Trends," November 1, 1955, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 131-145.

<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*, 132.

and unlikely to change, according to the authors of the estimate.<sup>205</sup> In Eastern Europe, the situation was similar, with dimming hopes for the promise of liberation. The NIE reported:

In the European Satellites the post-Stalin leadership is attempting to modify the more obvious manifestations of Soviet control, and may proceed further on this course. However, the USSR almost certainly will not abandon its hold over the Satellites, nor is it likely that any upsurge in Satellite nationalism will seriously shake this hold. The Satellite regimes share a common interest with Moscow in maintaining tight Communist control over populations which are still basically hostile.<sup>206</sup>

But the U.S. intelligence community, mindful of the impact of the “Spirit of Geneva,” worried that indigenous public hostility to the communist regimes in Eastern Europe might wane as tensions between East and West subsided and the promise of “liberation” faded. The authors of the estimate wrote, “A prolonged reduction of tensions would accelerate the already evident decline of popular hope for liberation, and hasten the process of adjustment to Communist rule.”<sup>207</sup>

The “prolonged reduction of tensions” which might damage long-term U.S. interests in Eastern Europe had the potential to unravel the gains in cohesion and unity among the Western powers. The U.S. intelligence community did not mince words on this score. The reduction in East-West tensions threatened the unity of the West on

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<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 136.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid.

<sup>207</sup>Ibid.

issues of rearmament and steadfastness in dealing with the Soviet Union. The intelligence community worried that the reduction in tensions, coupled with the appreciation of “the consequences of nuclear war, will create an even more serious threat to the Free World than did Stalin’s aggressive postwar policies.”<sup>208</sup> Where Stalin’s threats made for simple and clear responses, the ambiguity of the current international adjustment would make consensus more difficult to reach among allies in the West.<sup>209</sup> These problems were thought to be even more acute in the undeveloped and neutral countries of the world where Soviet economic and military aid was being used effectively to cement ties between Moscow and the former colonial areas of the Far East, the Middle East, and Africa.<sup>210</sup> The authors of the NIE noted:

In these areas the “battle of ideas” for influencing the attitudes and allegiance of potential leadership groups will also prove increasingly important. The current Bloc effort to establish its international respectability will help open new lines of communication to these groups, particularly those on which the Communists concentrate, the intelligentsia and the youth.<sup>211</sup>

But the United States had important material and political advantages in these areas too, not the least of which was Eisenhower’s 1953 political warfare strike: Atoms for

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<sup>208</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid.

<sup>210</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid., 144.

Peace.<sup>212</sup>

In fact, NIE-100-7-55, like all of its Eisenhower administration predecessors, emphasized the pre-eminently political nature of the struggle, the immediacy of the political threat, and the vital use of political warfare as an instrument in the Cold War. But this estimate went one step further: the result of the changing international system, the reduction in tensions between Moscow and Washington, and the advent of nuclear plenty was that political warfare was even more important than it had been. The authors wrote:

Despite the pronounced change in Soviet tactics, we see no indication that the USSR has given up its long-range aim of achieving a Communist-dominated world. Indeed the new Soviet leaders exhibit an air of confidence in their growing economic and military strength and in the ultimate victory of Communism. What they apparently have decided is that the existing world situation requires a shift from their previous line if they are to make progress toward their ultimate aims. Thus the East-West conflict is merely shifting from a phase marked by direct Bloc threats and pressures to one marked by increasing emphasis on less obvious forms of Communist political warfare.<sup>213</sup>

This evolution in the international situation suggests progress in the Eisenhower administration's conduct of the Cold War and a certain level of success for U.S. policy. Eisenhower had preached early that the Cold War would be one of long duration, and by mid-1955, the Eisenhower administration, according to its own internal assessments, had achieved the most fundamental aspects of its Cold War strategy:

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<sup>212</sup>Ibid.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid., 137.

1. they had ended the sense of hopping from crisis to crisis which plagued U.S. policy in the Truman administration;
2. they had settled into a long-term struggle with the Soviet Union; and
3. political warfare had emerged as the primary weapon in this struggle.

Indeed, Eisenhower himself responded to a pessimistic JCS assessment of the U.S. position<sup>214</sup> by noting “The Soviets have been turned away from the military form of international action.”<sup>215</sup> Dulles concurred. Over lunch with the secretaries of defense and treasury, Dulles judged that “the Soviet Union was now sufficiently committed to policies of non-violence so that I doubted that we would see from their side any repetition of the attack on South Korea.”<sup>216</sup>

But in doing so, they had reduced international tensions to a point where senior policy makers began to worry about the ability to maintain the Western coalition believed needed to deter Soviet military adventurousness. It was a situation full of irony. By building free-world unity, cohesion, and military strength, the administration could boast of reduced tensions with the Soviet Union. But those very reduced

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<sup>214</sup>See Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), March 12, 1956, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 234-238.

<sup>215</sup>Memorandum of a Conference with the President, March 13, 1956, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 238.

<sup>216</sup>See Memorandum of a Luncheon Conversation Among the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury (Humphrey), and the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), April 19, 1956, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 299.



tensions, members of the administration feared, might undermine free-world unity, cohesion, and military strength.<sup>217</sup> It seems an unspoken (unwritten) sub-text of NIE-100-7-55 that a critical amount of tension was required in the international system to maintain the political cohesion of the Western democracies upon which security had been built.

### **Evolution in national security strategy and policy**

Fundamentally, the NSC believed the basic strategy outlined in NSC 5501 remained “generally valid and sound” but that the developments in international tension and military technological capabilities warranted a revision of basic U.S. policy, particularly in the areas of policies toward the under-developed world, U.S. force planning, and technology policy.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup>“Basic National Security Policy (NSC 5602), undated, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 193-194. Note, this citation is not to the actual NSC policy statement, but to a memorandum prepared by the NSC planning board to justify the revision of NSC 5501.

<sup>218</sup>“Basic National Security Policy (NSC 5602), undated, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 194-195. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, disagreed. In a memo to the Secretary of Defense, JCS Chairman Arthur Radford wrote that the chiefs felt a simple restatement of basic policy along the lines first expressed in NSC 162/2 and NSC 5501 was insufficient given the “marked deterioration of the Free World position in the past year, due mainly to a new and more flexible approach on the part of the Communist Bloc (USSR). Unless U.S. policy is realistically revised to meet the new Soviet tactics, U.S. leadership of the Free World Will be jeopardized.” In this light, the JCS recommended that even if NSC 5602 were adopted, a complete review and “restudy” of basic national security policy was required. See “Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson),” February 24, 1956,

The discussion of a draft of NSC 5602 on February 27, 1956, reveals John Foster Dulles's personal continued interest in the people of Eastern Europe. In a discussion on the need for greater administrative flexibility to counter the Soviet Union's "economic offensive," the Secretary of State used a East European example for the type of program he envisioned. It was recorded in the minutes as follows:

Suppose, for instance, the United States went to the Czechoslovakian Government and said in effect that Czechoslovakia needed a lot of cotton. We would be glad to give this cotton to Czechoslovakia, together with butter, meats, fats, and other foods of which we had large surpluses. We would then propose some kind of a deal by which in return for these commodities Czechoslovakia was to provide us with war goods or other things. Any such proposal as this to Czechoslovakia would simply "raise hell" in the Soviet satellite countries. The Soviets, said Secretary Dulles, are grievously exploiting the satellites. Why can't we exploit this fact, just as the Soviets are exploiting our allies and the neutral nations?<sup>219</sup>

Eisenhower liked the idea, but conceded Congress viewed any trade with the Eastern

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published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 200. The JCS believed that the deterioration of the U.S. position resulted from unmet challenges in the "political, social, and psychological fields." See Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), March 12, 1956, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 235. Ironically, the JCS did not view these shortfalls in the psychological strategy of the United States as a cause to shift government resources from the Department of Defense to other departments and agencies responsible for political and psychological aspects of national strategy. See Memorandum of a Conference with the President, March 13, 1956, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 238-241.

<sup>219</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 277<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, February 27, 1956, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 217-218.

Bloc as “wrong and bad.”<sup>220</sup> According to the memorandum of the meeting’s discussion, Eisenhower, in contrast, “wanted to set in motion . . . centrifugal forces rather than centripetal forces in the Soviet bloc. U.S. trade with the bloc might eventually prove to be such a centrifugal force.”<sup>221</sup> This discussion did not progress as Dulles meant it as an example of one area in which greater administrative flexibility would serve the interests of the United States, but it is significant for it provides a clean and concise statement of Eisenhower’s own interest in Eastern Europe and the goals of U.S. policy as he conceived of them.

#### **NSC 5602/1**

The revised statement of basic national security policy appeared March 15, 1956. It reflected the shifting intelligence assessments of the Soviet threat, the international system and the destructive power of nuclear weapons. As a result, political warfare received even greater prominence in the policy prescriptions of the NSC.

The NSC recognized the military power of the Soviet Union and noted that the United States had two options in the face of it. The first would rely on direct military confrontation to reduce the Soviet Union’s military capabilities. This course of action

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<sup>220</sup>Ibid., 218.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid.

would risk nuclear war. The second option for U.S. policy would rely on “mutually acceptable agreements with the Soviets.”<sup>222</sup> Policy options as a result reduced themselves to political and persuasive measures:

Hence, U.S. policies must be designed (1) to affect the conduct and policies of the Communist regimes, especially those of the USSR, in ways that further U.S. security interests (including safeguarded disarmament); and (2) to foster tendencies that lead them to abandon expansionist policies. In pursuing this general policy, our effort should be directed to:

- a. Deterring further Communist aggression, and preventing the occurrence of total war so far as compatible with U.S. security.
- b. Maintaining and developing in the free world the mutuality of interest and common purpose, the confidence in the United States, and the will, strength, and stability necessary to face the Soviet Communist threat and to provide constructive and attractive alternatives to Communism, which sustain the hope and confidence of the free peoples.
- c. In addition to a and b above, taking other actions designed to foster changes in the character and policies of the Soviet-Communist bloc regimes.
  - (1) By influencing them and their policies toward the choice of those alternative lines of action which, while in their national interests, do not conflict with the security interests of the United States.
  - (2) By exploiting differences between such regimes to disrupt the structure of the Soviet-Communist bloc.
  - (3) By exploiting vulnerabilities within the bloc countries in ways consistent with this general strategy.

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<sup>222</sup>NSC 5602/1, Basic National Security Policy, March 15, 1956, published in *FRUS 1955-1957*, Volume XIX, 244-245.

d. Destroying or neutralizing the international Communist apparatus in the free world.<sup>223</sup>

As they had in previous national security strategy statements, the Eisenhower administration noted that the successful execution of this strategy would require the coordinated use of every element of national power, including “military, political, economic, psychological, and covert....”<sup>224</sup> But more importantly, these tasks reemphasized the vital role played by political warfare in the country’s over-arching national security strategy.

Like its predecessors, this strategy sought to ensure a long Cold War period as the best means to prevail without resort to direct conflict:

Provided that it is resolutely pursued, this general strategy offers the best hope of bringing about at least a prolonged period of armed truce, and ultimately a peaceful resolution of the Soviet bloc-free world conflict and a peaceful and orderly world environment. Failure resolutely to pursue this general strategy could, within a relatively short span of years, place the United States in great jeopardy.<sup>225</sup>

The political warfare elements of the new national security strategy remained consistent with previous statements of strategy, although the emphasis accorded them in the statement of national security policy gained prominence. “The United States should place more stress than heretofore on building the strength and cohesion of the

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<sup>223</sup>Ibid., 245.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid.

free world,” wrote the NSC.<sup>226</sup> The United States would need to help friends and others resist the threat of communism around the world, but “direct action” against communist groups around the world would be left to “local governments.”<sup>227</sup> But the United States could take more active role in employing a coordinated effort in “political, information, economic and military” to counter the subversion of other states.

Still, in 1956, the NSC emphasized, perhaps all the more appropriately, a long-term view of the cold war. In this struggle “over the long pull,”<sup>228</sup> the ultimate measure of success or failure would be found in which system could “demonstrate progress toward meeting the basic needs and aspirations of its peoples.”<sup>229</sup>

Toward the Soviet bloc itself, the NSC emphasized a range of soft instruments of power to produce the necessary political effects.

In utilizing East-West relations, negotiations and exploitation of vulnerabilities to influence Soviet conduct, the United States should seek (a) to reduce the likelihood or capacity of Soviet aggression or subversive expansion; (b) to give to the Communists regimes a clear conception of the true U.S. and free world purposes, including uncompromising U.S. determination to resist Communist aggressive moves and uphold freedom; (c) to convince the Communist leaders that alternatives exist to their present policies which would be acceptable to

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<sup>226</sup>Ibid.

<sup>227</sup>Ibid.

<sup>228</sup>Ibid.

<sup>229</sup>Ibid., 249.

the United States and which they might come to consider compatible with their own security interests; (d) to correct the distorted image of the West which has been sedulously cultivated for years inside the USSR; (e) to encourage the Communist regimes to take measures which would make more difficult a reversal of peaceful policy and which might over the long run lead to basic changes in the outlook or character of Communist regimes.<sup>230</sup>

This was a patient policy. Expanded contacts between the people of the East and West, proponents believed, would further this cause.<sup>231</sup> It was hoped that expanded contacts “would favor evolution in the Soviet society and economy toward peaceful development, or, if rejected, would expose the persistence of expansionism behind the

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<sup>230</sup>Ibid., 252.

<sup>231</sup>On May 31, 1956, the administration invited a select group of distinguished Americans to help organize an expanded people to people program of contacts overseas. The president’s letter of invitation read, in part, “There will never be enough diplomats and information officers . . . to get the job done without help from the rest of us. Indeed, if our American ideology is eventually to win out in the great struggle being waged between the two opposing ways of life, it must have the active support of thousands of independent groups . . . and of millions of individual Americans acting through person-to-person communication in foreign lands.” Eisenhower inaugurated the program on September 11, 1956. In remarks to the assembled chairmen of the new people to people programs, Eisenhower said, “In short, what we must do is to widen every possible chink in the Iron Curtain and bring the family of Russia, or of any other country behind the Iron Curtain, that is laboring to better the lot of their children—as humans do the world over—closer into our circle, to show how we do it, and then to sit down between us to say, ‘Now, how do we improve the lot of both of us?’ In this way, I believe, is the truest path to peace. All of the other things that we do are mere palliatives or they are holding the line while constructive forces of this kind take effect.” Remarks at the People-to-People Conference, September 11, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 751 and note on 752.

facade of Soviet tactics and propaganda.”<sup>232</sup>

Negotiations too served a similar purpose. Pursued earnestly, negotiations with the Soviet Union promised to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the United States and its allies. If successful, negotiations might produce positive developments in the international system. Failed negotiations, in contrast, could be used to demonstrate the intransigence of the Soviet Union.<sup>233</sup>

Soviet vulnerabilities would be probed in this way. The goals of policies in this vein were:

(a) to promote evolutionary changes in Soviet policies and conduct in ways that further U.S. and free world security; (b) to weaken the ties which link the USSR and Communist China and bind their satellites; (c) to encourage bureaucratic and popular pressures inside the bloc for greater emphasis by the regimes on their internal problems, and on national interests in the satellites; and (d) to undermine the faith of the Communist ruling classes in their own system and ideology. The effort should be to pose for them the necessity of devoting attention and resources to these needs or facing increased disaffection with the regime or the satellite relationship if these needs are ignored.<sup>234</sup>

In many ways, this approach mimicked the Soviet approach to Cold War as well.

According to NSC 5602/1, the U.S. foreign information programs had six goals.

They were to:

(1) project an image of the United States which reflects the

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<sup>232</sup>NSC 5602/1, Basic National Security Policy, March 15, 1956, 253.

<sup>233</sup>Ibid., 253.

<sup>234</sup>Ibid., 254.



fundamentally peaceful intent of U.S. policies, while making clear our determination to resist aggression; (2) delineate those important aspects of U.S. life, culture and institutions which facilitate understanding of the policies and objectives of the United States; (3) persuade foreign peoples that U.S. objectives will actually aid the achievement of their legitimate national objectives and aspirations; (4) expose Communist aims and actions and adequately counter Soviet propaganda; (5) encourage evolutionary change in the Soviet system, along lines consistent with U.S. security objectives and the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the USSR; (6) assure the satellite peoples of the continuing interest of the U.S. in the peaceful restoration of their independence and political freedom.<sup>235</sup>

The NSC, of course, also recognized that any U.S. policy required a sound U.S. economy and the continued support of an informed citizenry.<sup>236</sup>

In NSC 5602, therefore, the administration produced a document very similar to NSC 162/2 with the exception that the military concern was viewed to have stabilized, in part due to the achievement of nuclear plenty. The political challenges remained the same and the audiences for U.S. information campaigns remained identical. These developments, in turn, suggested different tools in the conduct of Cold War, but it remained a Cold War of prolonged duration, but reduced, sustainable tension in the international system.

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<sup>235</sup>Ibid., 255.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid.

## **De-Stalinization**

The administration issued NSC 5602/1 on March 15, 1956.<sup>237</sup> The document's relevance to political warfare, however, would be swamped within a week by the electrifying news of Nikita Khrushchev's withering denunciation of Stalin at the twentieth party conference (which took place on February 5, 1956, but details of which took weeks to reach the West.).

Even prior to the details of Khrushchev's speech, however, the NSC had begun examining the manner in which it might exploit and respond to the challenge of the obvious process of de-Stalinization in the Soviet orbit. On February 29, 1956, the Operations Coordinating Board established a special working group "to coordinate actions taken to exploit the current Soviet campaign against Stalin."<sup>238</sup> On May 17, 1956, the special working group presented a report of their work. They identified objectives of the U.S. effort to exploit the attacks on Stalin's legacy by the new Soviet leadership. U.S. objectives were shaped by the target audience efforts addressed. Just as the administration's earliest political warfare strategy identified multiple audiences, so too did the planners of the campaign to exploit Soviet criticism of Joseph Stalin. In the Soviet Union itself, for example, U.S. propaganda and political warfare activities

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<sup>237</sup>Ibid., 242-268.

<sup>238</sup>Memorandum for James S. Lay, Jr., May 25, 1956, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (8), DDEL.

sought to transform “the official criticism of Stalin into pressure by the people of the USSR for the diversion of effort away from military production and expansion of communism abroad toward a higher standard of living and more representative government at home.”<sup>239</sup> To accomplish this, U.S. political warfare experts sought to expand the current criticism of one-man rule to “an eventual admission that one-party rule carries the seeds of dictatorship.”<sup>240</sup> In the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, U.S. policy sought to use the criticism of Stalin by Khrushchev to loosen “the ties binding the satellites to Moscow” while shaping an environment in which the satellite states could exert greater autonomy independent of the Soviet Union.<sup>241</sup> In the free world, U.S. policy had two objectives. First, it sought to use the condemnation of Stalin’s rule to undermine “communist claims of infallibility and utopian pretensions” while simultaneously preventing legal communist parties in parliamentary systems from using the critique of Stalin as a means to increase their own political power.<sup>242</sup> Finally, as a general rule, the United States sought to extend the “Soviet admission of Stalin’s mistakes at home into an admission of Stalin’s mistakes abroad.”<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>239</sup>Report of the OCB Special Working Group on Stalinism, May 17, 1956, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (8), DDEL.

<sup>240</sup>Ibid.

<sup>241</sup>Ibid.

<sup>242</sup>Ibid..

<sup>243</sup>Ibid.

The political warfare coordinators on the Operations Coordinating Board employed every method at their disposal to spread the message to the numerous audiences it targeted around the world. Through official statements by American officials, un-official comments, the exploitation of indigenous spokespersons in various countries, overt and covert media outlets, and the coordination of efforts with French and British counterparts, the United States took the Soviet Union and its Communist ideology to task.<sup>244</sup> In admitting the excesses of Stalin's leadership, Khrushchev gave the United States propaganda material which the country would exploit—albeit “pitched on a minor key.”<sup>245</sup> The OCB realized that the evolution under-way in the Soviet Union was advancing U.S. interests around the world. The best policy for the United States at that point was to sit back and let the process unfold.<sup>246</sup> For example, indirect measures could be used to sow dissension and discord within communist parties in the West, as in Italy and France, without any direct U.S. involvement, “which would be counter-productive.”<sup>247</sup>

Official U.S. statements were derived from statements by the president and the

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<sup>244</sup>Ibid.

<sup>245</sup>Memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Beam) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy), April 3, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957* Volume XXIV (Washington, DC: GPO, 1989), 86.

<sup>246</sup>Ibid.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid.

secretary of state. An Eisenhower speech on April 21, 1956, established the parameters of U.S. policy. While hopeful that the break with Stalin's legacy would lead to improved peace and stability, the president called for continued vigilance against Soviet military might. Beyond that, however, Eisenhower said the United States would encourage peaceful evolution in Soviet policy, respect the legitimate interests of the Russian people, and seek the redress of wrongs committed during Stalin's leadership.<sup>248</sup>

Secretary Dulles also joined the public discussion of the de-Stalinization movement in the Soviet Union. The question, said Dulles, was whether or not the rhetoric of Khrushchev and others would be matched by deeds. He noted, for example, that while the Soviet leaders had agreed to liberate Austria, they continued to "forcibly hold East Germany detached from Germany as a whole."<sup>249</sup> East European governments, too, noted Dulles, remained firmly under the control of the Soviet Union. But Dulles combined this skepticism and critique of continued Soviet offenses with a hint of better things to come. He said, "Nevertheless, the fact that the Soviet rulers now denounce much of the past gives cause for hope, because it demonstrates that

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<sup>248</sup>Annex A to the Report of the OCB Special Working Group on Stalinism, May 17, 1956, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (8), DDEL. See also, Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 21, 1956, Ann Whitman File, Speech Series, Box 15, Editors, on Foreign Policy, 4/21/56 (1), DDEL.

<sup>249</sup>Annex A to the Report of the OCB Special Working Group on Stalinism, May 17, 1956, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (8), DDEL.

liberalizing influences from within and without can bring about peaceful change.”<sup>250</sup>

In a press conference on April 24, 1956, Dulles went further, endorsing the Yugoslav model of communism. In response to a reporter’s question, Dulles said,

The most important characteristic of Titoism is the fact that it recognizes that communism can be a national organization; not necessarily an international organization. That was the thesis which was held in Russia by Bukharin and his associated, who were purged and executed in the Nineteen Thirties because they took the view that you would have communism within a country but did not necessarily have to be a part of what is commonly called “international communism.”<sup>251</sup>

After noting that Stalin purged those sentiments from the Soviet communist party, Dulles observed that Tito endorsed the nationalist view of communism and “broke with Stalin on that issue, because Moscow did not admit his right to have a national Communistic state which would primarily be dedicated to the welfare of Yugoslavia.”<sup>252</sup> Then Dulles concluded:

If the Soviet Communists now say that it is all right to have communism on a national basis, that offers a great prospect to the Poles, the Czechs and so forth, who would much rather have their own national brand of communism than be run by Moscow.<sup>253</sup>

The president and the secretary of state hoped these barbs directed at the Soviet regime would further the process of de-Stalinization and advance the cause of internal reform

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<sup>250</sup>Ibid.

<sup>251</sup>Ibid.

<sup>252</sup>Ibid.

<sup>253</sup>Ibid.

within the Soviet system which was the basis of U.S. policy.

U.S. measures to exploit the denunciation of Stalin were differentiated between overt and covert methods. Publicly, the U.S. tone was one of skepticism. U.S. spokesmen called for deeds to match the Soviet rhetoric, but avoided the pitfall of appearing celebratory. Covertly, U.S. methods were more direct. As the OCB reported:

In the non-attributable field the U.S. is employing its resources to sow confusion and doubt in the communist world, to undermine the objectives of the campaign through ridicule and questioning and to expose the attempt of the present leaders to dissociate themselves from unpopular communist tenets.<sup>254</sup>

Once the United States intelligence community secured an accurate copy of Khrushchev's secret speech, the propaganda value seemed obvious. As Dulles put it, "We have an opportunity the like of which might not occur again for many years. Now is the chance to fragmentize the wall of granite of the International Communist Party."<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup>Report of the OCB Special Working Group on Stalinism, May 17, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957* Volume XXIV, 100.

<sup>255</sup>Notes on the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting, June 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957* Volume XXIV, 117.

## CONCLUSIONS

Scholars have advanced various interpretations of the goals of U.S. policies in Eastern Europe for the period covered in this chapter. These explanations range from liberation,<sup>256</sup> in every sense of the word, to “Finlandization”<sup>257</sup> Others have suggested the U.S. sought to loosen the Soviet grip throughout Eastern Europe, similar to developments in Yugoslavia during the Truman administration.<sup>258</sup> In fact, there is compelling evidence detailing U.S. support for a Yugoslav model for Eastern Europe.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>256</sup>See especially, Bennet Kovrig, *Myth of Liberation, and Of Walls and Bridges*, as well as Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*.

