THE UNITED STATES AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR, 1941-1947

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John Lewis Gaddis

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FOR BARBARA

CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

Asking an author to assess his own work is a risky thing to do. Self-congratulation is a slippery slope, and it's all too easy to wind up sprawled awkwardly at the bottom of it. Self-flagellation is also a danger, especially when the work in question is a revised doctoral dissertation completed almost three decades ago by an inexperienced young scholar in what was then a very different world. Rereading *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* is, for me, rather like revisiting the sites of lost youth. Some things seem familiar and others strange; some evoke nostalgia and others embarrassment; there is a sense of having done then what I could not or would not or should not do now. One thing, though, is clear: it never occurred to me when I was writing this book that it would still be in print three decades later, or that a generation of students not yet born would now be reading it, citing it, and even at times finding it useful.

Why this has happened, I'm not quite sure. It cannot be the sources, for they've been superseded by new materials, especially those from the "other side" in the early Cold War. It can hardly be the theory, for there is none here worth mentioning. It may have had something to do with the timing, for the book was one of the first substantial (if mild) critiques of "New Left" revisionism, and this fact gained it a sufficiently prominent historiographical niche that graduate students at least are expected to know what it says. I like to think that the writing has kept the book readable. For this I owe much to mentors

(their names appear in the original preface) who had not the slightest patience with slack or soggy prose.

There is one other way in which I think I was fortunate. I was in graduate school during the tumultuous 1960s, but I did not emerge from that experience with the same sense of obligation that so many of my contemporaries felt to condemn the American Establishment and all its works. Perhaps geography had something to do with this: politics weren't as polarized in Austin, Texas, as they were on the East and West coasts, and in retrospect this was probably good for me. I managed somehow to avoid letting my own outrage over the Vietnam War—which was certainly there as early as 1965—from becoming a lens through which I viewed the early Cold War. One never totally escapes the present in writing about the past, but I'm glad that that particular present did not become, as it did for so many, my point of departure.

I've noticed one other thing in returning to this book for the first time in many years. It focuses, more than I'd remembered, on the relationship of domestic politics to foreign policy, and in this sense it's still unusual. My Yale colleague H. Bradford Westefield had, of course, published his classic *Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics: From Pearl Harbor to Korea* in 1955, and I modeled my dissertation on it. The original title was to have been "Domestic Influences on United States Policy Toward the Soviet Union, 1943–1946." But surprisingly few scholars since have looked at the role party and Congressional politics played in shaping foreign policy during World War II and the early Cold War.

Somehow, in our preoccupation with archives, theory, quantification, methodology, and historiography, we've lost sight of something Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and their subordinates never for a moment forgot: that they operated within a highly contentious domestic political environment from which they could only rarely insulate the conduct of foreign policy. It seems worth it now to have taken the time, in writing the dissertation, to plough doggedly through all of the issues of the *New York Times, Time, Newsweek,* and the *Congressional Record* for the years in question, even though I never used most of the notes I took from these sources. They did, I think, give me a better sense of how American leaders saw things at the time than most of our current mod-

els of bureaucratic and organizational politics or of "rational choice" decision making would have done.

What's missing from this book? Quite a lot, I can now see. There was speculation, but only that, about the actions of the Soviet Union: we now have much more confirming evidence. There's almost nothing about the role of the Europeans in the coming of the Cold War, something I now regard as of major importance. There's little, even within the context of United States policy, about political economy, war planning, the military-industrial complex, covert operations, or the extent to which the American view of the outside world was a socially constructed reality. No one should attempt to understand the role of the United States in the early Cold War without consulting the works of historians who have dealt carefully with these issues: I mean particularly Melvyn P. Leffler, Michael Hogan, Frank Costigliola, Elaine Tyler May, Marc Trachtenberg, Aaron Friedberg, Anders Stephanson, and Carolyn Eisenberg, among many others.

And what have I learned from rereading this book? Well, that I wrote in shorter sentences then. That I certainly had more stamina for slogging through sources than I do now. That I resisted, as I hope I still do, seeing history in terms of dogmas, whether of the right or the left. But, most of all, that I was extraordinarily lucky: that the book came out at just the right time, that it did as well as it did, and that there are people around now—wonder of wonders—who still want to read it.

