

TOWARDS A CRITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ORTHODOX-REVISIONIST  
DEBATES ON THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR: BETWEEN DISCIPLINARY  
POWER AND U.S. NATIONAL IDENTITY

By

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## **Abstract**

The study of U.S diplomatic history and the Cold War has undergone a marked transformation in the analytical methods, conceptual approaches, and theories used by practitioners in the field. However, innovation and sophistication has seldom transferred into the study of the historiographical literature itself. In an attempt to buck this trend, this dissertation posits a theory of historiographical development in order to interrogate the meaning of the orthodox-revisionist debate on the origins of the Cold War. Borrowing insights from the literature on ‘critical historiography’, it suggests that historiographical shifts occur in the twin struggle of defining the boundaries of the historical field and the construction of U.S identity. It documents the process of ‘disciplinisation’ that Cold War revisionism underwent, reconfiguring both the parameters of the field and the form of revisionist interpretations. It moves on to suggest that legitimization of revisionism as a form of historical knowledge was facilitated by conceptual shifts in the meaning of U.S identity and a rearticulation of the orthodox narrative, which incorporated and thereby marginalised the revisionist critique. Finally, a few thoughts are raised as to the politicised nature of all historiography in the way that it negotiates challenges to disciplinary practices and boundaries.

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>I.    The Origins of the Cold War: An Overview</b>	1
<b>II.   Empiricist Historiography, Critical Historiography</b>	4
<b>III.  Power, Identity and the Politics of Cold War Historiography</b>	7
<b>1) Conceptualising Cold War History: Between the Politics of Disciplinarity and Identity Formation</b>	11
<b>Part A</b>	
<b>I.    History and the ‘Ideology of Realism’</b>	11
<b>II.   Diplomatic History as a Form of Imperial Knowledge</b>	12
<b>III.  Disciplinary ‘Crisis’ and the Incommensurability of Research Paradigms</b>	16
<b>Part B</b>	
<b>IV.   Ideology, Identity and the Cold War</b>	19
<b>V.    Cold War Constructs: ‘Good versus Evil’ and ‘National Security’</b>	20
<b>2) Orthodoxy and Consensus</b>	
<b>I.    American Intellectuals and the Cold War Consensus</b>	25
<b>II.   Orthodoxy, Realism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins</b>	32
<b>3) Fault lines and Fractures in the Cold War Formation</b>	35
<b>I.    Shifting Perceptions of the ‘Other’: Totalitarianism</b>	36
<b>II.   Intransigent Realities: ‘Freedom’ in the Third World</b>	41
<b>4) The Cold War Revisionists and U.S Diplomatic History</b>	44
<b>I.    Background: The Emergence of the “New Left”</b>	44

<b>II.</b>	<b>Revisionism and the Origins of the Cold War</b>	45
<b>III.</b>	<b>The Ideological Challenge: Radicalism as Form</b>	49
<b>IV.</b>	<b>The ‘Open Door’, Ideology and the Radical Form</b>	52
<b>V.</b>	<b>Assimilation and Incorporation</b>	57
	<b>Conclusion: Neorealism, Revisionism and the “Containment of Ideology”.</b>	61
	<b>Notes</b>	65
	<b>Bibliography</b>	73

## **Introduction**

### **I. The Origins of the Cold War: An Overview**

The story of Cold War historiography was once a simple one to tell. First, there was the traditionalist or orthodox thesis, which formed the standard interpretation between the 1940s and the early-1960s.<sup>1</sup> Orthodox historians argued that the Cold War started because of the Soviet Union's decision to embark upon an expansionist policy in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, which was driven by the ideological goal of exporting world revolution. Proof of Moscow's intentions could be found in Soviet unilateral moves to install communist or pro-communist governments in Eastern Europe, efforts to destabilise governments in the Near East and the return to doctrinal belligerence by Russian leaders.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, the United States was seen as largely passive and defensive in its approach to the problems of the immediate post-war period, having few specific aims other than to encourage an international order based on freedom, self-determination and adherence to the rule of law.<sup>3</sup> By 1947 U.S leaders finally realised the futility of such aims, given the innate hostility of the Soviet Union and settled upon a policy of "containing" Russian expansionism. The central theme in much of traditionalist historiography was an ideological one: the United States, confronted by an implacably hostile foe for which no amount of Western conciliation would satisfy its global ambitions, came to the defence of freedom and democracy, saving the world from the spread of communist rule.<sup>4</sup>

The mid-to-late 'sixties' witnessed the emergence of another school to rival orthodoxy, namely 'revisionism'.<sup>5</sup> Where orthodox scholars saw U.S foreign policy as virtuous, benevolent and essentially benign, revisionist historians observed purpose, design and the consistent pursuit of national self-interest. Where traditionalists interpreted Soviet actions as part of an overall blueprint for global domination, the revisionists saw security fears

at the heart of Soviet policy. Having turned orthodoxy on its head, revisionists concluded that the United States was chiefly responsible for the onset of Cold War.

Broad assent on U.S responsibility has often obscured the fact that revisionism was a heterogeneous body of scholarship. Notwithstanding the attempts of anti-revisionist critics to portray them as a single monolithic interpretation, Cold War revisionism combined the writings of William Appleman Williams and his followers on the 'Open Door Empire', Gar Alperovitz's work on atomic diplomacy and Gabriel Kolko's survey of the capitalist system and U.S foreign relations.<sup>6</sup> They were part of a resurgence of the historiographical left in America that was associated with the "New Left" movement, though the relationship between these diplomatic historians and radical politics was ambiguous.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, the debate over the origins of the Cold War between traditionalists and revisionists was exceedingly hostile and vituperative. Peter Novick observes that "what made the controversy so highly charged were the implicit questions it raised, which had to do with nothing less than the United States' moral standing in the world".<sup>8</sup> By charging the United States with responsibility for the Cold War, focusing on Washington's own expansionist ambitions and rejecting Soviet depravity as a principal cause of the conflict, revisionists subverted not only the clear moral distinctions that had sanctioned U.S policy, but the very meaning of 'America' itself. The Cold War debate "was not just about what we should do, but about who we were".<sup>9</sup>

From the mid-1970s, the intensity of the controversy dissipated, paving the way for another reconsideration of the origins of the Cold War. The new synthesis that was heralded, called "post-revisionism", claimed to have overcome the shortcomings of the existing orthodox and revisionist literature and avoided the unscholarly emphasis on blame-throwing.<sup>10</sup> Post-revisionist historians like John Lewis Gaddis postulated a less-clear cut



picture of events, where multiple intertwining factors entered into explanation. Nevertheless, one of the underlying themes of post-revisionism was geopolitical.

Emphasis on the strategic dimensions of U.S policymaking, the fears, perceptions of threat and the definition of vital security interests became the hallmark of post-revisionist scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Washington's fears about the Soviet Union, in particular its ability to capitalise on the devastation wrought by the Second World War to spread its pernicious influence into the power vacuums left by the defeat of the Axis powers, were genuine. The threat posed to Western interests and institutions was real. Post-revisionist historians, to varying degrees, praised the wisdom of postwar U.S officials in restoring a global balance of power and forestalling the possibility of Moscow's domination of Eurasia.<sup>12</sup>

By the late 1980s, however, the division of Cold War historiography into traditionalism, revisionism, and post-revisionism, was no longer tenable. The arrival of new conceptual approaches, such as 'corporatism', 'world systems', and later 'culture' blurred the lines of separation between historical accounts. The diffusion of perspectives was accelerated by the end of the Cold War itself and the subsequent release of archive materials in the former communist bloc in the 1990s. Correspondingly, a 'new' Cold War history was proclaimed.<sup>13</sup> However, the new history did not constitute an interpretive 'school' so much as it meant the study of Cold War history that was truly international in scope (rather than simply an adjunct of U.S diplomatic history) and genuinely multifaceted in its approach to explanation. Odd Arne Westad states that the "new Cold War history is in its essence multiarchival in research and multipolar in analysis, and, in the cases of some of the best practitioners, multicultural in its ability to understand different and sometimes opposing mindsets".<sup>14</sup>

Contemporary Cold War historians have come a long way since the days when orthodox and revisionist historians did battle over the causes of the U.S.-Soviet confrontation

in books, articles and journal commentaries. In many respects, they were participants in the Cold War. Presently, the study of the Cold War is so broad, diffuse and eclectic that a historiographical dispute on a similar scale is almost unimaginable.<sup>15</sup> No doubt that the passage of time and remoteness from events has aided historical perspective. If historical progress has surely been made, the same cannot be said of *historiographical* analysis in the field.

## **II. Empiricist Historiography, Critical Historiography**

Historians have long-recognised the contemporaneity of all historical writing. Frederick Jackson Turner wrote in the 1890s that “[e]ach age tries to form its own conception of the past. Each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time”.<sup>16</sup> The truism that each generation of historians are influenced by a ‘climate of opinion’ or ‘the spirit of the age’ is often repeated in historiographical surveys, though it is seldom captured with any degree of conceptual precision. In traditional or ‘empiricist’ overviews of historiography – that which constitutes the bulk of the historiographical literature – there is a curious absence of thinking on the production of historiographical meaning and its changes.<sup>17</sup>

A case in point is the work published on Cold War historiography. Roughly, this literature can be divided into two groups: comprehensive overviews of the development of historical debate;<sup>18</sup> and in-depth treatments of one or more Cold War ‘school’.<sup>19</sup> Although there are differences of emphasis and approach, neither attempt to conceptualise the link between the historiographical ‘modes of interpretation’ employed and the broader context in which they are situated. The conventional formula is to represent the literature in a descriptive

manner, summarising the interpretive debate between competing schools or traditions and areas of contention.<sup>20</sup>

The descriptive character of much Cold War historiography also coincides with a highly attenuated understanding of what comprises a ‘politicised’ history, which is framed in disparaging terms as charges of bias or ‘presentism’, i.e. reading present concerns into the past. This is certainly the case with early writings on the Cold War that are deemed to have lacked requisite impartiality because they followed closely changes in overall political trends. The British historian D. C. Watt argued that American debates on the Cold War were “essentially unhistorical” and a “form of pseudo-history”, which “tells us very little of the Cold War much of American intellectual history in the 1960s and 1970s”.

There is profound reluctance, in empiricist accounts of historiography, to explore the role of the ‘non-empirical’; in other words, the choice of theory, methodology, and forms of representation, as well as the subjective and ideological connotations they entail. This can be attributed in part to the dominant assumptions of the historical discipline, which circumscribe the boundaries of the field. The observation of the discipline’s conventions and rules of evidence is simultaneously a legitimisation of history’s claims to scientific knowledge and objective truth; but the practice of historiography itself threatens this procedure. As Robert Berkhofer explains “if historiography is the history of history, then it undermines the authority of proper history through its historicization of all histories to their times and thus suggests their cultural and political arbitrariness”.<sup>21</sup>

A recent alternative to conventional accounts is Steven Hurst’s *US Cold War Foreign Policy*, which situates the historical literature in an explicitly conceptualised framework. Eschewing descriptive concerns, Hurst’s primary focus is on the structural dimensions of the Cold War’s ‘key perspectives’, which comprise choices about levels of analysis (individual,

class, state, system) and explanatory factors (politics, economics, strategy, ideology, culture). According to Hurst, the “arguments about U.S. foreign policy is [sic] an argument about which combinations of actors, levels, and fields provide us with best explanation of that policy”.<sup>22</sup>

Hurst’s study is an important addition to the literature on Cold War historiography because it breaks out of the constraints of traditional historiography to debate the form of explanation used by historians in constructing historical accounts. More intriguing perhaps, is the attempt to elaborate, albeit in somewhat circumscribed fashion, the connections between the explanatory framework and an ideological function.<sup>23</sup> This is a promising departure, but in the book it is left inchoate. What is required is a more formal and exacting theorisation of the way in which historiography reinforces certain ‘political’ tendencies.

Another suggestive proposal is advanced by Emily Rosenberg who observes that “all historical texts...are invariably *structured representations* that...both silence as well as reveal, encode as well as decode, assign voice and authority to some and deny it to others [emphasis in original]”. The structure and logic of textual representation, she adds, “need[s] to be interrogated, not merely assumed”.<sup>24</sup> Rosenberg’s suggestions echo many of the ideas associated with the ‘linguistic turn’ or ‘theory’, which have infused historical studies in recent years. New theories of language, narrative and discourse have raised discomfiting questions about history’s epistemic status, but they have also challenged any pretension to permanent truths, fixed meanings and objective standards. This means that historical interpretation is no longer about the meaning and truth of the past, but is rather an effect of linguistic and social practices in the present, which form the basis of our cultural and political universe. According to Hayden White, “[p]ure’ interpretation, the disinterested inquiry into anything whatsoever is unthinkable without the presupposition of the kind of activity which politics represents”.<sup>25</sup>

The notion of the inescapability of politics in the nebulous domain of culture is a general theoretical orientation shared by so-called 'postmodernist' scholars, who have influenced a growing body of 'critical historiography', which suggests that all forms of historical explanation are ideologically positioned whether historians profess impartiality or not.<sup>26</sup> It involves a critique of the politics fostered by interpretation as well as the politics behind interpretation, that is, the presuppositions about the nature of man, society and culture, methodological postulates, and the tropes, emplotments and other narrative strategies embedded in textual representation.<sup>27</sup> This practice goes against the grain of traditional historiographical thinking, but it greatly enriches the potential meanings of what constitutes the 'politics of history'.<sup>28</sup> Taking this as a starting point, we can begin to elaborate the conceptual approach to be pursued here.

### **III. Power, Identity and the Politics of Cold War Historiography**

The 'historical' writings of French thinker Michel Foucault have been a seminal influence on the development of critical historiography.<sup>29</sup> His central preoccupation, in what is often described as his 'genealogical' period, was to explain the integrated processes of 'power/knowledge' that function to control and discipline modern societies, or what he termed a 'regime of truth'; that is

the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.<sup>30</sup>

Understanding Foucault's 'problematic' is instructive, for it enables us to conceive historiography not as simply a discourse about discrete events in the past, but as a discourse that produces and legitimises knowledge in the present, which supports, albeit obliquely, articulations of ideology and political interests. On this account, truth in history is not to be

found in the realm of the 'past'. Rather, it is an 'effect' of the practices and rules of discourse, in which the production of truth is a dynamic process governed by the 'interplay' of multiple forms of power.<sup>31</sup>

Starting from this perspective, we can identify at least two interrelated forms of power that condition the production of meaning in historiography. The first belongs to the discipline or sub-discipline proper. As a mode of discourse, history is involved in an ongoing struggle to control the boundaries of the field in order to define its meaning, which is a form of 'politics' internal to the discipline. This is what gives the discipline a degree of autonomy, whereby interpretive, conceptual or methodological shifts are not reducible to the impact of any single external development. The second can be said to belong to a more diffuse, though no less important, struggle for 'hegemony' in a given social or political order.<sup>32</sup> Historiography in this sense is an intervention onto a 'field of possibility' or 'discursive formation' that limits the horizons of meaning within which discourse takes place. The contours of historiographical development can be understood as the outcome of mediations between these two realms, which together shape and reshape meaning and truth in historical discourse, though neither is reducible to the other.

Having foregrounded the theoretical intent, the aim of this dissertation is to critique early Cold War historiography as a discourse prefigured by, on the one hand, the field of U.S. diplomatic history and, on the other hand, an American Cold War 'framework of meaning' constituted by representations of ideology and national identity. It is argued that the Cold War debate between orthodox, revisionist and post-revisionist historians was not simply a progressive endeavour towards the 'truth', where one interpretive thesis was replaced by another more plausible thesis. It was rather a much more contradictory and vagarious process emerging out of competing internal and external antagonisms, which challenged, resisted, or

otherwise modified the parameters of discourse, creating new configurations of meaning and truth in the Cold War.

Chapter 1 focuses on the rules and practices of discourse in U.S. diplomatic history and the nature of disciplinary and institutional arrangements, which determine how the field operates as a system of knowledge. In this regard, primary emphasis is given to an analysis of the constitutive role that power has played in legitimising certain modes of interpretation as well as an examination of the ideological implications for historical writing. This chapter also elucidates the conceptual underpinnings of Cold War representations, which exerted a profound influence on American society and culture, and were inextricably bound up with the meaning and identity of the United States itself.