<sup>257</sup>This argument is most adamantly made by Ronald Krebs in *Dueling Visions*. Mitrovich asserts that “Finlandization” was the basis for a proposal Dulles made at Geneva to settle the East European situation once and for all, but Mitrovich asserts, overall, that the aim of U.S. policy in Eastern Europe was “liberation” until the risk of nuclear war made the risk too great. See Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*, 171.

<sup>258</sup>For more on U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia, see H. W. Brands, Jr., “Redefining the Cold War: American Policy Toward Yugoslavia, 1948-1960” *Diplomatic History* vol. 11, no. 1 (1987): 41-53.

<sup>259</sup>For example, see John Foster Dulles, Address before the Annual National Four-H Club Congress, November 29, 1954, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 83, Folder “Re: Liberation Policy (1954),” Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton, NJ, 9. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, January 9, 1956, See Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, December 1, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 114. The Millikan committee seemed to be making specific reference to Tito when they noted that a policy of evolution was essential, for if the United States appeared to be threatening revolution, the target country’s leadership, then, would only conclude that the U.S. was hostile to any



These explanations fail, however, to provide an accurate account of the Eisenhower administration's intentions in Eastern Europe because they treat the fate of Eastern Europe as a single policy issue divorced from the strategic context of the time. In some analyses, the only context guiding the historian's assessment is that the United States used rhetoric and propaganda to tacitly support disturbances in the Soviet system in the years leading up to the Hungarian revolution. This context has led to distorted interpretations of events.

In fact, U.S. goals in Eastern Europe, regardless of whether they are best characterized as support for "Finlandization," the Yugoslav model, or something else, are only understood in terms of the strategy articulated by the NSC. That strategy called for military preparedness and political warfare to win friends and influence enemies for the over-arching purpose of keeping the United States secure.<sup>260</sup> U.S. political warfare operations in Eastern Europe were only one element of that strategy,

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"communist" regime, regardless of its ideological hue. See Report on the Exploitation of Soviet Vulnerabilities, November 30, 1954, circulated as an Annex to NSC 5505, January 18, 1955, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 51, Eastern Europe (5), DDEL, 59. For Dulles's explanation of support for Tito to Spanish Dictator Franco, see Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and General Franco, 1 November 1955, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, General Correspondence and Memoranda, Box 1, Folder 5, Memos of Conversations - General E-I [1], at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>260</sup>A good example of this, in rhetoric, is found in John Foster Dulles, "Address Before the Illinois Manufacturers Association," December 8, 1955, Chicago Illinois, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 94, "Re: Liberation Policy (1955)," Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University.

not the strategy itself.

The strategy and its implementation were always subject to the broader context: rhetoric was shaped by Stalin's death; political warfare was subsequently shaped by the process of de-Stalinization; and the over all strategy of the United States was shaped by these factors as well as developments in the East-West military balance. Despite these changes, however, the administration's commitment—despite personnel changes and conflicts—to political warfare remained unchanged.

When in March of 1956 the NSC reviewed its policies to date in Eastern Europe, the council also discussed the news of Khrushchev's speech. The timing was ironic. While lamenting the frustrating pace of progress in political warfare, the United States found its first explosive propaganda weapon in the Soviet leader's speech. The State Department's Office of Intelligence Research concluded, "The public desecration of Stalin by his successors constitutes a major psychological jolt whose ultimate repercussions on the Soviet population and Communists abroad cannot yet be foreseen."<sup>261</sup> Its ultimate repercussions are the substance of chapter five.

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<sup>261</sup>"The Desecration of Stalin," March 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957* Volume XXIV, 74.

## Chapter 5

### U.S. Policy During the 1956 East European Uprisings and their Aftermath

“He learns to live with the frustrating fact that many issues on which he is required to work have no immediate, and sometimes not even a satisfactory future, solution.”<sup>1</sup>

**Dwight David Eisenhower**

In the summer of 1956, riots broke out in Poznan, Poland, inspired, primarily, by grievances over wage reductions.<sup>2</sup> The forces of dissent however grew beyond these economic grievances to express discontent with a range of issues, most notably the influence of the Soviet Union and the presence of Soviet forces in Poland. These local issues were swept up into the Cold War along with the process of de-Stalinization and the idea of “nationalist communism.” In the end, the new regime in Poland convinced officials in Moscow that Poland sought no accommodation with the West, but rather sought to better provide for its citizens and thereby become a better ally of the Soviet

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<sup>1</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), 29.

<sup>2</sup>In comparison with the Hungarian Revolution, there are considerably fewer works on the Polish disturbances of 1956. In general, considerations of Poland are found in longer studies on the Hungarian revolution, or the course of East European political development in the Cold War. Among others, see Geoffrey Swain and Nigel Swain, *Eastern Europe Since 1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), esp. 77-100 or any of the works cited below on the Hungarian revolution. In addition, see Johanna Granville, “1956 Reconsidered: Why Hungary and Not Poland?” *Slavonic and East European Review* vol. 80, no. 4 (October 2002): 656-688; Johanna Granville, “Poland and Hungary, 1956: A Comparative Essay Based on New Archival Findings,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* vol. 48, no. 3 (September 2002): 369-396; Tony Kemp-Welch, “Khrushchev's ‘Secret Speech’ and Polish Politics: The Spring of 1956,” *Europe-Asia Studies* vol. 48, no. 2 (March 1996): 181-207.

Union.

In October of 1956, similar pressures broke free in Budapest, Hungary.<sup>3</sup> Mob action spread and the Soviet backed regime teetered on the verge of collapse. Soviet forces stationed in the country since the end of World War II first attacked Hungarian demonstrators, then withdrew from the capital. Over several drama filled days, the disturbances in Hungary began to promise true reform and the re-emergence of the post-war democratic parties which had been outlawed for more than a decade. The United States signaled it sought no military advantage in Hungarian independence. Soviet leaders proclaimed their respect for the independence of socialist regimes.

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<sup>3</sup>For a thorough discussion of the Hungarian revolution, its origins, course, and consequences, see György Litván, ed., *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Reform, Revolt, and Repression, 1953-1963* (London: Longman, 1996); Terry Cox, ed., *Hungary 1956—Forty Years On* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); Ferenc Fehér and Agnes Heller, *Hungary 1956 Revisited: The Message of a Revolution—a Quarter of a Century After* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983); Grzegorz Ekiert, *The State Against Society: Political Crises and their Aftermath in East Central Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), esp.37-120; David Irving, *Uprising* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981); Bill Lomax, *Hungary 1956* (London: Allison and Busby, 1976). For a more thorough consideration of the Soviet intervention in Hungary, see Jenő Györkei and Miklós Horváth, eds., *Soviet Military Intervention in Hungary 1956* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999); and Johanna Granville, "In the Line of Fire: The Soviet Crackdown on Hungary, 1956-1958," *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, No. 1307, University of Pittsburgh, 1998. See also, Csaba Bekes, "The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Great Powers," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* vol. 13, no. 2 (1997): 51-66. For the Soviet perspective, see Mark Kramer, "The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings," *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 33, no. 2 (1998): 163-214. There is, in addition, a vast literature composed of white papers and personal accounts which are riveting. But most are written with an ideological intent.

Negotiations began about the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary. After days of promise and tension, Imre Nagy expressed his country's desire to leave the Warsaw Pact, proclaimed Hungary's neutrality, and requested UN recognition. By that point, the Soviet Union's leaders had already reached a decision and rushed its troops in to seize control and install a regime more loyal to Moscow.

The conduct of U.S. policy in these months is best described as a balancing act. On one side, the United States did not want to be seen as encouraging the rebels, but on the other, they did not want to abandon them either. Within the administration, opinions differed at all levels over what course of action the United States should take. John Foster Dulles expressed a keen desire to act, while Eisenhower demonstrated remarkable patience in letting events develop. At lower levels, a whole range of options were considered, including offers of armed assistance or covert support, U.S. direction of dissident forces, establishing radio links with rebels, offering humanitarian aid, and expanding the use of propaganda.

When the United States finally did take action, it came in the form of a series of maneuvers in the United Nations designed to pressure the Soviets to refrain from violent action in Hungary.<sup>4</sup> The tactic failed. On the morning of November 4, more

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<sup>4</sup>For a partial text of the UN resolution initially offered by the United States, see Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV (Washington, DC: GPO, 1990), 388. For a revised version, see Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 427; Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 428.

than 200,000 Soviet troops and almost 6,000 Soviet tanks moved to put down the Hungarian uprising.

Throughout the crisis in Eastern Europe, however, U.S. policy never deviated from its strategic objectives and methods as articulated in formal NSC policy statements. Tactics were certainly improvised, but the parameters of U.S. policy were not. They had been shaped in the policy debates of 1953, refined over the ensuing years, and put to use in the critical weeks and days of 1956. Specifically, the Eisenhower administration conducted its policies in order to: (1) avoid any actions that might lead to general war with the Soviet Union; (2) avoid inciting any uprising in Eastern Europe since the United States would not support it; (3) advance U.S. interests in the global Cold War through the use of political warfare; and (4) maintain the hope for eventual freedom in Eastern Europe through the use of political warfare.

### **THE CONTEXT OF U.S. POLICY**

#### **NSC 5608/2**

On July 12, 1956, the NSC met to consider a revision to NSC 174, “U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe.” The revision—drafted as part of the administration’s regular review of policies, not as reaction to any sense of pending crisis in the region—was designed to reflect the situation in Eastern Europe more

accurately, and to couple that revised assessment to “a more realistic assessment of U.S. capabilities to affect developments in that area.”<sup>5</sup> The new statement of policy, NSC 5608/1 was distributed on July 18, 1956.

In fact, very little changed in the new strategy document. The United States remained primarily concerned with the military potential of the satellites under Soviet control. U.S. political and psychological efforts were seen by the NSC as “impediments” to “the consolidation of Soviet control.”<sup>6</sup> Still, the NSC saw very little promise for any type of organized resistance in any East European satellite, and thereby very little prospect for immediate liberation.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of “national communism,”<sup>8</sup> however, promised to provide a wedge for U.S. political warriors in Eastern Europe, argued the NSC. The Soviet acknowledgment of “different roads to Socialism,” as in Yugoslavia, and the process of de-Stalinization undermined the legitimacy of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe by

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<sup>5</sup>Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs to the Secretary of State, July 10, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 211.

<sup>6</sup>NSC 5608/1, U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, July 18, 1958, accessed via [www.ddrs.psmedia.com](http://www.ddrs.psmedia.com), September 23, 2002, 1.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>8</sup>Prior to this time, U.S. policy sought to avoid anything that resembled encouraging national communism on ideological grounds. See NSC 5611, Part 6: The USIA Program, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 7, NSC 5611, Part III [Status of U.S. National Security Programs on June 30, 1956] (3), DDEL.

opening the door to the promise of “nationalist communism” in the satellites. Still the NSC dismissed the prospect of another state following the Yugoslav path anytime soon.<sup>9</sup> More than anything, “national communism” was a vulnerability to be exploited to disrupt relations within the Soviet orbit. Even with such a negative short-term outlook in regards to liberation, the NSC remained confident that, over the long-term, developments would favor U.S. interests and encourage “national independence and individual freedom and security” in Eastern Europe.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the NSC did not anticipate the political upheavals which would shake the region several months later.

### **Re-Stating “Liberation” and the Value of Political Warfare**

When the 1956 election began to loom, Eisenhower stressed the peaceful nature of liberation. In a meeting with Senator Prescott Bush, chairman of the Republican Platform Committee, Eisenhower stressed that any discussion of “liberation” in Eastern Europe meant peaceful liberation. The record of the meeting reflects this perspective explicitly. It reads:

The President referred to several of his statements on the liberation of people behind the Iron Curtain and stated that this particular plank should make it clear that we advocate liberation by all peaceful means, but not to give any indication that we advocate going to the point of war

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<sup>9</sup>NSC 5608/1, U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, July 18, 1958, accessed via [www.ddrs.psmmedia.com](http://www.ddrs.psmmedia.com), September 23, 2002, 2-3.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 4. The remaining seven pages of NSC 5608/1 remain classified.



to accomplish this liberation.<sup>11</sup>

When Eisenhower's 1956 Democratic rival criticized the Republican "liberation" pledge during the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower asked Dulles for clarification on the Republican position. On September 5, 1956, Dulles wrote to Eisenhower:

There was no such "pledge". It was stated at one point that it would be made clear "that United States policy, as one of its peaceful purposes, looks happily forward to the genuine independence of those captive peoples". And at another point it was said, "The policies we espouse will revive the contagious, liberation influences which are inherent in freedom. They will inevitably set up strains and stresses within the captive world which will make the rulers impotent to continue in their monstrous ways and mark the beginning of the end."<sup>12</sup>

On the eve of the Hungarian revolution, therefore, the president and his secretary of state reaffirmed their commitment to peaceful liberation and their conduct of such a policy since 1952.

In his presidential news conference on September 5, 1956, a reporter asked Eisenhower if the United States was losing the Cold War. Eisenhower responded with a strong, "no." He went on to list the accomplishments of his administration in the Cold War, the end of the fighting in Korea, the Austrian Peace Treaty, and so forth. Then, Eisenhower noted a shift in Soviet tactics. The Cold War was not about military

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<sup>11</sup>Memorandum for Record: President-Senator Bush Appointment, August 1, 1956, Ann Whitman File, DDE Diary Series, Box 17, August 1956 Diary—Staff Memos, DDEL.

<sup>12</sup>John Foster Dulles to Dwight D. Eisenhower, 5 September 1956, John Foster Dulles Papers, 1951-1959, JFD Chronological Series, Box 14, Folder 6, September 1956 [3], at Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

threats anymore, instead it was about which system could better provide for its people.

Eisenhower said:

At the same time, there has been a change in the whole Russian Soviet approach to this problem. They have changed into more, apparently, of an economic propaganda plan rather than depending upon force and the threat of force. This requires intelligent, fast work on our side to put our own case better before the world and to operate better, and I think that that change has been made or is being made effectively, and that the Soviets are not doing as well in this new plan as they first thought they could.<sup>13</sup>

The change in Soviet tactics from brusque arm-twisting to “smiling friendliness” posed problems for U.S. propaganda. USIA characterized them as following:

We must demonstrate that we do not brush aside Soviet overtures which might lead to solutions of pressing world problems. But we must also make our friends and allies aware of the fact that the danger has not diminished, and that high levels of defense effort are still required. We must encourage tendencies toward liberalization in the Communist bloc, without seeming to approve Communist practice.<sup>14</sup>

The political-psychological challenge facing the United States in 1956 required great dexterity. But on balance, the president and his advisors were satisfied that their policies had made great strides since inauguration day 1953. In their view, they had relied on a set of principles based on their best judgement of the strategic situation to

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<sup>13</sup>The President’s News Conference of September 5, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 739.

<sup>14</sup>NSC 5611, Part 6: The USIA Program, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 7, NSC 5611, Part III [Status of U.S. National Security Programs on June 30, 1956] (3), DDEL.

devise policies for dealing with the Soviet Union. These principles continued to guide U.S. policy during the Hungarian revolution.

## **THE UPRISINGS**

### **Poland**

The Pandora's box opened by the Soviet leadership in its pursuit of de-Stalinization, coupled with a growing sense of grievance in the populations of Eastern Europe began to erupt in the summer of 1956, first in Poland and then in Hungary. On June 28, 1956, John Foster Dulles received a phone call from his brother, Allen Dulles, the director of Central Intelligence, informing him of a riot in the Polish city of Poznan. Its origins were initially unclear,<sup>15</sup> but the secretary of state received the news with enthusiasm and excitement, saying, "When they begin to crack, . . . they can crack fast. We have to keep the pressure on."<sup>16</sup> The next day, the Dulles brothers spoke again via phone and

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<sup>15</sup>Subsequent reporting from the American legation in Warsaw described the causes of the riots as an outgrowth of an initially peaceful demonstration for better wages that grew to include demands for greater independence from the Soviet Union. See Telegram from the Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, July 3, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 187. Almost three months later, the U.S. Embassy in Poland viewed the uprising as the result of internal Polish problems. See Telegram from the Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, September 21, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 244-247.

<sup>16</sup>Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Director of Central Intelligence, June 28, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*,

immediately saw the cold war value in publicizing the Poznan riots, particularly in the Arab world and in India.<sup>17</sup>

When John Foster Dulles met the next day with his staff, they discussed the Polish unrest from the perspective of political warfare. But Dulles also spent considerable time discussing the means of exploiting Soviet economic problems for political value.<sup>18</sup> The Polish riots, then, were only one issue in the over-all propaganda effort of the administration.

One important point did emerge from the secretary's discussions with his staff, however. Herbert Hoover Jr., undersecretary of state and chairman of the OCB, cautioned that in using the Poznan riots for political purposes, "official statements should probably not be used but quotable statements from the floor of Congress might be helpful as would the statements of businessmen who come out of Poland having

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Volume XXV, 181.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 181, note 3. The obvious propaganda value of the riots and their repression received follow-through from the Operations Coordinating Board. See Notes on a Meeting of the OCB, July 18, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 221-222. The riots received USIA attention in Eastern Europe as well, where Voice of America broadcasts underscored the "legitimate grievances" at the heart of the Polish disturbances, and "that these grievances are widespread in the Soviet bloc, . . . ." See NSC 5611, Part 6: The USIA Program, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 7, NSC 5611, Part II [Status of U.S. National Security Programs on June 30, 1956] (3), DDEL.

<sup>18</sup>Notes of the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting, June 29, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 182.

stressed the Poznan riots.”<sup>19</sup> The reason for this word of caution stemmed from the desire not to sow suspicion that the United States had inspired the uprising or to make the situation worse in Poland. Like the East German riots in 1953, the United States most tangible response came in the offer of emergency food assistance to the Polish people.<sup>20</sup>

One report from the American legation in Warsaw included a paragraph which probably spoke to the most profound impact of the Polish uprisings for U.S. policy.

Polish troops seemed to side with the mob. The paragraph read:

When the crowd became mob, militia, troops and tanks appeared but took no immediate effective action. Regime says reason was orders were issued deal peacefully with crowd; contrarily, other sources claim many militia and soldiers refused to fight, soldiers left tanks, because they sympathized with the crowd. Some said abandoned tanks subsequently manned by Russians in Polish uniform. Embassy not only unable to confirm but on basis of information available to date inclined to disbelieve this.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the embassy’s skepticism, well founded though it may have been, the most

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>See Memorandum of Telephone Conversation by the Secretary of State, June 29, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 183-184, especially note 2. See also Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between the Secretary of State and the Director of Central Intelligence, June 29, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 184-185. In this second conversation, Allen Dulles stressed to his brother that the United States had to be careful not to appear to be using food for propaganda. The Polish Red Cross ultimately rejected the offer.

<sup>21</sup>Telegram from the Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, July 2, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 186.

significant long-term consequence for U.S. policy from the disturbances in 1956 was the intelligence assessment that the rank and file of Eastern European militaries were of questionable loyalty to their regimes.

The OCB discussion on July 3, 1956, focused on how to maintain pressure on the Soviet Union despite Moscow's efforts to blame the Polish disturbances on the United States. John Foster Dulles suggested that since the riots began as labor demonstrations, perhaps international labor might be encouraged to comment critically on the repressive measures used by the Polish government.<sup>22</sup>

The discussion also reveals hesitancy to enlist the UN Security Council or other multi-lateral forums. Jacob Beam, deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs and chairman of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems in the OCB, advocated caution in referring these debates to the UN, "stating that it might be harmful to our long-term interest should these internal disturbances become a matter of discussion by a UN agency."<sup>23</sup>

Beam did not elaborate on his reasons for making such an intriguing statement, or at least any such elaboration is not found in the OCB minutes. An explanation, however, is found in other State Department materials. In brief, bringing the case of

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<sup>22</sup>See Notes on a Meeting of the OCB, July 3, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 189.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

mob action and violent reaction to the UN would open a Pandora's box for the United States and its allies, especially those still grappling with colonialism. An internal State Department memorandum explained this concern succinctly:

Article 2(7) of the [UN] Charter states that the United Nations is not authorized to intervene in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state. A majority of Members, including the colonial powers who desire to maintain intact the application of Article 2(7) to colonial issues, could be expected to regard the Polish situation as essentially a domestic problem. Their position would be modified only if we could show conclusively that the situation in Poland actually threatens international peace and security. Moreover, even if we could successfully overcome their arguments in this instance, it would open the way to requests from the Communist bloc and from the Afro-Asian states to consider other matters also of a domestic character, such as the Negro question in the United States, lynchings, or potentially embarrassing domestic situations elsewhere. The Latin American states, for example, frequently have to cope with mob action and would be unlikely to favor any action suggesting UN competence in such cases.<sup>24</sup>

Other considerations applied too. It was expected that many UN members would be reluctant to take up the Polish issue as it was likely to be viewed as a propaganda issue, "on which no constructive action can be expected."<sup>25</sup>

But the July 6, 1956, memorandum for the Assistant Secretary itself is a statement of explanations for members of Congress who urged a stronger U.S. reply,

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<sup>24</sup>Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs to the Acting Secretary of State, July 6, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 198.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

not a document “for use in public statements.”<sup>26</sup> In fact, the propaganda value of the Polish disturbances was such that the United States did not want to leave itself open to counter-attack or accusations that it had a role in inciting the rioters to action. While claims of U.S. responsibility were untrue, State Department officials worried that any “UN discussion would create enough doubt to deprive us of a decisive moral verdict.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the administration felt no urgency to bring the issue to the UN. International reaction was critical enough and further effort, planners worried, would distract attention from the deeds of the Polish communist regime.<sup>28</sup>

The administration tried to maintain that pressure when in the fall of 1956, the Polish government announced trials for some arrested in connection with the riots in Poznan. John Foster Dulles urged the president to express “concern and interest” as a

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 197.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 198.

<sup>28</sup>A phone discussion between John Foster Dulles and U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., underscored the thin margin for maneuver the administration felt on the Polish riots. Although the United States had taken no direct action, Dulles noted the rhetoric of liberation and did not want to disavow it. See Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Representative at the United Nations, July 10, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 209-210. The administration continued to resist pressures to be more assertive regarding the Poznan riots on these grounds throughout the summer. See Memorandum of a Conversation, July 20, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 227-229.



testament to the fact that the West had not “forgotten” them.<sup>29</sup> Eisenhower concurred and issued the statement on September 26.<sup>30</sup>

The situation had not stabilized when on October 20, 1956, media reports indicated Soviet troops were active inside Poland.<sup>31</sup> Later that day, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Robert D. Murphy met with the Polish ambassador to the United States and signaled that active U.S. assistance would not be forthcoming. Murphy reportedly said, “The United States, while deeply sympathetic to the Polish people and hopeful of Polish independence, has always recognized that Poland’s destiny is for the people of Poland alone to decide.”<sup>32</sup>

As events developed, however, the United States found more material for political warfare in the events in Poland. On the same day Murphy met with the Polish ambassador to the United States, Wladyslaw Gomulka, first secretary of the Central Committee, Polish United Workers Party, gave a speech which endorsed the strikers’

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<sup>29</sup>Memorandum from the Secretary of State to the President, September 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 247-248.

<sup>30</sup>See Statement by the President Regarding Trials Following the Poznan Riots in Poland, September 26, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 805.

<sup>31</sup>See Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Research for the USSR and Eastern Europe, October 20, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 253-254.

<sup>32</sup>Memorandum of a Conversation, October 20, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 257.

actions in Poznan. He rejected the claims that any outside interference inspired the dissenters and asserted that the source of the discontent “was to be found in ourselves, in the leadership of the Party, in the Government.”<sup>33</sup> Gomulka’s speech was promptly translated and distributed to key audiences around the world.<sup>34</sup>

On October 23, 1956, the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State met and discussed developments in Eastern Europe and U.S. objectives and policies in the region. U.S. objectives, the Policy Planning Staff maintained, were to:

- (a) encourage Poland to become increasingly independent of the Soviets so as to cut down on the power and prestige of the USSR;
- (b) avert Soviet forceful intervention in Poland, which would not only terminate that independence but might also involve a risk of spreading hostilities.<sup>35</sup>

The United States should undertake several actions to achieve these stated goals in Poland, asserted the Policy Planning Staff:

- (a) We should make known quietly to the Polish regime our willingness to furnish economic assistance . . . if that regime maintains its present position of increased independence from Moscow. We should indicate that we do not insist on a complete break with Moscow—much less on a pro-U.S. alignment—as a precondition of giving aid which would spare Warsaw the necessity of relying completely on the USSR. We might consider urging some of the Western European countries also to offer aid.

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<sup>33</sup>See Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 258.

<sup>34</sup>Notes on the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, October 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 278.

