

War Drums and International Relations: The power of ideas in the early Cold War

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Abstract:

There is a well-known debate about the beginning of the Cold War. Most scholars admit 1945 as the beginning of the Cold War. The problem in this acceptance rests on a fragile rhetoric and ill-managed historical common sense. Realism provides us with the concept of bipolarity. Thus, we need the same parameters to define what the Cold War is and when it has begun. In this paper, we argue that only in 1953 US had accepted Realism as the benchmark for international political agency, answering USSR Stalin's historical approach. During all the time of Truman-Acheson Period, the US international politics decisions were guided by come "international idealism" regardless Kennan's tentative discourses. The arrival of John Foster Dulles at the State Department buried the "old circles" of advisors who were taking decision about Foreign Policy since Roosevelt last period. At the same time, International Relations were becoming a "scientific approach" that would inform the decision-makers about foreign policy. International Relations and Realism. Being accepted as frameworks to understand the world created the Cold War, as the conflict between states becomes a structural struggle between hobbesian's type states; always looking for survive in a "reckless world".

Introduction

There is a sensible difference between a world with two countries involved in a mere rivalry and a world where two countries have no other behavior than engage themselves in a political fight jeopardizing the entire world¹. There is a long distance between a rivalry beginning with political decisions taken by countries and a structural

¹ Rivalries existed since humanity. One does not need of a structural approach to explain certain human actions, but assuming two countries (or political unities) OUGHT TO fight against each other (physically or politically) for the sake of its own survive is not a simple task. We need to accept every human political interaction has the hobbesian framework. There is no sufficient evidence to accept this therefore it renders all thesis under suspicion.

feud that cannot be averted². These two scenarios have almost no relation but, more important, there are no possible way one becomes other (WOHLFORTH, 1999).

This article asks when and how exactly a rivalry becomes a life and death struggle³. The waltzian Cold War (WALTZ, 2000) seems to remain in the past of old explanations overruled by empirical facts. There can be no structural explanation of some phenomena overridden by a subject choice, as Gorbachev's (GADDIS, 2005, p. 252-257). The Cold War's ending put as almost insoluble problem to theories rested upon the invisible constraints and profound forces. Gorbachev simply could not have finished a structural bipolar international system. Yet, he did.

That is why Morgenthau's world once again gains breath. The Morgenthau's rivalry, although much less predetermined, requires a clear subject expression⁴ (MORGENTHAU, 2003, p. 628-629). There is no bipolarity risen from misunderstandings or poor timed actions. In Morgenthau's argumentation, bipolarity emerges from a comprehensive political interaction where both players recognize and acknowledge each other as opponents, and so must do the other nations. Morgenthau's bipolarity, though not scientific⁵, is rational (VASQUEZ e ELMAN, 2003, p. 130-133).

² Although Mearsheimer (MEARSHEIMER, 2001) have written a dense book trying to point out bipolarity along the history, historians agree with the idea one cannot simply defines ever rivalry as a structural bipolarity (WAGNER, 1993). Neither Mearsheimer presented a good historical method for analysis nor did he used the best evidences at his disposal. For a good critic (SCHROEDER, 1994)

³ Rivalries can appear and disappear for any reason but intrinsically depends on subject's preferences and actions. One can argue this subjects are rational so they will be acting to enhance their gains, given some predictability to these actions. Even so, this is rather different than a system where conflict emanates from structural constraints. The very subject volition is taken away in this second case.

⁴ Although Morgenthau's argumentation commutes from less structural to more evidently structural, we can understand that to achieve a pole status a nation needs to enhance its power. So it is decisive to bipolarity the will of the nation and not only its position in the international system.

⁵ Morgenthau argues emphatically against the scientism on politics, especially international politics (MORGENTHAU, 1972). "He [Morgenthau] equated utilitarianism with scientism, only to observe, 'the ideal of scientism applied to politics is the disappearance of politics altogether'" (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 228)

"Realism sometimes is viewed as synonymous with cynicism, given its view that states seek power and care first, if not solely about themselves and their citizens. There is something to this, but the common next step of viewing cynicism as being in conflict with morality is not warranted. In fact, for Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and their colleagues it was their cynicism that permitted them to see that moral dilemmas in politics could not be easily elided and that one of the gravest dangers in politics was the attempt to do so." JERVIS in GUILHOT, 2011, p. 35

The question we must answer is when U.S. and USSR recognized each other as international opponents and gathered internal support and knowledge about each other to effectively fight the Cold War. Actually we should ask when the US decision makers had will and sufficient information (SMITH, HADFIELD e DUNNE, 2008) to fight against USSR. There are two situations to bear in mind in order to avoid common mistakes: (1) as Cold War is a responsive system, the same question should be asked about USSR international politics actions too and (2) we should be alert not to interpret any American action towards USSR as an action caused by bipolarity.

