JAMES GORMLY

The Counter Iron Curtain: Crafting an American–Soviet Bloc Civil Aviation Policy: 1942–1960*

In the January 1941 issue of *Life* magazine, publisher Henry Luce announced it was "America's century," to be led by a global-minded federal government using its power and influence to break down barriers that constrained the flow of goods, ideas, and services. This would speed the expansion of American culture, values, and technology, as well as the American people's "can-do" attitude. "American jazz, Hollywood movies," he stated, along with "American machines and patented products" were desired in "every community in the world."[1]

While most Americans agreed with at least part of Luce's assessment, those connected to the aviation industry whole-heartedly embraced his vision and placed the expansion of American aviation in the center of America's century. The country's entry into World War II only enhanced their enthusiasm as it provided new opportunities and federal support in promoting the international dimensions of American aviation. Not only did the war mobilize and enhance the American aviation industry while weakening the industry's prewar international rivals, but it also ensured an international-minded American government arose willing to shape the postwar world. As Secretary of State James F. Byrnes told Congress shortly after the surrender of Japan, the United States had "joined in a cooperative endeavor to construct an expanding world economy based on the liberal principles of private enterprise, non-discrimination, and reduced barriers to trade."[2]

Luce's and Byrnes's positions were echoed strongly throughout aviation circles. American planes had proved to be a dominant weapon in the war and would prove to play an equal role in peace. Plus, the wartime growth and experience of the

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1. Henry Luce, "The American Century," *Life* (January 1941). For a discussion of the concept of the U.S. "American Century" and the formation of an American empire in the twentieth century, see Robert J. McMahon, "The Republic as Empire: American Foreign Policy in the 'American Century,'" in *Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Howard Sitkoff (New York, 2001), 80–100; and Volume 23 Spring and Summer, 1999 issues of *Diplomatic History* for a wide-ranging discussion on Luce's idea of an American Century.

2. James F. Byrnes, "Statement to the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency: The Full-Employment Bill of 1945," *Department of State Bulletin* 13 (August 26, 1945): 279.

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aviation industry allowed the United States to assume a commanding position in postwar civil aviation which, in turn, would play a key part promoting peace and prosperity. "The only possible effect of the war would be that the United States would emerge with an imperial power greater than the world has ever seen," concluded Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle, who added that "the doctrine of free air" was the nation's "plainest road to superiority."[3] Eugene Wilson, President of the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce, outdid Berle, writing that an American postwar "empire of the air" would create a " 'Pax Aeronautica' comparable with the 'Pax Britannica' fostered by English sea power." Nor were Wilson and Berle alone. L. Welch Pouge, Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), told a Minneapolis audience: "Aviation, in war-time a destroyer of civilization, if wisely used thereafter as a vehicle for trade and travel, offers us the best instrument yet devised to keep the world at peace." Even President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed on, calling aviation "the first available means . . . to heal with the wounds of war and put the world once more on a peacetime basis."[4]

From this perspective, an open door policy for commercial aviation would connect the far reaches of the world, speeding the growth of business, reducing political and cultural barriers, and providing a path for American culture, technology, and values to follow. But such success was not automatic, there were obstacles. New ways of thinking about geography, distance, and travel were required and, to achieve optimum results, there needed to be freedom of the "ocean of air." In the coming air age, the "cornerstone" would be the extension of "American air routes around, up and down the globe, wherever America is likely to do business."[5] As Assistant Secretary of State William Clayton explained to Senator Josiah Bailey, an American airline should be able to take "an American citizen . . . on an American plane to any place in the world." "It all fits in with the American concept of an expanding world economy and a closer and better understanding between nations," he continued.[6] Congresswoman Clair Booth Luce expressed it even more bluntly: "We want to fly everywhere. Period!"[7]

Ensuring an open ocean of air for American airlines, however, required more than mere statements, it required forceful diplomacy. Unlike maritime law that generally allowed freedom to sail the seas, nations were determined to guard their

3. Berle quoted in Jeffrey A. Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: The Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 40–41.

4. L. Welch Pouge, "Common Sense in Aviation Thinking," April 9, 1943, State Department Subject File, 1938–45, box 54, Adolph Berle Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter cited as Berle Papers); *Department of State Bulletin* XXII (November 5, 1944): 529–30.

5. N. L. Englelardt, Jr. "Air Geography," *Education* (March 1944): 413–19; Joseph Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's Romance with Aviation, 1900-1950* (New York, 1987), 125–30.

6. William Clayton to Josiah Bailey, February 23, 1945, Department of State Records, File 800.796, National Archives, College Park, MD. (hereafter cited DSR and File Number.)

7. Solberg, *Conquest of the Skies: A History of Commercial Aviation in America* (Boston, MA, 1979), 285; C. D. Luce, "America in the Post-War Air World," *Vital Speeches* 9 (March 15, 1943): 331–36; "The New Imperialism: Mrs. Luce's Speech," *New Republic* 108 (February 22, 1943): 253.

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air space by regulating flights in and out and over their nations. Furthermore, while other nations' visions of the benefits of international aviation might be similar, their ideas about the realities of air travel did not duplicate those of the United States. They had their own agendas and potentially stood in the way of an American international aviation system. Surveying the aviation scene in 1943, the State Department concluded that "a wide and rapidly growing tendency" existed to exclude "American civil aviation from post-war landing rights and routes."[8] Solving "the problems of air navigation rights on an equitable basis," concluded an Interdepartmental Advisory Committee on Aviation, was necessary to insure the success for American international aviation. But, "solving the problems of air navigation" even among those Americans considering aviation policy proved problematic. Differing groups, for various reasons, sought alternative means and goals. In the broadest sense, some focused on aviation and business while others stressed politics and national interests. "It is the interest of the United States," stated CAB Chairman Pogue, "that aviation policy be conducted on a business basis." Others argued that political considerations should be paramount. Representing the War Department and others, Robert Lovett wrote that "freedom of the air is bunk . . . and detrimental to national security." It was dangerous, he said, to let "the starry eyed boys" make policy.[9] Generally, these two considerations coexisted, generating little debate within the government in that most of the time an expanding American aviation industry served foreign and security policy purposes. But, that was not always the case, especially when aviation policy became a tool of global diplomacy and enmeshed in Cold War politics. As Assistant Secretary of State Garrison Norton testified in 1947, aviation could not be seen "solely as an instrument of trade" but that it was "wedded to international affairs and there was no divorce in sight.[10]

Before the onset of the Cold War and before initial hopes for friendly open skies succumbed to battles for access, landing rights, technology, passengers, and influence, Washington sought to incorporate Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union into its system of global aviation. But as the Cold War developed other avenues of policies emerged including constructing a "counter iron curtain" that would

8. Memorandum for Secretary of State, June 4, 1943, State Department Subject File, 1938–45, box 54, Berle Papers. For a general view of the conflicts over aviation policies, especially between the United States and Great Britain, see Alan P. Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare: The United States, Britain, and the Politics of International Aviation* (Oxford, 1991); Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet*; Alan P. Dobson, "The Other Air Battle: The American Pursuit of Post-War Civil Aviation Rights," *The Historical Journal* 28 (1985): 430–31, 435.

9. "Proposals for Consideration by the Principle Committee," Interdepartmental Sub-Committee on International Aviation, June 19, 1943, State Department Subject Files, 1938–45, box 54, Berle Papers; Memorandum for General Wedemeyer, March 1, 1943, "Postwar Aviation Rights," Record Group 165, ABC Files 580.82, Section 1-A, March 1, 1943, box 599, National Archives.

10. Garrison Norton, Statement before the President's Air Policy Commission, September 8, 1947, President's Air Policy Commission Papers, box 17, Harry S Truman Library, Independence, MO. (Hereafter cited Truman Library.)

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quarantine Communist bloc aviation from the rest of the world. What seemed like a workable approach, however, quickly fell victim to the political and commercial realities of international aviation, demonstrating the limits of Washington's diplomatic clout, especially when dealing with what one State Department official characterized as America's feckless allies.[11]

As American officials contemplated the structure of an American global aviation system in 1943, there was optimism, if not confidence, that the United States would be able to structure the postwar aviation system to insure that American owned airlines had access to foreign markets, especially in Europe. International agreements would be needed to reduce barriers to trade and travel, allowing "airlines . . . to operate services to and through each others territory." Optimally, the new international system would create a format to allow airlines to board and discharge passengers and cargo all along an extended flight route that serviced more than one nation.[12] In November 1943, President Roosevelt instructed Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle and four others,[13] whom he deemed most responsible for postwar aviation planning, about "the policy he wanted to follow." Except for the Axis nations, he sought "a very free interchange" allowing planes from "one country could enter any other country for the purpose of discharging traffic of foreign origin, and accepting foreign bound traffic." As for the Axis countries, Roosevelt believed, they should have no postwar aviation potential and should not be allowed "to fly anything larger than one of those toy planes that you wind up with an elastic."[14]

Accepting Roosevelt's desire for an open door for American aviation, Berle made his first priority reconciling policy differences with Great Britain. The United States considered the British as its most important air rival and represented one of the two major problems that Berle and advocates of an aviation open door faced. Britain supported the idea of widespread international aviation but recognized that it was at a technological, economic, and quantitative aviation

11. State Department Memorandum, August 1, 1947, DSF 711.4027/8-147; Engle, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet*, 2–17.

12. Memorandum, September 20, 1943, "Postwar Aviation," Folder 2, Harry Hopkins Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter cited as Hopkins Papers); Memorandum, April 30, 1943, State Department Files, 1938–45, International Aviation, box 54, Berle Papers; Report, Interdepartmental Subcommittee on International Aviation, June 19, 1943; Memorandum of Conversation, "Aviation Policy," November 11, 1943, Record Group 165, "ABC 580.82," box 599, NA; Solberg, *Conquest of the Skies*, 285–86; Henry Ladd Smith, *Airways Abroad: The Story of American World Air Routes* (Washington, DC, 1991), 149–51. It should be noted that the vision of open skies and landing rights projected by American planners did not include foreign carriers having access to any but a few American cities or flying across American territory.

13. The five men were Under Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Jr.; Assistant Secretary of State A. A. Berle; Assistant Secretary of War for Air Robert Lovett; Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board L. Welch Pogue; and Harry Hopkins. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, Volume II, General: Economic and Social Matters* (Washington, DC, 1967), 360 (hereafter cited FR, 1944, Vol. II, page).

