Introduction

Of all the many books on Allied diplomacy in World War II, Robert E. Sherwood's magisterial *Roosevelt and Hopkins* remains unequaled.[1] Published in 1948, the 962-page tome draws on Sherwood's insider status as a Roosevelt speechwriter and on his discussions with the historical actors. Sherwood was forbidden, however, to use his most explosive interview, the one that assigned blame for the breakup of the Grand Alliance. The interviewee was Anthony Eden, Winston S. Churchill's foreign secretary. In wartime negotiations the top diplomat had loyally supported his chief even when the latter tangled with Franklin D. Roosevelt. Eden stood next in line for prime minster should the Conservatives win the next election. He understood that postwar Britain depended on Washington, where Harry S. Truman served as president. Nevertheless, by August 1946 this habitually restrained aristocrat was so disturbed by the deterioration in relations with Moscow since Roosevelt's death in April 1945 that he let loose. In lamenting the loss of Roosevelt, Eden criticized Churchill and Truman in ways that, if made public, could have crippled his future career. After venting, he insisted on keeping the interview secret. And so it long remained.

To Sherwood, Eden "stated flatly that the deplorable turning point in the whole relationship of the Western Allies with the Soviet Union was caused directly by the death of Roosevelt." The former foreign secretary seemed moved himself as he detailed the emotional valence of FDR's relationship with the Russians. "He spoke at length and with great conviction of the extraordinary ability of Roosevelt to handle the Russian situation and of the overwhelming respect which the Russians had for the President." Decades of practicing realpolitik had attuned Eden to intangibles, such as personality and respect. The

Russians' "respect" for Roosevelt "was for the man himself rather than for the high and powerful position that he held." Eden understood that manner and nuance could tip the balance between success and failure. He was blunt about how Roosevelt differed from others who had dealt with the Russians. "Eden spoke of Roosevelt's infinite subtlety and contrasted him in this respect with Churchill and Truman." Particularly at a critical juncture in history, such as 1945, emotional and personal dynamics could tilt the weightiest matters of international politics. As Eden put it, "had Roosevelt lived and retained his health he would never have permitted the present situation to develop." A professional in the precise measurement of words, he offered a stunning final judgment: Roosevelt's "death, therefore, was a calamity of immeasurable proportions."[2] *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances* reaches a similar conclusion.

Roosevelt's death weakened, perhaps fatally, the prospects for avoiding or at least mitigating the Cold War. FDR was critical to the founding of the Grand Alliance and to keeping it together. He intended the coalition to continue into the postwar era, as did Joseph Stalin. Despite his Marxist-Leninist ideology, the Soviet dictator also identified with Czar Alexander I, who had remained a partner in the Holy Alliance after the victory over Napoleon. Stalin wanted strong confederates to help contain postwar Germany and Japan.[3] Churchill, nervous about the "Great Russian Bear" and the "Great American Buffalo" squeezing the "poor little English donkey," remained more ambivalent about continued Big Three partnership.[4] Just as the wartime alliance depended on Roosevelt, so, too, did Roosevelt rely on a personal alliance of close aides and friends in the White House. Tragically, however, FDR persisted in behaviors that drained this intimate circle. In contrast to Truman and the embittered Soviet experts who would become the new president's principal advisers, the supremely self-confident Roosevelt lavished on Stalin displays of respect that salved the dictator's personal and cultural insecurities, rendering him more amenable to compromise on certain issues.

As the fulcrum of the Grand Alliance, Roosevelt merits primary, but not exclusive, attention.[5] For Churchill and Stalin, as well as for Roosevelt, background, personality, and culture conditioned their emotional beliefs and their interactions with each other. This book examines wartime diplomacy in the context of each leader's family and cultural heritage, formative experiences, and emotional dispositions and sensibilities. Spurred by personal feelings as well as by official responsibilities, Roosevelt and Churchill, and, perhaps, Stalin, too, approached their initial summit meetings as grand adventure. As the terrible strain of the war mounted, these flesh-and-blood titans interacted in ways increasingly conditioned by sickness and exhaustion.

Despite their other differences, the Big Three all sought to appear resolute and manly. Early in the war, each tried to persuade the other two, and the Axis enemies mocking them as weak and decadent, that he possessed the toughness to persevere until victory. Yet all of them, too, in their respective ways, had to live with a gender identity more complex than the conventional norms of masculinity. This complexity also enabled each man to draw from a wider spectrum of behaviors. With a hint of femininity, Roosevelt and Stalin charmed and seduced. Forever boyish, Churchill enthused and effervesced. As the war was drawing to a close, benign impressions of Stalin as seducer were overpowered by frightening reports of the Red Army's rape and pillage.

