

An Analysis of Five Theories  
of  
Cold War Origins

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## PREFACE

Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union during the period of the Grand Alliance of World War II and in the post-war years have been the subject of numerous discussions and studies in recent years. Historians from all points of the political spectrum have written their accounts and given their interpretations and analyses of the events of this period. Until about ten years ago, however, there was virtual agreement among the interpreters of the origins of the Cold War. Most historians held to what is now known as the traditional viewpoint. Within the last decade, as tensions seemed to ease between the two nations, dissent in the historical interpretations appeared, in a wave of revisionist accounts of the Cold War origins. Since that time, debate has been continuing. Traditional historians have gone to great lengths to prove that the breakdown of relations resulting in the Cold War can be blamed entirely on the aggressive nature of the Soviet Union. Revisionist writers have matched these efforts with work of their own to shift the guilt to the West, especially the United States and its wartime and post-war diplomatic inadequacies and blunders. Equally convincing on the surface are the arguments of the economic determinists who have tied all foreign policies of the period to economic motivations, especially United States imperialist aims. In addition, there are those who cannot be classified in the above three categories, but who

feel that the Cold War was the inevitable result of such factors as power vacuums created by the war or the emergence of competing super powers.

The purpose of the present paper is not to add to the already uncountable number of histories and interpretations of the events and diplomatic intricacies leading to the Cold War. Rather, the object is to analyse the general theories of representative historians by examining their accounts of major events of Cold War history. It is not within the scope of this study to prove one interpretation correct nor to disprove another, for this would require reversion to a detailed analysis of all that happened during the late and post-war years. Neither is it the object to synthesize a personal interpretation to emerge as the absolute truth. Weaknesses and strong points in the histories examined will, however, be brought to light.

The works of five historians have been chosen as representative of the categories mentioned above. They are: Herbert Feis' Between War and Peace and From Trust to Terror, examples of the traditional viewpoint; The Cold War and its Origins by D.F. Fleming, the revisionist writer; Gabriel Kolko's The Politics of War and The Limits of Power giving us a clear picture of an economic interpretation; Louis Halle's power vacuum theory defense in The Cold War as History; and two works by Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence and The Rivals,

which attribute the Cold War to Great Power politics. After reading these works, I selected nine points of disagreement which I felt were indicative of the differences in the interpretations. These nine points can be placed under three major headings which constitute the three sections of the paper. The first, that of basic interpretations, will present an overview of each writer's theory of Cold War history by examining his viewpoint on such questions as the starting date, the nature of the conflict and who was at fault, and the influence of domestic factors and the effect of atomic power on the formulation of policy. The second section deals with the conflicts arising in Germany, Poland, and the other East European nations during and after the war. In the final section, two major United States policies, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, are related to the historians' interpretations of events.

On none of these questions is an attempt made to cover every detail or every issue of disagreement. Keeping in mind the purpose and limited scope of this study, each issue is discussed in generalized form as it shows the traditional, revisionist, etc. point of view. As we examine each issue, we will see how the general theory held by the historian colors or shapes differing interpretations of the same set of facts and events.

#### BASIC INTERPRETATIONS

##### Nature of the Conflict and Placement of Guilt

The question of whether the Cold War was inevitable or

whether someone was to blame for bringing it about is the major issue which distinguishes one interpretation from another. The placement of guilt is very closely tied to the historian's view of the conflict as either economic, political, or ideological. For this reason, an examination of the questions of the nature of the conflict and the placement of guilt will give an overview of each historian's theory.

Herbert Feis viewed the Soviet Union as being an inherently aggressive and autocratic nation which attempted to grab as much as it could for itself. For Feis, then, the Cold War conflict had a strictly political nature. Communist ideology did not figure into the question significantly, since the expansionistic traits were present throughout Russian as well as Soviet history. Mr. Feis believed that the Cold War resulted from the Soviets' unrelenting drive for quite selfish and unreasonable national interests. While he did not condemn the concept of striving for national interest per se, for by doing so he would have condemned any nation, even his own, he did place guilt on the Soviet Union for defining their national interests so unreasonably. The West, then, was, by implication, being quite fair and reasonable in their demands.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we find D.F. Fleming advancing the belief that the conflict was largely an ideological one, with capitalism and the democratic way pitted against communism. As a revisionist, Fleming laid the blame to the United States for the cold relations with the Soviet Union. From the

birth of the Soviet state, the United States had ostracized and downgraded it as much as possible because it felt that the democratic way of life was greatly threatened by communism. Fleming went on to say that the United States was in error in believing the communist ideology to be such a threat since there was no communist threat. He stated also that the United States was wrong to take a hostile and hard-line stance against the Soviet Union. Fleming maintained that it was only American hostility which created mistrust and defensive goals in the Soviet mind. In the face of Western hostility, he continued, the Soviet Union had legitimate national security needs such as a buffer zone to defend its western border. Further showing the United States to be in the wrong, Fleming judged the American refusal to recognize the Soviet need for a buffer zone to be unreasonable and unjustifiable.