<sup>35</sup>Record of a Meeting of the Policy Planning Staff, October 23, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 259.

(b) We should strike a public posture which is restrained and which makes clear that while we welcome greater Polish independence we are not seeking to gain a position of special influence for ourselves in Poland.

(c) We should ready an appeal to the UN, for use in the event of Soviet intervention, and let the Poles and the Soviets know that the appeal is at hand. We should speak to neutralist countries on whose friendship the USSR evidently sets store (e.g., Yugoslavia, India) concerning the dangerous consequences of Soviet military intervention in Poland, in the hope that they would be moved to tell the Soviets what a dim view they would take of such intervention.<sup>36</sup>

Dulles appeared on the CBS news program “Face the Nation” on October 21, 1956. He was asked directly about Poland and replied that the process underway was long-term in nature, similar to a “yeast” working. As for U.S. policy, Dulles rejected the proposition that the United States would intervene or meddle in Polish affairs, “because that kind of thing . . . often is counter-productive.” He continued, “Our job is only as exponents of freedom to keep alive the concept of freedom, because that is a contagious thing and, if anybody is apt to catch it, it is going to be the Poles.”<sup>37</sup>

U.S. information managers emphasized factual news reporting and commentary in treatment of the Polish situation. Broadcasts and other output was tailored to keep listeners informed of developments without inciting revolution; to use Gomulka’s speech as a defense against the claims that the United States was behind the unrest, and

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 259-260.

<sup>37</sup>See Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on “Face the Nation,” CBS Network, Sunday, October 21, 1956, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 351, “Interview: ‘Face the Nation’ Television Program October 21, 1956,” Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, 2.

to emphasize the evolutionary aspects of the “various roads to socialism.”<sup>38</sup> USIA

warned its managers to avoid four specific issues:

1. Any direct identification of U.S. official policy with the present resurgence of Polish nationalism.
2. Any statements which the Poles might resent as outside interference.
3. All stories which discuss recent developments in Poland in terms of the breaking up of the Soviet power bloc.
4. Any speculation that events in Poland spell the future doom of Communism per se.<sup>39</sup>

Ultimately, the new Polish regime of Wladislaw Gomulka rose to power promising a Polish path to socialism that would neither threaten the Soviet Union nor undermine the Warsaw Pact, but make Poland a better ally of the Soviet Union. While these developments decreased tension in Poland, they raised the level of agitation in Hungary.<sup>40</sup>

## **Hungary**

As the administration grappled with the events in Poland, unrest began to boil-over in Hungary. By mid-July, reports from Budapest discussed political maneuvers and

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<sup>38</sup>Memorandum from the Chief of the News Policy Staff of the Office of Policy and Programs of the USIA to the Assistant Program Manager for Policy Application of the USIA, October 24, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 270-271.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>40</sup>See György Litván, ed., *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Reform, Revolt, and Repression, 1953-1963* (New York: Longman, 1996), 50-51.

leadership changes within the regime and a growing sense of popular discontent.<sup>41</sup> By the end of October, large crowds gathered in Budapest and heard the first public demands for the withdrawal of Soviet forces in Hungary.<sup>42</sup>

When Hungarian troops were dispatched to quell disturbances and cases of vandalism against Communist symbols, reports indicated that Hungarian troops “backed out in friendly atmosphere when crowd failed to give way.”<sup>43</sup> When fighting did break out, reports indicated the secret police or possible Russian troops were involved, although as in the Polish case, the initial accounts stretch one’s credulity.<sup>44</sup>

The course of events in Hungary, however, took a very different turn from the pattern set in Poland. On the morning of October 24, 1956, Soviet troops left their barracks. The embassy in Budapest reported requests from Hungarian civilians for arms, and diplomatic aid. Civilians reportedly asked, “What is America going to do for

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<sup>41</sup>See Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, July 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 222; Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, July 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 224-227; Despatch from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, August 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 231-241. This last document makes clear that in the eyes of the legation, there was no U.S. role in the origins of the Hungarian revolution. They also recognized that events there had moved so fast as to cause concern that “an effort will be made to use [the Soviet] brake,” to slow events. See especially page 241.

<sup>42</sup>Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, October 23, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 260.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*

us in this hour?”<sup>45</sup> John Foster Dulles wondered the same thing. He confided to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge at the UN that he was “worried that it will be said that here are the great moments and when they came and these fellows were ready to stand up and die, we were caught napping and doing nothing.”<sup>46</sup> Dulles told Lodge the situation in Hungary was different from the Polish case, and that he should begin to prepare to bring the Hungarian issue to the UN Security Council.<sup>47</sup>

Officials within USIA debated the appropriate information response, and noted the delicate nature of the U.S. position. The administration did not want to appear to encourage revolution when it had already ruled out military assistance, but it did not want to diminish the sacrifices already made in Hungary. The proposed middle course was to “make clear U.S. identification with just aspirations of Hungarian people and condemnation of intervention, amounting to aggression of Soviet force against civilian

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<sup>45</sup>Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, October 24, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 272.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>47</sup>Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State in Washington and the Representative at the United Nations in New York, October 24, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 273. Further discussion of the value of bringing the topic to the United Nations took place in various settings of the next several days. See for example, Notes of the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, October 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 277-280.

population of Hungary.”<sup>48</sup>

The next day, the same source in Europe blasted USIA leadership in Washington for the content of VOA broadcasts to Hungary in the midst of the crisis. His criticism was not that the broadcasts were incendiary, on the contrary. The broadcasts were divorced from reality. He criticized the broadcast of “Americana” during such a crisis, and denounced the description of events in Hungary as “riots.”<sup>49</sup> He wrote:

Staff members here could not understand how VOA Hungarian from Washington last night could tell Hungarians about *Globemaster* landing on Arctic shelf, activities of Soviet election observers, and cancer research while people were dying in the streets. Feel such treatment could only cause dismay and resentment. Effects further aggravated by fact that BBC Hungarian which followed immediately after Washington origination carried two sharp commentaries on the situation, strongly condemning use of Soviet forces to put down uprising. . . .<sup>50</sup>

The author wondered, in writing, whether or not the program managers were out of touch with their audience or hamstrung by official uncertainty over how best to proceed given current circumstances.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Telegram from the Director of the Munich Radio Center of the International Broadcasting Service to the Assistant Program Manager for Policy Application of the USIA, October 24, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 274-275.

<sup>49</sup>Telegram from the Director of the Munich Radio Center of the International Broadcasting Service to the Director of the International Broadcasting Service, October 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 276.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 276.

After slightly more than a week's uncertainty about the direction events would take, the government of Imre Nagy declared his country's intent to leave the Warsaw Pact and sought U.N. recognition of Hungarian neutrality. Andrew Goodpaster delivered this news to the president and remarked, "That man," meaning Nagy, "has signed his death warrant."<sup>52</sup> On November 4, Soviet tanks attacked to install a new regime.

### **NSC 5616: U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary**

In the midst of the crisis, the NSC began work on a revised policy statement in light of the developments in Poland and Hungary.<sup>53</sup> The statement of original intent was retained from the first draft:

Our initial objective toward the Eastern European satellite area has been to encourage, as a first step toward eventual full national independence and freedom, the emergence of "national" communist governments. While these governments might continue to be in close political and military alliance with the Soviet Union, they would be able to exercise to a much greater degree than in the past independent authority and control in the direction of their own affairs, primarily confined in the first stage to their internal affairs.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Andrew Goodpaster, personal interview with author, March 20, 2003.

<sup>53</sup>An initial draft was overtaken by the course of events, but is still instructive as a benchmark for judging the evolution in U.S. policy given developments on the ground. See Draft Statement of Policy by the Planning Board of the NSC, NSC 5616 (DRAFT), October 31, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 354-358.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 354. Compare with NSC 5616/2, Interim U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary, November 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume



In Poland, events seemed to be evolving in a manner consistent with this stated U.S. objective. In Hungary, however, the situation was bleak. The events in Hungary confirmed to the American administration something they had speculated on for some time: “at least in those countries where Soviet troops are stationed, the Soviet Union is willing to use its armed forces to prevent the coming into power of a non-communist government, or to prevent a communist government from altering a policy of close military and political alliance with the USSR.”<sup>55</sup>

U.S. actions in Poland reflected the relative success of the regime there and focused on improving relations and securing better ties between the two countries.<sup>56</sup> In Hungary, U.S. actions would be limited to pressuring the Soviet Union to cease hostilities through the UN, and to reassure the Soviet Union that the United States did not seek to make military allies out of its satellites in Eastern Europe. If events in Hungary progressed, ultimately, as they did in Poland, the administration was prepared to advance the same set of economic offers to Budapest as it had to Warsaw.<sup>57</sup>

More generally, the NSC articulated a policy to exploit the Soviet Union’s conduct in Hungary and Poland for political and psychological purposes around the

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XXV, 463-464.

<sup>55</sup>NSC 5616/2, Interim U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary, November 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 465.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 466.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 466-467.

world.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, the NSC recommended the following:

As a matter of urgency, under currently organized governmental mechanisms, undertake a study of the situation in other European satellites to formulate plans and determine U.S. courses of action in the event of future revolutionary actions or uprisings, whether successful or unsuccessful, in those countries which indicate a movement away from control by the USSR.

This passage is significant. It reveals the administration had not considered the events that transpired in Poland and Hungary a priori. They were, in a word, surprised. The administration had no pre-packaged plans for an event like this which seemed to them to signal a new period in which regimes might want to move away from the Soviet Union.

### **Interaction with Suez**

Scholars and contemporary observers have often cited the co-incidental timing of the Suez Canal and Hungarian crises as one explanation as to why the United States did not take a more active response in Hungary.<sup>59</sup> Some of the documentary evidence

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 468.

<sup>59</sup>Willy Brandt, Interview by Gordon A. Craig, 13 August 1964, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 13-14). For example, see Csaba Békés, “The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Great Powers,” in Terry Cox, ed., *Hungary 1956—Forty Years On* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 51-66.

seems to support this contention. For example, in a personal letter dated November 2, 1956, to his long-time friend, Alfred Gruenther, Eisenhower was more concerned with the mistakes the British and French were making in Egypt. The Suez crisis was forcing him to lose sleep. His remarks on the Hungarian issue were almost an aside:

Of course in some ways the situation in the satellites calls for just as much concern, but in a far different way. I most prayerfully hope that the Russians are sincere in saying that they are going to withdraw their troops from those areas, although I notice that they didn't say anything about Czechoslovakia in making this offer.<sup>60</sup>

By the middle of the month, Eisenhower's secretary, Ann Whitman, mentioned to him that "from the newspapers" the situation in Hungary "seemed to be easing." According to Whitman, Eisenhower "shrugged his shoulders and said, or really implied, that there was nothing he could do about the Hungarian situation, that it was the Mid East that was worrying him."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Eisenhower to Gruenther, November 2, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, November 1956, Misc. (4), DDEL.

<sup>61</sup>Ann C. Whitman Diary, November 15, 1956, Ann Whitman File, Ann Whitman Diary Series, Box 8, November 1957, Diary ACW (1), DDEL. Further evidence of Eisenhower's resignation to developments in Hungary is found in the lack of discussions the president had with other heads of state. In fact, in all the president's phone calls in the month of November with heads of allied governments, Hungary was only mentioned in one: a discussion between Eisenhower and Prime Minister Anthony Eden of England which focused predominantly on the Suez Canal crisis. Hungary is mentioned only once, and very briefly, by Eisenhower as combining with Suez to distract the president from the last days of the presidential campaign. See the Transcript of a Telephone Conversation between Eisenhower and Eden, 12:55 PM, November 6, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 19, November 1956, Phone Calls, DDEL.

However, as the preceding analysis demonstrates, the United States was guided by strategic considerations in its handling of the Hungarian crisis, independent of the gambits and intrigues of its allies. However, the crisis in Suez did limit or otherwise affect the rhetorical and propaganda response of the administration to events in Hungary. It was difficult to condemn the Soviet Union for naked aggression when the closest allies of the United States were undertaking the same.<sup>62</sup>

An editorial note in the FRUS series reads: “The Suez crisis and the involvement of Great Britain and France quickly overshadowed the Hungarian Rebellion and became the principal area of concern for United States leaders.”<sup>63</sup> But the evidence suggests that other factors, not Suez, influenced U.S. decisions. The Israelis did not open the gambit until October 29. By that point the United States had already signaled its hands-off approach in Hungary. On October 31, Britain attacked the Egyptian Air Force, and on November 6, British and French forces stormed Port

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<sup>62</sup>Richard M. Nixon, Interview by Ricahrd D. Challener, 5 March 1965, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 32).

<sup>63</sup>Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 330. The minutes of the NSC meeting on November 1, 1956, support this claim at first glance. However, careful scrutiny of the notes accompanying the minutes reveals that Eisenhower’s expressed desire to concentrate the discussion on Suez, at the expense of Eastern Europe, stemmed from an early morning conversation between Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles who told the president the situation in Eastern Europe had largely resolved itself. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 302<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the NSC, November 1, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 358, especially note 2.

Said, two days after Soviet forces began their final crack-down in Hungary. The split in Western powers over Suez may have given the Soviet Union reason to believe they had greater freedom to act than would otherwise have been the case, but that is not for want of U.S. attention to Hungary.<sup>64</sup>

The primary damage to American interests were in its propaganda efforts. The damage caused by Suez was apparent to Dulles and Eisenhower at the time, and cannot be over-stated. Dulles, speaking to the president, noted “what a great tragedy it is just

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<sup>64</sup>In fact, the U.S. intelligence community suggested this possibility at the time. See Special National Intelligence Estimate, SNIE 12-2-56, October 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 333. Still the intelligence community was criticized in some quarters for failing to warn of the crises in Poland, Hungary, and the Middle East. See Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 364. Interestingly, RFE broadcasts linked the two events. See “Implementation of Policy Lines in Scripts,” C.D. Jackson Papers, Box 54, Free Europe Committee, 1956 (2), DDEL. Eisenhower also linked the events. In meeting the new British ambassador to the United States, Eisenhower related a letter he had received from a member of the “now-liquidated” Hungarian government to the effect that British and French action in Suez opened the door to Soviet intervention in Hungary. See Memorandum of Conference with the President, November 9, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 19, November 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL. The letter to which Eisenhower referred was transmitted by the U.S. legation in Budapest. See Bibo to Eisenhower, November 4, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 8, Dulles, Foster, November 1956 (2), DDEL. Eisenhower also mentioned the letter from “Bibo” to Eli Ginzberg. See Eisenhower to Ginzberg, November 5, 1956, AWF, DDE Papers as POTUS, Name Series, Box 15, Ginzberg, Eli [Middle East, Hungary], DDEL. Eisenhower’s repeated reference to the correspondence from “Bibo” suggests the president believed that Suez enabled Russia to distract international public opinion from Hungary. But the president did not believe the same was true of his administration’s attention to events in Eastern Europe. The relationship between the two events in foreign public attitudes was considered at the time. See “Western Europe: The Impact of Suez and Hungary,” January 31, 1957, DDE Papers as POTUS, Dulles-Herter Series, Box 8, Dulles, J.F., February 1957 (1), DDEL.

when the whole Soviet policy is collapsing [Britain] and [France] are doing the same thing in the Arab world.”<sup>65</sup>

Eisenhower viewed the dual crises in Eastern Europe and the Middle East in their Cold War context. He refused to let British and French enthusiasm for UN action on Hungary muddle the larger political challenges he would face by letting their gambit succeed. Later, as both crises reached their respective apexes, the president’s actions on Hungary were affected by Suez.<sup>66</sup> It was not that the United States would have moved forces into Hungary in the absence of Suez; it would not.<sup>67</sup> Rather, Suez

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<sup>65</sup>Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the President and the Secretary of State, October 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 346. Dulles also feared the Suez crisis would obscure action on Hungary at the United Nations. See Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State in Washington and the Representative at the United Nations in New York, November 2, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 365. When the French and British urged strong, immediate action in the security council on Hungary, the United States expressed that the situation was too vague to warrant aggressive action. For further elaboration of the British and French proposal, see Telegram from the Mission at the United Nations to the Department of State, November 2, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 368. See also Notes on the 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 6, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 402.

<sup>66</sup>For example, see Daniel F. Calhoun, *Hungary and Suez, 1956: An Exploration of Who Makes History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991); and Csaba Békés, “The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Great Powers,” 51-66. For more on the Suez Canal crisis, see Keith Kyle, *Suez* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991); and William Roger Louis and Roger Owen, eds., *Suez 1956: The Crisis and Its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>67</sup>Andrew Goodpaster, personal interview with author, March 20, 2003. Abbot Washburn, phone interview with author, March 20, 2003.

muddled the political stakes, particularly on the international stage. Take for example Eisenhower's reaction to the Hungarian request for UN assistance. On November 3, 1956, Eisenhower discussed the matter with his aides, including acting Secretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr. Hoover noted that the British and French wanted the United States to join them in a resolution in response to the Hungarian request for assistance. It was noted that Dulles did not want to join the French and the British, "and the President said that such a thought was almost absurd"<sup>68</sup> because it would give the French and British an opportunity to complete their adventure with international attention focused elsewhere.

Eisenhower, in his handling of Suez, however, strove, sincerely, to keep "Communist influence" from gaining a foothold in the region. The Hungarian situation provided critical evidence, the president believed, and outlined in his diary what he thought should be done:

One of the first [thing to do] is to make certain that none of these governments fails to understand all the details and the full implications of the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt. We should, I think, get all the proof that there is available, including moving pictures taken of the slaughter in Budapest.

We must make certain that every weak country understands what can be in store for it once it falls under the domination of the Soviets.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Memorandum of Conference with the President, November 3, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 19, November 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL.

<sup>69</sup>Memorandum, November 8, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 19, November 1956, Diary, DDEL. In addition to these political-

At the end of the year, Eisenhower met with the bipartisan congressional leadership to discuss plans for 1957. The Suez crisis, and the resulting ebb of European influence in the region opened the door to increased Soviet involvement in the region via economic assistance, thereby raising the ante for U.S. leadership. The United States, said Eisenhower, would counter the decline of European influence with an aid program of its own consisting of “bilateral and multilateral economic programs.”<sup>70</sup>

### **PRINCIPLES GUIDING U.S. POLICY**

After bitterly spirited resistance, the Hungarian revolution was put down by overwhelming Soviet force. Critics inside and outside the United States have condemned the Eisenhower administration’s failure to confront the Soviet Union more directly over Hungary. Many explanations of the U.S. position have been offered.<sup>71</sup>

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psychological tactics, Eisenhower envisioned a range of positive policy initiatives in the region as well.

<sup>70</sup>Legislative Leadership Meeting, December 31, 1956, AWF DDE Papers as POTUS, Legislative Meetings Series, Box 2, Leg. Leaders Mtgs., 1956 (5) [December], DDEL.

<sup>71</sup>See Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991); and Kovrig, *Myth of Liberation: East Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics since 1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). Ronald R. Krebs, *Dueling Visions: U.S. Strategy Toward Eastern Europe under Eisenhower* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America’s Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY:



Most, however, neglect the four fundamental principles guiding U.S. action since the Eisenhower administration first promulgated its national security strategy in 1953.<sup>72</sup>

### **1. Avoid actions that may lead to general war with the Soviet Union.**

The administration understood that U.S. action in Eastern Europe would be viewed as a threat by the Soviets to their national security. Such moves were flatly rejected by the NSC in its planning, just as surely as they would have been if proposed to Eisenhower himself.<sup>73</sup> Other ideas, such as a CIA-advocated plan to employ tactical nuclear weapons against the major rail-lines running into Hungary as a means of disrupting the

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Cornell University Press, 2000); and Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

<sup>72</sup>Kitts and Glad, suggest that Eisenhower's conduct of policy, however, was "improvisational" in nature, dismissing any guiding strategic framework. They neglect the four years of Eisenhower's administration prior to the revolution—and the administration's development of national security strategy—in doing so. See Kenneth Kitts and Betty Glad, "Presidential Personality and Improvisational Decision Making: Eisenhower and the 1956 Hungarian Crisis," in Shirley Anne Warshaw, ed., *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 183-208.

<sup>73</sup>See Draft Statement of Policy by the Planning Board of the NSC, NSC 5616 (DRAFT), October 31, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 356. USIA Director Theodore Streibert, when asked about the possibility of sending in U.S. troops said simply, "No. No. There was nothing could be done [sic.]" See Transcript of a Recorded Interview with Theodore Streibert, Richard D. Challener, Interviewer, November 5, 1954, New York City, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, 40.

Soviet invasion, or air-dropping supplies to the rebels, were quickly dismissed.<sup>74</sup>

Accordingly, the United States signaled the Soviets on several different occasions that the United States would not intervene militarily in the region.<sup>75</sup>

John Foster Dulles was but one of several voices on this issue. He signaled to the Soviet Union that the United States sought no military advantage from freedom of the Eastern European satellites.<sup>76</sup> While Dulles praised “the heroic people of Hungary,” and condemned “the murderous fire of Red Army tanks,” Dulles was very direct about U.S. interests in the region. He said:

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<sup>74</sup>See Kitts and Glad, “Presidential Personality and Improvisational Decision Making: Eisenhower and the 1956 Hungarian Crisis,” in *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency*, 191.

<sup>75</sup>These signals largely came in the form of public remarks by prominent members of the administration and the president himself. See Transcript, “Face the Nation,” October 28, 1956, Address and Statements by C.E. Wilson, Secretary of Defense 1956, Volume III, DDE Library, Abilene, Kansas, 1077-1083.

<sup>76</sup>This position was first suggested by Harold Stassen in the NSC meeting on October 26. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 301<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the NSC, October 26, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 299. Initially, Eisenhower was cool to the idea. Later in the day he had changed his mind and informed John Foster Dulles. Dulles, was not enthusiastic, but after another telephone conversation with the president, Dulles suggested making such a statement in the speech he was scheduled to give in Texas in a few days time. See Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Director of Foreign Operations (Stassen), October 26, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 305; Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the President and the Secretary of State, October 26, 1956, 5:50 pm, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 305-306; and Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the President and the Secretary of State, October 26, 1956, 7:06 pm, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 306-307.

And let me make this clear, beyond a possibility of doubt: The United States has no ulterior purpose in desiring the independence of the satellite countries. Our unadulterated wish is that these peoples, from whom so much of our own national life derives, should have sovereignty restored to them and that they should have governments of their own free choosing. We do not look upon these nations as potential military allies. We see them as friends and as part of a new and friendly and no longer divided Europe. We are confident that their independence, if promptly accorded, will contribute immensely to stabilize peace throughout all of Europe, West and East.<sup>77</sup>

Subsequently, Charles Bohlen, the American ambassador in Moscow, was instructed to bring this passage from Dulles's speech to the "attention of highest Soviet authorities."<sup>78</sup>

On the evening of October 31, 1956, Eisenhower delivered a nationally televised address to the nation on developments in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The text of the speech was Eisenhower's. A draft sent to the president that afternoon by John Foster Dulles was rejected by Eisenhower for its stridency, particularly in Eastern Europe. Instead, Eisenhower sought to relate the facts as he understood them at the time and then explain how the United States had responded.

First, the president reminded the nation of how Eastern Europe came under the control of Soviet armed forces at the end of World War II. He noted the bipartisan

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<sup>77</sup>Address by the Secretary of State Before the Dallas Council on World Affairs, October 27, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 317-318.

<sup>78</sup>Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, October 29, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 328. Bohlen did so the next day. See Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State, October 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 347-348.

nature of the policy to end Soviet domination in Eastern Europe, but he also noted the very real limitations on U.S. policy. He said:

We could not, of course, carry out this policy by resort to force. Such force would have been contrary both to the best interests of the Eastern European peoples and to the abiding principles of the United Nations. But we did help to keep alive the hope of these peoples for freedom.<sup>79</sup>

This is as concise a statement of U.S. policy, and the reasons for it, as anyone could give. The president then noted recent developments in Poland and Hungary and observed that events suggested “that the light of liberty soon will shine again in this darkness.”<sup>80</sup>

Finally, he stated the response of the United States government to these recent developments:

The United States has made clear its readiness to assist economically the new and independent governments of these countries. We have already—some days since—been in contact with the new Government of Poland on this matter. We have also publicly declared that we do not demand of these governments their adoption of any particular form of society as a condition upon our economic assistance. Our one concern is that they be free—for their sake, and for freedom’s sake.

We have also—with respect to the Soviet Union—sought clearly to remove any false fears that we would look upon new governments in these Eastern European countries as potential military allies. We have no such ulterior purpose. We see these peoples as friends, and we wish

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<sup>79</sup>Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Developments in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, October 31, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 1061.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 1062.

simply that they be friends who are free.<sup>81</sup>

Eisenhower refused, in short, to take any action that might lead to general war with the Soviet Union. This had guided the administration's review of national security strategy in 1953, and it guided the president's conduct in the autumn of 1956. In an interview almost a decade later, Theodore Streibert, who had served as director of the U.S. Information Agency in the first Eisenhower administration made clear that from the earliest days of the administration, policy makers had known, "that you could never send American boys across the curtain there to help liberate these countries, that you couldn't spill any American blood in the process of liberation."<sup>82</sup> The U.S. position in other words was not improvised in 1956, it was policy of long standing.