14. Ibid., 360–62; Smith, *Airways Abroad*, 149–55.

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disadvantage compared to the United States. Consequently, it sought to restrict the number of flights and passengers American airlines could fly to Britain and Europe. While there were significant differences between the two nations on the specifics of international aviation policy, both American and British officials expected to find common ground through negotiations that would form a foundation for expanded postwar international aviation.[15]

The Soviet Union, however, represented a second and more fundamental obstacle—closed air space. It seemed to have little interest in international aviation, and represented the largest and most important country not to allow the right of "innocent passage" and "technical landing rights" to aircraft of other nations.[16] As in other areas, the Soviets stood apart from playing an active role in world affairs, but both American and British officials were hopeful that the Soviets were becoming more cooperative and receptive regarding international affairs. Their optimism arose from several sources. Overall, the Grand Alliance seemed to be working well. The Moscow meetings of the three foreign ministers in October 1943 and the summit talks in Teheran in November and December were viewed as successes and it appeared that the Soviets wanted to participate in a variety of discussions on postwar issues.[17] Regarding aviation, there were several indications that the Soviets were interested in establishing better air relations with the British and the Americans. Soviet Ambassador to Britain Ivan Maisky had informed Foreign Minister Anthony Eden that Moscow did not want to be ignored in any postwar aviation discussions; while in Moscow the Soviets appeared willing to allow British and American nonmilitary flights into the Soviet Union as a means to improve wartime travel and communication links. These, combined with the Soviet need for lend-lease aircraft and the beginning of Operation Frantic, seemed to signal a beginning of Soviet cooperation in aviation matters.[18]

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15. David MacKenzie, *Canada and International Aviation, 1932-1948* (Toronto, Canada, 1989), 144–70; Dobson, *Other Air Battle*, 160–151; *FR, 1944*, Vol. II, 374–76, 386–400; Foreign Office Memorandum, January 11, 1944, W97/97/802, FO 371, British Record Office (hereafter cited FO 371).

16. Innocent passage and technical landing rights were considered two of the most critical agreements relating to international air travel. Innocent passage allowed civilian planes to fly over the territory of a foreign country to destinations beyond that nation while technical landing rights allowed planes to land in a foreign nation to take on fuel and make mechanical repairs.

17. Although historians find different motivations for Soviet policy during the winter of 1943–44, there is general agreement that Allied relations, particularly American–Soviet relations were positive and cooperative. See William Taubman, *Stalin's American Foreign Policy: From Entente to Détente to Cold War* (New York, 1982), 47–73; Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 27–31; Mary E. Glantz, *FDR and the Soviet Union: The President's Battles over Foreign Policy* (Lawrence, KS, 2005), 140–76.

18. Initially, many within the Foreign Ministry and Air Ministry paid only lip service to Maisky's repeated requests, focusing instead on dealing first with the United States. This caused Maisky to comment: "If this was to be the spirit in which post-war problems were to be considered between nations, he would be despondent." By early 1944, the Foreign Office had changed its mind on the matter and was holding bilateral talks with the Soviets regarding aviation issues, including the sale of aircraft and arranging flights in and out of Moscow. Christopher

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In August 1943, the State Department reminded Admiral William Standley, the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, that establishing a once-a-week flight from "Seattle or Fairbanks and Moscow" to improve wartime communications was but "a first, but important, step to the establishment of regular commercial services between the two countries after the war." Standley did his part, not only opening discussions about a Siberian route, but also for one that stretched from Egypt to Iran to Southern Russia.[19] Other indications of increased cooperation occurred in October when General John R. Deane, who headed the U.S. Military Mission to the Soviet Union, found the Soviets willing to return American airmen who had crash-landed in Siberia and to open discussions on the use of bases in western Russia for shuttle bombing of Nazi Germany. By the end of the year, the British also were hoping to establish air routes to Moscow, one that duplicated the American route through Iran and another that flew over Scandinavia and the North Sea to Moscow.[20] Privately, both Washington and London worried that the other might gain an advantage which would exclude them from flying into the Soviet Union.

By the beginning of 1944, the British appeared close to the goal, but believed that they were encountering staunch opposition from within the Soviet military. They decided to ask Soviet Foreign Minister V. Molotov to intervene and in a meeting with Molotov and Premier Joseph Stalin, British Ambassador Sir Archibald Clark Kerr raised the question of the air link. Molotov responded that the Soviets were willing to sign an air agreement—provided the British sold them six 4-engine aircraft, explaining that the aircraft were needed to initiate Soviet flights to Britain. Before Clark Kerr could respond, however, Stalin pulled Molotov aside for "a buzz." After their discussion, Stalin reduced the request and asked for four planes. Clark Kerr responded positively and, in return, Molotov said he would deal with the obstructionists.[21]

The Soviet request quickly landed on Prime Minister Winston Churchill's desk. "Surely such a small request," he instructed the Foreign Office, "should not be denied to an Ally fighting as Russia was doing." He told the Foreign Office to ask the Air Ministry about planes for the Soviets. Despite a sense of urgency within the Foreign Office, the Air Ministry took nearly four weeks to respond. There were no new 4-engine planes available. The Air Ministry stated that some used 4-engine bombers could be found, but it was unlikely the Soviets would accept them. "Used aircraft are an anathema to Russians," commented one Air Ministry official. Faced with the lack of new planes, the Air Ministry suggested

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Brewin, "British Plan for International Operating Agencies for Civil Aviation, 1941-1945," *International History Review* IV (February 1982): 100–4.

19. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, Volume III* (Washington, DC, 1963), 681–2 (hereafter cited *FR*, *1944*, III, page).

20. Foreign Office Memorandum, January 11, 1944, W97/97/802, FO 371; Glantz, *FDR and the Soviet Union*, 169–71.

21. Foreign Office Memorandum, January 11, 1944, W 97/97/802; Telegram, Clark Kerr to Foreign Office, February 5, 1944, W 1811/97/802 1944, FO 371.

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Britain could use American C-87s or C-54s from its allotment, but it would require Washington's approval of their transfer to the Soviets. The Foreign Office lamented that having to ask the United States would undermine the British position. "Harriman is . . . negotiating for permission to operate American service from Teheran or Cairo to Moscow," commented one Foreign Office official, "and has already offered one if not two C 87's to [the] Russians." Nonetheless, the Foreign Office made the request—and received the expected reply. The United States would approve the transfer only if given "the same or similar rights."[22]

In reality, William Averell Harriman, who had replaced Ambassador Standley, was making less progress than the British thought. In December 1943, the Soviets stated that "there was no objection" to "the establishment of air communications between the U.S.S.R. and the United States along the Moscow–Teheran–Washington route." But, in January, when the Ambassador reminded Molotov that Washington was seriously interested "in speeding up the service for passengers and mail to Moscow" and suggested a "weekly service by a 4-engine motor plane . . . between Cairo and Moscow," a seemingly uninterested and unhelpful Soviet minister answered that it was a "military matter which was outside his competence."[23]

Still, as 1944 began, optimism prevailed across the aviation spectrum. Progress was being made on the larger issue of establishing an international aviation system. Ongoing, informal, discussions with the British were narrowing points of disagreement and both nations believed that an international meeting on postwar aviation could be held before the end of the year. On the Soviet front, invitations were extended to the Soviets to join "broad questions of policy" discussions in Washington over postwar aviation.[24] In February 1944, Harriman renewed his efforts to establish an air link to Moscow in a meeting with Stalin and Molotov. He told Stalin that "he was under constant pressure from Washington to establish" an air connection with Moscow. He stressed to the Soviet leader the desire for "reciprocal privileges" that would allow Americans to fly into Moscow and Russians to fly to Washington. Using long-range American-made four-motored transports, he explained, reduced significantly the time it took to fly from one capital to the other and allowed flights in winter. Stalin and Molotov were unmoved. Stalin admitted that "such a service would be a convenience for the

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22. Telegram, Clark Kerr to Foreign Office, February 5, 1944, W 1811/97/802 1944; Letter , Air Ministry to Foreign Office, March 17, 1944; Letter, Air Ministry to British Ambassador (US), March 18, 1944, W 4218/97/802, FO 371. Reporting on the British request, Berle recommended to Secretary of State Cordell Hull: "We should tell the British that we are glad to help them with their air entry into Moscow, but that we want the same or similar rights for the United States." Letter, Berle to Secretary of State, June 30, 1944, Diary Files, Berle Papers.

23. "Paraphrase of Outgoing Army Cable – Moscow – December 26, 1943"; Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Harriman and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, January 15, 1944, box 171; Letter, Harriman to Molotov, August 28, 1944, box 174, The Papers of William Averell Harriman, Manuscript Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as Harriman Papers).

24. *FRUS, 1944*, Vol. II, 365, 370, 376–78, 380–81, 387–90, 392, 402–4.

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passengers, but said that it would not be convenient for the Soviet Government." Molotov dourly suggested that the United States conclude an agreement like the British which exchanged planes and crews in Teheran and recognized that flights within the Soviet Union were to be flown by Soviet pilots exclusively. Undeterred, Harriman offered an incentive for the Soviets to consider parallel flights. He said he knew the "importance" that Stalin placed on transport aircraft and if the Soviets wanted four-motored transports "he would try to arrange to procure them." Responding, Stalin noted that they had only received two-engine aircraft but that "the Soviet Union would be pleased to buy some 4-engine planes, even outside of the scope of Lend Lease." He "added that he had not raised the question since he knew that the United States needed all it could produce." Harriman left asking only "that the question be allowed to remain open."[25]

On the larger issue of general international aviation, Harriman had better news. He reported to Washington that the Soviet Union would participate in bilateral aviation discussions in Washington. He also warned that Molotov was wary of similar talks with the Canadians and British and did "not like the idea of the Soviets being excluded from the initial conversations with the British and the Canadians." Harriman offered that the Soviets might want to participate in expanded British–American–Soviet talks. A month later, however, Moscow accepted the bilateral Soviet–American formula and named those selected to participate in the discussions. Conveying Moscow's position, Soviet Charge de Affaires in Washington Andrey A. Gromyko suggested April as a possible starting date for the talks. Berle, in turn, replied: "we would be ready whenever they were." He added that Special Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Grew and CAB Chairman Pouge would be available for informal discussions at any time.[26] To prepare for the meeting Berle sent Gromyko a copy of the American agenda for the talks and a summary of general objectives. Gromyko noted they seemed acceptable and "that the Russian group would not submit an agenda of their own."[27]

With the prospect of Soviet–American aviation discussions beginning in Washington, Harriman and others in Moscow continued to work for the establishment of "parallel air transport services." In a letter to Molotov, the American ambassador laid out three options for air routes and offered the Soviets four "C-87 air transports for this service." He also added that it was his "understanding" that the British were now negotiating for such direct service as well."[28] In August, as

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25. Memorandum of Conversation, "Improvement of air and signal communications between Washington and Moscow," February 2, 1944, box 171, Harriman Papers.

26. The proposed Soviet delegation included Gromyko, Lt. General L. G. Rudenko, Major General A.A. Avseevich, Major General N. I. Petrov, and Colonel P. F. Berezin. Only General Petrov and Colonel Berezin were not already in the United States and had to travel from Moscow. *FRUS, 1944*, II, 415–22.

