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HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEWS

CONTINUING DEBATE AND NEW APPROACHES IN COLD WAR HISTORY

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ABSTRACT. *The Cold War lasted for almost fifty years and ended nearly twenty years ago. A vast historiography continues to grow. In explaining the past and continuing debate, this article is necessarily selective. It has three aims. The first is to locate the main phases and trends in the debate about the Cold War. The second is to analyse the growing literature on the end of the Cold War. Thirdly, it attempts to identify a number of major themes by looking beyond geopolitical issues to various aspects of the cultural Cold War, to espionage and intelligence, and to the economic dimension. The review has three main conclusions. First, diplomacy and strategic issues have been extensively explored, though more is needed on the Soviet Union and especially on China. Secondly, analysis of the economic and intelligence dimension has improved, though, again, knowledge of the Soviet Union and China remains thin. Lastly, the growing coverage of cultural issues has deepened our understanding but needs to be integrated into political and strategic narratives.*

The Cold War defined an era. For nearly fifty years it dominated international relations. It influenced all aspects of developments both within and between states. Such a long, extensive, and all-encompassing conflict has naturally generated a vast historiography. That literature has been influenced by the circumstances in which it was written. Up to the late 1980s and just beyond, scholarship could not entirely escape the influence of the continuing conflict. Analysis was also limited by the availability of sources. A decade and a half and more have passed since the Cold War ended. More documents have become available from the archives of both East and West, if in an uneven manner. Passions have cooled and distance from the events has given greater perspective. Yet, controversy persists about various issues. Most accounts have concentrated upon political, diplomatic, and strategic relations between the powers and, in particular, the US–Soviet relationship. This approach is epitomized in the latest study by John Lewis Gaddis. In *The Cold War* (2005) he offers a valuable conspectus that focuses on the geopolitical struggle and the American involvement in particular. The roles of personalities are rightly stressed.[1] Yet, as George-Henri Soutou makes clear, in the best large-scale single-volume study, this was also a struggle between rival economic, political, and social systems and a battle of ideas fought externally and internally.[2]

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[1] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War* (London, 2005).
[2] George-Henri Soutou, *Guerre de cinquante ans: les relations est-ouest, 1943–1990* (Paris, 2001), p. 10.

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Any attempt to capture the nature of debate on all these aspects of the Cold War must necessarily be highly selective. This snapshot has three aims. The first is to identify the main phases and trends in the discussion of the origins and development of confrontation throughout the whole Cold War era. The second is to analyse the growing literature on the end of the Cold War. Thirdly, there is an attempt to identify a number of major themes. For most of the Cold War, geopolitical issues dominated the debate. To these matters have been added concerns about ideology, propaganda, and psychological warfare. Scholars have explored the cultural Cold War. The serious study of the role of intelligence has also emerged, escaping from the frequently lurid press reporting. The crucial influence of economic interests has regularly been asserted, but their precise operations have been analysed rather less often. Exploration of a selection of recent studies of each of these themes reveals the multifaceted nature of the conflict and encourages a re-examination of our understanding of the Cold War as a whole.

I

Initial studies in the West, principally by Americans, adopted an interpretation that has been called the orthodox view. These scholars took a realist view of international affairs: rational decision-makers were acting on national interest. They were also positivists, since they felt that the answers lay in the government documents, and foreign ministry files in particular. These first accounts were based on published memoirs and diaries of politicians and officials, and published diplomatic correspondence and other state papers, as well as speeches, pamphlets, and press statements by senior government figures. Subsequent works were able to benefit from steadily fuller American government and private sources. A number of these early books were written by figures like Herbert Feis who had served in the US government.[3] Their central argument was that the Cold War had its origins in a power struggle. They blamed the expansionist urges of the Soviet leader, Josef Stalin, suggesting that he was guided by communist ideology which favoured the spread of the communist message. This outlook united conservatives such as W. H. Chamberlin and liberals such as Arthur Schlesinger, though the conservatives were critical of Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman for not adopting sufficiently tough responses to Stalin, while liberals applauded US policy as a creative response to the Soviet threat and a recognition of America's global responsibilities.[4]

If the early American scholars were sympathetic to the predicaments and policy solutions of the US government, Soviet writers produced similarly sympathetic accounts – but for wholly different reasons. They had little choice but to conform to official views. Soviet interpretations also offered an orthodox vision that accused the Americans of embarking on a capitalist imperialist expansion. As Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov say, '[t]here is no proper historiography of the Cold War in Russia'; 'absolute control over intellectual life … guaranteed that all writings on the origins and phases of the Cold War had to reflect official legend'.[5] Valerian Zorin, Molotov's deputy at the Foreign Ministry, and then Andrei Gromyko, when he was Foreign Minister, edited the official history of

[3] See for example, Herbert Feis, *Between war and peace: the Potsdam conference* (Princeton, NJ, 1960).

[4] For a good recent summary of debates, see Ann Lane, 'Introduction: the Cold War as history', in Klaus Larres and Ann Lane, eds., *The Cold War* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 1–16.

[5] Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, 'The Soviet Union', in David Reynolds, ed., *The origins of the Cold War: international perspectives* (New Haven, CT, 1994), p. 53.

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Soviet diplomacy. It was based on some archival sources, though they were not cited, and on classified histories.[6] These accounts of the official Soviet version of events comprised two central arguments. First, the Cold War was launched by imperialists, those prominent in American society, mainly bankers and industrialists, whose class interest favoured global expansion by the United States. Based on Lenin's theory of imperialism, it was augmented by adopting the ideas of American critics of US policy. Secondly, the official Soviet interpretation saw the world as divided into two camps: the Soviet Union was the leader of a peaceful democratic camp that faced the imperialism of the Americans. This was developed by Andrei Zhdanov when he inaugurated the Communist Information Bureau in September 1947, which was the Soviet response to the Marshall Plan.[7] But this was not merely propaganda. It incorporated, say Zubok and Pleshakov, some 'original assessments that the Soviet leadership made about the causes and nature of the Cold War, the motives and plans of their opponents, the dynamics of the arms race, and so on'. The Kremlin version was not deliberately created, but emerged from the process of making estimates and producing policy. Yet it established a rigid framework that thwarted genuine discussion. Thereafter, contributions amounted to little more than elaborations of this outlook or, frequently, rationalizations of policy failures.[8]

