7 THE MARSHALL PLAN AND NATO

As the events in France and Italy showed, the nature of Stalin's threat to Western Europe was at least as much political as it was military. Through his control of popular fronts, Stalin hoped to subvert existing governments. He hoped that continuing and deepening economic hardship would demonstrate to the people of Western Europe that capitalism had failed. Early in 1947 it seemed that he might be right; the Western European economies were faltering. On top of an anemic postwar recovery, Europe had a very hard winter in 1946–47. The economic recovery stalled. The situation seemed hopeless. Very large U.S. loans to Britain and to France had done little good.

Secretary of State George C. Marshall thought the situation could be reversed, and his optimism proved decisive. Having been disillusioned at Moscow the previous month, he announced at Harvard on 5 June 1947 that the United States would provide European recovery funds. This time the Europeans would have to accept a degree of national planning (with U.S. review) and membership in a pan-European economic organization, the OEEC (Organization for European Economic Cooperation, later the OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). The program, which became popularly known as the Marshall Plan, was formally termed the European Recovery Program (ERP). Representatives of all the European governments, including the Soviet Union, were invited to a conference convened in Paris.[1] The Soviets were not expected to join; the Marshall Plan was a direct attack on Stalin's hopes that economic chaos would bring him victory in Europe.

Until this time, Stalin had toyed with schemes to attract American financing for reconstruction. He continued to seek a postwar loan as late as 1947. One scheme was to attract U.S. money to pay for the settlement of displaced European and Russian Jews in the Crimea (Stalin called it "California in the Crimea").[2] Stalin initially opposed independence for Palestine, partly because he considered it a competitor for his resettlement scheme, but probably also because in 1945–47 he still hoped that favoring Britain would help split that country from the United States. Once

Stalin could no longer hope for U.S. money, he felt free to use anti-Semitism, always popular in Russia, as the basis for his next purge.[3]

Stalin briefly thought that he could get Marshall Plan aid without accepting the program's conditions. A Soviet economist, Evgeniy Varga, told him that the plan was no more than a desperate U.S. attempt to head off that country's inevitable postwar domestic economic crisis. U.S. manufacturers desperately needed European markets in which to unload their goods.[4] While it is true that the Marshall Plan helped end the U.S. recession of 1948, Varga's interpretation of American motives was pure fantasy. When Molotov arrived in Paris, he discovered as much. Soviet intelligence told him that the Americans and the British had secretly agreed that the Marshall Plan would help defend Western Europe against a Soviet threat.[5]

Molotov wired Stalin that joining in the plan would amount to accepting American economic domination. Given Stalin's usual techniques, Molotov was presumably echoing his master's views. To receive aid the Soviet government would have had to reveal how it planned to spend the money. How would Stalin explain the vast military projects his starving country was being forced to support? He said simply that the plan was the beginning of the creation of an American-led coalition. Stalin apparently initially ordered the Eastern Europeans to attend the conference in order to disrupt it; they were then to withdraw after three days, taking as many other delegations with them as they could. He seems to have reversed himself because he was afraid that the delegates might not follow through.[6] The Czechs and the Poles had announced their intention to attend before the reversal was ordered.[7]

In Western Europe, the plan presented Stalin with a dilemma. If it succeeded, Europe's economic crisis would pass and the popular front would lose an important opportunity. Yet, if Western Communist parties opposed the plan, they would lose support, since to most Europeans the plan offered hope. By the time the Cominform met in September 1947, the popular fronts were finished and the Italian Communists were being attacked for their tardiness in rejecting the Marshall Plan. Stalin demanded that the Italians and the French proclaim their loyalty to the Soviet Union and their fierce opposition to the United States.[8] They were told to prepare for armed uprisings. Stalin's order to oppose the Marshall Plan damaged both the French and the Italian Communists in 1948 elections.

Stalin apparently feared that the plan had the potential to roll back his power in Eastern Europe. The Czech and Polish governments wanted to participate (knowing this, Stalin announced that the Poles had rejected the plan before they even voted on it).[9]

It was time to end the fiction of independent Central European governments. Hungary came first. There, the Communists gained control of the political police. Using them, their leader, Matyas Rakosi, destroyed the non-Communist parties bit by bit with what he called "salami tactics." In the fall 1947 election, Rakosi's men stole votes on a large scale. Two Marxist parties triumphed. Hungary was the first Eastern European government to proclaim Communist status, in 1949.

The Hungarian election of 1947 shocked many Europeans: it showed just how far Stalin's men could and would go. Fear of Stalinist expansionism in France helped defeat the French Communist Party in the 1948 election.[10]

Bevin was more interested in security treaties than ever, but in the summer of 1947 he deferred attempts to negotiate them with the Benelux countries because the advent of the Marshall Plan made economic cooperation more urgent.[11] When the Soviets withdrew from the Paris conference in July, Bevin renewed his call for a Western alliance. On 17 December 1947, in the aftermath of yet another failed Foreign Ministers Conference, he told the French foreign minister that it was time to create some sort of federation in Western Europe and that American backing would be needed. That day, he proposed to Marshall that a treaty group (Britain, France, and Benelux) be loosely but formally linked with the United States and Canada. Bevin formally proposed a Western European Union (now including Greece, Scandinavia, and possibly Portugal) in a major speech to the House of Commons on 22 January 1948.[12] He thought that, until a European alliance was in place, the U.S. Senate would reject wider American participation. In Washington there was a real fear that talks on a security treaty would jeopardize passage of the Marshall Plan.

By this time the military situation in Europe seemed so bleak that U.S. and British commanders in Germany feared that Stalin might run them out of the country and off the Continent. In January 1948 Adm. Richard L. Conolly, commander of U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean and the Near East, arrived in London to discuss Dunkirk-style plans to save occupation forces in the event of a Soviet attack on Germany. By this time efforts to deal with Stalin's political threat seemed to be working. The British Joint Planners feared that disclosure of the talks, which had been directed at a military threat, would demoralize the Europeans and thus hand Stalin victory without war.[13]

Meanwhile, as another consequence of the Marshall Plan, Stalin ordered the Czech government rolled up. Czechoslovakia was unique in that the Communists had won a plurality (38 percent) in a free election in 1946 and thus had a reasonable chance of gaining power legitimately. However, in 1948 it seemed likely that the Communists would do poorly in the next election because they now opposed the Marshall Plan. Czechoslovakia's continuing independence had seemed to demonstrate that Stalin was willing to tolerate friendly though non-Communist regimes in Central Europe. But Stalin found that independence (demonstrated by the Czechs' attempt to attend the Paris meeting) unacceptable. In February 1948, the Communists staged a coup and seized power. No Soviet troops were present, although the local Communist party had formed an armed militia that helped the Communist-dominated police. No one doubted that Stalin was responsible. According to Pavel Sudoplatov, then a senior Soviet operative, Prime Minister Edvard Benes had been compromised by the Soviets during the prewar Czech crisis. When Stalin decided to take over the country, Sudoplatov was sent to demand Benes's help.[14]

To many in the West, the Czech coup demonstrated that Stalin would not brook any opposition, no matter how mild. Western governments were particularly wary because their failure to defend Czechoslovakia in 1938 had given Hitler a green light to continue his aggression. Ironically, the coup, triggered by the Marshall Plan, may have been crucial in convincing Congress to enact the program without crippling amendment.

