

“PURPOSES OF PRESTIGE,” 1933:  
THE ROOSEVELT TOUCH AND U.S. DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION  
OF THE SOVIET UNION

BY: KENNETH T. CROWEL

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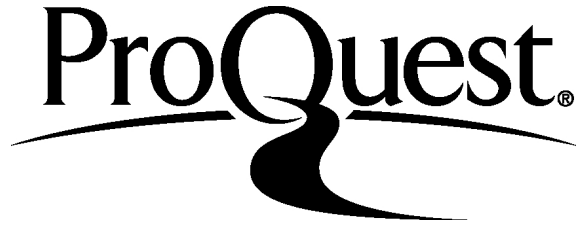
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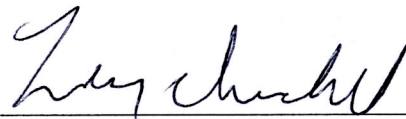
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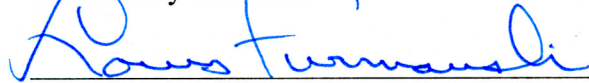
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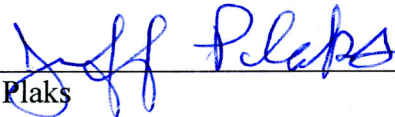
By



Dr. Lindsey Churchill



Dr. Louis Furmanski



Dr. Jeff Plaks

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acknowledgment was to his wife for enduring the “brooding presence” of a particular despot roaming their house whilst Montefiore crafted his book. I instantly understood exactly what this phrase intended to convey, and all he and his wife encountered. Aria suffered through years of Stalin’s unflinching feline eyes adorning the “Crowel Kremlin’s” walls, and spent many lonely nights in an empty bed, while I hunched over a screen composing yet another paper, chapter, or assignment. Thank you my darling, I could not have done it without you. I Craznlou You!

### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the United States government’s official diplomatic recognition of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1933. I argue that in severing sixteen years of executive policy President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s personal leadership directly impacted recognition, aided by the involvement of his Soviet counterpart: Foreign Minister Maxim M. Litvinov. Their combined efforts formed a union of convenience which ensured diplomatic recognition, and a rapprochement to earlier hostility. FDR’s advisors began seriously discussing the possibility of recognizing the Marxist state in May 1932, although their actions were not made known until well after the March 1933 inauguration. Alternatively, Litvinov initiated a policy of “collective security” within the USSR that dovetailed succinctly with western machinations for international prosperity. Several milestones throughout Roosevelt’s first year in office were a direct result of the ultimately fruitful negotiations between him, the United States’ State Department, and Litvinov. The bitter impasse they arrived at, however, set the tone of US/Soviet diplomacy for the remainder of the century.

“Purposes of Prestige,” 1933: The Roosevelt Touch and U.S. Diplomatic Recognition  
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## Introduction

“If I could only, myself, talk to some one man representing Russians,” then president-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt confidently quipped, “I could straighten out the whole question.”<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt as a foreign policy chieftain remains a conundrum to historians, particularly when juxtaposed against the “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma” that was Joseph Stalin’s Russia.<sup>2</sup> The rapprochement Roosevelt initiated between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the early 1930s severed sixteen years of executive policy. The formal diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union in late 1933, however, stood apart as preeminently historically significant. This initiative occurred at the direct behest of Roosevelt and was solidified due to the efforts of both Foreign Minister Maxim M. Litvinov, and William C. Bullitt. FDR’s advisors seriously discussed the possibility of recognizing the Marxist state in May 1932, although their actions were not made known until well after his March 1933 inauguration. The atmosphere of the early 1930s was undoubtedly conducive to such an undertaking, although Roosevelt had to first solidify public support. Such an endeavor was not as difficult as previously thought, owing to the United States being gripped by a worldwide depression, whilst the Soviet system appeared to have survived the economic malaise.

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<sup>1</sup> Donald G. Bishop, *The Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreements*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965), 11 [Hereafter cited as Bishop]; John Morton Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Crisis, 1928-38*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), 21. Title taken directly from text: “Both Hull and Phillips suspected that part of the trouble lay in the desire of the Commissar [Litvinov], for purposes of prestige, to deal directly with Roosevelt. The only answer, if an agreement was to be achieved, lay in transferring the talks to the White House. The President agreed to undertake the task and Secretary Hull arranged to bring Litvinov to see him on the following day.” Robert P. Browder, “The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Comintern, 1933-5,” *The Russian Review* 12, no. 1 (January 1953), 27, [Hereafter cited as Browder-U.S., S.U., & C].

<sup>2</sup> Direct quote of Sir Winston Churchill, found in Dennis J. Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt & Stalin: America’s Ambassadors to Moscow*, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), ix, [Hereafter cited as Dunn].

Roosevelt's motivation for reconciliation stemmed from a desire to aid in increasing opportunities to forestall the U.S. economic depression. Alternatively, Litvinov's impetus was to further cement "collective security" within the Soviet Union and abroad, which dovetailed succinctly with western machinations of international prosperity. Individually, both men's previous efforts bore fruit, but it was their combined efforts in 1933 that personally made recognition not only possible, but inevitable. These events depict a multi-faceted quagmire wherein the tenuously changing diplomatic intrigue which simultaneously occurred throughout Europe and the United States produced the perfect environment for U.S. and Soviet commonality through mutually beneficial diplomatic relations. The wealth of primary source material published by U.S. governmental offices showcased Roosevelt's involvement throughout the convoluted process, continually frustrated due to his executive predecessors' foreign policy blunders, and a pervasive fear of Bolshevism among political elites.

The genesis of this work is bolstered by a brief overview of international relations historiography relative to the larger cold war milieu during the early to mid-twentieth century, significant in its extensive indictment of the primary governmental parties. The climax of historiographical discourse is the introduction of pericentrism, a dynamic hypothesis which included not only fault levied against both the United States and Soviet Union, but also incorporated larger foreign relations dynamics amongst smaller states who sought to take advantage of bi-polar conflict. A chronicle of estrangement between the U.S. and Soviet Union from 1917–32 further highlight this chapter, as well as a synopsis of the respective presidential administrations between revolution and recognition. Understanding the stalwart positions of American politicians refusing recognition on the grounds of the faulty foreign policy decisions of



Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover is extremely useful to solidify the reader's appropriate historical context.

As with any historical examination, it is necessary to define specific terminology. For the purposes of this thesis, chapter two discusses key verbiage relative to the dictates of how international law perceives recognition, and conversely – its ensuing responsibilities and expectations to all entities involved. This relationship is further complicated owing to the revolutionary change of government experienced, as opposed to the traditional constitutional format of transferring governmental rule. A discussion of significant international events further endow the reader with a greater understanding of pressing concerns necessary to grasp such a delicate international balance of power: the early-1930s global economic depression, the rise of fascism in Germany and militarism in Japan, Stalin's first "Five Year Plan," and the Comintern's influence within the US – whether legitimate or imagined.

Building on chapter two's explanation of the dire state of affairs in international relations, chapter three is instrumental in providing a concise examination of the delicate steps which composed recognition's prelude. Confident in his constitutional authority, Roosevelt "greased the wheels" toward recognition so as not to disturb his constituency, or those in the State Department. An examination of controversial actions conducted by FDR which may have effectually levied *de facto* recognition is also included which ultimately culminated in an official invitation to Soviet President Mikhail Kalinin, asking him to send a diplomat to DC to begin negotiations on 10 October 1933.<sup>3</sup> Specific talks took place between representatives of both

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<sup>3</sup> George McJimsey, general editor. *Documentary History of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidency, Vol. 27: The Recognition of the Soviet Union* (LexisNexis, 2006), 312 [Hereafter cited as McJimsey]. Michael Cassella-Blackburn, *The Donkey, the Carrot, and the Club: William C. Bullitt and Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1948*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 99 [Hereafter cited as Cassella-Blackburn]; Robert E. Bowers, "Hull, Russian Supervision in Cuba, and Recognition of the USSR," *Journal of American History* 52, no. 3 (December 1966): 542-555 [Hereafter cited as Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*]; "President Roosevelt to the President of the Soviet All-Union Central Executive Committee (Kalinin)," 10 October 1933, *Foreign Relations of the United*

governments on three separate occasions and locations during 1932-3 foreshadow chapter four's record of convoluted relationships between FDR and the State Department which occurred simultaneous to FDR's clandestine statesmanship above. More specifically this key thesis installment expounds on three primary impediments espoused with vigor by anti-recognition representatives: restitution of the "Kerensky Debt," protection of the religious and legal rights of Americans in Russia, and a guarantee for the cessation of Comintern interference/propaganda efforts on US soil.

Chapter five chronicles the diplomatic negotiations in their entirety, and intensive discussions between Litvinov, Bullitt, and Roosevelt from 7 – 16 November 1933 which constituted the bulk of the recognition efforts. Absent the presence of stenographers, no complete record exists of the exchanges that took place. The bulk of information available regarding these meetings must therefore be pieced together.<sup>4</sup> Although charged with their promulgation, Bullitt ultimately called on FDR's help in solidifying American aims, and it is Roosevelt's direct involvement that allowed the talks to bear fruit. The final terms of recognition were agreed upon, however, the delicate issue of unresolved debt negotiations masked by a "gentleman's agreement" to settle financial dictates the following calendar year proved its undoing. The subsequent and long lasting effects on U.S. – Soviet relations which arose from the diplomatic ramifications of these unanswered questions provided fertile soil for the formal Cold War period. Relevant international relations theories and the significance of recognition on international political events ultimately ground this analysis, and provide legitimation to the actions discussed.

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*States: The Soviet Union, 1933-9*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), 17-8 [Hereafter cited as *FRUS-SU*].

<sup>4</sup> Bishop, 19 [\*="In the library at Hyde Park is a Memorandum for the Secretary of State, dated March 3, 1934: "Mr. Kannee forwards envelope of miscellaneous papers and clippings re Litvinoff conferences and states that these were left on the mantle in Mr. McIntyre's room during the conferences. Mr. Kannee states that he put them in Mr. McIntyre's desk and called them to the attention of Mr. Bullitt who said, "leave them there, they are not important." (Roosevelt Papers, Official File, Box 799, RL.)].

## **Chapter 1. Historical Context of Pre-Second World War International Relations and an Analysis of Related Historiography**

The installation of international affairs as the dominant force in American politics propelled geographically insulated Americans to delve into nation building, set about peaceful commercial expansion, and practice political noninvolvement in the affairs of others. Conversely, European statesmen continued to barter away other nations' real estate in order to maintain a fluctuating balance of power. Following the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917, United States businessmen circumvented official governmental policy and organized a profitable trade relationship with the Soviet Union through the offices of the American Trading Corporation (Amtorg) – Moscow's eager representative which sought American technology and capital. In 1925, Amtorg proved so successful that ten percent of all Ford Motor Company tractors were purchased by Soviet buyers, who also acquired American-manufactured locomotives in bulk. By 1930, Soviet-U.S. trade reached a \$100 million annual value, doubling figures prior to 1914. Although concern existed that the Soviets may dump cheap products in American markets, growing optimism among entrepreneurs foresaw lucrative business exchanges with the Soviet Union, especially following the 1929 stock market crash and the potential of Russian commerce aiding in the overall U.S. economic recovery.

Combined with nearly a century of historical hindsight, extensive Roosevelt research published during past decades provide a nuanced, balanced portrait of the commander-in-chief and the controversial events which culminated in recognition. Recent scholarship tossed out claims of appeasement and conspiracy, and further repudiated declarations of his extraordinarily perceptive and prophetic abilities as an enormously skilled executive. For example, the author

Justus D. Doenecke critically conceded FDR so ably made recognition possible that he deserved to be titled the architect of U.S.-Soviet relations. Conversely, Mark A. Stoler unashamedly pronounced Roosevelt was imbued with a litany of faults, including a “deviousness and selective morality” which established “dangerous precedents and had tragic consequences.”<sup>5</sup> The subject at hand, however, required a macro estimation of recognition’s place within the larger landscape of Cold War historiography, not merely a reflection of publications which delved into the picked over campaigns of the wheelchair bound executive. While both cumbersome and clumsily overlapping, diplomatic historiography provided fertile soil for a successful analysis of the prodigious amount of research available. The Cold War’s complicated milieu is rightly ascribed “the most studied and curious in modern history”; as such, each publication consulted attempted to distinguish reality and illusion, and included some distinction as to what aspect of U.S. – Soviet relations were adjudicated.<sup>6</sup>

The first interpretations of hostility fomented between the U.S. and Soviet Union were heavily influenced by the assertion that the cause of hostilities rested solely on the Reds’ perceived expansive foreign policy aims. This vantage, known interchangeably as “traditionalism” or “orthodoxy,” clearly prosecuted the Soviet Union as having radically altered the “spheres of influence” status quo and compelled America to counter its advance.<sup>7</sup> Typified by “diplomats turned historians,” many leading scholars who inaugurated this premature

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<sup>5</sup> Justus D. Doenecke and Mark A. Stoler, *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Foreign Policies, 1933-45*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 2 [Hereafter cited as Doenecke].

<sup>6</sup> Timothy J. White, “Cold War Historiography: New Evidence Behind Traditional Typographies,” *International Social Science Review* 75 (Fall 2000): 42. [Hereafter cited as White]; Ronn Pineo, “Recent Cold War Studies,” *The History Teacher* 37 (November 2003): 85. [Hereafter cited as Pineo].

<sup>7</sup> Pineo, 82. Note: It should be understood that the term traditionalist is interchangeably used with the term orthodox, and for the remainder of the paper, the term traditionalists will be used for continuities sake.

examination of international relations were former members of the American administrations who witnessed its formation.<sup>8</sup> Via unrestricted access to personal conversations and documents, this ideological construction was heavily inspired by the respected opinions of George F. Kennan, then serving as an American advisor in Moscow. Writing under the pseudonym “Mr. X,” Kennan’s “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” (1947) borrowed heavily from earlier containment theories which dated back to the Wilson administration.<sup>9</sup> The ensuing announcement of the Truman Doctrine as a perceived necessary response to Soviet aggression undergirded American military and diplomatic policies for decades thereafter. Kennan’s involvement, is further prescient because he is one of the only authors included here actually present at the meetings which installed recognition in 1933. Although he lent “a very minor hand in the preparation of the briefing papers for the American negotiators,” his involvement with the discussions in Washington play a significant role in later summations and disenfranchisement with Soviet dealings.<sup>10</sup> His nuanced representation of America’s historical foreign relations as designed to elicit social, commercial, and cultural bonds further showcase a successful promotion of the American international agenda. He balanced this assertion by pointing out the United States’ prosperity was a result of its largely peaceful history, insulated by weak geographical neighbors to the north and south – to which Kennan contrasted Russia’s centuries of regional conflict dominated by either invasive wars, their preparations, or the distracting diplomacy left in their wake. During bouts of relative peace, Slavic leaders were thus unable to

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Crapol, “Some Reflections on the Historiography of the Cold War,” *The History Teacher* 20, no. 2 (February 1987): 254. [Hereafter cited as Crapol].

<sup>9</sup> Mr. X [George F. Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947): 566-582; Kennan composed this treatise under a pseudonym, the purpose of which is not entirely clear in the research included for this paper.

<sup>10</sup> George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), 58, [Hereafter cited as Kennan – *Memoirs*].

fortify infrastructure and culture, but instead contended with powerful continental rivals who continually sought to diplomatically maneuver their advantageous positions without a modicum of deference to Russia's welfare. The divergence in approach toward international relations by Russia and America was therefore significant to Kennan's worldview and writings, and prompted him to adopt the conservative viewpoint that Russia must be dealt with in a firm, consistent manner along a reasonably static course.

Built on Kennan's earlier theses, the quintessential work which introduced the formal traditionalist approach was Herbert Feis's *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (1957), naively heralded as the preeminent monograph on the subject only a year after its release.<sup>11</sup> Finding "neither fools nor traitors" in the ranks of the American government, traditionalism's founding set the stage for an overriding sense of universalism and commonality between nations who shared a vested interest in world affairs.<sup>12</sup> Observing the difficulty in obtaining information to bolster his research, Feis cleverly referred to the "hoarded documents" of public figures whose "reputations are surrounded by a moat for a generation"; the most titular of which being Kennan's later two-volume works: *Soviet American Relations, 1917-1920, Volume I: Russia Leaves the War* (1956), and *Soviet American Relations, 1917-1920, Volume II: The Decision to Intervene* (1958).<sup>13</sup> Kennan's recollection of events long forgotten is more akin to a Greek epic in its rambling dictation and personified the traditionalist gospel. Lastly, no examination of the traditionalist camp would be complete without referring to the

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<sup>11</sup> Herbert Feis, *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 655; B.H.M. Vlekke, "Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought" by Herbert Feis," *Pacific Affairs* 31(December 1958): 401.

<sup>12</sup> S. Everett Gleason, "Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought" by Herbert Feis," *Political Science Quarterly* 72 (December 1957): 610; Crapol, 253.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Feis, *From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970), x. [Hereafter cited as *From Trust*].

works of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and their impact on the field. His article “Origins of the Cold War” (1967) described a “cumulative momentum” of American might matching Soviet treachery in Europe as an ordained “crusade for international freedom,” concealed within an “implacable struggle.”<sup>14</sup> Schlesinger opportunistically took up the mantle of defending traditionalism, and curiously argued “the Soviet Union was *not* a traditional national state,” and maliciously attacked historians who did not agree with his contentious agenda.<sup>15</sup>

Most often applied to the domain of foreign policy, “revisionism” provided a logical antithesis to traditionalism. Distinguished by an “impurity of American motives,” revisionism asserted the plausibility that the Soviets possessed sufficient cause to act the way they did due to America’s pervasive foreign policy encroachments.<sup>16</sup> A widespread reevaluation of the United States’ role in international affairs was therefore necessary to understand leading historical scholars, and their impetus for espousing controversial arguments about who was actually at fault for the conflict’s proliferation. This scrutiny gained valuable incitement with the pervading corporatism of the day and high cost of readily identifiable military conflicts. Previously, traditionalists sought to justify their claims by excusing previous administrations’ deplorable actions. Their camp highlighted the preconception that America’s formative inception arose during “an age of empires as part of an empire,” which supposedly established precedence for their descendants to reconcile democratic republicanism with a lucrative imperial foreign

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<sup>14</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “Origins of the Cold War: The Russian Revolution – Fifty Years After,” *Foreign Affairs* 46, no. 1 (1967): 45. [Hereafter cited as Schlesinger]; Schlesinger, 22; Charles Seymour, “Foreign Affairs: Woodrow Wilson in Perspective,” *Foreign Affairs* 34 (January 1956): 178.

<sup>15</sup> Schlesinger, 46.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Seabury, “Cold War Origins, I.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, no. 1 (January 1968): 169. [Hereafter cited as Seabury].

policy.<sup>17</sup> Consistently credited as one of the “doyens of revisionism, on chronological grounds alone,” William Appleman Williams’ *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) presaged the age of revisionism and served as a voice in the wilderness regarding American foreign policy.<sup>18</sup> He originated the assertion that the U.S. craved the implementation of “an economic, political, and ideological agenda” in order to construct a purely western focused century.<sup>19</sup> Williams admirably distinguished himself by challenging historians “to apply the past tense to certain of our attitudes” and honestly reflect on the end goals of commanding an international presence.<sup>20</sup> Williams’ other less notable revisionist writing was *The Roots of the Modern American Empire* (1969), preceded by other popular monographs which complete pantheon of the “New Left,” such as D.F. Fleming’s *The Cold War and Its Origins* (1961), which argued Soviet actions could be rationally explained or justified in light of its own nationalistic interests.<sup>21</sup>

Another less obvious prognosticator of revisionism, was Maxim Litvinov himself, with the disappointing 1955 publication of his *Notes for a Journal*. Although published in the United States two years after Stalin’s death, Litvinov’s perspective is staunchly Stalinist. E.H. Carr’s introduction to the work confided to the reader that extensive passages of the work were refurbished or wholly invented in order to increase the book’s appeal to a wider audience. Carr supposed “at least two hands have been at work” on the materials included.<sup>22</sup> Serious passages,

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<sup>17</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1959), 25. [Hereafter cited as Williams].