Chapter 2 assesses the nature of Cold War orthodoxy's hegemony during the 1940s and 1950s. It sees this as a product of the cultural and intellectual conditions of the time, which were highly conducive to a single homogenising interpretation. This is reflected in political, social and historical thought, which was part of a 'culture of Cold War'. The alliance of scholarship and power and the close ties between government and intellectuals is also explored in this period. What it also shows is how orthodox historiography remained firmly entrenched within the dominant research paradigm of diplomatic history. Increasingly important here is the slippery concept of realism, around which a limited interpretive rival to the orthodox thesis emerged.

Chapter 3 traces the development of Cold War revisionism beginning with an account of how latent tensions in the Cold War framework became visible over the decade of the 1950s. As the dimensions of the Cold War mutated and the United States became embroiled in intractable conflicts in the Third World, these tensions turned into open wounds by the time of the Vietnam War. The parameters of the Cold War debate also shifted under the strain,

creating the conceptual possibilities for the radical critique of U.S. foreign policy and a revision of the historiography.

Chapter 4 continues the examination of how revisionism emerged by examining the process of its assimilation into the discipline of U.S. diplomatic history. The purpose here is to analyse the nature of the revisionist challenge to the established discourse, how representatives of the existing research paradigm responded and where revisionism's eventual incorporation reconfigured the boundaries of the field. Yet this ought to be seen as a two-way process. The acceptance of revisionism as a legitimate form of inquiry altered the intellectual trajectory that revisionist scholars would take. At one time excluded from the discourse, they became defenders of those boundaries.

The last chapter and conclusion takes up the theme of the previous chapter about the incorporation of revisionism into the field in relation to revisionist (and their intellectual descendents) claims of a strategy of 'containment' by realist or neorealist scholars. It situates that contention within the disciplinary framework and asks whether the constraints and limits of the field have also acted to diffuse the radical emphasis of revisionist scholarship.



## Chapter 1

### Conceptualising Cold War History: Between the Politics of Disciplinarity and Identity Formation

#### PART A

##### I. History and the 'Ideology of Realism'

In the essay "The Politics of Historical Interpretation", Hayden White assesses the transformation of historical studies into a properly disciplined form of inquiry in the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> This original act of turning history into a professional activity was, according to White, an inherently politicised move. History's authority was established in its separation from speculative philosophy of history, which constituted a fundamental reorientation of the ontological status of the past along realist lines.<sup>34</sup> The belief in the reality of the past and its objective recovery, via the protocols of empirical evidence, enabled the distinction between history and fiction to be drawn, based on the correspondence theory of truth. 'Facts' and description were treated as distinct from values and interpretation and objectivity was defined by the extent to which the latter could reliably account for the former. Thus, by this process of 'disciplinisation', history's professional authority was legitimated.

The theoretical foundations of historical inquiry, often described as 'Rankean', have been modified in the last one-hundred and fifty years or so, though it still exerts a profound influence over the field. Recently, doubts about history's epistemological status have been raised by so-called 'postmodern' historians, who deny the possibility of representing the past "as it really was". Dissolving the link between the past and the present, they argue that history, like other forms of cultural representation, have no privileged access to the truth. This claim has caused some consternation within the ranks of the historical profession, which is unsurprising since it undermines history's authority. According to postmodernists, history's

legitimacy is conferred by what Berkhofer calls the “ideology of realism”, where historians “assert their power over their readers in the name of reality”.<sup>35</sup> Assuming the voice of an omniscient narrator, historians claim to speak on behalf of the past and what really happened. This is an exercise of disciplinary power, which obscures the ‘fictive’ dimensions of historical representation, i.e. its presumptions of models of human agency, standards of rationality, moral and ethical norms and modes of emplotting narratives. Postmodernists have also emphasised the political interests that are served by the uncritical assimilation of these postulates.<sup>36</sup> To paraphrase White, the disciplinisation of history performs the ideological and social function of reinforcing the legitimacy of the nation-state – and one that it still performs today.<sup>37</sup>

Having said that, whilst one can agree that all forms of historical explanation are freighted with ideological baggage, the disciplinary formation of knowledge is more internally complex and inconsistent than this (admittedly reductionist) portrayal allows and cannot be apprehended by seeing history as simply an oppressive venture. A more nuanced approach is suggested by an analysis of the internal dynamic and individual characteristics of the given sub-discipline.

## **II. Diplomatic History as a Form of Imperial Knowledge**

The rise of diplomatic history to the front rank of professional historical scholarship under the patronage of Leopold von Ranke paralleled the consolidation of the modern nation-state in Europe. In the United States, the development of diplomatic history followed a somewhat different path. Indeed, it was not until the interwar period that American diplomatic history became a full-fledged sub-field of the profession.<sup>38</sup> This was due in no small measure to the nation’s chequered diplomatic record and its ambivalent relations with the outside

world.<sup>39</sup> Despite this delay however, America's early diplomatic historians remained wholly committed to the 'Rankean' tradition of historical studies.

In the 1930s and 1940s, a 'nationalist' perspective developed amongst leading practitioners like Samuel Flagg Bemis, who "stressed the continuities in American diplomacy" and "celebrated the growth of American power".<sup>40</sup> Their main preoccupation was the study of state policy, in particular the causes and consequences of U.S. involvement in 'crisis events' like wars and peace settlements. Consequently, they combined a focus on elite decision-makers with accounts based on 'hard' empirical evidence gleaned from documentary archives and tended to reflect a patriotic bias.

In the early postwar period, the nationalist perspective gave way to a more pessimistic view of international politics and U.S. foreign policy associated with the doctrine of 'realism'. Its emergence, announced by the publication of George Kennan's classic *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950*, did not constitute a 'paradigm shift' so much as a more subtle variation on a traditional theme.<sup>41</sup> Indeed the realist problematic, with its central focus on the state and realm of policymaking, was easily assimilated into existing practice. What it did was to propose a different standard by which to judge the success of foreign policy, as opposed to an alternative approach to historical interpretation.<sup>42</sup>

Taking the state as the primacy unit of analysis, both nationalists and realists have reinforced certain interpretive assumptions whilst excluding others.<sup>43</sup> Events are often seen as the accumulation of decisions by historical actors and interpretations are derived from a literal reading of the documents, where the reason given for action taken is assumed to be the explanation of those actions. Furthermore, foreign policy is conceived as distinct from the domestic sphere, where policymakers operate in a vacuum unaffected by ideological impulses or economic interests and few limits on human agency are considered to exist.

This form of explanation which is familiar to the realist paradigm reflects a particular social location that is coextensive with the state and political power. In other words, realist historians write inside the purview of the official perspective or policymaking ‘*Weltanschauung*’. This proximity to power is a key component in understanding how the field has operated as a disciplined system of knowledge and the effects on interpretive outcomes and their ideological connotations.

According to Foucault, power is conceived as something that is at once confining and enabling, whereby discourses that are sanctioned by power produce knowledge and at the same time regulate its production through norms and practices that are seen as self-evident.<sup>44</sup> Influenced by this Foucauldian viewpoint, scholars have argued that the types of knowledge and practices that are dominant in diplomatic history are those which draw their legitimacy from the discourse of U.S. foreign policy itself. Frank Costigliola declares “we tend in our writing to reinscribe, with little comment, the discourses of policymaking”.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, in examining the “pronounced coincide of temperament” between policymakers and diplomatic historians, Patrick Finney observes that “the two groups share the same discursive field – the same assumptions structuring perception, the same textual and linguistic practices through which knowledge of the world is constructed”. They include:

the suppression of epistemological uncertainty and ambivalence, the predilection for hard evidence and documentary proof, the preoccupation with 'realities' rather than representation, the premium placed on experience and expertise, the lauding of (masculine) rationality, realism and pragmatism.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, to take them as self-evident, Finney writes, “yields the agenda to the objects of historical inquiry, and blinds us to other ways of analysing policymaking... [this] helps to explain why our interpretive debates so often entail merely elaborating or refining competing arguments that derive from the original rhetoric of policymakers themselves”.<sup>47</sup> A case in

point is the continued use of the term ‘containment’ to describe U.S postwar foreign policy, which bears obvious ideological connotations.<sup>48</sup>

The relation between realists and policymakers can also be observed in the institutional structures of the discipline. Michael Hunt has argued that realist historians are “policymakers’ naturally ally [sic] in academe, where they serve as spokesmen for or explicators of officials perspectives”.<sup>49</sup> This willingness to genuflect the interests of the state is reciprocated through power relations that are interspersed in the system of patronage and publishing which operates inside the discipline. The work of realist historians continues to dominate much of the field; writing for a wider non-specialist audience, they enjoy privileged access to establishment journals like *Foreign Affairs* as well as other mainstream outlets.<sup>50</sup>

Underlying the realist perspective is an undeclared ideological commitment to a mutually reinforcing view of, on the one hand, U.S. diplomatic history as field of knowledge and, on the other, the world and America’s place within it. Taking the foundational status of the state for granted circumscribes the boundaries of the field, which, at the same time, entrenches the authority of the American state and reinforces its attendant ideologies and identities. So by trying to “see like a state” from “the vantage point of a fictive national security adviser”, realist diplomatic historians have defended an intrinsically conservative position inside the field.

Prominent theorists in international relations – where realism has had an even greater impact – have argued that states do not possess a fixed identity; to assume otherwise is to conceal a claim for hegemonic control over the field.<sup>51</sup> David Campbell asserts that states are “paradoxical entities which do not possess prediscursive, stable identities”. As a result, they are “in permanent need of reproduction: with no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that constitute their reality, states...are always in a process of becoming”.<sup>52</sup>

Foreign policy, alleges Campbell, is a pre-eminent example of a discursive practice that is engaged in the 'reproduction' of national identity. The same can also be said of diplomatic history (though the claim is less strong), a suggestion which underlines the politically contested nature of the venture. As Anders Stephanson has written:

What drives diplomatic history in the United States is political controversy. Without it, the field has no direction, no character, no shape or form, no vivacity. This central feature is ultimately grounded in the fact that any analysis of the relationship to the outside world puts into question the very identity of the United States as an entity and a project.<sup>53</sup>

Yet American diplomatic history is also animated by its own internal antagonisms, conflicts and struggles that constitute its own 'politics of disciplinisation', which mediate how historians respond to external political developments or trends. Also important in this respect is the 'subject position' of the historian inside discourse.<sup>54</sup> Under the auspices of the realist paradigm, the conceptual field of U.S. diplomatic history was narrowly defined, limiting the range of interpretive possibilities and ruling out of bounds certain analytical schemas and ideological agendas. This hegemony, however, has not gone unchallenged.

### **III. Disciplinary 'Crisis' and the Incommensurability of Research Paradigms**

In the midst of the Cold War historiographical debate between orthodox, realist and revisionist historians, a perceptive commentator saw the struggle in terms of "who had the right to control the assumptions of history".<sup>55</sup> Following the rise to prominence of New Left historiography in the 1960s, realists could no longer claim complete control of the study U.S diplomatic history.<sup>56</sup> Subsequent decades have seen the field undergo a dramatic transformation, whereupon diplomatic history can be said to involve "virtually any kind of relationship between political units, peoples and societies, not just between modern nations".<sup>57</sup> But the profusion of research agendas and lines of inquiry was not solely due to the impact of New Left revisionism. What directed this new intellectual trajectory, above all,

was a widely perceived ‘crisis’ in the field.<sup>58</sup> If anything, however, ‘the long crisis in U.S diplomatic history’ can be understood as two mutually reinforcing crises: an external crisis of legitimacy on the one hand and an internal crisis of identity on the other.

The rise of new intellectual trends in the 1960s profoundly challenged traditional modes of inquiry in the humanities and social sciences. In the case of history, the introduction of the ‘new’ social history undermined the authority of older and long established fields like political and diplomatic history. Retaining an elite focus and relying on positivist methodologies, they seemed out of step with the historiographical mood, regularly inviting charges of archaism, elitism, parochialism and ethnocentrism. There was a collective unease amongst diplomatic historians about the declining fortunes of their discipline, the extent of which could be measured by the number of ‘state of the field’ articles addressing the issue published in books, journals and periodicals in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>59</sup>

Responding to their seeming irrelevance, leading diplomatic historians sought reinvigoration through an intellectual engagement with numerous other scholarly disciplines. Yet this has served to reinforce questions about what diplomatic history is and ought to be; interventions that simultaneously attempt to define, redefine or reshape the parameters of discourse. The process of widening the field’s conceptual horizons constitutes a fundamental reconfiguration of the institutional and discursive structures of diplomatic history, the boundaries of legitimate discourse and the distribution of forces across the discipline. As a result, the goal of greater academic relevance and legitimacy has raised ideological tensions that have impeded progress towards the vision of a unified field of study.

As new categories of analysis, objects of inquiry and interpretive frameworks have multiplied, the field has fragmented into separate research domains each with their own vision of what diplomatic history is; a tendency that seems to perpetuate rather than end diplomatic

history's isolation. Frank Ninkovich declares that "diplomatic historians sort themselves out on the basis of their affiliation with different interpretive traditions that dictate incommensurable research strategies".<sup>60</sup> These schisms are rooted in the ideological split between the New Left revisionists and the traditional realists, yet they have been conditioned by the discipline's own internal politics, as research priorities and agendas have diverged and diversified.

In this context, realism has been the biggest loser in the sense that by having to accommodate alternative paradigms, it has been forced to cede ground to other approaches. The increased conceptual and interpretive pluralism, the focus on non-state actors and rise of new objects of inquiry has eroded the imperative to define the state as the central locus of explanation. On the whole, realist historians have remained the most resistant to new approaches and the most unreflexive towards their own theoretical suppositions. Yet even they have updated their approach, adding new layers of explanation by setting policymaking within broader contexts and deploying analytical frameworks borrowed from Political Science and International Relations, such as bureaucratic politics, strategy and geopolitics. However, such complexity has tended to reinforce realism's overall ideological predisposition.

Contrastingly, revisionist diplomatic historians, by wresting control away from realism to define the boundaries of the field, led the way in opening up research in the domains of economics, ideology, power, and social structure. But as their work passed into the mainstream, commitments to certain modes of interpretation, such as the Open Door thesis, were revised or even abandoned. The process of legitimising revisionism modified or mediated lines of inquiry, where criticism of early revisionist historiography can be said to have reconfigured old approaches and spawned new interpretive frameworks. Both 'corporatism' and 'world-systems theory', for example, can be seen as a response to the



demands imposed on properly disciplined historical knowledge. Such an imperative it is suggested has worked to diffuse the ideological thrust of left revisionism.

Increasingly, diplomatic historians of various persuasions have taken to describing the topography of the field in the hope more than expectation of finding some shared terrain on which to ground a common dialogue over the nature and practice of diplomatic history. These proposals offer “synthesis” or promises “to bridge the ideological divide” or a “taxonomy for American diplomatic history”, as measures to transcend the continued impasse.<sup>61</sup> Still, the sense of incommensurability remains and has become all the more acute given the recent ‘cultural turn’ in diplomatic history. This intra-disciplinary conflict over the meaning of diplomatic history is animated by the twin impulse to maintain its distinctive identity as form of knowledge whilst shaping that identity in such a way as to serve a particular ideological perspective.

## **PART B**

### **IV. Ideology, Identity and the Cold War**

Having no common ties of ethnicity, heritage, religion, or culture to bind the nation, U.S. leaders have relied upon the traditions of providential destiny, chosenness, and national mission, to construct visions of America as “a project for mankind”.<sup>62</sup> This has led to a tendency to see America as both separate from and different to the rest of the world. David Ryan states that “[i]n the absence of a shared past, the search for identity produced narratives of difference and exception. National identities focused on what the Americans were not, their practices and values were set apart from and above those of the Europeans of the ‘old’ world”.<sup>63</sup>

The theme of exceptionalism indicated here is important for understanding how constructions of U.S. identity have conditioned the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. It has infused the framework through which foreign policy has been articulated with a moral force, offering justifications of American power not on the grounds of *raison d'état*, but through messianic crusades to universalise the values of freedom, democracy and self-determination. As a result, Americans often thought of themselves as altruistic, virtuous, and anti-imperial in their dealings with the outside world. In contrast, they viewed the outside with suspicion, if not hostility, reducing the complexities of international politics to a separation of the world between the 'good' America and the 'evil other'. This outlook has been reinforced by a history and experience of U.S. diplomacy that for long periods was remote and aloof from world affairs, encouraging a diplomatic style and *modus operandi* that contrasted with European power politics.<sup>64</sup>

During the Cold War, U.S. policymakers borrowed from this array of discursive strategies and modes of representation in order to reconstruct the meaning and identity of United States in relation to emerging confrontation with the Soviet Union. The repetition of these ideological themes by U.S. officials, public figures and intellectuals, suffused American political life, creating a 'culture of the Cold War'.<sup>65</sup> In turn, a broad-based consensus on the definition of American power and interests in the world was forged, which provided widespread public support for U.S. Cold War policies throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.