From afar, C.D. Jackson urged Eisenhower to act. Eisenhower refused for the same reasons he had refused all along. He wrote to Jackson:

I know that your whole being cries out for "action" on the Hungarian

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid. Eisenhower reiterated this basic assessment the next day during a political rally in Philadelphia, PA. See Address in Convention Hall, Philadelphia, PA, November 1, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 1070-1071. The immediate reaction to the October 31 speech in international circles was overwhelmingly positive. Henry Cabot Lodge called the president at 11:45 PM on October 31 to report on the reaction the president's speech had engendered at the United Nations. In Lodge's words, it was "absolutely spectacular." Phone Calls, Wednesday, October 31, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 18, October 1956, Phone Calls, DDEL.

<sup>82</sup>Transcript of a Recorded Interview with Theodore Streibert, Richard D. Challener, Interviewer, November 5, 1954, New York City, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, 32.

problem. I assure you that the measures taken there by the Soviets are just as distressing to me as they are to you. But to annihilate Hungary, should it become the scene of a bitter conflict, is in no way to help her. . .

One of my friends sent me a particularly moving document on the case of decency versus extinction. I quote from it two or three sentences:

Partisanship has no place when such a vital question (as atomic self destruction) confronts us. Mothers in Israel and Egypt, sons in England and France, and father and husbands in the United States and in Russia are all potential victims and sufferers. *After* the event, all of them, regardless of nationality, will be disinterested in the petty arguments as to who was responsible—or even the niceties of procedure. . . . That war (would be) so terrible that the human mind cannot comprehend.<sup>83</sup>

The cost of war, in short, would have been so great as to be unbearable. Henry Cabot Lodge, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations at that time, recalled the stakes in these terms: “But the Hungarian thing—it looked as though, at the time, you couldn’t rectify the brutal actions taken with regard to Hungary without starting World War III. There didn’t seem any way to do it, except to put in troops and all that.”<sup>84</sup> Eisenhower

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<sup>83</sup>Eisenhower to C.D. Jackson, November 19, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, November 1956, Misc. (2), DDEL, parentheses, emphasis, and ellipses in the original.

<sup>84</sup>Henry Cabot Lodge, Interview by Richard D. Challener, 16 February 1965, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library (Trans. page 26-28). Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Robert D. Murphy echoed Lodge’s assessment. See Robert D. Murphy, Interview by Richard D. Challener, 19 May and 8 June 1965, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 45-47).

would simply not commit the United States to such a costly and perilous course of action.

**2. Do not incite uprising since country will not support it.**

The administration's discussions prior to the uprisings of 1956 had always emphasized the need to avoid any provocative acts so as not to encourage disorders that would lead to violence. During the crises, the United States made every effort to remain committed to this principle and chose its public statements very carefully. The broadcasters who operated U.S. broadcast facilities in the region were not as discreet, however, and some have interpreted certain broadcasts during the uprisings as incendiary and irresponsible.<sup>85</sup> On the whole, however, U.S. policy remained consistent and indiscretions by individuals at lower levels did not reflect the strategic guidance emanating from the White House.

In early 1955, the administration had reviewed its intended course of action in the event of disturbances in Eastern Europe. A memo prepared within USIA revealed the limits on U.S. policy given such a development:

It is our considered judgement that should an uprising similar to the abortive East Berlin riots of June 17, 1953 occur in the near future in

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<sup>85</sup>Goodpaster also suggested that CIA-controlled entities and operatives either over-stated the willingness of the United States to help or did not correct misperceptions in Hungary. Andrew Goodpaster, personal interview with author, March 20, 2003.

Eastern Europe, the position which the U.S. Government must take would not differ materially from the stand we assumed in 1953.

Specifically, the courses of action to be taken by the U.S. are severely circumscribed by over-riding presently applicable policy considerations. Basically, this means that the U.S. must not adopt any course of action which would

- 1) precipitate hostilities (e.g. armed aid, logistics support, etc.).
- 2) cause the premature uprising and consequent annihilation of dissident elements on the basis of exhortations or promises which we are not able to support.
- 3) alienate our allies.

Since any active courses of action embarked upon by the U.S. in such a rebellious situation would likely cause one or more of the above reactions, and since such actions are clearly not in concert with established U.S. national policy, positive activity by the U.S. is not feasible.

Thus, should a situation of revolt develop, the U.S. would have to confine itself (1) to dissemination of the facts of the ensuing action and (2) to expressions of sympathy, passive encouragement and moral support coupled with whatever political steps would be deemed feasible and effective in the light of the actual circumstances. No attempts to encourage the participants could justifiably be made which would result in needless loss of life.<sup>86</sup>

Despite this, American broadcasters expressed some desire to do more during the Hungarian revolution.<sup>87</sup> Although their desires were quickly rebuffed, accusations

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<sup>86</sup>Memorandum from Robert F. Delaney of the Office of Policy and Programs, Soviet Orbit Division, USIA, to Francis B. Stevens of the Office of East European Affairs, January 24, 1955, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 10-11.

<sup>87</sup>For discussions during the crisis itself, which reveal information managers eager to help constrained by more cautious colleagues and presidential leadership, see Notes on the 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, October 26, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 300-303. A subsequent meeting made the limits very clear. The question was posed, "What do we say to the insurgents?" The answer: "We keep them informed. That is about as far as



began to surface that the United States had incited the revolution. A typical example is found in a report from the American embassy in Vienna:

We are encountering among our Austrian friends a strong tendency to blame the U.S. for the present predicament of the Hungarian patriots. Reference is frequently made to RFE and our balloon operations having incited the Hungarians to action and our failure to do anything effective for them now that they have risen against their Communist oppressors.<sup>88</sup>

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you can go.” See Notes on the 40<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, October 29, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 322-326, especially 325. Reports from field operations were even more exasperated in tone. See Telegram from the Consulate General in Munich to the Department of State, October 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 343-344. On November 1, an interagency panel noted that the United States had few tools at its disposal in Hungary. “Psychological measures are about the only [options] open to us at the moment.” Specifically, Radio Free Europe conducted broadcasts to Soviet troops in Hungary “urging them not to shoot the Hungarians.” See Notes on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 1, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 362 and 363. Several Radio Free Europe scripts from the period in question are available in the Eisenhower Library. They reveal RFE broadcast acknowledgments to rebel broadcasters that they were being heard in the West, and initially over-optimistic assessments of developments in Hungary. They also quoted newspaper columns and letters to editors in Western Countries which suggested a greater willingness to act in Hungary than was the case in the Eisenhower administration. See “Implementation of Policy Lines in Scripts,” C.D. Jackson Papers, Box 54, Free Europe Committee, 1956 (2), DDEL. In addition, the Committee for a Free Europe prepared a report on its role in events. See “Radio Free Europe and the Hungarian Revolution,” CD Jackson Papers, Box 54, Free Europe Committee, 1956 (1), DDEL. By the end of the year, however, RFE balloon operations in Eastern Europe were largely curtailed. See Staff Notes, No. 50, December 7, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, December 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL.

<sup>88</sup>Telegram from the Embassy in Austria to the Department of State, October 28, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 319. That lack of American guidance to the insurgents, however, seemed to some at the time to eliminate any

When Eisenhower learned of these accusations, he was disturbed. He insisted they were wrong when informed of them by Henry Cabot Lodge at the United Nations.<sup>89</sup> Still, he raised the issue with Dulles, hospitalized at Walter Reed Army Hospital, who reassured the president that “we always have been against violent rebellion,” and suggested these beliefs did not exist outside of British and French quarters.<sup>90</sup>

A telegram two days later from Austria elaborated further on the criticism U.S. diplomats had heard. It read:

One of reasons is doubtless realization that no country other than U.S. has capability of doing anything effective but reason almost universally given is that past declarations of policy but more specifically our radio and balloon operations have led to belief that we would be prepared to do more than we actually done if any of the subject peoples attempted to break free from Soviet tyranny. I am of course aware that neither the leaflets dropped nor the nature of the broadcasts were designed to incite an uprising scope of these operations and in case of balloons dramatic nature of method did in fact given rise in considerable measure to false expectations.<sup>91</sup>

The situation was such that the telegram’s author felt failure by the United States to do more than it had done to date regarding Hungary would only damage the U.S. position,

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Soviet pretext for further intervention. See Telegram from the Embassy in Austria to the Department of State, October 31, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 352.

<sup>89</sup>See Memorandum of Telephone Conversations with the President, November 9, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 424.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 425.

<sup>91</sup>Telegram from the Embassy in Austria to the Department of State, November 11, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 430.

especially in Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>92</sup>

Eisenhower continued to express concern that opinion viewed the United States as having instigated Hungarian uprising. On November 13, 1956, the president instructed that “all our efforts” should be devoted to “correcting this impression.”<sup>93</sup> He took the first step himself. At the opening of his press conference on November 14, the president said:

Nothing, of course, has so disturbed the American people as the events in Hungary. Our hearts have gone out to them and we have done everything it is possible to, in the way of alleviating suffering.

But I must make one thing clear: the United States doesn't now and never has advocated open rebellion by an undefended populace against force over which they could not possibly prevail.

We, on the contrary, have always urged that the spirit of freedom be kept alive, that people do not lose hope. But we have never in all the years that I think we have been dealing with problems of this sort urged or argued for any kind of armed revolt which could bring about disaster to our friends.<sup>94</sup>

In the question and answer portion of the same press conference, Eisenhower was forced to defend the liberation plank in the 1952 campaign, and the current administration position on “liberation.” Eisenhower stressed the peaceful nature of

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 430-431.

<sup>93</sup>Memorandum from the Counselor of the Department of State to the Acting Secretary of State, November 13, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 435.

<sup>94</sup>The President's News Conference, November 14, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 1096.

liberation. He said:

I think it's been perfectly clear from way back in 1950, as far as I am concerned, and I happened to have had the administration when I was then in NATO.

I believe it would be the most terrible mistake for the free world ever to accept the enslavement of the Eastern European tier of nations as a part of a future world of which we approve. Now, we have said this in every possible way, and because of this we try to hold out to all the world the conviction that freedom will live, human freedom will live.

We have never asked, as I pointed out before, for a people to rise up against a ruthless military force; of course we think, on the other hand, that the employment of such force is the negation of all justice and right in the world.

What I do say is the policy is correct in that we simply insist upon the right of all people to be free to live under governments of their own choosing.<sup>95</sup>

Various elements of the administration reviewed the conduct of radio broadcasts prior to and during the uprising.<sup>96</sup> USIA reported to the president via memorandum on November 19, 1956 that its broadcasts and information activities had hewed carefully to the strategic guidance of the administration. USIA reported,

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 1100-1101.

<sup>96</sup>See Notes on the 46<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 13, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 437. The USIA representative at this meeting said his organization could produce a Hungarian defector "who was prepared to say that VOA and RFE had not incited revolt." Cord Meyer, the coordinator of CIA efforts, boasted of three defectors who would say the same. In the course of the discussion, however, one participant expressed the view, attributed to "Western Europe" that the content of the broadcasts were not so much the question as the existence of those broadcasts themselves. See page 438. In addition, see "Radio Free Europe and the Hungarian Revolution," CD Jackson Papers, Box 54, Free Europe Committee, 1956 (1), DDEL, as well as Department of State Staff Summary Supplement, December 7, 1956, White House Office, Staff Research Group: Records, Box 16, State Department, 51-70, DDEL.

In compliance with NSC directives, these lines of emphasis did encourage the satellite people to stand fast in the face of their Soviet dominated regimes. However, VOA did not incite a revolt nor did it in any way commit the U.S. to any action to restore liberty to the Soviet satellite nations. For the most part the above lines were formulated in public statements by high-level U.S. Government officials and were emphasized as appropriate in VOA output.<sup>97</sup>

USIA also defended its conduct during the Hungarian revolution. Agency officials asserted:

*Recent Programming:* During the uprising of the Hungarian people, which began October 23, VOA neither encouraged nor discouraged the Hungarian freedom fighters; it sought only to keep the Hungarian people informed as best it could. Broadcasts to Hungary consisted entirely of heavy news coverage of the Hungarian developments and reporting world reaction to the events in Hungary. The statements of the President and the actions taken in the UN were given the fullest coverage. With respect to developments taking place in Hungary on which we had to rely in large measure on Hungarian sources, extreme caution was exercised to avoid broadcasting back news which might prove inaccurate or inflammatory. All news carried in the broadcasts was centrally gathered and carefully edited.

In its tone, the Hungarian broadcasts were calm, factual, and objective. . . . Certain programs even warned the freedom fighters to be cautious and not go too fast.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Memorandum from the Acting Director of the USIA to the President, November 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 470-471.

<sup>98</sup>Memorandum from the Acting Director of the USIA to the President, November 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 470-471. For a full accounting of the post-mortem given U.S. radio broadcasts to Eastern Europe, there are several documents in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV. Their titles and page numbers follow: Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence to the President, November 20, 1956, 473-475; Memorandum from the Director of International Broadcasting Service to the Acting Director of the USIA, November 21, 1956, 476-479; Memorandum for the Record by the Counselor of the Department of State, November 21, 1956, 479-480; Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Austria, November 26, 1956, 481-482; Notes on the 55<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the

Of course, USIA was not the only U.S.-funded information agency operating in Eastern Europe. Because of its operation on German soil, the government of the Federal Republic of Germany conducted a review of tapes of Radio Free Europe broadcasts for the period between October 23 and November 10. Although the Germans found no evidence of broadcast promises of U.S. military help, the German government did find other problematic elements in the broadcasts. In particular, they said RFE had:

1) quoted a London Observer news story datelined Washington to the effect that the U.S. Government was under irresistible pressure to give military aid; 2) urged Hungarian workers to strike; 3) asked Hungarian soldiers to participate in the resistance; 4) given advice to use Molotov cocktails; 5) called the Hungarian army stronger than the Soviet army; 6) criticized Nagy and suggested that the fighting should be centrally organized.<sup>99</sup>

U.S. representatives made clear to their German contacts the political consequences of the West German report given pending UN action on Hungary, especially in light of the Soviet Union's allegations of subversive U.S. activities in

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Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, December 6, 1956, 496, Notes on the 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, December 13, 1956, 508-509; Memorandum from the Acting Secretary of State to the President's Press Secretary, December 15, 1956, 518-519; Dispatch from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, December 18, 1956, 520-525; Notes on the 58<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, December 19, 1956, 533; and Editorial Note, 556-558.

<sup>99</sup>Staff Summary Supplement, December 26, 1956, White House Office, Staff Research Group: Records, Box 16, State Department, 51-70, DDEL.

Eastern Europe.<sup>100</sup> The German government expressed sympathy for American concerns and promised to do its best to keep the report quiet.<sup>101</sup> At the end of January, German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer addressed the topic in a press conference. He told the press that a review of RFE broadcasts “showed that assertions that RFE had promised the Hungarians military aid from the West were not in conformity with the facts. The Chancellor noted that ‘some remarks were made which might give rise to misinterpretations; on this, an exchange of ideas took place; changes in staffing resulted from it, and I believe that for the time being the matter may be regarded as settled.’”<sup>102</sup> The U.S. embassy staff in Bonn believed the chancellor’s remarks had stymied critical media attention on RFE in Germany.

Radio broadcasts and propaganda remained important to overall U.S. strategy, however, despite the criticisms suffered in the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising. Reflecting this continued importance, the OCB created a working group to bolster U.S.

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Staff Summary Supplement, December 31, 1956, White House Office, Staff Research Group: Records, Box 16, State Department, 51-70, DDEL. German authorities also worried that Soviet complaints would also be aimed at the Federal Republic of Germany because RFE broadcast facilities were located on its soil. See also Staff Summary Supplement, January 4, 1957, White House Office, Staff Research Group: Records, Box 16, State Department, 51-70, DDEL. See also Department of State Staff Summary Supplement, January 7, 1957, White House Office, Staff Research Group: Records, Box 16, State Department, 51-70, DDEL.

<sup>102</sup>Department of State Staff Summary Supplement, January 28, 1957, White House Office, Staff Research Group: Records, Box 16, State Department, 51-70, DDEL.

broadcasting programs and counter the criticisms.<sup>103</sup> In the first meeting of its type with the bipartisan congressional leadership in 1957, the administration made clear its intention to request increased funding for U.S. information programs. One member of Congress “cited the allegation that the Voice of America had encouraged the Hungarians to revolt with the expectations of U.S. aid.”<sup>104</sup> The director of USIA challenged that assertion immediately.

Regardless of the actual role played by U.S.-operated or -sponsored radio broadcasters in the Hungarian revolution, many Hungarians expected support, more than moral, from the United States.<sup>105</sup> Such action, however, would have been completely inconsistent with the Eisenhower administration’s approach to national security strategy.

### **3. Employ political warfare broadly to advance the cause of freedom around the world.**

The Eisenhower administration relied on non-military, primarily political, means to

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<sup>103</sup>Staff Notes No. 51, December 10, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, December 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL.

<sup>104</sup>Notes on Presidential-Bipartisan Congressional Leadership Meeting, January 1, 1957, AWF, DDE Papers as POTUS, Legislative Meetings Series, Box 2, Legislative Leaders Meetings, 1957 (1) [January-February], DDEL.

<sup>105</sup>Telegram from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, November 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 472.



advance the interests of the United States in the global struggle with the Soviet Union. This required a robust organization for political warfare and a willingness to use it. During the disturbances in Eastern Europe, the political warriors in the administration sought to use developments there to advance their cause in key target audiences, not in Eastern Europe, but particularly in Western Europe, Asia, and Africa. For example, Soviet action in Hungary, reported Allen Dulles, “had reduced Soviet prestige in Western Europe to its lowest point in many years.”<sup>106</sup> These political-psychological efforts, however, were horribly sabotaged by the British, French, and Israeli fiasco in the Suez Canal, but the Hungarian uprising could provide useful political material to help draw the Alliance back together given the immediate example of Soviet ruthlessness.<sup>107</sup>

The peril of general war and the promise of political warfare to advance U.S. interests short of the use of force were the first points Eisenhower emphasized when he met with the bipartisan legislative leadership on November 9, 1956. The meetings recorded this consistency succinctly:

As a backdrop to this discussion, the President said, it was necessary to remember that this is the age of the atom and that the world has to find a

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<sup>106</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 303<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the NSC, November 8, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 419.

<sup>107</sup>See Statement by the Secretary of State, Augusta, GA, December 2, 1956, and “Statement by the Honorable John Foster Dulles Upon Departure for NATO meeting at Paris,” December 8, 1956, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 104, “RE: Liberation Policy (1956),” Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University.

solution—either we achieve peace or we face extinction. Also the Russian menace now seemed to combine the old Stalinist technique along with the new style of economic penetration.

The President wanted to note particularly that Hungarian developments have served throughout most of the world to convict the Soviet of brutal imperialism. This was the opposite of the old situation when neutral nations would never view Russia as being guilty of either colonialism or imperialism, and when Russian would never be disbelieved and we would never be believed. Further, the Hungarian situation warns us again that the Soviet is capable of changing its face almost instantly.<sup>108</sup>

The Hungarian and Polish uprisings provided ammunition for the Cold War. In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's intervention in Hungary, Eisenhower noted in his diary that there were several tasks before him. The first item, in his judgement, was to share with the world the facts—in both word and moving picture—of Soviet actions in Hungary. “We must make certain,” the president opined in his diary, “that every weak country understands what can be in store for it once it falls under the domination of the Soviets.”<sup>109</sup>

Elsewhere, Eisenhower recorded in his own hand the significance of what he termed the “Hungarian Tragedy.” The events in Hungary, Eisenhower believed, “convicts [the] Soviets before the world of the most brutal imperialism,” and “warns us

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<sup>108</sup>Bipartisan Legislative Meeting, November 9, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, November 1956, Misc. (3), DDEL.

<sup>109</sup>Dwight David Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, Robert H. Ferrell, ed., (New York: Norton, 1981), 334.

of no change in purpose” in the Soviet regime.<sup>110</sup> Propaganda gains were also found in the subsequent defection of Hungarian Olympians “en masse,” the boycott of Soviet goods sponsored by international labor,<sup>111</sup> and the brutality of Soviet actions against Hungarian civilians.<sup>112</sup>

The administration was especially interested in emphasizing the Soviet Union’s brutality in the non-aligned world, particularly in India. Eisenhower speculated events in Hungary might encourage Nehru to distance himself from the Communists and suggested to John Foster Dulles that in asking for Nehru’s counsel in this matter, the United States might draw India closer to the West.<sup>113</sup> In meetings with legislative leaders, the administration speculated on the impact that Hungary would have on

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<sup>110</sup>Untitled Notes, November 9, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, Drafts Series, Box 3, Drafts, June-December 1956 (1), DDEL. These notes provided the basis for Eisenhower’s comments to the bipartisan legislative leadership in their meeting on November 9, 1956. Compare to the Minutes of the Bipartisan Legislative Meeting, November 9, 1956, AWF, DDE Papers as POTUS, Legislative Meetings Series, Box 2, Leg. Leaders Mtgs. 1956 (4) [July-November], DDEL.

<sup>111</sup>See Notes on the 46<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 13, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 438-439.

<sup>112</sup>The administration took heart from the popular condemnation of Soviet activities in Hungary. See Memorandum of a Conference with the President, October 27, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 309-313. See also See Draft Statement of Policy by the Planning Board of the NSC, NSC 5616 (DRAFT), October 31, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 357.

<sup>113</sup>Eisenhower to John Foster Dulles, October 29, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 18, October 1956, Misc. (1), DDEL.

India.<sup>114</sup> When Nehru visited the United States, Eisenhower and Dulles discussed recent events with him. At the time, Nehru suggested “that Communism is sort of at a crossroad,” and that “something could be done toward hastening the weakening of Communism’s hold over its own people.” To Eisenhower’s and Dulles’ chagrin, Nehru offered nothing in the way of a concrete proposal.<sup>115</sup>

In other words, U.S. efforts in Eastern Europe had multiple facets, each intended to provide political-psychological benefit to a global audience. The United States expressed sympathy via humanitarian aid. It expressed concern via political action—in the traditional sense—at the United Nations. Finally, it expressed—and sought to encourage—outrage via the publication of a “White Book” of Soviet offensives and news reels documenting the attack on Hungary.<sup>116</sup> Sometimes, these elements might all come together and the United States could offer humanitarian aid to Hungary while simultaneously scoring political and psychological points in the Cold War. In January 1957, for example, a member of the OCB staff noted a UN report

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<sup>114</sup>Bipartisan Legislative Meeting, November 9, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, November 1956, Misc. (3), DDEL.

<sup>115</sup>Eisenhower to Dulles, Phone Calls, Wednesday, December 19, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, December 1956, Phone Calls, DDEL.

<sup>116</sup>Notes on the 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 6, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 403. Further documentation on U.S. activities is found in the Notes for an Oral Report to the OCB by the Chairman of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 417.

stressing the urgent need of grain in Hungary to stave off starvation throughout the winter. The OCB staff member noted Khrushchev's boasting of a bumper crop in the Soviet Union and suggested Henry Cabot Lodge at the United Nations, and the VOA, should "point up the apparent gap between Soviet capabilities to alleviate suffering of the Hungarian people—which the Soviets caused—and their performance on this score."<sup>117</sup>

These rather paltry moves by the administration, especially given the criticism that the United States had incited the uprising in Hungary, rankled Eisenhower. He was frustrated, but he felt the country had done all it could do. NSC minutes reflect this frustration:

The President said that this was indeed a bitter pill for us to swallow. We say we are at the end of our patience, but what can we do that is really constructive? Should we break off diplomatic relations with the USSR? What would be gained by this action? The Soviets don't care. The whole business was shocking to the point of being unbelievable. And yet many people seemed unconvinced.<sup>118</sup>

The conversation in the NSC meeting turned to how to better convince the rest of the world. Eisenhower, for example, pondered aloud how any country, Syria, in his example, could still consider fostering better relations with the Soviet Union in light of events in Hungary. "It is for this reason," the president continued, according to NSC

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<sup>117</sup>R.V. Mrozinski to Paul Comstock, January 22, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, OCB Central File Series, Box 34, OCB 91. Hungary (2) [January 1954-June 1957], DDEL.