The functioning of the wartime alliance and the future of the postwar world pivoted on diplomacy inextricably personal and political. It remains impossible, however, to isolate what the precise impact of the "personal" would be on a hypothesized, wholly impersonal "political" interaction—not that such could ever occur among human beings.

The most persuasive evidence for the real-life importance of personal diplomacy was the extraordinary, indeed heroic, efforts made by Roosevelt and Churchill. FDR, aware of his heart disease, risked his life in journeying to far-off Yalta. Defying exhaustion and bouts of pneumonia, Churchill traveled repeatedly to Washington and to Moscow. After negotiating with the Kremlin dictator in October 1944, Churchill found it "extraordinary how many questions yield to discussion and personal talk."[6] Even Stalin, who had not gone abroad since the 1917 Revolution, left the Soviet Union for the Tehran and Potsdam conferences. A telling marker of the shift in Washington's stance after Roosevelt's demise was Truman's telling his staff in late 1945 that he did not intend any further Big Three summit meetings.

The Cold War was not inevitable. Nor did that conflict stem solely from political disputes and the ideological clash between capitalism and communism. Examining how the Grand Alliance operated and then fell apart is prerequisite for understanding how the Cold War formed. The alliance cohered and then collapsed for reasons more contingent, emotional, and cultural than historians have heretofore recognized. If Roosevelt had lived a while longer—indeed, he was trying to manage his health in order to survive—he might have succeeded in bringing about the transition to a postwar world managed by the Big Three. His death and Churchill's electoral defeat three months later disrupted personal and political connections in which all three leaders had invested enormous effort and cautious hope. Neither the men who succeeded these giants, nor the American "Soviet experts" who asserted a more decisive role than they had hitherto been allowed to play, shared Roosevelt's, or even Churchill's, interest in Big Three accord.

The dynamics of the Cold War—the mutually reinforcing pursuit of ambition and fear of threat on the part of the two superpowers—originated in a zero-sum model quite different from that imagined by the Big Three leaders during the war. They had surmised that after the war, their rivalry and differences, though sharp at times, could be corralled by their mutual interest in a stable and peaceful world that would ensure their collective predominance. Their envisioned order would have restricted the liberty of smaller nations in the regional domain of each of the Big Three sheriffs. Roosevelt largely accepted such restrictions in the expectation that they could ease with time. He was amenable to areas of influence as long as they did not become exclusive and closed. The Cold War that actually developed would highlight Soviet injustice in Eastern Europe without doing much to ease the pain. Indeed, perceptive observers, such as the diplomat George F. Kennan, would decades later come to see the Cold War as promoting the repression rather than the liberation of the Soviet Union's empire.

While mobilizing public anger against the Axis, Roosevelt tried to tamp down uproar over issues, such as Poland, that could split the Grand Alliance. At times FDR himself became furious with Stalin. Yet he tried to control such feelings. Churchill and Truman, in contrast, did not or could not exercise such restraint. He also tried harder than Churchill or Truman to build bridges—some of them admittedly shaky—across the cultural divide separating the Americans and British from the Soviets. Though not inclined toward detailed study or abstract concepts, the squire of Hyde Park wielded a razor-sharp emotional intelligence. Masterful in reading personality and in negotiating subtle transactions of pride and respect, he could charm almost anyone. He deployed these skills with surprising success in establishing a bond with Stalin.

The Kremlin chieftain also tried to limit hyperemotional reactions in the alliance and in his own entourage. In January 1945, he instructed fellow Communists: "In relation to bourgeois politicians you have to be careful. They are . . . very touchy and vindictive. You have to keep a handle on your emotions; if emotions lead—you lose."[7] Despite such advice, Stalin himself remained susceptible to anger, revenge, pride, and flattery.

Cultural differences excited emotional reactions and complicated political issues. Insecure pride, craving for respect, anxiety about change, and fear of appearing fearful skewed political perceptions, making political compromises more difficult. Racialized cultural stereotypes of "semi-savage" Soviets and of "conniving" cosmopolitans eager to make "fools" out of Russians hampered the formation of the alliance in 1941 and helped destroy it after the war. John "Jock" Balfour, a British diplomat familiar with both Moscow and Washington, advised a group of influential Americans: "Russia is so different from us historically, politically, and culturally that in many respects she seems almost like another planet."[8] Roosevelt employed personal ties to make such differences appear less alien.