27. Ibid., 428–29.

28. Commenting on the British overture, General Deane reported in May to the War Department that he did not believe the "British line is being negotiated strictly as a war-time measure. It will be commercial," he stated. He also noted that the British negotiations had

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hopes for parallel flights waned, Harriman changed the offer to ten C-47 type two-engine transports for a Teheran–Moscow air link and two or four C-87s for the Soviets to use on a possible Cairo or Aleppo–Moscow route. Hoping to avoid further delay, Harriman reminded Molotov that it was "clear as early as the Moscow Conference" (1943) that the United States placed "prime importance in the conduct of affairs between our two countries to develop the most expeditious air service possible" and that he and other American officials were available "to work out a program that will be mutually agreeable in accomplishing this end."[29]

As American officials worked to pave the way for a global network of air routes, the CAB released its first projected postwar international aviation routes for U.S.-based airlines. The routes reflected the desire for open skies and were the product of asking American air carriers to recommend the international routes they wanted. Eleven companies responded, including Pan American Airways, Trans World Airlines, and American Overseas Airlines. A year of consideration later, the CAB announced "on a provisional basis" its international routes connecting the United States with Europe and Asia. Several of these assumed the use of Soviet air space, including a northern Baltic route providing air service "to Norway, Sweden, and Russia" and one that established a global route across the Soviet Union. Two Asian routes that used Soviet air space were also presented. President Roosevelt examined the CAB's plans for 140,000 miles of American air routes, including those to and over the Soviet Union "and ordered full speed ahead."[30]

The CAB's announcement came as Soviet–American aviation discussion began in Washington. Initially, the talks started on a positive and "friendly" note. The Soviets appeared willing to participate in an "international network of air routes" and to join in some form of international aviation organization. They also discussed "air routes passing over the territory of the U.S.S.R" and stressed that flights between Moscow and New York constituted an "important air route." Then suddenly, the sense of cooperation all but vanished. A message from Moscow caused the Soviet delegation to reverse their "general ideas." Soviet air space was again closed to all foreign planes and pilots. The Soviet delegation went on to say that trans-national flights were "possible only under the condition

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encountered "countless Soviet delays," but those were overcome when the British ambassador offered Stalin "four engine transports." Deane recommended an "immediate Soviet-British-American conference . . . [to] provide for parallel Soviet, British, and American operations between the UK and Moscow." War Department Message, U.S. Military Mission – Moscow to Washington, May 18, 1944, box 172, Harriman Papers.

29. Letter, Ambassador Harriman to V. M. Molotov, June 19, 1944, box 173; Telegram, War Department to General Deane and Ambassador Harriman, August 28, 1944; Letter, Harriman to Molotov, August 28, 1944, box 174, Harriman Papers.

30. *Newsweek* (June 26, 1944): 65–66; *Flying* (December, 1944): 32–33, 92, 96, 100; Memorandum for Secretary State Hull, May 30, 1944, A-B File, box 59, Berle Papers; State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee 217/1, December 27, 1945, Manchuria Folder, DSF, 711.6.

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that . . . transit carriage through the USSR will be carried out only by Soviet planes" and Soviet crews. A Soviet airline, they explained, would connect with the air carriers of other nations "at a point or points on the other side of Soviet territory." The proposed route connecting New York and Moscow, for example, could be flown by a "coordination of operations" whereby passengers and cargo were exchanged in Cairo.[31]

The denial of the "right of innocent transit along recognized commercial routes," was a serious setback, but Berle and the American delegation still found room for some optimism. The Soviets were still allowing passengers and goods into the Soviet Union and there were hints that in the future "foreign planes" might use Soviet airports. Equally important, the Soviets agreed to continue talks and participate in a general aviation conference scheduled for November in Chicago. "It ought to be stressed," Berle concluded that, despite the setback, the Soviet position represented "a very real advance." He suggested that further progress might be made if a special envoy or Ambassador Harriman spoke directly with Molotov, or if the president conferred with Stalin. Roosevelt responded that Secretary of State Cordell Hull should "do it instead" and talk to Molotov.[32] Presenting a more somber perspective, Harriman, reported in September that there was an effort "on the part of political elements of Soviet Government to avoid collaboration on all air matters with us" and offered as one example the "failure" of the two-year effort to establish an air link between the Soviet Union and the United States.[33]

Berle, however, looked forward to the Soviets being among the more than fifty nations attending the Chicago Civil Aviation Conference (November 1 to December 7, 1944) and even considered the possibility that the Soviets might support the American plan for international aviation as opposed to the one being presented by the British. He was to be disappointed. Only days before the conference started, on October 26, word arrived from Moscow that the Soviets would not participate in the meeting. In what many considered a strange rationale, the Soviets withdrew from the conference. Their stated reason was that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had reached its decisions because the United States was allowing several nations (Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal),

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31. Berle, Memorandum, August 2, 1944; Memorandum, "International Aviation Matters," August 31, 1944; "International Aviation Conference," September 16, 1944, File A-B, Berle Papers.

32. Berle, Memorandum, August 2, 1944, File A-B Berle Papers; Letter, CAB to Harry Hopkins, September 6, 1944, "International Aviation Conference," Folder 2, Hopkins Papers.

33. "Soviet Policy," Letter, to General Arnold from Harriman, Walsh, and Deane, September 8, 1944, box 174, Harriman Papers. In a correspondence to Harry Hopkins, Harriman recorded his view that working with the Soviets was becoming more difficult: "Our relations with the Soviets now that the end of the war is in sight have taken a startling turn evident during the last two months. The Soviets have help up our requests with complete indifference to our interests and have shown an unwillingness even to discuss pressing problems." Harriman added "At the earliest convenient time and place, I feel I should report to the President." Paraphrase of Navy Cable from Moscow, September 9, 1944, From Harriman to Harry Hopkins, box 174, Harriman Papers.

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whose past actions had demonstrated a "hostile position" toward the Soviet Union and with whom the Soviet Union had no official diplomatic relations, to participate in the discussions. Dismayed at the sudden withdrawal, in an effort to convince Moscow to attend the meeting, the State Department argued that the geographical locations of the three nations made their participation in a conference on international air travel necessary and that their attendance at the Chicago conference was hardly a secret or a last minute addition. Meeting with A. Y. Vyshinski, the First Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Kennan explained Washington's position and requested that the Soviet delegation, or part of it, already in the United States be allowed to observe the conference. Vyshinski replied that he would pass the American request on to his superiors, but that he doubted they would change their minds or allow any members of the Soviet delegation to "wait 'outside the door' while delegates of these neutral countries took part in the discussions." He also suggested that the United States was pursuing a bad policy in collaborating with such countries and that it "should draw a line around those countries which are really reliable partners and should base . . . [its] plans and discussions . . . on that sphere." Gromyko delivered the final reply on October 30, rejecting the American alternative because it might make it appear that the Soviet Union was attending the meeting "but only in some kind of disguised and cowardly form."[34]

Few accepted the official Soviet reasons and several alternative explanations were offered instead.[35] The British offered two reasons why they thought Moscow avoided the conference. The first was because Moscow wanted to stay out of any "serious disagreement between the U.S. and British delegations." The second offered that the Soviet position on aviation would be unsupported by others at the conference and "they did not wish once again to be in the minority as they had been at the UNRRA meeting . . . and at the EITO Conference."

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34. *FR, 1944*, II, 570–76, 579–80; According to Andrei Gromyko, Soviet policy was consistent and that for "strategic and political reasons the 'consolidation of an American presence in countries neighboring us would be clearly not in the Soviet interest.' " Gromoko's report entitled, "On the Question of Soviet-American Relations," was written in July 1944. Vladimir O. Pechatnov, "The Big Three After World War II: New Documents on Soviet Thinking About Postwar Relations with the United States and Great Britain," Working Paper 13, Cold War History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC (July, 1995): 8.

35. *FR, 1944*, II, 581–84; Don Cook, "The Chicago Aviation Agreements: An Approach to World Policy," *The American Enterprise Association's Economic Survey Series, # 406* (New York, 1945), 28–30, Pan American Airlines Papers, University of Miami (hereafter cited PAA Papers). Some historians have argued that during this period of time, there was a general shift in tone between American and Soviet diplomats and policy over a variety of issues ranging from events in Poland to the termination of the shuttle bombing program, Operation Frantic. In Moscow, Harriman, Kennan, and General Deane were advocating a tougher diplomatic stance toward the Soviet Union. Glantz, *FDR and the Soviet Union*, 167–77; Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy*, 70–92; Diane S. Clemens, "Averell Harriman, John Deane, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the 'Reversal of Co-operation' with the Soviet Union in April 1945," *International History Review* XIV (May, 1992): 277–306.

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Berle disagreed with London. He told Secretary of State Edward Stettinius that Soviet behavior might be a by-product of "some question . . . left unsettled by the Churchill–Stalin talks"; or, it could have resulted from the Soviets believing they "were not yet prepared to play a decisive role [in aviation matters]."[36] Whatever the reason for the Soviet decision not to attend the Chicago Conference nor to open its air space, it ended the first stage in U.S.–Soviet aviation relations. It would be another decade before either Washington or Moscow would seek establishing a direct aviation link between their two nations.

Rather than try to pry open Soviet airspace, by the beginning of 1945, both London and Washington shifted their priorities to establishing air links with Eastern Europe.[37] They theorized that routes to Eastern European capitals would not only contribute to the growth of international aviation but the establishment of air treaties would also benefit other national goals. For many in the State Department and Foreign Office, commercial aviation rights would provide opportunities to open and maintain links that could limit the growth of Soviet influence in the region.[38] Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary received first priority as they seemed most likely to begin air service. Nor were the United States and Britain alone. Dutch, French, and Scandinavian aviation companies also were anxious to begin air services with the newly liberated nations.

The United States sought first to establish air service with Czechoslovakia. It was the most advanced aviation country in Eastern European and the least dependent on Soviet approval for the expansion of its air service. The Czechoslovakian national airline, *Ceskoslovenske Aerolinie* (CSA), was considered an independent national enterprise and comparatively free from Soviet control. Livingston Satterthwaite, the U.S. Air Attaché in London, initiated meetings with Czech air officials in August 1945. They seemed "anxious," Satterthwaite wrote, "not only for their own lines to be able to begin service but for Pan American Airways to inaugurate schedules."[39]

Pan American Airways had been awarded the air route from New York via London and Brussels to Prague by the CAB in July 1945. The airline hoped that Prague could be used as a stepping stone to Moscow and its projected

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36. Edward R. Stettinius to Berle, November 8, 1944; Berle to Stettinius, November 11, 1944, File A-B, Berle Papers; Solberg, *Conquest of the Skies*, 257–88; *FR*, *1944*, II, 582–84. The Soviet withdrawal did not prevent Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia from attending the Chicago Conference. See *International Civil Aviation Conference, Chicago, Illinois, November 1 to December 7, 1944, Final Act and Related Documents* (Washington, DC, 1945).

37. Neither Washington nor London completely halted efforts to encourage the Soviets to change their commercial air policy. Washington offered to sell the Soviets aircraft, aviation materials and "took the lead in holding open for Russia a seat on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)." "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the U.S.S.R. and Its Satellites," June 11, 1948, Policy Planning Staff Paper #32, Record Group 59, Policy Planning Staff, 1947–53, NA.