<sup>18</sup> Michael Leigh, “Is There a Revisionist Thesis on the Origins of the Cold War?” *Political Science Quarterly* 89 (March 1974): 104.

<sup>19</sup> Crapol, 254-255.

<sup>20</sup> Williams, 20.

<sup>21</sup> Seabury, 170.

<sup>22</sup> Maxim Litvinov, *Notes for a Journal* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1955), 14, [Hereafter cited as Litvinov].



whether legitimately ascribed to Litvinov or invented by later public affairs representatives, dominated the book's early sections. Later inscriptions appear to be those of a "gossip-writer" and become ever more prominent; its final sections almost exclusively not the accurate reflections of the politically exiled foreign minister.

The third and arguably most significantly impactful school of thought did not necessarily discredit previous academic assemblies, but instead attributed blame to both transgressors equally.<sup>23</sup> A familiar face emerged when researching its beginnings – that of noted historian, John Lewis Gaddis and his landmark *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (1972). Gaddis explained the behind-the-scenes semantics over what label to use as a characterization of this new field – variously alternating from "neoorthodoxy," "eclecticism," and finally "post-revisionism" – the latter term ultimately crystallized as the epithet used in practice.<sup>24</sup> Although initially active in the formation of the traditionalist discipline, Gaddis' groundbreaking work in tandem with his tirelessly passionate scholarship on the subject, earned him the ominous title: "father of post-revisionism." In spite of his consistently superior understanding of the Cold War, buttressed with an august and methodological sophistication, Gaddis is also the first to literally capitalize the term: forging its place in the public consciousness not merely as *a* cold war, but by a new identification as *the* Cold War.<sup>25</sup> Further, what is most striking is Gaddis's revelation that "not one of the New Left revisionists was a

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<sup>23</sup> Ellen Shrecker, editor, *Cold War Triumphalism: The Misuse of History After the Fall of Communism* (New York: The New Press, 2004), 71. [Hereafter cited as Shrecker].

<sup>24</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, "The Emerging Postrevisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the cold War," *Diplomatic History* 7 (1983): 172. [Hereafter cited as Postrevisionist Synthesis].

<sup>25</sup> Shrecker, 53; Note: The assertion of Gaddis's capitalization is in reference to his *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

Soviet specialist” and even fewer of their number even spoke Russian.<sup>26</sup> In all actuality, he also posited in *Russia, The Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretative History* (1978) that the qualified number of “American experts on Russia ... could have been counted on the fingers of one hand.”<sup>27</sup> The most contentious element of his post-revisionist thesis harkened to the recognition accords’ initial debt negotiations. Gaddis posited American decision-makers approached their dealings with the Soviet Union from a position of weakness which stemmed from limitations inherent in the American economic system. American strategists were therefore convinced that capitalism’s survival required an unlimited overseas expansion of American economic influence, and thus unable to recognize legitimate Soviet interests abroad.<sup>28</sup>

Post-revisionism humbly accepted evidence cited by revisionists, although did not condone its conclusions, which forced its earliest critics to dismiss its prominence as “toothless.”<sup>29</sup> Further, detractors point out post-revisionism’s failing to include philosophical texture, and a specific lacking of a clearly defined synthesis of its core tenets.<sup>30</sup> Time and again, post-revisionists stalwartly asserted this new synthesis of Cold War historiography was much more than traditionalism “plus archives,” and fundamentally rejected classical interpretations of traditionalism and revisionism.<sup>31</sup> Salvaging important landmarks of both camps by finally gaining necessary materials to vindicate themselves, post-revisionism absorbed previously

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<sup>26</sup> Postrevisionist Synthesis, 175.

<sup>27</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Russia, The Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretative History*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1978), 59. [Hereafter cited as *An Interpretative History*].

<sup>28</sup> Leigh, 103-4 [quote: John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York, 1972), 357.

<sup>29</sup> Crapol, 258.

<sup>30</sup> Crapol, 259.

<sup>31</sup> Postrevisionist Synthesis, 180.

inaccessible documents which confirmed a multitude of key traditionalist discourses.<sup>32</sup> Greater insight was paid as to the Cold War's duality than a probe of malfeasance for its beginning or ending – these historians believed the Cold War was not only the result of predictable tensions in a bipolar system, but key players' firmly held suspicions of one another had previously been established informally for generations. Ronald E. Powaski's *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991* (1998) agreed that conflict was indeed inevitable, due in large part to the striking incompatibility of the two nations' ideological underpinnings.<sup>33</sup> Powaski elaborated further that both were expansionist in their respective spheres of interest, and would have eventually extended their purview globally.<sup>34</sup> The Cold War being “unavoidable” has obviously been a common thread throughout its rich scholarship, as echoed by both Isaac Deutscher's *Ironies of History* (1966), and Paul Seabury's foreknowledge of its overdue arrival still waiting “to be written” in his “Cold War Origins, I” (1968).<sup>35</sup>

Donald G. Bishop's *The Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreements*, published in 1965, added to the post-revisionist studies on the implementation of commitments made by both the United States and Soviet Union, respectively. While the first chapter concerned the lead-up to recognition and the related Washington negotiations, each subsequent chapter dealt with the specific implementation – or lack thereof – of each of the accords' provisions. Difficulties which stemmed from the fulfillment of the November 1933 agreements were its chief concern, as well as how the American government believed the Soviets honored initial promises, specifically because the popular response within the United States was that Soviet commitments were always

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<sup>32</sup> Couvares, 257.

<sup>33</sup> Powaski, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Powaski, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Seabury, 178, 182.

ruptured when no longer beneficial. Bishop's work sought to discover how truthful such a position was as it related to recognition, and ultimately disproved such a monochromatic aggrandizement of Soviet intentions.

Prominent advocates of post-revisionism include George Herring's *Aid to Russia, 1941-1946: Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Origins of the Cold War* (1973), and most especially, Gaddis's own *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (1997). The latter writing directly challenged Williams' revisionist assertions regarding America's empire building, and prolifically espoused "the American empire arose primarily, therefore, not from internal causes, as had the Soviet empire, but from a perceived external danger powerful enough to overcome American isolationism."<sup>36</sup> Edited by Ellen Schrecker, *Cold War Triumphalism: The Misuse of History after the Fall of Communism* (2004) retroactively ushered in a new American cultural recognition. Schrecker also identified "the self-conscious cult of toughness" associated with this era of statesmanship, and the propensity of decision-makers to look or walk away from the cruel aftermath of their behavior, which obligated future historian's to judge policy-makers "less by ... the purity of their motives than by the consequences of their actions."<sup>37</sup>

This work has already described Walter LaFeber's 1972 challenge of William A. Williams' earlier thesis, which claimed both the U.S. & Soviet Union sought to expand their predominance to regions most dramatically positioned to serve their economic interests.<sup>38</sup> With this postulation, it is necessary to outline the second metastasis to post-revisionism as exemplified by a refreshing thesis which served as a "middle road." "Realism" established the

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<sup>36</sup> Gaddis' *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 218.

<sup>37</sup> Shrecker, 65.

<sup>38</sup> Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2000* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 310.

premise that power structures and external pressures within international relations “shape and determine the behavior of states.”<sup>39</sup> Realists denote that both the United States and Soviet Union were essentially empires at their core, therefore, their actions proved they each acted in their respective best interests – perfectly normal behavior given the circumstances. Employing the broad definition of *realpolitik* which identified “long-term national interests and the power politics deployed to defend and promote them,” realists provided a necessary bridge for post-revisionism to its applicable undertones within today’s society.<sup>40</sup> This shift highlighted far reaching trends inherent in modern foreign policy, specifically the tutelage of determined and decisive leaders. Interestingly, this bohemian vision assigned “blame for the Cold War either to both sides or, more accurately, to neither.”<sup>41</sup> The practical response to relativism was then a call for historicism, particularly the recognition that there will always be varying definitions of *correct* interpretations, so long as they pass the “test of plausibility.”<sup>42</sup>

This impasse within Cold War historiography allowed “pericentrism” to enter the fray on the side of realists and synthesized traditionalism, revisionism, and post-revisionism, to provide a re-examination of the conflict’s global implications.<sup>43</sup> Reconsidering the influence of “junior members in the international system” – formerly viewed as pawns during the rivalry – pericentrism offered a “fundamental contribution ... to the making of history” which utilized the

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<sup>39</sup> Ninkovich, Frank, *The Wilsonian Century*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 2. [Hereafter cited as Ninkovich].

<sup>40</sup> Couvares, 254.

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

<sup>42</sup> Shrecker, 53.

<sup>43</sup> Sari Autio-Sarasma, “A New Historiography of the Cold War?” *European History Quarterly* 41 (2011): 658.

availability of ideological crusades to further their own aims, short of all-out war.<sup>44</sup> Tony Smith's "New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War" (2000), convincingly and aggressively argued that fundamental features of this epic are only fully understood when viewing the governments of minor countries as occupying axiomatic quintessence in the overall character of the Cold War.<sup>45</sup> Smith's prolific work altered the previously held belief that the remaining countries in the antithetical twentieth century were manipulatively taken advantage of for purposes of expanding foreign policy exploits of that era's primary combatants. While others claimed knowledge of why the conflict dragged on as long as it did, Smith clearly enunciates other states in the international structure were just as complicit as anyone in the capitols of Washington or Moscow. The periphery's decorum in Cold War historiography is checkered by those seeking "to be rectified by a history of the struggle ... feeding on and contributing to the central dynamics of the East-West contests," especially poignant when considering that the Soviet Union was once such an amateur state fully expecting to take advantage of abhorrent international circumstances, and may well have provided a sufficient paragon for future subordinate reflections of themselves.<sup>46</sup> Thus pericentrism not only redefined conventional traditionalist concepts of the Soviet Union's expansionary tendency, but simultaneously criticized revisionism's exaggeration of American imperialism for refusing to come to terms with how the U.S. was *dragged* in equal measure to being *driven* "into every corner of the globe."<sup>47</sup> Finally, pericentrism viewed post-revisionism as yet another futile lens to

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<sup>44</sup> Tony Smith, "New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 24 (Fall 2000): 568. [Hereafter cited as Smith], 570.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, 568.

<sup>46</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet-American Relations, Volume II, 1917-1920: The Decision to Intervene*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1958), 133; Smith, 569.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, 591.

view history for not fully comprehending the tendency of peripheral surrogates' interests and leaders, who desperately yearned to gain an upper hand in the shadows of a global grudge match.

## Chapter 2. Estrangement: U.S.-Soviet Relations Between Revolution and Recognition, 1917-32

### Woodrow Wilson to Herbert Hoover

The origin of discontent between east and west went back much further than the breakdown of wartime alliances in the late 1940s. While an abundance of authors point to the mistrust exemplified by Catherine the Great's unwillingness to recognize the newly independent American colonies following its Revolutionary War, an examination of hostility spanning back to the eighteenth century is not the intention of this work. The genesis of this thesis' analysis was thus found rooted in the events which surrounded the 1917 Bolshevik seizure of power, and resultant disavowal by the west.<sup>48</sup> Subsequent decades elapsed whilst the Soviets consolidated their dominance through civil war, domestic strife, and the transition of power from Vladimir Lenin to Joseph Stalin. The United States experienced similar circumstances during this period and by 1932 was deeply immersed in the Great Depression. The American public looked ahead to the inauguration of newly elected Franklin D. Roosevelt, without realizing the stupendously ill-advised foreign policy measures of the presidents and policy-makers which preceded his administration had forever sowed the seeds of discontent within the Soviet psyche.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The implication of the Cold War's far reaching origins preceding "the World War II era," are found in Couvares, 246; it is also specifically linked to "sentiments dating from 1917..." in Thomas G. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 260. [Hereafter cited as Paterson]; further, Stalin's later suspicions regarding American foreign policy being "traced to this period," can be found in Powaski, 34. [Hereafter cited as Powaski]; lastly, "the Siberian intervention was a harbinger of things to come," is explicitly chronicled in Carl J. Richard, *When the United States Invaded Russia: Woodrow Wilson's Siberian Disaster*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), ix. [Hereafter cited as Richard].

<sup>49</sup> Norman E. Saul, *Friends or Foes?: The United States and Soviet Russia, 1921-1941* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 5.



Spanning three successive Republican administrations, non-diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union was a basic ingredient of American foreign policy, however, the decision was initially solidified under Woodrow Wilson's democratic administration. In the midst of the crippling series of events which served as a prologue to the most abhorrent century in mankind's tenure, one must recognize President Wilson's intentions were not always to "repair the potentially fatal international defects of modern industrial civilization[s]."<sup>50</sup> Incidentally, he regarded the Bolshevik government "as a demonic conspiracy" which destroyed the "democratic promise" inside Russia.<sup>51</sup> While it is true the president strove to provide equitable freedom for the world's poor and distressed, he alone ascertained whether they chose freedom accordingly. Once it was determined the nation in question had not met his high standards, Wilson deployed U.S. muscle to "force reality into correspondence with his imagery and ideals."<sup>52</sup>

Events "limit the capacity of the statesman to bend history to his will," although there is perhaps no person in American history that strove to bend history to his own will more, than the twenty-eighth president of the United States.<sup>53</sup> Convening seven separate foreign military interventions during his two terms as president – a record thankfully unbroken by successors – made Wilson's governance quite remarkable indeed.<sup>54</sup> American participation in Allied efforts to control Russia's ever changing political landscape "differed in style and form" from the Wilson administration's previous foreign interventions, and confirmed the American president "was

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<sup>50</sup> Ninkovich, 48.

<sup>51</sup> Powaski, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, 57.

<sup>53</sup> Schlesinger, 25.

<sup>54</sup> Frederick S. Calhoun, *Power and Principle: Armed Intervention in Wilsonian Foreign Policy*, (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1986), ix. [Hereafter cited as Calhoun].

dragged into the Russian imbroglio at the insistence of his allies.”<sup>55</sup> Wilson’s disturbingly vague yet grand promises of perpetual peace, “contributed to the somniphany of liberalism,” of which it never fully recovered.<sup>56</sup> Wilson’s willingness to fully commit America’s resources – most especially the military – particularly because international events allowed him greater opportunities to do so, enabled him to convert the language of foreign policy to coincide with his domestic ideology.<sup>57</sup> The U.S. government perceived Soviet practices and ideology antithetical to the American way of life, therefore official diplomatic recognition was inconceivable. Secretary of State Robert Lansing’s 15 December 1917 memorandum specifically forbade American diplomatic representatives in Europe and the Far East from having any official relations with Russian diplomatic deputies recognized or appointed by the Soviet government. This watershed event established a firm non-recognition policy, variously justified by successors thereafter, yet always upheld by the U.S. government for a further sixteen years. Paradoxically, military attaché to Russia and Brigadier-General W.V. Judson insisted from the outset the Soviet establishment comprised a *de facto* government, and thus relations should be established. In answer to his advocacy, General Judson was specifically directed by President Wilson to refuse “direct communication with the Bolshevik government” – an implied admission that the Soviet regime did in fact constitute a defined government.<sup>58</sup>

This undercurrent of U.S.-Soviet studies showcased the minority opinion that the Cold War encompassed two separate phases exemplified by hostile policies of American Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Harry S. Truman, respectively. The first commenced with the ineffectual

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<sup>55</sup> Calhoun, 191.

<sup>56</sup> Calhoun, 220.

<sup>57</sup> Calhoun, 2-3.

<sup>58</sup> Calhoun, 217.

March 1918 military interventions at Murmansk, Archangel, and Vladivostok, which occurred because the president did not consider the Soviet state as representative of the Russian people's will.<sup>59</sup> Wilson's interference in Russia's internal affairs continued until fall 1919 – effectually ended by his tour of western American states advocating for the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations – thus halting his active participation in American governmental proceedings and providing Secretary of State Lansing an avenue to formulate foreign policy. Although American forces remained in Russia until 1920, Lansing eventually ascertained it was not likely to topple the Russian authoritarian regime solely with force, and instead sought a gradual undermining of their legitimacy to pave the way for future dealings. Lansing's eventual exit from the Washington political landscape made possible Bainbridge Colby's appointment as Secretary of State, who wasted no time in marshalling new contentions against recognition. Colby recoiled at the dismemberment of Russia and dictated that all questions of sovereignty for the former tsarist empire's territories be tabled until Russia was no longer in the throes of a non-representative government. Further, lacking any formal political experience with which to draw from, Colby examined the Soviet government and justified his perspective in a 10 August 1920 note to Italian ambassador Baron Camillo Romano Avezzana:

We cannot recognize, hold official relations with, or give friendly reception to the agents of a government which is determined and bound to conspire against our institutions; whose diplomats will be the agitators of dangerous revolt; whose spokesman say that they sign agreements with no intention of keeping them.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Calhoun, 217.

<sup>60</sup> This attestation was in response to Baron Avezzana's inquiry as to the American position on Poland's hostile April 1920 overtures: declaration of war on Russia, and invasion of Soviet Ukraine. Secretary Colby took this opportunity to not only answer the Baron, but further expound on the United States' larger position on the Soviet Union. Mary E. Glantz, *FDR and the Soviet Union: The President's Battles over Foreign Policy*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 8-9. [Hereafter cited as Glantz]; Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, *The First Cold War: The Legacy of Woodrow Wilson in U.S.-Soviet Relations*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), xvii-xviii, [Hereafter cited as Trani], taken from Forward written by Vyacheslav Nikonov; Katherine A.S. Siegel, "The Women's Committee for the Recognition of Russia: Progressives in the Age of "Normalcy," *Peace & Change* 21, No. 3 (July 1996), 291-2, [Hereafter cited as Siegel]; Louis Fischer, *Why Recognize Russia?:*

At the time of this critical writing President Wilson was incapacitated from a stroke and unfortunately never indicated any disagreement with Colby's staunch anti-Soviet policy. Domestically, the United States was left reeling from the First Red Scare wherein Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer campaigned against dissenters of socialist orientation, culminating in mass arrests and deportations. Unscathed by their actions, the American government soon forgot the Allied intervention; the Soviets did not, and held fast to their bitter discontent. Diplomats in the U.S. Foreign Services and military officers who served in the American Expeditionary Forces during this time were similarly marked by their experiences, and developed strong characterizations regarding not only the Russian regime's governance, but also the disposition the U.S. should undertake toward it.

Those who favored closer ties with the Soviet republic were cautiously optimistic after Warren G. Harding's November 1920 landslide victory because his campaign platform championed trade restoration with nations at peace with the United States. The twenty-ninth president's intentions were soon overshadowed, however, by influential cabinet members led by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, and Secretary of Commerce Herbert Clark Hoover. A *New York Times* article boasted on 25 March 1921 they were "unable to discover that a single member of President Harding's Cabinet is at this time in favor or recognition of Soviet Russia or direct dealings with that regime."<sup>61</sup> According to White House's conservative bastions, the Bolshevik regime's dissemination of revolutionary propaganda, nationalization of foreign-owned property, and most significantly the repudiation of international debt, justified economic and

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*The Arguments for and Against the Recognition of the Soviet Government by the United States*, (New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1931), 54 [Hereafter cited as Fischer].