<sup>118</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 303<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the NSC, November 8, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 419.

minutes, “that we must go on playing up the situation in Hungary to the absolute maximum, so the whole world will see and understand.”<sup>119</sup> Members of the NSC concurred and related to the president the activities of USIA and Radio Free Europe in this regard.<sup>120</sup>

Despite his frustrations, however, the president, more than anyone else in his inner-circle, retained a dispassionate approach to the crisis.<sup>121</sup> It was a crisis of incredible human tragedy, full of the frustration of leadership wedded to impotence. But Eisenhower understood it was but one crisis; a crisis about which the United States could do little more than protest, condemn,<sup>122</sup> and offer humanitarian assistance to the

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<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 420.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>For example, see Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the President in New York and the Secretary of State in Washington, October 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 290-291; and Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State in Washington and the Representative at the United Nations in New York, October 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 291. Dulles appears eager to act in the UN, while Eisenhower was more patient. In a meeting of the NSC the following day, it was again Eisenhower who adopted a patient attitude. Where members of the NSC wanted to take some sort of action, including a direct approach to Marshal Zhukov in the Soviet Union to reassure the Soviets that the United States would not exploit freedom of any of the satellites to the military detriment of the Soviet Union, Eisenhower rather wanted a staff study done by the NSC planning board about what had happened to date in Poland and Hungary and what the United States should do about it. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 301<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the NSC, October 26, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 299.

<sup>122</sup>Eisenhower’s first public statement on developments in Hungary, issued after the first introduction of Soviet forces is an excellent example. See Statement by the

victims. The Cold War was bigger than Hungary, and bigger than Poland, and the overall U.S. strategy for waging cold war recognized this. In the passions of the moment, Eisenhower held true to this insight and acted with his long-term vision of the Cold War in mind. He was angry and disturbed by the use of Soviet force against civilians seeking freedom and democracy. But he was not willing to upset the larger, more favorable, strategic setting gained in recent years. As one document put it, the United States would condemn the return of Stalinism, but urge the Soviet Union not to “reverse the spirit of Geneva.”<sup>123</sup>

#### **4. Employ political warfare in Eastern Europe to maintain the hopes for ultimate freedom.**

The Millikan report in late 1954 and the reviews of NSC policy prior to the Polish and Hungarian crises, had transformed the U.S. effort at political warfare in Eastern Europe from one of “revolution” to “evolution.” Throughout the revolutions which took place, however, the United States clung to the hopes of encouraging evolution in the region along the lines of Tito’s regime in Yugoslavia. The reason: it was the best the United

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President on Developments in Hungary, October 25, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 1018-1019.

<sup>123</sup>Notes on the 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 5, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 397. The actual exchange reads:

Campbell: How far will the expression of indignation go?

Beam: It is to take the form of indignation against the return of Stalinism and it has been said that we should not reverse the spirit of Geneva.

States could do short of World War III.

The NSC, in determining the best course of action for the conduct of U.S. policy in the region in the midst of the crisis, endorsed the objectives detailed in NSC 5608/1, and called for “increased contacts and exchanges between Poland and the United States on economic, scientific, and cultural bases. . . .”<sup>124</sup> In Hungary, specific action during the crisis was limited to propaganda broadcasts and offers of food aid and other types of humanitarian assistance.<sup>125</sup>

The rather paltry extent of U.S. political warfare efforts in Eastern Europe grew

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<sup>124</sup>See Draft Statement of Policy by the Planning Board of the NSC, NSC 5616 (DRAFT), October 31, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 356 and 357.

<sup>125</sup>On November 2, 1956, the president authorized the use of \$20 million in emergency funds to provide food and other vital goods to the people of Hungary. See Statement by the President on Authorizing Food and Other Relief for the Hungarian People, November 2, 1956, published in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1956* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1958), 1074. In this volume, see also, Statement by the President on the Use of Soviet Forces in Hungary, November 4, 1956, 1076; Statement by the President Concerning the Admission of Refugees from Hungary, November 8, 1956, 1093; Statement by the President in Support of Red Cross Disaster Appeal for Relief in Hungary and to Hungarian Refugees in Austria, November 29, 1956, 1114; and White House Statement Concerning the Admission of Additional Hungarian Refugees, December 1, 1956, 116-117; Memorandum Authorizing Expenditures to Carry Out the Hungarian Refugee Program, December 8, 1956, 1118-1119; and Statement by the President: Human Rights Day in the Light of Recent Events in Hungary, December 10, 1956, 1119-1121. See also Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 364. Documentation on the handling of Hungarian refugees is considerable, but not cited here. A range of economic incentives were proposed to the NSC for Poland and Hungary. See Staff Notes No. 38, November 2, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 19, November 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL.



from an excess of caution about appearing responsible for events in Eastern Europe.

From a political warfare perspective, it was more effective to sit back, quietly, and reap the rewards without too much stridency. The administration first adopted this tack in the Polish disturbances of the summer and maintained it in Hungary. One State

Department official put it this way:

Our policy line in this limited sense is clearly enough marked. We should lie low, seek little, and reap the sure rewards of patience. If the Poles should look to us or to Western Europe for economic help, it would be necessary politically to respond, but even in this we ought to proceed carefully. A process is underway that can be checked only by forceful Soviet action. Although there might be gains for us if we could stir things up to the point of causing direct Soviet intervention, that course would carry very sizeable risks. We can make smaller but still substantial gains at virtually no risk. I would suppose it to be prudent foreign policy to take these latter gains.<sup>126</sup>

Regrettably, the Soviet leaders opted for “forceful” action in the Hungarian case. Still, as the preceding quote suggests, the violent reaction of the Communist leaders provided political-psychological benefits for the United States. Despite the tragedy of events, particularly in Hungary, 1956, on balance, was a good year for U.S. interests in the Cold War.

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<sup>126</sup>Memorandum from Philip H. Trezise of the Policy Planning Staff to the Director of the Staff, October 24, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 268.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF REVOLUTION

The Hungarian revolution confirmed some aspects of U.S. policy and introduced modifications in other places. The United States had to deal with the humanitarian consequences and the exodus of refugees from Hungary.<sup>127</sup> The United States also sought to consolidate a more stable relationship with Poland without fueling tensions in

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<sup>127</sup>Memorandum from the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs to the Secretary of State, October 29, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 326-327. U.S. policy on refugees was shaped in part by propaganda considerations. See Notes on the 53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 490-495. For an indication of congressional support for U.S. aid to Hungarian refugees, see Summary of Congressional Mail Addressed to the President, December 3, 1956, and December 5, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, December 1956, Misc. (4), DDEL. See also Staff Notes No. 39, November 7, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 19, November 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL. Eisenhower also donated \$200 to the efforts of the Red Cross in helping aid refugees. Eisenhower to E. Roland Harriman, November 29, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, November 1956, Misc. (1), DDEL. Other symbolic efforts involved hiring Hungarian refugees to work in the kitchen or garden at the White House. See Phone Calls, Eisenhower to Ray Hare, November 9, 1956, 3:42 PM, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 19, November 1956 Phone Calls, DDEL. See also Richard M. Nixon, "Report to the President on Hungarian Refugees," January 1, 1957, AWF, International Series, Box 28, Hungarian (1); and Tracy S. Voorhees to Eisenhower, January 27, 1957, DDE Records as President, Subject Series, Box 32, Hungarian Crisis (4); Loy W. Henderson to Sherman Adams, February 8, 1957, DDE Records as President, Subject Series, Box 32, Hungarian Crisis (4); Admission of Hungarian Escapees into the United States, after April, 1957, DDE Records as President, Subject Series, Box 32, Hungarian Crisis (5), DDEL.

the region.<sup>128</sup> On balance, however, these developments suggest that, by some measures, 1956 had been a successful year for U.S. policy in the Cold War.<sup>129</sup>

The single most important development to U.S. military planners, and in some respects to the administration as a whole, was the changed assessment of the value of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union from a military perspective. After the events of 1956, East European Armies were no longer believed likely to support their Soviet-sponsored regimes in a clash with West.<sup>130</sup> Allen Dulles reported to members of

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<sup>128</sup>For background discussion of the economic aid proposal to Poland in the midst of the October crisis, see Telegram from the Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, October 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 287. For details of the legal restrictions on U.S. economic aid and trade with the Eastern Bloc, see Memorandum from the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs to the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 447-452. By the end of 1956, the United States was willing to grant the French a COCOM waiver so it could sell two electrical generators to Poland. The deal was hoped to help demonstrate the difference in relations with a more independent Poland. See Staff Notes No. 50, December 7, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, December 1956, Staff Memos, DDEL. Further efforts included State Department certification of Poland as a country “not dominated or controlled by the USSR” and therefore eligible for assistance. See Staff Notes No. 55, December 19, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, December 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL.

<sup>129</sup>As an example, see Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, before the Atomic Power Institute Sponsored by the New Hampshire Council on World Affairs, Durham New Hampshire, May 2, 1958,” John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 136, “Re: Speech by JFD Concerning Foreign Policy, Atomic Power Institute, New Hampshire Council on World Affairs,” Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, 8.

<sup>130</sup>Reports of this nature were many, and gained credibility in post-revolution intelligence assessments. For reports during the disturbances, see: Transcript of Teletype Conversation Between the Legation in Hungary and the Department of State,

Congress that the Hungarian revolution had produced two results: “. . . Russia had lost a satellite and gained a conquered province, that in the outside world the myth of sweet reasonableness of communism had been destroyed with a resultant denunciation of it by former Party members and that the Soviets now realize that satellite armies are not at all trustworthy.”<sup>131</sup> When John Foster Dulles returned from the NATO ministerial meeting in December 1956, he noted the significant change in the disposition of satellite country armed forces. He told Eisenhower, “The sixty satellite divisions can no longer be regarded as an addition to Soviet forces—in fact they may immobilize certain Soviet forces.”<sup>132</sup> As early as 1953, and as recently as the drafting of NSC 5608/2 six months earlier, U.S. political warfare efforts were designed to weaken the warfighting potential of Eastern European armies. By the end of 1956, military

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October 25, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 281; Memorandum of a Conference with the President, October 27, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 309; Special National Intelligence Estimate, SNIE 12-2-56, October 30, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 331 and 334-335. Allen Dulles reported on November 1 that “approximately 80% of the Hungarian Army had defected to the rebels.” See Memorandum of Discussion at the 302<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the NSC, November 1, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 358.

<sup>131</sup>Bipartisan Legislative Meeting, November 9, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, November 1956, Misc. (3), DDEL.

<sup>132</sup>Memorandum of Conference with the President, December 15, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, December 1956 Diary, Staff Memos, DDEL. It should be noted however, these developments did not warrant, in Dulles’ estimation, any reduction in U.S. military preparedness. This was a net gain, but not the end of the game. See Secretary Dulles’ News Conference of December 18 1956, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 106, “Re: NATO Ministerial Meeting, Paris, December 8-15, 1956,” Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, 2.

analysts believed they faced a greatly diminished military force across NATO's eastern frontier. From this perspective, events in Hungary constituted a net gain for the United States.

The events of 1956 also provided evidence that Millikan was right to target mid- and lower-level bureaucrats to encourage evolution, initially through appeals to national communism.<sup>133</sup> Prior to the Soviet military response to events in Hungary, the administration had reason to believe that the policies advocated in the Millikan report were proving effective. Reports from Budapest indicated that the spate of reforms underway in Hungary were the result, not of popular pressure, primarily, but rather the result of "pressure from the masses of lower and middle level party members," the targets of U.S. political warfare since the Millikan Commission reshaped U.S. information campaigns in 1954.<sup>134</sup>

An assessment of developments in Poland prepared within the Policy Planning Staff also suggested that Millikan's suggestions for targeting lower- and mid-level

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<sup>133</sup>Initial reviews inside the administration were not so optimistic, however. In the midst of the crisis, Allen Dulles suggested that events in Hungary may preclude the survival of any national communist regime in Eastern Europe. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 301<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the NSC, October 26, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 296.

<sup>134</sup>Memorandum of a Conversation between the Chargé in Hungary and the Yugoslav Minister, October 12, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 248.

members of the Communist party and bureaucracy may have borne fruit.<sup>135</sup> In short, this analysis argued that members of the Polish Communist party were swung to nationalist communism by the sentiment of the Polish people. The difference was that the sentiment began to affect people within the governing mechanism and thereby affected political developments in Poland after Poznan. Most importantly, “the pressures elsewhere to imitate the Poles will be irresistible. We can be sure that Communist officials in the other satellites are similarly susceptible to popular attitudes.”<sup>136</sup> Given the nature of Communist economies, the resulting demand for greater public welfare spending would result in decreased resources dedicated to bloc militaries and, over a long period of time, may result in evolutionary changes in the regimes themselves.<sup>137</sup>

The problems, however, with some of the more subtle elements of the American propaganda effort advocated by Millikan and pursued since 1955 stemmed from the fact that increased cultural exchanges and other contacts were the hallmark of good relations between states. To carry these programs on in light of events in Eastern Europe would have been impossible politically. The president instructed that all such

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<sup>135</sup>Memorandum from Philip H. Trezise of the Policy Planning Staff to the Director of the Staff, October 24, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Volume XXV, 266.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>137</sup>*Ibid.*

programs be suspended on November 5, 1956.<sup>138</sup>

Still, a special NIE in late November concluded that events of the autumn months had demonstrated conclusively that there were vulnerabilities to be exploited in the Soviet satellites. In particular, anti-Soviet sentiments were believed to have increased as a result of the crack-down in Hungary. The estimate concluded, “The harshness of Soviet repression and lack of Western military support for the Hungarians will discourage armed rebellion, but will probably not prevent anti-Soviet agitation and vigorous expressions of discontent.”<sup>139</sup>

In the broader Cold War effort as well, the product of 1956 was a more receptive global audience. Arthur Larson became the Director of the U.S. Information Agency in November 1956. He noted that the dual crises proved beneficial to the international opinion of the United States. He said,

Actually, in a way—at least vis-à-vis the African and Asian world—that was a relatively rosy period. Vis-à-vis France and England and Israel, of course, it was quite the opposite. But we were the white haired boys, we were the heroes for a few weeks, to the Asians and Africans. Almost simultaneously, of course, the Russians were in Hungary and looking rather bad there. So, between the two, I came in at a time when this elusive thing called world opinion was in pretty good shape, so far as

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<sup>138</sup>See Memorandum of a conference with the President, November 5, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 394. Some distinction between the Soviet Union and the satellites was complicated in suspending these exchanges. See Notes on the 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, November 5, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 395.

<sup>139</sup>SNIE 12-3-56, November 27, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 487.

the United States was concerned. Of course, these things never last very long, but that was the atmosphere in which I entered.<sup>140</sup>

After the dust had settled, U.S. policy remained unchanged. The United States would continue to pursue evolutionary change in the satellites, just as it had since the adoption of NSC 5501 in 1955.<sup>141</sup>

The future for U.S. policy in Eastern Europe, according to the U.S. intelligence community at the time, relied on Poland's continued progress:

Poland's success in maintaining its present limited degree of independence is a key factor affecting the future political developments in Eastern Europe. Should the USSR succeed in reimposing its complete control over Poland, it could more easily check dissident elements in other Satellites, particularly disruptive forces in the other Satellite Communist parties. If the USSR does not achieve its aim in

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<sup>140</sup> Arthur Larson, Interview by Richard D. Challener, 22 September 1965, The John Foster Dulles Oral History Project, Seely G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Used by Permission of Princeton University Library. (Trans. page 17). See also Herbert Hoover Jr.'s comment at the Bipartisan Legislative Meeting, November 9, 1956, DDE Papers as POTUS, DDE Diary Series, Box 20, November 1956, Misc. (3), DDEL.

<sup>141</sup> See Notes on the 58<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, December 19, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 532. The statement was based on a public pronouncement by John Foster Dulles during a press conference on December 18, 1956. Interestingly, the USIA representative at the meeting said his agency "planned not to give too much play to the Secretary's statement, except as immediate reassurance against any American desire to incite revolt." Clearly the information warriors in the administration were un-nerved by recent events. But the secretary had made such a statement before. On December 2, he had said that the United States continued to support an end to Soviet rule in the satellites, but via "evolutionary primary processes, and not violent revolution." See Transcript of News Conference, August GA, December 2, 1956, John F. Dulles Papers, Box 104, "Re: Hungary (1956)," Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University.8.



Poland, its problems elsewhere will probably worsen.<sup>142</sup>

The administration's concern for Poland extended to a formal consideration to use force to defend the new regime against any repeat of the Soviet intervention in Hungary. Ultimately, the same desire to avoid the unimaginable costs of general war that had guided the administration in its 1953 policy reviews guided it here too. The United States would not use force to protect even regimes which it thought had progressed beyond the strictest of Soviet controls.<sup>143</sup>

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The events of 1956 have traditionally been depicted as a low point in the Eisenhower administration's conduct of foreign policy. The Suez Crisis and the failure to respond strongly to the Soviet Union's intervention in Hungary revealed that U.S. allies were capable of the same offenses as its adversary and that U.S. policy in Eastern Europe had been little more than rhetoric. This may have been true, but it is a gross underestimation of the power of rhetoric.

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<sup>142</sup>NIE 12-57, February 19, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XXV, 579.

<sup>143</sup>See James D. Marchio, "Risking General War in Pursuit of Limited Objectives: U.S. Military Contingency Planning for Poland in the Wake of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising," *The Journal of Military History* vol. 66 (July 2002): 783-812.

Although frustrated by their inability to do more, the discussion within the administration reveals that in their own opinion, the events of 1956 in Eastern Europe had advanced U.S. interests considerably. And they had done so by following the basic principles—though refined over the years—which had guided U.S. policy since 1953. First, as the crisis in Eastern Europe unfolded, Eisenhower sought to take no action which would increase the risk of general war with the Soviet Union. Second, despite reports and concerns to the contrary, the United States took no formal action to incite an uprising which the country would not be capable of supporting. Third, the administration, though troubled by the violence in Hungary, never lost sight of the potential to use events in Eastern Europe to sway audiences around the world and thereby advance the cause of freedom. Finally, the administration continued to use political warfare in Eastern Europe to maintain faith in an ultimate liberation.

This is not to argue that the Eisenhower administration was infallible. There is certainly more than enough evidence to make one wonder what might have happened had the administration reacted more forcefully to events in Hungary or to ponder how U.S. policy might have differed were it not for the competing crisis over the Suez canal. But the purpose of this inquiry has been to examine the administration's approach to political warfare. The evidence indicates that 1956 produced real benefits for U.S. cold war efforts—chief among them, a militarily and politically weakened Warsaw Pact and overwhelming evidence of Soviet transgression that could be used to

influence audiences around the world. In no small measure, these gains are attributable to the consistency of Eisenhower's approach and his devotion to the political-psychological elements of power. The consistency which characterized U.S. policy from 1953 to 1956 would continue throughout Eisenhower's second term in office, the subject of chapter six.

## Chapter 6 Political Warfare in the Second Term, 1957-1960

In its second term, the Eisenhower administration continued to approach the Cold War as a battle for hearts and minds around the world. In fact, little changed in its strategic approach to the use of political warfare. At the start of the second term, Eisenhower continued to express concern over the folly of any war in the nuclear age and the need to balance security and solvency.<sup>1</sup> The resulting requirement to weigh the political-psychological impacts of virtually every U.S. policy continued.<sup>2</sup>

Developments in 1956, particularly in Eastern Europe, benefitted the overall position of the United States in the Cold War. John Foster Dulles, for example, believed the Soviet Union was in a weaker position in the aftermath of the Hungarian revolution than it had been two years previously. He said, “The men in the Kremlin do not now exert anything like the influence they exerted two years ago, either over the National Communist Parties outside the Soviet bloc or over the Soviet satellites

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<sup>1</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 309<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, January 11, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX (Washington, DC: GPO, 1990), 409.

<sup>2</sup>For example, the OCB established a working-group to prepare an information campaign to accompany the test flight of intercontinental and intermediate-range ballistic missiles. See “Editorial Note,” published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 377. Another example is the Special National Intelligence Estimate prepared to consider the global reaction to a U.S. civil defense program. See SNIE 100-5-57, Probably World Reaction to Certain Civil Defense Programs, Memorandum of Discussion at the 314<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, February 28, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 442-445.

themselves.”<sup>3</sup>

Some scholars argue that after the Hungarian Revolution, the United States backed away from political warfare. As Bennett Kovrig has written, “. . . it took a revolution in Hungary to impose a sober reappraisal of the political costs and benefits of psychological warfare.”<sup>4</sup> The evidence, however, does not support Kovrig’s assertion. In fact, the Hungarian revolution and the developments in Poland suggested to the administration that their overall approach was fundamentally sound.

### **1957 POLICY REVIEWS**

The conduct of U.S. policy in 1957 lends further support to the idea that the events of 1956, in the estimation of the Eisenhower administration, advanced U.S. interests. In the case of Poland, the United States may have even found something worth fighting for in Eastern Europe.

No one seriously questioned the human tragedy that befell the people of Hungary, in particular, in the events of 1956. But the political value to the United States of the Soviet Union’s open aggression was apparent to all in the administration’s

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<sup>3</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 307<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, December 21, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 392.

<sup>4</sup>Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 41.

inner councils.<sup>5</sup> The question facing the administration in the first months of 1957 was what to do with this opportunity.

The NSC discussion of a proposed revision in the basic national security strategy on February 28, 1957 reflected the opportunity facing the United States. Soviet military power had suffered because of the Hungarian and Polish uprisings. The draft of NSC 5707 discussed at this meeting noted,

While the economic and military strength of the USSR itself continues to grow, the Soviet power position in Eastern Europe, including the reliability of the satellite armed forces, has been weakened and its ideological claims have been damaged by Soviet repression in Hungary.<sup>6</sup>

The political liabilities faced by the Soviet Union as a result of its actions in Eastern Europe opened the door to a variety of opportunities and consequences for the United States government. U.S. policy, the NSC warned, would need to encourage “evolutionary change” without aggravating the Kremlin’s “hypersensitivity to Western actions” in the region. As a result, the NSC believed the best means to encourage “developments toward independence” were found in “limited economic assistance and cultural exchanges” in addition to the “broad political posture of the [United States].”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 314<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, February 28, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 435.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 435-436. In the truncated discussion that followed, Eisenhower suggested that the word “particularly” replace the word “including” in the statement of the “problem.”

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

Nor did the new national security strategy demonstrate any deviation from the administration's enthusiasm for political warfare in the Cold War. The new statement, NSC 5707/8, generally accepted the political warfare elements of its predecessor, NSC 5602. The over-arching consistency suggests that instead of being the subject of contentious debate after Hungary, the administration remained satisfied with its overall approach to these issues. Such a notion is supported by the lack of discussion of these elements of power in the meetings leading up to the issuance of NSC 5707/8.<sup>8</sup> If the role of political warfare or the statement of the political challenges had changed or been controversial, they would have been discussed in the NSC process. The fact that they were not discussed, coupled with the administration's repetition of their standing policies on the political elements of the national security strategy, suggests that in fact, the Eisenhower administration was largely satisfied with developments in this area.

The threat facing the United States was the military and economic power of the Soviet Union, in conjunction with the growth of nuclear stockpiles, and "the weakness

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<sup>8</sup>In fact, in the numerous NSC meetings to discuss the drafting of NSC 5707, most discussions focused on the impact of Soviet nuclear capabilities, and the role of U.S. nuclear forces, not developments in Eastern Europe. Those developments had been, in the grandest context of the Cold War, generally positive for the United States. They did not need to be labored over in the NSC. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 317<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, March 28, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 446-456; Memorandum of Discussion at the 318<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, April 4, 1957, published in *ibid.*, 459-464; Memorandum of Discussion at the 319<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, April 11, 1947, published in *ibid.*, 465-480; Memorandum of Discussion at the 320<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, April 17, 1957, published in *ibid.*, 480-486; and Memorandum of Discussion at the 325<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, May 27, 1957, published in *ibid.*, 488-507;

or instability in critical areas where there is a strong pressure for economic or political change, and the menace of the international Communist apparatus.”<sup>9</sup> In the face of this threat, the Eisenhower administration continued to call for a response that secured the United States and its citizens “without seriously weakening the U.S. economy.”<sup>10</sup> Full scale war or negotiations promised the only means of decreasing Soviet military power, and the United States and its allies rejected the use of force to solve this problem.<sup>11</sup>

As had been the case in every statement of national security policy since 1953, the United States was then compelled to rely upon political warfare “to affect the conduct and policies of the Communist regimes, especially those of the USSR . . . . and . . . to foster tendencies that lead them to abandon expansionist policies.”<sup>12</sup> More specifically, the United States would seek through political means to deter Soviet aggression, maintain and develop Western resolve and cohesion, and encourage reform and liberalization in the Soviet bloc. NSC 5707/8 stated that U.S. policy sought “to foster changes in the character and policies of the Soviet-Communist bloc regimes” by three specific means:

- (1) By influencing them and their peoples toward the choice of those

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<sup>9</sup>NSC 5707/8, Statement of Basic National Security Policy, June 3, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 509.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 509-110.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 510.



alternative lines of action which, while in their national interests, do not conflict with the security interests of the United States.