38. Telegram, Moscow to London, June 1, 1945, W7406/75/802, FO 371.

39. Statterthwaite to State Department, August 29, 1945, DSF 860f.796.

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global service. Expecting representatives of Pan American Airways to arrive soon, Czech officials asked the United States to "supply them—on a sale or loan basis—a few thousand gallons of aviation gasoline with which to begin their air services." Satterthwaite was told that the aviation fuel would expedite the Czech approval of a treaty.[40]

Within Washington there were no qualms about concluding aviation agreements with the Czechs—or any other Eastern European nation. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson informed the State Department that the War Department "strongly endorses the desirability" of trading fuel for aviation rights. Negotiations continued and in January 1946, an American–Czechoslovakian aviation agreement was signed that permitted Pan American Airlines access to Prague. In turn, CSA was allowed to fly over the American zone of Germany and to initiate a flight to New York City when it was technologically possible.[41]

From the Czech position, the agreement with the United States matched their expectations and needs. The Czechs saw the "business of transportation" as an important way to expand trade and gain foreign assets, and consequently sought to "make Prague the center of European aviation." "The air," said one Czech official, "is our sea." Their hopes, however, were partially derailed by the Soviets when Czech officials arrived in Moscow to negotiate an air treaty that would allow their airline to fly into the Soviet Union. They discovered the Soviets had quite a different idea about the sea—it ended at the Soviet–Czech border. The Soviets demanded that they sign a Soviet–Czech air agreement that maintained a closed Soviet air space while allowing Moscow a monopoly on flights between Moscow and Prague. To make matters worse, the manner in which they were told to sign the agreement raised valid concerns about Soviet intentions to influence, if not control, CSA operations.[42]

Wanting to open Eastern Europe to American aviation, the State Department hoped its agreement with Czechoslovakia would provide a model for a similar agreement with Hungary that would permit Pan American Airways to fly to and from Budapest. But its efforts were first ignored and then refused. Finally, in February 1946, Hungarian officials explained that, while they were flattered to be included in American aviation plans, their government was unable to act. Elaborating, they stated that an existing Hungarian–Soviet air agreement prevented them from responding and that the United States would have to negotiate

40. Ibid.; "PAA Routes Extended in CAB Decision," The Pan American Clipper, Atlantic Division, July 19, 1945, PAA Papers.

41. Secretary Stimson to State Department, September 25, 1945, SDF 860f796/9, NA.

42. In explaining their demand for a closed air space that prevented Czech flights over their territory, the Soviets gave national security as the primary explanation. Citing German civilian pilots who had during the war bombed Russian cities as part of the German air force, a Soviet spokesman told the Czechs that the "decision had been made on the highest level" and that "this fear and distrust was not directed against" Czechoslovakia but stemmed from setting a precedent that the Soviets "would have to extend to others." Jiri Klasparek, "Negotiating the Czech-Soviet Aviation Agreement," *The American Slavic and East European Review* 11 (October 1952): 207–14.

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any air agreement for Hungary with the Soviets. "[B]ut for fear of the Russians," American officials concluded, "the request would have been eagerly granted."[43]

Soviet obstruction in Hungary quickly became the norm throughout Eastern Europe. Francis Deak, the U.S. Air Attaché for most of Europe, provided an evaluation: "[the] aviation problem is a small part of the many controversial issues beclouding US-USSR relations." He believed that further American efforts would be futile and recommended reconsideration of the policy to reach aviation treaties with Eastern Europe.[44] At first, few agreed with Deak's view but that gradually changed as American relations with the Soviets deteriorated throughout 1946. By the end of the year, there was an ongoing debate within the administration about the benefits to be gained from continued efforts to establish air treaties with Eastern Europe—one that was finally resolved by President Truman. Efforts to reach aviation treaties with the Eastern European states would continue and the official policy remained to maintain "efforts to induce the U.S.S.R. to begin negotiations for an air transport agreement," to conclude air "agreements with Poland, Finland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Hungary," and to diplomatically try to prevent Moscow or its satellite states from concluding air treaties that did not include full reciprocity.[45]

As 1947 began those dissatisfied with the policy continued to press for change. But the focus of the discussions was shifting. It now had less to do with promoting commercial aviation than with shaping western relations with the Soviet Union and its satellites. Those supporting the existing policy agreed with the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union General Walter Bedell Smith that "security advantages to be gained by the United States from successful negotiation with Soviet satellite states . . . [were] sufficiently significant in their own right to warrant expeditious development." Smith believed that "even a crack in the so-called iron curtain would be something and might be the first step in widening the crack into a main breach."[46] Spokesmen for the State Department's Aviation Division remained optimistic stating that "arrangements with the Balkan States . . . appear less gloomy today than heretofore" and that progress was being made in

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43. Memorandum for Secretary of State, June 4, 1946, "Efforts to Secure Landing and Transit Rights in Hungary for U.S. Carriers," American Legation, Budapest to Secretary of State, August 5, 1946, Record Group 197, Civil Aeronautics Board Records, box 40, File U.S.–Hungarian Negotiations, National Archives.

44. Schoenfeld to State Department, August 5, 1946, SDF, 860f796, NA; "Negotiation of Bilaterals with Satellite States," Memorandum, Division of Aviation, December 18, 1946, SDF, 860f796, NA.

45. Ibid.; Air Coordinating Committee Paper, ACC 66.5, "United States Air Relations with Soviet Russia – Aviation Policy of the U.S Toward," February 20, 1947, Enclosure 2 in "Interim Aviation Policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and its Satellites, January 12, 1948; Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Soviet Affairs, 1948–51, Folder 2, Record Group 59, Lot Files 81D176, SDF, NA.

46. Ibid.; "Negotiation of Bilaterals with Satellite States," Memorandum, Division of Aviation, December 18, 1946, SDF, 860f796, NA.

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negotiations with Poland, Hungary, and some of the Balkan states.[47] Adopting a tougher, exclusionary policy they believed would jeopardize those negotiations, give a diplomatic advantage to those western European nations that continued to negotiate with Eastern Europe, and provide Pan American Airways another reason to withdraw its service to Prague.[48]

The CAB had awarded Pan American Airlines a route to and from London, Prague, and Moscow but the airlines was dissatisfied with its allocation. It had wanted access to Paris, Rome, and Athens or Cairo. Officials at Pan American did not expect the Prague and Moscow route to be especially profitable, and had made it clear to Washington that it required "a substantial subsidy" to maintain the route. With the Moscow leg of the route seeming unavailable, Pan American hoped to convince the CAB and State Department to allow it to change its route across Europe to Asia. It petitioned the CAB to skirt "the Russian-dominated Balkans by flying to Calcutta via Italy and Greece." In support of its request, Pan American stated there "was no reason to believe that U.S. will be able to get operating rights in these countries or Yugoslavia within the 'foreseeable future.' "[49] While the CAB and the State Department recognized Pan American's reasoning and were willing to allow an alternative route through either Italy or Greece to Turkey and beyond to India, the State Department was insistent Pan American maintain its contract to fly to Prague. John Hickerson, Chief of the Office of European Affairs, advised "canceling Pan American's certificate" and granting it to a rival carrier if Pan American halted its flights to Prague.[50]

Another source of concern over adoption of a more restrictive air policy toward Eastern Europe arose from fears that Britain and other western European nations might secure aviation advantages and further stray from the aviation policies advocated by the United States. France, Italy, and Denmark were rumored to be considering an approach by Moscow that would allow Soviet flights to exchange passengers with their airlines at destinations outside of the Soviet Union.[51] But it was Britain that most worried the State Department. It would do little good, the State Department opined, for the United States to take an exclusionary aviation policy toward the Soviet bloc while the British continued to operate there.

47. Part of the optimism arose from the prospect that the conclusion of the peace treaties with Eastern European countries would restore their air sovereignty and thereby provide new negotiating opportunities. By mid-1947 this view was fading as the Soviet Union created joint aviation companies like MASZOVLET (Hungarian–Soviet Airlines) that placed aviation controls in Soviet hands. For the Hungarian example, see Laszlo Borhi, *Hungary in the Cold War 1945 – 1956: Between the United States and the Soviet Union* (New York, 2004), 166–67.

48. "Air Coordinating Committee Adopts Policy Toward USSR," Current Economic Developments, March 7, 1947, Record Group 59, Lot 70D467, box 2; Memorandum, "Air Transport Operations Through Satellite States," June 9, 1947, Record Group 59, Policy Planning Staff, 1947–53, NA

49. Ibid; State Department Memorandum, March 20, 1947, SDF 711.4027, NA.

50. Ibid; State Department Memorandum, July 29, 1947, SDF 711.4027, NA.

51. Central Intelligence Group, "Future Soviet Participation in Long-Range International Air Transport," ORE 14, March 1947, NA.

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The British had flights to Prague and Poland they were unwilling to curtail and it appeared they were nearer to concluding aviation treaties with various satellite states, including Yugoslavia, than the United States. The Soviets seemed willing, a State Department assessment concluded, "to allow western powers including [the] UK to penetrate the iron curtain, but NOT US."[52] Unless London abided by and promoted the American policy, the State Department feared not only an American loss of influence throughout Europe but that American air carriers would suffer.

But as American policy toward the Soviet Union and its satellites moved toward a more confrontational stance with the announcements of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, those wanting to maintain the aviation status quo were losing ground. Increasingly, many in the State Department and other governmental agencies argued that American aviation policy should be linked to the emerging policy of containment. They pointed to a standstill in negotiations with Eastern Europe for landing rights and declared there was little chance the Soviets would allow further "foreign commercial air interests" access to Soviet controlled airspace. In supporting their view, they stressed that the satellite airlines, including CSA, were under virtual Soviet control and being directed "largely, if not exclusively, by political and military, and decidedly not for economic, considerations." By the end of the summer of 1947, those advocating for a more stringent aviation policy toward the Soviet Union and its satellites that included ending negotiations, halting travel to and from the Soviet bloc, and restricting the sale of aviation technology and products to the Soviet bloc were gaining ground.[53]

They had gained momentum but had not yet won the argument. It was agreed in December to implement a compromise—an "Interim Policy." The new policy, to begin in January, would not seek to completely curtail flights to and from the Soviet bloc. Instead, it sought to freeze aviation relations as they existed. Specifically, the policy called for the United States and Western European nations to no longer actively seek aviation rights with the Soviets or the expansion of existing aviation agreements with the satellite states. The key point of compromise was the phrase "actively seek," and it reflected three assumptions. First, it recognized that it would be difficult to get Britain and other Western European aviation

52. State Department Memorandum, July 29, 1947, SDF 711.4027, NA.

53. Memorandum, Merchant to Norton, "Should United States policy toward the U.S.S.R. and Satellite States be modified?" June 20, 1947, SDF 711. 4027; Central Intelligence Group, "Future Soviet Participation in Long-Range International Air Transport," ORE-14, March 1947; Garrison Norton, Office Memorandum, "United States aviation policy toward the Soviet Union and States under its influence," July 18, 1947; State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, SWN-5697, September 17, 1947, Enclosures 3 and 5 in "Interim Aviation Policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and its Satellites, January 12, 1948; Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Soviet Affairs, 1948–51, Folder 2; Eastern European Working Party: Memorandum #1, "Commercial Relations and Economic Pressure as Instruments of Soviet Policy," September 25, 1947, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Soviet Union Affairs, Economic Affairs Division, US-Soviet Trade Relations and Economic Subject Files, 1948–55, Folder 1, Record Group 59, Lot Files 81D176, SDF, NA. For background on American efforts to limit British sale of aviation technology, see *Engel, Cold War at 30,000 Feet*, 53–89.