<sup>61</sup> "Soviet's Appeal Going to Cabinet," *The New York Times*, 25 March 1921, 1.

diplomatic isolation. Likewise, a mere four months in office, President Coolidge's 4 December 1923 address to Congress superseded the previous Lansing-Colby doctrine and outlined his brand of economic-legitimism:

While the favor of American is not for sale, I am willing to make very large concessions for the purpose of rescuing the people of Russia. Already encouraging evidences of returning to the ancient ways of society can be detected. But more are needed. Whenever there appears any disposition to compensate our citizens who were despoiled, and to recognize that debt contracted with our Government not by the Czar [*sic*] but by the newly formed republic of Russia; whenever the active spirit of enmity to our institutions is abated; whenever there appear works meet for repentance, our country ought to be the first to go to the economic and moral rescue of Russia.<sup>62</sup>

Fortunately for the Soviets, American business magnates still offered short and long-term financing options during the 1920s, and maintained a tenuous relationship which signified a transition in concern toward the more pointedly critical issue of propaganda.

Installed in 1929, President Hoover's administration contained an air of legitimacy owing to his prior humanitarian activities in Europe as Director of the American Relief Administration during and immediately after the First World War. In fact, it was Hoover's 28 March 1919 report which vehemently compelled his Washington superiors to oppose further accommodations with Lenin and challenged, "we cannot ever remotely recognize this murderous tyranny without stimulating actionist radicalism in every country in Europe and without transgressing ... every national ideal of our own."<sup>63</sup> Following inauguration, Hoover corroborated his earlier pretenses and declared long-term credits and communism were incompatible because "no one would trust men who repudiated debts and agreements whenever it suited them."<sup>64</sup> In spite of this staunch

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<sup>62</sup> "The Recognition Policy of the United States, with Special Reference to Soviet Russia," *Foreign Policy Association Information Service*, Supplement No. 3 (November, 1926), 25-6.

<sup>63</sup> Will Brownell, *So Close to Greatness: A Biography of William C. Bullitt* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987), 93.

<sup>64</sup> Siegel, 291-2.

perspective, his administration's State Department learned of a series of upcoming wheat conferences between January 1930 and May 1931. The February 1931 "Second World Wheat Conference," however, was selected to provide an environment necessary for natural stages toward recognition. Leftist journalist Louis Fischer further elucidated such a possibility, and as a result, his formulations were circulated within the State Department's higher echelons and ultimately published in his 1931 *Why Recognize Russia?* Fischer confirmed the Soviets were ready to negotiate and further suggested:

wheat could afford the occasion for diplomatic contacts between the Soviet and American governments. ... A world wheat conference might ... make for better public feeling toward Russia. Prominent personalities ... would meet in quiet, serious, utilitarian discussion and perhaps pave the way to larger political pourparlers.<sup>65</sup>

Fischer further intimated recognition would be expedited by a "courageous executive" actively involved in the negotiation process "simply ... by making the announcement."<sup>66</sup> Hoover proved unwilling or unable to pursue such a course of action, and the burden of wheat and recognition fell to his successor. Incidentally, Roosevelt's later actions took the exact route initially put forth by Fischer – his close personal friend:

Wipe the slate clean, and invite negotiators to settle outstanding problems and exchange mutual pledges. There is really nothing more to it. Indeed, the whole matter is so plain that one sometimes wonders why all the commotion and opposition.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Fischer, 224-5.

<sup>66</sup> Fischer, 289.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*; Robert E. Bowers, "American diplomacy, the 1933 Wheat Conference, and Recognition of the Soviet Union," *Agricultural History* 40, No. 1 (January 1966), 42-3, [Hereafter cited as Bowers-Wheat]. Footnote taken from text for this quote: "Mr. Fischer does not claim credit for special influence, however. (Letter of Mr. Louis Fischer to the writer on July 4, 1963.) According to Mr. Fischer's letter, he also discussed this same matter with Secretary of State Stimson in 1932. Stimson, of course, saw both Roosevelt and Hull frequently between election and inauguration, 1932-1933."

During a January 1933 meeting with outgoing Secretary of State Henry Stimson Roosevelt broached the subject of Soviet recognition. Stimson responded by explaining the reasons behind the standing non-recognition policy, but more significantly, asserted specific criteria he believed must be met before the Soviet Union's recognition was possible.<sup>68</sup> Hoover's administration (and his Republican predecessors) convinced themselves the Soviet Union intended to foment worldwide revolution, a position bolstered by the nationalization of foreign nationals' private property, and the refusal to pay its alleged war debts. Stimson's chief concern was an assurance from the Soviet regime it would function within the "fundamental principle of the family of nations."<sup>69</sup> He earnestly believed that in surrendering even a small portion of America's international moral standing by conducting relations with nations refusing to live according to international precedent, would in essence, undermine international liberalism.

At this critical juncture, FDR comprehended that it was not whether the Soviets could gain recognition, but how; Fischer and Stimson alternatively provided him with the necessary blueprint to ensure success. In addition, several waves of sojourners to the Soviet Union fulfilled the role of midwife to this beneficial accord's birth. The first wave embraced the thrill of it all, romantic revolutionaries – John Reed, Louise Bryant, Lincoln Steffens, and William C. Bullitt – who sought to persuade political representatives to transcend their apprehensions and welcome the workers' paradise into the family of nations. Philanthropists followed in 1921, and provided food to the famine stricken regions of the Soviet Union, followed by an increasing number of educators, social workers, labor leaders, artists, social scientists, and businessmen. Eager to

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<sup>68</sup> Fischer, 201.

<sup>69</sup> Glantz, 18; Cassella-Blackburn, 93; Henry L. Stimson to Senator William E. Borah, letter, 8 September 1932, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), 1, [Hereafter cited as *FRUS: SU*].

identify with the languishing Soviet republic, these travelers conditioned their individual perception of reality and emphasized specific segments of Soviet society to protect their idyllic impulses. Frustrated by the complacent policies which spanned from Presidents Warren G. Harding to Herbert Hoover, Roosevelt changed this shortsighted delineation, particularly because of his sympathetic interest in the reds' efforts toward social idealism, experimentalism, and social reconstruction – all of which closely akin to his own world outlook.

Excepting the Wilson administration's disastrous policies regarding post-tsarist Russia, the solidification of republican foreign policy regarding the Soviet Union primarily stemmed from: an expectation of halting revolutionary activity abroad, a willingness to honor financial obligations of previous governments, or provide restitution to American individuals and businesses for property nationalized during the revolution. Various State Department officials, Kennan included, were skeptical of this premise's plausibility and labeled the Marxist state an unfit ally from the outset.<sup>70</sup> Others, such as Senator William Borah actively campaigned for a reversal of the non-recognition platform; Borah himself introduced in the American Senate seven resolutions calling for the establishment of diplomatic relations between May 1922 and March 1933.<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, Litvinov in 1926, and Stalin in a 1 December 1930 *New York Times* interview, were open to paying a portion of the debt in question, so long as Soviet counterclaims were likewise considered, and the U.S. granted credits or loans in exchange.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Kennan – *Memoirs*, 56-7.

<sup>71</sup> Nikolai V. Sivachev and Nikolai N. Yakovlev, *Russia and the United States*, translated by Olga Adler Titelbaum, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 84-5, [Hereafter cited as Sivachev]; Ira S. Cohen, "Congressional Attitudes toward the Soviet Union, 1917-1941," master's thesis, (University of Chicago, 1955), 45-6; Fischer, 140.

<sup>72</sup> "Stalin Sees Capitalists Drifting Surely to War; Puzzled by our Attitude," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1930, 1; Cassella-Blackburn, 99; Fischer, 216.



In consideration of these factors, Roosevelt was compelled to ford the U.S.-Soviet impasse, particularly because of Russia's investment potential and trade opportunities present in a nation of 160 million people. Fortunately, the 1932 domestic-issue focused election procured Roosevelt one of the most lopsided victories in U.S. history. Carrying forty-two states in total – every state west and south of Pennsylvania – on 8 November 1932 Roosevelt amassed fifty-seven percent of the popular vote, and 472 of 531 Electoral College members. His entrance into the White House, however, occurred during a period of immense international chaos caused by two bellicose foreign powers, and an American union addled by economic crisis. As a result, FDR sought formulated strategies to obtain American domestic and international security well before his tenure at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. To accomplish this feat, he identified a powerful ally; one with vast resources, a market ripe for economic proliferation, and desperately seeking legitimacy and validation in the international political arena. FDR was then forced to navigate international law and related precedencies, specifically the key detraction the Soviet regime's violent confiscation of power was *a priori* illegal. This perspective formed an underlying foundation of the United States government and pervaded its attitude toward the Soviets; further developments necessary to corroborate or refute this reality remained elusive.

### **The First Five Year Plan**

Bolstered by a limited arsenal, the impressive first decade of Bolshevik governance exploited rivalries within Europe and suppressed further economic, military, and diplomatic revolution within its sphere of influence. By 1924 the Soviets gained *de jure* recognition from every major European nation, and succeeded in solidifying a small portion of the foreign capital it desperately craved.<sup>73</sup> These developments prompted Stalin to passionately declare in 1927, "let

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<sup>73</sup> Paul Cravath, "Pros and Cons of Soviet Recognition," *Foreign Affairs* 9, Issue 2 (January 1931): 268.

them go to hell, all these liberal-pacifist philosophers with their *sympathy* for the U.S.S.R.”<sup>74</sup> The persistent fear of renewed intervention, however, marred their fledgling success and highlighted a frustration at the revolution’s failure to breach Russia’s borders. As such, a dynamic re-tooling of Soviet foreign policy began, particularly the humbling challenge of reconciling two contradictory factors: a primal necessitation to spread revolution, while prosaically guaranteeing Russia’s own internal survival. Leon Trotsky’s theory of “Permanent Revolution” initially overcame this paradox and proffered the assumption Russia’s revolution was not secured until the threat of imperialist intervention was thwarted by an equally significant revolution within other industrialized western nations. Socialism’s establishment in agrarian Russia therefore depended upon economic and technical support from successful revolutions in other countries with already established infrastructures, who would in turn similarly elevate Russia to the same status. This persistent belief in an imminent revolution retarded the Bolsheviks’ ability to formulate effective foreign policy, especially because Commissar for Foreign Affairs Trotsky saw little cause to establish relations with capitalist nations whose fate was already foretold; he boasted “the victorious revolution would not bother seeking recognition from the representatives of capitalist diplomacy.”<sup>75</sup>

The Soviets’ supposition that foreign relations and diplomatic recognition were superfluous was replaced in 1924 by a sober-minded re-evaluation of their need to reach a *modus vivendi* with the outside world. To the Bolsheviks’ chagrin, external capitalist powers never experienced a predicted worldwide revolution, which forced the Soviet Union to adopt a dual

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<sup>74</sup> Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1968), 188, [Hereafter cited as Ulam].

<sup>75</sup> Gabriel Gorodetsky, editor, *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-91: A Retrospective*, (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1994), 30.

foreign policy. Such a decision reconciled their revolutionary principles and established a *modus operandi* for foreign affairs, manifested in the attainment of national security by cultivating diplomatic relations with the west, and simultaneously encouraging clandestine subversion or revolution when provisions appeared constructive. The 1929 financial panic presented a suitably chaotic milieu for this paradoxical system to flourish. Appeals to the free market's natural laws appeared as renunciations of social responsibilities, and cynical masses reinforced ideological disillusionment amongst the intelligentsia: between democratic politics and dictatorial governance, between command and market economies, between liberal politics and communism or fascism. The countries of Europe's heartland were still the primary actors on the international stage, particularly because of the global depression's undermining of the United States' domestic markets and interconnected foreign relationships. 1929 also witnessed the launch of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan, which called for a massive restructuring of Russia's industrialization and required significant technical assistance and machinery from the capitalist west. Although U.S. exports to the Soviet Union exceeded every other country's, the amount represented just three percent of total U.S. exports; Soviet exports also expanded to obtain foreign capital to pay for these imports. President Roosevelt sought desperately to improve his nation's economic locus, and needed business opportunities to alleviate sensitivity among American business officials. Stuart Chase accorded currency to the expression "A New Deal" in his 1932 book of the same title, however, five years prior he realized that Soviet reality was the *newest* reality for mankind – "Why," said the author, "should Russians have all the fun of remaking a world?"<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Lewis S. Feuer, "American Travelers to the Soviet Union, 1917-1932: The Formation of a Component of New Deal Ideology," *American Quarterly* 14 (Summer 1962): 124-5, [Hereafter cited as Feuer].

This favorable outlook dissolved suddenly, at a time when the U.S. economy could least afford to lose a dominant trading partner; 1931 exports to the Soviet Union dipped to half those of the previous year. Further, in 1930 the United States supplied a quarter of Russia's imports – a figure which steadily declined until it decreased to one-twentieth in 1932.<sup>77</sup> During that year, a U.S. Commerce Department report responded to the Soviets' rapid decrease in purchase of American imports, and sought to assess Russia's finance and trade capabilities. The report found the Soviet economy possessed enormous potential when compared with its imperial predecessor, and U.S. exports to the Soviet Union actually "increased 233 percent as compared with American exports to pre-war Russia, [while] American imports from the Soviet Union have actually fallen off nearly 20 percent."<sup>78</sup> Exacerbated by "threats of embargoes and mendacious propaganda about conditions in the Soviet Union," importation unfortunately declined rapidly from 1930-2 by sixty-one percent, which compelled the Soviets to place orders with other countries; the most disturbing of which being a 1930 sixty-two percent increase to Germany.<sup>79</sup> Contrasting the Commerce Department's optimistic findings, a State Department report on trade cautioned little would change following potential recognition. According to this enunciation, if the Soviets obtained critical trade agreements they would neither remunerate their debts, nor end propaganda efforts. Politically, the Commerce report asserted the Soviet trade monopoly was an infinitely useful "weapon of political pressure," yet according to State the Soviet leadership could "turn trade off and on like a water faucet, regardless of all conditions."<sup>80</sup> Commerce thus

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<sup>77</sup> Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-41*, Vol. I: 1929-36, (New York: The Oxford University Press, 1956), 120, [Hereafter cited as Beloff].

<sup>78</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 93.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 96-7.

dictated the Soviet government proved an excellent credit risk, while State argued the Soviets were already in default to German banks and required extensive credits – on overly generous terms – to dig themselves out.

### **Aggressive Foreign Actors: Germany and Japan**

The global financial panic highlighted the Soviet market's potential, central planning, and social and economic practices and forcibly shifted American liberals further to the left. Individual recognition advocates longed for a signal of America's moral approval of the Soviet regime and encouraged the United States to court the burgeoning Soviet social experiment. The Soviets were not the only forces bent on altering the status quo, however, and the potential of another world war became all the more prescient with German fascism and Japanese militarism's respective predatory machinations. Rapprochement between the United States and Soviet Union therefore possessed a critical security dimension for both nations, in restraining Japanese Far Eastern aggression and related border skirmishes along the Soviet border, along with the added benefit of slowing Hitler's alteration of the European Versailles system. The Far Eastern situation further spiraled out of control with the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria, which directly threatened the Soviet Union's hegemonic status in Outer Mongolia, specifically the Kremlin's investment in the Chinese-Eastern Railway. This railroad forged a tenuous link through Manchuria, and connected the west to the vulnerable Russian port at Vladivostok. Stalin offered Tokyo a nonaggression pact and negotiations specifically related to the railroad, and blended firmness of will with conciliation when he turned to the issue of diplomatic recognition. During spring 1932 Moscow also turned to the U.S. as a potential source of support for opposing Japan's expansion, via indirect appeals by the Soviet press and unofficial diplomatic channels.

Hitler's fascist foreign policy likewise echoed imperial expansion, based upon a systematic vision of struggle to drive a contagious platform provided by the era's emerging mass media opportunities. A critical facet of this drive toward ruinous world conflict was the covet for *Lebensraum* – which presented immutable geographical conflict with Germany's neighbors – a fact well known to Stalin and his magnates who possessed a “specially translated *Mein Kampf* and [were] endlessly discussing the pros and cons of a German alliance.”<sup>81</sup> The true impetus for changing Soviet foreign policy, however, occurred in “hungry thirty-three” as a result of Hitler's victorious installation as chancellor.<sup>82</sup> While the Soviet leadership attempted to make inroads with the Nazi government, Hitler rebuffed their overtures and forced the Kremlin to shift toward a policy of “collective security” to combat outside aggression. The Soviet Union never entirely abandoned efforts to elicit cooperation with Germany, although mistrust of its capitalist colleagues failing to come to its aid overshadowed fear of German expansionism. Tellingly, Moscow hedged its bets and signed a series of nonaggression pacts with multiple European nations in early 1930s: Lithuania (May 1931), Finland (January 1932), Latvia (February 1932), Estonia (May 1932), Poland (July 1932), and France (November 1932). Additionally, Soviet representatives attended disarmament talks held in Geneva during 1932, and concluded mutual assistance pacts with Czechoslovakia and France in May 1935.<sup>83</sup>

The arduous task of implementing collective security ultimately fell to Litvinov because of his mastery of diplomatic intrigue, and possession of a realistic assessment of international

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<sup>81</sup> Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 307, [Hereafter cited as Montefiore]. Quote is taken from a recollection of Andrei Zhdanov's son, Yury.

<sup>82</sup> Montefiore, 120.

<sup>83</sup> Glantz, 21-2.

balance of power politics. Years later, noting his demotion from Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov pluckily inquired of Stalin, “does that mean you regard me as an Enemy of the People?” Stalin hesitated, then decreed “No, we don’t consider Papasha [Litvinov] an Enemy. Papasha’s an honest revolutionary.”<sup>84</sup> This courageous outburst impressed the *vozhd*, who consistently just preserved the cosmopolitan curmudgeon, undoubtedly because Litvinov’s usefulness and respected status in the west remained self-evident. Normalizing relations with the United States obviously served the Soviet government’s best interests and became of preeminent importance, not to mention aid the propagation of paranoia used by Kremlin elite to allege encirclement by increasingly hostile imperialist states. To stem the tide of such a hostile environment, it became necessary to march toward the production of infrastructure, a missing component that would be vital to any potential future conflicts. Enter Stalin’s first “Five-Year Plan” – a massive internal readjustment which provided the master-key to every facet of Russian foreign and domestic policy after 1929.

The gloomy outlook of the late-1920s produced a miasma of suspicion and pessimism in Moscow, with renewed and increasingly panicked warnings of imminent intervention by foreign powers. Stalin utilized this war scare to curb internal opposition, and prepared his people for the demanding sacrifices of industrialization and collectivization which lay ahead. At the very least, this transition was an admission of the dual policy’s failure, and paved the way for filling its void in Soviet domestic governance. Prior to Stalin’s consolidation of Russian leadership into an oligarchical dictatorship, a divergence in perspective amongst foreign communism was possible. By 1930, however, if one wished to remain a communist – they were required to be a Stalinist. This manufactured solidarity of purpose was combined with an inward conviction that a lengthy

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<sup>84</sup> Montefiore, 303; An apocryphal story existed that Litvinov previously saved Stalin from being beaten by dock workers in 1907 London – “I haven’t forgotten that time in London,” Stalin routinely quipped.

peace period lay ahead, and provided the 1927-8 impetus for Soviet leadership to implement a sequence of momentous domestic policies which sought to transform the Soviet Union, in addition to the larger world communist campaign. Recognized as the most drastic attempt in modern European history to alter the economic and social structure of a nation within such a brief period of time, Soviet industrialization and collectivization involved compulsory conditions for its rural populations to transform their lives in nearly every respect. If the dual policy imploded and no threat of war existed, however, it was useless to coddle western public opinion; yet Hitler's ascension to power continued to represent a tangible danger. Thus, appeasement of western liberal-pacifists became a singularly important component of Soviet foreign policy, in conjunction with the secondary aim of destroying European socialist offshoots un-aligned with Moscow. The great depression's onset did not alter this elemental dynamic but instead renewed the communist parties' militancy, and struck a different tone from the years 1921-7 wherein the Comintern's expected seizure of power would be accomplished in a relatively brief period of time. Conversely, Stalinism viewed nationalism and nation-states as transient precepts within modern world history's contextual understanding of Marxism. The Soviet Union, however, needed to behave as a nation in order to be welcomed into the family of nations, whilst still retaining Bolshevism's radical propaganda and revolutionary apparatus. The plan's primary objective demanded the attainment of specific parameters, although its finer details were the chief influence on international public opinion along with the resultant policies of capitalist states' response to the Red Army's military potential, and related economic effects of Russia's emergence onto the world market.