## **V. Cold War Constructs: 'Good versus Evil' and 'National Security'**

In the hands of 'post-structuralist' theorists, the concept of identity has become mutable, contingent and subject to the disruptive force of discursive practices that do not only shape, but constitute its meaning. Relieved of its metaphysical essence, identity is intrinsically

unstable and incomplete. According to William Connolly, “identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-identity”.<sup>66</sup> Thus, ontologically speaking, identity exists only insofar as there is a relation between the ‘self’ and an ‘other’; to wit, in relation to something that threatens to subvert identity, the exclusion of which renders identity more permanent. However, the boundaries of ‘identity/difference’ are not contiguous with the fixed borders of the state. Instead, they can be said to be common to both internal and external spheres, demarcating lines of division between practices, values and moral codes that correspond to ‘America’ and those which are excluded as ‘other’.

From this perspective, scholars have argued that the confrontation with the Soviet Union can be seen as a means of reconstituting the basis of American identity and obscuring its fundamentally discursive character, than as a defence against an external threat.<sup>67</sup> David Campbell declares, “the Cold War is an important moment in the reproduction of American identity that was not dependent upon (though clearly influence by) the Soviet Union for its character”.<sup>68</sup> Of course, diplomatic historians have gone to great lengths to prove whether the United States or the Soviet Union was responsible for causing the Cold War, but that exercise misses the crucial point raised here. So in asking ‘why Cold War?’ one must wrestle not only with complex historical questions, such as Soviet intentions or the breakdown of the geopolitical order, but the very concept of the Cold War and its meaning. “What must be explained”, writes Stephanson, “is why it took the extremely nasty form it did, why it became a Cold War”.<sup>69</sup>

This brings us back to the question of American ideology. Odd Arne Westad declares, “it was to a great extent American ideas and their influence that made the Soviet-American conflict into a *Cold War*” [emphasis in original].<sup>70</sup> The evidence to substantiate this claim

includes the widely shared view of a cautious and pragmatic Stalin, who had hoped to avoid precisely the kind of conflict that ensued. However, this is not to say that Stalin did not ‘cause’ the Cold War, only that it was not his intention, nor in his interest.<sup>71</sup> In addition, it has been contended that whilst both U.S. and Soviet foreign policies were driven by ideological imperatives, it was the former that actively sought global hegemony through the projection of its ideas.<sup>72</sup> The underlying premise is that the Cold War derived its meaning from uniquely American characteristics; “the Cold War turned out to be the American way of conflict”, in Stephanson words.<sup>73</sup>

### ***‘Good versus Evil’***

When President Truman announced in his message to Congress that the world was divided into mutually antagonistic “ways of life”, he was rearticulating the meaning of U.S national identity in the opposition of ‘freedom’ and ‘totalitarianism’. This kind of distinction had numerous historical antecedents, most notably in the war against Hitler’s Germany. Indeed it has been suggested that the conceptual formation established by Roosevelt to represent the struggle against Fascist tyranny, codified into such statements as “Unconditional Surrender” and the “Four Freedoms”, was ‘redeployed’ in the construction of the Cold War.<sup>74</sup> It enabled the lessons of World War Two to be filtered through ideological lenses, as signified by ‘Munich’ and ‘appeasement’, which conflated them with the initial experience of dealing with the Soviets, turning an erstwhile enemy into a hostile foe and unremitting source of enmity.<sup>75</sup> However, this “was not mere repetition”, according to Stephanson: “It was a new constitution of the Other and a new affirmation of the Self as the negation of that which was thus being

excluded”.<sup>76</sup> Thus, invoking the Soviet ‘threat’, as personified by the Truman Doctrine, became a mechanism for the naturalising and partial fixing of American identity.

The construction of the Cold War was framed in a language composed of a series of binary oppositions – freedom-slavery, democracy-dictatorship and good-evil, which reduced a complex and heterogeneous world to Manichean dimensions. This kind of ideological reductionism was indispensable for policymakers seeking to communicate a coherent understanding of reality and offering prescriptions for how to deal with that reality, but it also had the deleterious effect of constraining the foreign policy debate and marginalising dissent.

### *National Security*

The United States reorientation to the world in the postwar period was facilitated by the newly fashioned construct of ‘national security’, which “provided the common discursive terrain upon which internationalists of both the national interest, realist school and the collective security school could unite”.<sup>77</sup> Without a clear strategic vision, yet faced by a dire situation in Europe and uncertainty over Soviet intentions, the doctrine of national security shaped American perceptions of the postwar world and the international role the United States would play. Indeed, the term legitimised the rise of American globalism whilst extinguishing any remaining remnants of isolationism. Frank Ninkovich defines the conceptual transition signalled by national security in the context of Henry Luce’s declaration of the ‘American Century’, stating “by emphasising the survival of the American way of life over survival as such, Luce was defining, or redefining, the national interest in terms of identity”.<sup>78</sup>

Put together, the construction of the bipolar Cold War framework and the discourse of national security were two sides of the same foreign policy coin: by defining U.S. security in

terms of the defence of the American 'way of life' globally, it became necessary to invoke the communist menace as the cause of instability in the world in order to justify US actions abroad, construed as an act of self-defence against 'illegitimate' aggression. These constructs fused with other powerful impulses like mission, virtue and anti-communism belonging to an ideology of 'American nationalist globalism', which reinforced arguments against cooperation and compromise with the Kremlin.<sup>79</sup> In this context, the doctrine of 'containment' took on an ideological complexion as the crusade against a monolithic communist enemy was launched. The idea of simply containing the Soviet Union, originally prescribed by George Kennan in his 'Long Telegram' and 'X'-article, would no longer suffice. "The universalisation of the policy", writes David Ryan, "the implications [sic] required a conceptual universalisation of the Soviet threat".<sup>80</sup> The effect was to create an irreducible tension between the necessities of explaining US intervention and the means and ends of containment strategy. At the time, such difficulties were scarcely acknowledged as debate was sidelined, dissent closed off and issues restricted to questions of implementation. Only later, when the United States faced a disastrous foreign policy predicament did these latent tensions resurface.

In the late 1940s, the consolidation of the Cold War consensus was far advanced. The grand narrative of an American-led 'free world' against the 'totalitarian' menace of the Soviet Union and its communist proxies offered a simplified, yet powerful explanation of why the Cold War had arisen. The constant repetition of this image in representations of social 'reality' maintained the consensus on the necessity of meeting the communist threat and infused constructions of American identity. Historiographically speaking, this ideological framework and the tensions embedded within it provided the conditions of possibility for historical writing on the Cold War as well as the interpretive shifts that arose.

## Chapter 2

### Orthodoxy and Consensus

#### I. American Intellectuals and the Cold War Consensus

The construction of a Cold War consensus in the late 1940s and 1950s was not solely the outcome of effort by American political leaders and government officials. Prominent American intellectuals, both liberal and conservative, also contributed to in no small measure to propagating ideas and values that enveloped American political and intellectual culture. They held in common not only a perspective that was entrenched in the bipolar division of Cold War, but which also reflected a general pessimistic tenor about the world and man's place in it. According to Michael Hogan, this outlook comprised "a feeling that progress was not inevitable, a loss of faith in man's basic goodness, a belief in the pervasiveness of evil, a suspicion of mass political movements, a faith in elite rule and a conviction that totalitarian regimes were globally ambitious and had to be contained".<sup>81</sup>

If there was a defining intellectual motif of the 1950s, then it was the concentrated fusion of power and knowledge in the service of the American state, which permitted certain practices as it closed others off. This sometimes took quiet overt forms, where various arms of the government, officially and unofficially, provided direction, organisation and, above all, funding for projects inside and outside academia.<sup>82</sup> In the view of some, this alliance of scholarship and state power was indicative of the anti-communist repression of academic freedoms and the closing down of dissent,<sup>83</sup> though it also took less direct, more diffuse and complex forms that cannot so easily be pigeon-holed.

In the discourse of the social sciences, research was geared towards engineering technocratic solutions to the problems of social planning, economic and industrial development and warfare, amongst others. As a result, there was a preoccupation with kinds

of methodologies that could yield findings directly applicable to these problems. Behaviourist models of inquiry were adopted in numerous disciplines in order to aid quantification, prediction and facilitate the testing of hypotheses, producing ‘hard’ empirical knowledge that was prized by the government.<sup>84</sup> Such an analytical framework rested on preconceptions about the nature of human behaviour and society, supporting values of consensus, order, and stability, which were assumed to be the ultimate goal of inquiry. More complex, obscure and difficult to quantify categories of intellectual phenomena were overlooked. Behaviourists “discounted the power of ideas and values as motivating forces in the human experience”, writes Ron Robin, “preferring, instead, to treat ideology and belief systems as mere rationalizations of behavioral modes”.<sup>85</sup> These methodological choices, although not reducible to the impact of the Cold War, functioned in a manner that supported underlying assumptions about the American purpose and helped to perpetuate totalitarian images of the Soviet Union.<sup>86</sup>

Elsewhere, the ties between government agencies and intellectual culture are more ambiguous than manipulation and domination of the former over the latter. The rise of Cold War cultural fronts is a case in point.<sup>87</sup> The formation of the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), for example, was not just a ruse to manufacture an official Cold War culture in order to support U.S. foreign policy.<sup>88</sup> Although it was part of the effort “to contain Soviet influence in cultural circles and mobilize Western intellectuals behind the American side in the Cold War”, the way to achieve that goal aroused differences of opinion.<sup>89</sup> If anything, what divided participants was the question of how to negotiate or reconcile the demand to wage the Cold War struggle with the defence of freedom and civil liberties at home. Hardliners like James Burnham urged a more forceful prosecution of the



anti-communist crusade, whereas others like Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. saw its excesses as damaging to cultural freedom.<sup>90</sup>

Disagreements such as these reflect the latent tensions within the Cold War consensus as a whole. Initiatives to promote “convergence of moderate leftist and rightist positions towards a broadly social democratic centre” can be seen as a response to broader ideological shifts that had undermined the American liberal democratic tradition.<sup>91</sup> The Great Depression, the New Deal, the rise of totalitarianism and World War Two, represented challenges to the values of democracy, liberty, and capitalism. Furthermore, amidst global Cold War, tensions were magnified once it became clear that something more substantive than anti-communism and diatribes against the evils of Soviet totalitarianism was required. The communist alternative to the conception of economic and political progress, tied to free-markets and liberal democracy, vied for influence in areas of the ‘Third World’, where decolonisation fuelled by nationalism threatened the established order.

Conceptually, the construction of ‘freedom’ as defined in opposition to ‘totalitarianism’ was reconfigured in the ‘end-of-ideology’ discourse, which was rationalised on the premise that the rise of totalitarian ideologies – fascism and communism – constituted the failure of political utopianism and had thereby collapsed the distinctions of right and left.<sup>92</sup> In the title of Arthur Schlesinger’s *The Vital Center*, the liberal anti-communist consensus became “the politics of freedom”.<sup>93</sup> Defined as non-ideological, the meaning and identity of freedom in the American image, that is, democratic institutions combined with a private enterprise economy, was universalised. “US ideological constructs were not seen as such”, writes David Ryan, and “‘the American way of life’ and its democracy were seen as essentially anti-ideological”.<sup>94</sup> Thus, criticism of American activities on the grounds of goals or ends was deemed illegitimate and ruled out of bounds.

The urge to eradicate ideology from politics was also a central concern for sociologists like Daniel Bell, who argued “ideology, which was once a road to action, has come to a dead end”. Instead, contending political interests would be mitigated through social engineering, industrial management and a ‘mixed economy’ with shared state-private controls. Stephen Whitfield argues “intellectuals endorsed the resort to pragmatic resolution of conflict as essential to the health of a democracy”.<sup>95</sup> This technocratic approach was wedded to liberal democratic values and infused American ideas on development and modernisation as tools to raise living standards and to stymie communist or ‘independent’ progress in the Third World.<sup>96</sup> Yet it was also here where the American construction of freedom was contested by intractable ‘realities’ that could not be easily packaged into Washington’s binary framework.

In many respects, the historiographical counterpart to the ‘end of ideology’ was a rise of ‘consensus’ history, as exemplified in the writings of Richard Hofstadter, Daniel Boorstin, and Louis Hartz. This new historiographical current represented a repudiation of progressive era historiography, with its focus on the struggle between the ‘interests’ and the ‘people’, replacing it with an account of the American past that was celebratory and triumphal, stressing the continuity and harmony of the U.S. liberal tradition. They also reaffirmed the notion that America was resolutely non-ideological. “It was the very rejection of theories and ideologies”, writes Howard Schonenberger, “that was the peculiar and beneficent genius of the American experience”.<sup>97</sup> Like in other academic realms, homogeneity and convergence was the order of the day, running alongside the active repression and marginalisation of radical dissent within the discipline.<sup>98</sup>

In the discourse on American foreign policy, the parameters of critique are detectable in the writings of so-called realist commentators, who provided some of the most pertinent criticism of the 1940s and 1950s. Realist writers, notably George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau,

and Walter Lippmann, meshed historical and contemporary perspectives on the Cold War in order to try and actively shape foreign policy. As a concept, realism's definition is notoriously slippery, as it has been used in variety of contexts to explain quite often diverse ideas. In the context of U.S. foreign relations, Lloyd Gardner writes "the simplest way to define 'realism' might be to say that it was a reaction against the Wilsonian-Rooseveltian 'idealism', particularly as expressed in 'one-world-ism'".<sup>99</sup>

The realist approach can be described as a normative orientation on international politics that stresses the immutable and indivisible nature of power in its ability to determine relations between states. Rooted in the European tradition of *realpolitik*, realists argued that in the absence of a common sovereign the international system was anarchic in nature, which meant the ostensible aim of the state was to guarantee its own survival by encouraging stability in the system. Accordingly, the basis for a solvent foreign policy was a rational calculation of the national interest which would encourage a balance of power between nation-states and thus mitigate rivalry. Of course, if that was not achievable then recourse to limited war, to readdress the balance of power, was the only alternative.<sup>100</sup>

As articulated by Kennan, Morgenthau and Lippmann, realism became a vehicle through which to articulate recommendations for policymakers that emphasised the inescapable limits of power and the need to carry out foreign policy in line with the 'national interest'. Though by no means unanimous, realists grew concerned by the global commitments of the United States, which threatened to overstretch American power and resources. Lippmann, who penned the first substantive critique of the evolving policy of containment, denounced it as being a "strategic monstrosity" and "fundamentally unsound", a plan that "cannot be made to work, and that any attempt to make it work will cause us to squander our substance and our prestige".<sup>101</sup> What he saw in containment was a strategic

deficiency, principally a failure to discriminate between vital and peripheral interests and an inability to specify a link between means available and ends sought. Indeed, he questioned whether there was such an aim, stating that containment ‘did not have as its objective a settlement of the conflict with Russia’.<sup>102</sup>

It is ironic that Lippmann’s attack was chiefly directed at Kennan’s ‘X’ article, since Kennan himself would later echo similar sentiments about the need to open negotiations with the Russians. They argued that, without the prospect of a negotiated settlement, the Cold War would continue indefinitely, becoming increasingly burdensome in terms of American manpower and resources. Notwithstanding the contradictions in Kennan’s own thought, which helped to supply the rationale for policies he would later come to oppose, both he and Lippmann saw the Soviet challenge with a relative degree of equanimity.