In 1948 Stalin apparently did show some restraint: he did not seize power in Finland. When the Soviets defeated the Finns in 1944, they formed a Communist-dominated popular front, but despite Stalin's wish to punish the Finns for their resistance in 1939–40, they did not occupy the country. Soviet troops were badly needed elsewhere. In 1945, the Communists won a quarter of the seats in the Finnish parliament. In 1948 they and their allies controlled both the state and mobile police. However, the Social Democratic Party had not been broken up. A. A. Zhdanov, the senior Soviet official on the spot, had helped plan the 1939–40 Winter War against Finland and had helped Sovietize Estonia. He seems to have realized that a Czech-style coup would not have succeeded; to give the Communists power the Soviets would have to invade. Zhdanov personally refused such requests at least twice during the first half of 1948. An invasion would have been too blatant.

On 22 February 1948, Stalin offered Finland a friendship treaty. Similar treaties had just been concluded with Hungary and Romania. The Czech coup was underway. The Finnish president stalled for a month. A delegation of Finns went to Moscow to negotiate the treaty. Stalin suddenly changed course and dramatically weakened the treaty; unlike Hungary and Romania, Finland did not have to enter a military alliance with the Soviet Union. A planned coup had apparently just been abandoned. A snap mobilization of the Finnish army, which greatly outnumbered the two Communist-controlled police forces, may explain what happened. It has been suggested that Stalin knew that the Finnish army could fight, and he may have feared the cost of maintaining order in the face of an unfriendly population.[15]

In the newly Communist countries of Eastern Europe, the new ruling parties prospered. They were the essential means of control. However, the Soviets knew that most of the new Party members were opportunists. They were right: many would defect under stress, as in Poland and Hungary in 1956, or they would simply lie low, as in East Germany in 1953. To exert control over foreign Communist parties, the Soviets created secret police in the image of their own NKVD (later the KGB). These new organizations answered, not only to their own governments, but also to the Soviet secret police.[16] In the event the governing Communist party collapsed, they would preserve Soviet control. The KGB connection would become particularly important in 1989.

By this time Truman could point to many examples of Stalin's aggression. The European Recovery Program and a revived U.S. military were, he said, "two halves of the same walnut."[17] Truman's phrase reflected both his personal judgement and one important implication of the Marshall Plan. Truman linked Marshall Plan funding with national defense, and he had to include both the plan and rearmament

in the same balanced budget.[18] The cost of rebuilding Germany and Japan, while not included in the Marshall Plan funds, served much the same purpose of giving their populations a viable alternative to communism. It would soon be obvious that Truman could not afford rearmament and maintain any sort of balanced budget. One or more of the services would have to be cut deeply if anything was to survive. On the other hand, Truman considered Stalin's subversive threat far more urgent than his military threat—as long as Stalin did not have the atomic bomb. Thus to the president it seemed quite sensible to concentrate on economics and politics.

On 25 March 1948 the new secretary of defense, James Forrestal, asked Congress to add a $3 billion supplemental to the $9.8 billion budget for fiscal year 1949. Half of it would increase uniformed personnel, from 1,374,000 to 1,734,000. That was rearmament, done the old-fashioned way. The men would be armed with weapons left over from World War II. Unfortunately, some of those weapons, particularly aircraft, were now obsolete. The other half of the supplemental would buy production versions of the new weapons the services had been developing since the war. Some early production had been paid for out of money left over from World War II, but anything not spent by the end of FY48 (30 June 1948) had to go back to the Treasury.[19] The supplemental paid for the bombers the air force needed to execute its new atomic war plans.[20]

The huge wartime U.S. military production machine had been demobilized. It was estimated in 1947 that it would take at least a year to reconvert U.S. industry.[21] When the United States had mobilized for World War II, companies had pressed for arms contracts because they were still suffering from the Great Depression. They could, moreover, expect increasing orders as the world political situation continued to deteriorate. This time the U.S. economy was healthy. Moreover, it seemed that defense orders would be held to a trickle, because no one in Washington was very willing to balloon the defense budget.

An exception to reconversion was made for the aircraft industry. In 1945, aircraft makers expected lucrative civilian contracts for airliners and even for personal aircraft (far-sighted developers talked of building homes with their own hangars opening onto communal runways). By 1947, however, aircraft companies still depended on military contracts for 80 to 90 percent of their business. As wartime contracts ran out, companies began to starve. The new U.S. Air Force argued that it should be sized to require enough orders to maintain a healthy industry. It would also need equipment to train the million and a half men the air force would need for a five-year war, and personnel to man the bases essential for the mobilized force. The desired 70-group (three squadrons each) force level was set by Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, deputy commander of the army air forces, on 29 August 1945, when he was told that a previous goal, 78-groups, was not affordable.[22] On the other hand, specific companies would not be protected. For example, Curtiss, one of the largest U.S. wartime aircraft manufacturers, was allowed to go out of the aircraft-making business in 1948.

The aircraft industry had to be kept healthy because technology was changing so fast. A jet fighter that was state-of-the-art one year might be obsolete three years later. For example, in 1946 the hottest U.S. Air Force fighter was the new F-84 Thunderjet. Two years later the air force was buying the swept-wing Sabrejet (F-86), which totally outclassed the F-84. Three years after that the air force was buying the F-100 Super Sabre, its first supersonic fighter—which outclassed the F-86.[23] By the late 1940s, there were also prototype medium-range (about 1,500 to 2,500 miles) jet nuclear bombers, such as the U.S. B-47 and the Soviet Tu-16; each was capable of carrying ten-thousand-pound weapons. Their existence would further accelerate new aircraft development, because they were so difficult to intercept. Fighters were generally coached into a tail chase, during which they could hope to stay with a bomber long enough to shoot it down. To win, the fighter needed a speed advantage, perhaps as much as 50 percent. It would take supersonic fighters to deal with the subsonic jet bombers available in the early 1950s. These aircraft would take some years to develop. That is why reconnaissance B-47s were so successful in eluding subsonic Soviet fighters when they flew over the Soviet Union in the 1950s.