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nations to shut off the possibility of air travel to and from Eastern Europe. Second, it accepted the belief that some benefits came from American air access to Prague; and, finally, that there still remained a chance of an aviation treaty with Yugoslavia. Consequently, the Interim Policy allowed further aviation negotiations and agreements, if initiated by the satellite countries and if the treaties provided for reciprocal agreements.[54]

As telegrams explaining Washington's new policy were delivered to American embassies in Europe, it was becoming clear that only one of the assumptions behind the compromise was correct. Britain and other Western European nations were at best indifferent to and, at worst, suspicious of American aviation policies. They exhibited little interest in curtailing their expansion presence in Eastern Europe. It was good business, politics, and policy to continue efforts to negotiate air treaties with the satellite states, they argued.[55] The other assumptions were proving less and less valid. Negotiations with Hungary and Yugoslavia for air treaties fell short and the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia seemed to exemplify the continued pattern of Sovietization of Eastern Europe.[56]

In a flurry of telegrams and memorandums, cases were being made to scrap the Interim Policy for a more restrictive, exclusionary, policy. Reversing their earlier analysis of the intelligence benefits derived from flights to and from Eastern Europe, the Joint Chiefs of Staff now believed that they provided little if any benefit to the United States. Even more importantly, they agreed that flights by satellites states air carriers, especially CSA, fulfilled an important role for Soviet intelligence agencies. On a related front, in March 1948, President Truman issued Presidential Proclamation 2776, which approved restrictions on the export of civil and military aviation technology and materials. Taking effect in April, the restrictions were quickly applied to the Soviet Union and its satellites. In implementing the policy involving East–West trade, Washington asked other western nations to also participate and to stop the "maintenance, modification, and repair of satellite aircraft."[57] The influential Policy Planning Staff chaired by George Frost Kennan

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54. State Department Memorandum, "AV Redraft of Martin Policy Statement 'Civil Aviation Agreements,'" October 22–30, 1947, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Soviet Affairs, Economic Affairs Division, US–Soviet Trade Relations and Economic Subject Files, 1948–55, Folder 2; Record Group 59, Lot Files 81D176; "Air Coordinating Committee Adopts Policy Toward USSR," Current Economic Developments, March 7, 1947, State Department Records, Group 59, Lot 70D467, box 2; Department of State Memorandum, "Air Transport Operations Through the Satellite States," June 9, 1947, SDF 711.4027, NA; *FR, 1948*, IV, 436, 448–57.

55. State Department Office Memorandum, August 1, 1947, DSF 711.4027/8-147; *Foreign Relations of the United States (FR), 1948, Volume IV, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Washington, DC, 1974), 437–46 (hereafter cited *FR, 1948*, IV, page). For a brief overview, see Marc Dierikx, *Clipping the Clouds: How Air Travel Changed the World*, (Westport, CT, 2008), 43–45.

56. Negotiations with Hungary collapsed in April 1948 when they were terminated by the Hungarian government. Discussions with Yugoslavia continued sporadically but were not productive.

57. State Department Memorandum, "Some Considerations Involved in U.S. Aviation Policy Toward the Soviet Union and Satellites," May 28, 1948, Record Group 59, Policy Planning Staff, 1947–53, Subject Files: Aviation, box 7, NA.

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also weighed in that a new policy was needed. In a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Robert Lovett, Kennan explained that they "had been concerned for a long time" about Soviet use of Soviet bloc air carriers and that "the danger . . . has been increased by the tightening of the communist hold on Czechoslovakia."[58]

The Policy Planning Staff and State Department and other government officials were especially concerned about the activities of the Czech national airline. For over a year, American observers had reported that CSA was increasingly under the direction of Communist elements in Czechoslovakia and was being used by Moscow for Soviet intelligence purposes. By mid-1947, efforts were underway to limit CSA flights and its acquisition of aircraft and parts. To bloc, or at least hamper, CSA flights, Washington restricted its use of airspace over the American zones in Austria and Germany. It also sought to prevent the Czechoslovakian airlines from buying Lockheed Constellations and examined the legal limits placed on American actions by its 1945 air treaty with CSA and Czech airline's membership in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Expecting a change in policy, Washington informed its European embassies that the United States no longer believed that flights to Eastern Europe provided political or economic benefits to the West and told Embassy staffs to work harder to convince Western nations to limit or, preferably, halt their aviation services to and from the Soviet-bloc countries.[59]

While the State Department began to toughen its aviation policy stance with CSA and Eastern Europe, the Policy Planning Staff started drafting recommendations for a new aviation policy. On June 15, 1948, the Policy Planning Staff made its recommendation for restructuring American aviation policy toward the Soviet Union and its satellites to the National Security Council. It argued that efforts from 1945 to 1947 to incorporate Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union into a normal air transport system had failed and that the interim, "no initiative" policy begun in mid-1947, was equally unproductive. Citing the "Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, . . . an increasingly aggressive Soviet policy" to deny American planes from Eastern Europe, and complete Communist control of CSA, the Policy Planning Committee argued that it was necessary to deny Moscow any military and political benefits it received from using satellite carriers flying to other parts of the world. It recommended that the United States seek "informal

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58. Letter to Secretary Robert Lovett, "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the U.S.S.R. and Its Satellites," June 11, 1948, Anna K. Nelson, ed., *The State Department Policy Planning Staff Papers, 1948, Volume II* (New York, 1983), 274.

59. State Department Office Memorandum, August 1, 1947, DSF 711.4027; State Department Memorandum, "United States aviation policy toward the Soviet Union and States under its influence and control,'" July 18, 1947; SDF 711.4027; Air Attaché (Bern) to State Department, March 14, 1947, SDF 860F.796; Eastern European Economic Working Party, Memorandum #1, September 27, 1947; "AV Redraft of Martin Policy Statement, 'Civil Aviation Agreements,'" October 22–30, 1947, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Soviet Affairs, Economic Affairs Division; Telegram, Prague to State Department, February 28, 1948, SDF 860F.796; *FR*, *1948*, IV, 448–51.

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assurances from the countries of Europe and the Near East which have air transport agreements with the satellite countries" that they would work to deny satellite air carriers the rights to fly to and over their territories.[60]

In a matter of weeks, National Security Council Memorandum 15/1 replaced the "Interim" policy. Copying most of the language of the Policy Planning Staff's paper, the new policy argued that "true reciprocity," with the Soviets and their satellites was now "impossible," and that the United States and the other nations of Western Europe should "restrict the civil air operations of the USSR and its satellites to their territory until the USSR grants, on a reciprocal basis, transit and commercial landing rights in USSR territory to civil air carriers of the U.S. and other states outside the area of Soviet control which desire such rights." The ban on flights, NSC 15/1 stated, should include curtailing flight based on existing treaties and rejecting any overtures from Soviet bloc nations.[61] In simpler terms the United States wanted to erect a "counter iron curtain" by blocking air travel to and from satellite states.[62]

While there was widespread support within Washington for the new restrictive air policy toward the Soviet Union and its satellites, effective implementation would depend on how agreeable other Western European countries would be in following the U.S. approach. There were three overlapping areas of concern: (i) getting western European nations to end their negotiations and flights to Eastern Europe, (ii) halting western Europeans from selling aviation products and aviation fuel to Eastern Europe and the Soviets, and (iii) halting Eastern European, especially Czechoslovakian, flights beyond the Iron Curtain. It was a daunting challenge and almost immediately the State Department dispatched messages to Britain, France, Belgium, Denmark, and Italy explaining the new policy. As Norton wrote Kennan,

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60. Policy Planning Staff, Department of State, PPS/32, "Problem: To Determine U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the Soviet Union and the Soviet Satellite Countries in the Light of Our Failure to Obtain Agreement With the U.S.S.R. for Reciprocal Operational Rights," June 11, 1948, Nelson, *The State Department Policy Planning Staff Papers, 1948*, 275–80; A Report to the National Security Council, June 15, 1948, Record Group 73, Policy Planning Staff, 1947–53, Subject File – Aviation, box 7, NA.

61. Initially listed as PPS 32, the report became NSC 15 (June 15, 1948) once it was received at the National Security Council. With only minor modifications, NSC 15 became NSC 15/1 (July 12, 1948). Memorandum, "Some Considerations Involved in U.S. Aviation Policy Toward the Soviet Union and its Satellites," May 28, 1948; Letter, Norton to Kennan, May 27, 1948, Record Group 59, Policy Planning Staff, Subject File Aviation, box 7; "Report to the President by the National Security Council," NSC 15/1, "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the USSR and Its Satellite States," July 12, 1948, Record Group 73, NA.

62. The term "counter [iron] curtain apparently was first used in a May 27, 1948 memorandum to Kennan from the State Department's Garrison Norton who used the phrase " 'Common Front' counter curtain" as a means to "deny egress of Soviet and satellite air carriers beyond the iron curtain." While not found in NSC 15 or 15/1, the term "Common Front counter-curtain" and "counter iron curtain" were used in documents explaining and discussing the new policy to U.S. and other officials. State Department Memorandum, Norton Garrison to George F. Kennan, "Definition of 'Reciprocity in Exchange of Air Rights with the Soviet Union or its Satellites," May 28, 1948, Record Group 73, Policy Planning Staff, 1947–53, Subject File—Aviation, box 7, NA; *FR, 1948*, IV, 463.

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"the multilateral approach 'all for one and one for all' " was a necessity. Because the implementation of NSC 15/1 would fail without London's active support, the highest priority was to convince the British to accept the policy.[63]

Seeking ways to convince Western European nations to implement a counter iron curtain, Washington chose Soviet behavior and national security. "The identity of national security interests is a sufficient strong motive for agreement," concluded the State Department. In making its case for national security, Washington highlighted Czechoslovakian flights to and from Prague. Using existing and pending aviation agreements and landing rights, CSA had rapidly expanded its routes and presence. By the end of 1946, it had flown a total of 804 flights to London, Belgrade, Warsaw, Copenhagen, and Stockholm, carrying over 11,000 passengers. Six months later, CSA had added service to Berlin's Soviet zone, Rome, Athens, Geneva, and Istanbul as destination cities and was logging over 74,600 miles a week. By the end of 1947, CSA was advertising in Beirut newspapers its service to Lebanon via Rome and Athens and appeared to be establishing routes to Palestine and Egypt, and India.[64] In its expansion, CSA had become a tool for Soviet policy, which sought "by every means possible to secure the right . . . to operate in the air space of other countries." With CSA under their control, the Soviets could "place their air crews" on flights beyond the borders of the Soviet bloc and "gain experience in flying outside the Soviet orbit." In addition, such flights could gather important intelligence information, facilitate the placement of agents, and provide "more effective liaison with Soviet agents and Communist parties abroad."[65]

The British, however, were "hesitant to endorse the proposed policy on its own merits." They saw little benefit in the American policy. It would not change Soviet policy or behavior, and flights by CSA and other satellite air carriers, they believed, posed no significant security or military risk. The openness of Western societies provided the Soviet bloc with more than enough intelligence opportunities, the Foreign Office concluded. Furthermore, the Foreign Office considered the American position, if adopted, would undercut those groups in Poland and Czechoslovakia interested in maintaining open relations with the West. It believed it was good politics to keep and foster existent contacts in Eastern Europe. Finally,

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63. Memorandum, Garrison Norton to George F. Kennan, May 27, 1948, RG 59 Policy Planning Staff—Subject Files: Aviation, box 7; *FR, 1948*, IV, 456–66; Engle, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet*, 99–102.

64. Telegrams, Steinhardt to State, August 12, 1946, October 7, 1946, January 10, 1947, SDF 860F796; U.S. Embassy Beirut to State, August, 17, 1948, SDF 860.79600, NA. It was reported in NSC 15/1 that the Soviets were "reported to have indicated to the Czechs their intention to make available to them a limited number of 4-engine aircraft." With such long-range aircraft the Czech might be able to cross the Atlantic and implement their landing rights in the United States. "Report to the President by the National Security Council," NSC 15/1, "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the USSR and Its Satellite States," July 12, 1948, Record Group 73, NA.