U.S. and British relations with the Soviets played out on two stages with different scenery, performers, and rules—resulting in divergent moods between the two groups of players. At Churchill's 1941–44 conferences with Roosevelt, at the three-way summits of Tehran in 1943 and Yalta in 1945, at Churchill's two conferences with Stalin in Moscow in 1942 and 1944, and at the 1945 Potsdam meeting that included Truman, top leaders emerged from the intense talks convinced they had advanced their personal ties and political agendas. There was something seductive about wheeling and dealing with other men of power. "When Truman returned from Potsdam, he was in a state of advanced euphoria," a top aide later recalled.[9] Feelings of warmth and needs for approval altered perspectives. "I'd like that man to like me," Churchill said after first meeting Stalin.[10] Leaders came away readier to trust each other. Such short-term feelings probably resulted in part from physiological change.[11] Though the pleasant glow from each summit would fade, political progress had usually been gained. A key aspect of Roosevelt's postwar vision was institutionalizing such summits as regular events, in which the three or four "world sheriffs" would gather at some secluded location like the Azores and hash out solutions without the glare of media attention.[12] A master at personal charm, Roosevelt probably expected that such meetings would gradually acculturate participants to the American model.

Far different, however, were the stale and limited roles that the U.S. and British diplomats, military liaison officers, and journalists stationed in Moscow found themselves playing each day. They deeply resented their intense personal isolation. The Kremlin's policy of isolating foreigners from "normal" contacts with Soviet citizens and officials rendered many representatives frustrated, furious, and even disoriented. Feeling especially aggrieved were Kennan and Charles E. "Chip" Bohlen, ambassadors William C. Bullitt and W. Averell Harriman, and the Pentagon liaison to the Red Army, General John R. Deane. Each had intended to strike up personal relations with Russians, immerse himself in Russian culture, and become the interlocutor between Washington and Moscow. The "no-contact" regime thwarted those good intentions. These diplomats and military liaison officials served as the optical nerves of the U.S. and British governments. What they reported from Moscow and what they said on returning home was conditioned by their disappointment, anger, and resentment. Most were skeptical about compromise with a country whose repressive system they had personally experienced.

Colleagues who had not served in Russia tended to defer to the insistent opinion of those with firsthand experience. Moscow-based diplomats expected the contact and freedom that were embedded in their own culture. They had little empathy for the cultural insecurity, military exigencies, and political imperatives of Soviet leaders. Their sense of exceptionalism was always operative, and especially influential once Roosevelt was gone.

Pushing for contact with Soviet citizens constituted the personal element in America's and (to a lesser extent Britain's) traditional foreign policy of the open door, that is, seeking unhampered trade and investment as well as travel and information around the globe. While pursuing this goal, U.S. officials would end up accepting half-measures in much of the world. In Soviet domains, however, the open door policy hooked into not just politics and economics but also gut-level convictions about access, freedom, and information. As Harriman reminded Americans in Moscow, "Anything unknown to us is sinister."[13]

Historiography

For years after 1945, the former diplomats in Moscow helped to enforce not merely a Cold War policy but also a one-sided interpretation of the very history of the conflict. This view blamed the Cold War solely on Soviet aggression and intransigence. In 1949, Edward R. Stettinius Jr., FDR's secretary of state at Yalta, completed a memoir that assigned some of the fault to U.S. policy after Roosevelt's death. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, an informal adviser to FDR, applauded Stettinius for having "vindicated the great man who is no longer here to speak for himself."[14] Chip Bohlen, in contrast, sharply disagreed. He warned the retired secretary of state that "all of those" currently (in 1949) managing relations with Moscow concurred that the Cold War had originated wholly "in the character and nature of the Soviet state" and in its ideology. U.S. policy under Truman bore no significant responsibility for tensions, he insisted. Bohlen responded "so frankly" and so vehemently because Stettinius was challenging what had become gospel truth: the Cold War was inevitable and Moscow's fault. Bohlen restated the creed: "Yalta proved the impossibility of expecting agreements with the Soviet Union to provide solutions to the postwar world." He disputed Stettinius's memory that at Yalta "a really solid basis was arrived at which was somehow or other frittered away by mutual suspicion on both sides, etc."[15] By the 1950s, few in the West questioned the prevailing narrative: a largely innocent, well-intentioned United States had reluctantly, indeed bravely, taken up the burden of defending the "Free World" against an aggressive, ideologically driven Soviet Union led by a grasping dictator.[16]

Despite their denunciation of the character and ideology of the Soviet Union, these original Cold Warriors did not assert what some historians would later claim: the supposed madness of Stalin. Bohlen, Kennan, Harriman, and others who had repeatedly seen the dictator up close condemned him as ruthless, brutal, cruel, and calculating—but not as insane.