Neither Herbert Feis nor D.F. Fleming considered economic factors of importance to the conflict. Gabriel Kolko, however, saw economic considerations as the heart of the Cold War problem. According to Mr. Kolko, tensions and conflicts arose when the American picture of the ideal post-war international economic configuration did not coincide with the goals of the Soviet Union with regard to its own economic development with the aid of Eastern Europe. In Kolko's view, the United States had early in the war determined to create a post-war world economy based on liberal capitalist principles of private enterprise and free trade. The United States wanted free access



to all nations for trade and investment and desired healthy economies for export markets to be established. These ideas conflicted with the Soviet goal of rapid reconstruction of their own economy to the point of self sufficiency, a goal which is anathema to liberal capitalist ideals of mutual interdependence and free foreign trade. Political and ideological considerations were discounted almost entirely by Kolko, who even maintained that several United States policies would have been unchanged without the existence of the Soviet Union.

Louis Halle conceived of the problems of post war relations almost entirely as the result of a need to fill the power vacuum left by the defeat of Germany in World War II. Halle indicted neither the United States nor the Soviet Union, for he saw the conflict as an inevitable attempt by both nations to maintain the world balance of power which had been shaken by the elimination of Germany as a dominant factor. According to Halle, ideology was immaterial, for the rush to fill the power vacuum would have occurred even if the United States and the U.S.S.R. shared the same ideology. Whenever the two nations rushed to fill the same vacuum, conflict resulted, culminating in the Cold War status of relations. Halle saw the political nature of the struggle extending to the clash of national interest goals established by both parties. He differed from either Feis or Fleming, however, in that a nation should not be condemned for honestly defining its national interests as it perceives them, even though another nation

may feel them to be unjustified. One nation cannot judge for another what its interests are to be.

Similar to Halle's viewpoint in some respects is that of Adam Ulam. Like Halle, Ulam did not charge either the United States or Russia with bringing about the Cold War single-handedly. However, Ulam saw the conflict as arising from the inevitable clashes and disagreements which resulted from the emergence of the two Great Powers after the war. As the two remaining strong nations emerged from the war and attempted to carve out their respective places in the world, confrontations were the natural result. Because these nations were destined to play the roles of super powers, neither could be condemned for their actions. Mutual suspicion and lack of communication on the same wave length were, for Ulam, also important factors in the nature and cause of the conflict. He found that the Soviets were inherently mistrustful of western capitalists and found it necessary to maintain a closed and mysterious society. This ominous mystery led to reciprocated suspicion in the minds of Americans. Because of the incomprehension by each system of the other, agreements in form only and numerous misunderstandings resulted.

Like Halle, and in accordance with his own political theory of Cold War origins, Ulam did not count ideology as an important factor in U.S. - Soviet relations. Since the conflict can be traced to the inevitable clashes resulting from the super power status of both nations, the same conflicts would

have arisen had they shared the same ideology. To be sure, during the war, while Britain was still a Great Power vying for a post-war position of major influence, she and the United States clashed often, even though they adhered to similar ideologies. When Britain lost her great power status, the possible cause of a Cold War between the United States and Britain was eliminated. Such a Cold War, however, would perhaps never have reached the dimensions of the Soviet - American one. With Britain no longer a Great Power, the U.S.S.R. and the United States were left as the only powers continually clashing in their efforts to achieve the greatest possible influence in post-war affairs. For Ulam, economic considerations had little importance of themselves, but rather played a supporting role under the heading of Great Power politics.