(2) By exploiting differences between such regimes to disrupt the structure of the Soviet Communist bloc.

(3) By exploiting vulnerabilities within the bloc countries in ways consistent with this general strategy.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, the administration sought to destroy or neutralize “the international Communist apparatus,” the chief agent of Soviet political warfare, “in the Free World.”<sup>14</sup>

As in previous national security strategy statements, the administration identified the need to coordinate all the elements of national power, what the NSC termed again as “a flexible combination of military, political, economic, psychological, and covert actions. . . .”<sup>15</sup> The administration even repeated its assessment that this strategy offered the best promise of “bringing about at least a prolonged period of armed truce, and ultimately a peaceful resolution of the Soviet bloc-Free World conflict and a peaceful and orderly world environment.”<sup>16</sup>

The real innovation in NSC 5707/8, which distinguished it from previous strategy documents, was its discussion of nuclear weapons and their role in U.S. national security policy. In fact, it was NSC 5707/8 which stated that the United States

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid..

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

would place its “main, but not sole, reliance on nuclear weapons,” and integrate them into the military with other weapons, going so far as to consider their use “conventional” from a military perspective.<sup>17</sup> In fact, however, the purpose for this apparent expansion in the willingness of the United States to use nuclear weapons stemmed from psychological considerations expressed in the document itself: the need to convince the Soviet Union that aggression would not pay. In other words, deterrence.

The NSC believed that for a deterrent strategy to work, a political strategy was vital to maintain Western cohesion and unity.<sup>18</sup> In fact, they were both different sides of the same coin.<sup>19</sup> According to the NSC,

Political and economic progress in the Free World is vitally important (a) to maintain the effectiveness of the military deterrent by preserving the cohesion of our alliances and the political basis for allied facilities and capabilities; (b) as an end in itself, in strengthening the vitality and well being of the free nations; and (c) to create the conditions which over time will be conducive to acceptable change in the Communist bloc. Behind the shield of its deterrent system, the United States should place relatively more stress on promoting growth and development in the Free World and constructive evolution in the Communist bloc.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 511.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 513.

<sup>19</sup>NATO's North Atlantic Council concurred in its communique after the ministerial in Bonn in May 1957. See Department of State for the Press, No. 275, May 7, 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers, Box 117, “Re: Hungary (1957),” Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 513.

The NSC continued to emphasize the need to focus on the long haul and to demonstrate that the western system could better provide for its citizens. They wrote, “The ability of the Free World, over the long pull, to meet the challenge and competition of the Communist world will depend in large measure on the capacity to demonstrate progress toward meeting the basic needs and aspirations of its peoples.”<sup>21</sup>

When it turned to “Means of Directly Influencing the Communist Bloc,” the United States sought to use political means, either negotiation, or the “exploitation” of Soviet “vulnerabilities.” These means would be used to deter Soviet aggression, clarify U.S. policies, and persuade Communist leaders that alternatives existed, acceptable to the United States, “which they might come to consider compatible with their own security interests.” In addition, the United States would seek to revise the image of the West painted inside the Soviet Union, while encouraging the evolution of peaceful policies which “might over the long run lead to basic changes in the outlook or character of Communist regimes.”<sup>22</sup> The actual means to be used in pursuit of these objectives included expanded personal contacts between East and West, negotiation, disarmament, and other political methods.<sup>23</sup>

On the specific issue of exploiting Soviet vulnerabilities, little had changed

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 514.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 518.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 518-519.

since NSC 5602, despite the Hungarian revolution. The NSC wrote:

In the exploitation of Soviet bloc vulnerabilities, the United States should design its policies and programs (a) to promote evolutionary changes in Soviet policies and conduct in ways that further U.S. and Free World security; (b) to weaken the ties which link the USSR and Communist China and bind their satellites; (c) to encourage bureaucratic and popular pressures inside the bloc for greater emphasis by the regimes on their internal problems, and on national interests in the satellites; and (d) to undermine the faith of the Communist ruling classes in their own system and ideology. The effort should be to pose for them the necessity of devoting attention and resources to these needs or facing increased disaffection with the regime or the satellite relationship if these needs are ignored. When feasible, the Executive branch should seek changes in legislation relaxing present restrictions on the use of economic aid to foster the development of independence among the Eastern European satellites.<sup>24</sup>

In every respect, this statement of policy was fully consistent with NSC 5602 and, perhaps more tellingly, the work of the Millikan Committee. Despite the violence in Hungary in 1956, U.S. policy on exploiting Soviet vulnerabilities and conducting political warfare remained the same.

It would be inaccurate, however, to suggest a complete absence of change in the administration's policies. In fact, NSC 5707/8 does provide evidence of some evolution in the administration's approach to political warfare. The concept of foreign

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 519. The use of economic aid and trade with Poland also make sense as a reaction to Soviet policies. In February of 1957, Allen Dulles reported to the NSC that the Soviet Union would use economic aid as its primary means of bringing Poland and Yugoslavia back under Soviet domination. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 314<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, February 28, 1957, AWF, NSC Series, Box 8, 314<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, February 28, 1957, DDEL, 3.

information programs had been broadening since 1953 from efforts to indict the Soviet regime to more subtle campaigns to educate the world about the United States and its people. This evolution found expression in NSC 5707/8 which reflected on the “vital role” of “strong foreign information, cultural exchange, educational exchange and comparable programs. . .” and noted “U.S. policies and actions should be presented in a manner which will advance U.S. objectives, and their psychological implication should be carefully considered in advance.”<sup>25</sup> Several principles served to guide U.S. information programs:

In interpreting abroad U.S. policies and action, the United States should seek to (1) project an image of the United States which reflects the fundamentally peaceful intent of U.S. policies, while making clear our determination to resist aggression; (2) delineate those important aspects of U.S. life, culture and institutions which facilitate understanding of the policies and objectives of the United States; (3) persuade foreign peoples that U.S. objectives will actually aid the achievement of their legitimate national objectives and aspirations; (4) expose Communist aims and actions and adequately counter Soviet propaganda; (5) encourage evolutionary change in the Soviet system, along lines consistent with U.S. security objectives and the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the USSR; (6) assure the satellite peoples of the continuing interest of the U.S. in the peaceful restoration of their independence and political freedom.<sup>26</sup>

In every key area affecting political warfare, NSC 5707/8 demonstrates a consistency—allowing for evolution and refinement—in the administration’s approach

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<sup>25</sup>NSC 5707/8, Statement of Basic National Security Policy, June 3, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 520.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

spanning the divide created by the Polish disturbances and the Hungarian Revolution. This consistency in pre- and post-revolutionary policies is important, for it suggests that the administration was satisfied with its conduct during the Hungarian uprising, and content with its prior policies despite the violence of 1956.

### **Revisions in the Threat Assessment**

In November 1957, the intelligence community released its National Intelligence Estimate on trends in Soviet policies and capabilities for the period between 1957 and 1962.<sup>27</sup> Although the intelligence community expressed real concern over military-technical developments, their basic assessment of the Soviet threat remained unchanged. The Soviet Union's leaders were expected to "continue to prefer non-military means of achieving their objectives."<sup>28</sup> The continuation of the Soviets' campaign for "peaceful co-existence" offered the leaders in the Kremlin the best hope of sowing dissent between the Western allies and suspicion of the west in the developing world. The Soviets would continue to rely on cold war, political warfare tactics, especially in the Middle East, where activities would likely include "high-level goodwill visits, broadened contacts, promotion of cultural and other exchanges,

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<sup>27</sup>NIE 11-4-57, Main Trend in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1957-1962, November 12, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 665.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 666.

expanded foreign trade, long term credits and technical aid, and arms aid.”<sup>29</sup> In Western Europe, the intelligence community expected the Soviet Union to concentrate on dividing the political unity of NATO in the hopes of spurring the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe. On issues of disarmament, the Soviets were expected to try to appear flexible in negotiations, consistent with their campaign for “peaceful co-existence” so as to appear “constructive” with the actual intent of neutralizing “U.S. nuclear striking power.”<sup>30</sup>

In turning its attention to Eastern Europe, the intelligence community acknowledged changes in the relationship of the regimes in Yugoslavia and Poland with Moscow. But these changes, as well as the Soviet relationship with China, were believed to be designed to allow greater flexibility, and thereby increase the strength of the Eastern bloc. That being the case, the events of 1956 in Poland and Hungary were expected to temper the Soviet Union’s acceptance of further change in the nature of the satellite relationships. The NIE reported:

However, mindful of last year’s developments in Poland and Hungary, the USSR now seems determined to go slow in any further evolution of its relationships in with the European Satellites, and above all to avoid any repetition of the Hungarian or even Polish experiences. It would almost certainly revert to repressive policies in event of serious threats to its position in Eastern Europe. Baring such developments, we think the USSR will pursue a cautious policy of economic aid, adjustment to national peculiarities, and toleration here and there of a somewhat

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 667.

greater degree of Satellite autonomy.<sup>31</sup>

The sub-text of this document is that the Hungarian revolution and the Polish disturbances of 1956 were caused by problems in the Soviet system and the relationship between Moscow and its dependent regimes throughout Eastern Europe.<sup>32</sup> The resultant lessons were for Soviet policy, not American.

In fact, evidence, as assessed in 1957, seemed to suggest that 1956 had been a good year for long-term U.S. policy objectives, especially in Poland.<sup>33</sup> The rest of the region continued to show progress toward long-term objectives as well, except in Hungary where the Soviet Union held too firm a grip for U.S. efforts to be successful. The primary source of progress throughout Eastern Europe came in the form of expanded exchange programs.<sup>34</sup> The problems that most worried U.S. planners, however, grew from contradictions inherent in U.S. policy. The OCB put it this way:

The central difficulty results from the problem of trying to straddle the contradiction between the traditional anti-communist posture of the United States and the interim NSC objective of encouraging development of “national communism” as a positive first step in the

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>See also Progress Report on NSC 5608/1, U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe and NSC 5616/2, Interim U.S. Policy on Developments in Poland and Hungary, November 20, 1957, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box 17, NSC 5608/1–Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe (1), DDEL.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 3.



evolution away from Soviet domination.<sup>35</sup>

The OCB called for a more precise definition of “evolutionary means,” among other needs in U.S. policy.<sup>36</sup> The ironic tension inherent in U.S. policy was obvious. The United States opposed Communist power, but had to cultivate better relations with communist states to advance U.S. interests. Evidence, however, suggests ideology played a decreasing role in U.S. calculations as the fervor and fear of the early Cold War years and the heights of McCarthyism receded. In the course of discussions of NSC 5707, for example, John Foster Dulles expressed the classic formula of strategic calculation: capabilities plus intentions. He said, “hostility to the United States from a militarily impotent nation was a matter of no anxiety.”<sup>37</sup> It was not the Soviet Union’s ideology, it was its military that threatened the United States. Based on this, the United States could do business with communist states, as long as they ceased to threaten the national security of the United States and the free world.

That said, the precarious position of Poland’s political developments since 1956 made certain aspects of NSC 5608/1 “inapplicable” less than one year later. The OCB wrote, “While NSC 5608/1 applies, in general, to the other Eastern European countries continuing under Soviet domination, it no longer applies in certain respects to Poland.”

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>37</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 317<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, March 28, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 446.

In particular, the OCB felt the following passages were no longer applicable to Poland:

- Para. 16. Seek to Create and increase popular and bureaucratic pressures through the exploitation of discontents and other problems to promote evolutionary changes in Soviet-satellite policies and relationships which will advance U.S. objectives.
- Para. 19. Seek to cause each satellite regime to occupy itself increasingly with internal problems and to pose difficult decisions tending to create uncertainty or divisions within the regime.
- Para. 20. Encourage the satellite peoples in passive resistance to their Soviet-dominated regime when this will contribute to minimizing satellite contributions to Soviet power or to increasing pressures for desirable change.
- Para 24. When appropriate to achieve the basic objectives set forth in this paper, stimulate and exploit conflicts within the Communist ruling groups in each satellite, among such groups, and between them and the Kremlin.

The OCB warned:

Implementation of the foregoing paragraphs would run contrary to the policy expressed in paragraph 17(a) of NSC 5705/1 of “. . . avoiding any situation from developing which the Soviets would feel they would have to repress with military force.”<sup>38</sup>

These restrictions on U.S. policy in Poland stemmed from the “complicated balancing act” the Gomulka regime in Poland found itself performing. On the one, hand, according to the assessment from Washington, Gomulka needed and wanted to pursue liberalizing policies in Poland. On the other hand, the regime was thought to be

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<sup>38</sup>OCB, Operational Guidance with Respect to Poland, May 8, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, OCB Secretariat Series, Box 6, Poland and Hungary (NSC 5616/2) (2), DDEL, 3.

“leaning over backwards to avoid trouble with Moscow.”<sup>39</sup> In this light, the altering the parameters of U.S. policy in Poland to distinguish it from the rest of the region gives further credence to the argument that 1956 was seen as a success in Poland. The OCB wanted to make sure that U.S. policies there did not undermine the gains already achieved by the regime in Warsaw.

The OCB recognized that if the Soviet Union used force in Hungary, the use of force in Poland, which was seen as more important militarily to the Soviet Union than Hungary, was very possible. The OCB put it this way:

In the event of Soviet initiation of military action in Poland, no course available to the United States could be expected certainly to prevent serious damage to U.S. interests. Forceful intervention by the Free World would involve a grave risk of a general U.S.-USSR war, while U.S. inaction would cause serious damage to U.S. interests and might still lead to war.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, any use of force by the Soviet Union in Poland could produce a larger scale conflict. U.S. policy, as a result, need to encourage peaceful evolution in Poland:

Accordingly, U.S. policy is to encourage the Poles to seek independence from Soviet control *gradually and without internal disorder*, avoiding any development which the Soviets would feel they had to repress with military force.

While thus encouraging the Poles, the U.S. should make clear that it does not seek Poland as a military ally against the USSR. On the other hand, we should avoid giving the impression that under *no* circumstances would we come to the aid of Poland in opposing Soviet

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 4.

aggression.

In fostering an evolutionary development, we must seek to maintain the morale and the hopes of the Polish people while indicating that their basic problems can only be solved in the long term by pacific means and that patience and enduring quiet effort will be required on their part.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the U.S. desire to not provoke further violence, the United States, unlike the period prior to 1956, began to consider what it could or could not do should another uprising shake Eastern Europe.

### **Contingency Planning**

The Eisenhower administration worried about the international reaction that would follow if the Soviet Union attempted to reimpose strict control on Poland without any type of significant reaction from the West. The NSC believed the implications would be global, and so the administration examined how the United States could and should react in such a scenario.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 4-5. For example, between 1957 and 1964, U.S. sales and credits to Poland totaled in the hundreds of millions of dollars. For further discussion, see Stephen S. Kaplan, "United States Aid to Poland, 1957-1964: Concerns, Objectives, and Obstacles," *The Western Political Quarterly* vol. 28, no. 1 (March 1975): 147-166.

<sup>42</sup>NSC 5705/1, U.S. Policy Toward Certain Contingencies in Poland, February 25, 1957, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box 20, NSC 5705/1—U.S. Policy Toward Certain Contingencies in Poland, DDEL. See also S. Everett Gleason, Memorandum for the Executive Secretary, NSC, February 5, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 52, Poland (2), DDEL; and Briefing note for Planning Board Meeting, February 8, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, Special Staff File Series, Box 6, Poland, DDEL. See also the Draft Checklist of Possible Courses of

The consideration of under what circumstances the United States would employ force in Poland marks an important change in U.S. policy. Prior to this point, the United States did not formally consider any scenario anticipating the use of force in Eastern Europe. While the administration noted a number of steps that would have to be passed before the United States would need to decide on the commitment of forces to Poland, the recognition of this potential contingency provides evidence that to planners in the administration, 1956 was a year of progress in the conduct of the Cold War. For the first time, the Eisenhower administration gave serious consideration to employing military force in Eastern Europe.<sup>43</sup>

While the NSC discussion of NSC 5705/1 remains very heavily redacted, Eisenhower refused to seriously consider the introduction of U.S. forces unless NATO interests were threatened. The president's position—and his continued reluctance to consider the use of military force were recorded in the NSC minutes:

Actually, if there were trouble between the Soviet Union and Poland it would be trouble between two Communist countries, even though the Communism was involuntary and was imposed by a relatively small layer of government officials. Nevertheless, we would not need to worry too much about a conflict between Poland and the Soviet Union

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Action in the Event of Soviet Military Action Against Poland, May 13, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, OCB Secretariat Series, Box 6, Poland and Hungary (NSC 5616/2) (2), DDEL.

<sup>43</sup>For a further discussion of the military's contingency planning in Poland, see James D. Marchio, "Risking General War in Pursuit of Limited Objectives: U.S. Military Contingency Planning for Poland in the Wake of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 66 (July 2002): 783-812.

unless the trouble spread and actually affected our NATO defenses.<sup>44</sup>

While the rest of the conversation remains unknown, Eisenhower's reluctance to commit U.S. forces to Eastern European crises remained unchanged from the earliest days of his presidency.<sup>45</sup>

The administration's contingency planning was not limited to Poland. On August 26, 1957, the OCB forwarded to the NSC several studies mandated by NSC 5616/2 designed to examine the U.S. response to contingencies, notably revolutionary disturbances of the type having occurred in Hungary. While these studies of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania consider a broad range of actions, they uniformly reject the introduction of U.S. forces into the region, although they do consider the provisioning of arms and munitions to insurgents and the symbolic

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<sup>44</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 313<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, February 21, 1957, AWF, NSC Series, Box 8, 313<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, February 21, 1957, DDEL.

<sup>45</sup>On face value, the administration's policy shift might be seen as a reaction to the rebukes suffered at the hands of friends and enemies for having done nothing to aid the Hungarians. But the evidence, in particular the notable focus on economic aid and trade to Poland, suggests that much more than just U.S. policy had changed. The regime in Poland was viewed as different, and in some sense "better," than the previous regime. Poland might be worth fighting for. Hungary was not. See also the discussion of extending Most-Favored- Trading status to Poland, particularly, Clarence B. Randall to Council on Foreign Economic Policy, May 22, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, CFEP Series, Box 7, CFEP 555/1, Poland, DDEL. For an interesting discussion of the marshaling of Congressional support for MFN, see T.V. Kalijarvi, "Report on Congressional Consultations Pertaining to the Economic Discussions with the Poles, February 21 to August 16, 1957," NSC Staff Papers, CFEP Series, Box 7, CFEP 555/1, Poland, DDEL.

movement of troops in neighboring allied countries or nearby waterways.<sup>46</sup> The existence of these new contingency plans underscores that no one expected the tragic events of 1956, but does not change the basic consistency in U.S. policy. In fact, in some respects, it underscores it. The majority of actions contemplated in these contingency studies focused on diplomatic and psychological measures. More aggressive actions were rejected. As the authors put it themselves, “Intrinsically unreasonable courses have been excluded.”<sup>47</sup>

These contingency plans cast light on Eisenhower’s own recollection of the Hungarian revolution in his memoirs. When discussing the Hungarian uprising, Eisenhower wrote:

I still wonder what would have been my recommendation to the Congress and the American people had Hungary been accessible by sea or through the territory of allies who might have agreed to react positively to the tragic fate of the Hungarian people.<sup>48</sup>

The president’s own doubts notwithstanding, the discussion of the contingency in

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<sup>46</sup>Working Group Studies Under Paragraph 25 of NSC 5616/2, August 14, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 52, Eastern Europe (10), DDEL.

<sup>47</sup>Summary Comments on Contingency Studies on Eastern European Satellites Prepared Under Paragraph 25 of NSC 5616/2, August 14, 1957, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 52, Eastern Europe (10), DDEL. The paper here on Albania seems to refute Eisenhower’s claims in his memoirs that the U.S. might have intervened if the revolution had been in Albania instead of Hungary. The contingency study of Albania lends nothing to support this view. See

<sup>48</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace: 1956-1961* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), 88-89. [Emphasis mine.]

Czechoslovakia, accessible by West Germany, and Albania, accessible by sea, reveals little likelihood of any U.S. action under any circumstance.

The policy reviews of 1957, the first formal considerations of U.S. national security strategy since the violence of 1956, demonstrates remarkable consistency with pre-revolutionary policy on political warfare in Eastern Europe and the use of political warfare more generally.<sup>49</sup> The only changes were designed to further secure, as in Poland, the gains of the previous year.

### **1958 POLICY REVIEWS**

The policy reviews of 1958 reiterated, almost verbatim, the policy outlines of 1957. Little, in fact, changed in regards to the use of political warfare or U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe.

At an NSC meeting in March 1958, the president's national security adviser, Robert Cutler, noted a change in the cold war balance of power due to increases in the destructive power of hydrogen weapons and the advent of ballistic missiles. He asked whether the United States should continue its existing national security strategy in light

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<sup>49</sup>For example, see Abbot Washburn, Memorandum on Worldwide Information Campaign on the U.S. (Free World) Disarmament Proposals, September 24, 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers, Eisenhower Library, White House Memoranda Series, Box 5, Folder 11, Seely G. Mudd Library, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.



of these developments. Alternatively, the United States could either increase its pressure on the Soviet Union, or decrease that pressure by making concessions to Moscow. In fact, this line of argument was a non-starter. John Foster Dulles noted that the basis of Cutler's concerns were founded only in an assessment of the challenges facing the United States. The Soviet Union had problems of its own, reminded Dulles, problems that would hinder its conduct of foreign policy.<sup>50</sup>

The growth in superpower nuclear arsenals, and improvements in delivery systems did not fundamentally alter the perceptions of the utility of force. In the earliest days of the administration, the use of force was ruled out in all but the most dire of circumstances because modern conventional war was so destructive. Thus when in 1958, Cutler reported to Secretary Dulles, "All-out war is obsolete as an instrument for the attainment of national objectives. The purpose of a capability for all-out war is to deter its use by an enemy. . . ,"<sup>51</sup> the fact is, this was the prevailing wisdom in 1953 at the time of Solarium. Little had actually changed in the ensuing five years.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 359<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, March 20, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III (Washington, DC: GPO, 1996), 51-53.

<sup>51</sup>Letter from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to Secretary of State Dulles, April 7, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 67.

<sup>52</sup>For further evidence, see Paper by the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, "Major Factors Influencing Review of Basic Policy," May 1, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 78-79. By a conservative estimation, four of 11 factors cited by the president's national security advisor bore strong resemblance to factors

The one new development was the growth in size and destructiveness of nuclear arsenals and the increasing sophistication of their delivery systems. The NSC planning discussions reflect these issues more than any other.<sup>53</sup> The meeting's minutes refer to this development as "the principal new emphasis in" the administration's statement of national security policy.<sup>54</sup> While John Foster Dulles supported the broad outlines of the strategy, he urged that nuclear and other defense programs not crowd out programs by which the country could "wage the cold war."<sup>55</sup>

The new statement of national security policy, NSC 5810/1, did reflect the new prominence of specific nuclear issues. But the document itself remains a "cold war" document in that it stresses the non-military aspects of superpower confrontation as much, if not more, than the military elements. Internationally, it said:

Our goal abroad must be to strive unceasingly, in concert with other nations, for peace and security and to establish our nation firmly as the

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on the table in 1953. The other factors reflected more recent developments in nuclear weaponry.

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, Memorandum of Discussion at the 364<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, May 1, 1956, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 79-97.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 87. This was not the first time Dulles issued such a warning. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 343<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the NSC, November 7, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 634.

pioneer in breaking through to new levels of human achievement and well being.<sup>56</sup>

In outlining the U.S. national strategy, numerous elements from the field of political warfare predominate. In stating the basic threat to U.S. security, the NSC noted, among other challenges, “weakness or instability in many areas exerts strong pressure for economic or political change and creates vulnerabilities to expanding Sino-Soviet subversion, political action and economic penetration.”<sup>57</sup> In stating the basic problem for U.S. policy, the NSC maintained the formula that had guided U.S. policy since the Eisenhower administration’s first statement of national strategy: sufficient military forces to deter aggression coupled with political warfare elements to buttress the political unity of the West and “engage successfully in an over-all world-wide peaceful contest with the USSR, and thus to achieve its basic objective.”<sup>58</sup>

The fact that these political warfare elements were not discussed in NSC meetings prior to the issuance of the policy statements does not reflect a de-emphasis of these issues. Instead, it reflects the consensus achieved within the administration on this element of national power. Whereas in 1953 and 1954, the administration was turning the process to an appreciation of the power of political warfare, by the policy

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<sup>56</sup>NSC 5810/1, Statement of Basic National Security Policy, May 5, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 99.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

reviews of 1958, there was no controversy over the employment of political warfare.