65. Bohlen told George F. Kennan that American aviation policy was based largely on "security considerations." Memorandum, November 11, 1948 SDF 711.4027; Engle, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet*, 100; *FR, 1948*, IV, 457–62.

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the Foreign Office, still suspicious of American aviation motives, did not want to give any advantages to American carriers.[66]

The British did not want to give up their flights to Prague and their "courier" flights to Warsaw, which they hoped would soon develop into full-service flights. In addition, London was hopeful that an aviation agreement was possible with Yugoslavia and believed, correctly, that Washington was still working to sign a similar agreement. Still, the Foreign Office did not want to alienate Washington by rejecting the American plan. Hoping to maintain its aviation position in Eastern Europe and to meet the Americans halfway, the Foreign Office agreed to block Soviet and satellite flights to the Middle East. Word was sent to British delegations and embassies throughout the Middle East to encourage governments to deny or retract landing rights to Czechoslovakia and other Iron Curtain nations. It also informed the State Department that Britain would support the American position by asking Western European nations not "to grant permission for satellite services . . . beyond what is absolutely necessary as a *quid pro quo* to obtain such services as they require and are actually ready to operate into satellite territory."[67]

The British reply met with mixed responses in the State Department. Charles Bohlen took a positive approach saying that London was "apparently in agreement." But others were disappointed. They considered the British response a step in the right direction but believed the response was inadequate and further proof that Britain wanted to promote its own aviation goals. They feared the Foreign Office might use the opportunity not only to block Czech aviation in the Middle East but to obstruct American interests as well.[68] They asserted that the United States should increase its efforts to convince the British to follow Washington's lead. Bohlen recommended a more cautious policy. For the time being, he said, Washington should not use "pressure" to get Western Europeans to follow its policy. Not only would they resent American pressure, but it would provide the Soviets ammunition to support their claim that the United States dictated policy to Marshall Plan nations. Bohlen's approach was adopted, although the State Department decided it should continue efforts to get the British onboard.[69]

Yet, as 1949 started, there was little chance that Britain was willing to alter its "unwillingness to yield to U.S. advocacy of a policy of complete containment." In a review of its Satellite Bloc aviation policy, the Foreign Office concluded that even efforts to get the western nations to adopt a limited aviation policy with Eastern Europe had met with only limited success, and that it would probably be impossible to get them to agree to a total containment policy. It was "extremely difficult

66. Ibid.; Memorandum, "US-UK Air Traffic to Satellites," January 28, 1949, W 540/45/802G, FO File 371.

67. Ibid.

68. As Jeffrey Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet*, and Alan Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare*, point out American officials continued to be dissatisfied with Britain's general aviation policies which sought to limit the expansion of American commercial aviation and to sell the Soviets aviation technology.

69. *FR, 1948*, Vol. IV, 471, 486.

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to get the Scandinavians to co-operate," the Foreign Office noted, and the Belgians had refused to place any limitations on their efforts to obtain aviation rights with the Soviet bloc. As for the Italians, they appeared "to attach considerable importance to their services to Prague." The result of the review was to affirm its current policy regarding Eastern Europe while continuing its efforts to block Czechoslovakian entry into the Middle East. "I am anxious," Prime Minister Clement Attlee stated, "that satellite services to the Middle East should be curtailed as effectively as possible."[70]

By February 1949, the State Department concluded that its "aviation iron curtain" was being subverted by Britain and other Western Europeans nations. Washington told its embassy in London that it was "seriously disturbed [about] recent British attitude." Specifically, the State Department was angered by Britain allowing a Hungarian flight to fly over Britain's German zone en route to Holland. It was "a clear-cut evasion" of Britain's support of their "common air policy, and made it more difficult to persuade others "to 'hold the line.' " Nor were the British the only problem for the State Department. The Dutch were discussing an aviation agreement with the Hungarians and the Belgians were considering one with the Poles. In addition, despite Washington's best efforts, "Czech and Polish air carriers continue to operate without serious restrictions" throughout Western Europe. Replying to Washington, the American Embassy wired that the "British, Belgians, Dutch and perhaps other governments have little or no apprehension over scheduled or irregular flights to Western Europe by satellite aircraft . . . as long [as] western controlled airlines are permitted reciprocal rights."[71]

By mid-1949, while promoting "the erection of a counter iron curtain of the air" and emphasizing the security dangers generated by Soviet Bloc aviation, the State Department was increasingly frustrated by its inability to gain "full implementation" of its "common front" policy and discussing possible alternative approaches. Still, placing the primary blame on the British, State Department officials contemplating "whether to exert heavier pressure on the British at higher levels," concluded that it would be beneficial to get the Joint Chiefs of Staff's assessment on "the extent . . . security factors justify further efforts to implement this policy in Western Europe, despite British opposition." It was also thought that the Joint Chiefs could work with their British counterparts to validate and emphasize the security risks.[72] Unfortunately, the Joint Chiefs replied on July

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70. Foreign Office Minute, James Murray, February 8, 1949; Foreign Office Minute, R.M.A. Hankey, February 11, 1949; Letter, Pierson Dixon to Ernest Bevin, February 1, 1949; Clement Attlee to Pierson Dixon, April 1, 1949, W 623/45/802 G, FO 371.

71. Current Economic Developments, April 15, 1949, July 25, 1949, Record Group 59, Lot 70D 476, NA.; Engle, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet*, 102–4; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949*, Volume V, *Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union* (Washington, DC, 1976), 196–97 (hereafter cited *FR, 1949*, V, page).

72. Appendix A, Letter to Secretary of State from Acting Secretary James E. Webb, June 1, 1949, in A Report to the National Security Council, "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the USSR and Its Satellites," December 28, 1949. This report became NSC 15/2; *FR, 1949*, V, 204.

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20, reversing its earlier view. It stated that there were "military advantages to be gained" by having western flights, including American carriers, service the satellite states. The Chiefs also agreed with the British assessment that Soviet intelligence gained few, if any, advantages from satellite flights through Western Europe. The Joint Chiefs agreed the policy created by NSC 15/1 needed further study. The State Department and other government agencies continued their reviews and in late December the State Department presented its review and recommendations to the National Security Council. If the NSC agreed to a change in policy, the State Department would "make it clear" that Washington firmly supported the "continued 'containment' of satellite civil air operations in the Near East, South Asian, and African area."[73]

The State Department's review was reformatted as NSC 15/2. Although it concluded that the complete embargo of flights to and from the satellite states had failed, it held that the broader containment policy required continued efforts to keep some degree of quarantine around the Soviet bloc. As in NSC 15/1, the new document kept security needs "the predominant consideration" and the blockage of the sale and the export of aviation materials to the Soviet Union and its satellites should be continued. Affirming opposition to Soviet Bloc flights to the Middle East, NSC 15/2 added South Asia to the regions covered by the policy. On the contentious issue of flights between Western and Eastern Europe, the State Department stated it had "no hesitancy in exerting" greater "diplomatic, and possibly military" pressure to achieve the "common front" goal established in NSC 15/1. But, it also understood that the overall results did not justify the effort and it was best to find a policy "which Britain and other Western European states could give full support." Consequently, the State Department now thought that the "adverse effect on our national interests" caused by satellite flights to the west could be offset "through civil air penetration of satellite territory" by western carriers. In its recommendations, the State Department held that full reciprocity on the part of the satellite states was mandated and that any failure on their implementation of reciprocity should result in denial of any flights to the west.[74] A week after its December 28, 1949, submission by the State Department, NSC 15/2 became NSC 15/3 and was sent as a report to President Truman for his approval. The differences between the two documents were minimal. Truman approved the new policy on January 6, 1950.[75]

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73. Appendix B, Letter from Office of the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State, July 20, 1949; Note by the Executive Secretary on U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the USSR and Its Satellites, December 28, 1949, *FR, 1949*, V, 206–7, 220–21.

74. NSC 15/2, "A Report to the National Security Council by the Department of State on U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the USSR and Its Satellites," December 28, 1949, National Security Files, NA; *FR, 1949*, V, 221–22.

75. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, Volume IV, Central and Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union* (Washington, DC, 1980), 1–6 (hereafter cited *FR, 1950*, IV, page); NSC 15/3, "A Report to the President by the Security Council on U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the USSR and Its Satellites," January 5, 1950, National Security Council Files, NA.

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Having modified its policy, the State Department again approached the British for support. The State Department took pains to explain that the United States had not retreated from its policy set forth in NSC 15/1, but had improved it. It instructed its officials to stress the policy should not be seen as an "easier policy" and whereas the "previous policy called for only one counter measure" NSC 15/3 allowed for more flexibility. Focusing on the need for complete reciprocity, which the Soviets would reject, Washington claimed its new approach would beat "the USSR and its satellites at their own game."[76] Months of further discussion ensued with both nations explaining and expressing slightly differing positions and definitions. Basically, the Foreign Office saw the new American approach as little different from their view of the Interim policy and their "joint policy for preventing as far as possible flights by airlines of Soviet and satellite countries to points outside the Iron Curtain, especially in Western Europe and the Middle East." It wondered why Washington gave it such "special significance." "We did not attach any great importance to this amendment," the Foreign Office recorded, "since this idea seemed to us already implicit in the 1948/49 policy."[77] Despite a continuing mild disagreement over the differences between the old and the new policies, both governments in January 1951 instructed their missions and embassies to promote the policies set forth in NSC 15/3.[78]

Ironically, as the United States was promoting NSC 15/3, events taking place in Czechoslovakia were producing increased support for blocking nearly all CSA flights beyond the Iron Curtain, and at least temporarily halting or reducing Western European flights to Prague. In its efforts to consolidate its control, the Communist government of Klement Gottwald initiated a series of political trials aimed at pro-Western and anti-Soviet elements in the country. The Gottwald government also charged several Western newsmen and diplomatic personal with spying and barred many correspondents from entering Czechoslovakia. At the same time, CSA made several "illegal overflights" of the Western zones of Germany and held captive two American Air Force pilots whose jets had been forced down in Czechoslovakia. But it was the arrest of American newsman William Oatis in April 1951 for espionage that galvanized the State Department into more forceful action. Responding to the variety of Czechoslovakian actions, State Department officials concluded that the United States and the Western Powers needed to take strong action or "shut up" and accept Prague's behavior.

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76. *FR, 1950*, IV, 26–30.

77. Foreign Office Memorandum, "Civil Aviation Relations with the Soviet Union and Satellites, Discussion with United States Civil Aviation Representatives on October 12," November 3, 1956, GA 26/80, FO Correspondence 371.

78. In August, 1950, the United States accepted that the British supportive efforts were adequate, but U.S. instructions being sent to U.S. missions to promote the policies set forth in NSC 15/3 did not reflect a joint message. *FR, 1950*, IV, 40; Current Economic Development, "Modified Aviation Policy toward USSR and Its Satellites," June 5, 1950; "Aviation Policy Toward USSR and Its Satellites," June 11, 1951, box 4, RG 59, NA; Foreign Office Memorandum, "Civil Aviation Relations with the Soviet Union and Satellites, Discussion with United States Civil Aviation Representatives on October 12," November 3, 1956, GA 26/80, FO Correspondence 371.