Despite their pointed criticisms, however, they were unable to shape the foreign policy debate. This was due partly to a reticence on the part of Americans to define their policy actions in terms anything other than those that professed dedication to a higher mission. Kennan excoriated what he called “the legalist-moralist approach to international problems”, which was “the most serious fault of our past policy formulation”.<sup>103</sup> Neither he nor Lippmann, however, disputed the underlying assumptions on which sweeping ideological rhetoric and moral exhortations were founded. They never doubted that the Soviet Union would expand its influence unless checked by American power, nor questioned the need to act purposefully in the pursuit of the national interest. Indeed, they defined American security interests in terms of the defence against the Soviet Union, leaving implicit their dedication to an international order established on U.S. principles of liberal democratic capitalism. “What was disturbing about the new realists of the forties and fifties”, Christopher Lasch explains, “was their willingness to prematurely commit themselves to a view of American society in

which the United States appeared unambiguously as the leader of the ‘free-world’ and the only alternative, for all its faults, to Soviet ‘despotism’”.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, despite considerable efforts, realists like Kennan and Morgenthau were not able to delineate an objective and universally accepted standard on which to harness the much vaunted “national interest”. Instead, they were reduced to invoking some ill-defined notion of “national character” or “culture”.<sup>105</sup> In the end, Cold War realists were neither able to advance an alternative vision, nor offer a substantive critique of foreign policy because of their adherence to the ideological consensus and basic American goals.

An elaboration of the discourse of intellectuals helps to illuminate the ideological formation of the Cold War and the discursive practices that constituted it. It is argued that intellectuals of the 1950s reflected, maintained and redirected the process of legitimising representations of U.S. identity and other Cold War constructs. This was not, however, always an active and consistent pursuit on their part. Rather it is suggested that identifiable limits of discourse conditioned practices, but did not ultimately determine the course of intellectual trends. Convergence was established, however, on the self-evident purpose of the United States in the world, that the United States resolutely did not have an ‘ideology’ and that the Soviet Union was the chief external threat to the security of the nation. Of course, tensions arose and disagreements emerged inside the Cold War consensus, over the construction of ‘freedom’, and the means and ends of ‘containment’, which themselves reflected the conceptual tensions between U.S. ideological abstractions and the complexities of international politics, where the need to undermine the communist threat incongruous to the requirements of defining and redefining the meaning of ‘America’ and articulations of freedom.

## **II. Orthodoxy, Realism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins**

The early historical writing on the origins of the Cold War shared family resemblances with both consensus historiography and realism, but the interpretive framework employed in the literature was conditioned, most of all, by the representation of the U.S.-Soviet confrontation as articulated by American policymakers. What became known as the ‘orthodox thesis’, exemplified in the works of Herbert Feis and William H. McNeill, was an elaboration of the views first put down by Washington officials. According to Staughton Lynd “they [Feis and McNeil] represent the collective memory of British and American officialdom about their wartime alliance with Soviet Russia and how it broke down”.<sup>106</sup> The coincidence of outlook was no accident. What Michael Hunt calls the “much-traveled bridge between the world of scholarship and government” in diplomatic history was never more apparent than in the early postwar period, especially in light of the wartime service rendered by members of the profession.<sup>107</sup> This was not simply a personal bias, however; it was an institutional presupposition.<sup>108</sup> Orthodox historians, to be sure, shared the official Cold War perspective and through their narratives advanced it. This can be seen in an examination of the major points of interpretive convergence which characterised both orthodox and realist accounts.

First, orthodox scholars supported the view that the United States had no other interests than to encourage international cooperation and harmony. In the immediate postwar period, McNeill writes “the United States...stood relatively in the background, seeking to re-establish as soon as possible a ‘normality’”.<sup>109</sup> Feis records that “Truman and his advisers sought settlements which corresponded to principles and aims that soared beyond the ordinary satisfactions and rewards of victory”.<sup>110</sup> There was little said here about the character of U.S. interests or the kind of ‘peace’ or ‘normality’ American officials envisaged and its implications for U.S.-Soviet relations.

Second, they reaffirmed the aggressive and expansionist features of Soviet behaviour in Eastern Europe. On this point, most shared the official wisdom that Moscow was intent on global domination and was therefore responsible for the breakdown of wartime cooperation. Those who shared this view tended to see the conflict as essentially foreordained. “No American policy given Moscow’s theology”, writes Arthur Schlesinger Jnr, “could hope to win basic Soviet confidence, and every American action was poisoned from the source. So long as the Soviet Union remained a messianic state, ideology compelled steady expansion”.<sup>111</sup>

Others, however, were more inclined to view the U.S.-Soviet antagonism as a power struggle rather than a clash of competing moral values. Louis Halle wrote that the Cold War was “not a case of the wicked against the virtuous”, but an “irreducible dilemma” rather like putting a “scorpion and a tarantula together in a bottle”.<sup>112</sup> Halle’s emphasis on power politics betokens a realist inclination, downplaying the importance of communist ideology as a factor in understanding Soviet motives. This argument reconfigures the ‘inevitability thesis’ by suggesting that the causes of the conflict were to be found primarily in the breakdown of the geopolitical order. McNeil expresses this sentiment, writing “it was not Truman nor Churchill nor Stalin who broke up the Alliance but the disappearance of a common enemy”.<sup>113</sup> Still, the general disposition of realist historians was to see Russia as aggressive and the United States as defensive.

Cold War historians and writers of the ‘fifties’ often find themselves positioned along a continuum between the poles of orthodoxy (or ‘traditionalism’) and realism. The disparity resides chiefly in how to define U.S. interests given the nature of the Soviet challenge and, therefore, a definition of the proper response.<sup>114</sup> What is at issue here is not strictly historical. As Thomas McCormick notes, traditionalists and realists “differ in normative judgements

rather than in interpretation”.<sup>115</sup> Those of a more ‘idealist’ persuasion supported the global confrontation. “Diplomatic historians”, according to Peter Novick, “contributed most wholeheartedly and directly to the support and the defence of the American cause in the Cold War... [by] linking America’s struggles with the Axis and with the Soviet Union as successive stages in one continuous and unavoidable struggle of the Free World against expansionist totalitarians”.<sup>116</sup> Even realists remained attached to the notion that American interests lay in a certain kind of international order which managed change in certain kind of way and saw the Soviet Union as the main source of instability in the world and the greatest potential threat to that order. When viewed from the vantage point of the interpretive framework, we can see how orthodox historiography reinforces the overall ideological consensus on the Cold War and fundamental purpose of the United States. The representation of the actions, behaviour and motives of the United States and the Soviet Union is inscribed by the binary divisions symptomatic of the Cold War formation. Steven Hurst describes how “traditionalist accounts depict a Manichean world of good versus evil in which American policy is always honest, generous and for the good of all and Russian policy always devious, self-serving and a mortal threat”.<sup>117</sup> This attribute also infuses other interpretive choices, such as the narrow focus on elites, the lack of constraint placed on agency and a positivist methodology, which privileges the statements of U.S policymakers, allowing them to powerfully shape the form and content of the narrative. Orthodox historians, for example, shared the perception of U.S. officials that they were always responding to Soviet expansion. This unspoken assumption enables them to evade discussion of any internal motivating factors and confers legitimacy and justification on the commitment to halting Soviet advances and re-building Western strength. This is the juncture where realists often depart, seeing global containment as imprudent and unnecessary.



## Chapter 3

### Fault Lines and Fractures in the Cold War Formation

The ability of an ideological formation to sustain its legitimacy and its hegemonic position within a given social milieu depends on the extent to which it can exhaust the range of all possible interpretations of ‘events’ in ‘reality’ and, thus, eliminate the grounds for counter-hegemonic interpretations. As Terry Eagleton suggests “this process...involves the ideology in creating as tight a fit as possible between itself and social reality, thereby closing the gap into which the leverage of critique could [sic] be inserted”.<sup>118</sup> Given the mutability of contingency of social existence, however, ideologies do not produce entirely unified or coherent representations of the way the world exists. David Campbell describes an “irreducible, irresolvable, ‘floating indetermination’ in both the conditions of our existence and the established ways of representing them”.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, there is always a potential for the subversion of an ideological framework and the conceptual constructs it deploys which pre-exists the practices and discourses that constitute them.

In respect to the Cold War, the binary logic rooted in the articulations of ‘freedom’ and ‘totalitarianism’ inscribed into the discourse of U.S. foreign policy was especially potent, since it successfully diminished the realm of complexity, enabling its reproduction in other cultural spheres. This was also a major source of weakness, however, since the stability engendered was predicated on the clear, definite separation of the conceptual boundaries between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. Rationalising power over the interpretation of events rested on the continued repetition of such sharp delineations in order to maintain the credibility of the meanings they created. The framework retained its authority so long as shifts in the representation of reality could be successfully mediated. A challenge presents itself, however, when ambiguities and contradictions can be observed revealing the limits of ideological

explanation. Campbell indicates that “any transformation in the objects of enmity might... belie the persistence of the logic they serve”.<sup>120</sup>

Consequently, it can be said that the tensions inscribed in the construction of the Cold War and U.S identity were exacerbated by changes in the U.S.-Soviet confrontation, which, as a result, blurred the lines of division between those reified categories and distinctions, creating the possibility for practices and discourses that served alternative political interests and socio-cultural identities.<sup>121</sup> Although the 1950s represented a period of pervasive ideological homogeneity, when debates on foreign policy concentrated on the best way to prosecute the global struggle and political discourse restricted pluralism and marginalised effective criticism of domestic institutions and structures, the Cold War lost some of its sharpness. The representation of the moral separation of the United States and the Soviet Union was not seriously undermined until the Vietnam War, where America’s moral superiority and virtue was contested by even liberal mainstream critics.<sup>122</sup> Yet well before America’s disastrous intervention in Vietnam, the frame of perception that conditioned the interpretation of events was shifting, creating fissures and spaces into which the potentiality for counter-hegemonic readings of the Cold War could be inserted into mainstream discourse.

### **I. Shifting Perceptions of the ‘Other’: The Soviet Union**

In the early postwar period, the perception of the Soviet Union as a threat was formed by U.S. officials as wartime cooperation evaporated over the questions of Germany and democracy in Eastern Europe. A leading contributor towards this process was George Kennan who in his ‘Long Telegram’ and ‘X’ article provided a convincing explanation of Soviet behaviour and how it should be handled. They both helped to crystallise the attitudes of Washington officials towards Moscow. Kennan provided, as Gaddis states, “American officials with the intellectual

framework they would employ in thinking about communism and Soviet foreign policy for the next two decades”.<sup>123</sup>

Although Kennan’s writings were frequently inconsistent and contradictory, they became influential especially because he was able “to fuse concerns about totalitarianism and communism in dealings with the Soviet Union”.<sup>124</sup> The image of totalitarianism gained distinctive meaning in the 1930s and 1940s with the fusion of representations of Hitler’s Germany and depictions of Stalin’s Russia.<sup>125</sup> Its re-emergence in the postwar period helped to strengthen a deep-seated strain of American thinking that internally repressive regimes are externally aggressive and expansionist.<sup>126</sup>

In his famous ‘doctrine’ speech, President Truman identified the threat posed by “totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples” who “undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States”. As a result, the term passed into the common language of the Cold War. The historians Les Adler and Thomas Paterson write that “this popular analogy was a potent and pervasive notion that significantly shaped American perception of world events in the cold war”. It did so at the price of hampering efforts to avoid a full-blown confrontation and curtailed policies that envisaged the possibility of a non-adversarial relationship with the Kremlin. Those who accepted the analogy’s veracity assumed “that conflict with totalitarianism was inevitable after World War II; that there was no room for accommodation with the Soviet Union because the Communist nation was inexorably driven by its ideology and its totalitarianism”.<sup>127</sup>

In response to this seemingly dire threat, U.S. policymakers laid out a global militarised policy of “containment” that was intended to halt communist advances and to thwart the supposed Soviet blueprint for global domination. Although Kennan would demur at the increasingly universalised approach to containment, he was initially convinced that the

United States could accelerate the break up of the Soviet Empire and the eventual collapse of the U.S.S.R. itself, leading to an end of hostilities. This assumption was based on the premise that the Soviet regime was inherently unstable and, as Kennan wrote in the 'X' article, "bears within it the seeds of its own decay".<sup>128</sup> He later told an audience that "I predict within six months we will be able to do business over the table with our Russian friends".<sup>129</sup> Kennan was proved wrong, however, as Moscow's continued ability to maintain its grip over the peoples of Eastern Europe attested. Nonetheless, the assumption that the United States could contribute to "either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power" was inscribed into the strategy of "liberation" and reinforced the logic behind the defence of 'freedom' on the perimeter.

Under first the Truman and then the Eisenhower administration, U.S. policymakers believed they could rollback Soviet power by liberating the satellite nations from Soviet control and sowing discord within the international communist movement.<sup>130</sup> Despite the use of political warfare, covert operations and what Secretary of State Dulles called 'brinkmanship', Soviet hegemony was not substantially weakened. Indeed, any faint hopes for liberation were extinguished by the time of Moscow's decision to crush the Hungarian rebellion in 1956; an event that dramatically exposed the futility of American attempts to rollback Soviet power.

Of course, in order to sustain the military build-up as well as escalating global commitments, it became necessary to invoke the existence of a world communist conspiracy in order to justify U.S. intervention. The Korean War reinforced assumptions about the need to contain communism wherever it appeared, extending U.S. commitments to areas where policymakers had previously considered them to be beyond the orbit of American interests.<sup>131</sup> So the image of a monolithic communist conspiracy directed by Moscow was reified in U.S.

political discourse. The validity of that image, however, would be challenged by changes in the perception of the U.S.S.R.

The 1950s were not short of Cold War crises: Korea, Vietnam, Formosa, Hungary, Suez and Berlin to name a few. Over the course of the decade, however, new circumstances emerged which created tensions and inconsistencies in the bipolar framework and the ideological constructs that served to ground it. Although U.S. officials would continue to rely on the spectre of the communist menace, the shifting contours of Cold War competition raised questions about the ultimate aims of the Kremlin. A period of relative calm, following the Korean armistice and the death of Stalin, ushered in an era of increasing stability in Europe. This was also at a time when both sides had reached nuclear stalemate on the continent, which considerably raised the stakes sides in any confrontation. “For the United States to take a stance of unrestrained hostility toward Russia”, Stephen Ambrose wrote “was intolerable”.<sup>132</sup>

Recognition that victory had become a distant prospect and a de facto acceptance of the status quo, promoted tendencies towards accommodation and ‘peaceful coexistence’. As the imminent threat of communist military takeover receded and as it became evident that the Russians were not trying to expand their influence everywhere, the idea that the Moscow had embarked upon an ideological crusade aimed at the destruction of the West seemed rather less plausible. If anything, it suggested that the relative importance of power politics and strategic considerations in determining Soviet policy outweighed those of ideology.<sup>133</sup>

Beginning in the 1950s, American writers took “a more limited view of the Soviet challenge”, according to Norman A. Graebner, and “questioned the fears and the ideological assumptions which guided the evolution of United States policy in the postwar years”.<sup>134</sup> Insofar as Soviet behaviour was a guide to intentions that critique appeared to have prima facie support. A “soft” realist line was espoused by public figures like Kennan and Walter

Lippmann, who saw a limited but powerful antagonist in Europe and deplored the globalist direction of American policy.<sup>135</sup>

The doubts about the strategy of containment resurfaced. Indeed it appeared to be losing its rationale as not only did the much anticipated retraction of Soviet power never materialised, but the U.S.S.R. was getting stronger. The Russians could boast some notable achievements in the 1950s, testing the world's first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and launching the world's first man-made satellite, Sputnik. Even in the areas of economic growth and industrial output the Soviet Union appeared to be challenging American supremacy. It was to the surprise of many in the West that "the Soviet economic and political system had emerged as a genuine alternative to Western democracy".<sup>136</sup>

But if the logic behind containment appeared less irresistible, why did the build-up of Western strength and the expansion of American power continue? What was the purpose of containment? Realist commentators had identified from the beginning the lack of coordination between means and ends and discrimination between vital and peripheral interests inherent in the U.S. strategic doctrine. "Containment", Graebner explains, "evolved into a package of means without any clearly defined body of ends which might be achievable through the more possession of military power".<sup>137</sup> One might have gone further than the realists to question whether in fact containment served another purpose. Of course, any such inquiry implied criticism of the role of the United States in the world, not merely the policies it was carrying out. Those who did were marginalised and completely ignored.

These trends were magnified as the 1950s saw the Cold War struggle move into new battlegrounds in the 'Third World'. In this context, the terms of acceptable debate over the nature of the Soviet challenge and how to deal with it underwent a reversal. The shifting perception of threat moved from the military towards the economic and political spheres,

where the Soviet Union was believed to hold certain advantages. Unfortunately, this could not be easily reconciled with the comparisons between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, which had helped to establish the ideological framework and could only be sustained at the expense of increasing disparity.