In this paper we will analyze only the US part of the Cold War dance. It means we will not be able to discuss the entire Cold War system, but only the American International politics in the early Cold War. We argue, following the second situation mentioned above, only in 1953 US have both the right set of information (about USSR) and internal consensus to fight the Cold War. Accepting this approach, we need to recognize that the Stalin-Roosevelt years and the Stalin-Truman period cannot be labelled as Cold War. So, what happened there? We argue they were following some kind of gentlemen's agreement that rests in a mutual confidence acquired during the war. The last "Ialta's great leaders" imprinted much more confidence in each other, than Cold War's historians like to admit (DOBBS, 2012, p. 399 of 9178). To break these alliances was not an easy task.

"After the Potsdam summit he [Truman] wrote: 'I like Stalin. He is straightforward.'" (HASLAM, 2011, p. 1495 of 15098)

“Truman was the type of man Stalin would like, ‘a man of action and not of words’, as Harriman put it. (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 259)

1) Will and internal consensus

Structural explanations are easy to be accepted as we need only to gather empirical evidence theoretically guided to fill a rational narrative, often outlined well before (WHITE, 1992, p. 10-12). The problem is we can never be sure if these three categories (empirical evidence, theory and the resultant narrative) rest upon the same configuration theory, as the explanatory rationality is always part of fiction (RICOUER, 1997, p. 323). In fact, the narrative is always constructed from the present to the past and frequently involves creation (or recreation) of motivations, ideas, constraints etc. that we ASSUME were part of the mental tools (CHARTIER, 1992, p. 23) possessed by the past subjects. All the blank fields, in this type of explanation, can be filled with “forces”, “interests”, “political pressures”, “financial demands” and other well-known explanatory resources to cover our inability to grasp the real motivations (GOFF, 1990, p. 20). Even if we take for granted the reality can never be actually understood, or the subjects “real” motivations rest in some inaccessible realm, we cannot dismiss a solid knowledge’s construction by adding ethereal components to explanation that, now for sure, we can never grasp either. (RICOUER, 1994, p. 185-186; 261)

The contemporary History’s theory rightly points all past reconstruction is based on present assumptions (RÜSEN, 2010, p. 64). That’s why we should always revisit the past, because, as the different generations will not bear the same epistemological framework to decode the past, the result will never be the same. The problem is structural theories have had so many supporters during the Cold War and even in the 90’ they produced some kind of “frozen history” (MULLER, 2004, p. 11) about the period. These theories were, firstly, oriented to provide a safe way out of international

political maze (KISSINGER, 1994, p. 20), not to serve as a framework of historical narrative (MANNHEIM, 1954, p. 9).

There are lots of problems with this approach⁶, but the hardest one is the normative character the Cold War concept acquired (SCHROEDER, 1994). Almost no historical, or sociological phenomena can escape of this conceptual field⁷. Cold War explains virtually everything in the world from 1945 to 1989/1991. The Latin American coups, the hunger in Africa, the middle east policy development, the East European history etc. (WESTAD, 2010, p. 2).

This simply cannot be scientifically acceptable. Everything in History is human construction, moreover politics. Humans are guided by ideas; we need only to identify them (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 77). If we look to the final years of the Second World War, we will acknowledge there were strong evidences of a good relation between Roosevelt and Stalin. Even more impressive is the view americans and soviets had about each other (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 317)⁸. Roosevelt clearly preferred to deal with Stalin than Churchill, and Stalin recognized american president as a trustier leader (HASLAM, 2011, p. 606 of 15098).

In addition to providing a “realistic picture of United States as a powerful but friendly industrial nation”, information officers were to explain how “despite great

⁶ There are several problem accepting the structural Cold War. Historically we can say the period was not “cold” as many conflicts and wars had erupted around the globe. We cannot take for granted who was fighting against whom (countries? Economic systems? Political systems? Blocs?) Methodologically speaking the Cold War acquires a so wider explanation field that simply cannot be right. A concept that could not offer a sensible difference between the object conceptualized and the rest of the universe cannot be accepted as a scientific conceptualization. If Cold War explains everything than, it’s right to say it explains nothing.

⁷ This is the classical problem presented by Giovanni Sartori as “stretching concepts” (SARTORI, 1970). To see a good enhanced argumentation (COLLIER e MAHON JR, 1993).

⁸ Even the Parliament was cutting funds to programs that could have raised American-Soviet conflict. “Despite their growing antipathy toward the Soviet Union [William] Benton’s [Assistant secretary of state for public affairs] efforts failed to impress the Congress. In May 1946, the House Appropriations Committee cut his request by 48%, from \$19,284,778 to \$10,000,000. (BELMONTE, 2008, p. 17). “February of 1945, most americans polled said that they foresaw postwar problems with Britain as being more serious than those with Russia. By May of 1945, that situation had reversed” (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 269)

organizational and ideological differences, there can be peace and friendship between USSR and USA". (BELMONTE, 2008, p. 21)

"It was not until down on May 10 that the word filtered out, loud-speakers on the streets began playing the "international" and "The star-spangled Banner", and joyous muscovites surged forth to celebrate. Spotting the American flag waving from the balcony of the US Embassy, the crowds gathered in a spontaneous demonstration of friendship. "Long live Truman!" they shouted. "Long live Roosevelt's memory!" Americans who ventured forth to join the celebrating were, in Kennan's words, "tossed enthusiastically into the air and passed on friendly hands over the heads of the crowd, to be lost, eventually in a confused orgy of good feeling." (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 271)