PREFACE

Historians of the Cold War face a peculiar problem: an overwhelming, though still not complete, body of documents on United States foreign policy during and after World War II is now open for research, yet we have little reliable information about what went on inside the Kremlin during the same period. This disparity of sources makes it impractical, at present, to attempt a definitive study of the origins of the Cold War. Nor is it now feasible to make final judgments about responsibility for that conflict, although I do venture a few highly tentative suggestions in the conclusion.

My goal has been more modest. I have sought to analyze the evolution of United States policy toward the Soviet Union from the formation of the Grand Alliance in 1941 to the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947. I have proceeded on the assumption that foreign policy is the product of external and internal influences, as perceived by officials responsible for its formulation. In seeking to understand their behavior, I have tried to view problems of the time as these men saw them, not solely as they appear in retrospect. I have not hesitated to express judgments critical of American policy-makers, but in doing so have tried to keep in mind the constraints, both external and internal, which limited their options. If there is a single theme which runs through this book, it is the narrow range of alternatives open to American leaders during this period as they sought to deal with problems of war and peace.

In contrast to much recent work on the subject, this book will not

treat the "Open Door" as the basis of United States foreign policy. Revisionist historians have performed a needed service by stressing the influence of economic considerations on American diplomacy, but their focus has been too narrow: many other forces—domestic politics, bureaucratic inertia, quirks of personality, perceptions, accurate or inaccurate, of Soviet intentions—also affected the actions of Washington officials. I have tried to convey the full diversity and relative significance of these determinants of policy.

Far too many people have helped in the writing of this book for me to thank them all individually, but the contributions of several deserve special mention. Robert A. Divine supervised the manuscript in its original form as a dissertation at the University of Texas, and has offered wise counsel on subsequent drafts. H. Wayne Morgan taught me most of what I know about writing style. Oliver H. Radkey first stimulated my interest in Soviet-American relations through his courses in Russian history. Robert H. Ferrell, Gaddis Smith, George C. Herring, Jr., Thomas R. Maddux, and Alfred E. Eckes, Jr., have all read the manuscript at various stages and have offered valuable suggestions. My colleague and office-mate, Lon Hamby, has generously taken time from his own book, soon to appear in this series, to wade through at least three separate drafts and to offer unfailingly helpful advice on each. I owe an especially large debt of gratitude to my editor, William E. Leuchtenburg, who, with an exemplary combination of firmness and tact, persuaded me to reconsider, reorganize, and rewrite large portions of this book. The results of his patient and constructive guidance are evident on every page. Needless to say, final responsibility for the contents remains my own.

Historians could not function without archivists and librarians. I wish to express my appreciation to the staffs of the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Dwight D. Eisenhower Libraries, and the manuscript collections at Princeton, Yale, Harvard, Rice, and the Universities of Michigan, Oklahoma, and Virginia. I owe special thanks to the long-suffering librarians at the University of Texas, Indiana University Southeast, and Ohio University, all of whom cheerfully put up with incessant requests for books, interlibrary loans, microfilm, and Xerox copies while I was writing this book. Every historian of recent United States foreign policy is indebted

to the Historical Office of the Department of State, which, despite years of understaffing, has nonetheless managed to make the record of this country's diplomacy available to scholars with a degree of speed and accuracy unmatched by any other nation.

My wife, Barbara, has contributed to this project in so many ways that my gratitude to her can only be expressed on the dedication page. My son, John Michael, offered encouraging gurgles from his crib.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

DAFR	*Documents on American Foreign Relations.* Vols. II–IX (1939–47). Boston and Princeton, 1940–49.
Eisenhower Papers	Albert D. Chandler *et al.*, eds. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years.* 5 vols. Baltimore, 1970.
FDR: Personal Letters	Elliott Roosevelt, ed. *F.D.R., His Personal Letters: 1928–1945.* 2 vols. New York, 1950.
FDR: Public Papers	Samuel I. Rosenman, ed. *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt.* 13 vols. New York, 1938–50.
FR	U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States.* Annual volumes, 1941–46. Washington, D.C., 1958–70.
FR: Casablanca	U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Washington, 1941–1942, and Casablanca, 1943.* Washington, D.C., 1968.
FR: Potsdam	U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), 1945.* 2 vols. Washington, D.C., 1960.
FR: Tehran	U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943.* Washington, D.C., 1961.
FR: Washington and Quebec	U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Washington and Quebec, 1943.* Washington, D.C., 1970.
FR: Yalta	U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945.* Washington, D.C., 1955.
Truman Public Papers	*Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1945–1947.* Washington, D.C., 1961–63.