Herbert Feis' was obviously a true traditionalist stand; the West was in the right and the U.S.S.R. was to blame for bringing on the Cold War. The weakness in Mr. Feis' argument is the vague concept of and fine dividing line between reasonable and unreasonable national interest goals. There are two sides to each issue, and, while the United States felt that its demands were justified and the Soviet's goals aggressive, the Soviet Union probably felt justified in defining national interests as they perceived them and believed the West to be unreasonable in refusing them. Can we believe Mr. Feis that the United States knew better than the Soviets what were the true needs of the U.S.S.R. at that time?

Aside from the fact that the United States could hardly have felt anything but threatened in view of the Soviet propaganda against the West and the predictions of imminent destruction of the capitalist system, Fleming's account has missed the point that it was unlikely that the Soviets would have been trusting and openly cooperative with nations which, according to their doctrine, were their natural enemies. This appears to be a weak link in Mr. Fleming's chain of beliefs.

By ignoring political and ideological factors, Kolko has severely weakened his theory. If seen only in the light of economic motivations, numerous U.S. policies make little or no sense. For example, if only economic factors matter, why did not the United States institute the European Recovery Program sooner, or why cut off loans to nations which needed them in order to rebuild in an effort to force a change in the composition of the government? Various questions such as these were left unanswered by Mr. Kolko's economic interpretation of the Cold War beginnings.

Halle and Ulam have taken historical interpretative stands with which it is difficult to find fault. By not assigning guilt, they did not fall into the trap of condemning a nation or its leaders for not being able to know through foresight that which we can see twenty or so years later, only through hindsight. Nor have they attempted to play God by determining for each nation what is good, reasonable, and justified with

respect to its national interests.

### Chronology

The date chosen as the actual sprouting point of the Cold War relations, and the tracing of the roots growing before this eruption should support the interpretation advanced by each historian. By assigning a specific date, the writer is naming a certain event happening at that time as the immediate cause. From this position, it is easy to assign guilt to the party responsible for that event. The position of giving only gradual genesis to the Cold War gives more latitude for interpretation of its origins. It is therefore necessary to look at the question of Cold War chronology to get a broader picture of the historical theories.

Because he conceived of the Cold War as the result of Soviet unreasonableness, Feis dated the roots of the conflict in discussions and conferences during the war. He saw the Cold War as having definitely sprouted in 1945, after victory, when it was no longer possible to postpone solutions to post-war problems. Since the Soviets would not tone down their unreasonable national-interest demands, the Allies had tried to avoid conflict during the war by leaving settlement of important questions until after victory, in hopes that the Soviet Union would then listen to reason. When victory came and the Soviet stubbornness continued, the Cold War was born. Feis' Cold War chronology was, in this way, determined by his general theory.

In line with his placement of guilt with the United States, D.F. Fleming asserted that Cold War roots grew during the period of forced ostracism following the birth of the U.S.S.R. The actual starting point for Fleming was very definite, however. It was the day Harry Truman took office, because it was with the Truman administration that the United States began a truly hard-line, anti-Soviet policy. As mentioned above, Fleming felt that Soviet defensiveness was caused by American hostility. Therefore, it would follow that the Cold War started when the United States began its hostility. Fleming maintained that Truman's hard-line stance destroyed Soviet trust and good faith and that if Roosevelt had lived longer, or if Truman had followed a Roosevelt-style soft line, the Cold War might never have started at all; a belief which very clearly places the blame on the United States.

Kolko, to support his economic interpretation, gave the the Cold War a vague starting point in 1942 or 1943. Mr. Kolko asserted that the Cold War developed as the United States defined more and more sharply its economic goals and blueprints for the post war economy. He felt that the pattern for future Soviet - American relations and economic conflicts was set by 1943, since, by the end of that years, the United States had formalized its plans to create an international economy in its own image.

In support of his power vacuum theory, Halle could not place the beginning of the Cold War any sooner than the defeat

of Germany; in other words no earlier than the creation of the power vacuum to be filled. Mid-1945, then, would seem to be the logical date for Halle to set as the commencement of the conflict. Oddly, he did not. Instead, he saw the introduction of the Marshall Plan in 1947 as the genesis of the Cold War, because this policy drew distinct lines between the camps.

According to Adam Ulam's viewpoint, the Soviet - American conflict came about gradually, as victory over Nazi Germany became increasingly apparent to the Allies. Ulam did not set a month or year within which the Cold War can be said to have begun. However, he did feel that it had begun by the time of the Yalta Conference in early 1945, since by this time, the specter of a Nazi victory had been eliminated as the unifying force in the Grand Alliance. No longer fearing defeat, both the United States and the Soviet Union began to vie for desired positions suited to their Great Power status in the post-war scheme of international relations.