## The Communist International

Established in 1919, the Communist International (Comintern) was established to direct communist movements throughout the world. Prior to 1928, European communist parties were financially and organizationally dependent on their Soviet host; that year, however, witnessed a swing in their slavish subjugation to the ruling party apparatus and its leader – the *vozhd*. By the 1930s the Comintern was supremely under Stalin’s direct control, marching in lock-step with a militant rhetoric meant to counter the world’s economic depression. Simultaneously, Stalin intimated he was willing to negotiate with the United States in 1933 and reoriented his political construct toward cooperation with the west. The first Five Year Plan’s abhorrent side effects – the loss of millions of innocent lives due to crushing repression, man-made famine, extreme agricultural losses, and an overall decrease in the standard of living by nearly one quarter when compared to 1928 – were by then well known in the west.<sup>85</sup> The U.S.S.R.’s communist party during this period was similarly completely overhauled, and evolved into a fully totalitarian formulation with Stalin’s defeat of Nikolai Bukarin’s “Right Opposition,” which removed any nucleus of leadership within the party to oppose his reign of terror. It was precisely this governmental structure which FDR hoped to facilitate favorable diplomatic relations. By 1931, U.S. diplomats in Poland and Romania reported directly to the State Department on the influx of refugees fleeing the Pale. Further, reporters and travelers personally apprised Chief of the Division of Eastern European Affairs, Robert F. Kelley, of food shortages and its accompanying litany of horrors: suicide, murder, and cannibalism, a pervasive network of informants, and summary executions of officials for “sabotage.” Roosevelt was similarly made aware of this genocide, although Kelley made only indirect mention of it in his official presentations to

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<sup>85</sup> Ulam, 183.

Secretary of State Hull, and the president never referenced it in his official communications with Soviet representatives Litvinov or Kalinin. Historians forever fault FDR for not addressing these atrocities when communicating terms to his Slavic counterparts, or later recognition negotiations.

Ending its Five Year Plan in 1932 – a year early – Litvinov’s spring 1933 speech to the Central Committee harkened “the greater our plans of development, the more rapid their pace, the greater is our interest in the preservation of peace.”<sup>86</sup> Entitled “The Results of the First Five-Year Plan,” Stalin’s own 7 January 1933 musings on its progress explained,

The fundamental task of the five-year plan was to transfer our country, with its backward, and in part medieval, technology, on to the lines of new, modern technology. ... to convert the U.S.S.R. from an agrarian and weak country, ... into an industrial and powerful country, fully self-reliant and independent of the caprices of world capitalism. ... [and] in converting the U.S.S.R. into an industrial country, to completely oust the capitalist elements, to widen the front of socialist forms of economy, and to create the economic basis for the abolition of classes in the U.S.S.R., for the building of a socialist country. ... to create all the necessary technical and economic prerequisites for increasing to the utmost the defense capacity of the country, enabling it to organize determined resistance to any attempt at military intervention from abroad, to any attempt at military attack from abroad.<sup>87</sup>

Molotov likewise pointed out a renewed international interest in resuming diplomatic relations once it was effectively determined the Soviet Union’s relative strength had successfully calcified at the international level.<sup>88</sup>

Obviously, Soviet enterprise necessitated increased western industrial and technical imports, and increased American engineers pouring into Russia.<sup>89</sup> These engineers’ eye-witness

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<sup>86</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 92.

<sup>87</sup> J.V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 13: 1930 – January 1934, “The Results of the First Five-Year Plan: Report Delivered on January 7, 1933,” (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), [Hereafter cited as *Stalin-Works*].

<sup>88</sup> Beloff, 121.

<sup>89</sup> Feuer, 140-2.

accounts provided convincing tidings of Soviet state planning's grandeur, and transcended divergent social systems to provide an accurate reflection of Soviet political and social constructs. Compared to earlier sojourners, these engineers were not spectators hurriedly shepherded through model hospitals, schools, and museums, but functioned as participant-observers within Soviet factories. They also stayed for much longer periods of time than the casual American visitor, and signed contracts between one and three years. By 1931, however, staggering inefficiency and bureaucratic obstruction essentially terminated this technological exchange, and the relationship between Soviet and American engineers delved into friction and fracture. The Five Year Plans' fever pitch strained nerves and provoked jealousy due to the higher pay and better living conditions of the American counterparts. Further intensifying tensions was the perpetual state of anxiety which preoccupied the Russian psyche, whereupon the slightest error may result in death and produced workmen who purposely avoided responsibility to circumvent incrimination. The spectacle of a vast backward country revolutionizing itself illuminated in 1933 what U.S. liberals and New Deal proponents echoed during in previous decades. Soviet leaders affirmed absolute security and a system compatible to their worldview, however, never committed to its solidification as the result of merely signing a single treaty, or winning only a single battle. Utopia thus required extreme patience balanced with numerous and difficult prerequisites, each of which contained promises of distantly future favorable conditions. The Soviet citizenry did not generally believe the *immediate* attainment of the communist ideal was possible, although few denied its eventual absolute achievement. Each international event furthered this elucidation because no time limit existed for its realization; each progression forward could thus be hailed a glorious victory, and any set-back proportionately minimized.

### **Chapter 3. Prelude to a Diplomatic Waltz: FDR's Controversial First Steps, his Relationship with State Department, and Synopsis of Key Impediments to Recognition**

#### **Diplomatic Calculations**

Key chronological landmarks evidence the Roosevelt administration's steady progression toward Soviet recognition, and highlight FDR's personal pursuit of its achievement – a desire harbored well before his inauguration. Recognition was thus hurriedly brought to fruition by a U.S. State Department apparatus carefully positioned to execute his direct and explicit orders. FDR's stacked deck with State assured high level diplomatic meetings and correspondence, carried out clandestinely to assure a successful outcome with Moscow, and protect key American interests. Foreign Service officers represented a prominent part of the post-Second World War American foreign policy toward the Soviet Union. Likewise, diplomats – especially each president charged with overseeing them – occupied equally significant roles during its inception and formulation.

Many vacillated in their assessment of the Kremlin's objectives, and viewed Moscow as unwilling to adhere to the social construct of the “family of nations” perception present within the interwar period. This contemptuous perspective of the Soviets as incorrigible ideologues antagonistic to western cooperation festered in the minds of government representatives. Those unwilling to accept this undifferentiated illustration perceived Moscow's intentions in four distinct ways, each with its own distinctive foreign-policy paradigm. First, *ideological cooperation* assumed Russia willing to subscribe to and embrace the reconstruction of the post-First World War world according to liberal-democratic values and beliefs derived from absolute and universal principles. These diplomats supported a policy of accommodation and

compromise. Secondly, *ideological confrontation* perceived the Soviets as confrontational; contended to represent ideological expansionism and aggressive threats to liberal-democratic values. This group advocated any action which provided an ideological counteroffensive without regard to its substantive make-up. Lastly, those who adopted a view of *realistic cooperation* perceived Moscow as indifferent to liberal-democratic values, and contended the Soviets adhered to a “world order based solely on national interests derived from the circumstances of relative military and political power.”<sup>90</sup> As such, this group championed the formation of spheres of influence. Incidentally, *realistic confrontation* believed the advancement of Soviet interests by means of militaristic expansion, however, it was not seriously considered by professional diplomats, as it logically summoned forth a policy of retaliatory confrontation. Realistic cooperation ultimately won out and pervaded the State Department’s higher echelons, whose members viewed recognition as merely a brisk political victory. For Roosevelt, recognition was no mere stopgap; if the Soviet Union could be bolstered diplomatically and economically, perhaps it could then aid in halting Japan’s expansion. Further, the economic and political benefits of recognition would keep businesses happy, and forestall the rampant domestic crisis within the United States. Robert F. Kelley and the State Department, however, observed relations between the Soviets and other countries and declared “friction and controversy have been the inevitable result of recognition.”<sup>91</sup>

Fortunately, Roosevelt employed his own particular brand of personal charisma as a delicate and calculating politician, which viewed the world in terms of manageable problems not

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<sup>90</sup> Hugh DeSantis, *The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933-47*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 2-3.

<sup>91</sup> Robert F. Kelly to Congressman Hamilton Fish, 19 October 1929, box 3, folder 4, Robert F. Kelley Papers, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.; Cassella-Blackburn, 92.

uncompromising dilemmas. For him, compromise was merely a part of any deal brokered and every person a willing participant, so long as they could be shown how they benefited.

Persuading the American populace, however, called for a systematic gauging of public opinion, and the construction of a course for which recognition was the inevitable goal. Over a thirty-day period, the U.S. State Department surveyed 300 newspapers and revealed little interest in the premise, although direct inquiries to a total 1,139 newspapers revealed sixty-three percent favored recognition.<sup>92</sup> Further, simultaneous estimations ranging from voter surveys, periodical editorials, and State department memoranda evidenced Americans were generally receptive to recognition. To guarantee success, however, western receptivity had to be matched with favorable and reliable information obtained from within the Soviet Union. FDR set about this task by commissioning several fact finding missions on his behalf – well in advance of his formal inauguration – and on the advice of advisors who called for just such a premise in May 1932. During this process a key introduction ultimately proved most beneficial to FDR, and recognition overall.<sup>93</sup>

### **Bullitt's 1932 Trip to Europe**

Although the Republican Party enjoyed a monopoly of foreign relations leaders in 1932, William C. Bullitt's unique experiences made him the most well-informed person on U.S-Soviet foreign affairs. Intimately connected with Soviet diplomatic affairs, Bullitt returned to the Soviet Union in May 1932 to renew old ties and conduct an informal survey of its conditions.<sup>94</sup> On returning, Bullitt and close friend Louis Wehle devised a plan for seeking recognition which

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<sup>92</sup> Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-45* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 79 [Hereafter cited as Dallek].

<sup>93</sup> Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*, 544; Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph* (Boston, 1956), 272.

<sup>94</sup> His last sojourn occurred during the infamous 1919 "Mission to Moscow."

required the latter's October 1932 re-introduction of Roosevelt to Bullitt. Because Roosevelt was unable to travel outside the United States himself due to overwhelming domestic concerns, he was doubly eager to take advantage of Bullitt's eyewitness accounts. FDR examined the exiled diplomat's findings and gauged them a clarion call for foreign affairs, and calculated the approaching European political collapse inevitable unless imperative debt negotiations were implemented. At the behest of Roosevelt, Bullitt traveled to Europe three times between 1932-3 to ascertain the precarious situations of key political leaders.<sup>95</sup> Obviously, Bullitt's overtures coincided nicely with the president's quest for information regarding Russia, particularly because of Bullitt's eagerness to leap back into American politics. Following twelve years compiling broad networks of acquaintances within Europe's governments and academia, Bullitt fed off Roosevelt's political magnetism and liberal outlook – just as he had done with Woodrow Wilson. Bullitt visualized FDR as the world's last great hope, yet maintained a safe distance from the executive until after the election to ensure, then *candidate*, Roosevelt did not appear to overstep.

This opening dialogue between Roosevelt and Bullitt solidified their political relationship and the junior diplomat's place within the president's newly formed State Department. Roosevelt and Bullitt became fast friends owing to a shared common social background, similarly “temperamental congeniality,” and heightened by a “boldly intuitional” nature.<sup>96</sup> Because geopolitical and economic concerns constantly intertwined for the thirty-second president, Roosevelt tended to absorb only new information he could grasp quickly. Perhaps

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<sup>95</sup> Bullitt to Missy Lehand, Roosevelt's personal secretary, 24 January 1933, President's Personal File, 1124, Bullitt folder, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY.

<sup>96</sup> Louis B. Wehle, *Hidden Threads of History: Wilson through Roosevelt*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), 114-5 [Hereafter cited as Wehle].

subconsciously, he refrained from logical analysis and compensated by gambling – often successfully – on eleventh-hour, inspired decision-making. Louis Wehle claimed:

Despite his moral courage, he [FDR] was, as I had occasions from observing, extremely sensitive to adverse criticism from friends, and was immediately depressed by it, although he would quickly recover his self-confidence or show of it. He shrank from private controversy. In listening to a proposal, he was inclined to avoid a plain negative answer, so that, as biographers and others have often noted, many left his presence interpreting his response as Yes when he had not said it; and misunderstandings often ensued.<sup>97</sup>

Bullitt, however, possessed a capacity for sustained critical thinking which required relevant facts resolved into tangible plans of action. These complementary political tacticians were ideally matched: Bullitt vividly and swiftly made available his vast scholarship of world history and unique familiarity with European chieftains, and Roosevelt readily gleaned information which provoked decisive action.

Bullitt's proximity to the Democratic Party and New Deal administration allowed him an immense influence on policy-making decisions and became "one of the chief advisors to President Roosevelt on the question of recognition."<sup>98</sup> An eleven-page memorandum chronicled his tour of Europe, relevant discussions held there, and correspondence home; all forwarded to Roosevelt by Wehle, who relayed FDR's instructions back to Bullitt. Returning to the U.S on 16 December 1932, Bullitt met with both Wehle and Roosevelt on 27 December to submit a full report. On 15 January 1933 Bullitt returned to Europe and continued submitting regular reports to Roosevelt at Warm Springs, Georgia. His activity, however, soon provoked suspicion and

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<sup>97</sup> Wehle, 116.

<sup>98</sup> William Appleman Williams, *American-Russian Relations, 1781-1947*, (New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1952), 238-9 [Hereafter cited as Williams – A-R Relations]; citation a direct quotation in text from Hull to author, 19 December 1949.



scandal, with headlines that prompted a cancellation of the trip's remainder; Bullitt returned to Paris on 10 February.<sup>99</sup>

Although Bullitt initially supported recognition, he shared many of the State Department – East European Affairs Division's reservations.<sup>100</sup> By October 1933 he was asked to submit memoranda which outlined his views toward recognition and echoed earlier considerations put forth by Robert F. Kelley, particularly: “whatever method may be used to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Government, it seems essential that formal recognition should not be accorded except as the final act of an agreement covering a number of questions in dispute.”<sup>101</sup> Bullitt remained optimistic about U.S.-Soviet relations and shared the president's conviction that once recognition was accorded details necessary to clench such an agreement could be negotiated thereafter. Further, Bullitt's European trips ripened the president's resolve and

crystallized Roosevelt's advance determination to restore to the President the initiative in foreign relations, and educated him intensively for pursuing that policy ... they helped to establish the precedent that a President-elect, within appropriate limits, may properly confer with domestic and foreign officials about problems that he will have to meet.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Orville H. Bullitt, editor, *For the President, Personal and Secret: Correspondence between Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 23-4 [Hereafter cited as *For the President*]; “Envoys Asked to Report on Bullitt Acts,” *The Oklahoman*, 5 February 1933, 19: “Both the State Department and president-elect Roosevelt have denied that Bullitt has any governmental sanction to enter into negotiations”; “Bullitt Given ‘Clean Slate,’ *The Oklahoman*, 8 February 1933, 10: “In forwarding state department replies to inquiries abroad made at the suggestion of the senator, Undersecretary Castle wrote Senator Robinson there were no indications Bullitt had represented himself to European high officials as a representative of President-elect Roosevelt. The Paris cablegram state Bullitt had made it clear in his views to French officials he was acting in the capacity of a journalist and a specialist in foreign affairs. At no time, so far as the American representatives were able to ascertain, did Bullitt pretend to have any credentials from Roosevelt or any other prominent member of the Democrat party.”

<sup>100</sup> “Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Bullitt),” 4 October 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 16-7.

<sup>101</sup> Glantz, 20.

<sup>102</sup> Wehle, 122.

This experience indelibly aided the executive's future diplomatic and foreign policy considerations, and endowed him with a uniquely useful archive for coming decades.

None of the men involved with Bullitt's travels could foresee Hitler's momentous rise, his long-term impact in world affairs, or the financial impact of actions carried out in at his direction. Incidentally, this shortsighted viewpoint represented a general failure present throughout Europe's western leaders. The other equally historically significant figure which presented yet another unknown quantity was, of course, Stalin. The Georgian leader had to be cautious with proposed foreign policy objectives which deviated from orthodox Marxism, because Marxism-Leninism established an intensely ideological political and cultural structure facilitated by a staunchly philosophical and moral concept and precluded all others. This perception was integral to communist foreign policy. Stalin himself – replete in all his power – was bound by this system's requirements for rationalizing deviations. Policy could thus be dictated from above, so long as it coincided with the institutional confines of communist morality. Incidentally, Walter Duranty – himself a champion of recognition and improved U.S.-Soviet relations – alerted in a 12 June 1933 *New York Times* article that Stalinism transitioned away from comprehensive global revolution, an occurrence which dictated “rival systems may live side by side in amity.”<sup>103</sup> Stalin harkened to the world's proletarian masses – common people who inevitably suffered greatly – and positioned the Soviet Union as their savior. With this shift away from carnage the Soviet government became “intensely pacifist,” in order to construct a socialist system which ensured the survival of its state and people.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Walter Duranty, “Russians Fearful of Parley Failure,” *The New York Times*, 12 June 1933, 2.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

## FDR's Direct Appeal to Heads of State, May 1933

A further step toward solidifying Soviet approval of U.S. diplomatic recognition was Roosevelt's historic May 1933 invitation, titled "Message to Heads of Governments," as Soviet President Kalinin was buried within the list of government heads destined to receive FDR's urgent plea for peace.<sup>105</sup> Some contend this controversial step alone constituted recognition, however, it may simply evidence Roosevelt's spontaneity.<sup>106</sup> Generally, such an important message would be disseminated by the State Department at the Secretary of State's direct behest, however, Secretary Hull's involvement in recognition's lead-up are miniscule, if not largely ignored. Interestingly, Hull and several other division heads were not informed of Roosevelt's inclusion of Kalinin in his address, until it became public knowledge.<sup>107</sup> The final act, which signaled to the public and his posterity that Roosevelt intended to conduct recognition efforts personally and without interference, occurred when the executive dispatched Hull to the Montevideo Conference; far removed from Washington and the potential arrival of Russian representatives.<sup>108</sup> Incidentally, for the majority of his secretaryship (unbeknownst to the public), extremely ill Hull suffered from diabetes and bi-lateral tubercular lesions.<sup>109</sup> Harold L. Ickes recorded his pleasure at hearing this series of events which undoubtedly paved the way toward

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<sup>105</sup> "Roosevelt to Various Chiefs of State," 16 May 1933, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1933*, Vol. I, 143-45 [Hereafter cited as *FRUS-1933*].

<sup>106</sup> Bowers-Wheat, 44-5; Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*, 545.

<sup>107</sup> Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*, 554; Harper, Samuel N., editor, *The Russia I Believe In: The Memoirs of Samuel N. Harper, 1902-1941* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1945), 200-1 [Hereafter cited as Harper].

<sup>108</sup> Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*, 554; See *FRUS-SU*, especially 1-63.

<sup>109</sup> Doenecke, 11.

recognition, a decision he and many in Washington had been in favor of for many years.<sup>110</sup> Moscow was similarly satisfied with the invitation, and recognized their inclusion in FDR's appeal was the first direct communication between the Kremlin and the United States government, since the October 1917 Revolution.