The historiographical fight over the origins of the Cold War flamed up in the 1960s. Many of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* volumes for the war and immediate postwar years undermined the Manichaeism of the orthodox interpretation. William A. Williams's *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959), Walter LaFeber's *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–66* (1967), Gabriel Kolko's *The Politics of War* (1968), and Lloyd C. Gardner's *Architects of Illusion* (1970), among other works, stressed that U.S. leaders were pursuing what they perceived as America's national interest in opening markets and in laying the groundwork for resurgent capitalism around the world, including in Eastern Europe. In another strand of "revisionism," Gar Alperovitz's *Atomic Diplomacy* argued that the Truman administration had dropped the two atomic bombs on Japan, even though Tokyo seemed ready to surrender, in order to intimidate Moscow.[17] The revisionists argued, convincingly, that U.S. policy was far more aggressive than defensive. Such challenges to the orthodox interpretation rankled most policymakers from the 1940s. Harriman labeled Alperovitz's study "an awful book. Horrible book."[18]

In May 1967, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. mounted a counteroffensive against the revisionists. A prize-winning historian, adviser to the Kennedys, and champion of the Cold War consensus then fracturing in the Vietnam War, Schlesinger aimed to quash the heresy with an authoritative article in the respected journal *Foreign Affairs*. To assemble the most commanding evidence, Schlesinger held an off-the-record seminar with Harriman and John J. McCloy, assistant secretary of war during World War II and the postwar banker-diplomat dubbed "chairman of the Establishment."[19] Together they would retrace the origins of the Cold War. Harriman, despite his distaste for revisionism and despite his tough line in 1944–46, had by the 1960s become an advocate of reengaging the Soviets. Ever ambitious, the septuagenarian no doubt appreciated that such diplomacy could open fresh vistas for his career as America's most experienced Kremlin negotiator.

Schlesinger focused on getting the former ambassador to Moscow to endorse his, Schlesinger's, pet theory about the origins of the Cold War. This theory lacked relevant sustaining evidence. Yet once assumed as valid, the thesis offered such an unassailable, ideologically and intellectually satisfying explanation for the Cold War that in subsequent decades it would be embraced by some other historians as well. Schlesinger posed a leading question: "When do you think Stalin became irrational?" Harriman: "I don't know." Then, collecting his thoughts, the older man asserted that Stalin, rather than irrational, "was the ablest man that I've ever known." Taken aback, Schlesinger pressed: "Even abler than Churchill, even than Roosevelt? "Yes. Very definitely." The questioner tried again: When did Stalin begin "to lose—to go around mad"? Harriman explained that although the dictator's mental stability had indeed failed, that slippage had occurred only a few years before his death in 1953. Schlesinger would not give up. Harriman just as stubbornly insisted that in 1946, when he had last seen Stalin, the latter was "wholly, wholly" rational.[20] Ruthless—but not irrational or mad. Undaunted, Schlesinger a few months later published in *Foreign Affairs* a widely read essay blaming the Cold War principally on "the intransigence of Leninist ideology, the sinister dynamics of a totalitarian society, and the madness of Stalin."[21]

In the 1970s and '80s, the orthodox-revisionist debate grew more complex as some historians, notably John Lewis Gaddis, argued for a "post-revisionist synthesis." He asserted that "the primary cause of the Cold War was Stalin's own ill-defined ambition, his determination to seek security in such a way as to leave little or none for other actors."

Gaddis did not, however, pick up on Schlesinger's claim of "madness." Rather, he found Stalin "a cagey but insecure opportunist . . . without any long-term strategy or even very much interest in promoting the spread of communism beyond the Soviet sphere."[22] Unconvinced revisionists responded that post-revisionism amounted to "orthodoxy plus archives."[23] Deborah Welch Larson ventured onto new ground with *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*.[24]

The ending of the Cold War in 1989–91 and the subsequent partial opening of Russian archives enabled the writing of some pathbreaking Stalin biographies. Carefully researched and balanced studies by Robert Service, Simon Sebag Montefiore, and Hiroaki Kuromiya concurred on Stalin's brutality, cruelty, and dark suspiciousness—as well as on the dictator's intelligence, diligence, and sanity, at least until the early 1950s.[25]

Nevertheless, some authors revived Schlesinger's theory that the "madness of Stalin" had made the post-1945 confrontation inevitable. Two influential books combined analysis based on newly opened archival sources with emotional commentary. Vojtech Mastny's *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity* (1996) asserted that the "insatiable quest for security" that warped Stalin's personality also made accommodation with the West impossible. Alluding to the "possible pathological bent of Stalin's mind" and stressing the "sheer evil of Stalinism," Mastny concluded that the Soviet Union "was not a normal state but one run by a criminal syndicate at the service of a bloody tyrant hungry for power and ready to abuse it."[26] John Lewis Gaddis's *We Now Know* (1997) argued that Stalin had "conflated the requirements of national security with personal security in a completely unprecedented way." With regard to the inevitability of, and responsibility for, the Cold War, Gaddis, in contrast to his earlier scholarship, now saw pathological personality as compelling policy. "Did Stalin therefore seek a Cold War? The question is a little like asking: 'does a fish seek water?'"[27] Much of the problem stemmed from Stalin's "paranoia."[28] It "was Stalin's disposition to wage cold wars: he had done so . . . throughout his life." The dictator's personality required total security only for himself, thereby "depriving everyone else of it." This "made conflict unavoidable," Gaddis concluded. Even if Roosevelt had lived past April 1945, it would not likely "have altered the long-term course of Soviet-American relations."[29]