Existing subsonic fighters could be coached into position to intercept fast bombers, but they needed much more powerful weapons: first rockets and then guided missiles directed by radar and computer. They became much more complex than their World War II predecessors. Not only did the unit price of aircraft rise dramatically, but also the cost of the associated maintenance organization. By the early 1950s the U.S. Air Force would think in terms of systems in which the radar and computer aboard the fighter were as important as the airframe and engine. At the same time, work began on surface-based antiaircraft missiles to replace the existing guns. German wartime work on antiaircraft missiles provided inspiration. By the mid-1950s the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain were all developing and deploying such weapons. Unlike guns, they were most effective against high-flying aircraft, since the further away the target (within limits), the more time the missile had to adjust its course.

Atomic weapons, too, had transformed the air defense problem. During World War II, no air force could sustain a loss rate of about 5 percent for very long, since it would be wiped out within a few weeks or months. Now a few successful bomber attacks might cripple a country. Even if 95 percent of the bombers were shot down, the rest might destroy a country. For the U.S. government of 1948, matters were not entirely bleak. As long as the Soviets had no atomic bombs, the United States did not have to pay the very high prospective cost of air defense. However, once the Soviets developed bombs of their own, the situation would be transformed. Suddenly the cost merely of defending the United States would rise disastrously, adding a new dimension to the budget.

For Stalin, Germany was still the key target in Europe. Given the presence of Allied armies of occupation, popular front victories throughout the country still

offered him the only chance of victory short of war. To win, he had to defeat the Western effort at economic revival. The November–December 1947 Council of Foreign Ministers meeting broke up without making any progress on a German peace treaty. Given Soviet obstructionism, the three Western powers occupying Germany (Britain, France, and the United States) met in London on 23 February 1948, as the Czech crisis worsened. Three days later they invited the Benelux countries to join the conference. It was time to set up a German state; the French decided to join their zone to the bizone to form a "trizone." Stalin concluded that, once the Western Allies merged their zones, they would not allow any Communist-oriented popular front to gain power. He decided to take action.

In March 1948 Gen. Lucius D. Clay, commanding the U.S. occupation force in Germany, wired Lt. Gen. Stephen J. Chamberlin, the director of army intelligence, that he feared imminent Soviet attack.[24] The cable was particularly impressive because Clay had been almost alone among senior administration figures in scoffing at the possibility of war with the Soviets. Clay later said that he had considered war unlikely, and that he had been trying to alarm the U.S. public to a slowly developing crisis. Privately he said that when visiting him in Berlin in February 1948 Chamberlin had asked him for a strong message that could be used to sell Universal Military Training (i.e., preparedness against the Soviet threat) to Congress. Clay apparently thought the cable would be used only in closed session, and was shocked that it was made public.[25] However, Clay's willingness to send a message suggests that he saw both in Prague and in Berlin alarming signs of Soviet aggressiveness. The CIA discounted the immediate threat of war, but it admitted that Stalin might strike any time after the next two months. Soon the Soviets began to interfere with ground traffic between the Western zones of occupation and Berlin.

On 3 April 1948 President Truman signed the Marshall Plan into law. Under the four-year program about $13 billion was spent. Marshall Plan spending and the Korean War mobilization put enough cash back into European economies to get them working again. The key to success was probably that the U.S. government insisted on helping decide how cash was to be spent: as seed money, and often to change the way the European economies worked. For this reason, amounts smaller than the loans made in 1945–46 to Britain and France bought much better results. Overall, European weakness made it possible for the U.S. government to press ideas which otherwise might not have been acceptable. For example, a 30 March 1949 draft NSC report on "Measures Required to Achieve U.S. Objectives With Respect to the USSR" includes, as a primary political/economic objective, encouraging "in all appropriate ways the political and economic unification of Europe."[26] The European Recovery Program was the beginning of the European Union. The habit of cooperation born under ERP made it easier for European governments to work together for common defense.

The new German trizone was offered Marshall Plan aid. Stalin had little access to the trizone, but the three Western Allies occupied zones in Berlin, 110 miles inside the Soviet zone of Germany. The temporary settlement reached in 1945 included a formal agreement to allow the Western powers air access to their zones in Berlin, but no formal agreement had been reached on surface access. Yet the western part of the city lived on supplies moved across Soviet-occupied territory.

In March 1948 the head of Stalin's German party (the SED), Wilhelm Pieck, had warned that the October 1948 elections in Berlin were likely to be disastrous unless "one could remove the Allies from Berlin."[27] Stalin decided to demonstrate to the Germans that the Western powers could not protect them. Ground access to West Berlin was cut off in stages, culminating on 24 June 1948 with suspension of all rail and barge traffic into West Berlin and prohibition of any supply from the Soviet zone. The city's western citizens were offered ration tickets redeemable in its Soviet-occupied eastern zone.

The Allied response, the Berlin airlift, was dramatic. Berlin was supplied entirely by air. The operation was all the more remarkable in that a January 1948 U.S. Army study had concluded that it would be impossible. The initial force of seventy C-47s could lift about 225 tons per day. Using more of its aircraft, the U.S. Air Force offered two thousand tons a day, and the British added another 750. A new airfield, Tegel, was built, largely by the Berliners. Daily tonnage capacity rose to 4,500 and then to 5,600 tons. Rations in Berlin were still quite short, but tolerable.

By instigating the crisis over Berlin, Stalin converted a nascent American-British entente into an effective military alliance. Bevin proposed reviving the wartime combined (U.S.-UK) planning staff to consider both the logistics of the airlift and further military steps (such as moving heavy bombers into Europe). Thus from 12 to 21 April 1948 U.S., British, and Canadian planners met in Washington to prepare an outline emergency war plan based on the earlier U.S. plans. The British would defend both the United Kingdom and the Cairo-Suez area; most U.S. troops would have to be concentrated in the United States, for local defense. The weak U.S. and British ground forces in Western Europe would have to fall back, initially to the Rhine and then, in a fighting retreat, to evacuation ports in France and Italy.[28] The U.S. Navy's carriers would operate mainly in the Mediterranean, to gain air superiority and to attack Soviet forces moving south to the Middle East.