### **The London Economic Conference, June – July 1933**

This diplomatic prelude's final step was the June – July 1933 London Economic Conference. The singularly historic act of this conclave was Bullitt's meeting with Litvinov, an awkward meeting considering the two had not had significant interaction for over a decade and had not generally been on good terms during their prior encounters. Numerous U.S. diplomats paraded through the Soviet delegation's doors to meet with Litvinov and his colleagues, including Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Bullitt on 22 June, Assistant Secretary of State Raymond Moley on 2 July, and Hull; this impressive and unofficial procession simultaneously dispelled any question as to the Americans' desire for recognition.<sup>111</sup> The critical meeting between Litvinov and Morgenthau was the first official conversation between Soviet and American envoys, enunciated by a State department telegram which boasted "Delegation made its first contact with Russia and opened official conversations to sound out Russian willingness to participate in world wheat accord when Morgenthau saw Litvinov and found him particularly agreeable."<sup>112</sup> Taken together, these conversations "paved the way" toward rapprochement,

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<sup>110</sup> Entry of "Friday, 20 October 1933," Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, The First Thousand Days, 1933-6* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1953), 111 [Hereafter cited as Ickes].

<sup>111</sup> Beloff, 122; Karl Radek, "Amerika "otkrivaet" SSSR" [America 'discovers' the U.S.S.R.], 15 July 1933, *Izvestia*, 149-55: the author gives credit to five noncommunist Americans for their consistent efforts toward recognition – the other three were Walter Duranty, Walter Borah, and Louis Fischer.

<sup>112</sup> Bowers-Wheat, 49.

although any mention of trade negotiations was quickly quashed by Litvinov until formal recognition was formally extended.<sup>113</sup>

Bullitt's clandestine discussion with Litvinov at the London Economic Conference successfully connected the recognition issue with the far east's political intrigue, and sought to position the Soviet Union as "a bulwark against the aggressive tendencies ... developing in Japan."<sup>114</sup> Roosevelt asked Morgenthau and Bullitt in October 1933 to approach Boris Skvirsky, Moscow's preeminent representative in the United States, and gave them explicit instructions on how they should proceed with the discussion. Following FDR's detailed orders Morgenthau invited Skvirsky to his office where the Treasury Secretary promptly declared Bullitt would join them in five minutes with an unsigned paper which carried the president's full authority. When Bullitt entered the room he stated

This document can be made into an invitation ... between our two countries. We wish you to telegraph the contents ... by your most confidential code, and learn if it is acceptable to your people. If it is ... the President will sign this piece of paper ... If they are not acceptable, will you give me your word of honor that there never will be any publicity ... and that the whole matter will be kept a secret?<sup>115</sup>

Skvirsky assured them he agreed to the terms, and inquired if this was a confirmed signal diplomatic recognition was the goal. Bullitt quipped "what more can you expect than to have your representative sit down with the President of the United States."<sup>116</sup> The message and its importance were warmly received in Moscow, and FDR began corresponding with Kalinin, inviting Russia to send a representative to talk with him personally, and asserted "difficulties

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<sup>113</sup> Bowers-Wheat, 50.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas R. Maddux, *Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union, 1933-41* (Tallahassee, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1980), 14-5 [Hereafter cited as Maddux].

<sup>115</sup> Dallek, 79.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

between great nations can be removed only by frank, friendly conversations.”<sup>117</sup> This proposition was cordially received and accommodated; Kalinin’s response echoed optimism at overturning a “most abnormal and regrettable a situation.”<sup>118</sup>

## **Key Impediments to Recognition**

### **A. The “Kerensky Debt”**

Emperor Nicholas II’s tsarist government was essentially replaced in March 1917 by Alexander Kerensky’s Provisional Government, which in turn capitulated to Bolshevik governance on 7 November. On 28 January 1918, the Soviets subsequently repudiated any indebtedness of the approximately □ 12,000,000,000 of either predecessor:

(1) All State loans concluded by the governments of the Russian landowners and the Russian bourgeoisie enumerated in a list which is being especially published are annulled (annihilated) as from December 1, 1917. (2) In the same manner are annulled all guarantees given by the said governments of the loans of various enterprises and institutions. (3) All foreign loans are annulled unconditionally without any exception.<sup>119</sup>

Roughly □ 7,000,000,000 of this total was composed of war loans, while the remainder was the result of bonds guaranteed or issued by the Imperial Russian government. A series of decrees quickly followed which privatized property inside the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, including regions in which the majority of foreign interests were located. In addition, one document was a waiver for all counterclaims against the United States for damages which

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<sup>117</sup> McJimsey, 312, 319-334; “President Roosevelt to the President of the Soviet All-Union Central Executive Committee (Kalinin) to President Roosevelt,” 17 October 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 18.

<sup>118</sup> “The President of the Soviet All-Union Central Executive Committee (Kalinin),” 10 October 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 17-8.

<sup>119</sup> Bishop, 140.

resulted from invasion of American troops during the allied intervention.<sup>120</sup> The prescient realization that the Soviet leadership inherited all their predecessors' assets, but not their liabilities spread throughout the west.<sup>121</sup> The imperial family's July 1918 liquidation, and exodus of remaining Romanov relatives, further complicated western expectations of collecting the \$86,000,000 the tsarist government incurred through National City Bank during 1914 – 7.<sup>122</sup>

Fear for the safety of the Provisional Government's representatives and their eventual respective flights from Russia, similarly complicated matters. At the time of its November 1917 collapse, Alexander Kerensky's failed administration owed the U.S. Treasury \$187,000,000 from purchasing military supplies.<sup>123</sup> In addition to the funds denoted for the administrations of Nicholas II and Kerensky respectively, was \$11,000,000 used to purchase military goods within the U.S., bringing the total of Russian military debt to \$284,000,000.<sup>124</sup> Obviously, the Soviets refused to incur this arrearage, due to their fundamental disagreement over Russia's involvement in the war, in the first place.<sup>125</sup> Further, the Soviet Union rejected the notion of paying back the □ 117,650,000 in material they nationalized, most of which concerned International Harvester and Singer Sewing Machine, Co. With this addition, the grand total of money owed to the United States by the Russian leadership – recent past, and present – was \$345,000,000 without interest.<sup>126</sup> Comparatively, the U.S. held only seven percent of Russia's overall war debt,

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<sup>120</sup> Robert P. Browder, "Soviet Far Eastern Policy and American Recognition, 1932-4," *Pacific Historical Review* 21, no. 3 (1 August 1952), 270.

<sup>121</sup> Bishop, 141.

<sup>122</sup> Endnote in Cassella-Blackburn, 113.

<sup>123</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 113.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended 30 June 1920*, <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/194#15566>, (accessed 29 January 2016), 329; Siegel, 310.

whereas nineteen percent was France's, and seventy percent belonged to Great Britain; any settlement with the U.S. would thus have resultant repercussions in those allied nations as well.<sup>127</sup> Further, according to the Soviet Union's ideological dictates any capitalist loans proffered by the west were merely exploitative tools. Regardless of whether the Provisional Government or tsarist administration acquired the money – to reimburse western governments any amount was an acknowledgment of capitalist power and superiority.<sup>128</sup>

### **B. Religious Rights of Americans in Russia, and Comintern Interference / Propaganda**

President Roosevelt was particularly interested in the extent of religious freedom within the Soviet Union. Obviously, he was unable to obtain a formal guarantee of complete religious freedom within the Marxist state, and subsequently settled for a promise that all resident Americans in the Soviet Union would have the right to worship as they pleased, "in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience."<sup>129</sup> The Soviet Union's 1936 "Stalin Constitution" included an unmistakable article with clear language which guaranteed religious freedom – a proviso heartily received by the western world – the truth, however, was a fundamentally atheistic and repressive Stalinist structure which crushed dissent and disseminated intensive anti-religious propaganda. Incidentally, it did not acknowledge the previous 1929 Soviet Constitution, shepherded by Lenin, which prohibited religious propaganda.

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<sup>126</sup> Endnote in Cassella-Blackburn, 113; "Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Eastern European Affairs (Kelley), 25 October 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 23-4. This figure is a conservative estimate – Dallek, 81 asserted "the State Department calculated [the figure] to be more than \$600 million," while Doenecke, 18-9 alleged the U.S. Treasury placed the amount at "\$636 million."

<sup>127</sup> Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-41*. Vol. I: 1929-36, (New York: The Oxford University Press, 1956), 125; W.H. Shepardson, *The United States in World Affairs, 1934-5*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935), 84.

<sup>128</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 108.

<sup>129</sup> William H. Standley and Arthur A. Ageton, *Admiral Ambassador to Russia*, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), 182.



Interference would be a continual matter during subsequent negotiations, particularly global concerns over the Comintern's involvement in western domestic affairs. The American Minister in Riga informed the State Department,

as for Russian propaganda in the United States, it is a fair guess that the Russian Government will agree to give it up and perhaps even ... restrain the Communist Party ... The Russians will not admit it but the fact is that their propaganda campaign is dying a natural death for the excellent reason that it does not pay.<sup>130</sup>

As ambitious a prognostication as this was, it must be understood the extent to which the Comintern's infrastructure had metastasized. Communist propaganda which originated from Moscow's hub was not merely literature but a fully staffed apparatus, directed, subsidized, and controlled by party officials who sought to establish subservient Soviet satellites throughout Europe, Latin America, and the United States.<sup>131</sup> Interestingly, the Comintern had not held a formal meeting since 1928 because Stalin's machinery purposely toned down Trotsky's premise of world revolution. In response to the failure of other industrialized states to follow Russia's lead, Stalin championed "Socialism in One Country" to fill its void. According to the Soviet despot, the Soviet Union's vast resources more than provided for their needs, therefore, outside assistance to build economic interests and a thriving infrastructure would be beneficial, but not required. It was hoped that if the Comintern lay dormant it would not frighten away possible capitalist collaboration, although this decline in emphasis continued until extensive debate eventually caused its 1935 revival.

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<sup>130</sup> Bishop, 27.

<sup>131</sup> Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*, 546.

## **FDR vs. The U.S. State Department**

Roosevelt was far more worldly than the advisors which resisted him, yet his mastery of the political landscape's shifting, inevitable priorities truly set him apart. FDR shunned naiveté and gleaned useful information from those with whom he trusted in order to strike a wide path for his will; in spring 1933, Roosevelt willed the United States to formally extend diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union. With public opinion successfully on his side, the last remaining impediment to this goal appeared the U.S. State Department, caused by an organic divide along generational lines. Whereas Roosevelt's foreign policy experience was driven by the First World War's formative events and subsequent Treaty of Versailles' failures, younger foreign service officers were contrastingly influenced by the 1938 Munich Agreement, and 1939 Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. The same specialization which created experts capable of understanding Soviet developmental nuances produced a generation of State Department analysts restricted in their willingness and ability to place the Soviet situation in a broader international setting.<sup>132</sup> This obsession with communism's expansion all but blinded them to the increasing threat of Japanese and German militarism. The State Department's Division of Eastern European Affairs only became more frustrated over time as their perception of being overlooked escalated into hostility, and eventually mutiny against the policies they were tasked to implement. They had no way of knowing just how high (or far back), the discontent spanned.

If John Nance Garner had not agreed to be FDR's initial vice-president Hull was next in line for the position. Generally ignored by Roosevelt once appointed Secretary of State, Hull was surprised at initially even being considered, and advised by Louis Wehle to accept on condition that Roosevelt agree Hull chose his subordinates. Incidentally, Hull was so charmed by the

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<sup>132</sup> Glantz, 13.

president-elect at Warm Springs he neglected to request this crucial caveat. As a result, FDR later handwrote a note to Raymond Moley which listed critical appointments and included the names of Breckenridge Long, William C. Bullitt, Sumner Welles, William Phillips, and other choices for second-tier staff. From the beginning, Roosevelt circumvented Hull and dealt directly with these men which allowed unrestricted backchannels inside the administration. The decision to handpick sub-cabinet members evidenced Roosevelt's detailed knowledge of governance and separated him from most executives. Secretary Ickes further lamented:

The cold fact is that on important matters we [the Cabinet] are seldom called upon for advice. We never discuss exhaustively any policy of Government or question of political strategy. The President makes all of his own decisions ... On particular questions he will call into his office persons directly interested, but it is fair to say that the Cabinet is not a general council upon whose advice the President relies or the opinions of which, on important matters, he calls for. Our Cabinet meetings only skim the surface of things on routine matters. As a matter of fact, I never think of bringing up even a serious departmental issue at Cabinet meeting, and apparently the other members follow the same policy...<sup>133</sup>

Roosevelt expressed disappointment at not having greater contact to President Wilson while the Navy's assistant secretary, and ensured his own subordinates did not feel the same.<sup>134</sup>

Robert F. Kelley drafted a lengthy memorandum which outlined key characteristics for pursuing or not pursuing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and formally revealed a frustration with communist propaganda.<sup>135</sup> Significantly, he drew the conclusion that communist ideology was the primary motivation for Soviet foreign policy; a not altogether untrue conclusion. Further, he confirmed states which already had agreements with the Soviets had just as many problems with propaganda as those which did not. Kelley postulated there was little

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<sup>133</sup> Entry of "Monday, 4 March 1935," Ickes, 308.

<sup>134</sup> Jonathan Alter, *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 162.

<sup>135</sup> "Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Eastern European Affairs (Kelley), 27 July 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 6-14.

hope of successful rapprochement with the Soviets, even if a more finely detailed document were produced and agreed upon.<sup>136</sup> The memo also stressed other issues such as protecting the broader civil rights of Americans within the Soviet Union, guarding against “economic espionage,” and ensuring diplomatic recognition would not be made retroactive and thus prejudice outstanding American claims against the Soviet Union.<sup>137</sup>

The portion of the memo meant to levy the most significance was Kelley’s synopsis of treaty promises created and disavowed by the Soviet government. Because Kelley was not enthusiastic about recognition, it is no surprise his studies emphasized difficulties and subsequent diplomatic relations with the Soviets, and surmised key issues (debts and claims, propaganda, and civil and religious rights) should be addressed before extending recognition. Condensed into seven categories of pledges which chronicled nearly every form of possible interference, this information was exacted by foreign governments to “bring about cessation of Russian interference in their domestic affairs.”<sup>138</sup> According to Kelley, of the thirteen governments soliciting such understandings, eight found Soviet officials guilty of violating their pledges.<sup>139</sup> This influential memorandum was a portion of Kelley’s detailed research into the issue of recognition. In all, he prepared a series of memorandums on “Problems Pertaining to Russian-American Relations”:

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<sup>136</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 96; “Problem of Communist World Revolutionary Activity,” 7 July 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 6-7.

<sup>137</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 98.

<sup>138</sup> Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*, 546-7; Footnote in Bishop, 28: “Of the nine governments which did not exact pledges, five had complained of Soviet interference, thus leading to the conclusion that those who had exacted pledges experienced as much trouble as those who had not.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

1. Russian Governmental Indebtedness to the Government of the United States.
2. Russian Governmental Indebtedness to American Citizens. Dollar Loans Floated in the United States.
  - a. Recommendations and Considerations in Connection with the Question of Russian Governmental Indebtedness to Government of the United States.
  - b. Russian Government Debt to the Government of the United States.
3. Private American Claims against Soviet Russia.
4. Questions of “Communist Propaganda.”
5. Treaty Rights Essential to the Welfare and Protection of American Nationals in Russia.
6. Russian Government Property in the United States.
7. Dominating Party and Governmental Organizations and biographies of Prominent Party and Governmental Leaders of the U.S.S.R.
8. Statements by Litvinov on Matters of Foreign Policy that are of Interest to the United States.

A key memorandum co-prepared by Kelley and Bullitt eventually defined the cornerstone of the State Department and larger administration’s position, and submitted to the president for approval on 21 September 1933. It forcefully elucidated that the time was ripe to engage the Soviets on their inability to meet their spring 1933 financial obligations to Germany; in addition, the increasing likelihood of a Japanese attack in the Pacific would drive the Soviets to beg for recognition.<sup>140</sup> These two powerful appraisals were seen as the impetus for bringing about a favorable settlement of outstanding issues between the U.S. and Soviet governments.<sup>141</sup>

Both Bullitt and Hull accepted Kelley’s estimations and followed his directives, especially related to recognition’s three primary obstacles as expressed in a 27 July 1933 memorandum: 1) “the world revolutionary aims and practices of the rulers of that country,” 2) “the Soviet ‘duty’ to acknowledge property and investments held by Americans in Tsarist Russia,” and 3) “difficulties arising out of the profound differences between the economic and

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<sup>140</sup> Williams, 239-40.

<sup>141</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 97; “The Secretary of State to President Roosevelt,” 21 September 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 12-13.

social structure of the two countries.”<sup>142</sup> According to the State Department, recognition should not be granted until the Soviets were committed to the matter of halting propaganda, and outlined their specific plan to rectify outstanding debts to the United States.

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<sup>142</sup> Williams, 239-40.

## **Chapter 4. Sparring Partners: The Roosevelt-Litvinov Negotiations, Formal Recognition, and International Relations Theoretical Significance**

### **The Roosevelt – Litvinov Negotiations: 7 – 16 November 1933**

Travelers returned from the Soviet Union during the interwar period full of wonder and excitement, and played tricks on the American consciousness: technicians observed everyday realities but doubted the Bolsheviks' insistence on faith catalyzing technology; spectator idealists recognized the power which motivated this faith, but failed to grasp the depth of its perversion; and engineers marveled at Soviet planning and daring.<sup>143</sup> The symbolization of intervention as a means for restoring social equilibrium was familiar to President Roosevelt, who rationalized Soviet recognition in appealing verbiage which not only sought to achieve lofty objectives, but also served to couch violations of sound foreign policy's basic components. Recognition was thus a tragic enterprise – at least in the manner with which FDR explored – due to the compromise of successful foreign policy which should have been more concerned with the maintenance of a balance of power, not kowtowing to a foreign entity to procure a political victory. This tragic decision lay squarely on President Roosevelt's shoulders alone. Yet, both Roosevelt and Stalin affected a legendary cadence of charm when necessary, and the latter's fondness for FDR "was as genuine a diplomatic friendship as he ever managed with any imperialist."<sup>144</sup> This primacy of diplomacy which highlighted the need for international relations as the organizing principle for effective policy was particularly evident in its connection with the two contrasting forms of high and low diplomacy. High diplomacy encompassed encounters between adversaries and allies alike which determined the international landscape's stubborn details: national economic

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<sup>143</sup> *American Quarterly*, 144.

<sup>144</sup> Montefiore, 466.

strength, distribution of military power, and the overall cohesion of competing societies. In these instances, weak leadership presided over failure. Low diplomacy is occupied by less exalted figures such as ambassadors and professional staff members, who represent a respective government's views and are variously occupied with political reporting. Often, this sub-level interaction became superfluous as heads of state communicate on routine matters; such was not the case for the culmination of this theses depiction of events.