## **II. Intransigent Realities: ‘Freedom’ in the Third World**

As superpower confrontation was pushed onto the periphery, it was carried onto terrain where the contradictions and tensions in U.S. strategic and ideological constructs became more and more evident. The neat and simplistic dualities of the Cold War framework were ill-suited to enable a sophisticated understanding of the complex dynamic of revolutionary nationalism, unleashed by the process of decolonisation. Having declared war “to make the world safe for liberal democracy and liberal capitalism” against the forces of totalitarianism, the United States could not afford to allow a more nuanced or fuzzy picture to emerge of the world that would undermine existing representations.<sup>138</sup> The reduction of national liberation struggles and their causes to Cold War dimensions, meant that U.S. foreign policy was set against the popular aspirations of indigenous people, which eroded the legitimacy of the narratives of self-determination and freedom as explanations of events, opening the door to counter-narratives based on American Empire and imperialism.<sup>139</sup>

The pattern of U.S. intervention in areas beyond the ‘core’ of Europe and Japan that began with the Korean War accelerated what one critic called “the terrifying momentum toward disaster”.<sup>140</sup> The justification of American involvement, which led to the overthrow of popularly elected governments (Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954) and the backing of corrupt authoritarian regimes (notably Diem’s Vietnam) was based on the assumption of defending the security of the ‘free world’ against communist aggression. The power of the rationale was

waning as the hand of American interference became more conspicuous (i.e. the Bay of Pigs), whereas the communist movement seemed less monolithic as signs of growing Sino-Soviet became clear.

David Ryan argues that “the Cold War created intellectual and institutional straightjackets that reduced most challenges to Cold War dimensions”.<sup>141</sup> Disruptive and intransigent elements in the Third World did not fit into the binary of ‘free world and ‘totalitarianism’, which constituted a transgression of the conceptual limits and boundaries of Cold War discourse. There was a greater distinction between the categories of good and evil as perceptions of threat shifted. “The culture of the Cold War decomposed when the moral distinction between East and West lost a bit of its sharpness”, Stephen Whitfield writes “when American self-righteousness could be more readily punctured, when the activities of the two superpowers assumed greater symmetry”.<sup>142</sup>

The irresolution of these tensions and contradictions did not turn into a ‘crisis of representation’ until the increasing escalation of the Vietnam War exposed a cognitive as well as a moral dissonance in the construction of the American self-image.<sup>143</sup> In this atmosphere, one could ask, with increasing legitimacy, about the nature of American aims and purpose in the world. Yet radical critics of American foreign policy had already begun to do so. Robert Tomes writes: “Only when Vietnam became a major foreign policy concern among the mainstream did it move to the heart of radical discussion”.<sup>144</sup> As interpreters of historiographical trends have observed, however, the impact of the Vietnam War and the subsequent political and constitutional upheavals are crucial for an understanding of how radical historiography was gradually accepted within the historical discipline from the mid 1960s onwards. According to Jonathan Wiener, the “political crisis undermined the profession’s commitment to the prevailing conception of history”, in response to which



leading historians “abandoned the assumption that the prevailing historical scholarship posed the significant questions and provided the adequate answers”. Consequently, “the profession redefined the field in a way that included radical historians’ conceptions of the significant problems requiring study”.<sup>145</sup>

Wiener is correct insofar as he sees the definition of the meaning of history as a product of historical conditions, but the assumption that underpins his analysis implies that this process went in one direction: political and cultural forces shaped historians’ views of the profession and redefined its boundaries in keeping with them. In contrast, it is argued that this process ought to be seen as more dialogical, where a genuine interaction takes place between internal disciplinary constraints and external political interests, in which meaning is negotiated. The outcome of this continual ‘renegotiation’ can help to elucidate more clearly the contours of historiographical change.

The conceptual shifts within the Cold War formation opened up a political space that enabled a radical interpretation of American foreign policy to be formed and articulated. But this in itself is not enough to explain how Cold War revisionism was incorporated into the field of U.S. diplomatic history. We need to turn to the internal politics of the discipline, which mediated the assimilation of new historiographical tendencies. The next chapter looks at how revisionist historiography was able to transform disciplinary rules and conventions, redefining the field, but was itself ‘re-implected’ in that process.

## Chapter 4

### Cold War Revisionism and U.S. Diplomatic History

#### I. Background: The Emergence of the “New Left”

Although the 1950s was seen as an especially unpropitious period for the radical left, portends of a new radicalism were visible late in the decade. Two of the most influential intellectual antecedents for scholars of the ‘New Left’ were the sociologist C. Wright Mills and historian William Appleman Williams. Notwithstanding the differences of discipline and research, both formed a critical perspective towards power and culture that allowed them to analyse the internal structures of American society from the outside.

In *The Power Elite* (1956), Mills had described the inner-workings of the dominant societal structures and institutions (the state, military and the corporations) and the mechanisms through which they exerted power and control over social life. Later, he wrote the classic *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) which attacked the prevailing social science methodologies that upheld the status quo. Unlike the scientific positivism that held sway, “Mills held out the promise of social science as a critical and historically oriented way of developing rational knowledge about societal structures, historical transformations and the capacities of human actors to maneuver [sic] within and against them”.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, Mills also took an especially jaundiced view of the proponents of the ‘end of ideology’, writing:

the end-of-ideology is of course itself an ideology –a fragmentary one, to be sure, and perhaps more a mood. The end-of-ideology is in reality the ideology of an ending; the ending of political reflection itself as a public fact. It is a weary know-it-all justification – by tone of voice rather than by explicit argument – of the cultural and political default of the NATO intellectual.<sup>147</sup>

In a similar vein, Williams unfurled his conception of an American *Weltanschauung* in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) and *The Contours of American History* (1961), distilling the essence of how U.S elites and other sections of society understood their relationship to the outside world. The beliefs, assumptions and ideals rooted in this worldview

were crucial in explaining the rise of a modern American Empire during the twentieth century. Williams saw an expansionist mentality at the heart of the American world-view, which developed into an imperialist impulse and a quest for 'informal' Empire in the twentieth century.

Of course, Williams (and Mills for that matter) did not mark a complete break from the past, nor did he operate in an intellectual vacuum. His graduate days were spent in the relatively hospitable surroundings of the University of Wisconsin, which had not succumbed to the excesses of McCarthyism.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, the history department at Madison remained something of an outpost of progressive historiography during the era of 'consensus'. Williams's return to Wisconsin as a member of the faculty in 1957 marked a significant moment in the rise of American radical historiography. Jonathan Wiener writes "his graduate seminar provided the intellectual arena in which New Left history in the United States first developed".<sup>149</sup> Out of Williams's seminar emerged the radical journal *Studies on the Left*, launched in 1959, as did the 'Wisconsin school' of U.S. diplomatic history, which included future leading members of the discipline, such as Lloyd Gardner, Walter LaFeber and Thomas McCormick.<sup>150</sup>

Though it is always difficult to estimate the influence of one person to the development of a trend or movement, Williams did more than anyone to provide a historical framework for the articulation of the radical critique in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet in 1959 that critique was very much at the margins of historiographical and societal debates on the Cold War. Political trends had yet to catch up with intellectual developments. The war in Vietnam, however, would change all this.

## **II. Revisionism and the Origins of the Cold War**

In *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, Williams's elucidation of the "Open Door thesis" was a turning point in the historiography of American foreign relations.<sup>151</sup> *Tragedy* was a sweeping reinterpretation of American diplomatic history in the twentieth century from the declaration of the Open Door Notes in 1899 and 1900 to the onset of the Cold War. In it, Williams challenged the conventional wisdom on America's rise to global pre-eminence at every turn; denying that turn-of-the-century imperial expansion was an aberration, exploding the 'myth' of isolationism of the 1920s and 30s and reconfiguring the Second World War as "the war for the American frontier". Williams saw a continuous imperial thread to American foreign policy that derived from the open door *Weltanschauung*, which cohered around the belief that the well-being of democracy and prosperity at home required overseas economic expansion and access to foreign markets.<sup>152</sup>

In the context of the Cold War, Williams argued that American officials, in seeking to make this Open Door worldview the basis for postwar cooperation, challenged the Soviet Union's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. In the face of U.S. interference, the Kremlin moved to assert its hegemony over Eastern Europe in order to resolve the problem of security and the needs of postwar recovery. In summary, "it was the decision of the United States to employ its new and awesome power in keeping with the traditional Open Door Policy which crystallized the Cold War".<sup>153</sup> On its publication, *Tragedy* "made a rather modest splash".<sup>154</sup> But shortly thereafter, Williams' ideas entered mainstream historiographical discourse.

The application of the "Open Door thesis" was advanced by other members of the "Wisconsin school", who substantially revised and elaborated on the insights Williams provided into periods of American history as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, or as recent as the interwar period. A series of revisionist works appeared in the early-1960s, of which at least one received academic recognition (Walter LaFeber's *The New Empire*, won

the AHA's Beveridge Prize in 1962). Prior to 1965, however, not one of those scholars, who would be at the forefront of Cold War revisionism, had published a monograph on the Cold War's origins.<sup>155</sup>

Retrospectively, that year marked a decisive moment in the emerging debate on the Cold War and revisionism. Not only was it a time of rapid military escalation in Vietnam, but that year Gar Alperovitz published his *Atomic Diplomacy*; a book which greatly accelerated the onset of historiographical controversy. Christopher Lasch wrote in 1970 that *Atomic Diplomacy* "made it difficult for conscientious scholars to any longer avoid the challenge of revisionist interpretations".<sup>156</sup> This is perhaps somewhat ironic given the fact that several other revisionists did not share Alperovitz's thesis that the Truman administration had deliberately dropped the atomic bombs on Japan in order to impress the Russians.<sup>157</sup> Nonetheless, a whole spate of revisionist works followed over the next decade.

The most trenchant critiques of American policy emanating from the revisionist camp were authored by Gabriel Kolko, who alongside Williams played a pivotal role in disseminating revisionist arguments. In *The Limits of Power*, Kolko (with co-author Joyce Kolko) argued that "the United States' ultimate objective at the end of World War II was both to sustain and to reform world capitalism".<sup>158</sup> The very notion of a Cold War was, for Kolko, merely to obfuscate the real aim of U.S. policy. In his view, the turmoil in Western Europe at the end of the war presented American officials with a unique opportunity to reshape the world economy in line with U.S. economic interests. As a consequence, Washington was encouraged to press its own hegemony in Eastern Europe on the conviction that it was a vital region in the rehabilitation of Western capitalism. The question of U.S. foreign policy, therefore, "was not the containment of communism, but rather more directly the extension and expansion of American capitalism according to its new economic power and needs".<sup>159</sup>

As many historians acknowledge, there was never a single revisionist thesis. Substantial disagreements existed on several points of interpretation, in particular the extent of continuity between Roosevelt and Truman, the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan, and the importance of early sphere of influence initiatives in subsequent disagreements between the United States and the U.S.S.R. over Eastern Europe.<sup>160</sup> “The revisionist critique”, Stephanson contends “did not suggest a single argument, except insofar as it saw the general causes of the cold war in American actions”.<sup>161</sup>

Equally, there was considerable diversity between revisionists on how to structure interpretation, involving choices about concepts, forms of explanation and categories of analysis. Although many followed Williams’s intellectual trajectory, the scope of his interpretive horizons was so broad that it offered little concrete guidance. For the likes of LaFeber, Gardner and others, ideological themes outweighed economic forces. In contrast, Kolko pursued a more deterministic approach, where the primacy of economic interests and the needs of the global capitalist system were emphasised. For others, such as Alperovitz, the role of individual agents was fundamental.

When revisionist historiography first appeared it received academic disapprobation from wide sections of the community of U.S. diplomatic historians. The exchanges over the origins of the Cold War were especially fierce and vituperative. Robert James Maddox’s *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* (1973) was notable in this regard for its attempt to impugn the scholarly credentials of the revisionists by insinuating that they had wilfully manipulated the historical record. Others who did not go that far took aim at the approach the revisionists adopted towards explanation as well as their general attitude towards the purpose of historical inquiry.

In the decade thereafter, the controversy over the origins of the Cold War raged, causing one onlooker to describe it as “historiographical warfare”.<sup>162</sup> Later, more moderate voices could be heard, though a convergence of viewpoints between the warring parties never truly materialised. A post-revisionist ‘synthesis’ was proclaimed by the mainstream, though it never satisfied revisionist critics.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, as scholarly passions cooled, attention refocused on the state of the discipline itself and the apparent ‘crisis’ it faced. Indeed, the languishing of the field was blamed on an over-reliance on dominant analytical models unduly shaped by the U.S.-Soviet confrontation.<sup>164</sup>

### **III. The Ideological Challenge: Radicalism as Form**

In *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy*, Robert Tucker insisted that what distinguished Cold War revisionism from other critiques of American diplomacy was its “rejection of America’s role and interests in the world”.<sup>165</sup> Contrasting with moderate realist critics, who shared a similar outlook on America’s international position as partisans of U.S. foreign policy, the revisionists were firmly rooted in a radical politics that implied a fundamental transformation of American society. According to Tucker, this ideological position was implicit in the way they went about explaining the history of American diplomacy:

The essence of the radical critique is not simply that America is aggressive and imperialistic but that it is so out of an institutional necessity. It is the central assumption that American imperialism must ultimately be traced to the institutional structure of American capitalism that is the common denominator of radical criticism.<sup>166</sup>

Although Tucker welcomes revisionism’s focus on a self-interested and expansionist America, he rejects the notion that expansion can be primarily explained in terms of economic forces. “America’s interventionist and counterrevolutionary policy”, he wrote “is the expected response of an imperial power with a vital interest in maintaining an order that, apart from the

material benefits this order confers, has become synonymous with the nation's vision of its role in history".<sup>167</sup> The difference between Tucker and the revisionists, as between revisionists and later post-revisionists, rested on the definition of the kind of world that the United States wanted to create.

According to the revisionists, Washington's decision to embark upon a global policy of "containment" was not primarily motivated by the desire to thwart communist advances, but to establish American hegemony by extending values of liberal democracy and free-market capitalism around the world. This was a consistent strategy carried out in pursuit of a clear and coherent vision for the postwar period. Thomas Paterson explains that "American diplomacy was not accidental or aimless: rather, it was self-consciously expansionist".<sup>168</sup> Looking beyond the American-Soviet confrontation, revisionists saw U.S. policies in the 'Third World' as evidence of imperial domination, where Cold War rhetoric on preserving freedom and democracy was undermined by the quest to enforce a liberal capitalist order of unfettered markets and open economies.

Where the Vietnam War was concerned, the revisionists challenged the liberal defence of the Cold War consensus that had represented Vietnam as an aberration and a tragedy, but not one that required a fundamental overhaul of U.S. foreign policy. The orthodox rationale of containment, which explicated American expansion as a response to the external threat of Soviet communism, supplied the interpretive strategies to portray American involvement as mistaken or misguided, but not immoral. It focused wrongdoing on intellectual errors, logical inconsistencies and faulty perceptions; in other words, on the failings of individuals. Still, given the defensive and virtuous nature of U.S. aims, American intentions remained sincere and honourable. "The result", Tucker contends, "is invariably a partial justification of American policy and a partial exoneration of our sins".<sup>169</sup>



In the radical view, however, the Vietnam War was an unavoidable outcome of America's pursuit of global Empire. This interpretation, according to Robert Divine, made "George Kennan, not Lyndon Johnson, the scapegoat by portraying Vietnam as the culmination of the Cold War effort to contain communism".<sup>170</sup> More precisely, it was the revisionists focus on the structural dimensions of policymaking, defined in economic and/or ideological terms, that made possible an articulation of Cold War strategy as a clear, consistent and self-aggrandising pursuit of a global vision. This 'frame of reference' was also innately pejorative since revisionists saw this vision as a conflation of capitalism and democracy in the U.S. conception of 'freedom'. Paterson argued that "Americans considered themselves democratic because they were prosperous and prosperous because they were democratic".<sup>171</sup> Above all, the revisionist interpretation directly contested the meaning and identity of the United States as it had been represented in orthodox accounts. It challenged the moral superiority and exceptionalism in depictions of American foreign policy from an 'idealist' perspective and subverted the realist preoccupation with power politics (which itself presumed identity, thereby suppressing it) by privileging economics over politics and structure over agency in explanation.