As yet there were no other Allies on the Continent. The British had seen little point in expending their own scarce resources there. Like the Americans, they remembered World War II. As in 1940, at the outset they would probably be chased off the Continent. Their main threat against the Soviets would be, as in 1940–44, air attack, which would be mounted mainly from the United Kingdom itself. Again, as in World War II, securing the sea routes between North America and the Commonwealth would be vital. The Middle East was also clearly vital. All of this made defense of the Continent distinctly secondary, which meant that Britain did not have to maintain a large army in Germany. However, by 1948 there was for many a growing fear that if the Soviets could conquer enough of Western Europe, they could place their air and, in the future, missile forces in position to bombard

the United Kingdom. Thus ultimately it was impossible to separate defense of the UK from the defense of Western Europe.[29] To get resources for that purpose, the British began to retreat from their initial preoccupation with defending the Middle East.[30]

During March and April 1948, the British chiefs of staff drew a "stopline," beyond which a Soviet advance would be a direct threat to the United Kingdom.[31] In September they set it at the Rhine, to keep the Soviets out of France and the traditional invasion coast of Europe (the Benelux countries); Britain had gone to war in 1914 to deny the Germans control of this coastline. So much would be needed merely to defend this line that resources could not readily be spared to protect any country outside it. Conversely, it would be important to bring any country inside the "stopline" into an alliance, and to secure American pledges to help protect it. Attractive allies were Iberia (Spain and Portugal), which controlled important naval bases, and western Germany (for its industrial potential). On the other hand, Scandinavia would not be included unless Sweden, which supposedly was well-armed, joined. This choice seems odd in maritime terms. Scandinavia blocked Soviet access to the sea approaches to Britain and to the Atlantic.

The French were vital partners, because potentially only they offered a large enough army to stop Stalin's hordes. The British and the Americans were likely to contribute mainly air and sea power. The French were reluctant suitors, still afraid to offend Stalin unless the Americans signed a treaty with them. On the other hand, they were greatly affected by the Czech coup. When Bevin proposed a collective treaty (France and Benelux with Britain) on 13 February 1948, the French offered only bilateral treaties, all directed against Germany, like the one they had signed at Dunkirk. The Benelux countries demanded a collective treaty.

Bevin had already warned the United States and Canada that time was running out if the Soviet thrust to the Atlantic was to be stopped. There was a real fear in Washington that premature emphasis on a collective treaty might preclude passage of the Marshall Plan or inspire isolationists looking towards the 1948 presidential election. Bevin argued that a treaty was needed to assure Europeans of American support, to stop the spread of a gnawing insecurity. The State Department answered on 3 March 1948 that the United States could not get directly involved until the Europeans themselves united to protect the Continent; a series of bilateral treaties would not do. The French cabinet accepted the collective treaty the same day, specifically to satisfy the United States. Britain and France signed the Brussels Pact (Western Union), a treaty with the Benelux countries, on 17 March 1948.[32] The French knew that they had considerable leverage: in August they almost killed the evolving transatlantic treaty (which became NATO) by demanding that the United States immediately promise troops and military supplies to France as well as an integrated command structure including France.[33]

With U.S. rearmament only beginning, the only immediate leverage the United States had was its powerful air and naval forces. In Berlin, General Clay recommended that the squadron of B-29s in Germany be reinforced to a group (this buildup was completed on 2 July 1948), that a fighter group move up its planned arrival in Germany from August, and that B-29s deploy to Britain and perhaps to France. Two B-29 groups were earmarked for Britain and the necessary invitation was issued on 14 July 1948. Given his intelligence sources in the West, Stalin probably knew that the bombers brought to England were not nuclear-capable.[34]

The new de facto allies had plenty of military-age manpower, but they lacked enough modern weapons. For Truman, badly strapped for money, military assistance was a less costly way of building U.S. security, because the United States did not have to pay for manpower. Then, too, as before 1941, orders for military equipment could help revive the U.S. defense industry. In August 1948 Truman approved an NSC recommendation that he seek legislation to broaden his authority to provide military assistance. The new Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP) included transfers of U.S. equipment (including ships and aircraft) and arms purchases abroad (the offshore program, OSP) to revive local defense industries.

Despite the air of desperation implied by the stopline strategy, the British doubted that war was imminent. Surely Stalin would need a few years to recover from World War II. The British approached this question in several ways. One was to estimate that it would take two five-year plans to rebuild his country to the point at which he could risk war: that put the "year of maximum danger" at about 1956. A "five plus five" rule (no war for five years, the probability of war gradually increasing over the following five years, and then sharply after that) was enunciated at least as early as October 1946 and possibly about a year earlier. It became the formal basis for British planning by August 1947. Another approach was to imagine that Stalin would not move until he had enough atomic bombs (about one hundred) to devastate the United States. That would take about five years after Stalin's first test, the date for which was estimated as 1952. Thus, 1957 became the likely date for war (in December 1945 the British Joint Chiefs estimated that only the U.S. could initiate atomic warfare before 1955). The British recalled how in 1934 they had begun to rearm against Hitler after making the very lucky guess that Germany would probably be ready to fight in five years, so that 1939 would be "the year of maximum danger."[35] In 1949, the "year of maximum danger," 1957, became the target date for planning British military modernization. In March 1950 (that is, after the Soviet nuclear test) the British Joint Intelligence Committee brought forward the date by which war was likely, based on Soviet progress in "atomic research," but national planners could not change their goals to match; 1957 remained the target year for British rearmament.

To the British, the Americans seemed to lack any comparable long-range perspective. Early in 1949, with the crisis in Berlin winding down, the U.S. government apparently accepted the British concept that 1957 would be the "year of maximum danger."[36] But U.S. planners were certainly looking well ahead as they opposed the British stopline idea. To them it was politically disastrous: countries

outside the stopline might easily fall to the Communists. Italy was a case in point. The U.S. government valued it for its strategic location; its loss would demoralize Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. In northern Italy, World War II had ended as a civil war, with partisans fighting Fascists still loyal to Mussolini. That war ended because the British and the Americans occupied the country. No one knew whether the Communists would simply dig up their weapons and resume guerilla warfare once Allied troops were withdrawn after a peace treaty was signed. Early in 1948 the CIA estimated that in an armed uprising the Communists could probably gain temporary control of northern Italy. If Yugoslavia and/or a Communist France supplied serious assistance, the Italian government might be unable to regain control without foreign help. Probably it could not beat off a determined Yugoslav attack.[37]

The 1948 Italian election seemed crucial. The CIA backed the Christian Democrats, who won 48.5 percent of the vote. In this context it would have been disastrous to accept the British view that since Italy would not be able to defend itself for a long time, it had best be left outside the stopline. Thus British commanders in Austria and in Trieste were instructed not to help defend Italy in the event of war. The U.S. wanted these troops withdrawn into Italy in the event of war to support Italian resistance. Soon the U.S. government would argue that Italy should be invited to join NATO because otherwise she might accede to Soviet demands early in a war, or might even go Communist.