Herbert Feis' picture of the gradual worsening of Soviet - American relations is based on historical evidence. Relations between the two nations did gradually worsen during the war years and in the period immediately following victory. There is no support, however, for the idea that these tensions were suddenly and significantly sharpened by Hitler's surrender. It is difficult, in addition, to find any evidence showing a sudden change for the worse in U.S. - U.S.S.R. relations which would support Fleming's argument, and he himself gave none.

While Mr. Kolko's assignment of a starting date, like those of Feis and Fleming, followed logically from his general interpretation, a Cold War beginning as early as 1942 or 1943, at a time when the members of the Grand Alliance still felt it imperative to be a solid alliance in order to defeat Hitler, is a little more difficult to accept; even assuming economic motivations for later diplomacy. It would seem that, by this, Kolko was saying that, at that time, the post-war economic considerations were more important to the United States than the defeat of Hitler. Certainly this is ridiculous.

The choice of 1947 as the beginning of the Cold War did not provide the strong support it should offer for Halle's adherence to a theory attributing the American - Soviet conflict to attempts to fill power vacuums. By 1947, an overwhelmingly large portion of what Halle would term "filling of power vacuums" had already taken place, with the Soviet Union in firm control of Eastern Europe, and the United States and other Western nations lined up, so to speak, against further Soviet advance. If the Cold War had not begun by 1947, it would seem that the Marshall Plan, which did not create the two opposing camps, but merely defined the lines of separation more clearly, could hardly have brought such a chilly conflict about. One must ask how Halle viewed the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the West in the two years between 1945 and 1947, which even the most superficial study will show to be anything but warm and cordial. An answer to this question, however, is not to



be found in Halle's history.

Mr. Ulam, like Feis, saw a gradual worsening of U.S. - Soviet relations, a view born out by history. He has not attempted to liken the Cold War to a football game by setting a definite "kickoff" time, and by this has viewed the Cold War as what it was - the gradual progression of relations between two nations. Feis, Fleming and Halle provide no factual support for their idea that one day we had peace and the next day we had Cold War - triggered by the surrender of the enemy, the assumption of Harry Truman of the presidency, or the announcement of the Marshall Plan.

#### Internal Factors

Domestic affairs can often have significant influence on the foreign policy of a nation. They can perhaps justify actions otherwise unexplainable. The relative significance of internal influence can also have a bearing on the inevitability or individual responsibility for an event. Cold War historians disagree on the role of American and Soviet domestic factors in the origins of the conflict. For these reasons, an examination of the discussions of internal influences will give us more insight into the several theories.

Herbert Feis did not assign much importance to the possible influence of internal factors on United States policy of this period, and considered it of even less importance to Soviet policy formulation. This is to be expected from his

view that the Cold War was brought on by Soviet aggressiveness. In Feis' eyes, Stalin's power-hunger and expansionistic desires determined all of the Soviet Union's policies. Feis could not admit to the possibility that Russian internal forces could have had any influence on the actions of the Soviet government, for this would be an admission that the villains might have had reasons other than pure aggression which, they may have felt, justified their foreign policy. Because Feis denied the justifiability of Soviet actions, he must also deny the influence of domestic factors on their policy. Since the United States' policies were in response to Soviet belligerence, internal forces played only a minor role. The only internal influence on American actions which Feis mentioned was the conflict which occurred within the Cabinet, between those advocating a soft line towards Russia and those demanding a tougher anti-Soviet stance. Feis felt that these intr-Cabinet squabbles created weaknesses in the United States' bargaining position; weaknesses of which Stalin was quick to take advantage. Feis' belief that the Soviets' aggressiveness brought on the Cold War; and his regret that the United States did not take a much harder line against the Soviets was shown clearly by his attitude towards internal influences.