Such debate as there was about the Cold War therefore occurred not in the Soviet Union, but in the United States. By the 1960s, there emerged a school of revisionists who challenged the orthodox verdict of Feis and Schlesinger among others. In certain ways, their interpretation was similar to the Soviet argument, which is unsurprising, given Soviet borrowing from their texts. W. A. Williams and D. F. Fleming questioned the assumption that Americans were naïve about Soviet intentions as the Second World War ended and that the Cold War developed as a reaction to Soviet misbehaviour. They claimed that the crucial stimulant to confrontation lay in the expansionist tendencies of the United States. Americans sought to extend their economic influence. These studies were based on such American sources as had become available at the time and on virtually no Soviet materials. Yet, on this basis, they claimed to understand Soviet policy.[9]

Other scholars, such as Daniel Yergin, challenged the orthodox historians' view of the motivation of Soviet policy and emphasized how the Soviet leadership was influenced in its decision-making by national security interests rather than by communist ideology. 'For the fundamental source of the Cold War, we must turn to the interests and positions of nation-states, which are the basic unit in international politics.'[10] Yergin explained how the

[6] Valerian Zorin and Andrei Gromyko, eds., *History of diplomacy* (5 vols., Moscow, 1959–79). The Cold War is covered in volume v. Other studies include: A. G. Mileykovsky, ed., *International relations after the Second World War* (2 vols., Moscow, 1965); G. A. Trofimenko, *SshA: politika, voyna, ideologiya* [USA: politics, war, ideology] (Moscow, 1976); and N. Sivachev and N. Yakovlev, *Russia and the United States* (Chicago, IL, 1980).

[7] Zubok and Pleshakov, 'The Soviet Union', p. 54. There is a substantial excerpt from the speech in an excellent collection of documents and witness accounts: Jussi Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cold War: a history in documents* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 50–2.

[8] Zubok and Pleshakov, 'The Soviet Union', p. 53.

[9] The pioneers in this interpretation were W. A. Williams, *The tragedy of American diplomacy* (New York, NY, 1962), and D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and its origins, 1917–1960* (2 vols., Garden City, NY, 1961). Other significant revisionists include: David Horowitz, *The free world colossus: a critique of American foreign policy in the Cold War* (New York, NY, 1965); Gabriel Kolko, *The politics of war: the world and United States foreign policy, 1943–1945* (New York, NY, 1968); Lloyd Gardner, *Architects of illusion* (Chicago, IL, 1970).

[10] Daniel Yergin, *The shattered peace* (New York, NY, 1977), p. 7.

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national security state developed three components: attitudes towards their protagonist, policies that encapsulated these attitudes and institutions designed to pursue these policies. The Americans, therefore, adopted anti-communist views and a belief in the need to establish sound national security against the communist menace. A policy of containment was developed and sustained by various new agencies.

John Lewis Gaddis, on the other hand, articulated what he called the post-revisionist thesis which stressed that the Americans contributed to the onset of the Cold War and that their foreign policy was influenced by economic and ideological considerations. But he suggested that it was a defensive response to perceptions about Soviet behaviour/policy.[11] Washington probably 'mistook Stalin's determination to ensure Russian security through spheres of influence for a renewed effort to spread communism'. Both Washington and Moscow were influenced by 'a variety of preconceptions, shaped by personality, ideology, political pressures, even ignorance and irrationality'.[12] Other post-revisionist perspectives were offered by Robert Messer, who criticized Roosevelt's manipulations and highlighted difficulties between Truman and his first secretary of state, James Byrnes; and by Deborah Welch Larson, who explored Soviet-American mutual mistrust.[13]

The late 1970s and early 1980s also signalled another development in study of the Cold War. Until then, the confrontation had been largely viewed as a US–Soviet affair. Indeed, most studies had been even more narrowly focused on the United States. This occasioned a famous appeal by Donald Cameron Watt to historians to explore the British documents that were being progressively released under the Thirty Year Rule.[14] There had been few British studies of the Cold War. Desmond Donnelly, a maverick Labour MP, and G. F. Hudson, an Oxford don, had written strongly orthodox accounts, while Evan Luard had edited a collection of more thoughtful pieces in which Watt had contributed his thoughts on the issue of Germany.[15] The first beneficiaries of the new sources were a number of American historians who produced studies of Anglo-American relations in the 1940s.[16] Soon, however, there was a steady flow of British books examining the British dimension. The general trend in these volumes was to stress Britain's significant role in the immediate post-war era on issues such as policy on Germany and in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty. Both Alan Bullock and Anne Deighton maintained that the British had first proposed containment of the Soviet Union.[17] John Kent and John Young

[11] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York, 1972); idem, 'The emerging post-revisionist synthesis on the origins of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History*, 7 (1983), pp. 171–93. [12] Gaddis, *United States and the origins of the Cold War*, pp. 355, 360.

[13] Robert L. Messer, *The end of an alliance: James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt and the origins of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 982); Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of containment: a psychological explanation* (Princeton, NJ, 1985).

[14] D. C. Watt, 'Rethinking the Cold War: a letter to a British historian', *Political Quarterly*, 49 (1978), pp. 446–56.

[15] Desmond Donnelly, *Struggle for the world* (London, 1965), G. F. Hudson, *The hard and bitter peace* (London, 1966), Evan Luard, ed., *The Cold War* (London, 1964).

[16] Terry H. Anderson, *The United States, Great Britain and the Cold War* (Colombia, MI, 1981); Robert M. Hathaway, *Ambiguous partnership: Britain and America, 1944–1947* (New York, 1981).

[17] The earliest studies included Roy Douglas, *From war to Cold War, 1942–1948* (London, 1982); Victor Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War, 1941–1947* (London, 1982); Elisabeth Barker, *The British between the superpowers, 1945–1950* (London, 1983); Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: foreign secretary, 1945–1951* (London, 1983); Michael Dockrill and John W. Young, eds., *British foreign policy, 1945–1956* (London, 1989); Anne Deighton, ed., *Britain and the first Cold War* (London, 1990). Sean Greenwood, *Britain and the Cold War, 1945–1991* (Basingstoke, 2000), is an adept recent study of the British role.