By January 1949 Stalin was hinting at compromise on Berlin. The blockade was finally lifted on 12 May 1949, just short of eleven months after it had been imposed. The citizens of Berlin—and of the "trizone"—were provided with a vivid demonstration of Western resolve at a crucial time. Within a few months, a West German state would be proclaimed. Many in the United States apparently saw Stalin's retreat as a hopeful indication that the Cold War had passed its peak. In effect the Berlin Blockade was the last of the series of Soviet offensive actions which marked the onset of the Cold War in Western Europe.

We now know that Stalin considered blocking air access to Berlin. He seems to have abandoned this idea when his air force pointed to superior Allied air strength. According to a recent Russian account, "it was no accident" that in July 1948 Stalin's Politburo passed a resolution calling for better national air defense.[38]

Stalin probably saw the blockade as a continuation of his efforts to gain control of Germany through politics and strong-arm tactics. He probably knew that standing U.S. and other Western forces in Europe were weak, and that the United States could not yet destroy the Soviet Union through nuclear attack. On the other hand, any open fight would lead to a drawn-out war against the United States, and thus probably to a World War II–style U.S. mobilization.

In November 1948, the Austrian Communists secretly planned their own coup, assuming, remarkably, that while the Social Democrats might resist them, the occupying Western military forces would not. Stalin soon quashed them. They

were showing too much initiative and too little judgement. One crisis at a time—in Berlin—was enough.[39]

Bevin's brainchild, the NATO treaty, was signed in Washington on 4 April 1949. The five core countries (Britain, France, Benelux) were joined at the foundation of NATO by the flanking states vital to sustained defense of sea lanes in the Atlantic (Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and Portugal) and the Mediterranean (Italy). Denmark not only controlled the straits leading out of the Baltic, but she also owned Greenland and the Faeroes. The French initially rejected the inclusion of Italy, as that would extend the alliance to the Mediterranean; but they changed their minds after the United States pressed the issue. For a time, there was talk of a separate Mediterranean pact, since some of the North Atlantic countries were reluctant to become involved in that area. On the other hand, Spain, which the British wanted to include, was not allowed to join.[40] Memories of Franco's close relationship with Hitler from the Spanish civil war onwards were still too painful. As recently as the Potsdam Conference Stalin had tried to enlist his wartime allies in displacing Franco in favor of a "democratic" regime. He apparently badly wanted to avenge his 1936–39 defeat. In 1945 the Spanish Left was still quite powerful, only barely contained by Franco's tough dictatorship. George Kennan emphasized these points in an early 1946 telegram to the U.S. State Department.

Spain offered several benefits. As the early war plans showed, it might be essential for a badly damaged NATO army to be able to retreat into Spain. In addition, Spain (and Spanish Morocco) controlled the mouth of the Mediterranean. There were also less tangible benefits: Spain had strong connections to both the Latin American and, to a lesser extent, the Arab worlds. For example, in 1948 Franco extended a large credit to Perón of Argentina (at that time quite anti-American). If the Soviets took Spain, this connection might well open Latin America to them.

Unfortunately, the United States still had no diplomatic link with Franco, who was even then being treated as a pariah (Congress, for example, had vetoed Spanish participation in the Marshall Plan). The U.S. government asked the Vatican to pressure Franco to moderate the more unacceptable features of his regime, such as the excesses of the Falange (the Spanish Fascists) and of the Spanish church.[41] By 1948 both the British and the Americans were trying to end Franco's isolation and include him in the emerging Western defense system, and gradually to turn public opinion in that direction. President Truman was a major opponent: as a Protestant and a Freemason he was infuriated by Franco's persecution of both groups.[42] To him, Franco was a totalitarian, indistinguishable from Stalin or Hitler. Apparently the outbreak of war in Korea and McCarthy's pressure to get tough against Communists but to stop attacking their enemies wore Truman down, so that a U.S. ambassador took up residence in Madrid in February 1951. Formal military talks soon began, the result being the 1953 bilateral defense treaty granting base rights. Reintegration into Europe (and membership in NATO) would not be possible for many more years.

Ireland, which would have been valuable for bases on the Atlantic, also did not join NATO. As in World War II, no Irish government could ally itself with the British, no matter how sympathetic it might be.

Because the U.S. government could not support its European partners' fight to hold on to their colonies, it tried to limit the NATO treaty, which made an attack on one partner an attack on all, to Europe proper. The French disagreed; in March 1949 they had made inclusion of French North Africa (Algeria was legally part of metropolitan France) a precondition for their acceptance of the NATO treaty.[43] France regarded these territories as a vital link to the French Union and as a possible national redoubt in the event of invasion (the Free French had used North Africa precisely for this purpose after 1942). To the Americans, however, any inclusion of the French colonies in North Africa would invite other countries to demand inclusion of their own colonies (the British in the Middle East were a particular concern). In the end the Americans had to accept some of the French departments in Algeria. In return the United States eventually obtained bases in French North Africa.[44] American willingness to include Algeria probably reflected a shift in U.S. strategy at home, under fiscal pressure, in which air bases in the western Mediterranean were considered more useful (because they were more defensible) than those at Cairo-Suez.

The situation in the Mediterranean shifted again later, when Greece and Turkey were admitted to NATO. Once Italy had been admitted to NATO, both governments considered a separate Mediterranean treaty a second-rate security arrangement. The British wanted a more comprehensive arrangement that would safeguard their interests in the Middle East. They had fought in Greece to safeguard those interests. The U.S. government, however, would not agree to any such arrangement. Once war broke out in Korea, and NATO began its transformation into a military pact, the Greek and Turkish governments fought harder for admission. Without membership in NATO, all they had were vague guarantees from the British and the Americans. The British argued that the whole point of NATO was that it extended the concept of an Atlantic community. Moreover, accession would provide the Turks access to NATO plans—which would reveal just how little help they could expect in wartime.[45] In May 1951, however, the U.S. State Department informed the British and the French that the United States would support the Turks and the Greeks for NATO membership. In effect this was the price the British had to pay for the desired extension of U.S. military commitments to the eastern Mediterranean—which was suddenly practicable because of U.S. rearmament due to the Korean War. The French were less enthusiastic, possibly because they were much less interested in the eastern Mediterranean. Accession was, however, approved at a September 1951 NATO conference. Both countries were formally admitted in February 1952.