Fleming, on the other hand, used internal factors to explain and justify Soviet policies and aims. By his account, the Soviet government was under pressure from the Russian people to take revenge on the German nation as a just payment

for the misery inflicted by the Nazis. In addition, the Soviet government was motivated by the desires of its people for a strong, healthy economy and material benefits. For these reasons, the Soviets, in Fleming's eyes, made reasonable demands for reparations and economic cooperation from Germany and the occupied East European nations. Feelings of Pan-Slavism were also important in the Soviet Union's drive to unite the Slavic people of the East European nations. Since he did not feel that Soviet policies and goals were unreasonable, Fleming attempted to show this by his interpretation of the influence on internal factors on policy making. This attempt is found above. To further shed an unfavorable light on the United States over the Cold War issue, Fleming asserted that there was a tidal wave of public outcry and anti-Soviet publicity based on an unfounded fear of Soviet aggression early after the war ended. The effects of this outcry were twofold. On the one hand, the Russians felt threatened by the American hostility and took a defensive attitude. Mutual trust was thus lost. On the other hand, public clamor caused the American government to take a much tougher stance than even Truman had outlined, once again putting the Soviet Union on the defensive, and doing a great deal to spiral mutual mistrust.

As would be expected, the internal factors which Gabriel Kolko considered to have had influence are economic in nature. In the United States, the capitalists and the government were deeply concerned about the possibility of another

serious depression after the war, brought on by the greatly enlarged production capacity of American industry which domestic markets would not be able to absorb. To prevent this overproduction crisis, the United States embarked on a policy of creating a world liberal capitalist economy to act as export markets for American industry. In this we can see Kolko's economic interpretation quite clearly. Kolko believed that the public anti-Soviet feelings were not natural, but were whipped up by the United States government in order to assure financial support for its imperialist policies. Kolko did not see significant autonomous public outcry on Eastern European issues, etc. by the American people. On the other side of the line, the Russians were not only pressing their government for a rebuilt economy but were also demanding revenge against Germany and security from another attack from the West. These were all influences which helped shape the severe treatment imposed by the Soviet Union on her former enemies. Kolko was very careful to assure that his emphasis on the influence of internal factors followed from his overall economic interpretation of Cold War history.

The rush to fill a vacuum in which Halle believed would have taken place no matter what internal forces were at work in either nation. He, therefore, places only nominal importance on the effects of domestic affairs on the development of Cold War relations. Halle did mention that American "myths" and her black and white image of international politics had a small

influence on foreign policy. He also pointed out that the large Polish-American population helped shape the United States' stand on the Poland issue. Neither of these factors were vital enough to change the course of development of Soviet - American relations.

The influence of internal forces was especially significant to the formulation of Soviet policy during and after World War II, according to Adam Ulam. He felt that Soviet actions in East and Central Europe can be traced almost entirely to the need for Stalin to consolidate both his own personal power and that of the Soviet regime, both of which had been somewhat shaken by the hardships of the war. Stalin had to prevent internal turmoil in this manner in order to build the U.S.S.R. to a position of economic and military strength equal to its status as a Super Power in post-war affairs. To effect this consolidation of power, Stalin felt it imperative to expand westward and to exploit the economies of the Eastern European occupied areas to rebuild the Soviet domestic economy as rapidly as possible. In addition, Stalin closed the U.S.S.R. to Western access and influences. This he did partly to hold the West up as an enemy before the Russian people in order to exact from them further sacrifices of hard work; secondly, to prevent his people from viewing and coveting the material wealth of the West; and lastly, to hide the Soviet Union's weaknesses from Western eyes. By closing the Soviet Union from Western view, Stalin managed to create an aura of power

which instilled fear and mistrust in the overestimating minds of the West. Ulam did not discuss at length internal United States factors, but did make mention of the role played by American ethnic public opinion on United States' policies with regard to the Polish question and other similar ethnically oriented issues in Europe.

We can easily see, from Ulam's discussion of Soviet domestic forces and their effects, the roots of his belief in the continuing spiral of misunderstanding, fear, and mistrust. Ulam explained that by making Russia into a closed society, Stalin increased Western hostility, and by continually repeating accusations against the United States, Stalin himself became convinced of them, just as did the Soviet people. One must question, however, how Adam Ulam could describe with such certainty the workings of the mind of Stalin, a man whom Ulam himself pictured as tight-lipped and not at all the type to openly discuss his thoughts.