Tucker's description of radical revisionism was not without its own flaws.<sup>172</sup> First, he failed to appreciate that the economic analysis of revisionism did not depend absolutely on the requirements of the American economy calculable in terms of exports, imports, and investments. Second, he did not give adequate weight to the distinction made between ideological motives and economic interests. The point to be emphasised here, however, is that Tucker identifies the relationship between the form of explanation as deployed in revisionist interpretations and their ideological disposition. Yet this cannot be explained simply by reducing the former to the latter. It is argued that the form (or what we might otherwise call

the interpretive framework) exists in reciprocal tension with ideology, on the one hand, and the disciplining of historical knowledge, on the other. Thus, the form is constitutive of ideology, shaping how ideological codes can be represented in the historical field. We can examine this contention in more detail if we focus on the way revisionists employed ideological factors in their interpretive approach.

#### **IV. The ‘Open Door’, Ideology and the Radical Form**

As we have suggested, the revisionists were not of one mind. Williams, unlike Kolko, never went so far as to attribute avaricious motives to American policymakers. As he put it, “the tragedy of American diplomacy is not that it is evil, but that it denies and subverts American ideas and ideals”.<sup>173</sup> Williams retained a belief in the ultimate realisation of U.S. values of freedom and self-determination through a radical re-visioning of American society, which is reflected in how ideological connotations infuse his interpretive framework. An exploration of the relationship between the form and ideology in the work of Williams demonstrates the nature of his incorporation into diplomatic history.

As in the case of George Kennan, the realist position on ideology has been largely a negative one. The role assigned ideals and morals (never an ‘ideology’ as such) is typically one that explains why policymakers failed to understand the ‘realities’ of international politics and why their judgement erred. In a philosophical sense, ideas and ideologies are exogenous to the workings of power politics, functioning only as error.

In the writings of Williams, ideology played a more constitutive role in determining the course of American diplomacy. Through the formulation of the Open Door thesis, Williams’s writings represented an ambitious attempt to integrate ideas and material interests, thought and social reality into explanation. Frank Ninkovich recognises the Open Door thesis

for its “acknowledgement of the qualified autonomy of ideological causation [which] represents, in terms of increased theoretical scope, a major advance” over alternative interpretations.<sup>174</sup> His praise is vitiated, though, by objections raised to the primacy accorded to economic motivations in the Open Door conception of ideology.

For critics and interpreters of Williams’ thought, the focus on economics is narrow and reductionist, for although it affords ideational factors a degree of autonomy, it relegates non-economic phenomena to second-order variables, robbing them of causal vitality.<sup>175</sup> What we are left with is a form of “economic ideology”.<sup>176</sup> All that said, there is an irresolvable tension in the conception of the *Weltanschauung* between the capitalist system and ideology, as several critics have noted. Tucker explains:

the reader is never quite clear – because Williams is never quite clear – whether America’s institutions necessitated expansion or whether America has been expansionist out of a mistaken conviction that the continued well-being, if not the very existence, of these institutions required constant expansion.<sup>177</sup>

If the former, then why did Williams spend so long trying to clarify the concept of a *Weltanschauung*? If the latter, one is left with the impression that U.S. expansion was the result of a faulty belief system. The insinuation being that ideology is, at bottom, “illusory”.<sup>178</sup> Though we can never be sure of what precisely Williams meant, in more lucid moments he did make more exacting statements about the nature of what he described as a “way of life”:

A way of life is the combination of patterns of thought and action that, as it becomes habitual and institutionalized, defines the thrust and character of a culture and society... each society holds in common certain assumptions about reality, everyday those assumptions guide and set limits upon its members – their awareness and perception, their understanding of cause and consequence, their sense of options, and their range of actions.<sup>179</sup>

Here, the definition of Williams amounts not to integration, but to the elision of the distinction between thought and material reality; a move that poses certain difficulties for conventional historical explanation. As one critic wrote, “it is difficult to conceive of any American policy, or any evidence about the reasons for its adoption that could not be incorporated into the Williams interpretation”.<sup>180</sup> As Schlesinger stated more bluntly:

“Because it explains everything, it explains very little. It is not a testable historical hypothesis at all. It is a theological dogma”.<sup>181</sup>

The difficulty here is that the form of explanation Williams proposes is outside the discipline’s bounds of ‘acceptability’. As a field of inquiry, diplomatic history is attached to the assumption “that there are material causes to which events and actions can be reduced”.<sup>182</sup> Explanations, to be considered as such, presuppose the existence of “objective, hard, substantial realities” that can “be accessed by social scientific methodology”.<sup>183</sup> This creates difficulties for both realist and revisionist alike in terms of situating ideology within explanations of cause and effect.

A conceptual tension resides in the need to submit causal explanations for events that are necessarily over-determined, implicitly demanding that ideas or mental phenomena are reduced to other material causes or conditions. Since all evidence of causes for historical events are mediated by thought (or rather language), to establish the influence of ideology on policymaking beyond the notional, requires the effects of ideological belief to be proven as a necessary cause; otherwise ideology is always reducible to another more primary cause.<sup>184</sup> Given the nature of the past, a tacit separation of the material and the ideal is given in realist historical ontology, a disparity that gives rise to “hard realities”, on the one hand, and “false consciousness”, on the other.

In realist modes of explanation, this disparity is negotiated by the always already existing reality of international politics and the U.S. habit of pursuing high-minded ideals, which at times leads to realistic policies (more by chance than design) and at others some decidedly unrealistic ones. In the ‘Open Door’ framework, it is encoded into the internal contradictions of U.S. ideology itself: the promotion of values of liberty, democracy and self-

determination are conflated with the economic imperatives of market capitalism and free trade, which work to undercut progress towards liberty and self-determination abroad.

Given the tensions in any attempt to theorise causality, putting ideology somewhere (even if that is nowhere) becomes a necessary conceptual imperative within the explanatory framework; even more so, in the case of U.S. foreign policy where ideological representations abound. The procedure of realists and revisionists alike is to see ideological beliefs as “error”, and to recognise, if not the sincerity with which they are held then at least the power of the illusion they create. Both consider there to be an external reality which is objectively describable, hence explanation arises out the discrepancy between that ‘reality’ and U.S. policymaking, which necessitates the turning of beliefs erroneous, perceptions false and ideologies ironic in order to function.<sup>185</sup> It is in the definition of that ‘reality’, structured by disparate ideological visions, that one finds the divergence between moderate realists and radical revisionists, though it may be said, that Williams was every bit as much the internal critic of American foreign policy as were realists.<sup>186</sup>

Additionally, Williams’s definition of ideology as an all-embracing *Weltanschauung* is also important for understanding how his radical political vision emerges through his historical writings.<sup>187</sup> In contrast to realists who seek to exclude ideas and ideology from the history of policymaking, Williams does not – to him ideology *is* historical reality. Reading him in this manner, Stephanson asserts: “The weltanschauung of expansionism is the American *geist*, the unifying principle that expresses itself in different ways in different times, as the social totality unfolds in history”.<sup>188</sup> Williams presents us with an explanatory concept which hypostatizes a single truth as the essence of reality. This epistemological position subverts the empiricist foundations of history, which seeks to establish the historical truth by making verifiable empirical statements drawn from the evidence. But Williams’s argument

cannot be disproved by reference to empirical evidence. Seen from this angle, Williams appears to be offering not simply history, but a philosophy of history; one that resolutely did not conform to the requirements of history as a disciplined form of knowledge.

In contrast, the *Weltanschauung* of the open door was quiet in keeping with his recommendations for the transformation of American foreign policy and his radical vision of America. A prerequisite to that end was a redefinition of the American worldview. He urged fellow Americans “to cut to the bone and scrape the marrow of our traditional outlook” and embrace an “open door for revolutions”.<sup>189</sup> This was not so much revolution in the Marxist tradition of a proletarian seizure of the means of production, but an adjustment in outlook that would “realize our most cherished ideals and aspirations”.<sup>190</sup> The historical writings of Williams reflect a kind of dialectical idealism, where resolution (“transcendence of the tragic” as he called it) will emerge, not through changes in the material structures, but a change in the social totality as expressed in the *Weltanschauung*. Of course, the problem is how to know whether a change in the world-view has occurred, is occurring, or will occur. Williams offers us no criteria.

In the field of U.S diplomatic history, the influence of Williams is widely apparent.<sup>191</sup> Yet it is also evident that the criticism levelled at his work has conditioned the way his ideas have been received and deployed. Bradford Perkins maintains that “it was equally possible simultaneously to embrace and to reject key parts of Williams’s argument”.<sup>192</sup> The highly idiosyncratic nature of the interpretations of Williams, to be sure, meant that they could not be easily replicated. But the form in which they were represented did not lend them to simple adoption because to do so would only be to confirm the truth of the ‘Open Door’ thesis, not add to historical knowledge. The argument put forward here suggests that any utility gained from the writings of Williams presupposed their deconstruction, either into an economic

analyse or a focus on ideological aspects, in such a way as to ensure the that his utopian vision was separated and excluded from the field.

## V. Assimilation and Incorporation

Initial resistance to the work of radical historians by representatives of historical establishment was emphatic: it was not history.<sup>193</sup> If this was not always openly declared, it was implicit in the way mainstream critics went about addressing the arguments raised by revisionist historians. This involved some rather dubious tactics which sought not to engage in order to refute, but to dismiss and to marginalise. A popular stratagem was to label the Cold War revisionists as ‘presentist’ or partisan and to censure them of failing to uphold the profession’s objectivist creed of neutral, impartial and detached scholarship.<sup>194</sup> More insidious was the use of the term ‘New Left’ to describe the entire revisionist camp, which only helped to trivialise and de-legitimise the revisionist critique. Peter Novick states:

By aggregating a carefully selected list of writers – including the most vulnerable, and omitting the most circumspect – all cold war revisionists could be tarred with New Left brush, and made collectively responsible for whatever errors or exaggerations were contained in the work of anyone so designated.<sup>195</sup>

In between the *ad hominem* attacks and the efforts at exclusion, however, more discerning readings of the revisionist literature were published, resulting in some serious and at times damaging criticism. Critics complained of narrow approaches that omitted political and strategic considerations, minimalised the role of the international system and lacked any sense of the vagaries of U.S decision-making. There were also charges that applied equally well to revisionism as to realism: ethnocentrism, parochialism, male-oriented, and elite focused.<sup>196</sup>

If the revisionist critique was challenged, it too challenged the underlying precepts of traditional inquiry. Charles Maier writes “the non-revisionists are asking how policies are

formed and assume that this also covers the question why. The revisionists see the two questions as different and are interested in the why".<sup>197</sup> At the very least, Cold War revisionists forced traditional diplomatic historians to reconsider questions about the nature of American power and the interests it served. Nor could they pretend that policymaking was completely divorced from the rest of society.

It is also important to remember, however, that revisionism did not challenge traditionalist modes of interpretation on every front. Although revisionists opposed the conventional understanding of historical objectivity, they remained "firmly committed to the realist, objectivist, and anti-relativist tradition of the left".<sup>198</sup> Moreover, whilst they reversed the theory of causation that belonged to orthodoxy, which traced the source of U.S. behaviour to the response to external Soviet aggression, revisionists never questioned the search for causal relationships. One revisionist insisted: "Attempts to isolate cause and effect must remain the ultimate goal".<sup>199</sup> Methodologically speaking, revisionists, realists and traditionalists alike continued to adhere to the empiricist formula for constructing accounts of the past, extracting meaning from the evidence and basing inquiry on "the search for an explanation of policy and the subject that produces it".<sup>200</sup> These are not insignificant concerns that ought to be borne in mind when considering how legitimacy was conferred upon Cold War revisionist accounts by the historical discipline.

Unfortunately for the high priests of orthodoxy, efforts to bring down revisionism failed. Maddox's attack on the professionalism of revisionist historians and implicitly on disciplinary integrity as a whole was condemned. Warren Kimball summed up the matter, stating "Maddox deals primarily with interpretations – not falsification of the evidence".<sup>201</sup> No doubt such flagrant attempts to expunge the revisionist critique were not countenanced because they failed to prove their charges. Yet there was also the fact that the orthodox truth



of the Cold War, in the shadow of Vietnam, appeared so thoroughly discredited. Writing in 1970, Maier admitted that “the war has eroded so many national self-conceptions that many assumptions behind traditional Cold War history have been cast into doubt”.<sup>202</sup> Moreover, Schlesinger’s defence of orthodoxy in 1967 conceded important ground to revisionist arguments before he resurrected the ideological explanation that rested on Soviet depravity as means of exculpating American excesses.<sup>203</sup>

This formula was repeated in John Lewis Gaddis’s *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (1972), which situated policymaking within the context of domestic politics. Examining the impact of public opinion and electoral politics on policymaking, Gaddis depicted Washington officials as badly constrained by such obstacles of the American political system, making the effective conduct of foreign policy difficult. Yet Gaddis’s narrative “frequently had more in common with revisionist than with orthodox accounts”.<sup>204</sup> He acknowledged that Soviet, not American, interests were at stake in Eastern Europe, that Stalin was cautious not expansionist and that U.S officials consistently exaggerated external threats to achieve politics ends. However, Gaddis concluded by affirming Soviet responsibility because Stalin’s “absolute power did give him more chance to surmount the internal restraints on his policy than were available to his democratic counterparts in the West”.<sup>205</sup>

The acceptance of revisionist contentions within an overall framework that emphasised Soviet depravity and American virtue became a central feature of ‘post-revisionist’ interpretations of the origins of the Cold War. In the words of Anders Stephanson, “post-revisionism can be seen as an attempt to come to terms with the revisionism while remaining within the political mainstream”.<sup>206</sup> The possibility of a new interpretation of the Cold War, more acceptable to the self-image of the United States, would emerge was not

unlikely given that the liberal consensus in American politics survived the crises of the late 1960s and early 1970s, as American foreign policy moved into calmer waters during the era of détente with the Russians and the Chinese. Indeed, the incorporation of several key revisionist arguments into the reconstructed liberal realist narrative of the Cold War indicated the final assimilation of left revisionism as a part of the field.

## Conclusion

### Neorealism, Revisionism and the “Containment of Ideology”

By the end of the 1970s, the furore that had begun with the revisionist critique of Cold War orthodoxy had abated. The cooling of scholarly passions was assisted by intertwined developments from within and without the discipline. Withdrawal from Vietnam coupled with new geopolitical configurations meant that Washington was forced to confront the limits of power in the international realm, which recast America’s role in the world and ushered in a period of *détente* with the Soviet Union. No longer centre stage, though still vital, the bipolar receded from view as new vistas lurking in the shadows of superpower confrontation moved into sight. The effects could be registered on historiographical trends. Joan Hoff-Wilson writes “diplomatic scholars began to turn their attention from global, political, and bipolar topics to regional, economic, cultural and multipolar ones”.<sup>207</sup> In addition to alleviating concerns about the health and well-being of the discipline, these new avenues of inquiry helped to overcome the disciplinary stasis that had taken root for a time in the stand off between orthodoxy (and their traditional realist counterparts) and revisionism over the nature of American expansionism in the twentieth century and, in particular, during the Cold War.<sup>208</sup>

That transcendence did not mark reconciliation so much as “an acceptance of perspectival relativism” as Novick describes it.<sup>209</sup> On balance, such an outcome was probably a mixed blessing. Revisionist and revisionist-oriented scholars, though in the minority amongst their fellow diplomatic historians, were firmly ensconced in the mainstream dialogue over the nature of U.S diplomatic history and the Cold War and some could claim leading positions within the discipline. Yet the hope that revisionism would ‘stick’ never came fruition, as the disquieting conclusions reach by Williams and Kolko were succeeded by the less radical and iconoclastic, but more complex and conceptually refined arguments of the

‘corporatist’ and ‘world-systems’ interpretations.<sup>210</sup> They analysed precisely what was missing or had been bypassed in the formulation of the ‘Open Door’ framework, focussing more critically on both domestic and international structures and the relationship between the two realms. Historiographical progress no doubt. But what was presupposed in replacing old categories of analysis with these new strategies and departures?