None of this solved a major British problem. Although the fleet base at Malta was included as a NATO base in the Mediterranean, the very important colony of Cyprus was not. Nor was the vital informal empire in the Middle East. The British complained bitterly that, to the Americans, the Mediterranean was important only as a flank for forces in Europe (the Sixth Fleet could make flanking attacks on advancing Soviet forces) and as a valuable area for basing heavy bombers. After 1952 Cyprus became the main British land and air base in the Mediterranean, but Malta was still the naval base.[46] Within a few years the British would be embroiled with both new NATO neighbors. Terrorists on Cyprus were demanding union with Greece (*enosis*), and the Turks demanded protection for ethnic Turks on the island. Nor, as it turned out, could the French rely on NATO in Algeria, despite that area's inclusion as NATO territory. From about 1955 on, then, unresolved Mediterranean issues would threaten to tear NATO apart. In 1949–52 that still seemed far in the future.

For the time being, Stalin's dual subversive-military threat to the West had been contained. The U.S. government needed a formal long-range strategy for the future. It was already strongly influenced by Kennan's ideas of containment. On 24 November 1949 President Truman formally adopted containment as U.S. strategy by approving a National Security Council paper, NSC 20/4, which had been requested to form the basis for the FY51 budget (in fact it was completed too late for that purpose). Kennan's State Department policy planning staff wrote the first draft of the paper.

Containment was not merely an attractive strategy; it was inescapable.[47] The United States could not afford to build up the sort of armed force needed to win World War III. Even if it could build up that sort of force by, say, 1957, technology was moving so quickly that it would soon be obsolete. Stalin could afford to wait out the U.S. force; as Kennan had pointed out, he had no fixed plan to follow. The United States could not afford to maintain a modern force capable of meeting Stalin whenever he chose to act. On the other hand, the United States could affordably build and maintain enough forces to make a war risky for Stalin. It could also provide enough to its new allies to encourage them to resist. To back up its standing forces, the U.S. could build up the ability to mobilize in an emergency to fight a big war, when and if that broke out.[48] If Stalin could be held off for five or ten years, "by that time something [might] have happened to reduce the intensity of the Communist threat."[49]

Containment initially applied to Europe, the perimeter consisting of the NATO and associated countries (such as Greece and Turkey, which were not yet members in 1949). By the fall of 1950 Greece and Turkey had been invited to coordinate their own plans with those of the new alliance. They joined formally in 1952. West Germany joined in 1955, when she began to rearm.[50]

The Truman administration did not count entirely on passive containment. By 1948 it had secretly decided to help whatever resistance movements existed or could be raised in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, albeit not to the extent of risking outright war. The British government agreed.[51] This was much the

strategy Winston Churchill had followed after being forced from the Continent in 1940. The Allies tried at least four areas: the Baltic States, Poland, the Ukraine, and Albania. It was known that the Balts resented forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union. The remnants of the Polish Home Army were fighting the Communist government. After the Germans were driven out, the Ukrainians began a rebellion, presumably because of their unhappy memories of Stalin's vicious collectivization and massacre in the 1930s. It may have continued as late as 1956. Albania was probably a test case for satellite-state dissatisfaction. After the split with Tito, it had no land border with any Soviet satellite and hence was safe from direct armed intervention. In September 1949 Bevin and Acheson agreed to try to bring it down.[52]

Having penetrated the British secret service, the Soviets were well aware of Allied plans; they seized virtually all the émigrés who were delivered into the target areas. Remarkably, a string of failures in the Baltic (using ex-German torpedo boats to deliver agents) failed to alert the British to the possibility that they had been compromised.[53] Later, a British historian would point out that there was apparently no critical mass of potential resisters in Central Europe; the war, with its terrible suffering, was too recent a memory.[54]

The administration also set up radio stations which offered, among other things, a message of resistance: the Voice of America and the European-based Radio Free Europe.[55] The Soviets began jamming these stations in 1948.[56]

Although resistance movements did not form, expectations grew. They were to be dashed in Hungary in 1956.

Ironically, in 1952 the Republicans would claim that the Democrats' containment policy had been far too passive, that they would work to roll back the Soviet conquest of Central Europe. The Democrats could not reply; the attempts to overthrow Soviet power were secret.

Initially, the combination of containment and support for internal resistance seemed to have a fair chance of winning within a relatively short time. In 1948, Air Marshal Tedder, the RAF chief of staff, toasted the beginnings of the resistance efforts with the hope that the war might be won within five years.[57] Stalin's terror held together the Soviet empire while he was alive. However, Tedder had a point. Within five years, the empire was apparently in such poor condition that Stalin's heir, Beria, was willing to entertain radical reforms. Had Stalin lived a few years longer, presumably the problems Beria perceived would have become far less tractable. The system really might have begun to crash. On the other hand, Tedder and his colleagues did not realize that, absent Stalin, the Soviet system could gain considerable time by internal reform. Ultimately, however, as Kennan had foreseen, the system generated internal pressures it could not sustain.

Containment was paradoxical. In long-range terms it was an offensive strategy. However, any direct military attack on the Soviets might bind citizens to their government, as when Hitler invaded in 1941. That the West had to hold back was bad for U.S. morale. The Soviets seemed to be able to extract concessions from the United States because they could take greater risks. The United States had just won the greatest war in history. Why was it impossible simply to defeat the Soviets? Why was it necessary to avoid fighting them?

Popular discontent with the evolving containment policy played into the Republicans' hands. Containment looked like inactivity in the face of Stalin's aggression. As they approached the 1948 election, the Republicans charged that the United States was losing the Cold War because the Truman administration was too "pink" to want to win. The administration was unable to trumpet many of its own triumphs, such as the CIA's successful support of the Christian Democrats in the 1948 Italian election. In 1952 the Republicans would castigate the Democrats for "twenty years of treason," including the concessions at Yalta and the loss of China. There was even talk that in 1945 the U.S. Army could (and should) have driven east to liberate Eastern Europe as soon as the Germans collapsed. To compound the administration's problems, there were real cases of subversion. As in Britain, Stalin's recruiters had enjoyed some signal successes in the 1930s. The administration badly wanted to avoid any publicity connecting it to Soviet spies.

It did not help that some prominent members of the Roosevelt administration, such as Alger Hiss, were accused of having been either Communist sympathizers or secret Communist agents. How much had they contributed to that administration's sympathetic view of Stalin? To the disastrous U.S. policy in China? Hiss's case was particularly corrosive. Richard Nixon made his name largely by attacking him. Many liberals believed that his case had been fabricated. Belief in Hiss's innocence became a litmus test for post-McCarthy U.S. liberalism (conversely, belief in his guilt became a litmus test for conservatives). Not until 1996 did released decoded Soviet spy cables from the 1940s finally prove that Hiss had been a spy.[58]

Some of the Soviet cables had already been decoded in 1949, but they were never shown to Truman. Although the Soviets had stopped using the codes involved (later it would emerge that they had been informed about the decoding project), the U.S. and British governments were very reluctant to admit what they knew. The messages used code names, not the actual names of spies, so investigators had to deduce whom the spies were, from details that only gradually emerged as the codes were slowly broken. Thus the Soviets could never be sure of just how badly their operation had been compromised. Unfortunately, out of ignorance, Truman tended to support prominent men like Hiss when they seemed to be under fire from irresponsible accusers. It might have been much better (if more painful) had the Truman administration let the truth come out in 1948–50. Since that did not happen, the administration's many Republican enemies in Congress were handed an issue which became more deadly as U.S. armies entered combat against other Communists in Korea.