Eisenhower himself provided guidance to the NSC on the topics appropriate for their consideration in the spring of 1958. According to Robert Cutler, Eisenhower said:

. . . that, in the first term, there was necessity to review all existing policy papers; but that, now we had completed that work, he hoped the Council [NSC] could discuss provocative issues which required high-level thought.<sup>59</sup>

Political warfare was not “provocative” by 1958. It was an accepted part of U.S. national security planning.

The one new feature of the political warfare campaign, however, came in the increased emphasis on economic and quality of life factors. These concerns were reflected in NSC 5810/1:

The ability of the Free World, over the long pull, to compete successfully with the Communist World will depend in large measure on demonstrated progress in meeting the basic needs and aspirations of Free World Peoples. In helping to remedy conditions throughout the Free World which are readily susceptible to Communist exploitation, the United States should take timely action rather than allow a further deterioration to ensue which may require more costly and less certain measures (including military action).<sup>60</sup>

In considering other means by which the United States could influence the Communist Bloc, the NSC continued to reflect the recommendations of the Millikan Committee,

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<sup>59</sup>Note by the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, “Guidance from President on Conduct of Council Meetings,” April 2, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 58.

<sup>60</sup>NSC 5810/1, Statement of Basic National Security Policy, May 5, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 105, parentheses in the original, [sic.].

including its call to encourage reform in mid-level bureaucrats in a manner consistent with both U.S. and target-country interests. The NSC also sought to accomplish these measures and exploit Soviet vulnerabilities through the expanded use of “exchanges and contacts,” as well as “information media, and peaceful cooperation” with the Soviet Union.<sup>61</sup> The NSC wrote:

In the exploitation of Sino-Soviet Bloc vulnerabilities, the United States should design its policies and programs to (1) accelerate evolutionary changes in Sino-Soviet policies and conduct which will advance U.S. and Free World security and policy objectives; (2) weaken the ties which link the USSR and Communist China and the controls by which these nations dominate other nations; (3) exploit divisive forces within the Bloc; (4) encourage popular pressures on the Bloc leaders for greater emphasis on the legitimate needs and national aspirations of their peoples, such as greater liberties and improved standards of living; (5) undermine the faith of the Communist ruling classes in their own system and ideology; and (6) develop closer contacts with the peoples of the Eastern European nations in ways calculated to build on traditional feelings of friendship and respect for the United States.<sup>62</sup>

In Eastern Europe, specifically, the NSC recognized the need to potentially seek reform legislation to enable U.S. economic trade and aid with governments there seeking to develop “internal freedom and national independence.”<sup>63</sup>

In general, the NSC continued to endorse the psychological element of U.S. national security policy. In a sub-section of NSC 5810/1, “Psychological Aspects of

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 110.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 110-111.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 111.

U.S. Policies,” they wrote:

42.a. The psychological impact abroad of our policies—domestic as well as foreign—plays a crucial part in the over-all advancement of U.S. objectives. It is essential, therefore, that along with the pertinent military, political and economic considerations, the psychological factor be given due weight during the policy-forming process.

b. After specific policies have been determined, implementing actions and statements supporting these policies should be coordinated and presented publicly in a manner that will best advance U.S. objectives.

c. Foreign informational, cultural, educational and other psychological programs are vital elements in the implementation of U.S. policies and should be selectively strengthened.<sup>64</sup>

### **NSC Policy Statements on Eastern Europe**

U.S. policy considerations in Eastern Europe continued to be focused on the political-psychological consequences of certain proposals or initiatives. For example, the Rapacki Plan—named for the Polish foreign minister who had called for a nuclear weapons free zone in central and Eastern Europe—was of concern to American policy makers primarily due to its potential to sway public opinion.<sup>65</sup>

Intelligence estimates in early 1958 predicted relative stability in Eastern Europe, despite the continued presence of forces within the Bloc which had led to the events of 1956. The willingness of the Soviet Union to use force to maintain control was no longer questioned. But the opportunities for “Western influence” in the region

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 112.

<sup>65</sup>Telegram from the Department of State to the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations, January 21, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1993), 2, 3.

were greater in 1958, “than at any time since 1948.” Absent the use of force, however, the intelligence community thought the most promising means of altering the situation in Eastern Europe lay in the conclusion of major negotiated agreements between the two blocs.<sup>66</sup>

Another intelligence estimate published on March 4, 1958, however, reveals continued U.S. interest in the potential for “resistance” behind the Iron Curtain. The NIE focused specifically on the potential for “resistance” in times of both war and peace. Ultimately, it concluded, opportunities were many.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>See NIE 12-58, Outlook for Stability in the Eastern European Satellites, February 4, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 5-6.

<sup>67</sup>NIE 10-58, Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the Sino-Soviet Bloc, March 4, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 7-11. The issue of resistance was again reviewed in the summer of 1958 by the Department of State. That review concluded that consensus existed on the likely continued consolidation of Soviet power in Eastern Europe with two possible resulting outcomes: general acceptance or marginal acceptance of the communist regimes in the region. Either of these outcomes implied U.S. policy must continue to encourage evolution in Eastern Europe and apply new political warfare tactics—contacts—to keep the potential for resistance alive. Current programs were deemed sufficient. See Draft Paper Prepared by N Spencer Barnes of the Policy Planning Staff, June 27, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 40-43. NIE 10-58 raised some interesting questions for further research. How did the expectation of partisan activity contribute to war planning in the U.S. military? Did this evolve over the course of the administration? As the international situation quieted and stabilized, the administration shifted from “revolution” to “evolution.” Did that reflect the decreased expectation that partisans would be necessary in the event of war? Many of the early statements of U.S. political warfare policy said that one motive was to deter war, and another was to bring the war to early conclusion should hostilities break out. Does this suggest that as stability became apparent in the international order the administration shifted focus from “revolution” to “evolution,” not because of concern over the hydrogen bomb, but because nuclear plenty brought greater stability? This is an engaging issue worthy of further research.

## NSC 5811

On May 22, 1958, the NSC discussed a draft of NSC 5811, a policy statement on Eastern Europe under development at the time.<sup>68</sup> A dispute erupted between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of State about under what conditions a satellite state might find itself freed of ties to the Soviet Union.<sup>69</sup> Cutler explained the differences in the position this way:

The Planning Board had unanimously agreed that the dominated peoples should seek their goals of greater independence from Moscow gradually and without resort to violence. The Joint Chiefs, on the other hand, believed that there was no chance of achieving independence in these countries without some fighting. They believed that we should discreetly encourage passive resistance and that violent uprisings, rioting, and guerilla operations should be encouraged, through only “on a calculated basis when we are ready to cope with the Russian reaction.” Moreover, the Chiefs believe that in the event that a satellite gained some measure of freedom, the United States should be prepared to make unmistakably clear to the Soviets that we will not tolerate any efforts

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<sup>68</sup>Planning for the revised statement of policy on Eastern Europe, however, can be documented back to the fall of 1957. As one member of the administration put it at the time, “The difficulty in our present policy papers for the Satellites is that we are trying to ride the two horses of encouraging ‘evolutionary communism’ and of stimulating actions presumably designed to roll back communism.” See Roy M. Melbourne to Frederick Dearborn, Jr., December 16, 1957, as well as Manning H. Williams to Dearborn, December 16, 1957, Williams to Dearborn, November 22, 1957, and Dearborn to Williams, November 21, 1957, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: 1952-1961, OCB Series, Subject Subseries, Box 6, Soviet Dominated Nations–Eastern Europe, DDEL.

<sup>69</sup>See Cutler’s briefing memo dated May 21, 1958, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, Special Assistant Series, Chronological Subseries, Box 6, May 1958 (2), DDEL, 4-5.



toward reprisal or resubjugation.<sup>70</sup>

John Foster Dulles disagreed strongly with the assertion that no country would break free of the Soviet Union without resort to force. He said:

Broadly speaking, . . . , we in the State Department believe that the best hope of bringing about an acceptable evolution toward greater freedom for the satellites is the exertion of constant pressure on the Soviet Union and on their own regimes, in the hope of effecting a change in the thinking of the Soviet rulers. Thus the Soviet rulers may ultimately come to realize that it is in their own best interests to be surrounded by free and relatively friendly countries, rather than, as at present, by a series of bitterly hostile satellite states. How to exert this pressure was a very delicate matter. . . . While it remained true that no enslaved country could ever achieve its freedom if the people of that country were not willing to die for freedom, the example of Hungary showed that the elements that we most depended upon had been liquidated by the resort to violence.<sup>71</sup>

This exchange is instructive because it went to the heart of U.S. encouraging dissent in Eastern Europe after 1956.

The statement of U.S. policy in Eastern Europe which emerged from the NSC process reflected broad evolution in the conduct, but not the ultimate objective of U.S. policy. In fact, the restrictions present in 1958 were very familiar, most notably the

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<sup>70</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 366<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, May 22, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 13. The JCS views are expressed in the first person in Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, May 20, 1958, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 52, Eastern Europe (11), DDEL. See also Cutler's briefing memo dated May 21, 1958, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, Special Assistant Series, Chronological Subseries, Box 6, May 1958 (2), DDEL.

<sup>71</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 366<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, May 22, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 14.

prohibition against the use of force to achieve U.S. goals.<sup>72</sup> Still, the United States refused “to accept the permanence of Soviet-imposed regimes. . . .”<sup>73</sup>

Interestingly, Poland and Yugoslavia were excluded from consideration in NSC 5811/1. The two countries were the subjects of their own respective NSC policy statements, reflecting the status accorded these two countries for pursuing varying degrees of independence from Moscow,<sup>74</sup> a fact, again, suggesting some degree of success for U.S. policy in 1956 in the minds of those on the NSC staff. In particular, after the revolutionary events of 1956, the administration viewed Eastern European regimes along a spectrum. On one end, the most independent regimes of Poland and Yugoslavia were plied with trade and other forms of engagement. On the other end of the spectrum was East Germany, a regime the United States did not even recognize. In

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<sup>72</sup>NSC 5811/1, Statement of U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe, May 24, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 19. See also Cutler’s briefing memo dated May 21, 1958, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, Special Assistant Series, Chronological Subseries, Box 6, May 1958 (2), DDEL.

<sup>73</sup>NSC 5811/1, Statement of U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe, May 24, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 19.

<sup>74</sup>For Poland, see NSC 5808/1, U.S. Policy Toward Poland, April 16, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 2, 110-120. For Yugoslavia, see NSC 5805, Draft Statement on U.S. Policy Toward Yugoslavia, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 2, 312-319. See also Cutler’s briefing memorandum, dated April 14, 1958, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records 1956-1961, NSC Series, Briefing Notes Subseries, Box 15 [Poland, U.S. Policy Toward] [1958-1960], DDEL. See also OCB Report, “U.S. Policy Toward Poland,” NSC 5808/1, February 11, 1959; as well as OCB, “Report on Poland (NSC 5808/1), March 30, 1960, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 53, Poland (4), DDEL.

the middle lay the rest of the East European regimes. In the center of this spectrum, the United States continued to encourage “evolutionary change.”<sup>75</sup>

The NSC believed the sources of unrest in 1956 continued to ferment in Eastern Europe. The Soviet crack-down in Hungary, the success of Poland’s liberalizing policies, and “the continued existence of Yugoslavia” independent of Moscow’s control negatively affected the Soviet Union in the region. The resulting ferment provided opportunities for U.S. policy to encourage further reform and evolution. However, U.S. activities were not simply limited to radio broadcasts—although these efforts continued.<sup>76</sup> Instead, the United States would develop closer relations with the regimes in the region as a means to broaden contacts “in such fields as tourist travel, cultural exchange, and economic relations, including exchanges of technical and commercial visitors.”<sup>77</sup> Although the methods had changed, U.S. policy in Eastern Europe still sought to exploit vulnerabilities and complicate efforts at Soviet control.

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<sup>75</sup>Cutler’s briefing memo dated May 21, 1958, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, Special Assistant Series, Chronological Subseries, Box 6, May 1958 (2), DDEL.

<sup>76</sup>Note, however, U.S. information programs no longer served to indict the Soviet-sponsored regimes exclusively. Rather, they were intended to encourage better understanding of the United States and its positions as a means of encouraging evolution in Eastern European regimes. See OCB Report, “Operations Plan for the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe,” July 2, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 83.

<sup>77</sup>NSC 5811/1, Statement of U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe, May 24, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 21.

The NSC recommended:

Flexible U.S. courses of action, involving inducements as well as probing actions and pressures, are required to exploit the Soviet dilemma and sensitivities in the dominated nations and to complicate the exercise of Soviet control over them. In order to take full advantage of existing opportunities in this area, U.S. courses of action toward the dominated nations must appropriately exploit their individual historical and cultural characteristics and the significant differences of their respective situations.<sup>78</sup>

In other words, the NSC recommended a “Trojan Horse” approach. To breach the barriers imposed by strict state control, the United States government would seek to foster better relations with the regimes of Eastern Europe as a means of expanding contacts with their populations through a variety of initiatives, including tourist travel, people-to-people exchanges, and commercial and cultural ties. In the process of exposing individuals in Eastern Europe to more Americans, and Western thought, not to mention western goods, the United States hoped to increase pressure on Communist regimes in Eastern Europe to become more responsive to the general welfare of their citizens and less closely bound to the Soviet Union. It was a very sophisticated approach, but one completely consistent with the pre-1956 policies of the administration.

In Hungary, the “Trojan Horse” approach ran head-long into traditional political warfare concerns. The NSC recognized this, and U.S. policy remained stagnant on

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 22.

Hungary until the end of the Eisenhower administration.<sup>79</sup> The reasons for this stagnation were articulated simply by the NSC:

Because Hungary has become an important psychological factor in the world-wide struggle of the free nations against expansionist Soviet Communism, U.S. policy must maintain a delicate balance; it must seek to encourage the same evolutionary developments as in the other nations of Eastern Europe, without compromising the symbol which Hungary has become.<sup>80</sup>

The conduct of U.S. policy, therefore, required tremendously deft handling and timing.

Most importantly, 1958 produced no change in the fundamental objectives of U.S. policy in Eastern Europe in either the short-term or the long-term. In the short-term, U.S. objectives continued to focus on the evolution of regimes and the “reduction

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<sup>79</sup>For example, see Memorandum from Secretary of State Herter to President Eisenhower, November 10, 1960, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 130-131. See also Despatch from the Legation in Hungary to the Department of State, July 6, 1950, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 109-114.

<sup>80</sup>NSC 5811/1, Statement of U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe, May 24, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 24. Further evidence of the symbolism Hungary had gained is found in the U.S. reaction to the executions of Imre Nagy and General Pal Maleter in the summer of 1958. These executions were exploited globally for propaganda effect as further evidence of the Soviet Union’s disrespect Hungarian aspirations for freedom. See Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 32-34. Allen Dulles recommended that the U.S. information programs “play up very hard the fact that the executions were ordered by Moscow.” See Memorandum of Discussion at the 369<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, June 19, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 38. For the OCB plan to exploit the executions, see Report On Exploitation of Hungarian Situation, July 23, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 45-47. While the OCB favored drawing world attention to the executions, they did not want to do so without reminding the world of the heroism and sacrifice of the Hungarian people.

of the contribution of the dominated nations to Soviet strength. . . .”<sup>81</sup> Over the longer-term, the United States continued to press for national independence and self-determination:

Fulfillment of the right of the peoples in the dominated nations to enjoy representative governments resting upon the consent of the governed, exercising full national independence, and participating as peaceful members of the Free World community.<sup>82</sup>

In other words, liberation.

NSC 5811 continued to produce further refinements, inspired in part by the violent reaction in Hungary and the successes in Poland, of the Millikan formula, encouraging evolution, primarily through expanded contacts and exchanges, in a manner consistent with U.S. interests, that would benefit the regime in question.<sup>83</sup>

Subsequent policy reviews continued to endorse this view of U.S. policy in Eastern Europe.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>NSC 5811/1, Statement of U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe, May 24, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 25.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup>Cutler’s briefing memo dated May 21, 1958, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, Special Assistant Series, Chronological Subseries, Box 6, May 1958 (2), DDEL.

<sup>84</sup>See Paper prepared by N. Spencer Barnes of the Policy Planning Staff, “Policy Toward the Communist States of Eastern Europe, Exclusive of the USSR, August 26, 1958, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 48-51; Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 61; OCB Report, “Operations Plan for the Soviet Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe,” July 2, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 79-94; OCB Report, “Report on Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern

## 1959 POLICY REVIEW

Discussions in the 1959 policy reviews focused on more specific issues associated with the conduct of nuclear war, and the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy, rather than political warfare.<sup>85</sup>

In fact, there were few changes in the text of the statement relating to political warfare. One semantic change affected the text in the NSC basic statement of policy affecting political warfare.<sup>86</sup> The only other change reflected the political warfare value of the newly formed National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Eisenhower

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Europe (NSC 5811/1), July 15, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 95-98; OCB Report, "Report on Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe," July 27, 1960, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 118-122; and Editorial Note, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume X, part 1, 125-126. In 1960, NSC 5811/1 was revised for editorial content, not policy substance. The revised version can be found in NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 52, Eastern Europe (11), DDEL.

<sup>85</sup>For example, see Memorandum of Discussion at the 394<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, January 22, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 173-179. In this particular volume, see also Memorandum of Discussion at the 411<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, June 25, 1959, 220-227; and Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, 228-235; Memorandum of Discussion at the 412<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, July 9, 1959, 238-253; Letter from Howard Furnas of the Policy Planning Staff to the Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning, July 15, 1959, 255-259; Memorandum of Discussion at the 413<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, July 16, 1959, 259-270.

<sup>86</sup>USIA requested that the words "cold war" be removed from a passage about maximizing the political contribution of the U.S. military to the struggle with the Soviet Union. It was a change devoid of real meaning. See Memorandum of Discussion at the 412<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, July 9, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 250.

pointedly said, NASA's "whole program was based on psychological values."

Although it contributed important advances in basic science, Eisenhower asserted that "nevertheless the furor produced by Sputnik was really the reason for the creation of NASA."<sup>87</sup> The discussion even reflected Eisenhower's pondering of the question whether or not a "soft moon landing" would have greater psychological impact than a trip to Venus.<sup>88</sup>

Sputnik had not been a complete surprise to the United States. On September 12, 1957, Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence, reported on indications that supported the Soviet claim of successful development of an inter-continental ballistic missile.<sup>89</sup> The launch of "Sputnik" on October 4, 1957, was not significant, then, from

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<sup>87</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 415<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, July 30, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 283. For further discussion of the relationship between *Sputnik* and the foundation of NASA, see Roger D. Launius, Eisenhower, *Sputnik*, and the Creation of NASA," *Prologue* vol. 28, no. 2 (1996): 126-143; and Rodger A. Payne, "Public Opinion and Foreign Threats: Eisenhower's Response to *Sputnik*," *Armed Forces and Society* vol. 21, no. 1 (1994): 89-112.

<sup>88</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 415<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, July 30, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 284. Not surprisingly, the U.S. intelligence community believed the Soviet space program was concentrated on military and propaganda programs. See NIE 11-5-59, Soviet Capabilities in Guided Missiles and Space Vehicles, November 3, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 329.

<sup>89</sup>See "Editorial Note" published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 593. For a critical assessment of the president's reaction to the challenge posed by Sputnik, see David Henry, "Eisenhower and Sputnik: The Irony of Failed Leadership," in Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 223-249. Giles Alston, however, believes Eisenhower's response to Sputnik was not inspired by Cold War concerns, but rather by a commitment to basic scientific research. See Giles Alston, "Eisenhower: Leadership in Space Policy," in



the perspective of military technology, but it was very significant from a cold war perspective where scientific progress was one measure of the success of the two competing socio-political systems.<sup>90</sup>

Other than the psychological value accorded to space exploration, there was no change in the substance of NSC 5906/1, Basic National Security Policy, when compared to the political warfare elements of NSC 5810.<sup>91</sup> The conduct of political warfare and overall U.S. policy in Eastern Europe remained consistent over the last year of the administration as well.<sup>92</sup> Policies continued to emphasize support for evolutionary tendencies through expanded contacts and people to people exchanges.

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Shirley Anne Warshaw ed., *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 103-119.

<sup>90</sup>The success of Sputnik in spurring international respect for Soviet science compelled the White House to reconsider how it supported basic research and national science policy. See Memorandum of a Conference with the President, October 15, 1957, published in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, volume XIX, 607-610. Among the recommendations Eisenhower received was the need for a presidential science advisor—similar in the approach to political warfare at the start of his administration. See *ibid.*, especially 608.

<sup>91</sup>NSC 5906/1, Basic National Security Policy, August 5, 1959, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 292-316.

<sup>92</sup>See OCB Report, “U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe,” (NSC 5811/1), January 7, 1959; OCB Report, “U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe,” (NSC 5811/1), July 15, 1959; and OCB Report, “U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe,” (NSC 5811/1), July 27, 1960, NSC Staff Papers, Disaster File, Box 52, Eastern Europe (12), DDEL. See also “OCB Report on Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe,” January 28, 1959, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records, OCB Series, Administrative Subseries, Box 2, Chronological-Karl G. Har, January-June 1959 (1), DDEL.

Radio broadcasts continued as a favored tool in reaching vast segments of the population, and the United States continued to seek a balance between support for evolution and anything that might lead to public unrest.<sup>93</sup>

The consistency went even further, however. The four targets of American political warfare efforts identified in 1953—in the free world, in Eastern Europe, in the Soviet Union, and in the unaligned world—remained unchanged. The methods envisioned to target them might have changed, and the programs responsible for accomplishing stated objectives had changed, but the Eisenhower administration which came to office promising to wage political warfare over the long-haul remained committed to the task throughout the length of its tenure.<sup>94</sup> Even as late as 1960, Eisenhower held to his half-century estimate for the length of the Cold War.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>See also Part 5, “The USIA Program” Status on June 30, 1959, White House Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Records, NSC Series, Status of Projects Subseries, Box 8, NSC 5912 (6) [Status of U.S. National Security Programs on June 30, 1959]; Part 5, “The USIA Program” Status on June 30 1960, White House Office: Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Records: NSC Series, Status of Project Subseries, Box 9, NSC 6013 (4) [Status of U.S. National Security Programs on June 30, 1960], DDEL.

<sup>94</sup>For an example of the thinking in the U.S. intelligence community in 1960, see NIE 100-60, Estimate of the World Situation, January 19, 1960, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 362-366. The Soviet Union was expected to maintain its typical political tactics toward the same political ends.

<sup>95</sup>In a NSC meeting on February 4, 1960, the president speculated out-loud, “Another fifty years might bring about quite a change in relations between the U.S. and the USSR.” See Memorandum of Discussion at the 434<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, February 4, 1960, published in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, volume III, 370.

## **The President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad**

On December 2, 1959, Eisenhower wrote to Mr. Mansfield D. Sprague to ask him to chair a special presidential commission to which Eisenhower attached “considerable importance.”<sup>96</sup> The president wanted Sprague to head the “President’s Committee on Information Activities Abroad.” According to Eisenhower,

The purpose of the Committee will be to review the findings and recommendations of the Committee on International Information Activities [The Jackson Committee] in its report dated June 30, 1953, and consider changes in the international situation which affect the validity of the findings and recommendations in that report [exclusive of organizational recommendations].<sup>97</sup>

Sprague accepted and one year later, the committee which bore his name—and included old-hands like C.D. Jackson and Allen Dulles as well as relative newcomers such as George V. Allen and Gordon Gray—delivered its findings.

The Sprague Committee, as it was known, endorsed the Eisenhower administration’s conduct of political warfare. But the report itself is a testament to the evolution in the international situation as well as the conduct of U.S. policy since 1953. The Eisenhower administration had come to office confronted, primarily, with the challenges of post-war stabilization around the world. The heart of its effort lay in

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<sup>96</sup>Appendix III, Eisenhower to Mansfield D. Sprague, December 2, 1959, *Conclusions and Recommendations of the President’s Committee on Information Activities Abroad*, December 1960, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 33, Sprague Committee-[Information Activities Abroad] (2), DDEL, 91.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, 91.

fostering strength and stability in Europe. The Jackson committee devoted considerable effort to charting an organizational and administrative path for the conduct of political warfare in that environment. In contrast, the Sprague Committee, seven years later, called on the administration to diminish political warfare resources devoted to Europe in order to more fully fund political warfare programs in the developing world.<sup>98</sup> Still, the Sprague Committee agreed with its predecessors in concluding that the primary threat posed by the Soviet Union was not military, but political-psychological. It foresaw “a period of protracted non-military conflict between the Free World and the Communist system.”<sup>99</sup>

In his contributions to the Sprague Committee’s work, C.D. Jackson reflected on 1956 as a “milestone” in the evolution of U.S. political warfare. As the minutes of the committee’s work reflect, “Prior to 1956, [Jackson] admitted, the general line was ‘hard’ and there was no difference in [RFE/RL’s] output to different countries.”<sup>100</sup> 1956, in Jackson’s opinion, did not end U.S. political warfare, but it shaped its content and forms in subsequent years.