U.S. State Department officials favored the usual diplomatic method – lengthy, detailed negotiations conducted by conference – when assessing potential recognition efforts. Secretary of State Hull further insisted on having all outstanding issues between the U.S. and Soviets settled by lower diplomatic representatives before inviting senior diplomats to Washington. Roosevelt perceived this interminable approach's inevitable outcome to be awkward compromise, or at worst, utter failure – an outcome FDR would not tolerate. Instead, the president sought a brilliant political victory furnished by smooth American diplomatic triumph, and after politely listening to Hull's suggestions, “decided otherwise.”<sup>145</sup> Further, the Soviet Union actively sought direct discussions with Roosevelt to serve a dual purpose of boosting the Kremlin's international prestige, and harness potential advantages with an aim specifically directed toward Japan. Bullitt was similarly convinced the success of any negotiations depended upon Moscow's choice of a key Soviet statesman – Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs – to broker this historic event. Bullitt maintained a terse relationship with Litvinov over the years, and attempted to meet on common ground by informing him of FDR's desire to limit State or Treasury Department interference in their proceedings. Although Litvinov consistently regarded Bullitt a “bitter enemy,” he also acknowledged the Soviet propensity for

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<sup>145</sup> Beatrice Farnsworth, *William C. Bullitt and the Soviet Union* (Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 1967), 92. [Hereafter cited as Farnsworth].



regarding foreigners as fools, and opined they only allow “themselves to be cheated ... because it suits them.”<sup>146</sup> He also understood his superiors (especially Stalin), were “traders at heart and love[d] to bargain.”<sup>147</sup>

Following FDR’s 10 October 1933 telegram which invited U.S.S.R. President Mikhail Kalinin to send a representative specifically to negotiate recognition, the Soviet Politburo produced a series of protocols which dictated Kalinin’s response, and designated Litvinov as its emissary to Washington.<sup>148</sup> Significantly, the Politburo outlined strict guidelines for the elder statesman in which to conduct his relations with America:

make sure our counter-claims related to [Allied] intervention are raised; the religious issue is an internal affair and should not be raised. Litvinov should not deviate from concrete discussions about our relations with Japan. If Roosevelt in discussion will make some rapprochement with us, or even a temporary agreement against Japan, then Litvinov must treat this propitiously.<sup>149</sup>

Overly confident in his abilities and underestimating the president’s resolve, Litvinov declared prior to embarking, he “could reach an agreement with President Roosevelt in a half hour.”<sup>150</sup> Upon arriving, he laughingly altered his projection and informed reporters he expected an agreement to be struck in “perhaps less” time than his original estimate.<sup>151</sup> Presumably made for diplomatic effect, Litvinov’s boast evidenced his fervent belief that

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<sup>146</sup> Litvinov, 287.

<sup>147</sup> Litvinov, 243-4.

<sup>148</sup> Bowers-Hull, *Russian Subversion*, 542-555; McJimsey, 312; “President Roosevelt to the President of the Soviet All-Union Central Executive Committee (Kalinin),” 10 October 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 17-8. Interestingly, “some members of the State Department reacted to Roosevelt’s invitation by leaking a report connecting the Soviet Union directly to communist subversion in Cuba. Unfortunately, United Press International refused the story unless they could attribute it to the State Department,” found in Cassella-Blackburn, 99, 100.

<sup>149</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 100.

<sup>150</sup> Bishop, 18; “Litvinoff Ready to Agree Quickly,” *The New York Times*, 29 October 1933, 1.

<sup>151</sup> Bishop, 18; “Litvinoff Hopeful Over Recognition,” *The New York Times*, 8 November 1933, 24.

U.S. diplomatic recognition would be unconditional. Remarkably, Litvinov arrived in New York aboard the *S.S. Berengaria* on 7 November – the Bolshevik Revolution’s sixteenth anniversary – where he was greeted by a throng of reports upon disembarking.<sup>152</sup> With typical cosmopolitan frankness and flair, he announced his intention to only discuss “the question of diplomatic relations” during his visit; all other discussions would be postponed until recognition was accorded.<sup>153</sup> Fortunately for the purposes of this thesis, Litvinov’s colorful presage was thwarted by President Roosevelt.

In preparation for intense negotiations over key impediments discussed previously (the “Kerensky debt,” religious rights of Americans in Russia, and Comintern interference / propaganda), all twenty-six relevant treaties between the Soviets and other nations which already extended them recognition, were carefully examined and gleaned of potential borrowings.<sup>154</sup> Once discovered the extent to which Moscow granted past concessions, Bullitt and his advisors readied arguments for objections they assumed Litvinov would present. By absorbing “a phrase here and a sentence there,” every word of their prepared draft had “already appeared in some treaty to which Russia had affixed her signature and seal.”<sup>155</sup> Fortunately for the overall negotiation process Litvinov eventually abandoned his expectation of requiring recognition be extended before taking part in any further discussions. This approach may have been purely tactical, although his stubbornness remained well after the finalized recognition agreement. Upon being shown the draft of mutual abstention to internal affairs interference, Litvinov exclaimed “we can’t agree to this!” to which Hull calmly explained Russia’s government had already done

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<sup>152</sup> Bishop, 17; Cassella-Blackburn, 100; Farnsworth, 94-5.

<sup>153</sup> Bishop, 18; “Litvinoff Hopeful Over Recognition,” *The New York Times*, 8 November 1933, 24.

<sup>154</sup> Browder-U.S., S.U., & C, 26-7.

<sup>155</sup> Bishop, 29; Kennan – *Memoirs*, 299.

so, as the agreement's text was prepared using wording directly gleaned from treaties the Soviets previously signed.<sup>156</sup> The same routine occurred with the draft of religious freedom for Americans in Russia, whereupon Litvinov insisted on the sufficiency of existing Soviet laws.<sup>157</sup> In his memoirs, Hull boasted there were as many as twenty drafts of the proposed recognition agreements, to ensure they were nothing short of "ironclad."<sup>158</sup> From the outset, the key to the agreement's success concerned the Communist International, although this preparatory phase and the agreement's final draft omitted any mention of the Comintern, directly. This was no oversight, but a well-thought out maneuver by Kelley who believed if the organization were specifically named, the Soviets would merely change its title and assert it was thereby not embodied in the agreement. By providing for *all* such entities and their activities, the Comintern's inclusion was assured, in addition to meeting the complex and politically essential parameters presented by American public opinion.<sup>159</sup>

The first session of negotiations occurred the morning of 8 November 1933 between Litvinov and his entourage, and the U.S. represented by Hull, Bullitt, Kelley, and Undersecretary William Philips.<sup>160</sup> The latter party did not take formal notes of the proceedings, except for Bullitt's brief note on the final day. Detailed recollections of the events were therefore presented orally to the president, and variously published in later accounts and/or the executive's archival

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<sup>156</sup> Farnsworth, 97.

<sup>157</sup> Maddux, 20.

<sup>158</sup> Bishop, 17; Kennan – *Memoirs*, 299.

<sup>159</sup> Maddux, 22.

<sup>160</sup> Various memoranda from Cordell Hull, William Philips, R. Walton Moore, Robert F. Kelley, E.L. Packer, and William C. Bullitt, 17 July 1933 to 8 November 1933, *FRUS: Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, 6-17 and Litvinov to the Foreign Commissariat, 11/8/33, *DVP*, 16, 607-608.

repositories.<sup>161</sup> The Americans adamantly informed their guests that recognition would only come as a result of a successful resolution to the questions regarding propaganda/interference within another state's domestic affairs, debts and claims, and religious freedom. As expected, Litvinov refused any concession on these matters and demanded recognition be granted first; only then would the Soviets consider rectifying these complicated issues – just as they had promised all other nations which had extended recognition up to that point. Observing they were at an impasse the meeting was closed with both sides equally frustrated, and a luncheon was given by the president in honor of the foreign secretary, with all State department representatives and cabinet members in attendance. Harold L. Ickes optimistically recorded:

Personally, I have been in favor of the recognition of Russia by the United States for a good many years and so it was a particular pleasure for me to be at this luncheon to meet members of the Litvinov party. I have no doubt that recognition will result from conversation in progress here now, and I sincerely hope so.<sup>162</sup>

Roosevelt eventually got down to the business at hand and reminded Litvinov that two primary sources of military threat the Soviet Union – Germany and Japan – both of which were eager to consume other states' territory for their own respective benefit.<sup>163</sup> Litvinov reported FDR stressed “we [the Soviet Union] are located between these dangers, but that

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<sup>161</sup> Various memoranda from Cordell Hull, William Philips, R. Walton Moore, Robert F. Kelley, E.L. Packer, and William C. Bullitt, 7/17/33 to 11/8/33, *FRUS-SU*, 6-17.

<sup>162</sup> Ickes, entry of “8 November 1933,” 118.

<sup>163</sup> Litvinov was obviously already acutely conscious of the dangers posed by these two rapidly militarizing states which bookended continental Russia. The Kremlin's response to these developments was the Soviets' suggestion to define aggression as first offered to the 6 February 1933 World Disarmament Conference. Though not acted upon at that forum, Litvinov's proposed definition was incorporated into later agreements with Russia's border states during the follow-on July 1933 London Disarmament Conference. It surmised that aggression on the part of any state was relegated to the following acts: “(1) declaration of war ... (2) invasion by its armed forces, with or without a declaration of war ... (3) attack by its land, naval, or air forces, with or without a declaration of war ... (4) naval blockade ... (5) provision of support to armed bands formed in its territory which have invaded the territory of another State, or refusal, notwithstanding the request of the invaded State, to take in its territory all the measures in its power to deprive these bands of all assistance or protection.” Found in Williams, 239-40.

together we would be able to avert these dangers.”<sup>164</sup> After the meal, Roosevelt dismissed everyone but Litvinov and Hull. The ambitious president – in office less than a year – explained he must ultimately deal with Congress and the American public in order to ensure the agreement was well received. Perhaps in an attempt to express sympathy for Litvinov’s position, or in a calculated move to assuage Soviet sensitivities, FDR agreed it was vital to avoid demands which characterized the U.S. as intervening in Russia’s internal affairs. He even went so far as to concede he always doubted the morality of necessitating “receipt of tsarist debts, and that [allied] intervention in Archangelsk was in in no way justified.”<sup>165</sup> Roosevelt could not realistically ask for the Comintern’s removal from Moscow, although the final agreement required the Kremlin to sever ties with the American Communist Party and any related communist-controlled organizations in the U.S. FDR admonished Hull and Litvinov to return to their negotiations under the pretext of assuaging the American public’s fears about Soviet interference in western domestic affairs.<sup>166</sup> This conversation culminated in Litvinov and Roosevelt emphasizing that war and peace were the true issues of recognition, and rightly justified their full attention.

Without Roosevelt’s artful yet heavy hand, subsequent days’ conversations turned to finance, and both sides increased hostility toward their counterpart’s waffling. Litvinov appeared unaware of the electrified atmosphere which surrounded debts and claims, and blustered he “continuously worked over Bullitt” precisely on that issue, although he later conceded Bullitt “placed us in the most impossible situation” with this complex financial situation.<sup>167</sup> A single

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<sup>164</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 101.

<sup>165</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 101.

<sup>166</sup> Maddux, 22.

<sup>167</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 103; Litvinov, 244.

one-hour conversation on 10 November, however, swiftly produced a dramatic shift in Litvinov's outlook.<sup>168</sup> In fact, several instances of this good cop/bad cop routine occurred: Bullitt frustrated Litvinov only to have Roosevelt later the same day counter, in order to allay Litvinov's anxiety and thereby produce a conciliatory atmosphere with which to gain Soviet trust.<sup>169</sup> In every instance, FDR employed his characteristic combination of sincerity, humor, and friendliness in forcing Litvinov to reconsider his position on religious freedom for Americans in the Soviet Union, and a proposal on propaganda as a whole. Although these concerns were indeed pressing matters for the men involved in the negotiations, the primary crux of the decision hinged on procuring an acceptable formula to present Congress. Unfortunately for the negotiations, an additional factor brought renewed pressure; President Roosevelt planned to leave Washington on 17 November and should the negotiations continue with only State department representatives in attendance, it would produce disastrous consequences. Hull left for Montevideo on 10 November, and Litvinov recognized the renewed sense of urgency which permeated his interactions with the Americans, all of whom remained convinced the Soviets required recognition far more than the U.S. needed to extend a diplomatic courtesy.<sup>170</sup>

A differing perspective was produced, however, which lampooned the Roosevelt's administration's actions and portrayed its exacerbation as "forcing their way through an open door."<sup>171</sup> Complicated by eastern prejudices, the negotiations progressed with more difficulty and dragged on longer than Moscow envisioned. Additionally, the 1929 Stock Market Crash

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<sup>168</sup> Maddux, 22.

<sup>169</sup> "The Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Bullitt) to President Roosevelt," 15 November 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 26.

<sup>170</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 102.

<sup>171</sup> Sivachev, 111.

caused the world's authoritarian governments to perceive America's hypocritical democratic ideals as fractured and decayed. In order to overcome this set back internationally, Roosevelt needed to evidence American strength and was thus compelled to "win" the conditions demanded of Litvinov with great difficulty. Conversely, Roosevelt's enemies would claim he sold out to communism without these negotiations, which forced him to convince fervent reactionaries he was tough on the reds and strong-armed them into a corner. According to this opposing viewpoint, the executive simultaneously proved sixteen years of quarantine had been not only logical, but further, only when Russia "appeared before the eyes of the world cleansed of its sins" could the United States accept the coalescence of Bolshevik atonement.<sup>172</sup> This was beneficial not only for winning over public sentiment, but because the U.S.S.R. would not buckle to inordinate claims of financial and ideological dictates, America required excessive demands to paint Soviets as intractable. Scholars of this creed contended Washington never intended to open U.S.-Soviet relations with close political cooperation, particularly in full view of potential international state aggressors. Representing the Soviet Union as a difficult partner from the outset thus took prevalence, and Soviets for their part, grudgingly allowed an American "victory" over them, although "only within the limits of decency."<sup>173</sup> This convincingly oppositional and controversial perspective appeared at first glance to be strikingly conspiratorial, although it does bear relevant points of interest, and offered a fascinatingly parallel view of U.S.-Soviet relations during this period.

Again Roosevelt requested an informal conversation with Litvinov "man-to-man" at the close of the negotiations late one evening. The president joked "he wanted ... to be able to call

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<sup>172</sup> Sivachev, 110-1.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

Mr. Litvinov names” if he chose, and “certainly hoped that Mr. Litvinov would feel free to call him names too.”<sup>174</sup> Possessing a unique mastery of the English language, Litvinov understood this jest, and “laughed heartily.”<sup>175</sup> Over the course of a three-hour meeting, the two men “resolved differences over propaganda, subversive activities, and religious practices,” followed by an additional two-hour discussion on 12 November where they took up the matter of legal rights for Americans inside the Soviet Union.<sup>176</sup> Up to this point, the president followed the State Department’s suggested format in debating recognition’s prerequisites, until he hinted on the issue of debt repayment. In fact, FDR’s departure from suggested procedure was disastrous and before discussions began, the polio-stricken executive admitted he “cared less for the financial portion of the negotiations than any other phase.”<sup>177</sup> This was actually a carefully calculated plan for maintaining a “high plane” during the negotiations; in Roosevelt’s opinion – there would be plenty of time to discuss business with the Russians during future interactions.<sup>178</sup> Although FDR viewed Soviet compensation as necessary for any further cooperation, the Soviets perceived this open-ended tabling of such a crucial matter as an invitation to ensure reparations never occurred, especially without additional concessions such as extensive credits, outright loans, or substantial reductions in interest payments. In a mere two days, the president secured an agreement on propaganda, religion, economic espionage, and legal protection of American nationals! Litvinov checked in with his government to see if concessions were acceptable, followed by two more

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<sup>174</sup> Dallek, 80.

<sup>175</sup> Dallek, 80.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Edward M. Bennett, *Recognition of Russia: An American Foreign Policy Dilemma*, (Waltham, MA: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1970), 118-9, [Hereafter cited as Bennett].

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*



days of discussions regarding debt. This heightened sense of success and relief played on the imaginations of Bullitt and Roosevelt (particularly the latter), which caused him to make a stupendously ill-advised decision on 15 November to extend a “gentleman’s agreement” to his Soviet guest.<sup>179</sup> It is extremely difficult to ascertain whether this oscillating exchange of frustration and euphoria was Litvinov’s intentions all along, or merely a fortunate by-product of drudgingly prolonged high-stakes negotiations between intellectual equals.

Recognizing the fundamental importance of establishing amicable relations with the U.S. and the mutual strengthening of international peace, Litvinov’s delegation decided that once recognition was extended the Soviet government would commit to considering questions of satisfying a limited number of American material claims. His only stipulation was that such compensation would not in turn reopen discussions of previously settled claims with other states. This conciliation, and Litvinov’s reservation, formed the basis of the 15 November accord sealed by a “gentleman’s agreement” which established the minimum and maximum range for future financial negotiations, and allowed both parties to table the issue until subsequent official talks following further consultation. The monetary details incorporated into this agreement would be the basis of contention for several years following Roosevelt and Litvinov’s private discussion. This “gentleman’s agreement” included revised estimates – submitted by both sides – wherein the United States could expect to be repaid between \$75 - \$150 million providing one important condition was met: the extension of a high interest rate loan to the U.S.S.R.<sup>180</sup> Its purpose was to reimburse American citizens with confiscated and/or nationalized property claims against the

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<sup>179</sup> “The Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Bullitt) to President Roosevelt,” 15 November 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 25-6; Dallek, 81.

<sup>180</sup> Maddux, 22-3.

Soviet government.<sup>181</sup> A minimum of \$75 million would cover the debt incurred by Kerensky's administration to prosecute war against Germany, but not the amount incurred by the tsarist government, or finances extended to third parties to overturn the Bolsheviks. FDR's involvement unfortunately caused the monetary portion of the final agreement to be loosely worded, which utilized the words *credits* and *loans* interchangeably.<sup>182</sup> Bullitt maintained he and the president perfectly understood the meeting's content in which this was discussed, and that Litvinov knew no loans could be granted to foreign governments, thus according to Bullitt he and his guests were on the same page.<sup>183</sup> With mutual agreement rectifying three of the pressing issues, and the shortsighted implementation of the "gentleman's agreement" which effectively postponed the final matter of debt repayment, the negotiations were complete.<sup>184</sup>

### **Formal Recognition – 16 November 1933**

A public exchange of letters took place on 16 November between Litvinov and Roosevelt confirming the agreement's finer points: the Soviet government's unilateral commitment for a declaration on religious freedom, and reciprocal declarations to establish committees to abandon hostile propaganda, and the rights of citizens, respectively.<sup>185</sup> The notes referring to religious freedom were the longest and spanned more than three pages of the published report. President Roosevelt referred to his expectation that once normal relations were established many Americans may "wish to reside temporarily or permanently" within the Soviet Union, and his

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<sup>181</sup> Sivachev, 114; Dallek, 81.

<sup>182</sup> Bennett, 120-1 Maddux, 22-3.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> Doenecke, 18-9.

<sup>185</sup> Sivachev, 113.

deep concern “they should enjoy in all respects the same freedom of conscience and religious liberty which they enjoy at home.”<sup>186</sup> This initial set of agreements directly specified recognition, and were addressed to “My Dear Mr. Litvinov:”

I am very happy to inform you that as a result of our conversations the Government of the United States has decided to establish normal diplomatic relations with the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and to exchange ambassadors. I trust that the relations now established between our peoples may forever remain normal and friendly, and that our nations henceforth may cooperate for their mutual benefit and for the preservation of the peace of the world.<sup>187</sup>

Interestingly, Roosevelt’s letter to Litvinov initiating recognition did not note economics, but “the great work of preserving peace should be the corner stone of an enduring friendship.”<sup>188</sup> Similar to the previous cadence of letters exchanged with Kalinin, Litvinov’s reply was nearly identical to Roosevelt’s, opening with “I am very happy to inform you that the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is glad to establish normal diplomatic relations.”<sup>189</sup> The remainder copied FDR’s letter word for word. Incidentally, in so doing the foreign commissar omitted any references to the final decision being the result of negotiations in Washington. By focusing on his government’s acceptance of the decision, Litvinov diverged from Roosevelt’s choice of stating the decision as fact, and instead highlighted the Soviets’ pleasure at resuming diplomatic relations. One is cautioned, however, to not read further into the documents’ expression, as no indications suggested “differences in phraseology were more than formal.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Bishop, 64; “Letters Exchanged by Roosevelt and Litvinov,” *FRUS-1933*, 29-33.

<sup>187</sup> Bishop, 20-1; “Letter, Roosevelt to Litvinov,” 16 November 1933, *FRUS-1933*, 27.

<sup>188</sup> Cassella-Blackburn, 95; “Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Relations (Litvinov),” 23 November 1933, *FRUS-1933*, 43.