"Russian quickly overtook all of the others in popularity, in large part, the organizers noted, because of the "wide-spread feeling of cultural affinity" between Americans and Russians, with both countries by then allied against Hitler" (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 16)

Of course there were disagreements, notably the Poland situation and the role of communist activists around the world, but even Roosevelt accepted the Stalin's concept of defensive belt (ZUBOK, 2007, p. 14). Stalin gave his word USSR would not back communists revolutions in occidental areas and the Greek communists were the first ones to prove Stalin's will (KOTKIN, 1995, p. 15-16). As the USSR did not back Italian or French communists either, Roosevelt accepted the "gentlemen's agreement" made in Ialta. East Europe should remain as a defensive belt USSR had demanded.

"Like most Americans, he [Roosevelt] was repulsed by anything that smacked of "empires", "balance of power", and "spheres of influence". In the grand rooseveltian scheme, a new world organization would assume primary responsibility for ensuring the "lasting peace" under the benign supervision of the victorious allies. The president wanted American Soldiers to come home from Europe and Asia as quickly as possible" (DOBBS, 2012, p. 218 of 9178)

"In public at least, Roosevelt would henceforth proclaim that the Atlantic Charter – in particular its opposition to spheres of influence – was the foundation of US foreign policy. Partly it was a matter of political necessity: Americans were more likely to support a war fought for idealistic principles than one designed to divvy up hapless nations like Poland into power blocs. In addition, Roosevelt the idealist believed in these principles. Yet Roosevelt the pragmatist would turn out to be far more willing, quietly and privately, to make the realistic concessions necessary to preserve the wartime alliance with the soviets." (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 211)

"Yet neither had contradicted what Roosevelt said in private to Stalin about Europe; indeed, Lippmann effectively argued for what Stalin saw as minimal: the Soviet right to Eastern Europe as a sphere of influence/protectorate." (HASLAM, 2011, p. 1042 of 15098)

After Roosevelt's death the situation did not change substantially. While in the office, Roosevelt himself took care of international political decisions. Truman, on the opposite, since the very beginning time as president, knew he was ill-informed to this particularly task (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 254-255). Marshall and later Acheson became not only the most important advisors, but they effectively conducted the US international decisions (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 257). Truman had not Roosevelt's experience but shared his sense of justice. He decided to maintain almost all Roosevelt's guide lines in treating with "the reds", after all "they are our allies".

Despite such outbursts, Truman essentially subscribed to Roosevelt's Grand Alliance strategy. (...) he came into office strongly committed to carrying out Roosevelt's policy of working with the Russians to win the war and secure the peace. (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 256)

Truman shared this naiveté: the Russians had 'always been our friends and I can't see why they shouldn't always be' (HASLAM, 2011, p. 1484 of 15098)

Even the atomic bomb did not change this situation, as Stalin was superbly⁹ informed about the entire american program (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 303-305), and Truman knew the bomb could not (and should not) be used against USSR with decisive effect. There were both material and ethical arguments against the use of the atomic artifact: the US had not sufficient number of ogives to attack USSR with decisive effects and Truman shared the bomb was an inhuman weapon.

⁹ "Stalin knew an atomic bomb had been tested. On 8 august 1941 an officer in Soviet military intelligence (Razvedupr) in London, Semyon Kremer (codename 'Barch') formally the military attaché's secretary since January 1937, made the acquaintance of one Klaus Fuchs" (HASLAM, 2011, p. 1619 of 15098)

One can rightly state Truman had a strong moral code and trust is one of his inescapable virtues. "The reds" did not break their words, nor did Truman. Acheson was a highly moral bearer too. In fact, all the US state department decision makers were called "the wise men" and had had higher education based on strong moral codes. For the good and bad, they valued confidence, trust, and even informal pacts as highly as any signed document. For the sake of America's international posture, the old war pacts, should be honored, they all thought.

"[George] Marshall added that foreign peoples cared about 'the righteousness of United States aims or the sincerity of the United States motives' only doing so server their direct interests" (BELMONTE, 2008, p. 35)

"'Thank you, Admiral [Standley]', said Harriman, forcing a smile. 'I know it will be difficult, but they're only human, those Russians. Stalin can be handled'" (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 219)

"The Russians, he [Stimson] added, 'perhaps were being more realistic about their own security than we were'" (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 265)

This view can be easily confirmed when we analyze the plan State Department had to share atomic secrets with USSR (and UN) in order to bolster the Soviet friendship (ACHESON, 1969, p. 152-156) and the international security (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 318). By far Dean Acheson, Chip Bohlen, Averrell Harriman, Robert Lovett and John McCloy shared similar views of international politics in the early Cold War, and this view carried all the old fashionable gentlemen's agreements characteristics such honor, truthfulness, compassion, honesty, and etc. The international decisions taken by this group were always directed to make the world a "better and secure" place. And this was not a rhetorical argument to elude an "imperial" interest.