It is somewhat ironic to learn of Jackson’s appreciation of this subtlety. As late

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<sup>98</sup>*Conclusions and Recommendations of the President’s Committee on Information Activities Abroad*, December 1960, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 33, Sprague Committee-[Information Activities Abroad] (2), DDEL, 1-2, and 12.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>100</sup>Notes, Staff Meeting, April 25, 1960, Sprague Committee Records, Box 27, Minutes (3), DDEL.

as 1958, he resigned his post with Radio Free Europe in protest of the administration's refusal to engage in a fight over the seating of Hungarian delegates in the United Nations. The record of correspondence between Jackson and his erstwhile patrons inside the Eisenhower administration, including the president himself, demonstrates, however, that at that late date, Jackson—who had been out of government service for several years—was still fighting the 1953-1955 Cold War.<sup>101</sup>

The administration had subsequently altered its approach for a variety of reasons. In fact, Hungary had little resonance in Western Europe within less than two years of the fighting there. By the spring of 1958, Allen Dulles reported that when someone raised the issue of Hungary with a Frenchman, the Frenchman said, “Why not talk about the Punic Wars?”<sup>102</sup>

The Sprague Committee report was a user's manual for cold war. In its basic statement of the facts, the challenges confronted since 1953, and the solutions to

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<sup>101</sup>There is an extensive documentary record on this exchange between Jackson and his former patrons. See Jackson to Allen Dulles, July 2, 1958, DDE Papers as POTUS, Administration Series, Box 22, Jackson, C.D., 1958-1959 (4); Jackson to Eisenhower, October 30, 1958; Eisenhower to Jackson, November 6, 1958; Jackson to Allen Dulles, December 9, 1958; Eisenhower to Jackson, December 6, 1958; Jackson to Ann Whitman, December 9, 1958; DDE Papers as POTUS, Administration Series, Box 22, Jackson, C.D., 1958-1959 (2); Eisenhower to John Foster Dulles, November 6, 1958, DDE Papers as POTUS, Dulles Herter Series, Box 10, Dulles, November 1958; John Foster Dulles to Jackson, January 8, 1959, Jackson, C.D. Papers, 1931-1967, Box 48, Dulles, John Foster (1) DDEL.

<sup>102</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 366<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, May 22, 1958, Ann Whitman File, NSC Series, Box 10, 366<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NSC, May 22, 1958, DDEL.

vexing problems of executive organization and management for coordinating foreign policy, particularly the OCB, the Sprague Committee report provided the Eisenhower administration's successors a detailed survey of the remaining challenges in political warfare.<sup>103</sup> While the new administration of President John F. Kennedy rejected the committee's recommendation to maintain the OCB, one passage in the Sprague Committee report foreshadowed things to come.<sup>104</sup> Among other initiatives in the developing world, the committee had called for

A program of training and orientation for young Americans who would spend several years abroad performing basic tasks such as teaching in elementary schools, working in civil services, and acting as staff assistants in village development programs.<sup>105</sup>

On March 21, 1961, the new president made good on a campaign pledge and signed an executive order creating the Peace Corps.

Regardless of its impact on the Kennedy administration, the Sprague Committee demonstrates Eisenhower's continued personal commitment to the conduct

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<sup>103</sup>The report was forwarded to the Kennedy administration. President John F. Kennedy, however, disbanded the OCB and relied, instead, on a close association of personal advisors.

<sup>104</sup>McGeorge Bundy authorized departments and agencies to act on any portion of the Sprague Committee report deemed "useful," except the portion on the OCB. See McGeorge Bundy, Memorandum for Recipients of the Sprague Committee Report, February 27, 1961, NSC Staff Papers, NSC Registry Series, Box 12, PCIAA, Conclusions and Recommendations (Final Report) (2), DDEL.

<sup>105</sup>*Conclusions and Recommendations of the President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad*, December 1960, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 33, Sprague Committee-[Information Activities Abroad] (2), DDEL, 27.

of cold war, his vision of the nature of the struggle with the Soviet Union, and the best means to prevail. The focus of the strategy may have shifted, but the focus of the cold war struggle shifted too, from Europe to the developing world. In short, the specifics of tactics may have changed, but Eisenhower's commitment to and personal involvement in the conduct of U.S. political warfare did not.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The Eisenhower administration's commitment to political warfare did not change in its second term. Despite the blood shed in Eastern Europe in the preceding year, the administration believed that its policies were fundamentally sound. Policy reviews in 1957, 1958, and 1959 altered little of the administration's approach to political-psychological operations. In fact, U.S. policy remained consistent with the formula first spelled out by Professor Max Millikan in late 1954.

In the second term, however, political warfare received less specific attention in NSC meetings. The lack of discussion, however, does not suggest waning administration concern for these issues. Rather, it suggests a firm consensus both on the value of political warfare and the fundamentals of the U.S. approach. Eisenhower himself had reminded his staff that NSC meetings should be dedicated to resolving controversial policy questions, not endorsing accepted positions. This fact, coupled

with the important role political warfare continued to play in NSC strategy documents indicates that political warfare was accepted and non-controversial.

The political-psychological element of the Cold War continued to evolve in the second administration. Advances in science and technology, the space race, standards of living, and aid to the developing world became increasingly important to policy makers and global audiences. Despite these changes, however, Eisenhower and his administration continued to place great faith in the value and importance of political warfare as a crucial element of a long-term strategy to win the Cold War without resort to force.



## Chapter 7 Conclusions

The existing literature on the Eisenhower administration's conduct of foreign policy contains several inconsistencies and apparent interpretive contradictions in its discussion of political warfare. On the one hand, many critics find fault with the Eisenhower administration's use of "liberation" rhetoric in the 1952 campaign, and the administration's policies toward Eastern Europe prior to and during the Hungarian revolution of 1956.<sup>1</sup> Anyone who is first introduced to the record of the Eisenhower administration through these authors is left with a somewhat muddled view of national security policy making in the Eisenhower administration. At the risk of over-stating the argument, one is left with a rather cynical view of Eisenhower's approach to Eastern Europe: he is portrayed ultimately as someone who used "liberation" opportunistically for political gain in 1952, irresponsibly stoked the fires of dissent in his first term, and turned his back on those who responded to his incitement in 1953

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1991); and Kovrig, *Myth of Liberation: East Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics since 1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). Ronald R. Krebs, *Dueling Visions: U.S. Strategy Toward Eastern Europe under Eisenhower* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); and László Borhi, "Rollback, Liberation, Containment, or Inaction? U.S. Policy and Eastern Europe in the 1950s," *Journal of Cold War Studies* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1999): 67-110.

and 1956.

This view clashes, however, with the broader interpretation of Eisenhower's handling of national security which has emerged in the last twenty years. Since Fred Greenstein first published *The Hidden Hand Presidency*,<sup>2</sup> Eisenhower scholars have refined the view of the former general's conduct of American foreign and national security policy. Eisenhower no longer is seen as the titular head of the foreign policy establishment so often advanced in the years after his presidency. Instead, he has emerged as a steady hand at the helm of state. Robert Bowie and Richard Immerman have advanced this interpretation further with their examination of national security policy making in 1953.<sup>3</sup> Instead of a passive president and active secretary of state, we see a national security team functioning collaboratively with Eisenhower at its head. He emerges as a president with a sophisticated understanding of the world, a long-term vision of the Cold War, and strong views of how to wage this war. Fundamentally, Eisenhower believed that the Cold War would not be won by arms alone. To prevail, the United States would need a political strategy coupled with unquestioned military might.

These two strains of interpretation—the specific, which sees Eisenhower as a

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<sup>2</sup>Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982).

<sup>3</sup>Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

political opportunist with no moral compass or broad vision in response to 1956, and the general, which portrays Eisenhower as a strategic thinker with well formed approaches to the challenges of the day—contradict each other. The former is predicated on an *a priori* belief—perhaps not unreasonably held—that the United States *should* have done something more to help the Hungarians in their 1956 uprising. U.S. words and covert actions in the years prior to the revolution should have imposed a moral imperative on Eisenhower and his key aides to take military action to defend those who were only heeding our advice. The latter—the general view of Eisenhower—in contrast, is based on decades of research and scholarship.

This dissertation began as an effort to reconcile these two interpretive schools, the specific, regarding the events of 1956, and the general, regarding the Eisenhower administration’s general approach to national security.

Others had begun some of the work in this area. Notably, Martin Medhurst contributed significantly to the understanding of Eisenhower’s use of rhetoric as a weapon in the Cold War.<sup>4</sup> But there remained a need to examine the use of political warfare in the context of the Eisenhower administration’s national security strategy, particularly given the trove of documents made available in the last decade. With the

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<sup>4</sup>See Martin Medhurst, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Strategic Communicator* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993) and the edited volumes *Eisenhower’s War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994) and, co-edited with H.W. Brands, *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000).

newest documentary evidence, we are able to better understand the political strategy that undergirded the Eisenhower administration's approach to national security and the role political warfare—of which “liberation rhetoric” was a part—played in it.

My original intent was to study the specific policy decisions surrounding the U.S. reaction to the Hungarian revolution of 1956. Initial research, however, given the noted discrepancies in the literature and the documents available to me, broadened the scope of the study in an effort to reconcile the specific policy decisions of 1956 with the general understanding of Eisenhower's approach to national security policy and planning.

## **FINDINGS**

Eisenhower's general approach to national security in the Cold War shaped his handling of the 1956 Hungarian revolution. First and foremost, Eisenhower believed that the Cold War was a long-term political struggle. It had a military dimension because preparedness was the essential foundation to success in all other aspects of the struggle. Eisenhower believed, however, that the Cold War would be won over decades, not by the advance of tanks and bombers, but by the triumph of ideas. His personal views on this issue were vetted in a comprehensive review, the “Solarium Exercises” in the summer of 1953. By the time the president signed his first national

security strategy document that fall, the administration had examined the full range of policies open to the United States from containment to confrontation. In the end, the Eisenhower administration's containment policy was predicated on the belief, shared by the president and his secretary of state, that there were internal sources of decay within the Soviet system. Over the long haul, Eisenhower and his aides concluded, in a battle of ideas, and economies, and political systems, the internal sources of decay in the Soviet Union and its satellites would rot from within the imposing military edifice of the Eastern bloc. U.S. policies were designed accordingly.

First and foremost, given the destructive nature of modern war, the administration maintained that the United States should avoid direct military conflict with the Soviet Union. Eisenhower and Dulles believed, however, there was more the United States could do than simply build walls against Soviet expansionism. Their task required political operations—political warfare and psychological operations—designed to accomplish several tasks: rally allied public opinion to the sacrifices and risks necessary to confront the Soviet Union; undermine the legitimacy of Soviet authority in Eastern Europe; and discredit Soviet efforts in the developing world.

These goals would be accomplished by a variety of overt and covert means. Overt efforts included direct U.S. government contact and support through development assistance, foreign aid, and government sponsored personal exchanges.

Covert efforts involved broadcasting endeavors such as Radio Free Europe and support to dissident groups behind the Iron Curtain.

The administration also demonstrated its commitment to political warfare and psychological operations through very concrete measures taken in its first year in office. The administration heeded the advice of the Jackson Committee and created the United States Information Agency to provide an executive level agency whose mission was to make America's case to the world. Recognizing that political warfare required more than simple words, but coordinated actions, the administration also organized the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) to make sure that any government initiative achieved its full psychological impact. These were important bureaucratic initiatives that provide tangible evidence of the president's commitment to—and belief in—the value of political warfare.

In the Eisenhower administration, however, policy was neither made in a vacuum nor left unexamined after being promulgated. Between 1953 and 1956, in fact, U.S. national security policy was the subject of multiple reviews and revisions. The general parameters remained the same, the United States continued to rely on containment as its organizing principle, but other changes in U.S. defense policy and force structure arose from developments in Soviet nuclear warheads and delivery capabilities.

While these developments shaped the U.S. conduct of political warfare and

psychological operations, the largest shift in the administration's efforts to win the battle of ideas came from an external review of previous efforts chaired by MIT professor Max Millikan. The Millikan Report concluded, ultimately, that U.S. efforts to complicate the Soviet Union's problems in its own back-yard were needlessly confrontational and fraught with the peril of unintended consequences. Millikan and his committee members urged that U.S. political warfare efforts should shift their tone. Instead of detailing the evils of communism to audiences in Eastern Europe already suffering those evils, Millikan and his cohort argued that U.S. information campaigns should emphasize the value of reform and progress within the Soviet system. The consequences of this proposal were profound. Instead of seeking revolutionary change in Eastern Europe, the United States would henceforth encourage evolutionary reform of governments too strong to topple overnight, but whose weaknesses could be exploited by providing the vision of a positive alternative.

Millikan's influence was far-reaching. His conclusions were transmitted to the president in 1954. Every national security strategy authored by the administration during its remaining tenure hearkened back to Millikan's reform proposals. They reshaped the U.S. effort to win hearts and minds in Eastern Europe and led to people-to-people exchanges and an increase in the flow of ideas between East and West.

Perhaps most importantly, the Millikan approach to political warfare was completely compatible with the administration's general approach to national security

and the Cold War. Political warfare, in this formulation, was benign in appearance. It would not provoke violent upheaval which the United States would not support, nor would it warrant a violent reaction which the United States sought to avoid. But it retained—and perhaps increased—the potential of political warfare to contribute to positive changes in Eastern Europe and beyond.

When violence erupted in Eastern Europe in 1956, the administration reacted in conformity with a set of strategic principles that had been in place since its earliest days. First, the United States sought to avoid actions that would lead to direct confrontation or general war with the Soviet Union. Second, the administration refrained from encouraging action the United States would not support. Third, the administration remained focused on the political value of Soviet misdeeds beyond Eastern Europe. The Hungarian revolution, as tragic an episode as it may have been, provided concrete evidence of the Soviet Union's transgressions and malicious intent.

Seen in this light, the events in Eastern Europe in 1956, though tragic, were an important positive development in U.S. Cold War strategy. They demonstrated the oppressive nature of the Soviet Union and its relationship with its allies. The disturbances in Poland and Hungary also called into question the loyalty of East European armies to their regimes. Ultimately, U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe changed very little after 1956. While the relationship with Hungary remained frigid for the rest of the administration, U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe remained focused



along the lines articulated first by Millikan: seeking to inspire national communism as a means of fostering policies increasingly independent of those sanctioned by Moscow.

### **NEW CONTRIBUTIONS**

The evidence and conclusions of this dissertation modify the existing literature on the subject of the Eisenhower administration's use of political warfare in the Cold War, particularly in Eastern Europe. First, it introduces the results of the Millikan Committee and factors that group's efforts into the evolution of U.S. national security strategy and the administration's approach to political warfare. The committee's report was declassified in the late 1990s, and has not been used in published research to date. It is significant because it provides a key piece of missing evidence. For decades after the Eisenhower administration, the general consensus was that U.S. policy towards Eastern Europe and the use of political warfare changed only after the uprisings of 1956 exposed the faults in existing U.S. policy. More recent scholarship has demonstrated the shift in U.S. policy away from aggressive political warfare occurred nearly two years before the Hungarian revolution, but credits changes in the Soviet nuclear threat as the source of that change.<sup>5</sup> The Millikan Committee report, however, links the change in U.S. policy not simply to balance-of-power considerations but to a

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<sup>5</sup>Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*.

compelling argument about the most effective means to achieve stated ends in Eastern Europe. In other words, U.S. policy was not simply reactive to developments in the nuclear relationship with the Soviet Union, it was also proactive in seeking to produce positive change.

This dissertation's second contribution is interpretive. It provides evidence to reconcile the general existing consensus of Eisenhower's conduct of national security policy and the specific actions of the administration in 1956. The president and his secretary of state believed that the Cold War was simply that, a cold war: the stakes were immense, but the means available were limited to those short of the use of force. Given the nature of the struggle, Eisenhower and Dulles believed—along with many others—that political warfare and psychological operations provided one of the few methods the United States could use to parry Soviet political gambits and initiate some of its own.

Previous scholars have had difficulty reconciling this macro-level understanding of the Eisenhower administration's national security strategy with the administration's specific policy choices in 1956. They fail to conceive of the struggle in the same manner the administration did. The Cold War was a global struggle, bigger than Eastern Europe and bigger than the fate of Hungary. This is no less a manipulative interpretation of the administration's conduct than those more apparently critical have offered. But manipulation is the essence of high politics. Eisenhower and

Dulles understood the importance of this observation and their policies reflected it.

Eisenhower and Dulles viewed the Cold War in a global context. Eastern Europe was the example, without equal, of Soviet oppression. Championing the plight of Eastern Europeans was good politics domestically in 1952; it was also good politics internationally in drawing attention to the sins of the Soviet system. In a global battle for hearts and minds, then, where the most important audiences were in Western Europe—where governments needed encouragement to arm and achieve political cohesion—and the developing world—where Soviet propaganda threatened to make its greatest advances and thereby tip, potentially, the balance of power between Moscow and Washington—the focus on any one state or region was rejected in favor of the global needs of a long-term battle of ideas. Eisenhower believed this was the only path to success in the Cold War. His policies can only be understood from this perspective. The administration's reaction to the revolution in Hungary is no different.

The United States did not marshal a great force to defend Hungarians who expected such a force to rise on their borders. The United States offered no official support or encouragement to the Hungarian rebels—despite some indiscretions by Radio Free Europe broadcasters. The United States did little more than condemn the Soviet Union for its violent response. In a global context, where every other alternative risked general war—the very thing U.S. policies were predicated upon avoiding—there were no options available to the president besides accepting the fate of Hungary,

working to protect gains in Poland, and subsequently using Soviet actions to indict Communism around the world. Throughout all of this, the basic approach to the problem posed by Soviet Communism, and the value of political warfare remained consistent.

This is not a flattering portrait of the president and his administration. Consistent policies are not necessarily ethical or sound. But this approach provides a more thorough and complete understanding of the role political warfare played in the administration's conduct of the Cold War.

#### **SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study has suggested other areas where research remains to be completed. The details of political warfare campaigns, particularly in the second term, remain largely unknown. In part this is due to the perceived diminution of political warfare after 1956, a misperception the evidence in this study should refute. Regrettably, even if a study were to be initiated on this topic, enormous evidentiary challenges will await the scholar. It has proven extremely difficult to extract details of political warfare operations from the nation's official libraries. There are reasons of classification behind this. As one archivist at the Eisenhower library put it, "there really isn't much left that can be declassified." But beyond this immediate consideration, the well

defined techniques of political warfare are seldom talked about by those who have the most immediate experience with them.

The relationship between war plans, liberation, and partisans discussed in note 67 of Chapter 6 may prove a particularly valuable area of further inquiry. Initial planning in the Eisenhower administration envisioned political-psychological tools contributing to deterrence and quicker war termination should deterrence fail. A study of the relationship between strategic stability, the nuclear relationship between the superpowers, and the role of political warfare may further deepen our understanding of the role political warfare played in the military planning of the Eisenhower administration.

The research for this project also revealed a vast untapped documentary record on the U.S. effort to care for Hungarian refugees. While beyond the scope of this particular dissertation, the data in these collections would likely provide the basis for a compelling study in and of itself.

Finally, the conclusions in this dissertation about the U.S. conduct of political warfare in the Eisenhower administration has implications for our understanding of subsequent Cold War policies and crises in Eastern Europe. The Czechoslovakian experience in 1968, the Polish Solidarity movement in 1980, and the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the final liberation of Eastern Europe at that time, seem to validate Eisenhower's national security strategy, the reliance on political warfare, and

the strategic framework first articulated by George Kennan. Certainly, hindsight is twenty-twenty, but the successive crises in Eastern Europe and the ultimate peaceful end to the Cold War warrant further consideration as related events along a continuum that should be considered as such. Such a study may be more political science than history, but the historian will have much to offer.

Today, political warfare is seldom mentioned in policy circles as such. But it is broadly recognized for its importance in the war on terrorism. There are even recent success stories. In 2000, the United States government launched a political campaign, orchestrated by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), in the former Yugoslavia to oust Slobodan Milosevic from power. The details of this campaign have been reported in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.<sup>6</sup> Milosovic's willingness to hold an election he could lose made the techniques taught by IRI and NDI personnel more effective. But the instruction also appears to have borne all the hallmarks of lessons learned in more than 50 years of cold war.

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<sup>6</sup>See Roger Cohen, "Who Really Brought Down Milosevic?" *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 2000, 43-47, 118, and 148. See also Michael Dobbs, "U.S. Advice Guided Milosevic Opposition: Political Consultants Helps Yugoslav Opposition Topple Authoritarian Leader," *Washington Post*, December 11, 2000.

## CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, the Eisenhower administration's use of political warfare in its national security strategy reveals a consistency of purpose: Eisenhower and Dulles came to office committed to the use of political warfare. It was, in their view, a key component of cold war. Over the course of the following years, the administration adjusted the tactics of political warfare in Eastern Europe and around the world to meet specific contingencies, in response to specific developments, and based on assessments of what worked best.

Political warfare was part of a long-term strategy to win the Cold War. The U.S. response to specific events in Hungary must be viewed in this context as well. In the critical days of 1956, Eisenhower was not concerned about the fate of a specific East European country. He was focused on how developments there would shape the broader cold war. The U.S. response to the Hungarian revolution was part of the long-term strategy, not an indication of failed policy. The revolution provided further indictment of the Soviet Union's oppressive ways, and confirmed the most recent thinking of the administration's favored means of approach as specified by the Millikan Committee. The lack of controversy or NSC discussion about political warfare in the second administration is an indication of how intimately woven into the fabric of the administration's approach political warfare had become. Eisenhower had specifically

requested that only controversial issues should be addressed in the NSC. Political warfare was no longer controversial inside the administration: it was a critical function of their efforts.

I recall my family hosting an exchange student in the late 1970s from the Phillipines. I also recall conversations with other foreign students staying with other friends and families. I first learned of the Berlin Wall in a neighbor's living room, listening to a student they hosted explain the lengths to which he and his family went to smuggle blue jeans and other consumer goods to family members in East Berlin. Such people-to-people exchanges helped shape countless views of the Soviet Union in the Cold War. They are a legacy of the Eisenhower administration's efforts at political warfare. To a boy, raised in a middle class community outside Hartford, Connecticut, smuggling, fake-sleeping so the police wouldn't search the seat on which you slept, and Berlin's wall were very strange ideas. But they were real examples of the Soviet system and the lack of freedom in the Communist world. The perils were experienced first hand by foreign travelers. They could relate them and the realities of a larger world with greater credibility and humanity than any propaganda or official government statement ever drafted.

Such an approach was essential if the Eisenhower administration was right that the only path to peaceful success lay in a long-term approach to the problem. The OCB was prescient. In 1954, they wrote:



The Soviet Union has shown that it considers the continued domination of Eastern Europe essential to its own security and that it would take strong measures to prevent the detachment of any satellite (except possibly Albania). The Soviet control mechanism continues to operate effectively. It is probable that only military intervention by the West or internal collapse in the USSR could disrupt the control mechanism, and neither seems likely in the foreseeable future.<sup>7</sup>

In 1959, just months before Dulles's death, NSC minutes recorded the following exchange between Eisenhower and his secretary of state:

Secretary Dulles expressed some doubt as to whether one could destroy the Communist threat in the world simply by destroying the Kremlin and the USSR. The Communist movement in the world was wider than the Soviet Union. Ideologies cannot be destroyed by military forces alone. If you destroy the present Communist center in Moscow, the very suffering and dislocation of so terrible a war would tend to keep the Communist ideology alive. The President agreed with Secretary Dulles and added that never in history had an ideology been destroyed by war.<sup>8</sup>

The administration's use of political warfare offered, in the collective best judgement of both Eisenhower and Dulles, the greatest hope for destroying communism as an ideology. This belief permeated their policies and their administration. It is no coincidence, then, that the U.S. Information Agency and the Operations Coordinating Board came into being in the Eisenhower administration, or that the country began people-to-people exchanges, cultural exchanges, and vast information operations

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<sup>7</sup>Progress Report on NSC 174, United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe, July 7, 1954, published in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Volume VIII (Washington, DC: GPO, 1988), 136.

<sup>8</sup>Memorandum of Discussion at the 394<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Security Council, January 22, 1959, published in *FRUS*, 1958-1960, volume III (Washington, DC: GPO, 1996), 176.

around the world during the Eisenhower administration. And it is no coincidence that Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev engaged in their famed “Kitchen Debate” during that time too.

In an important speech in 1950, Eisenhower called the court of public opinion “the final arbiter of human affairs.” On the field of political warfare, Eisenhower and his administration waged cold war, and laid the foundation for victory in 1989.

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