<sup>189</sup> Bishop, 20-1; “Letter, Roosevelt to Litvinov,” 16 November 1933, *FRUS-1933*, 27.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

Although the formal diplomatic recognition documents were dated 16 November, Roosevelt explained at Cabinet meeting on 17 November him and Litvinov “arrived at a meeting of minds ... about midnight” the night before.<sup>191</sup> Another source corroborated this and specified the various agreements were simultaneously signed fourteen minutes before 1:00AM on 17 November, with Bullitt and other State department officials present.<sup>192</sup> “Visibly pleased,” Roosevelt’s infectious elation was all the more exacerbated when celebrations commenced in the president’s study with quaffs of prohibition beer, and a request “to join him in a toast to the new relationship.”<sup>193</sup> Later in the day, the president ordered the agreements to be released to the press, whilst announcing the resumption of formal diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia; Ickes recorded “as near as I could make out, the President got everything that he wanted out of these conversations.”<sup>194</sup> Upon setting sail for Russia on 17 November, Litvinov remarked to the press

Yesterday’s exchange of notes not only creates conditions indispensable to the rapid and successful settlement of the unsolved problems of the past, but, what is more important, opens a new chapter in the development of genuinely friendly relations and peaceful cooperation between the two greatest republics.<sup>195</sup>

Soviet President Kalinin echoed this sentiment in his 20 November radio address, and Stalin observed from the Soviet Congress of the Communist Party, “this act is of very great significance for the whole system of international relations.”<sup>196</sup> In so doing, the Georgian despot

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<sup>191</sup> “President Roosevelt to the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs (Litvinov),” 16 November 1933, *FRUS-SU*, 27-37; McJimsey, 654-84, 780-837; Ickes, entry of “Tuesday, 13 November 1933,” 124; Maddux, 22-3.

<sup>192</sup> *For the President*, 57.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid*; Browder-U.S, S.U., & C, 28.

<sup>194</sup> Dallek, 81; Ickes, entry of “Tuesday, 13 November 1933,” 124.

<sup>195</sup> Sivachev, 117-8.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*; Stalin-Works, 310.

again emphasized the establishment of Soviet-American relations' singlehanded impact on the temporary preservation of global peace.

Undoubtedly, the fact Litvinov signed the pledges emphasized the importance Moscow attached to U.S. recognition, and considerable evidence indicated the Soviet government regarded American commitments as unusually broad concessions. Because Soviet leadership expected violations of the finalized agreements to occur regardless, the Russian general populace was never made aware of the document's exact wording, nor did Soviet newspaper coverage include extensive commitments made to the United States. Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V.M. Molotov – and Litvinov himself, for over a year and a half – proffered repeated assurance that the Soviet Union refused to make concessions not in accordance with strict Soviet ideological policies.<sup>197</sup> Litvinov went so far as to declare in a 29 December 1933 report to the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.: “at the national or governmental level contradictions between her [America] and our Union are absent, and troublesome questions were easily resolved.”<sup>198</sup> Although he referred to the recognition agreements as a whole, without describing the agreements' contents, Litvinov's careful remarks served notice that the Soviet Union would limit the application of non-interference to its governmental structure.

### **Relevant International Relations Theories and Applications**

President Roosevelt's actions and precise language in the final documents exchanged between him and Litvinov, evidenced a staunch conviction that diplomatic recognition was instrumental to securing a foundation for world peace. In order to provide the necessary conduit for cooperative guarantees of disarmament, nonaggression, and the settlement of disputes by

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<sup>197</sup> Browder-U.S., S.U., & C, 30.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*; Cassella-Blackburn, 106.

negotiation, ease of access to Russia through diplomatic channels was essential. The significance of Roosevelt's actions lay not in reversing decades of impractical policy, but rather in pursuing utopian goals as the basis for altering it. While various terminology – such as “securing peace,” “realistic objectives,” and “containment” (of German Fascism and Japanese militarism) – was employed leading up to the eventual recognition decision, no true understanding of underlying policy dynamics existed with respect to international relations as a whole. Supporters of recognition refused to assess Russia according to the moralistic crusade established by recognition's opponents, however, they did adopt “the Wilsonian concept of moral strength as a substitute for real power.”<sup>199</sup> President Roosevelt can likewise be viewed as a quixotic figure jousting at the armor of aggressive foes, with a “rubber lance of world opinion, which appeared so deceptively firm.”<sup>200</sup>

Governments differed in their use of ideologically based recognition policies, although the twentieth century's interwar period witnessed considerable premature diplomatic recognitions throughout Europe. This resulted in a relatively loosely defined system of control, which stemmed from hatred levied against the Bolsheviks. Generally, the United States has been the most concerned about recognition's applications on international relations, although the Soviets also utilized it for ideological purposes following the Second World War. Three developments occurred during the twentieth century which gave impetus to cementing modern recognition practices and criteria. First, non-recognition was used to express ideological dislike for newly formed governments, and the period of non-recognitions correspondingly lengthened according to the perceived radicalism of said nation's governmental structure; no surprise its

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<sup>199</sup> Bennett, 135-6.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

occurrence increased dramatically following 1917. During the nineteenth century the maximum length for this was three years, whereas during the interwar period it increased to sixteen, and following the Second World War it ballooned to thirty or more years.<sup>201</sup> Caught between the need for contact amongst emerging international markets and systems of government, and pervasive fears that recognition constituted significant alterations in attitude toward new governments, policy-makers merely expanded the classifications of “administrative,” “nonpolitical,” “temporary,” “technical,” and “informal” relations permissible within nineteenth century international law. While this development is obviously the easiest solution, several of the twentieth century’s prolonged non-recognitions were based upon deep-seeded antipathies shared and encouraged by the respective nation’s general populace.

Wise foreign policy was formulated based on the acceptance of a state’s need for direct contact with the outside world, thereby instilling an acceptance of recognition’s realities well before one’s population arrived at the same conclusion. Once initiated, ideological non-recognitions’ precedence was difficult to reverse, primarily because large influential swaths of both states viewed any change in attitude with respect to the new regime as potently significant. Governments therefore created workarounds in order to address particular crises which arose on an *ad hoc* basis, and expanded the content of indirect contact to do so. Chapter Three’s analysis of FDR’s initial steps to feel out Soviet receptivity to recognition’s extension contains prime examples of similarly *ad hoc* measures, particularly Roosevelt’s addition of Kalinin to his May 1933 “Direct Appeal to Heads of State.”<sup>202</sup> Second, this tendency was bolstered by governmental

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<sup>201</sup> 3-year example: Serbia following the 1877-8 Russo-Turkish War; 16-year example: see CHAPTER II – ESTRANGEMENT, 1917-32; 30+ year example: the Portuguese government never recognized the Soviet Government established in 1917, and was itself overthrown in 1974.

<sup>202</sup> Buell, Raymond Leslie. “Our Recognition of Russia: Arguments For and Against.” *The New York Times*, 16 July 1933, XX3.

activity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which expanded into areas of regulating economic activity, health, transportation, scientific research, and social services previously left largely to private industry. International cooperation in these fields soon became necessary and required increased contact with other states, similar to experiences with the suppression of crime, or regulation of international trade and finance. Maintaining contact thus encouraged the routinization of administrative matters kept separate from political decisions, such as entering into formal diplomatic relations with a foreign state. This factor, especially when conjoined with the pattern of protracted non-recognition of new governments, broadened the spectrum of low-level intra-state contact; Chapter Three pointed out such covert associations, specifically Bullitt's informal European and Russian tours during 1932.

Lastly, this era contained an intensive expansion of multilateral relations – in the form of conferences or permanent intergovernmental organizations – which stemmed from a desire to heighten cooperation within non-political arenas to avoid further global conflict. This formulation of fresh mechanisms of political collaboration reinforced the second trend's effects, and consequently made avoidance of political interaction with unrecognized governments significantly more onerous. The majority of multilateral undertakings resulted in a cohesive qualified majority of members which decided who else could participate, and had the unintended consequence of forcing a state's government to consider political expediency with a party it did not – or refused to – recognize. A plausible check against such schoolyard dynamics was allowing enough other members of the organization to agree the latter party should not be allowed to participate in their undertakings. Fortunately for history's sake, such a consensus often could not be reached, and thereby placed the snobbish outlier in a position where diplomatic discussions could not be avoided, and caused bilateral relations to metastasize into



multilateral affiliations. No historical event can thusly be categorized into such a neat expectation, and legal scholars tend to advocate requiring all of an organization's membership to recognize a new government once allowed to participate, however, it is reasonable to assume that no state would relinquish its recognition authority over to another. Once again, Chapter Three described just such a multilateral forum during summer 1933 at the London Economic Conference, and highlighted unofficial discussions between Soviet and American representatives which took place there.

Prior to 1917 the United States government preferred *de facto* recognition, although following this seminal year America cast aside its creation. The nature and construction of America's position pre- and post-1917 was formulated by historic policy positions which concerned recognition of new state governments:

Since the late eighteenth century, the legally constituted government of a state has been acknowledged as a government *de jure* (by right or by lawful title), while a government *de facto* has been considered a government in actual functional control of a nation or territory (a government in fact).<sup>203</sup>

The year 1918 was a watershed moment in international relations, because non-recognition and recognition frequently express sympathy or hostility for a new government. Traditional doctrines – circumstances defined by governments – delayed recognition and masked decisions taken for arbitrary reasons. The essential distinction in distinguishing the conditions which establish *de facto* qualifications has nearly always been said government's ability to discharge the routine obligations of a state, and maintenance of its power and infrastructure. When *de facto* governments prove their ability to control their territory and populace, they transition to a *de jure* designation. No international legal mechanism existed to distinguish at what point *de facto* control converted to *de jure* authority, although in practice this capacity was relegated to foreign

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<sup>203</sup> Bennett, 1-2.

states to generate this determination, based largely on the dictates of external state recognition. Ordinarily a government which sought recognition attempted to formalize its stature by promulgating a constitution, conducting an election, or both. The U.S.S.R. produced such a constitution in 1924 under Lenin's direction, and incidentally, Stalin amended his predecessor's dictates with a 1936 iteration. Those who advocated abolishing government recognition agree to its necessity so long as the international system lacked centralized institutions capable of stipulating when a new state emerges, and is only further complicated with the recent emergence of non-state actors.

Diplomatic recognition served three objectives in the international legal system due to a given government's propensity for ensuring:

only regimes clearly deserving such status are accepted as governments of states, assuring new governments that others will respect their status, and informing courts, government agencies, and nationals of recognizing states that a particular regime is in fact the government of another state.<sup>204</sup>

Russia's location, size, and potential rendered these stipulations relatively trouble-free, and the Soviet government generally resisted such conditions because of its favorable position to do so. Following French and British recognition, the Soviet Union expressed clearly its opposition to conditional prerequisites. Hungary attempted to extract agreements in exchange for Soviet recognition, whereupon Alexei Rykov informed the May 1925 Soviet congress:

Recently we refused to conclude an agreement with Hungary because we saw no need to buy the recognition of Hungary and of countries like Hungary, at the cost of concessions which might one way or another conflict with the interests of our Union. The other states [such as Belgium, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, or Yugoslavia] will have to take into account that the later they are, the worse it will be for them.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Bennett, 1.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

Denmark eventually accorded recognition to the Soviets in early 1923 primarily because of the Russian state's potential. Similarly, Switzerland's recognition was nearly extorted owing to Soviet insistence on establishing diplomatic relations before beginning negotiations on the 1923 Vorovsky Affair – the Swiss resisted such pressure. The Roosevelt-Litvinov negotiations, solidified by U.S. recognition, were thus not taken to be stipulations of this nature.

Both lawyers and statesmen are interested in governmental recognition. Lawyers recognize it as a long-standing legal institution which allowed for the essential function of identifying major international actors; statesmen took advantage of such looseness in the family of nations which allowed them to utilize recognition to not only identify state actors, but also articulate opinions *about*, and secure concessions *from* them. Domestic law defined recognition as a means for formally acknowledging that a situation or entity existed, coupled with assurances the legal consequences of such an arrangement was upheld and respected. States are abstract entities – which possessed central mechanisms to make and enforce policies – although internationally, a human agent is indispensable to act in its name. While separate distinctions are possible, historically one agency has filled both roles, and international law was erected on the assumption that the two will converge and be fulfilled by this same agency. An important distinction was made, however, depending upon how a government changed hands – whether by domestic authority indirectly passed to a successor, or via “legitimate” constitutional means. The issue of recognition does not arise when governments transition according to the latter, and thus domestic rule is deemed sufficient for denoting international agency. When a change of government occurs by non-constitutional means (as it did with the Bolshevik seizure of power), however, a specific requirement is imposed on the new government: the exercise and maintenance of effective rule over the state in question, against all challengers. Obviously,

recognition is also withheld for various reasons outside lack of effective state rule. Soviet leaders willingly provided such assurances in 1933, although (according to the west), they failed to make good on all they promised once recognition was extended.

The recognition of the Soviet Union solidified a new doctrine which caused the traditional functions performed by a given government's recognition efforts to reverse, and therefore equated formal diplomatic relations with the acceptance of a new government's existence. This altered the traditional format of having diplomatic relations as an act equivalent to recognition, and essentially constituted acceptance of a new government's status in reverse.

International law with respect to recognition, therefore, hinged on two primary themes:

(1) the circumstances necessitating and the conditions permitting recognition of a new government, and (2) the effects of granting or withholding recognition for the new government, the deciding government, their respective states and nationals, and third parties.<sup>206</sup>

Developments in both these arenas forced legal institutions to become involved. Western hemisphere administrations in the late nineteenth century established a precedence for respective states – or more specifically within democratic formulated nations, a state's people – to establish the specific government it desired. This often ignored doctrine provided powerful incentives to assertions that a government's origins paled in comparison to its ability to effectively maintain a state, and extract obedience from its populace. This perception was a powerfully contentious rationale because recognition only became an issue when regimes ascended to power by methods contrary to the customs, constitution, or laws of the nation affected. A succession of power manifested according to means considered a legal process could thus:

be interpreted to mean that the recognition granted to one government was handed to its successor along with the rest of its legitimate claims to power, the idea that

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<sup>206</sup> Bennett, 2.

origins should be irrelevant won wider acceptance as the principles of self-determination and nonintervention gained adherents.<sup>207</sup>

Once bestowed recognition is irrevocable, and no government can respond retroactively to a real or perceived ideological difference it failed to perceive when considering its decision initially. The political uses of recognition therefore possess an element of accident, perhaps most clearly personified by the United States government's subsequent policies regarding Cuba and Fidel Castro's ascension to power. The U.S. recognized the Castro regime within a week of its accession.<sup>208</sup> By utilizing recognition for political purposes, the American government then relegated their efforts to other methods of expression and influence regarding the Caribbean island, because they acted too swiftly before the situation entirely revealed itself. The political uses of recognition had two notable results for power distribution. The first occurred when a hegemonic power encountered a far easier time imposing its will through a coordinated recognition policy. Obviously, any breach in hegemony – real or perceived – caused the political uses of recognition to become exponentially problematic. Next, greater fluidity of alignment allowed non-hegemonic states the dual benefit of pursuing their own political uses for recognition, and protection from single-power domination. The imposition of stipulations therefore attempted to influence specific acts, and the general policy of new governments which rested on withholding recognition until the government adopted a desired act and policy.

A pattern of political purpose more easily resolved cases where recognition was bestowed before other states determined the new government effectively governed its state. Effective control was customarily accepted as the necessary precondition for recognition, and rendered

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<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> Bennett, 351-2.

premature recognition illegal; any government which bestowed it as such, required compelling political motives for performing it.<sup>209</sup> Aggressors and challengers to an established state would therefore not like to see such tenets displayed with reverence. For instance, an acute sticking point in U.S.-Soviet relations during this period was repayment of Soviet debt. This occupied widespread interest for everyday U.S. citizens because of its lasting effects on American corporations and government, each of which suffered tremendous losses as a result of the Soviet government's actions. Although its legal elements were essentially the crux of the matter was essentially, in a larger sense the foundational tenets tampered with were psychological and political, owing to the pervasive American sanctification of private property. Few Americans in 1933 had a foundation of knowledge regarding the Soviet system, however, the violation of private property was far more widely known than any of the Bolsheviks' other activities, and constituted a disavowal of the readily accepted principles of governance within the family of nations. This exemplified Kelley's 27 July 1933 memorandum in which he attempted to impress upon Roosevelt, "Among these principles is the duty of ... a Government to honor the financial obligations contracted by a State under preceding Governments."<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Cravath, 267.

<sup>210</sup> Bishop, 141; "Memorandum by Kelley," 27 July 1933, *FRUS-1933*, 7.

## Chapter 5. Diplomatic Significance and Resultant Ramifications for U.S. – Soviet Relations

The historically significant events and outcomes depicted within this thesis are buttressed by extensive U.S. – Soviet relations. Bureaucratic politics certainly played its part within each stage, yet these developments conclusively established the importance of individuals to history. Modern historians posit this argument's validity predated the explosion of twentieth century foreign policy bureaucracy, while others counter such an approach was relatively easy to levy during this discordant time period. The Russian Empire – tsarist, and Stalinist – possessed an inherent opposition to American principles of government. The former maintained a stalwart unwillingness to convene with a state born of revolution; a slight which characterized early prejudices, and undergirded the mutually mistrustful relations between the latter and the United States. Tsarism had no patience for revolution; as a result, Russia was among the last powers to recognize the United States when it declared its independence from Great Britain. In fact, it was not until 1809 that Tsar Alexander I conferred recognition on the American government, and welcomed a permanent diplomatic mission headed by John Quincy Adams posted to the St. Petersburg court. Further, no treaty relations were established until 1824, nearly a half century after America's famous proclamation to Britain's George III.<sup>211</sup> Although ever fearful of Republicanism and eager to halt its exacerbation, Russia's Catherine II eventually extended cordial relations to the American government during the nineteenth century. Similar circumstances occurred following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution when the opposite situation was personified by America's loathsome perspective toward Russia's Marxist administration. A

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<sup>211</sup> Bishop, 2; Malbone W. Graham, "Russian-American Relations, 1917-33: An Interpretation," *The American Political Science Review* 28, no. 3 (June 1934), 388, [Hereafter cited as Graham].

far different approach befell their predecessors, when on 22 March 1917 the U.S. became the first country to recognize Kerensky's Provisional Government:

Because all of the procedural formalities were fully complied with in the transfer of tsarist authority to the Provisional Government, because the ideology of the liberal provisional regime was at the moment in accord with our own gospel of democracy, because the new government promised to prosecute the war on which we were on the verge of embarking, recognition was immediately forthcoming ... On the basis of the Provisional Government's coherence with our canons of democratic legitimism, permission was given within twelve hours ... recognition was thus ... based on approval of the political doctrine of the incoming regime.<sup>212</sup>

This brief second interlude in hostility between America and Russia signified common national interests, although it lasted only as long as the administration which parroted the prevailing political ideology and democratic doctrine of the Allied and Associated Powers.

Power is the basic function which formulates a state's perception of another's material abilities; a balance of power therefore implies much more than a mere equilibrium of force, but a sustainment of international order via underlying perceptual consensus – a veritable “silent compact.”<sup>213</sup> During war states are generally obligated to display force, yet in peace they bestow confidence in prestige – not necessarily on power in and of itself, but a meticulously constructed *reputation* of power – generally tied to an enforceable document.<sup>214</sup> Thus, the U.S. – Soviet agreement was unique in that it is not directly tied to a political treaty with which to elucidate its legitimacy. It actually possessed stipulations plagiarized in large portions from prior treaties, and generally followed the blueprint of earlier settlements between the Soviets and other capitalist states. Significantly, the term “recognition” was never expressly mentioned; its only inclusion

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<sup>212</sup> Graham, 390.