Fleming's reference to the state of the Soviet economy as justification of Soviet policy are perhaps acceptable. Certainly Germany had caused appalling destruction and suffering to the Russian people, and it would have been natural and human for tremendous desires for revenge to rise from the Soviet nation. There is no denying, either, that the Soviet economy was severely in need of reconstruction, and the level of living was extremely low and in need of raising. One suspects, however, that the Soviet government strove for material well being for

its people less from a feeling of benevolence than from a fear of internal turmoil. It is difficult to believe, also, that the Soviet Union, while demanding revenge on Germany, could formulate policies towards the Slavs of Eastern Europe, most of whom had fought with Hitler against the Russians, out of a sense of ethnic affinity and Slavic unity. Indeed, the Red Army showed these alleged feelings of Pan-Slavism in most unusual ways in its rapacious march through Eastern Europe. By placing such emphasis on the power of the American public opinion to bring about a tough line policy and its effect on the Soviet Union, Fleming contradicted his earlier contention that Harry Truman's administration was entirely to blame and that Roosevelt would have been able to prevent the Cold War. By what supernatural powers would Roosevelt have been immune to the effects of this internal factor, by which Truman was so controlled? Mr. Fleming did not provide us with an answer.

Mr. Feis was less than objective in his history when he ignored the effect of American public opinion in favor of the East European ethnic groups, such as the Poles, and the anti-Soviet mistrust which was present in the Western mind. Kolko has also neglected the influence of the American public psyche on government policies and implied that the American people feel little but what the government tells or guides them to feel. This is<sup>a</sup> hardly plausible stance, for the

history of United States' policy shows that the mood of the people has had influence on government decisions. Halle also denied the power of domestic affairs to effect foreign policy, and is subject to the same criticism as Kolko and Feis.

### Atomic Power

From 1945 until 1949, the United States had a monopoly on atomic power. Only the U.S. had been successful in making and exploding an atomic weapon, the possession of which gave virtually ultimate power militarily. This weapon was first introduced to the world by its use against two cities in Japan in August, 1945. From that time, there was much controversy and disagreement, especially between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., over how best to handle this terrible power. These disagreements were part of the overall Cold War tensions between the two nations. In examining the five interpretations of this issue, we find it useful to consider two questions: Why was the A-bomb dropped; and did atomic power greatly influence the conduct of policy or diplomacy? Answers to these questions best point up the differences among the historians.

If one accepts Feis' traditional point of view, one finds that not only was Russia's help in the war against Japan still desired, but such aid was considered essential to defeat that nation. Therefore, it follows that the A-bomb was used against Japan solely for the purpose of bringing the Pacific war to a rapid close. At the time the decision was made to



use the A-bomb, President Truman was convinced, as were numerous military and policy advisors, that the defeat of Japan would be prolonged significantly without the use of the weapon. As long as the A-bomb was used as a weapon against Japan to save Allied lives, America cannot be placed in the wrong and this follows from Feis' general theory. Feis asserted, in addition, that the possession of this tremendous power had no effect on United States policy formulation, for the U.S. government would never have considered using the weapon again.

True to form, Fleming struck the opposite pose from Feis, and maintained that the United States government knew that Japan was defeated, no longer felt a need for Soviet military assistance there, and used the A-bomb not as a weapon against Japan but as a warning to the Soviet Union. Fleming also saw the use of the atomic bomb as a means of cheating the Soviet Union out of possible benefits it might have gained by helping to fight the war against Japan. The effect of possession of an atomic monopoly on the United States was to create a sense of euphoria, Fleming continued. Americans now began to feel overly secure and were overconfident about the outcome of what they considered the inevitable war with the Soviet Union. The United States also came to feel that, because of its superior weapon, it could dictate the course of world affairs. These beliefs all led to further destruction of trust and good faith between the Russians and Americans, making the Soviets

feel even more threatened and suspicious than ever.

Perceiving the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union as strictly an economic affair, Kolko assigned no hidden political motivations to the decision to drop the atomic bomb. On the contrary, he believed it to be simply a military tactic which was felt to be essential to the defeat of Japan. Kolko noted that at that time, Soviet help was still considered necessary for the ground war to bring about total victory at a saving of American lives. For Kolko, the main issue of the atomic power monopoly was American power. The United States was working out a world system of economic interdependence and was looking for a position of hegemony in that world system. Possession of the atomic power monopoly seemed to some to be the weapon the United States could use to attain that position. To support this, Kolko stressed that the United States did not merely keep the secret of atomic weaponry from the Russians, but also from allies such as Britain. For Kolko, this proved that maintenance of the United States monopoly was not an anti-Soviet political policy, but a means to achieve the economic dominance which had been the U.S. goal since the early forties.

Since the power vacuum would have dragged the two powers into conflict regardless of matching or unbalanced military powers, Halle did not view the atomic monopoly as greatly affecting the formulation of policies or the course of Cold War events. He further asserted that after dropping