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argued against the teleological picture of Soviet threat, European worries, British pursuit of an American alliance, and the Truman administration's offer of the North Atlantic Treaty. Instead, they claimed, the British sought to be a 'third force' in world affairs before military and economic weakness compelled them to turn to the United States.[18] The role of France also came under scrutiny. John Young rejected the image of France as a weak and vacillating power, obsessed with the German menace, explained how French thinking about Germany was centred on fears that the Soviets might launch a preventative war against German revival, and argued that the Schuman Plan demonstrated its ability to have an impact through independent action.[19] European scholars in general began to examine the newly available materials in their national archives and explored the roles of the different European states. Their findings appeared in a number of collected studies.[20]

In the meantime, events in the 1980s overtook scholarship. The decade began with tensions over Soviet military action in Afghanistan, the heightened Cold War rhetoric of a new US president, Ronald Reagan, and the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, and superpower boycotts of the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980 and in Los Angeles in 1984, but it ended with the demise of the Cold War, the disintegration of communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union. This led to triumphalist accounts which asserted that the end of the Cold War constituted a Western victory and that it heralded the inevitable spread of liberal democracy and market economics. Francis Fukuyama was the most famous proponent of this view.[21] Meanwhile, Soviet historians in the 1980s, released from their incarceration to official policy, began to produce critical accounts, claiming the Cold War was a product of Stalin's ruthless regime. Unfortunately these works were more a product of a new, more critical, spirit than the use of previously unavailable Soviet documents. As Zubok and Pleshakov said, 'for all its democratic merits, Soviet revisionism could not become a foundation of Cold-War historiography in the new Russia'. But serious history based on the new sources would take longer to appear. The fall of the Soviet Union led to the gradual opening of Soviet archives.[22] Selected materials were released from the Foreign Ministry, the Communist Party Central Committee, and the Politburo, and even from the KGB. As Raymond Garthoff explained, researchers did not gain open access to these files, only illustrative samples; the full archival lists of documents were often unavailable; and many important materials, such as Politburo meetings, were not released. Yet, he added, these sources allowed an understanding of the 'coin of internal discourse (and thinking) in the Soviet leadership' but did not reveal secret decisions.[23] The releases resulted in studies that provided, for the first time, a documented sense of the

[18] John Kent and John W. Young 'The "Western Union" concept and British defence policy, 1947–1948', in Richard Aldrich, ed., *British intelligence, strategy and the Cold War* (London, 1992), pp. 166–92.

[19] John W. Young, *France, the Cold War and the western alliance, 1945–1949* (Leicester, 1989).

[20] Josef Becker and Franz Knipping, eds., *Power in Europe? Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a postwar world, 1945–1950* (Berlin, 1986); Olav Riste, ed., *Western security: the formative years: European and Atlantic defence, 1947–1953* (Oslo, 1985); Reynolds, ed., *Origins of the Cold War*.

[21] Francis Fukuyama, 'The end of history', *The National Interest* (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18; idem, *The end of history and the last man* (London, 1992).

[22] Zubok and Pleshakov, 'The Soviet Union', pp. 54–5. See also the special issue of *Diplomatic History*, 21 (1997) which contains articles by R. D. English, Raymond Garthoff, Jonathan Haslam, R. C. Tucker, Odd Arne Westad, W. C. Wohlforth, and Vladislav Zubok.

[23] Raymond Garthoff, 'Some observations on using Soviet archives', *Diplomatic History*, 21 (1997), pp. 243–57, quotation at p. 245.

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thinking behind Soviet policy, often revealing Moscow's difficulties with its allies.[24] For many scholars, the new sources confirmed Soviet responsibility: Gaddis declared, 'as long as Stalin was running the Soviet Union a cold war was inevitable'.[25] Unfortunately, many of these archives subsequently closed.[26]

The following decade also saw the first signs of serious historical work from China, as records began to trickle out.[27] Initially, what surfaced were various volumes containing the selected works of senior figures, such as the Chinese leader, Mao Zedong, and his foreign minister, Zhou Enlai, collections with originally restricted circulations.[28] In addition, Communist Party documents, memoirs, and oral histories became available. From such foundations Chinese scholars were able to offer new perspectives, the most notable of which was Chen Jian whose *Mao's China and the Cold War* (2001) became an indispensable study. It comprised nine case studies from the communist victory in 1949 and the myth of the America's lost chance in China to the rapprochement under US president, Richard Nixon, in 1972. Jian argued that Sino-Soviet rivalry reduced Moscow's ability to wage global war with the United States, while the normalization of diplomatic ties between 1969 and 1972 contributed to the later collapse of the Soviet Union and their control of Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 1990s.[29] Jian's work demonstrated that an understanding of China now had a much richer documentary basis. Yet, while there were promising signs of further releases of documents, the availability of primary materials and a readiness to debate Cold War issues were still restricted.

In the West, meanwhile, there was a return to the claim that ideology shaped Cold War policy. Historians examined documents newly released from the archives of the Soviet Union and other former socialist countries at a time when ideas were deemed significant in ending the Cold War. They now considered the comparative influences of interests and ideology.[30] Some emphasized that ideology formed a vital component in Soviet decision-making: it was more than a rationalization of power politics or the necessary

[24] See, for example, Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), and Vojtech Mastny, *Cold War and Soviet insecurity: the Stalin years* (New York, NY, 1996). On Soviet difficulties with its allies, see Odd Arne Westad, *The global Cold War: Third World interventions and the making of our times* (Cambridge, 2006).

[25] John Lewis Gaddis, *We now know: rethinking Cold War history* (Oxford, 1997), p. 292.

[26] Raymond Garthoff, 'Foreign intelligence and the historiography of the Cold War', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 6 (2004), pp. 25–6.

[27] Shuguang Zhang and Chen Jian, eds., *Chinese communist foreign policy and the Cold War in Asia: new documentary evidence, 1944–1950* (Chicago, 1996). See also various issues of the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* that began publishing Soviet, East European, and Chinese documents and commentaries on them from 1993 onwards. For China see issues 6–7 (1995/6) and 8–9 (1996/7).

[28] On Mao see *Mao Zedong waijao wenxuan* [Selected diplomatic papers of Mao Zedong] (Beijing, 1994); on Zhou (Chou En-lai) see *Zhou Enlaiwaijao wenxuani* [Selected diplomatic writings of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing, 1990). See also Pei Jianzhang et al., *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijao shi* [A diplomatic history of the People's Republic of China] (Beijing, 1994).

[29] Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001). See also Chen Jian, 'In the name of the revolution: China's road to the Korean War revisited', in William Stueck, ed., *The Korean War in world history* (Lexington, KY, 2004), pp. 93–125. In addition, see the pioneering study by a Russian, an American, and a Chinese scholar, Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA, 1993).

[30] Nigel Gould-Davies, 'Rethinking the role of ideology in international politics during the Cold War', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 1 (1999), pp. 90–109; Mark Kramer, 'Ideology and the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, 25 (1999), pp. 539–76.