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The State Department argued it was time to apply diplomatic and economic pressures on Prague in order to alter their behavior and obtain the release of Oatis.[79]

On the list of possible reprisals that could be taken against Czechoslovakia was denying air space over West Germany to Czech planes.[80] Using CSA's overflights and the arrest and trial of Oatis as justification, in June and July, Washington increased its efforts to get the British and the French to agree as part of the High Commission for Germany (HICOM) to deny all CSA flights across West Germany. Washington also hoped that the Belgians, Dutch and Scandinavians also would agree to halt CSA flights to their capitals. In making its case, the State Department stated that because of the Oatis situation it was impossible for "US [to] approve any renewal [of] CSA overflights [of] Western Germany for [the] month of August" and that it was taking the action not to defend "American citizens and interests" but those "of entire free world." Washington also stressed the "seriousness of [the] situation" and the strong interest of the President, Congress, and the American people in getting Oatis released. To further allay Western European suspicions, Washington stated that it was not trying to implement its "old satellite aviation policy, [to] permanently wipe out Czech air service to Western Eur."[81]

As in the past, British and French responses were cautious, while the Dutch and the Belgians were hesitant. London agreed in the need to present a unified policy in the face of Czechoslovakian actions, but wondered if cutting off Czech flights might do more harm than good. They needed time to consider the American request and convinced the United States to allow CSA flights over West Germany to Paris, Brussels, and Copenhagen for the month of August. Washington kept up its efforts to convince Paris and London to implement a ban on CSA flights over West Germany emphasizing that this effort was not just for Oatis but to protect "Western nationals" as a whole."[82]

Continued Czechoslovakian actions and American pressure produced results. In late July, citing "Western solidarity" Britain and France also agreed to halt Czech flights over West Germany beginning in early September "until further notice." The Belgians and the Dutch also agreed to curtail CSA flights to their

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79. Current Economic Developments, June 5, 1951; June 11 1951, "Aviation Policy Toward USSR and Its Satellites," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, Volume IV (Washington, DC, 1980), 1281–85, 1339–42, 1346–563 (hereafter cited *FR 1951*, IV, page). See also Dana Adams Schmidt, *Anatomy of a Satellite* (Boston, MA, 1952), 28–56.

80. In working to implement NSC 15/3 and responding to Czech activities, the British agreed to end British European Airways flights to Prague and deny CSA flights to London in June of 1951, while the United States barred CSA flights from flying over the American zone of West Germany. *FR, 1951*, IV, 1265–67, 1281–85.

81. *FR, 1951*, IV, 1391–96, 1398, 1411–13. William Oatis was found guilty of espionage in July 1951 and was released in 1953 following Stalin's death and after President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent a strongly worded letter to the Czechoslovakian government. In 1990, the Czechoslovakian government exonerated Oatis. *New York Times*, September 17, 1990.

82. *FR, 1951*, IV, 1265–67, 1380–82, 1388–97; Current Economic Development, "Aviation Policy Toward USSR and Its Satellites," June 11, 1951.

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countries. These efforts effectively isolated CSA, leaving only Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Helsinki as destinations for its flights. Over the next year and a half, despite some wavering on the part of the Dutch and the French, efforts to maintain the counter iron curtain remained successful, with both Washington and London crediting their actions with the "effectively implemented" policy.[83]

The success of the common front policy, however, rested primarily on the actions of the Soviet Union and its satellites and by 1953 those actions and the international climate was changing. In March 1953, both the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union underwent change. In the Soviet Union, the death of Stalin ushered in a new regime composed of Georgi Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Lavrenty Beria. The new government seemed interested in improving relations with the West; and most European governments, including Britain, appeared anxious to respond positively. Reflecting the new international climate, British Ambassador Sir Oliver Franks told the outgoing Truman administration that over the next year "there was likely to be pressure . . . for a substantial increase of peaceful trade between the East and the West."[84]

In Washington, having defeated the Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson in November 1952, Dwight David Eisenhower assumed the presidency in March and quickly undertook a wide-ranging reexamination of American policies, including those involving the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. One initiative focused on improving relations with Eastern Europe by expanding American trade and communications with the region. Commenting on the initiative, Eisenhower thought it might be "the very best weapon in the hands of a modern diplomat" to separate Eastern Europe from the Soviets. As part of the agenda of building bridges to the satellite states, the State Department undertook a review of its aviation policies. Completed in the spring in 1954, the review upheld existing aviation policies, but allowed for the modification of the ban on CSA flights over West Germany. The report kept the thrust of NSC 15/3, saying the best results would be to gain access to Eastern European cities and air space while limiting the Soviet satellites' airlines to flying only to Western European capitals.

83. Ibid., 1265–67, 1386–88, 1405–7, 1405–13, 1553; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Volume I*, "General: Economic and Political Matters," Part 1 (Washington, DC, 1983), 407–8 (hereafter cited *FR, 1952-1954*, I, page). The Foreign Office noted that it had "loyally applied the 'containment policy.' " Minute to Foreign Office, Memorandum, "Air Services with the Soviet Union," July 26, 1956, GA 26/47/57; Foreign Office Memorandum, "Civil Aviation Relations with Soviet Union and Satellites," November 3, 1956, GA 26/80/57, FO 371; Memorandum for Mr. James S. Lay, Jr., Executive Secretary National Security Council, "Fourth Progress Report on Implementation of NSC 15/3," entitled: "United States Civil Aviation Policy toward U.S.S.R. and its Satellites," May 12, 1954, White House Office Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, NSC Series, Policy Papers, box 1, Eisenhower Library.

84. Ibid.; M. Steven Fish, "After Stalin's Death: The Anglo-American Debate Over a New Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 10 (Fall 1986): 333–55; Robert Mark Spaulding, Jr., " 'A Gradual and Moderate Relaxation': Eisenhower and the Revision of American Export Control Policy, 1953-1955," *Diplomatic History* 17 (Spring 1993): 231.

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As for the Soviets, the desire was to continue to deny Soviet aircraft entry into non-Bloc airspace.[85]

The problem, Washington realized, was the Western European desire to improve trade and travel not only with Eastern Europe but with the Soviets. In dealing with the aviation side of the issue, the State Department believed the best tactic would be to demand that "full reciprocity" be included in all aviation agreements. While the Satellite States would probably accept reciprocity, American officials believed there was little chance that the Soviets would agree. Furthermore, the West should not conclude treaties with the Soviets unless they not only agreed to full reciprocity but also accepted the right of "innocent transit" across the Soviet Union. To allow the Soviets to fly out of the Soviet Union without gaining flights across the Soviet-controlled Eurasian continent, State Department officials argued, would assure Moscow an easy around the world route while denying it to the West. From Washington's perspective, because there was little chance of Moscow granting overflights of their territory, the United States would be able to keep the Soviets locked behind the Iron Curtain.[86]

Washington's hope of getting European compliance in keeping the Soviets behind the Iron Curtain began to evaporate by mid-1954 when the Soviets launched an initiative to open air travel to and from Moscow. The Soviets suggested in a series of overtures to non-bloc countries the possibility of "interline" flights. It was a return to its 1944 policy whereby its national airline, *Aeroflot*, would fly into specified airports in cities like Prague, Vienna, Helsinki, and Berlin and exchange passengers and cargo with other European airlines. Washington immediately "questioned the advisability" of meetings with the Soviets and restated its commitment to requiring full reciprocity and Western access to Moscow. It did little good. The Finns and Scandinavians were the first to respond, followed by the Dutch, Belgians, French, and the British. Returning from meetings in Moscow, Lord Douglas, Chairman of British European Airways, called interline flights a first step in a direct London–Moscow service.[87]

By the winter of 1954, the counter iron curtain was collapsing. France had concluded an "in-line" agreement with the Soviets with flights to begin in 1955.

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85. Tor Egil Forland, "Selling Firearms to the Indians," *Diplomatic History* 15 (Spring 1991): 221–23; Spaulding, "A Graduate and Moderate Relaxation," 223–49; *FRUS 1952-1954*, I, 438–39.

86. Ibid.; Foreign Office Memorandum, "Civil Aviation Relations with the Soviet Union and Satellites," November 3, 1956, GA 26/80/57, FO 371. In a statement of general considerations of U.S. aviation policy toward the Soviet bloc, a National Security; Council Memorandum noted that "NSC 15/3 assumed that there would be no likelihood that the USSR would permit scheduled air services by carriers of the Free-World . . . into or over Soviet territory." National Security Council Report 5726/1, "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the Sino-Soviet Bloc," December 9, 1957, White House Office Files, Office of Special Assistant for National Affairs, NSC Series, Policy Papers, box 23, Dwight David Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas; Current Economic Developments, "Modified Aviation Policy Toward USSR and Satellites," June 5, 1951.

87. Current Economic Developments, "Soviet Civil Aviation Policy Seen Changing," April 17, 1956, NA; *The New York Times*, January 27, 1955; April 9, 1955; August 2, 1955; November 22, 1955.

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Passengers were to book directly through to Moscow, changing planes in Prague. As part of the agreement, France allowed CSA to fly into Paris. The French agreement was followed by the resumption of Czech flights to Belgium and Switzerland. Widening the breech of the counter iron curtain were Soviet statements suggesting the possibility of direct service to Moscow.[88]

Clinging to the policy of full reciprocity and the belief that the Soviets would not permit it, Washington prepared for another effort to put together a unified Western aviation policy toward the Soviet Union and Communist Bloc. It conceded flights to and from Eastern Europe, but hoped to continue the isolation of the Soviet Union behind the Iron Curtain. Prior to the Geneva meeting of Foreign Ministers in November 1955, American representatives met in Paris with their British and French counterparts. Referring to Eastern Europe, the American delegation noted that air travel to and from the Satellite States no longer provided any "strategic" benefit, and that the United States was willing to support increased air traffic, based on reciprocity, with the nations of Eastern Europe. They also agreed that as part of a wider "open skies" proposal, every effort should be made to include the Soviet Union within the sphere of western civil aviation. The American representatives went so far as to support direct flights to and from Moscow and were willing to put an American–Soviet air agreement on the Geneva agenda. Privately, the American officials considered their proposal having a catch, one Washington thought would result in Moscow rejecting the offer. A Soviet rejection of the Western offer hopefully would enhance Washington's chances of keeping France and Britain from arranging their own air agreements with Moscow. Consequently, the American representatives stressed that there needed to be full and strict reciprocity on the part of the Soviets, including a requirement for the Soviets to accept the technical provisions that the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Air Transport Association had in place governing international flights. Speaking to the British and the French, the State Department emphasized that interline agreements "weakened" their "tactical bargaining position," making it harder to pressure the Russians into reciprocity. The French and the British agreed to the American position and said they were willing to present a solid front to the Soviets at Geneva.[89]

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88. Current Economic Developments, "Soviet Civil Aviation Policy Seen Changing," April 17, 1956, NA; *New York Times*, January 27, 1955, April 9, 1955.