In 1996, Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov published *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, a book based on Russian sources. While discussing "Stalin's dark mind," they did not depict the dictator as mad.[30] Instead, they stressed Stalin's effort to balance his postwar imperial and revolutionary aspirations with his desire for continued Big Three collaboration. Zubok, in his 2007 follow-up, *A Failed Empire*, emphasized that until Roosevelt's death, most Moscow officials "believed that U.S.-Soviet cooperation, despite possible problems, would continue after the war."[31]

In the new millennium, arguments over blame and Stalin's supposed madness receded as scholars addressed other concerns, such as North-South issues and the role of ideology. Odd Arne Westad deployed his formidable language skills in producing *The Global Cold War* (2005), an overview of how local conditions around the world frustrated the ideologically driven—and in some ways ideologically parallel—policies of Washington and Moscow.[32] In *For the Soul of Mankind* (2007), a nuanced, finely balanced synthesis, Melvyn P. Leffler drew on a wide range of sources to demonstrate how the pressures of ideology, personality, and international structure sparked the Cold War and then sustained it, notwithstanding repeated opportunities for a settlement. Leffler depicted Stalin in 1945 as "no longer . . . the militant, aggressive revolutionary."[33] Though suspicious and brutal, the dictator sought to sustain the wartime coalition. He often seemed inscrutable, but not insane. Geoffrey Roberts's *Stalin's Wars* (2006), a book deeply grounded in Russian sources, extolled the dictator as "a very effective and highly successful war leader." Echoing Harriman's rejoinder to Schlesinger, Roberts maintained that although Roosevelt and Churchill were "replaceable as warlords . . . Stalin was indispensable." Roberts argued that the dictator "worked hard to make the Grand Alliance a success and wanted to see it continue after the war."[34] Wilson D. Miscamble, the author of *From Roosevelt to Truman* (2007), emphasized what he saw as the continuity between Roosevelt and Truman. In this rendering FDR appears naive and fumbling, while Truman, earnestly trying to pursue good relations with the Soviets, is thwarted by the grasping dictator.[35] Countering Roberts, Jonathan Haslam's *Russia's Cold War* (2011) emphasized the formative influence of Marxist-Leninist ideology from the Revolution to the collapse of the Soviet Union.[36] Jochen Laufer, *Pax Sovietica* (2009), focused on Stalin's postwar designs on Germany.[37]

Disputing the thesis that the "madness of Stalin" rendered the Cold War inevitable does not mean ignoring the dictator's horrific crimes against the peoples of the Soviet Union and neighboring lands. In a succinct analysis of *Stalin's Genocides* (2010), Norman M. Naimark asserted that while a number of factors made Stalin into the person who murdered millions, the primary element remained his "paranoia." "The real Stalin," Naimark reminded us, was a small man "both physically and morally," but he could be "capable" and "self-possessed" as well as "suspicious," "vindictive," and "brutal."[38] Timothy Snyder, in *Bloodlands* (2010), concluded that while both dictators perpetrated genocide in the "bloodlands" between Germany and Russia, Stalin, unlike Hitler, "was able to restrain himself when necessary."[39] That restraint was what Roosevelt counted on in trying to bring the Grand Alliance into the postwar world.

Personality, Emotion, Ideology, and Culture

Although the wartime coalition and the origins of the Cold War have attracted the attention of many gifted historians, *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances* aims to go beyond earlier studies by tracing the political consequences of the relationships, personalities, emotional lives, emotional dispositions, sensibilities, and cultural assumptions of Roosevelt and other key figures.[40] A close-up view of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin is critical to understanding how they interacted to create and sustain Allied unity. Similarly, investigating the inner qualities of Truman, Harriman, and Kennan helps in realizing why they opposed the compromises and the ambiguity that were essential to sustaining the Grand Alliance. The concept of "emotional belief" is useful in exploring how each of these six figures extrapolated—that is, made the leap in logic—from what they knew, to what they wanted to believe.[41]

Emotional beliefs entail arranging the evidence to support a conviction that goes *beyond* that evidence. Examining the assumptions in a statesman's leap in logic can yield evidence of that official's overall perspective and objectives.