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language to embroider traditional power politics. Soutou said that Moscow was the prisoner of ideology: the USSR was an ideology on the march, often to the detriment of its own interests.[31] He showed that understanding how policy was formulated in Moscow reinforces this point: the Communist Party decided whilst the Foreign Ministry reflected on issues and found formulas for party decisions and executed the policy. So historians must utilize both Foreign Ministry and Communist Party records. However, while there is some access to Foreign Ministry files, there is much less to those of the Central Committee and even less to the papers of the Politburo or secretary-general of the party.[32] But more writers focused on the ideological motives not of Stalin, but of the Americans. Some historians noted that American ideas amounted to an ideology and were not just a rationalization of US power politics. For Scott Lucas, the United States had a crusading ideology. Others talked about corporate influences.[33] Michael Hogan focused on the domestic origins of US policy, on the influence of economic and social considerations and, in particular, the collaboration between government and private business and other organizations in pursuit of particular economic goals, as reflected in the Marshall Plan. For Hogan, 'the technocorporative formulations of the 1920s [combined] with the ideological adaptations of the 1930s in a policy synthesis that envisioned a neo-capitalist reorganization of the American and world systems'. Marshall Aid sought economic growth, moderate social reforms, and a fairer division of economic wealth in order to protect the recipient countries from communist subversion while equipping them to pursue significant rearmament programmes. It was self-interested but 'far less heavy-handed' than the contemporaneous intervention in Greece or the later interventions in Central America, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. It was 'a reasonable defense of American interests'.[34]

For most of the Cold War, however, the dominant consideration had not been economics but each side's possession of nuclear weapons and the terrifying stakes involved: the danger of global obliteration, if tensions escalated out of control. Indeed, the nuclear predicament was a central reason why the confrontation remained a cold one. For the first time in history, two adversaries possessed weapons they could not use (American use against Japan in 1945 had occurred before the Soviet Union gained its own bomb). Elaborate strategies were developed about how to operate in these circumstances – first came 'massive retaliation', then 'flexible response', and, in the 1960s, the aptly named 'MAD' (mutual assured destruction). In particular, theoreticians stressed 'credibility', persuading the other side that nuclear weapons would be used in certain circumstances and thereby deterring them.[35] For all its attendant perils, John Gaddis believed the nuclear standoff brought the benefits of what he called the 'long peace'.[36] In his most recent book he cites, as support for his thesis, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, when the attempted placing of Soviet nuclear missiles brought the world close to a nuclear exchange. Both Moscow and Washington concluded that 'the weapons each side had developed during the Cold War posed a greater threat to *both* sides than the United States and the Soviet Union did to one another'.[37] Numerous writers challenged Gaddis's thesis. Clearly Europe

[31] Soutou, *Guerre de cinquante ans*, p. 17. [32] Ibid., p. 15.

[33] Michael Hogan, *A cross of iron: Harry S. Truman and the origins of the national security state* (Cambridge, 1998). [34] Michael Hogan, *The Marshall Plan* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 3, 18, 427, 429, 443.

[35] See Lawrence Freedman, *The evolution of nuclear strategy* (London, 1983); John Lewis Gaddis et al., eds., *Cold War statesmen confront the bomb: nuclear diplomacy since 1945* (New York, 1999).

[36] John Lewis Gaddis, *The long peace* (Oxford, 1983). [37] Gaddis, *Cold War*, p. 78.

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remained peaceful, as did direct US–Soviet relations. However, this era witnessed frequent wars in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, involving deaths in the millions. There have been few studies devoted specifically to the Cold War character of these wars. David Miller and David Stone sought to redress this balance by considering the various military dimensions to the conflict.[38] Other studies questioned the over-arching importance of East–West confrontation in shaping this combat. Jeremy Black stressed the 'variety of post-1945 conflicts and the diversity of goals and methods'.[39]

II

A different framework for debate has emerged over interpretations of the end of the Cold War.[40] Scholarship has developed outside the context of a continuing conflict and with greater access to figures from the Soviet bloc. But we do not yet enjoy the range of materials available for the origins and early phases of the confrontation. Writers are less easily categorized as orthodox or revisionist, although studies can be broadly divided into those seeing Soviet policy, and Gorbachev's in particular, as crucial and others that emphasize American strategies, especially those of President Reagan.

Don Oberdorfer, who was a journalist for the *Washington Post* as events unfolded, wrote the first substantial account in 1991, revised in 1998. His study utilized this experience and combined it with extensive interviews of key politicians and officials in both Russia and the United States. He recognized the influence of larger-scale forces, such as the burdens of military spending, the increasing sophistication of nuclear missiles and the attendant risks to both superpowers, and globalization in economics and communications that was widening the gap between East and West. Since Oberdorfer maintained, however, that the response to these forces depended on the choices of senior figures in Washington and Moscow, his account focused on these individuals and their negotiations.[41] This was a pattern of analysis followed by many subsequent studies. Although Oberdorfer was somewhat reticent about making a final judgement about where the primary responsibility lay for US–Soviet reconciliation, he identified the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, and his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, President Ronald Reagan and his secretary of state, George Shultz, President George Bush and his secretary of state, James Baker, as crucial figures. Gorbachev was a flawed but historically significant individual, someone who understood that 'change was essential if the Soviet Union was to remain a major power'. Reagan instilled confidence in the American people and showed a 'surprising eagerness to negotiate with the Soviet "evil empire"'. He was ready to make bold decisions.[42]

In a series of thoughtful essays grouped around the theme of the end of the Cold War, John Lewis Gaddis shared Oberdorfer's stress on Reagan's role. The President 'had a

[38] David Miller, *The Cold War: a military history* (London, 2001); David Stone, *Wars of the Cold War: campaigns and conflicts, 1945–1990* (London, 2004).

[39] Jeremy Black, *War since 1945* (London, 2004), p. 8.

[40] See the useful review article: Jeremi Suri, 'Explaining the end of the Cold War: a new historical consensus?', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 4 (2002), pp. 60–92.

[41] Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a new era* (2nd edn, Baltimore, MD, 1998). There were also two other impressive early studies: Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the highest levels: the inside story of the end of the Cold War* (New York, 1994); and Raymond L. Garthoff, *The great transition: American–Soviet relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC, 1994).

[42] Ibid., pp. 478–81.