Americans were not entirely sure whether the enemy was Stalin himself, with his Nazi-style political system, or something more diffuse: Communist ideology.

Before World War II public anti-Communism had been largely the province of the far right, which tended to lump communism with left-liberal politics. Now it seemed that the Right's arguments had some merit after all. Stalin's use of broad fronts in Europe, and the emergence of their Communist cores, seemed to show that Communist subversion was at least as potent a force as Stalin's Soviet Army.

The Communists were secretive; how could anyone know just how powerful they really were? How much of the liberal establishment concealed Communists or their treasonable sympathizers? Republican politicians naturally mounted a crusade against the Truman administration, conducted mainly through the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). HUAC actually predated World War II, having been established originally to investigate Nazi sympathizers. By 1938 it had begun to concentrate on Communists, its research director, J. B. Mathews, recently having defected from the Party. It attacked popular fronts—and the New Deal agencies, many of which were clearly left-wing. At times its charges became so wild that it discredited itself. In 1947, it was revitalized, partly after J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, appeared before the committee to support its policy of attacking subversives (i.e., domestic Communists) by publicizing their connections with the Party. In doing this he was indirectly attacking the Truman administration, which had failed to act on his own recommendations, including accusations that high administration members were Soviet spies (Hoover also displayed an undue appetite for quashing the civil liberties of Party members, on the ground that they were subversives).[59] The net effect of HUAC's policy was to expose supposed Communists, thus destroying their careers—since, given the growing Cold War mood, it was difficult to imagine that they were not traitors. Moreover, given the Communists' own claims that sympathizers fed their power, HUAC could attack not only formal (card-carrying) Party members, but also "Communist sympathizers" and "fellow travelers," sinister categories which could not possibly be defined.

Some of HUAC's earliest investigations focused on Hollywood. Clearly the committee sought the greatest possible publicity; but it could also argue that in Hollywood Communists had an unusually good opportunity to influence American opinion. The great question was whether secret Communists could further Soviet policies effectively simply because their allegiances were undisclosed.[60] In each case, witnesses were asked to "name names" of friends who were Party members. The leading Hollywood producers announced that they would blacklist all known Communists, presumably as a defense against potential attacks.[61] Later, when anti-Communism was no longer fashionable, those who had been blacklisted would sometimes be described as victims of an American purge—which, ludicrously, was compared to Stalin's purge, in which people actually died in their millions, not merely having been denied open employment. Those who "named names" were often excoriated. They often were ex-Communists disgusted with the degree of control the Party (and through it, Moscow) tried to impose on its members; some argued that although they had named their friends, in fact true Communists could not have real friendships. The tensions generated by blacklisting and "naming names" continue to haunt the U.S. film industry.

The next step clearly was to arrest Communists as Soviet agents. Under the Smith Act, which prohibited organizing or belonging to an organization plotting the overthrow of the government, the leaders of the American Communist Party were indicted on 29 June 1948. Earl Browder, who had led the Party before the war (and who had actually helped run its espionage activities) must have been glad that he had been purged, since he was not placed on trial. Apparently the prosecution arose out of J. Edgar Hoover's perception (which was hardly unique) that there was a good chance of war between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the event of a crisis, he wanted a legal basis to round up Communists, who might otherwise act as Soviet agents. He saw the 1948 prosecution as a useful test case. Perhaps the biggest surprise of the trial was that the Party had been so deeply penetrated for so long by the FBI; one mid-level official, Herbert Philbrick, had been working for the FBI since 1940. The jury convicted the Communist leadership, and the Supreme Court upheld the conviction; Hoover had the precedent he needed. Ultimately, however, there had to be some question as to whether outlawing a political party, no matter how obnoxious, fit a U.S. policy of fighting Stalin's totalitarian regime in the name of freedom. This issue split HUAC's brand of countersubversives from classic liberals who saw the Cold War as a fight between freedom and slavery, in which the very idea of freedom would ultimately destroy Stalin's slave system.

Sen. Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin saw in anti-Communism a heaven-sent opportunity. His success was almost accidental. He had been elected in 1946 on a Republican platform charging the Truman administration with having been too soft on the Soviets. He tacked a reference to "205 Communists" in the State Department onto a February 1950 speech to the Republican Women's Club of Wheeling, West Virginia—hardly a prime speaking opportunity—and was surprised that it attracted enormous attention. The Communists in question of course were never named and the number changed repeatedly. However, McCarthy's charges seemed to explain why the United States had just "lost" China and the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 seemed to make subversives in government a more urgent issue.

There is no evidence that McCarthy took his crusade terribly seriously; it was a lever to gain fame. He would accuse almost anyone of being a Communist, merely for the boost it would give his career. Although he conducted only a few hearings, he greatly increased the effect of HUAC and other "Red-hunters." McCarthy was terrifying simply because his charges were so outrageous. He began simply by using numbers to dress up quite conventional attacks on Communists, who were portrayed in much contemporary right-wing literature as a vast subterranean conspiracy. Many people simply could not believe that a senator could be so irresponsible, so they took the charges seriously. Since none of them could be proven, McCarthy had to keep making more and more outrageous charges, simply to keep

going. Moreover, McCarthy attracted important supporters, such as J. Edgar Hoover and Richard Nixon, and then the Hearst newspaper chain. By the spring of 1951, McCarthy had become a partisan issue, and the Democrats happily disproved many of his charges. However, he had no shame; he hit back with an even more outrageous charge, in June 1951, that Gen. George C. Marshall, the World War II army chief of staff, probably the most admired man in the administration, who was then secretary of defense, was a Communist. The charge was particularly explosive because Marshall's forces were fighting for their lives in Korea. Although the Republicans now knew that McCarthy was totally irresponsible, they backed him because otherwise they would have had to support the Truman administration, and they hoped to win the 1952 election on a platform blaming the administration for having failed to fight the Communists effectively enough. President Truman detested McCarthy but could not destroy him, for fear that his administration could too easily be painted as pro-Communist. He and others tried to dismiss McCarthyism as a manifestation of a classic paranoid streak in American politics. This psychological explanation had an unfortunate consequence, in that it became too easy to dismiss the reality, that there really were some Communist subversives.[62]

Given McCarthy's irresponsibility, it was inevitable that he and his followers would seek to brand liberals, who certainly had nothing to do with Communists, with the Communist label. One unintended consequence was that the anti-Communist liberals in the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom could, in effect, prove that they were not simply American tools by attacking McCarthy. Indeed, opposition to McCarthy came to be a test of good faith within the organization.