Roosevelt's personal background predisposed him to an emotional belief that postwar cooperation was necessary and worth the risk. He had enjoyed a wealthy, privileged, and pampered childhood. He benefited from his charm, good looks, and what became known as "Roosevelt luck." When he had gambled, it had paid off. The former New York governor had defied polio to win six straight elections, including third and fourth terms as president. Service in Woodrow Wilson's administration had left him anxious not to repeat Wilson's failure to win a lasting peace. FDR remained unscarred by the anti-Bolshevism of the 1918–20 Red Scare. He held enormous faith in America's power and future and in himself as a man of destiny. He sensed that his time was limited. Roosevelt bet on Stalin's overwhelming interest in heading off another German invasion. He would die before putting on the table his two high cards, control over the atomic bomb and postwar economic aid.

FDR's effectiveness as president and as keystone of the Grand Alliance depended on his personal alliances with dedicated, live-in aides who entertained him, translated his notions into pragmatic policy, and got results. Harry L. Hopkins and Marguerite "Missy" LeHand (and in earlier years, Louis M. Howe and Thomas G. Corcoran) wore themselves out in trying to cope not only with the extraordinary needs of the "Boss" but also with his possessiveness regarding even their personal lives. By 1944, the very time when Roosevelt faced mounting challenges in managing the war and planning the peace, he had lost the crucial players of his inner circle. FDR became, partly owing to his demanding nature, dangerously isolated.

Churchill's grounding, very different from Roosevelt's, inclined the British leader to an emotional belief that the interests he cared about would be better served by an alliance with Washington against Moscow. He had experienced difficulties during his childhood, and he often clashed with authority figures. Churchill's fondness for things military and naval, his Victorian perspective on imperial rivalry with

Russia, and his fierce anti-Bolshevism in 1918–20 all inclined him against the Kremlin. He had emerged from the political wilderness to become prime minister in May 1940 on the strength of his warning about one evil dictator, Adolf Hitler. Churchill feared that concessions to another dictator, Stalin, especially at the expense of the Poles, thousands of whom had fought alongside British forces, would alienate voters in his July 1945 election campaign. After losing the parliamentary election, Churchill would again seize the stage by sounding an emotional alarm about the "Iron Curtain" and by calling for a renewed alliance with Truman's America.

The destruction wrought by the 1914 and 1941 invasions and the spectacle of Germany's twice standing off most of the world imprinted on Stalin the emotional belief that this irrepressible enemy would strike yet again unless contained by some overpowering coalition. Though he would eventually settle for a ring of satellite nations and the Cold War, he initially preferred an alliance with powerful America and Britain to keep down Germany and Japan. In another emotional belief, Stalin imagined that the Soviets actually could fabricate a Warsaw government that would be simultaneously a "friend" to Moscow, an acceptable solution for the Polish people, and a rampart against another German invasion.

Born Joseph Dzhugashvili, Stalin endured the grimmest childhood. Beaten by his father, a cobbler who according to local rumor had good reason to doubt his paternity, "Soso" grew up surrounded by the authoritarian cultures of family, Orthodox seminary, czarist regime, and Bolshevik Party. Even more than Churchill, Stalin was scarred by the searing emotions of the Russian Revolution. In the 1930s, the dictator's forced collectivization and industrialization exacted a terrible human toll, a cost magnified by his bloody purges against imagined and real rivals. Stalin apparently convinced himself he could postpone or even prevent a German invasion by striking a deal with Hitler in August 1939.

The most consequential emotional belief of Truman's first year as president developed out of his unquestioning faith in America's exceptionalism. He believed the atomic bomb was born of the country's unique engineering and scientific talent, industrial workmanship, and

Yankee "know-how." This combination the Russians could not match, concluded the president. His thinking ignored the explicit advice of atomic scientists and a majority of his own Cabinet. He also ignored those voices in deciding that the safest bet was not in a possible Big Three deal with the Kremlin, but rather in staying ahead in an atomic arms race.

Truman coupled fierce pride with deep insecurity. A bookish boy who had loved school but could not afford college, he had a checkered career in business and farming. He achieved success as an artillery officer in World War I and then as a politician. In 1944, party bosses pushed Senator Truman for vice president. Roosevelt, who kept all his vice presidents at arm's length, regarded Truman as a Senate insider who could help get a peace treaty ratified. Not knowing much about foreign affairs and prone to hasty, emotional judgments, Truman as president proved susceptible to manipulation. Harriman and others exploited his insecurities and his impulse to play the tough guy with Stalin and other rivals.