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decisive impact' in a number of ways: his support for the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), also known as Star Wars, which unsettled the Russians; his backing of the 'zero option' in the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) talks and real reductions in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) talks; the speed with which he opened, and thereby legitimized, serious negotiations with Gorbachev when he came to power; and, most strikingly, his readiness to consider alternatives to the nuclear arms race in a fashion unlike any previous president. Reagan appreciated that his approach of 'negotiation from strength' was the 'means of constructing a domestic political base without which agreements with the Russians would almost certainly have foundered'. But Gaddis also emphasized how what he called 'tectonic forces' were influential. New ways of measuring power – which suggested that it involved more than the mere aggregation of military and economic strength – combined with the inability of the command economies to respond to new demands at a time when the use of brutality was ceasing to work provoked a crisis in the Soviet empire. He concluded, 'creative statecraft … is often a matter of recognizing the direction in which tectonic forces are moving and adapting one's own purposes to them'.[43]

The strongest exponent of Reagan's role, however, offered no such qualifications. In *Reagan's war* (2003), based on research in recently released American materials and sources from Russia, Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, Peter Schweizer argued that Gorbachev deserved credit for opting to allow the peaceful demise of the Soviet Union rather than trying to hold it together with force, but that this begged the question why Gorbachev had chosen this course. For Schweizer, the answer lay in the initiative taken by Reagan who was more committed than any other American leader to making 'rolling back and defeating communism a primary goal'. The US president's method was to put economic pressure on Moscow through the massive defence spending increases in 1981 and SDI, costs on the Soviet economy that he estimated at $40–8 billion annually.[44]

A challenge to these claims came from Frances FitzGerald in a volume based on printed American sources and interviews. She deemed the assertion that SDI and the US military buildup compelled the Soviets to spend more than they could afford on their defences and convinced them of the essential weaknesses of their system a 'vague but unexamined … thesis' that lacked supporting evidence. Star Wars alarmed the Soviet leaders, for it threatened strategic stability and stable costs, but they did not try to develop their own SDI programme. Gorbachev sought to convince the Reagan administration to restrict or halt the programme, 'presumably because he thought his own military-industrial complex would eventually force him to counter SDI', but by late 1987 the Soviet leadership no longer saw SDI as a danger. Moreover, FitzGerald argued that Moscow did not respond to Reagan's military buildup: while the US military budget rose by an average of 8 per cent annually the Soviets did not try to compete. Meanwhile, the Soviet economy continued its decline. It might well have survived much longer but for Gorbachev.[45]

[43] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the end of the Cold War* (Oxford and New York, NY, 1992), pp. 131, 165–6.

[44] Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's war: the epic story of his forty year struggle and final triumph over communism* (New York, NY, 2003), pp. 4, 283–4. See also his earlier book, *Victory: the Reagan administration's secret strategy that hastened the collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York, NY, 1994).

[45] Frances FitzGerald, *Way out there in the blue: Reagan, star wars and the end of the Cold War* (New York, NY, 2000), pp. 474–5.

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Such claims need to be checked against the evidence of both Soviet military advice to Gorbachev and his policies. He was not as sanguine about defence as FitzGerald suggested. By her own figures, Soviet defence spending continued to increase by 4.3 per cent annually in 1985–7. She was forced to speculate about Gorbachev's thinking and in doing so misunderstood Soviet views of SDI. As Soutou pointed out, the Soviet military recognized that SDI's threat came not so much in the scheme itself as in the technology that made it possible, indicating a significant American lead over the Soviets: a veritable revolution.[46] In support of his claim, Soutou cited the work of William Odom, who emphasized that Gorbachev saw that economic reform could only succeed if he could reverse military policy, which he pursued 'cautiously, almost by stealth'.[47]

In a deft compact study of the Cold War, Robert McMahon also stressed Gorbachev's pivotal role, claiming that his decisions owed more to an assessment of domestic circumstances than to Reagan's policies. Gorbachev was the first Soviet leader to accept the full scale of the country's economic problems, and recognized that these could only be addressed by reducing the massive defence spending burden and by reforming economic practices. Achieving these goals demanded a lessening of Cold War tensions to justify a smaller, less costly military and better relations with the West that allowed the technology transfers and various commercial deals needed to help the Soviet economy. His concessions were crucial for progress towards arms agreements; for example, he abandoned his opposition to SDI and so made it possible to achieve the INF Treaty. He ceased to apply the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' of armed intervention to support communist control and thereby permitted, or, at least, did nothing to obstruct, the emergence of protest which led to the fall of the communist regimes. These policies were not an inevitable consequence of circumstances. Many in the Kremlin advocated other options but Gorbachev was able to reject them because he possessed the political skills to secure the backing of the Politburo in Moscow and to win support in the West.[48]

Other writers contended that both men were important. In a valuable insider's interpretation, Jack Matlock suggested that both leaders deserve credit by virtue of their complementary contributions. This emerged in his memoirs of his time as US ambassador in Moscow and, more explicitly, in his study of Reagan and Gorbachev, which is based on numerous American and Soviet sources and memoirs.[49] Matlock rejected Schweizer's assertion that Reagan's military buildup and economic pressure was the vital ingredient, claiming that the Soviet Union could have survived the pressure for a decade or more. Matlock acknowledged Gorbachev's courage and genius as being vital, but maintained that, without the military and economic pressure of the US, it was most unlikely that Gorbachev could have persuaded the generals to acquiesce in the arms cuts without which the internal reforms were unthinkable.

Matlock argued that, from his first press conference, Reagan offered several themes that remained the bedrock of his approach to the Soviet Union: he wanted arms reduction to be on terms of equality and the linkage of arms negotiations with Soviet behaviour. Reagan wanted to move from reacting to challenges to taking the initiative in order to alter Soviet behaviour and thus favoured a more direct and candid approach to Moscow. So the

[46] Soutou, *Guerre de cinquante ans*, pp. 658–9.

[47] William E. Odom, *The collapse of the Soviet military* (New Haven, CT, 1998), p. 88.

[48] Robert McMahon, *The Cold War: a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 160–2.

[49] Jack F. Matlock, *Autopsy on an empire: the American ambassador's account of the collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York, NY, 1995); idem, *Reagan and Gorbachev: how the Cold War ended* (New York, NY, 2004).