Contrary to interpretations found in much foreign policy historiography, US policymakers did not define the national interest exclusively in concrete political, economic, and military terms. (BELMONTE, 2008, p. 7)

Truman received the Roosevelt-Stalin world directives, but also its critics. To some political agents (politicians, corporation's chiefs, journalists, etc.) Roosevelt had been "too soft" dealing with soviets and this error could endanger "america's freedom" (BELMONTE, 2008, p. 38-41). The bottom line of critics about Roosevelt-Truman's way to handle international relations was the anticommunist rhetorical argument that will enforce itself through US during the Mccarthy's trials and investigations (50') (ACHESON, 1969, p. 157: 161-163). The lack of confidence the american parliament demonstrated against Acheson's state department grew wildly in the later 50', but all had begun with Roosevelt "softness". As Acheson did not allow himself to be a warmonger, he welcomed Mccarthy's wrath.

"Acheson refused to see conflict with Moscow as inevitable" (HASLAM, 2011, p. 1495 of 15098)

"The personal reputation of Dean Acheson and public perceptions of the state department remained awful for many years" (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 83)

"Acheson did not take the Truman Doctrine literally. He was highly sensitive to the limited resources of the United States, and had no intention of intervening around the globe" (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 398)

At this point, the historical and scientific literature failed to recognize the set of values Acheson (and the his "wise men" in state department¹⁰) was using to understand the international politics could not be different from values he received in his education (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013 chapter 4). Acheson's political decisions were based on a strong honor code and he sees no reason to engage US in a never-ending feud with the soviets¹¹. Though, amongst the opposition there were only the

¹⁰ "Those who called on their services used the term "Wise Men" half tongue in cheek, but presidents from FDR to Richard Nixon counted on their wisdom" (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 36)

¹¹ Although its true Averrel Harriman began to change his view about USSR in the final months of 1945 to a more intolerant posture, he and Kennan were still not taken seriously. "Stettinius, who had taken over from Cordell Hull as secretary of State, refuse to embrace Harriman's hard-line prognosis. The ambassador was told to stay in Moscow and try to salvage the relationship" (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 247)

anticommunist rhetoric without any international plan of action than “fight the Reds”, yet.

“His decision to do so was deliberate: it had been necessary to show the world, one of the drafters of Truman’s speech later recalled, “that we have something positive and attractive to offer, no just anti-communism” (GADDIS, 2005, p. 95)

The first breaking point in this situation was Kennan’s Long Telegram (BELMONTE, 2008, p. 15). Kennan was acknowledged by his colleagues as a dangerous non-empirically based analyst. Acheson did not trust Kennan’s view (ACHESON, 1969, p. 151), there were several communications from Kennan simply dismissed as there were a consensus among the “wise men” Kennan could not be taken unbiased and seriously (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 228-231; 239; 273). If Kennan was unreliable, McCarthy was dangerous and MacArthur was unmanageable (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 292), and yet Europe should be reconstructed and world should stay in peace.

“Harriman had only Llewellyn (“Tommy”) Thompson, a young and inexperienced third secretary. He therefore called for the most experienced Russianist in the service, the tall, emotionally sensitive yet intellectually hard-headed George Kennan, of whom he had good report;” (HASLAM, 2011, p. 645 of 15098)

“McCloy seemed somewhat surprised by ‘the growing sense of Russia vs US’ that he found in San Francisco. But like [Henry] Stimson he felt that any disputes could be worked out on the basis of a ‘businesslike’ respect for each other’s interests” (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 275)

To solve this equation, US state department came with the Marshall Plan (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 86). The problem was the Congress had to approve the budget. To reach his goal, Acheson introduced the “clearer than the truth” formula (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 398). Congress would be convinced to lend the money, Marshall would enhance his already superb reputation (ACHESON, 1969, p. 140-142) and MacArthur would stay in Japan (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 333). Everything

was looking fine, except that the world's interpretations would be a little heavier than reality.

The situation Acheson did not expect was the “Long Telegram” anonymously publication. Kennan (Mr. X) (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 24) suddenly became the framework Mccarthy (and his supporters) (HASLAM, 2011, p. 1848 of 15098) that was in need to fight soviets and accuse Acheson of being a “communist agent” as he partakes Roosevelt’s softness related with USSR. Acheson’s “clearer than the truth” formula boosted the Long Telegram’s effect in a non-anticipated feedback circle (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 91). The apparent contradictions between internal narrative about the USSR (Kennan’s), the narrative presented to Senate (in order to approve Marshall Plan) (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 85) and the lack of firmness state department was showing in “fighting the communists” gave certainty to Mccarthy that something was going wrong in the state department (WESTAD, 2010, p. 26).

As this unease grew, Korean War erupted. The orders were clear, US should not trespass the 38 parallel in rebuking North Korea attack, respecting not a formal agreement but the Acheson-Truman determination to build an international image of an America that did not go for attack, but resolutely stood for defense¹². There were two problems with this understanding: internally was being formed a powerful media apparatus, and they needed heroes and enemies. An important part of the process of American media consolidation was to link American consumers with national industries.