Serious critics of the ‘Open Door’ had challenged its narrowness of scope, the privileged status accorded economic interests in defining a *Weltanschauung*, a focus on structural determinants, or the non-falsifiable explanatory schema. Such conceptual deficiencies inscribed ideological meaning into Williams’ radical representations of the American past. The form of explanation was the very thing that articulated the radical critique, so its revision – through corporatism and world systems – constituted something of a mediation away from radicalism. This is not to say, however, that we ought to prefer representations of the past that convey ideological meaning in a conceptually defunct manner. Rather it is to say that, there is a tension between a pursuit of a more ‘objective’ picture of the past and the mediation of ideological commitments one must accept in order to pursue that endeavour.

The focus on the ‘revising’ of Cold War revisionism in this manner may appear counter-intuitive. If anything, revisionists have slammed post-revisionist efforts to revise the origins of the Cold War by resuscitating the orthodox thesis and thereby marginalising or ‘containing’ the revisionist critique.<sup>211</sup> This charge multiplied over time as post-revisionism mutated into a neorealist interpretation that has fused revisionist arguments within an overall framework more compatible with U.S. self-image. “The characteristic method of post-revisionism in dealing with revisionist arguments”, writes Steven Hurst, “is a ‘yes, but’ formula that consists of accepting the broad contentions of the revisionists but reinterpreting

their meaning and implication in such a way as to neutralise their conclusions”.<sup>212</sup> This has been achieved in several ways.

First, post-revisionists have revived the realist chain of causation albeit in modified form. Michael Hogan states: “According to orthodox theory, the Soviets acted, the Americans reacted; according to neorealist theory, Americans reacted to the perception of how the Soviets acted”.<sup>213</sup> Second, they have asserted the primacy of geopolitics over economics as the principal motivating factor behind U.S. Cold War foreign policy. Melvyn Leffler contends that “economic interests often reinforced geostrategic imperatives and ideological predilections” and “concerns about correlations of power... far exceeded... apprehensions about the well-being of the American economy”.<sup>214</sup> Third, the explanation of U.S. expansionism and the rise of an American Empire have been reconfigured in a more virtuous light. Gaddis argues that the American Empire “fits more closely the model of defensive rather offensive expansion, of invitation rather than imposition, of improvisation rather than careful planning”. Finally, post-revisionists have downplayed the role of ideological factors. “Neorealism”, writes Stephanson “is a discourse that sets itself the profoundly ideological task of ridding history, in particular the history of *policymaking*, of ideology [emphasis in original]”.<sup>215</sup>

Neorealism represents the containment of ideology because it supports certain forms of explanation and not others. This also true of the field as a whole; the drive to extinguish ideology is encoded into its institutional and discursive practices, which legitimates it as a form of knowledge. By virtue of the fact that the state and policymaking remain the central objects of investigation privileges a particular conception of explanation and ideology. It is no coincidence that the politics of the middle-ground, of the status quo, as expounded by established political authority, can insist upon the eradication of ideology. We can also say

that the production of knowledge based on the belief in a past reality (the “ideology of realism”) “lends itself to use by some forms of ideology better than to others”.<sup>216</sup> The ideological positioned nature of historical knowledge is summarised by Hayden White:

For subordinate, emergent, or resisting social groups, this recommendation, that they view history with the kind of “objectivity”, “modesty”, “realism”, and “social responsibility” that has characterised historical studies since its establishment as a professional discipline, can only appear as another aspect of the ideology they are indentured to oppose.<sup>217</sup>

In other words, radical interpretations are always confronted by inauspicious terrain from which to elucidate the critique of dominant modes of historiography by virtue of the fact that the practices and procedures which define the historical discipline circumscribe the form, or the medium of explanation. The ‘disciplinisation’ of revisionism, therefore, the act of turning it into historical knowledge, constitutes the containment of the meaning and ideology of the radical critique. In many respects, it gives a historiographical twist to Nietzsche’s maxim that “the state never has any use for truth as such, but only for truth which is useful to it”.<sup>218</sup>

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The two most notable works of orthodoxy during this period are William H. McNeil, *America, Britain and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-46* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) and Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). But see also Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 'Origins of the Cold War', *Foreign Affairs* 46 (October 1967), pp. 22-52; and Herbert Feis, *From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York: Norton, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> McNeil is more equivocal on this point. He writes "it seems reasonable to suppose that Stalin had not explicitly and definitely given up the idea of world revolution any more than he had definitely and explicitly abandoned hope of continued co-operation with Britain and America", *ibid.*, p. 609. See also pp. 406-409, 609-610, 653-655.

<sup>3</sup> McNeil, *ibid.*, pp. 611-612, 614-15, 652; and Feis, *From Trust to Terror*, 3, 16, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Schlesinger, 'Origins of Cold War', 23, pp. 46-52. See also Steven Hurst, *US Cold War Foreign Policy: Key Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 23-26; and Anders Stephanson, 'The United States', in *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe: International Perspectives*, ed. David Reynolds (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 27-30.

<sup>5</sup> For general discussion, see Hurst, *ibid.*, pp. 29-60; Stephanson, *ibid.*, pp. 30-35; Robert W. Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); and Charles S. Maier, 'Revisionism and the Interpretation of the Cold War Origins', in Charles S. Maier ed., *The Origins of the Cold War and Contemporary Europe*, (New York; London: New Viewpoints, 1978), pp. 3-34.

<sup>6</sup> The key works of Cold War revisionism are William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Norton 1972 [1959]); Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-1980* (New York: Wiley, 1980 [4<sup>th</sup> Edition]); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941-1949* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970); Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam: the use of the atomic bomb and the American confrontation with Soviet power* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966); Gabriel Kolko *The Politics of War: Allied Diplomacy and the World Crisis* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1969); and with Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power: the World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper Row, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> See Jonathan M. Wiener, "Radical Historians and the Crisis in American History, 1959-1980", *The Journal of American History* 76, No. 2 (September 1989), 399-434; and Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 417-457.

<sup>8</sup> Novick, *ibid.*, 447.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas G. Paterson and Robert J. McMahon, *The Origins of the Cold War* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1991), p. xxi.

<sup>10</sup> The classic statement of the post-revisionist synthesis is John Lewis Gaddis's 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History* 7, No. 3 (July 1983), pp.171-190.

<sup>11</sup> For a critique of strategic aspect of post-revisionism, see Anders Stephanson, 'Commentary: Ideology and Neorealist Mirrors', *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1993), 285-295; and *idem*, 'The United States', pp. 35-41, 45-47.

<sup>12</sup> The most notable post-revisionist accounts of the origins of the Cold War are John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); *idem*, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); and Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

<sup>13</sup> See the essays of John Lewis Gaddis, Melvyn Leffler and Geir Lundestad in Odd Arne Westad ed. *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Odd Arne Westad, "Introduction," in *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory*, ed. Odd Arne Westad (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> One recent controversy, though not on the scale or magnitude of those in the past, surrounded the publication of Bruce Cumings' article "Revising Postrevisionism", or, The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History', *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 4 (Fall 1993), pp. 539-570.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Novick, *That Noble Dream*, p. 103.

<sup>17</sup> For characteristic examples, see articles in Michael J. Hogan ed., *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations Since 1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> For the best treatment of this variety, see Anders Stephanson, 'The United States'.

<sup>19</sup> Tucker, 'The Radical Left'; Kenneth W. Thompson, *Cold War Theories*;

- <sup>20</sup> For a discussion of various approach towards historiography, see Chris Lorenz's informative 'Historiography: Problems and Perspective', *History and Theory* 38, No. 1 (February 1999), pp. 25-39.
- <sup>21</sup> Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 228.
- <sup>22</sup> Hurst, *US Cold War Foreign Policy*, p. 5.
- <sup>23</sup> An example is Hurst's discussion of post-revisionism, where he states "the characteristic method of post-revisionism in dealing with revisionist arguments is a 'yes, but' formula that consists of accepting the broad contentions of the revisionists but reinterpreting them in such a way as to neutralise their conclusions". Ibid, pp. 61-88, quote at 61.
- <sup>24</sup> Emily Rosenberg, 'Revisiting Dollar Diplomacy', *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1998) p. 156. See also 'Hayden White, international history and questions too seldom posed', *Rethinking History* 12, no. 1 (March 2008), pp. 108-109.
- <sup>25</sup> White, 'The Politics of Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation', *Critical Inquiry* 9, no. 1 (September 1982), p. 114. Linda Hutcheon writes "all forms of cultural representation...are ideologically grounded...they cannot avoid involvement with social and political relations and apparatuses" in *The Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 3, pp. 2-11.
- <sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the rise of 'critical historiography', see Stephen Bann, 'Towards a Critical Historiography: Recent Work in Philosophy of History', *Philosophy* 56, No. 217 (July 1981), pp. 365-385.
- <sup>27</sup> Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story*, pp. 230-263.
- <sup>28</sup> Of course, this is not an argument for taking this approach in itself.
- <sup>29</sup> For an assessment of his impact, see Allen Megill, 'The Reception of Foucault by Historians', *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48, No. 1 (Jan-March 1987), pp. 117-141.
- <sup>30</sup> Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 131.
- <sup>31</sup> For useful introductions to Foucault's thought, see, Mark Philip, 'Michel Foucault', in Quentin Skinner ed. *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 65-81.
- <sup>32</sup> My understanding of 'hegemony' is largely derived from the neo-Gramscian work of Laclau and Mouffe, see Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).
- <sup>33</sup> White, 'Politics of Historical Interpretation', pp. 113-137.
- <sup>34</sup> See Michael Bentley, 'Past and "Presence": Revisiting Historical Ontology', *History and Theory* 45 (October 2006), pp. 349-361.
- <sup>35</sup> Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story*, p. 229.
- <sup>36</sup> See Patrick Finney, 'Still "Marking Time"? Text, discourse and truth in international history', *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 3 (2001): 291-308.
- <sup>37</sup> White, 'Politics of Historical Interpretation', p. 117.
- <sup>38</sup> For brief introductions, see Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, "Introduction", in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson ed. *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, pp. 1-3
- <sup>39</sup> See Anders Stephanson, "War and Diplomatic History",
- <sup>40</sup> Hogan and Paterson, "Introduction", p. 1. On Bemis, see Mark T. Gilderhus, 'Founding Father: Samuel Flagg Bemis and the Study of U.S-Latin American Relations', *Diplomatic History* 21, No. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 1-13.
- <sup>41</sup> For a critique of Kennan's historiography, see Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 5-8. The term 'paradigm' is used here simply to signify an analytical 'framework' or 'problematic'.
- <sup>42</sup> See also discussion in chapter 2.
- <sup>43</sup> For the best analyses of the realist paradigm, see Thomas J. McCormick, "Drift or Mastery? A Corporatist Synthesis for American Diplomatic History," *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December 1982), pp. 319-32; and Michael H. Hunt, "The Long Crisis in U.S Diplomatic History: Coming to Closure," *Diplomatic History* 16, no. 1 (January 1992), pp. 117-122.
- <sup>44</sup> Mark Philip, 'Michel Foucault', pp. 65-81.
- <sup>45</sup> Costigliola, 'The Nuclear Family: Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Nuclear Alliance', *Diplomatic History* 21, No. 2 (Spring 1997), p. 183.
- <sup>46</sup> Finney, 'Still "marking time"', p. 302.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>48</sup> For discussion on this point, see Sarah Jane Corke, "History, Historians and the naming of foreign policy: a postmodern reflection on American strategic thinking during the Truman administration", *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2001), pp. 146-165.
- <sup>49</sup> Hunt, 'The Long Crisis', p. 119.



- <sup>50</sup> See Robert Buzzanco, 'What Happened to the New Left: Toward a Radical Reading of American Foreign Relations', *Diplomatic History* 23, No. 4 (Fall 1999), pp. 575-607; and Michael J. Hogan 'The 'Next Big Thing': The Future of Diplomatic History in a Global Age', *Diplomatic History* 28, No. 1 (January 2004), p. 12-13.
- <sup>51</sup> For a discussion of related themes in the context of diplomatic history, see Frank Ninkovich, 'No Post-Mortems for Postmodernism, Please', *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1998) pp. 451-466.
- <sup>52</sup> Campbell, 11. For a critique, see Regina U. Gramer, 'On Poststructuralisms, Revisionisms, and Cold Wars', *Diplomatic History* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 515-524.
- <sup>53</sup> Stephanson, 'War and Diplomatic History', *Diplomatic History* 25, No. 3 (Summer 2001), p. 395.
- <sup>54</sup> Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse*, p. 89, 149.
- <sup>55</sup> Clifford Solway quoted in Gary R. Hess, 'After the Tumult: The Wisconsin's School's Tribute to William Appleman Williams', 484. Solway was talking about the wider challenge of New Left historians to conventional historiographical thinking, of which the Cold War revisionists were an integral part.
- <sup>56</sup> Thomas J. McCormick estimates that between 25-30 percent of publications on the history of U.S foreign relations were "revisionist-oriented" in the early 1970s, see 'Drift or Mastery', p. 318.
- <sup>57</sup> Alexander DeConde, 'On the Nature of International History', *The International Historical Review* 10, No. 2 (Nay 1988), pp. 298-99. See Thomas G. Paterson, 'Defining and Doing the History of American Foreign Relations: A Primer', *Diplomatic History* 14, No. 4 (October 1990), pp. 584-601; and Zara Steiner, 'On Writing International History: Chaps, Maps and Much More', *International Affairs* 73, No. 3 (July 1997), pp. 531-546.
- <sup>58</sup> See Charles S. Maier, 'Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations', in Michael Kammen, ed., *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 355-387; and Gordon A. Craig, 'The Historian and the Study of International Relations', *The American Historical Review*, 88, No. 1 (February 1983), pp. 1-11.
- <sup>59</sup> For a not exhaustive list of the literature on the state of diplomatic history, see Paterson, 'Defining and Doing', p. 585n1.
- <sup>60</sup> Ninkovich, 'Interests and Discourse in International History', *Diplomatic History* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1989), p. 155.
- <sup>61</sup> McCormick, 'Drift or Mastery', p. 321; Stephen E. Pelz, 'A Taxonomy for American Diplomatic History', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 19, No. 2 (Autumn 1988), pp. 259-276. For a recent call for synthesis that attempts to delimit the scope of the field by asserting the superiority of 'older' categories, see Melvyn P. Leffler, 'New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Prospective Reconfigurations', *Diplomatic History* 19, No. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 173-196.
- <sup>62</sup> Ryan, *US Foreign Policy in World History* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 22.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 10. See also John Fousek *To Lead the Free World American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 6-14.
- <sup>64</sup> See Stephanson 'War and Diplomacy History', 401-403; Frederik Logevall, 'A Critique of Containment', *Diplomatic History* 28, No. 4 (September 2004), pp. 486-90; and Ryan, *US Foreign Policy*, p. 27.
- <sup>65</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1991), pp. 1-25.
- <sup>66</sup> William Connolly, *Identity/Difference Democratic negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 64.
- <sup>67</sup> Frank Ninkovich, 'No Post-mortems', 456; Stephanson, 'Liberty or Death: The Cold War as US Ideology', in Odd Arne Westad ed., *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory*, (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 81-100; and Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 157. Elsewhere, Campbell states "in the West, the Cold War was an ensemble of practices in which an interpretation of danger crystallised around objectifications of communism and the Soviet Union".
- <sup>69</sup> Stephanson, 'The United States', 50.
- <sup>70</sup> Odd Arne Westad, "The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms," *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (Fall 2000), p. 544. See also Stephanson, 'Liberty or Death', p. 95.
- <sup>71</sup> Logevall, 'A Critique of Containment', pp. 484-85.
- <sup>72</sup> Westad, 'Three (Possible) Paradigms', pp. 554-55.
- <sup>73</sup> Stephanson, 'Liberty or Death', 95.
- <sup>74</sup> Anders Stephanson, 'Fourteen Notes on the Very Concept of the Cold War', <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/essays/stephanson-14notes.pdf>. Published by H-Diplo on May 1996.
- <sup>75</sup> For this argument, see Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, 'Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's', *The American Historical Review* 75, No. 4 (April 1970), pp. 1046-1064.
- <sup>76</sup> Stephanson, 'Fourteen Notes'.