In 1952 the Republicans won not only the presidency but also control of the Senate. McCarthy gained power, becoming chairman of the Investigations Committee of the Committee on Government Operations—which he used to conduct his own equivalent of HUAC hearings. He could now attack all branches of the government; he could do much more than simply give speeches. With a much greater capacity for damage, McCarthy was now a major problem for the new president, Dwight Eisenhower. Eisenhower's instinct was not to attack McCarthy directly, because that would only play into his fantasies about subversion and the administration's protection of Communists. Instead, he waited, knowing that McCarthy would soon overreach himself. People, even those on the Right, were beginning to admit that McCarthy was difficult to support. McCarthy finally eventually overreached himself, accusing the U.S. Army of harboring Communists, and was crushed in 1954.[63] However, the apparatus of loyalty oaths, investigators, and blacklists created out of McCarthy's crusade survived for many years.

The ultimate effect of McCarthy and his ilk was to discredit the idea that the Communists were an aggressive danger, at least within the United States; they looked much more like the pathetic (or heroic) victims of a powerful government running amok. In fact there really was a Communist subversive threat within the

United States, but it was small-scale; the worst of it was probably penetration by small numbers of people within the government who actually were working as Soviet agents. They were subject to normal security measures; there was no need for an elaborate mechanism of loyalty oaths and investigations to root them out. Too many sincere left-wingers or liberals were being attacked as targets of opportunity; conservatives too often used anti-Communism to enforce their own views. Moreover, by 1954, when McCarthy fell, some of the heat had gone out of the Cold War. Stalin, the Communist Hitler, was dead. With the end of the Korean War, Communists were no longer fighting Americans. In the wake of McCarthyism, anti-Communism itself was linked in many American minds to a sort of wild reaction to liberal ideas; the epithet "Communist" was often used to attack anyone trying to change the existing social order. That applied, for example, to the growing civil rights movement. Because irresponsible charges of Communism had had such terrible consequences, by the end of the 1950s it had become almost impossible to label anyone as a Communist. One consequence was that pro-Soviet propaganda often could not be discredited. Those who persisted in attacks on domestic Communists and their sympathizers were increasingly labeled as extremists; the Communists and their friends were often lumped with others on the Left as activists.

All of this was much more than domestic politics. The gradual change in perceptions eventually undermined the moral basis for the Cold War. If domestic Communists were not a real threat, it became difficult to believe that the foreign variety was any more menacing. For that matter, if many American Communists could be portrayed as virtuous unfortunates victimized by McCarthy, then it was more difficult to believe that foreign Communists were particularly evil. That mattered because, traditionally, Americans have sought a moral basis for their wars; they have been uncomfortable with the simple but brutal logic of national interest, which so often governs Great-Power behavior. In this decade, for example, Saddam Hussein was demonized (as a new Hitler) to justify American participation in the Gulf War. Clearly Saddam is a bloodthirsty tyrant—but so are several of our Middle Eastern allies. Americans were uncomfortable with the other justification for war: allowing Saddam to retain control of Kuwait would eventually give him control over the oil of the gulf, and thus the ability (which he would surely use) to blackmail the West. Resistance to blackmail would probably have entailed an economic disaster for the West, including the United States.

Stalin's thrust into Europe did threaten American national existence, but it was at least as important that many Americans perceived him—and, by extension, Communism—as an unalloyed evil, worth staving off. Without direct experience of life in Communist countries, Americans could not easily credit the reality that Communism in power ran an obscene slave system and, moreover, that Communism, not Stalin, was the problem. Although few said as much, many began to make a moral equation between Communism and the Western system.

That did not end the Cold War, but it left Americans with the feeling that the war was mainly about national security, rather than about a larger moral issue. The rhetoric of slavery versus freedom did survive, at least into the 1960s, but the effect of McCarthyism was to make it seem quite hollow, little more than a cloak for much more conventional Great-Power thinking. When the war in Vietnam began to go bad, that feeling of hollowness strengthened dramatically. Opponents of the war pointed to anti-Communism as the bankrupt policy that was killing young Americans for vague imperial purposes. Fewer and fewer Americans understood that in fact the Soviets and their associates were still mortal enemies, answering to a fundamentally aggressive ideology, because with the demise of active anti-Communism the sense of an American ideology (which was hardly merely anti-Communism) had largely disappeared.

8 TITO AND MAO

Through the 1940s, Stalin had to deal with two potential rivals, each of whom had fought his own revolution: Tito in Yugoslavia and Mao in China. After the war, Tito's revolutionary enthusiasm, and particularly his support for the civil war in Greece, helped sabotage Stalin's program to win quietly in Western Europe. It cannot have helped that Tito was seen (and greeted) throughout Eastern Europe as a major hero due to his wartime exploits. After the war he began to form a Balkan federation of newly Communist states—without Stalin's permission. Tito was pushing much too hard, and he was far too popular. Moreover, he kept talking about the Yugoslav road to Socialism, which might inspire others in Central Europe to follow their own paths. He had to go.[1]

In February 1948 Stalin approved a Bulgarian-Yugoslav union, which Albania might eventually join. The Bulgarians were Stalin's men. Tito feared that the union was merely a popular front on a grand scale; he would be squeezed out. He got his own politburo to reject the union. Stalin publicly attacked Tito and on 28 June 1948 he expelled the Yugoslavs from the Cominform.[2] Stalin told intimates that he would destroy Tito with "his little finger."[3]

During the summit conference on the abortive Balkan Union in February 1948 Stalin told the Yugoslavs to end the Greek war. At about the same time he told the unwitting Greek Communists that they were helping the world revolution by keeping the Americans out of China at a crucial stage. Once Stalin had broken with Tito, he apparently feared that the Greek Communists might side with the Yugoslavs. To prevent that, he told them that he supported their struggle. In the fall of 1948, for example, the Soviets and the satellite governments even formed a commission to coordinate aid to the Greeks' Democratic Army. The commission was a sham. In April 1949, Stalin told the Greeks to abandon the war.[4] For his part, Tito had lost interest. Having lost their main sources of supply in Yugoslavia, the surviving rebels fled to Albania. The Greek government won.

Beginning in the fall of 1948, the Soviets built the Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Romanian armed forces up to well beyond the levels allowed under their Soviet-