Harriman's emotional belief, which he pressed on Truman with success and ultimately dire consequences, was that Stalin would back down if pressed hard. Though the dictator gave in on some matters, on most he pushed back even harder. The shoving match would develop into the Cold War. Harriman had grown up in a family with greater wealth but less status than the old-money Roosevelts. Averell inherited from his father, the railroad empire builder E. H. Harriman, a fierce ambition—displayed, for example, by his investment of money and talent to become the fourth-ranked polo player in the nation. As ambassador, he aspired to leverage his position as the crucial American in Moscow into a shot at becoming secretary of state or even president. Repelled by the Soviets' naked repression in Poland and frustrated by his isolation, Harriman by September 1944 was lobbying for a much tougher stance against Moscow.

In 1946–47, Kennan, determined to jolt America out of what he saw as dangerous complacency, used loaded metaphors to create an emotional belief about the Soviet challenge. He went beyond the evidence of Moscow's behavior and ambition, indeed, distorted the picture, so as to depict the Kremlin as a monstrous, existential threat. He warned that the Soviets, while not planning war, aimed in every other way to "penetrate" and disrupt a U.S.-led international order. Though born into a middle-class family in Milwaukee, Kennan came to love the lost world of pre-1917 Russia. He doubted "there could be anyone in the Western world who [had] deeper feelings" for the Russian people than he did.[42] He dreamed of becoming the cultural and/or political mediator between the United States and Russia. Nothing about the Kremlin's repression frustrated Kennan more than the isolation of foreigners from Soviet citizens. Being deprived of contact with Russians facilitated his conclusion that the Soviet government should likewise be contained and isolated. In 1946–47, Kennan helped reframe the issue from whether the United States and the Soviet Union could reach a practical compromise to whether it was realistic and manly to negotiate with a regime impelled by an abhorrent ideology.

Though latent during the war, the ideological conflict between Marxist-Leninism and liberal-democratic capitalism was stoked by Kennan, Stalin, and Churchill in early 1946. Ideology—a condensed, explanatory set of beliefs—reduced the complex global crisis to easily understandable slogans and images, to a contest of good versus evil. At Yalta, Churchill and Stalin had candidly discussed the utility and the danger of whipping up ideological conflict among the masses. Roosevelt nearly always downplayed ideology. As a category of historical analysis, ideology is most usefully understood as one element in the broader realm of culture.[43] Cultural divergences aggravated political issues. As a Soviet diplomat explained it, tensions with the British were "largely due to differences of background and outlook . . . and method." Differences also intruded "in the use of such words as 'democracy' and 'collaboration.'"[44] Dissimilar categories of thought spurred misunderstandings, making political compromise more difficult.

Differences in war circumstance widened the gap between political perspectives. The people of the Soviet Union suffered some twenty-seven million dead. Millions of Ukrainians and other non-Russian nationalities initially welcomed the Germans as liberators. The Americans and British together suffered fewer than a million dead and fought land battles mostly at locations and at times of their choosing. Much of the U.S. contribution came in the form of Lend-Lease, of which eleven billion dollars out of the sixty billion total went to Russia.

Many Red Army soldiers acted on their belief that German atrocities justified extreme vengeance, including the mass rape of German women and pillaging along the route to Berlin.[45] Outrages against German civilians sparked among many Americans and British anger, disgust, and contempt for the Soviets. Cultural and racial prejudice antedated those reports, however. In 1940, British ambassador Stafford Cripps reported on "the universal hymn of hate . . . against the Russians" that sounded "whenever a few Englishmen meet. . . . The whole tradition and bias of the F[oreign] O[ffice] is violently and unreasoningly anti-Russian." Yet even the sympathetic Cripps criticized the Russians' "Asiatic ways, which are not our ways."[46] Notwithstanding the Nazi interlude and all its horrors, for many Americans and British, Germans still figured as racial and cultural kin. The Soviets, in contrast, dwelled outside the pale; indeed they ranked as "barbarians," Harriman told Truman.

Like individuals, nations can exhibit distinctive—though not determining or unambiguous—"emotional dispositions." Culturally and historically conditioned emotional dispositions influence the particular anxieties and imperatives of national leaders. U.S. officials (Roosevelt not included, however) tended to fret over whether others saw them as tough enough. The British, staggering to victory, seemed frantic to assert their authority. The Soviets overcompensated for their status anxiety. These trends and tropes were neither absolute nor exclusive. But like a computer operating system, such tendencies organized more or less inchoate concerns into a pattern of emotionalized political issues.

Russian status anxiety was fed by geography, history, and culture. The Russians, whether viewed as aggressors or as those whom Roosevelt was trying to "get-at," appeared as outlanders. Soviet officials, despite their proud nationalism, appeals to Slavic unity, claims of superiority over the decadent West, and leadership of the world's first Marxist state, nevertheless yearned for respect: to be treated as equals and accepted for who they were. When Roosevelt's emissary, Joseph E. Davies, asked Stalin's henchman, Vyacheslav Molotov, what was needed for real collaboration, the Russian "stressed the necessity for mutual respect."