89. Foreign Office Minute, October 12, 1956, Memorandum, "Civil Aviation Relations with the Soviet Union and Satellites," November 3, 1956, GA 26/83, FO 37; "Soviet Affairs: A Monthly Review of Significant Developments in the USSR and Eastern Europe," January 1956, OIR Report 4800.84, 15–17. May 1956, OIR Report 4800.88, 13–15, Confidential File, Russia, Eisenhower Library; Current Economic Developments, "Soviet Civil Aviation Policy Seen Changing," April 17, 1956, NA. The proposal for inclusion of the Soviet Union in global aviation system was incorporated into the broader 17 Point Program also introduced at the Geneva meeting of Foreign Ministers; it was also included in several subsequent discussions involving cultural exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union. "Annex A," National Security Council Report, NSC 5726/1, December 9, 1957, Eisenhower Library; Hans Heymann, Jr., "The

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Keeping to their agreement, the Foreign Ministers offered the Soviets direct air access to the West, if they agreed to the principle of full reciprocity and accept existing international standards and regulations governing international aviation. Meeting Washington's expectations, Foreign Minister Molotov rejected the offer. But to the surprise of the State Department, he countered that the Soviet Union would consider bilateral agreements that could include reciprocity.[90] Fearful that Molotov's response might be sufficient to lure the French and the British away from their joint position, American officials stressed that allowing Moscow to negotiate air treaties that did not include full reciprocity but which aided in expanding "its influence [would] . . . undermine Western efforts in the field of international air transportation."[91]

The concern expressed by American representatives proved correct. Moscow was changing its aviation policy. The change was in part a product of the new Soviet leadership and their desire to improve East–West relations and extend Soviet influence beyond the Communist bloc, but it also reflected developments in Soviet aviation technology that allowed Moscow to more effectively compete with Western aviation. In the view of the State Department, the new phase of Soviet civil aviation involved an increasingly effective aviation campaign to break through the iron curtain and establish air traffic between Moscow and the rest of the world. It was in step with Moscow's "policy to penetrate the free world economically." The interline agreements were the first volley. The second volley commenced in October 1955 with a Finnish–Soviet agreement that allowed the Finnish airline Aero Oy's to fly from Helsinki to Moscow. Realizing that the Finnish flights would soon be joined by other Scandinavian carriers, by mid-1956, the State Department admitted that the counter-iron curtain policy "was now obsolete."[92]

Following Finland's example, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden signed agreements that allowed Scandinavian Airlines to fly to Moscow. In return, Aeroflot received landing rights in Copenhagen and Stockholm, as well as "points beyond." In the face of the Soviet effort to "enter the international civil aviation field" and the Western European nations failing "to keep in line," the Eisenhower

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U.S.–Soviet Civil Air Agreement From Inception to Inauguration: A Case Study," R-10478-DOS, July 1972, (Santa Monica, CA), 5, 36–37.

90. *New York Times*, November 1, 1955; Foreign Office Minute, October 12, 1956, Memorandum, "Civil Aviation Relations with the Soviet Union and Satellites," November 3, 1956, GA 26/83, FO 371; "Soviet International Civil Aviation Policy Undergoing Change," Intelligence Report #7063, October 11, 1955; "Soviet Bloc Continues to Expand Civil Air Activities," Intelligence Report #7530, July 9, 1957, Intelligence Reports, SDF 59/5514/23, box 23, NA.

91. Ibid.; "Statement of United States Civil Aviation Objectives As Related to Sino-Soviet Bloc Civil Aviation Activities in the Free World," Tab C – History, National Security Files, box 182, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA. (hereafter citied as Kennedy Library).

92. Betsy Gidwitz, "Soviet International Civil Aviation Policy," *Survey* (1979): 31–32; Heymann, "The U.S.–Soviet Civil Air Agreement From Inception to Inauguration, 36–37; Current Economic Development, January 8, 1957, NA.

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administration believed it had no choice but to change its aviation policy. Determining the structure of the change was complicated by competing goals and realities. Should the United States continue with its efforts to limit the expansion of Soviet/Communist aviation or join with the Western Europeans in seeking an aviation treaty with the Soviet Union? The latter had certain benefits. It would work to improving Soviet–American relations, especially as the Soviets seemed to place some importance on such a treaty. Furthermore, it would benefit American airlines, especially Pan American Airways, in keeping pace with the Western Europeans flocking to Moscow seeking air treaties. But taking such a policy, given the "intense European competition" for access to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union would further play into the hands of the "hard bargainers" in Moscow who would try to set extensive limits on Western aviation into the Soviet Union. Seeking an air treaty with the Soviets would also make it more difficult to convince other nations around the world to try and resist Communist bloc aviation advances. On the other hand, continuing to oppose flights to Moscow would allow the Soviets to use the American stance as a wedge to undermine American influence with non-bloc nations. But one thing was clear, Washington's efforts to shape common front air policy with Western Europe which restricted Soviet and Eastern European flights would be at best difficult—if not impossible.[93]

The new policy, finalized in December 1957, was detailed in National Security Council Memorandum 5726/1, "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the Sino-Soviet Bloc." It noted that the Soviet Union "apparently has now realized the significance of civil aviation capabilities as an element of national power and prestige, and is developing a growing capability to challenge U.S. leadership in this field." Consequently, the memorandum announced the longstanding American and overarching goal "aimed at bringing the Soviet Union back into international civil aviation on Western terms." But it stated that any aviation agreements with the Soviets and the Eastern European satellite states should offer "maximum benefit to the West" and conform to the principles of the International Aviation Organization, including complete reciprocity of service. Broadening the goals of the policy, NSC 5726 listed the "prevention of further international air traffic between the Free World and Communist China, North Korea, and North Viet-Nam" and severely restricting Communist "influence and control over indigenous airlines in critical areas of the Near East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America." Furthermore, it was in Washington's "interest to persuade selected Free-World nations to pursue a common policy in their civil air relations with the USSR" and the Eastern European satellite states. Having stated the goals of American policy,

93. Current Economic Development, January 8, 1957, NA; *FR, 1955-1957*, Vol. IX, 488–503 (hereafter cites *FR, 1955-1957*, IX, page); State Department Memorandum, October 15, 1957, White House Office Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, NSC Series Policy Papers, box 1, Eisenhower Library; "Soviet Bloc Continues to Expand Civil Air Activities," Intelligence Report #7530, July 9, 1957, Intelligence Reports, SDF 59/5514/23, box 23, NA.

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the memorandum acknowledged that getting other Free World states to follow a common policy would be nearly impossible because of "each government's concept of its own commercial, political and military interests."[94]

That the common front, counter-iron curtain, policy was over became clear when France, Britain and other Western nations lined up to conclude bilateral air agreements with the Soviet Union that allowed their carriers access only to Moscow while giving Aeroflot access to nearly every European capital. In October 1959, an Operations Coordinating Board report on the effectiveness of NSC 5726/1 noted that although there was "a wide measure of support for U.S. objectives," Washington had not achieved the goal in creating the "proposed common civil aviation policy toward the Soviet Bloc." Rather, the Soviets, "benefiting from the competition and differences among Free World carriers," had concluded air treaties with most of Western Europe. In addition, both Soviet and Eastern European airlines, particularly CSA, were making inroads in North Arica, the Middle East, and South Asia.[95]

Having failed in keeping the Western Europeans in line regarding air policy toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the next issues to be addressed were the possibilities of maintaining a quarantine of Communist aviation in other regions of the world and if, or when, the United States should conclude an air agreement with the Soviet Union allowing flights between Moscow and New York. In January 1958, during negotiations for cultural exchanges, the United States and the Soviet Union established the groundwork for an air treaty. Both nations "agreed in principle to reciprocity on direct commercial flights between the two countries" and that negotiations would begin "at a mutually convenient date to be determined later." Over the next ten years, negotiations would start and then sputter to a stand-still, paralleling the ups and downs of the Cold War and differing opinions among American officials about the general benefits of a Soviet–American air agreement. In late 1958, it appeared that negotiations would begin after Khrushchev chided Lewellyn Thompson, the American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, about what he saw as an American unwillingness to negotiate an air treaty, saying that the Soviet Union was ready to begin discussions on the "next day." Washington agreed to start negotiations but the Berlin issue halted the momentum. The possibility of an air agreement resurfaced the following year after Eisenhower's meeting with the Soviet Premier at Camp David but the Soviet downing of an American Air Force plane over the Barents Sea halted any progress toward negotiations. Like the Eisenhower administration, the administration of John F. Kennedy saw an air treaty as a step in improving

94. National Security Council Report, 5672/1, December 9, 1957, "U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the Sino-Soviet Bloc," White House Official Files, NSC Series Policy Papers, box 23, Eisenhower Library; *FR*, *1955-1957*, Vol. IX, 490–503.

95. "Report on U.S. Civil Aviation Policy Toward the Sino-Soviet Bloc," October 29, 1958, White House Official Files, Office of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, NSC Series Policy Papers, box 23, Eisenhower Library.

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American–Soviet relations, but Cold War issues made it difficult for Washington to find an appropriate time to negotiate a treaty. Responding to President Kennedy's query about an air treaty with Moscow, in April 1963, Secretary of State Dean Rusk argued that there was no benefit for the United States in such a treaty and said that such a treaty would harm American interests. Commenting on the other side of the question, N. E. Halaby of the Federal Aviation Agency wrote a letter in 1963 to Harriman expressing his view: "there is something vaguely illogical about the lack of direct service between two powers such as the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and I believe it quite possible that at some time in the next five or ten years logic will catch up with us and such service will be inevitable."[96]

The "inevitable" remained dependent on the vicissitudes of the Cold War and American– Soviet relations. Consideration of an air treaty had restarted in 1963 with Kennedy and continued by President Lyndon B. Johnson, but Soviet actions and opposition from Congress and within the State Department and Department of Defense stalled agreement on a treaty until 1966. Then as part of "peaceful engagement" package with the Soviet Union that would "seek areas of agreement" and to "lessen international tensions" work was resumed on an air treaty. Signed in November, the bilateral aviation treaty allowed Pan American Airlines to begin service to Moscow and for Aeroflot to land in New York City—once technical details were concluded. Those details took time, but finally on July 15, 1968, the inaugural flights took place linking Moscow with New York.[97]

96. Memorandum, "Khrushchev Visit, September 1959, US-Soviet Civil Air Relations," September 24, 1959; Memorandum, "Air Transport Agreement Between the United States and the Soviet Union," July 19, 1960, White House Confidential Files, Russia, box 64, Eisenhower, Library; Letter to W. Averell Harriman from N. E. Halaby, June 21, 1963, Aviation Files, Federal Aviation Agency, Record Group 59, box 3343, National Archives; Heymann, "The U.S.–Soviet Civil Air Agreement From Inception to Inauguration," 10–13, 37–39.

97. A second inaugural flight scheduled for August 23, 1968 was cancelled because of the Soviet invasion of Prague on August 21, 1968. Draft Memorandum, "Statement of United States Civil Aviation Objectives as Related to Sino-Soviet Bloc Civil Aviation Activities in the Free World," November 11, 1962, box 11, National Security Files, Kennedy Library; Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks in New York City before the National Conference of Editorial Writers," October 7, 1966, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1966*, Book II (Washington, DC, 1967), 1125–26; Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point* (New York, 1971), 463–64; Memorandum, Department of Commerce, June 14, 1968, White House Central Files, box 15, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Texas; Heymann, U.S.–Soviet Civil Air Agreement From Inception to Inauguration, 11–15, 46–54; *New York Times*, July 13, 1965, May 7, 1967; Moscow File, PAA Papers.

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