“The number of industry advisory committees spawned by spawned by Korean War indicates the scope of the Cold War consensus between business and the state. At

¹² An eloquent example of this posture is the United Nations Security Council presentation made by US about the Korean War in 1950 (resolutions n. 82 to 85). During other similar events (invasions on Central America and Vietnam) US opted to block the UNSC.

the end of 1950, 68 such committees dispensed private wisdom to public officials; by 1952, 554 groups offered their expertise” (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 97)

Selling the “American way” (BELMONTE, 2008) was a great commercial achievement and, at the same time, boosted national moral, enhanced national industry and appease Mccarthy’s hate against the “communists supporters” (WESTAD, 2010, p. 117-118). Truman government thought it was an everybody win situation and tried to handle it. The price for all these substantial achievements seemed to be low, the problem was as interests grows the free market began to make some demands: even more patriotic narratives (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 108) could captivate more public, who would buy more stuff and assure higher propaganda expenses.

“We are facing a situation of possible ‘all out’ war, and argued that the attack in Korea showed that the Soviet Union was willing to use deadly force in dealing with the West¹³. After a lengthy briefing on the USSR’s intentions in Europe and Asia, he [Acheson] concluded by pleading for national support of the president and his cabinet in wartime. (...) Acheson’s aides followed his briefing with a request for the speedy creation of “methods to create closer liaison between state department activities and the nation’s broadcast media.” (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 112)

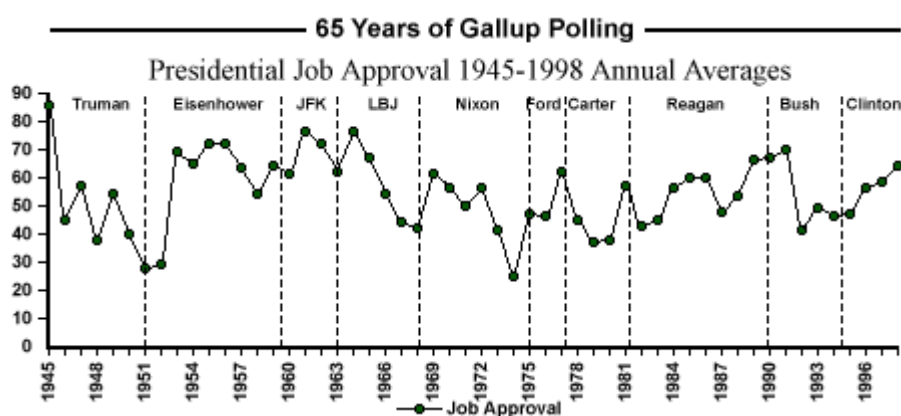
The second huge problem Truman-Acheson foreign policy faced was an unmanageable military hero and a greedy senator who wanted to do anything to patch his way to presidency. Joseph Mccarthy and Douglas MacArthur posed a serious threat to Acheson’s ideas (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 322-323; 333-334)¹⁴.

¹³ It is not easy to understand what exactly was going on among China, USSR and North Korea. The consolidated bibliography pledges for the Stalin’s support on North Korea attack (YOUNG e KENT, 2004, p. 147-149). The more recent studies have gather information demonstrating this was not the USSR position in 1949 “Kim first proposed an invasion of South Korea to Moscow on 11 March 1949. The response was not encouraging. The Berlin Blockade had failed and Stalin was scarcely of a mind to open a new chapter in confrontation until CCCP victory was assured without US intervention and until an atomic test had been successfully completed.” (HASLAM, 2011, p. 2956 of 15098), and even in 1950 Stalin was convinced North Korea war desires could endanger USSR security itself. Only after a huge pressure from Mao, Stalin gave permission for North Korea attack “But Stalin warned Kim that he should not count on direct participation from the USSR” (HASLAM, 2011, p. 3108 of 15098).

¹⁴ “It is more charitable to say that [Paul] Nitze admired and befriended General Douglas MacArthur, the US Supreme Commander in Japan. America’s Caesar even tried to hire Nitze to rebuild Japan’s economy after the war. The arrangement fell through when Nitze insisted on getting help from Washington, and MacArthur exploded, “I have absolutely no use for Washington at all, including the President!” (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 483-484)

Although Acheson used another military hero to shade MacArthur, neither Truman nor Marshall could handle MacArthur or his ego. The general put his “rollback” doctrine in practice trying to “solve the communist problem once and for all”. There was not a way to shade MacArthur’s mistakes or the chinese intervention in the Korean’s war even with the general’s censorship (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 105-107). The damage taken by the state department was severe and ultimately cost the next election.

“When Truman dismissed MacArthur for insubordination in April 1951, anti-administration talks escalated calls for impeachment” (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 115)



Source: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/3400/longterm-gallup-poll-trends-portrait-american-public-opinion.aspx>

In 1953 there was a consensus that USSR represented a huge threat to American way of life and the Truman-Acheson’s foreign policy could not offer any satisfactory answer. Acheson later admitted they had created a monster, and even Kennan (who was considered by the “wise men” as the more radical among them) denounced the new state department intelligentsia was using his thoughts and theories wrongly¹⁵. The US government found its way to fight the Cold War, but they hadn’t yet the correct weapons.