<sup>213</sup> Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A Brief History of International Relations Theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Manchester University Press, 1997), 242, [Hereafter cited as Knutsen].

<sup>214</sup> Knutsen, 243.



occurred in a 16 November collateral document sent by Acting Secretary of State Phillips to Serge Ughet (the Kerensky regime's residuary legatee) which referred to "the recognition of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by the Government of the United States."<sup>215</sup> Incidentally, no specification was given in this note as to when it occurred.

The western hemisphere withheld recognition much more often than its European counterparts during the nineteenth century. The extension of suffrage to large portions of the public – combined with the proliferation of mass markets – integrated previously underrepresented populations and forestalled their consciousness regarding economic and political power. A substantial portion of their number were disillusioned, hardened veterans of the First World War who risked life and limb for statesmen's follies, and possessed minimal trust in social values or politicians. As a result, interwar European politics were initiated with large quantities of passive non-recognition policies based upon intensive disgust for Russia's Bolshevik government. These measures were intended to consummate an active damming-up of this revolutionary administration, and while the majority of European states formally recognized the Soviet Union by 1925, the vehemence with which the international landscape viewed them continued for at least another decade. Multiple U.S. executive administrations bore this grudge, specifically Wilson's emphasis on constitutional propriety, and Harding and Coolidge's respective insistence on melding constitutionalism with protecting American material interests.

This preconception dominated President Wilson's decision-making for the remainder of his administration, and steeled his previously affable outlook toward the Soviets into implacable opposition in accordance with his uniquely liberalistic doctrine of constitutional legitimism. An impenetrably corrosive barrier thus formed regarding the Bolsheviks and potential negotiations,

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<sup>215</sup> Graham, 404-5; *New York Herald-Tribune*, 18 November 1933, 2.

which generated a deep-seated double standard within American foreign policy in tandem with Wilsonianism. Wilson may have broken with precedence by not diplomatically acknowledging foreign governments which controlled a given state, but it was Secretary of State Colby who carried it a step further by arguing recognition consisted of more than a neutral act precisely because it involved the extension of moral approval to the respective government. Colby vehemently argued the Soviets did not merit such support because of how they obtained power, and because he postulated they maintained their power through “savage oppression” – an allegation put forth well before Stalin’s rule calcified in 1928.<sup>216</sup> The unsatisfactory position occupied by the U.S. with respect to Russia personified the violation of a fundamental principle in international relations:

when a revolutionary party succeeds in capturing a State, the new government will presumably be recognized by foreign powers when it has demonstrated its orderly control of the area it occupies and its ability and readiness to carry out its international obligations ... [however,] the established principles for a nation’s recognizing successful revolters in a foreign State as its government certainly called for an exception when those revolters were known to be contriving the destruction of the very nation that was being asked to recognize them.<sup>217</sup>

The Bolsheviks’ “original sin” was thus their violent ascension to power, and was therefore hypocritically judged from the dictates of strict constitutionalism as an illegal entity by the U.S. State Department in February 1918.<sup>218</sup> This fact cannot be overstated when analyzing the complex circumstances undergirding recognition efforts, and the exceedingly pervasive influences it was forced to reckon with in order to bear fruit.

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<sup>216</sup> Maddux, 1.

<sup>217</sup> Wehle, 113.

<sup>218</sup> Graham, 393.

Colby's other prerequisites were termination of the Kremlin's continued revolutionary rhetoric, and Moscow's failure to satisfy its international obligations particularly the refusal to acknowledge the financial responsibilities incurred by prior Russian governments. The latter charge was particularly emphasized, and while Washington eventually shed this shortsighted characterization of Bolshevik welching, policymakers retained a staunch non-recognition policy until their subsequent 1933 ouster. The Soviets rightly argued these debts were not legitimately incurred by them, but were instead the responsibility of the very governments they abandoned and overthrew. Dominated by ideology, the Kremlin was convinced capitalist greed would allow the west to forgo compensation in order to access Russia's potentially lucrative markets. The Bolsheviks purposefully sought out this affiliation in hopes it would elicit a relationship with a forthcoming anti-communist coalition of powerful capitalist states who would provide technical and economic assistance as the Soviet Union transformed into a formidable industrial and military power. Little wonder then, that recognition's long-delayed bestowal was championed by both states as the initiation of a profitable relationship anchored on the pretext of Russia's unique demand for goods and services in an international market crestfallen by the most disastrous economic crisis in modern history. The New Deal's favorable impact on the U.S. economy was not a foregone conclusion in 1933, and not only exceeded the expectations and imaginations of nearly everyone – except Marxist propagandists – but was never dependent solely on increased U.S. – Soviet trade. As such, the most formidable pressure exerted on Washington to effect reconciliation came from U.S. business interests frustrated by commercial barriers imposed by non-recognition, and anxious to take advantage of opportunities in red Russia. To a certain extent then, the Soviets were correct regarding America's economic interests. The Bolshevik leadership

hedged its bets, however, and consequentially forfeited a beneficial trade relationship in the interim, and permanently compromised Russian national security.

America's conversely insular perspective was driven by an overriding concern for its population's domestic prosperity. Recognition's diplomatic ramifications were thus generally relegated to secondary importance within the U.S., however, Moscow considered rapprochement a significant diplomatic triumph which directly impacted international anxieties, especially concern over Far Eastern developments. The Kremlin therefore employed the lure of trade in their appeals for recognition, although principally because of its beneficial impact on American public opinion. Roosevelt's most likely reason for recognizing Moscow was understood to be conventional *realpolitik* estimations, hence diplomatic recognition's delay until 1934 or 1935 would still have constituted a very real warning to both Germany and Japan. When placed in the context of larger international concerns the dual threat of Germany and Japan were not of equal weight to the Soviet Union and United States in 1933. Obviously, geography was the primary catalyst in Soviet – German affairs which never cast the same shadow over relations between Germany and the United States. Likewise, Japan “represented an immediate menace to Soviet security in eastern Siberia,” yet little more than a distant threat to Pacific American holdings.<sup>219</sup> Accordingly, geostrategic considerations within central and eastern Europe placed America in a beneficial position to negotiate favorable terms between Germany and the Soviet Union, and accommodated increased U.S. ethical discretion in the meantime.

While recognition occurred with a single act – all in one day – its implementation, however, was a continually evolving development over several decades. Roosevelt gave Litvinov

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<sup>219</sup> David Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 105, [Hereafter cited as Mayers].

the impression the recognition agreements were designed merely to appease public opinion, and therefore increased the Kremlin's likelihood of ignoring them. While recognition may have been withheld until the Soviets promised to repay their debt or paid a portion of it in good faith, no agreement requiring the suspension of the Comintern's operations for a specific time period would have been taken seriously by Moscow. FDR similarly caused Litvinov to expect U.S. – Soviet cooperation against Japan, although his administration had neither the confirmed support of Congress nor the State Department for any successive steps beyond formal recognition. The latter agency merely viewed the arrangement as a necessary test of Moscow's willingness to establish normal relations with the United States. *De jure* recognition was thus consummated with the formal exchange of notes between Roosevelt and Litvinov, and every other undertaking – although they occurred on the same date – were signed subsequent to this exchange of letters. As such, the Soviet government rightly alleged the agreement's implied endeavors were actually reached after formal recognition's official bestowal, and also allude to multiple instances of U.S. unofficial correspondence which could be deemed *de facto* recognition. Due to the convoluted nature of the agreement's solidification, however, it is also equally possible for U.S. representatives to maintain the recorded ventures were reached prior to recognition. While turnabout is fair play within international relations, this illustrates face-saving was equally and simultaneously vital to both Moscow and Washington. Litvinov also overplayed his hand, giving the president and his advisors a finite impression that the Soviets intended to provide partial payment of its debts, and curtail its interference in U.S. domestic affairs. Obviously, the immediate future of U.S. – Soviet relations depended on how these initial misunderstandings between both parties would be deciphered and managed.

The president possesses the exclusive power to determine which foreign nations the U.S. formally recognizes within state-to-state interactions and the privileged authority to “speak with one voice for the nation.”<sup>220</sup> The ability to ascertain a government’s suitability and bestow recognition deposited in the executive branch therefore reveals the president not only makes the initial diplomatic recognition determination, but its office also maintains “that determination in his and his agent’s statements.”<sup>221</sup> Additionally, the sweeping 1936 decision in *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation* stated the president acts as “the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations.”<sup>222</sup> The overarching tragedy of the recognition issue is thus Roosevelt’s overstatement of the expected results which would potentially flow forth from recognition’s establishment. Among all the executives and secretaries of state discussed, FDR alone perceived recognition from a viewpoint that a staunch policy of nonrecognition was ridiculous in light of the Soviet state’s survival, and this rationale alone was sufficient for reversing Wilson’s errant original policy. FDR’s high hopes for 1933 established a fatal flaw which metastasized into subsequent U.S. – Soviet relations, forever colored by initial expectations and their failure to occur. Both states made promises in order to obtain a favorable result during the recognition negotiations yet Litvinov’s offerings – perceived as the “price of recognition” – far exceeded his host’s, although it is without question U.S. recognition increased Moscow’s self-confidence.<sup>223</sup> Present during the beginning of this diplomatic waltz, Louis Wehle

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<sup>220</sup> Lyle Denniston, “Opinion Analysis: Walking on a Tightrope on Mideast Policy,” 8 June 2015, <http://www.scotusblog.com/2015/06/opinion-analysis-walking-on-a-tightrope-on-mideast-policy/>, (Accessed 10 February 2016).

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>223</sup> Bishop, v; Cassella-Blackburn, 106; Joseph Grew, “30 November 1933,” *Ten Years in Japan: A Contemporary Record Drawn from the Diaries and Private and Official Papers of Joseph C. Grew*, (New York, 1944), 108.

postulated “imagination in a democracy seldom seems equal to visualizing, and providing against, the destructive power of adverse forces – an old truth for the philosophy of history.”<sup>224</sup>

A uniquely distinctive ingredient was infused into U.S. political pragmatism by 1932 when the general public began regarding the Soviet Union as the model for experimental methods of social practice. The very conception of social experimentation via planned human intervention into social processes with the aim of increasing the peoples’ welfare was indelibly linked to the Soviet Union in the minds of America’s leaders and intellectuals. The continual parade of sojourners throughout the Soviet Union during the interwar period aided in this transformation of American thought, and their published findings were far more impactful on the American political consciousness than any foreign influence. The experimental philosophical pragmatism which characterized the New Deal from its inception thusly signified an elemental readiness to harness varying hypotheses, and an implied readiness to experiment with challenging alternatives. To accommodate this shift in social consciousness, the Roosevelt administration paradoxically subsumed Wilsonian doctrine and added a revolutionary flair which produced the “pseudoprofound theory of convergence.” This hypothesis perpetuated the myth that the United States and Soviet Russia were on convergent paths which resulted in the former’s transition from laissez-faire capitalism to welfare state socialism, and the latter’s steady evolution from authoritarianism to social democracy.<sup>225</sup> In light of unfettered individualism’s impact on national interests the Great Depression’s occurrence indicated democratic capitalism was anachronistic; democratic socialism appeared to be the answer in order to expand the government’s role in halting unrestrained capitalism’s excesses, and not only redistribute wealth,

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<sup>224</sup> Wehle, 122.

<sup>225</sup> Dunn, 5.

but guarantee the social well-being of the state as a whole. Additionally, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution appeared to indicate the crusade toward socialism was part of an inevitable worldwide campaign, and merely another phase in the advance toward societal progression foreshadowed by the French and American enlightenment-influenced revolutions. American social thought thus contained the enduring notion of the experimental collective reconstruction of society under the guise of “economic planning,” a term installed into the lexicon of American language owing to its rapidly gained credence and adherents.

Not unsurprisingly, FDR’s adherents perceived Stalin to be representative of his people and were earnestly compelled to dispel evidence to the contrary and excused the Georgian mastermind’s extreme machinations. Thus Soviet expansion in northeast Asia and Eastern Europe were tolerated because the west postulated that such maturation advanced collective security and democracy. This influenced Roosevelt’s conviction (along with the multitude of other 1930s western intellectuals), that the Soviet Union was no longer a revolutionary actor, but an – albeit insecure and suspicious – traditional state power. According to this twisted logic, Stalin was no genocidal monster dedicated to the inevitability of revolutionary politics and the fomentation of revolution abroad, but an evolving statesman tasked with making difficult decisions of a defensive nature in order to protect and industrialize his nation. This hypocritical infusion of debilitating moral relativism into U.S. foreign policy allowed Roosevelt to determine Stalin was a versatile democrat, and an essential ally in constructing his new world order. Implementing this double standard required the Roosevelt apparatus to mislead public opinion and circumvent State Department professionals while courting Stalin, such as informal interactions within the larger 1933 Wheat Conference which provided the first opportunity for



American and Soviet diplomats to speak with each other following Roosevelt's ascendance to the Oval Office.<sup>226</sup>

In actuality, neither international stability nor trade received a significant boost from recognition's implementation. While this event was certainly an act of monumental importance, FDR's cautious handling of the issue arose less from public concern or resistance for international consequences than his prevailing inclination to creep through foreign affairs with a fervent desire for unequivocal consensus. Secretary Hull believed the Kremlin was so eager for validation Washington could name any price, and although this exaggerated assumption later proved false, Roosevelt's administration acted upon it to levy pressure on Litvinov. Had they carried it through to a logical conclusion, perhaps the U.S. would have stopped turning a blind eye to the horrific side effects of Stalin's Five Year Plans, specifically collectivization efforts in Ukraine. By concentrating on secondary issues such as the repayment of debts, religious rights of Americans in Russia, and the Comintern's meddlesome activities, FDR's administrative apparatus approached being a passive accomplice to Stalin's Holodomor; U.S. diplomatic representatives should have raised the issue of Ukraine's man-made famine with Litvinov, and made a gesture to aid in its recovery.<sup>227</sup> Whatever the possible successful outcome of historical hindsight, Sergei Kirov's December 1934 assassination and its initiation of subsequent purges – directly facilitated on Stalin's orders, and exacerbated at his behest – definitively ended the honeymoon between the U.S. and Soviet Union.<sup>228</sup> Rambunctious Litvinov eventually survived this viciously abhorrent bloodletting which ravaged the 1930s, although Molotov later chillingly

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<sup>226</sup> Bowers-Wheat, 52.

<sup>227</sup> Mayers, 105.

<sup>228</sup> Kennan – *Memoirs*, 65.

admitted of his predecessor, “It was only by chance that he remained among the living.”<sup>229</sup>

Fortunately for Litvinov he did not succumb to an arranged road accident, a fate which befell more than one old-guard Bolshevik during this period; he may never have known how close he came to no longer being considered an “honest revolutionary” by the *vozhd*.<sup>230</sup>

With recognition successfully won, Roosevelt set about building a State Department infrastructure to ensure his carefully procured prize was safely guarded by trusted representatives. William C. Bullitt was the logical choice as first ambassador to the Soviet Union precisely because of his relationship with FDR, obvious familiarity with the recent negotiations, and enthusiasm for friendly relations between the two states. Secretary Hull accepted the decision in light of friction between his office and the White House, and the realization that Bullitt’s posting would be a better alternative than his continued presence in Washington.<sup>231</sup> Bullitt’s infectious enthusiasm however quickly turned to thorough disillusionment regarding the optimism he harbored for the Soviet Union’s possibilities – a seed planted deeply when it and he were young – once he learned of extensive subversion taking place within U.S. borders in the Soviets’ name. The new ambassador realized that although an overriding condition of recognition had been the Comintern’s pledge of refraining from all domestic activities which occurred inside the U.S., and foreign activities aimed specifically at American institutions, it had been little more than a red herring. The Soviets never had any intention of following-through with its implementation.<sup>232</sup> As events later proved, Bullitt’s appointment to the Russian embassy was unfortunately not ideal due to the nature of his personality and emotional attachments, which

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<sup>229</sup> Montefiore, 621.

<sup>230</sup> Montefiore, 303.

<sup>231</sup> Maddux, 30.

<sup>232</sup> Wehle, 114.

caused him to be particularly susceptible to disappointment. After all, he had known Lenin and other key Bolshevik leaders personally, and “needed to be liked.”<sup>233</sup>

The fundamental reason for America’s non-recognition policy prior to 1933 may have been “the irreconcilability of the revolutionary Communistic theory and practice of government with the theory and practice of American democracy and capitalism,” Yet every modern century distinguished a specific state to which it looked as its conscience-model. <sup>234</sup> For fifteen years following the October Revolution, the Soviet Union fulfilled this role for many of the world’s intellectuals, equipped with a philosophy engendered by reports of travelers rendered in the language of American pragmatism and experience. Ideological intellectuals (social workers, social scientists, writers), however, were much more selective in their perceptions and submitted flowery reports skewed by surface level observations, free of the inner tension which personified Russian Marxism’s unimaginable technical incompetence. Further, these idealists grossly underestimated Stalinism’s perverse nature and preserved a blind spot for the Soviet secret police, choosing instead to focus on the inner liberation of Soviet energy and potential humanistic, democratic developments. Conversely, the Bolsheviks essentially nationalized Marxism-Leninism and lent their efforts to calcifying Stalinism which converted Russia into the Soviet Union’s nation-state, championed Socialism in One Country, and instituted the New Economic Policy. As a result, a growing body of literature challenged the “totalitarian” conception of Stalin’s reign, and suggested the formation and implementation of Soviet foreign policy shared many of America’s same policy making complexities. Its publication demands historians consider the juxtaposition of U.S. foreign policy related to Soviet foreign policy, and

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<sup>233</sup> David Mayers, “George Kennan and the Soviet Union, 1933-1938: Perceptions of a Young Diplomat,” *International History Review* 4 (November 1983): 525; Farnsworth, 109.

<sup>234</sup> Beloff, 117.

vice versa. This important relationship loomed over the cold war's historiographical issues, and the literal chronological interactions between these eventually dynamic, symbiotic super powers. Obviously the institutional miasma of bureaucracy is composed of impactful individuals, however, understanding how and why these agencies behave is paramount to ascertaining how and why their individual membership behaves. Likewise, their demeanor is not merely contingent upon their institutional mission, but equally derived from two parallel yet differing areas: ideology and psychology.

The degree of Roosevelt's persuasiveness is readily evident, and explained by Litvinov's prior obduracy advanced by Hull and Bullitt. To the distress of historians, FDR rarely generated memoranda of conversations, thus no record exists of his dialogue with Litvinov whereupon he masterfully deployed nonviolent settlement to facilitate successful negotiations aligned according to national advantage. Minor textual changes to the finished recognition agreement suggested the extent the president was involved in satisfying his own goals to the detriment of his guest's demands. Once again the importance of individuals to history became extremely relevant when assessing the tragic consequences of this episode in U.S. – Soviet relations, due to the long term consequences put into play by men charged with securing its conception. Each personage involved attached passionate importance to their respective state and subscribed allegiance to its prosperity, as if to a beloved. Decisions during the interwar period therefore occurred according to a distinct battle rhythm the cadence of which echoed throughout the international community, and were all too soon drowned out by the drums of war. Roosevelt, Stalin, Bullitt, and Litvinov all sought the same overarching goal – the solidification of a successful legacy for their people – although each set about his crusade according to vastly different methods the results of which impacted our world today in strikingly prescient ways.

Diplomacy and tragedy are thus the hallmarks of this thesis. Before the advent of mutually-assured-*destruction* came the age of mutually-assured-*benefit* to Russia and the United States. Its implementation unfortunately fell far short of the “purposes of prestige” with which it was originally established and negotiated, yet succinctly fastened the events depicted within as stepping stones in the larger diplomatic summation of the Cold War’s long memory.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Browder-U.S., S.U., & C, 27.

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