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administration drew attention to Soviet violations of previous agreements, such as the Test Ban Treaty, concluding, not that such agreements should not be made, but rather that they should be negotiated with great care. It also recognized that the Soviets fulfilled agreements when it was more in their interests to comply than to violate them. Meanwhile, Reagan built up American defence and the economy, for he was determined to be able to negotiate from a position of military and economic strength. The arms buildup proved a prelude to talks in which the previously dominant suspicion was replaced by trust, which was sustained by promises that were honoured. It took American and Soviet leaders of 'political stature and tactical skill at home to make these agreements stick'. In other words, Reagan and Gorbachev. Reagan's ideas, beliefs, and character equipped him to work effectively with Gorbachev. He regarded ideology as the central facet of the Cold War, and the arms race and geopolitical competition as symptoms of the ideological struggle. Since he believed the Soviet Union could change, he welcomed the reforms of Gorbachev, whose 'greatest asset was his character. He dealt with others, whether friends, adversaries, or subordinates, openly and without guile.' Gorbachev brought a 'combination of ideas and character traits that was unique among Soviet leaders'. When experience clashed with theory, he was ready to question the theory. He also concluded that the Soviet system could not continue as it was; it needed to change. Confident of his ability to persuade, Gorbachev successfully manoeuvred Communist Party officials into accepting, or at least not blocking, his reforms that weakened their power. He was frequently devious about his goals: 'If he had declared his intentions openly, he would have been removed from office as soon as the Politburo learned what he really had in mind.'[50]

For Matlock, the crucial point came in December 1988 when Gorbachev addressed the UN and announced the end of the Brezhnev Doctrine: the international class struggle would no longer be the foundation of Soviet foreign policy. Gorbachev then went beyond merely enunciating principles by practising them. He declared that there would be a reduction in Soviet armed forces of a least half a million men. Reagan recognized that Gorbachev was ready to co-operate because Soviet efforts to compete with the United States had produced disaster. Matlock concluded that '[p]sychologically and ideologically, the Cold War was over' when Reagan left the White House.[51]

Such conclusions appear clearer in retrospect than they did at the time, for Germany was still divided while NATO and the Warsaw Pact confronted one another. Frances FitzGerald correctly argued that Bush's presidency witnessed crucial developments. She also stressed his important role, saying he 'dealt in substance and achieved far more with Gorbachev than Reagan ever did', though she conceded that the 'pause' of 1989, when he was unsure whether to trust Gorbachev, harmed his reputation and enhanced Reagan's. On 13 February 1989 Bush ordered a full-scale 'strategic review' of US–Soviet relations: all policy decisions would be delayed until he reassessed how to handle Gorbachev. START talks were suspended and the regular meetings between officials of various levels from both governments ceased. This 'pause' lasted until late May 1989. Whilst it owed much, perhaps, to a desire by the new administration to distance itself from the Reagan administration,[52] it also revealed Bush's uncertainty about what to do. Matlock saw Bush's role as less significant. 'All he had to do was set the terms of the settlement, and he hesitated for ten months to do that.'[53] This reticence was mainly due to the need to

[50] Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 4, 5–7, 9, 320.
[51] Ibid., pp. 307, 312.
[52] FitzGerald, *Way out there in the blue*, pp. 467–8, 473.
[53] Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 316.

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reassure the Republican right and to find a way of distinguishing Bush's administration from Reagan's. Warren Cohen suggested that the Bush presidency's initial wariness about Gorbachev gave way to effective US–Soviet co-operation, with James Baker being 'very favourably impressed' by Shevardnadze, with whom he 'developed an unusually close relationship of mutual trust'. As a result, Cohen concluded, the administration 'performed ably': it might have played a secondary role in the end of the Cold War, the reunification of Germany, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it 'played it well'.[54] Oberdorfer endorsed this verdict, suggesting that Bush's 'caution and forbearance averted crises' in relations between Moscow and Washington, while Baker proved an 'extremely able negotiator'.[55]

Praise for Baker's skills points to the important roles of the US and Soviet foreign ministers. While Reagan and Gorbachev made vital contributions, they could not have done it alone. Shevardnadze and Shultz helped them get their priorities right, confronting those 'forces in their respective governments that would have blocked agreements, pushed their superiors in the right direction, and often absorbed the heat from controversial decisions'. According to Matlock, Shultz brought extensive knowledge of government, business, and academic life; 'he inspired teamwork, bringing the key players in his and other relevant departments into his counsel … he sought differing points of view before every important decision'; and, as an adept negotiator, 'he understood the importance and the limitations of personal chemistry in a negotiation'. Against this must be set a tendency to let differences with certain colleagues sour his attitude towards their departments. There were also some rare occasions when he 'would opt out of important decisions in a sulk rather than carry his views directly and vigorously to the president – something his rivals never hesitated to do'. Shultz's strengths complemented some of Reagan's weaknesses. Shultz mastered details that bored Reagan, was resilient in negotiations, and had a keen appreciation of the need for consistency in overall policy. Reagan was masterly on a public platform. 'If Haig [secretary of state, 1981–2] had remained in office, his confrontational approach would probably have prevented the effective coordination of any truly innovative policy.'[56] For Oberdorfer, Shultz was a figure 'of central importance in Washington' who doggedly pursued practical goals and who demonstrated great organizational abilities in co-ordinating the efforts of the various parts of the American political system in pursuit of his and Reagan's goal.[57]

According to Ekedahl and Goodman, Shevardnadze 'used his innate graciousness and sense of humor to insinuate himself' with both Shultz and Baker and to ease the opposition of anti-Soviets in the Reagan and Bush administrations. He also used his ties to Gorbachev to 'isolate anti-Americanists at home'. Shevardnadze was committed to rapprochement with the United States and was ready to make compromises, making 'concessions on issues that he believed would have resonance in Washington, particularly disarmament and human rights'.[58] Oberdorfer noted how Shevardnadze's 'candor and authority won the respect of his peers abroad'.[59]

[54] Warren I. Cohen, *America's failing empire: US foreign relations since the Cold War* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 14, 35.
[55] Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a new era*, p. 481.
[56] Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, pp. 321, 25.
[57] Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a new era*, p. 480.
[58] Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl and Melvyn A. Goodman, *The wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* (London, 1997), p. 101. This is the work of two former CIA analysts.
[59] Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a new era*, p. 479.