2) Theories and information

¹⁵ “Kennan would complain that he did not intend his theory of Soviet “containment” (as it later dubbed) to be interpreted as primarily a military response.” (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013, p. 352-353)

The US political science theories' development (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 128-129; 154-155) were erratic after the second world war (REISCH, 2005, p. 3-6)¹⁶. At the same time the war brought an anti-intellectualism (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 212-217) sentiment (GOFF, 1990, p. 267), US government understood they were ill prepared to deal with soviets¹⁷. The language was by far the lesser problem (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 14), but how to understand the country that had suffered most in the war and helped to win it¹⁸. How could this entire country be administrated in completely different basis from occidental paradigm (representative democracy and free market)? How was your function system? Could this way really beat the "america's way"? The war partner period offered brief but disturbing answers about these questions. USSR seemed to be stronger than its opposition had admitted. The real problem was US simply did not know.

"A rapid process of 'bildung', however, under supervision of german professors, would remedy this and ensure an orderly transition ushering America into its imperial age. The thrust of the Rockefeller Foundation's efforts to develop a field of IR after 1945 was indeed the need to train policy personnel for the State Department and other policy institutions" (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 10)

The lack of information about East Europe and USSR was not a simple setback to be solved. Almost all knowledge produced by US universities in the 40' had a diffuse

¹⁶ The Rockefeller Foundation began planning its major area studies initiative not long after the United States entered the war. Even as its program officers scurried to contribute to the war effort, the foundation focused on long-term goals, not wartime emergencies. It wanted to promote area studies not as a means for knowing enemies, friends, or subjects, but as a means of spurring more cosmopolitan general education, promoting interdisciplinary research, and reducing the "provincialism" of the social sciences. (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 18)

¹⁷ Isaacson emphasizes Foreign Service began to turn a "professional outfit" in the middle of 50' (ISAACSON e THOMAS, 2013), Engerman adds "US was grossly unprepared for a world divided between East and West (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 1), Guilhot stressed "In the United States at least there is no coherent set of methods (...) for the study of international affairs" (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 8), Saunders says "America, despite a massive marshaling of the arts in the new deal period, was a virgin in the practice of international Kulturkampf." (SAUNDERS, 2013, p. 15), Haslam affirms "Amateurism, idealism, and naiveté were still evident in the most unusual quarters of the US government. Ill-informed comment reflected either an unbounded sense of American power or genuine innocence, sometimes both" (HASLAM, 2011, p. 1236 of 15098).

¹⁸ "The keenest observers of the Soviet Union were typically radicals who had returned disenchanted from pilgrimages to the Communist holy land or diplomats, like George Frost Kennan, who had received specialized training in European universities." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 13)

admiration tone (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 21-24). The literature, the history and even the fight against czarism brought the few existing academics closer to the Reds than US government would have wanted. The academics who were interested to know USSR suffered two additional problems: the Soviet information control and the lack of a free market prices as basis for economic comprehension¹⁹.

This attitude carried into the postwar world, when Fisher lectured about and wrote a book called America and Russia in the World Community. He acknowledged Russia's differences—for instance, an "interpretation of freedom of the press [that] does not correspond with our[s]"—but optimistically declared that divergences would soon give way to unity. The closing chapter: "One World or None. (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 23)

Several programs were created, consuming a lot of money (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 80-81), in the quest for USSR (and East Europe) deciphering explanations. Even more people were involved to make sure this closeness would not endanger national concerns. There were the science people and the cover agents to overview the scientists²⁰. All methodological solutions created to know USSR definitely were not the best ones (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 49-51). Interviewing USSR emigrates (the Refugee Interview Project), for example, did not provide unbiased information and all econometrics researches could not solve the puzzle of communist economy. The "Troy" and "Soviet Vulnerability" projects could not give any real basis for an institutional gain over USSR. Objectively speaking, US government had reached a

¹⁹ These two problems existed besides Mccarthism: "The field faced another, especially delicate, problem: political suspicions. Sovietology rose to prominence at almost exactly the same time as Senator Joseph McCarthy. By late 1954, three of Columbia's five core faculty faced accusations of disloyalty. McCarthy condemned Ernest Simmons as "a Communist at the time" he had led the wartime program at Cornell. In the next breath, he fingered John Hazard as "a member of the Communist conspiracy." Mosely defended the pair by saying that they may have made comments "that now appear unfounded," but were loyal Americans." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 41)

²⁰ "[Army General Geroid] Robinson rehearsed all of the arguments for the Russian Institute in an article published in the uncertain months after the war's end. He considered knowledge of the USSR to be a top national priority; never before, he worried, had "so many know[n] so little about so much." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 29). "The attempts to bring Soviet scholars were hampered by Soviet inaction as well as by American action, namely, the Alien Registration Act, which required the fingerprinting of Communists coming to the United States." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 31)

consensus, supported by the media, politicians and people in general that something was tormenting the country, what exactly it was or how to counter it, however, was not clear.