- <sup>77</sup> Emily Rosenberg, 'The Cold War and the Discourse of National Security', *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 2 (Spring 1993), p. 280.
- <sup>78</sup> Frank Ninkovich, 'Where Have all the Realists Gone?', *Diplomatic History* 26, No. 1 (Winter 2002), p. 138.
- <sup>79</sup> The notion of an 'American nationalist globalism' is defined by Fousek, see *To Lead the Free World*, p. 6.
- <sup>80</sup> Ryan, *US Foreign Policy*, 129.
- <sup>81</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-54* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 422.
- <sup>82</sup> For a summary of recent literature, see David Engerman, 'Rethinking Cold War Universities: Some Recent Histories', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 5, No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 80-95.
- <sup>83</sup> Ellen Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- <sup>84</sup> See Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7. On the pre-Cold War origins of research trends, see Engerman, 'Rethinking Cold War Universities', pp. 92-93.
- <sup>87</sup> Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).
- <sup>88</sup> Giles Scott-Smith, 'The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the End of Ideology and the 1955 Milan Conference: Defining the Parameters of Discourse', *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, No. 3 (2002), pp. 437-455.
- <sup>89</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, p. 424.
- <sup>90</sup> For an explanation of the divisions between the CCF and its American affiliate, the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, as well as liberals and more conservative elements, see Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer*, pp. 86-94.
- <sup>91</sup> Scott-Smith, 'The Congress for Cultural Freedom', p. 441.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>93</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949).
- <sup>94</sup> Ryan, *US Foreign Policy*, p. 132.
- <sup>95</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 54.
- <sup>96</sup> See Ryan, *US Foreign Policy*, pp. 156-161.
- <sup>97</sup> Howard Schonenberger, 'Purpose and Ends in History: Presentism and the New Left', *The History Teacher* 7, No. 3 (May 1974), pp. 448-458. For the anti-ideological aspects of historical thought in this period, see Novick, *That Noble Dream*, p. 300.
- <sup>98</sup> Novick, *ibid.*, pp. 325-332; and Jonathan M. Wiener, 'Radical Historians and Crisis in American History', pp. 402-404.
- <sup>99</sup> Lloyd Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy 1941-1949* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p. 278.
- <sup>100</sup> See Craig Campbell, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau and Waltz*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). On the difference between realism and neorealism, see Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory', *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (Spring 1990), pp. 21-37.
- <sup>101</sup> Lippmann, *The Cold War: A Study in U.S Foreign Policy* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1947), p. 6. See also Logevall, 'A Critique of Containment', pp. 477-480; Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (London: Bodley Head, 1980), pp. 433-449
- <sup>102</sup> Lippmann, *ibid.*, p. 46.
- <sup>103</sup> Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (London: Seeker & Warburg, 1952), p.
- <sup>104</sup> Quoted in Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion*, p. 278.
- <sup>105</sup> On this matter, see Ninkovich, 'Interests and Discourse', 151-152.
- <sup>106</sup> Staughton Lynd, 'How the Cold War Began', in Norman A. Graebner ed. *The Cold War: Ideological Conflict or Power Struggle* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1963), p. 2.
- <sup>107</sup> Hunt, 'The Long Crisis in U.S Diplomatic History', 119.
- <sup>108</sup> See chapter 1, pp.
- <sup>109</sup> McNeil, *America, Britain and Russia*, p. 652. See also 583, 611-12, 652, 661-664.
- <sup>110</sup> Feis, *From Trust to Terror*, p. 43.
- <sup>111</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., 'Origins of the Cold War', *Foreign Affairs* 46 (October 1967), p. 47.
- <sup>112</sup> Louis Halle, *The Cold War as History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. xiii.

- <sup>113</sup> McNeil, *America, Britain and Russia*, p. 580.
- <sup>114</sup> Stephanson, 'The United States', p. 29.
- <sup>115</sup> McCormick, 'Drift or Mastery', 329 n4. See also Steven Hurst, *US Cold War Foreign Policy*, pp. 21-22.
- <sup>116</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 305.
- <sup>117</sup> Hurst, *US Cold War Foreign Policy*, p. 25.
- <sup>118</sup> Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 58
- <sup>119</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 18. It can be argued, of course, that positing this realm of 'undecidability' is itself an appeal to some kind of metaphysical standard. The impasse appears to be irresolvable; otherwise infinite regress sets in. See Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, p. 220.
- <sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.
- <sup>121</sup> For an explanation of the shift of the Cold War from the geopolitical realm to that of ideology and culture, see Stephanson, 'The United States', pp. 48-51.
- <sup>122</sup> The example of J. William Fulbright comes to mind here. See his *The Arrogance of Power* (1966).
- <sup>123</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 304.
- <sup>124</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace*, p. 39.
- <sup>125</sup> Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's," *The American Historical Review* 75, No. 4 (April 1970), 1046, 1060; and Thomas R. Maddux, 'Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism: The American Image of Totalitarianism in the 1930s', *The Historian*, 40, No. 1 (November 1977), pp. 85-103.
- <sup>126</sup> See here Stephanson, 'Liberty or Death', 87-91; and Gaddis, *ibid.*, pp. 34-40.
- <sup>127</sup> Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's," *The American Historical Review* 75, No. 4 (April 1970), 1046, 1060.
- <sup>128</sup> "X" [George Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct", *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (July 1947), pp. 566-582.
- <sup>129</sup> Quoted in Walter L. Hixson, *George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 37.
- <sup>130</sup> The literature on U.S political warfare in the early Cold War has grown exponentially in recent years. See Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Communist Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); and W. Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: the US crusade against the Soviet Union, 1945-1956* (Manchester University Press, 1999).
- <sup>131</sup> See Robert J. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1949-1953* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996), pp. 192-203.
- <sup>132</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938* Fifth Revised Edition (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 151.
- <sup>133</sup> In scholarly debates, the question of the whether the Soviet Union was motivated more by power or ideology remained unresolved. For an argument supporting the former, see Barrington Moore, *Soviet Politics: The Dilemma of Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950). For an alternative view, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1962).
- <sup>134</sup> Norman A. Graebner, "Cold War Origins and the Continuing Debate," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 13, No 1 (March 1969), p. 127.
- <sup>135</sup> For the notion of "soft" versus "hard" realists, see Jerald A. Combs, "Norman Graebner and the Realist View of American Diplomatic History", *Diplomatic History* 11, No. (Summer 1987), p. 258.
- <sup>136</sup> Norman A. Graebner, "Introduction", in Norman A. Graebner, *The Cold War: Ideological Conflict and Power Struggle* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1963), p. xvi.
- <sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
- <sup>138</sup> Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace* p. 84.
- <sup>139</sup> On Third World intervention and US ideology, see David Ryan, *US Foreign Policy*, pp. 149-153
- <sup>140</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 295-304.
- <sup>141</sup> David Ryan, *US Foreign Policy in World History* (Routledge: London, 2000): 150. See pp. 140-161.
- <sup>142</sup> Stephen Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, p. 205.
- <sup>143</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 169.
- <sup>144</sup> Robert Tomes, *Apocalypse Then: American Intellectual and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), p. 70.
- <sup>145</sup> Wiener, 'Radical Historians', pp. 428-29, 434.
- <sup>146</sup> Theda Skopal ed. *Democracy, Revolution, and History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 5, pp. 4-7.

- <sup>147</sup> C. Wright Mills, "Letter to the New Left", *New Left Review*, No. 5, (September-October 1960) reprinted at <http://www.marxists.org/subject/humanism/mills-c-wright/letter-new-left.htm>
- <sup>148</sup> See Wiener, 'Radical Historians', pp. 403-404.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid, p. 405.
- <sup>150</sup> See Weiner, *ibid.*, pp. 407-408; and Novick *That Noble Dream*, pp. 420-421.
- <sup>151</sup> For a balanced appraisal of the impact of *Tragedy*, see Bradford Perkins, 'The Tragedy of American Diplomacy: Twenty-Five Years After', reprinted in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Norton, 1972), 313-334.
- <sup>152</sup> See *Tragedy*, pp. 37-38.
- <sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 206.
- <sup>154</sup> Perkins, 'Twenty-Five Years After', p. 313.
- <sup>155</sup> *Tragedy* itself was not a monograph. One could, however, make an exception for D.F. Fleming's *The Cold War and Its Origins* (1961). But it is questionable as to whether Fleming really belongs in the revisionist camp or indeed amongst historians at all. For doubts about Fleming's scholarly credentials, see brief discussions in Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 451n; and Warren Kimball, "The Cold War Warmed Over", 1127-28.
- <sup>156</sup> Quoted in Robert James Maddox, 'Atomic Diplomacy: A Study in Creative Writing', *The Journal of American History* 59, No. 4 (March 1973), p. 925. See also discussion in J. Samuel Walker, 'The Decision to Use the Bomb: A Historiographical Update', *Diplomatic History* 14, No. 1 (January 1990), pp. 97-114.
- <sup>157</sup> See commentary in Kimball, 'Cold War Warmed-Over', pp. 1129-1130; Walker, 'The Decision to Use the Bomb', 98-102; and Charles Maier, 'Revisionism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins', pp. 8-12.
- <sup>158</sup> Gabriel Kolko and Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 11.
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid, p. 23.
- <sup>160</sup> See Michael Leigh, 'Is there a Revisionist Thesis on the Origins of the Cold War?', *Political Science Quarterly* 89, No. 1 (March 1974), pp. 101-116.
- <sup>161</sup> Stephanson, 'United States', p. 35
- <sup>162</sup> Kimball, 'Cold War Warmed Over', p. 1136.
- <sup>163</sup> Barton J. Bernstein, 'Cold War Orthodoxy Restated', *Reviews in American History* 1 (1973), pp. 453-462. See also Novick, *That Noble Dream*, pp. 454-457.
- <sup>164</sup> David L. Anderson, 'Paradigm Lost', *Diplomatic History* 25, No. 4 (Fall 2001), p. 695.
- <sup>165</sup> Robert Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 8.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 12.
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 111.
- <sup>168</sup> Thomas G. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University), p. 263.
- <sup>169</sup> Tucker, *Radical Left*, 50.
- <sup>170</sup> Robert A. Divine, 'Historiography: Vietnam Reconsidered', in Walter Capps ed., *The Vietnam War Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 103.
- <sup>171</sup> Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War* (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 104. See also Ryan, *US Foreign Policy*, pp. 118-120.
- <sup>172</sup> See Thomas Krueger's critique in 'New Left Revisionists and their Critics', *Reviews in American History* 1, No. 4 (December 1973), pp. 468-69.
- <sup>173</sup> Williams, *Tragedy*, p. 291.
- <sup>174</sup> Ninkovich, 'Ideology, the Open Door, and Foreign Policy', *Diplomatic History* 6, No. 2 (April 1984), p. 187.
- <sup>175</sup> Michael Hunt presses this argument in his *Ideology and U.S Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 9-11.
- <sup>176</sup> Stephanson, 'United States', p. 32.
- <sup>177</sup> Tucker, *Radical Left*, p. 56
- <sup>178</sup> Ninkovich, 'Ideology', p. 186.
- <sup>179</sup> Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament Along with a Few Thoughts about an Alternative* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 4-5.
- <sup>180</sup> J. A. Thompson, 'William Appleman Williams and the American Empire', *Journal of American Studies* 7, No. 1 (April 1973), p. 104.
- <sup>181</sup> Schlesinger quoted in Gary R. Hess, 'After the Tumult: The Wisconsin School's Tribute to William Appleman Williams', *Diplomatic History* 12, No. 4 (October 1988), p. 497.

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<sup>182</sup> Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 4.

<sup>183</sup> Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: US Foreign Policy Since 1900* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), p. 2.

<sup>184</sup> For a discussion of how to locate ideology as a causal factor in the context of Cold War scholarship, see Douglas J. MacDonald, 'Formal Ideologies in the Cold War: Toward a Framework for Empirical Analysis', in Westad, ed., *Reviewing the Cold War*, p. 181; and Nigel Gould-Davies, 'Rethinking the Role of Ideology in International Politics During the Cold War', *Journal of Conflict Studies* 1, No. 1 (Winter 1999), pp.

<sup>185</sup> For more on this see, Frank Ninkovich, *Wilsonian Century*, pp. 1-7. The meaning of this American self-delusion is captured in the symbolic use of the figurations of both 'irony' and 'tragedy' by realists and revisionists. In this context, Williams's *Tragedy* and Niebuhr's *The Irony of American History* (1952) immediately spring to mind. See Hess 'After the Tumult', pp. 486-87.

<sup>186</sup> Stephanson, 'United States', p. 31.

<sup>187</sup> According to Williams, a *Weltanschauung* "is a conception of reality that integrates economic theory and practice, abstract ideas, past, present, and future politics, anticipations of Utopia, messianic idealism, social-psychological imperatives, historical consciousness, and military strategy. Quoted in 'Confessions of an Intransigent Revisionist', in Berger, ed., *The William Appleman Williams Reader*, p. 343.

<sup>188</sup> Stephanson, 'Considerations on Culture and Theory', *Diplomatic History* 18, No. 1 (Winter 1994), p. 109.

<sup>189</sup> Williams, *Tragedy*, p. 10.

<sup>190</sup> Williams, *Tragedy*, p. 312.

<sup>191</sup> See Perkins, 'Twenty-Five Years After'; and Hess, 'After the Tumult'.

<sup>192</sup> Perkins, *ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>193</sup> Wiener, 'Radical Historians', 399-400.

<sup>194</sup> For examples, see the comments of Richard W. Leopold and Robert H. Ferrell in John A. Garraty, *Interpreting American History: Conversations with Historians* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 220, 244; and Irwin Unger, 'The "New Left" and American History: Some Recent Trends in United States Historiography', *The American Historical Review*, 72, No. 4 (July 1967), pp. 1237-1263. For a discussion of the New Left with respect to the questions of presentism and objectivity, see Howard Schonenberger, 'Purpose and Ends in History: Presentism and the New Left', *The History Teacher*, 7, No. 3 (May 1974), pp. 448-458.

<sup>195</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, p. 450-451.

<sup>196</sup> These criticisms are summarised in Hess, 'After the Tumult', pp. 496-98; and Edward P. Crapol, 'Coming to Terms with Empire: The Historiography of the Late-Nineteenth Century American Foreign Relations', *Diplomatic History* 16, No. 4 (October 1992), pp. 575-576.

<sup>197</sup> Maier, 'Revisionism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins', p. 23.

<sup>198</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, p. 423.

<sup>199</sup> Walter F. LaFeber, 'Responses to Charles S. Maier, "Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations', *Diplomatic History* 5, No. 4 (October 1981), p. 362.

<sup>200</sup> Stephanson, "Diplomatic History in the Expanded Field," 596.

<sup>201</sup> Kimball, 'Cold War Warmed Over', p. 1130.

<sup>202</sup> Charles Maier, 'Revisionism and the Interpretation of Cold War Origins', p. 4

<sup>203</sup> Stephanson, 'United States', pp. 29-30.

<sup>204</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, p. 454.

<sup>205</sup> Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*, pp. 360-61.

<sup>206</sup> Stephanson, 'United States', p. 36.

<sup>207</sup> Joan Hoff-Wilson, 'Responses to Charles S. Maier, "Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations', *Diplomatic History* 5, No. 4 (October 1981), p. 377.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, p. 456.

<sup>210</sup> Lundestad, "Moralism, Presentism, Exceptionalism, Provincialism, and Other Extravagancies in American Writing on the Early Cold War", *Diplomatic History* 13 (Fall 1989), p. 531.

<sup>211</sup> Stephanson, 'United States', p. 40; McCormick, 'Drift or Mastery', p. 318; Buzzanco, 'What Happened to the New Left', p. 576, 579.

<sup>212</sup> Hurst, *US Cold War Foreign Policy*, p. 61

<sup>213</sup> Michael Hogan, 'Review of Melvyn P. Leffler's *A Preponderance of Power*', *Reviews in American History* 21 (June 1993), p. 327. The clearest statement of this intention is by John Lewis Gaddis in his *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American Postwar National Security Policy*. Gaddis declares "one can argue at length about whether Washington's approach to the world since 1945 has been primarily defensive – I tend to think that it has – but the argument is irrelevant for the purposes of this book. What is important here is

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that American leaders consistently – *perceived* – themselves as responding to rather than initiating challenges to the existing international order”, p. x.

<sup>214</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power* (

<sup>215</sup> Stephanson, ‘Ideology and Neorealist Mirrors’, p. 285.

<sup>216</sup> White, ‘Historical Interpretation’, p. 136.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>218</sup> Quoted in Bruce Cumings, ‘Revising Postrevisionism’, or, The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History”, *Diplomatic History* 17, (Fall 1993), p. 569.

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