Davies shot back that another requirement was "mutual trust."[47] The exchange bespoke the legacy of suspicion and cultural difference between the two nations. Trust meant predictive reliability, assurance that the Soviets would reciprocate cooperation, edge toward Western norms, and moderate their geopolitical and ideological ambitions.[48] The Americans and British believed that trust also required the Soviets to permit greater contact and transparency. For the Big Three leaders, fostering trust was a major impetus for going to all the trouble of traveling to a conference. They believed that viewing personality and affect up close could offer crucial clues to a statesman's underlying intent and trustworthiness. In March 1946, Churchill honed in on this key aspect of character. He warned U.S. officials that "the Russians," for reasons of culture or race, lacked "understanding of such words as 'honesty,' 'honor,' 'trust,' and 'truth.'"[49]

The Soviets, concerned about status as well as the imperative of preventing another invasion, reacted vehemently to territorial issues. In dealing with U.S. and British leaders Stalin repeatedly sought recognition of Soviet borders as they stood before the German onslaught in 1941. That boundary included land taken from Poland, Romania, and Finland, and the formerly independent Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. From Moscow's viewpoint, that territory (all but Northern Bukovina part of pre–World War I Russia) rightfully belonged to the Soviet Union. The Soviets had taken these lands after their cynical deal with the Nazis in August 1939.

Then in June 1941 the Germans, for the second time in thirty years, hurtled across the flat lands of Poland to pummel Russia. Stalin was adamant about erecting after the war a "friendly" Poland to guard against yet another invasion. In no way did Soviet security concerns justify Stalin's exiling or slaughtering millions after the annexations of 1939–40.[50] Nevertheless, from Moscow's perspective, it seemed insulting to have to wheedle from the Western allies acceptance of Russia's number one war aim, regaining its preinvasion borders and securing against another assault. The Russians resented feeling like supplicants, especially after contributing to victory with the highest costs in blood.

A stunningly frank conversation about the emotional and political impact of this perceived inferior status took place in July 1943 in the Kremlin office of the former ambassador to London, Ivan Maisky, now a vice-minister of foreign affairs.[51] In speaking with the British ambassador, Archibald Clark Kerr, Maisky volunteered that "Russian civilization has always been centuries behind" that of Britain. The Bolshevik Revolution had only widened the gap. Clark Kerr paraphrased the Russian as saying, "We [the British] were sure of ourselves. We knew what we were about." Whatever Britain did "would appear to the rest of mankind to be the right thing. We had in fact a superiority complex and that was our strength. He envied it." In contrast, the Russians "knew that their civilization was callow, that they were only beginners." Turning Marxist dogma on its head, Maisky lamented that the Soviets "did not know the rules of the game." They often did "the wrong thing, not from malice so much as in self-defense." Their "inferiority complex" made "them acutely sensitive and always on the look out for slights." After this startling admission Maisky made his political pitch, suggesting, Clark Kerr reported, that "we" (the British) "should always ask ourselves first whether what we were doing . . . might hurt the feelings of country cousins. . . . We expected them to be grown up and as metropolitan as ourselves. They were not."[52]

Maisky's audacious appeal for empathy might, conceivably, have induced London and Washington to craft policies more attuned to Russian insecurities—and therefore more successful over time. But that would have required an emotional intelligence beyond that of most officials in any government. Russian experts in the British Foreign Office disparaged the "inferiority complex" as an "admirable alibi" for the Soviets "to have their own way." Even the sympathetic Clark Kerr grumbled that Maisky seemed unconcerned about British emotional needs, especially normal contact with Soviet citizens.

Nevertheless, with regard to the substance of Maisky's plaint, "in my heart I felt that he was right," Clark Kerr advised London. "We have not yet let [the Russians] into the club. They are still scrutinized by the hall-porter, stared at by the members, and made to feel that they do not really belong." Meanwhile, Britain went all out "to make the Americans feel at home." Churchill's preference ruled: "We *consult* Washington and we *inform* Moscow." The ambassador warned that the Soviets, "who miss nothing and who refuse to be taken in," would "one day stop wanting to belong to our club and will start one of their own."[53] In the Cold War the Soviets would indeed start their own "club," behind the Iron Curtain.

This book examines how huge policy issues about the very future of the alliance were filtered through highly personal relationships, intense desires and disappointments, and deep flaws of body and personality—all factors presented within the historical context of events. Only by including the overlooked private lives of public statesmen, the emotional stakes of their diplomacy, and the cultural context of their ideology can we arrive at a more holistic picture of how the Allies won World War II and then lost the security they had fought for. Examining the nexus between public and private helps us see the messy way that history really happens.

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