"The center's new leaders were certainly "men of sense and reason"—and good connections. But they were not, by any stretch of the imagination, Russia experts. (...) but none had been to the USSR nor engaged in serious study of Marxism, Communism, or Russia." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 46)

"The speaker at the center's inaugural research seminar was Geoffrey Gorer, a British psychiatrist best known for his swaddling theory. He argued that the tight swaddling of Russian infants resulted in either a propensity to violence or feelings of helplessness and passivity; this explained both Stalin's personality and his success in cowing a nation." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 47)

This uncomfortable situation could not be continued. And the great financiers in US were engaged in this task. In 1954 took place in Columbia University, the first international political conference, sponsored by Rockefeller Foundation with an explicit objective to give a paradigmatic and scientific response for the US international problems. The explicit choice for Realism not only answered why US should engage in a rivalry against USSR, but it extracted all moral constraints²¹. At least now there was a scientific theory telling how the international politics WERE, indifferently people, like Acheson for example, have agreed or not. The scientific argument forced through Realism simply overtook the old "wise politics".

"(...) the 1954 conference was a wholly different kettle of fish, since it was organized by an institution whose business was precisely the creation of new disciplinary fields, through a combination of institutional and individual grants, the creation of "invisible colleges" of like-minded scholars, and the coupling of research and policy." (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 9)

"By the end of 1954, America's Soviet experts had survived the security inquests—indeed, better than the Grand Inquisitor himself, who faced censure from his colleagues only months after haranguing Simmons and Hazard." (...) "He [General Robinson] was surely right. The need for Russia experts in government and

²¹ "The specificity of IR resided not in a method but rather in the particular assemblage of materials and techniques it represented, in the 'patterns of equipment' it brought to bear upon the study of power" (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 133)

academie was, if anything, more important in 1954 than it was in 1944.”
(ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 42)

“This understanding meant that realists believed both that national survival at times required doing evil and that statesmen had to minimize this possibility and avoid becoming evil” Robert Jervis in (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 34)

The names presented in the conference are sufficient to establish its legitimacy and importance. Kennan, who had suffered with some kind of ostracism in the state department, could not attend but enthusiastically send a paper. Paul Nitze, Reinhold Niebuhr, William Fox, Walter Lippmann, Arnold Wolfers, Dorothy Fosdick, James Reston and Don Price, Dean Rusk gathered with Hans Morgenthau to back a definitive guideline to US international actions.²² What was acknowledged, in Acheson's time, as a difficult political discussion against an old war partner, suddenly became an obligatory fight for the world supremacy. A game of life and death that should be fought by any means.

“Ironically, while the department faced widespread condemnation for softness on communism, the now famous joint State-Defense Study Group headed by Paul Nitze formulated a policy directive [NSC-68] that recommended massive militarization in the fight against communism” (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 83)

Realism gave meaning to US international actions, endorsing investments in military means but, more important, creating a “democracy vs totalitarianism” narrative. This narrative could be sold to american public incrementing the economic production by adding the “help to fight the reds” covert commercial discourse. The timing was precise, at the same time the internal media complex became dominant²³, the academics produced minimum tools to comprehend USSR and the state department

²² “The gap between IR theory and policy making being much narrower than is now the case, theorists saw their task as relevant to policy, and policymakers, at least those like [Robert] Bowie and [Paul] Nitze, hoped for guidance from scholars” JERVIS in GUILHOT, 2011, p. 38

²³ “Between 1949 and 1959, Americans bought six or seven million (TV) sets each year, until eighty-six percent of homes had one” (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 5)

had finally been inoculated with a theory about international politics (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 142). A scientific theory.

"Paving the way toward an autonomous discipline, the decision to strengthen a "theory of international politics" was taken in 1953 and officialized in the president's report to the trustees" (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 144)

The Eisenhower-Foster Dulles period took advantage in this matter. A clear plan was designed to international politics. This plan was "scientific" based and do not tainted by "ideology". Leading the free world in a crusade against "totalitarianism" was not a political choice but an historical necessity (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 165). It was not "the right thing to do" but the "only possibility". Realism make the life of decision makers easier as it dictates the objectives of international politics, the means by which the actions should be carried out and, even better, gave no room to dissents.

"There was no need whatsoever, in short, for any expanding apparatus of academic IR in the manner typical of the social sciences, devoted as they were to ahistorical, predictive 'modeling' of what states presumably do and do not do." STEPHANSON in GUILHOT, 2011, p. 171

"Offerings in Russian increased for the next decade, through the end of the Grand Alliance of World War II into the early years of the Cold War. Enrollments reached a plateau and started to decline in the early 1950s; the New York Times estimated that the number of undergraduates studying Russian fell by one-third between 1950 and 1954." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 83)

Of course there were other narratives about the role of US and USSR in the international field. There were major problems with these efforts too, but the government conceal brilliantly these points by appealing to "freedom-serfdom" opposition²⁴ (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 116). In a way, Acheson's view about international politics was not accepted but, paradoxically, his "clearer than the truth" formula to tell history seemed to be up to date.