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Matlock's findings echoed those of Oberdorfer but did so from a much fuller documentary basis. Whilst his study was persuasive, it revealed its author's origins. As a former diplomat Matlock focused on negotiations and the diplomatic contacts, paying less attention to other considerations such as the domestic political circumstances in each country, as well as economics and public feeling. Moreover, for all the absence of any sense of self-importance, he could not escape the tendency to speak well of the process in which he played a significant role. He shared the predominant view of Gorbachev's vital importance. The real controversy now centres on the significance of Reagan's role. The latest study by Saki Dockrill stresses how the Cold War's end depended on whether the Soviet Union would accept the West's position on key issues; that Reagan was willing as early as February 1983 to establish good US–Soviet relations; and that the Americans skilfully extracted concessions from Moscow. SDI, Dockrill explains, was not popular with Europeans but it did not cause a transatlantic rift. Gorbachev miscalculated: he expected to show that SDI was the main obstacle to US–Soviet negotiations, which would lead the Europeans to press America to drop Star Wars. For a time, the Americans were even tougher under Bush. It was only when Washington was convinced that Gorbachev's domestic situation was critical that the Bush administration adopted a more sympathetic attitude. The American negotiating position was made particularly powerful as the Soviet Union became increasingly dependent on the US, both financially and politically.[60]

III

As some scholars sought to understand the demise of the Cold War, so others turned to hitherto neglected aspects to the conflict. In the last decade or so the focus has shifted to the inter-related issues of ideology, public opinion and propaganda, and psychological warfare. Historians have recognized the importance of cultural tensions. The West's confrontation with communism and the Soviet Union was conducted not only at the level of diplomats and the military but also in national politics, in trade unions, among intellectuals, and in various forms of art and architecture, theatre, ballet and cinema, and music and literature, and in sport. In an excellent study that displayed both a detailed command of cultural activities and a persuasive analysis of the issues, David Caute maintained that the cultural Cold War was without parallel in history: no previous contest had 'involved furious disputes in genetics, prize-fights between philosophers, literary brawls, … duels with paint brushes'. Such a contest only became possible with the emergence of mass communications and its audience, the general public, which developed from the 1890s onwards. The defeat of Soviet communism was, perhaps, as much moral, intellectual, and cultural as it was economic and technological.[61] In the face of a threat whose scale and nature were unprecedented, many intellectuals, politicians, and trade unionists played a role in analysing and explaining it. We now know that the CIA funded many such activities in the West. When this was revealed in 1967 it provoked an outcry. Certain writers then and now have suggested or implied an equivalence in Soviet and American policies after 1945.[62]

[60] Saki Ruth Dockrill, *The end of the Cold War era* (London, 2005), pp. 205, 106, 114, 212.

[61] David Caute, *The dancer defects: the struggle for cultural supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 1–6 (quotation at p. 3).

[62] For a flavour of the debate and a critical view of CIA behaviour, see Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who paid the piper? The CIA and the cultural Cold War* (London, 1999).

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Scott Lucas argued that American Cold War policy was as much about ideology as it was concerned with national interests. America has an ideology and it was never just a rationalization of geopolitical and economic interests. The United States government believed it was defending universal values, was a force for good. Yet, said Lucas, America's conception of 'freedom' was highly elastic, being able to regard the Greek and Turkish governments in 1947 as free and Somoza's Nicaragua as moving towards democracy. Moreover, he suggested that the pursuit of this ideological war was achieved by involving both private individuals and organizations, an idea developed from Hogan's work on government–private business co-operation on economic goals. It was not only the president and the executive, diplomats, and generals who drove this agenda but also the private sector (often sponsored by the US government and the CIA especially). The American government needed the private sector to do much of the cultural work because the US case focused on freedom from government interference. A state–private network was thus established where the 'CIA might be providing most of the finance but the impetus was coming from individuals with no Government position, individuals with their own interests in ensuring the triumph of freedom'. This led to policies of freedom that 'cannot be explained on geopolitical, economic, or military grounds – in particular the pursuit of the "liberation" of Eastern Europe'. Lucas focused upon the activities of the Office of Policy Co-ordination, created in June 1948, which was succeeded in April 1951 by the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB). This, in turn, was replaced by the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) under Dwight D. Eisenhower. It is clear from their records that the United States adopted a more aggressive position than mere containment of the Soviet Union, simultaneously pursuing containment and 'rollback' of Soviet power.[63]

Lucas cited National Security Council paper NSC 20/4 of November 1948 as indicative of this more aggressive intent of the Truman administration. Soutou, however, regarded NSC 20/4 as a reaction to events, especially the Berlin blockade. For Soutou, the tension was narrowly tied to the Berlin crisis; once it eased, so did the pessimistic outlook contained in the paper. By the summer of 1949 policymakers in Washington felt that the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and containment were working in blocking Soviet expansion. NSC 20/4 'pouvait paraître trop pessimiste. Quelques semaines plus tard, la situation était à nouveau bien différente' (would appear too pessimistic. A few weeks later, the situation was again very different).[64] Despite this qualification, Lucas's work was important in establishing the importance of ideology, revealing the interest in a forward policy, and exposing the unresolved contradictions in simultaneously espousing containment and rollback.

While Lucas cast a critical light on American psychological warfare, Frances Stonor Saunders scrutinized the CIA's involvement in cultural activities, arguing that 'by camouflaging its investment, the CIA acted on the supposition that its blandishments would be refused if offered openly'. She suggested that clandestine CIA support for the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) and other activities allowed the Americans to shape the thinking of intellectuals who received their financial assistance. For the 'more militant intellectuals' in CCF the 'ends justified the means, even if they included lying'.[65] Hugh Wilford examined the CIA and the British left and reached different conclusions. Saunders might have captured more attention but Wilford's study was more impressive, having a better grasp of the Cold War and being more judicious in his assessment. He charted the

[63] Scott Lucas, *Freedom's war: the American crusade against the Soviet Union* (Manchester, 1999).
[64] Soutou, *Guerre de cinquante ans*, pp. 224–5.
[65] Saunders, *Who paid the piper?* pp. 5, 415.

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activities of the CIA in influencing British intellectuals and trade unionists through various means including the CCF and the magazine, *Encounter*. The aim was to foster a less socialist and more Atlanticist outlook. Wilford concluded that CIA efforts enjoyed mixed results. The Labour party proved resistant to the case for a united Europe. Even the successes achieved with CCF and *Encounter* require qualification. British intellectuals only worked on such schemes if they were likely to benefit from them. 'The popularity of *Encounter* was, in this sense, a measure of the CIA's failure fully to control it'. Wilford rejected notions of 'Washington gold' (similar to the Moscow gold that seduced many Westerners to the Soviet cause) and European dupes succumbing to manipulation and trickery. 'It might well have been the case that the CIA tried to call the tune; but the piper did not always play it, nor the audience dance to it.'[66]