²⁴ "Similarly, the group sought to elevate public discussions about the Soviet Union; it cited French sociologist Raymond Aron, who observed that the high quality of American scholarship on Soviet topics contrasted sharply with the 'shockingly' primitive level of public information" (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 73)

"Speaking to an American Television Society luncheon at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York in 1951, he told members that 'full cooperation between his department and the TV industry was so essential both for the medium and for the taxpayers of this country who want to know what is being done with their money during this national emergency [Korean War]'" (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 137)

"'Militant Liberty' was a secret domestic psychological warfare campaign created in 1955 to 'explain the true conditions existing under Communism in simple terms' and to 'generate a motivation to combat this threat'" (BERNHARD, 2003, p. 149)

What should be stressed here is the efforts to take Acheson away and, at the same time, to create the academic field of international relations. Realism accomplished beautifully both missions. As international politics were now part of a scientific field, mere politicians should remain altogether distant of the decisions makers (GUILHOT, 2011, p. 199-200). There could be no more room for "idealists" or gentlemen. Interference on Korea's war, for example, was not a matter of politics, full of ideologically blind points and unspeakable interests, it was a scientific obligation, otherwise, according with Realism, we will see the enlargement of Soviet power, inevitably. Even if soviets did not want (individually) to project their power, the Realism "demonstrates" they should and they will.

In this trend, all scientific production about USSR and East Europe should contribute to the plan of making US not only safe, but retaining the upper hand in international politics²⁵. It did not matter anymore to adhere to a code of conduct. The world suddenly became a nasty place where things were not really as they looked and people could simply lie because they "have to" in order to grant their country's survival. US should be prepared to do whatever it has to do to emerge victorious in this dire situation. The old diplomacy, based on reliance, negotiation, commitment is death and

²⁵ "His OSS boss, Geroid Tanquary Robinson, worried that Moore was "not as objective as one might hope" since he believed that the American and Soviet systems "were bound to clash." (ENGERMAN, 2009, p. 188)

buried. A new treacherous, ominous and unreliable world has emerged. The Cold War had begun.

"Since the fickleness of the democratic public was a central concern of the post war American realist Project, it is not surprising that the participants in the 1954 meeting repeatedly return to the question of the compatibility of democratic domestic politics with the requirements of realist diplomacy. Part of this concern stems from the inexorable tradeoff that the participants perceive between liberty and order and between justice and peace." SNYDER in GUILHOT, 2011, p. 59

"What Kennan failed to see, ironically because of his realism, was that the United States could often create its own realities and do so rather successfully." STEPHENSON in GUILHOT, 2011, p. 168

"When America entered the international arena, it was young and robust and had the power to make the world conform to its vision of international relations" (KISSINGER, 1994, p. 19)

3) Conclusion

It's clear there were two different worlds. Acheson's world was no doubt conflictive but against an old war allied who kept his words and compromises and had the right to fight for his security. The US should remain attuned to its values and guide the free world, maybe eventually be able to defend it. However, Acheson assumes that the possibility of a conflict between US and USSR was, nevertheless, a mandatory situation and, as far as he is concern, a new global conflict will be averted. Acheson kept Kennan and his thoughts away from the core of state department. Asking for a "fierce, effective but peaceful" action from US about Soviet situation should not give any interpretation of hostility nor close any possibility of negotiation. For Acheson and his "Wise Men" politics was not a game with a foreseeable outcome. People could be predicted provided diplomat had certain negotiation skills, people could be convinced, charmed, dissuaded, again, by high diplomatic abilities, but the "international field" as a role could not be accurately envisaged. People make decisions, not structures. That was the Acheson's (and his colleagues) way of understanding International Politics.

As long as they hold true their vision, the warmongers felt disturbed. Macarthism took all US as a dangerous infection, muting any dissonant position. From Hollywood to academy. Reaching the Senate, the fear of communism became hate of USSR. Anyone that did not share this point of view was considered a communist agent or, at least, a sympathizer. Acheson itself was accused and prosecuted by Mccarthy. He held the line and kept his word, MacArthur did not. The general disobeyed a direct order not to send their troops above 38 parallel and was dismissed by this action. The Chinese answer was the first rock to “roll down” against Truman’s office. An avalanche soon rolled down and despite US retained the line and protected South Korea, the incident was described as an indisputable example of communist imperialism rather than a foolish action of a well-known anticommunist (MacArthur).

Sounding as a “war drum”, Realism agglutinated the “cold warriors” and send them into battle. At the same time the drum kept the pace and energy, it has silenced other discordant voices. The drum can be a powerful weapon, as the Realism was in the Cold War. In the end, Realism became a self-fulfilling prophecy, creating the world that, supposedly, it was only meant to describe. There is, however, an important point to note, nobody goes for a war taking a war drum unless he desires the war. The idea comes, often, before the conflict.

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