Donald Cameron Watt was more scathing of Saunders's work, calling her 'extraordinarily over-praised'.[67] Watt pointed out that in the 1950s the Foreign Office Department, the Information Research Department (IRD), which waged the kind of political warfare against the Soviet bloc that the Political Warfare Executive had conducted against Nazi Germany, was not secret, nor were the names of some of its members. Its staff had 'passed through much common ground in the armed services and the universities' and followed the example of many other officials and participated in academic conferences and seminars, published articles and even books. For example, Monty Woodhouse had been a central figure during the war in SOE operations in Greece, had then joined MI6 and played a central part in the joint Anglo-American coup in Iran in 1953. A later generation of scholars, Watt added, failed to recognize these interconnections of British political society and tended to think in broad categories like British intelligence, with which they had little contact. As a result they found it 'difficult to digest or fit into the private morality plays that they introduce into their own historical research'.[68] This affected their ability to analyse or explore the efficacy of intelligence work 'as an instrument of British policy where its activities were in fact clandestine, that is in the foreign countries whose press was targeted'.[69]

Volker Berghahn's study reinforced this view of the limited effectiveness of US cultural endeavours. He examined the career of Shepard Stone, successively Public Affairs director in the US High Commission in West Germany and director of the Ford Foundation's International Affairs programme, as a means of assessing the 'larger cultural, political, and socio-economic trends, shifts, and generational conflicts in Europe and America'. Berghahn looked at what he called the 'triangular relationship between the producers of ideas and ideologies, corporate America, and Washington policy makers', and paid particular attention to the CCF and its successor, the International Association for Cultural Freedom (IACF). Their central purpose might have been to combat Soviet communism, but 'another cold culture war was being waged': America's bid for cultural leadership and Europe's resistance to it. To Berghahn, 'however close the relationship in the face of the common enemy and however strong the basic ideological consensus and sense of purpose, the Atlantic still remained a trench'. His conclusions thus contradicted Saunders's claims

[66] Hugh Wilford, *The CIA, the British left and the Cold War: calling the tune?* (London, 2003), pp. 299–301, quotation at p. 301.

[67] Donald Cameron Watt, 'Rumours as evidence', in Ljubica Erickson and Mark Erickson, eds., *Russia: war, peace and diplomacy. Essays in honour of John Erickson* (London, 2005), pp. 276–7.

[68] Ibid., pp. 344–5n.

[69] Ibid., p. 277

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about US manipulation and were similar to Wilford's doubts about how far the Americans were able to shape European opinion.[70]

If CCF, IACF, and *Encounter* concerned the elites, a great many developments affected the masses. Unsurprisingly, most studies of the cultural Cold War have focused on the United States. Stephen Whitfield's splendid survey explained how the Cold War politicized the whole of American culture from literature to film and television, from religion to regional and national politics. It promoted healthy interest in national security but also, and all too frequently, intolerance, suspicion, and the ugly patriotism of the red scare, particularly in the 1950s. The Cold War 'defined the deepest fears and stirred the most disquieting anxieties', the 'national identity seemed to be disfigured'. Yet, this culture was 'by no means synonymous with the culture of the 1950s'.[71] Other books have considered the US impact on various countries.[72] The early twenty-first century saw efforts to widen the scope of investigation, both geographically and in terms of themes. In an edited volume, Rana Mitter and Patrick Major explored features from radio and cinema to literature and propaganda and did so across the blocs.[73] A chapter by Nicholas Cull considered Edward Murrow's leadership of the United States Information Agency and made the important point about 'the degree to which the hand of government directed and assisted the international flow of ideas and images'.[74] Tony Shaw's chapter skilfully explored the ways in which George Orwell's *Animal farm* and *1984* were used in the Cold War battle for hearts and minds. Shaw has been in the vanguard of efforts to understand Britain and the cultural dimension to the Cold War.[75] Another area that attracted attention was Cold War rivalry in international sport.[76] Since the rise of the totalitarian states before 1939, and Nazi Germany in particular, sport had been an emblem of the regime, sporting triumphs being used as political victories. During the Cold War there were frequent episodes of sporting competitions as surrogates for political conflict, from the tours of football teams to the rivalry of athletes at the Olympic Games. The confrontation became especially intense in the 1980s: the Americans boycotted the Moscow Olympiad of 1980 as a response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, while the Soviets retaliated by their own boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics of 1984. The role of religion has also been scrutinized. In the first decade or so of confrontation, the West's religious faith was juxtaposed with atheistic communism. As Whitfield noted of the 1950s, 'religion was virtually synonymous with American nationalism'.[77] Religion resurfaced as a visibly significant element in the 1980s, as Catholic

[70] Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), pp. xii, 287, 290.

[71] Stephen J. Whitfield, *The culture of the Cold War* (2nd edn, Baltimore, MD, 1996), p. 231.

[72] See, for instance, Richard Wagnleitner, *Coca-colonization and the Cold War: the cultural mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994). See also Richard Pells, *Not like US: how Europeans have loved, hated, and transformed American culture since World War Two* (New York, NY, 1997), who suggested influence was not all one way.

[73] Rana Mitter and Patrick Major, eds., *Across the blocs: Cold War cultural and social history* (London, 2004).

[74] Ibid., pp. 42–3.

[75] See the special issue, edited by Tony Shaw, 'Britain and the cultural Cold War', *Contemporary British History*, 19 (2005).

[76] See, for example, Peter Beck, 'Britain and the Cold War's "cultural olympics": responding to the political drive of Soviet sport', *Contemporary British History*, 19 (2005), pp. 169–86.

[77] Whitfield, *The culture of the Cold War*, p. 87. See also, on this theme: Dianne Kirby, ed., *Religion and the Cold War* (London, 2003); and Andrew J. Rotter, Robert Dean, Robert Buzzanco, and Patricia R. Hill, 'Roundtable: culture, religion and international relations', *Diplomatic History*, 24 (2000), pp. 593–640.

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Poland with the support of a Polish pope, John Paul II, resisted communist control, thereby contributing to the demise of the Cold War.[78] Disentangling the role of religion from other ingredients is far from easy. Yet, as Andrew Preston points out, religion was more prevalent in America than any other industrialized democracy, and since religion 'informs values, norms, ideas', its role in shaping foreign (and other) policies deserves analysis.[79]

No consideration of the masses could ignore the cinema. Politicians, particularly in the West, recognized its power and wished to utilize it to support their cause. Others became concerned and, in some cases obsessed, about the possibilities of communist influence. Hollywood became the target in Washington of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). Its hearings partly coincided with those of Senator Joe McCarthy, whose name became synonymous with anti-communist witch-hunts. Most writers have been sceptical about the accusations against film-makers. Ronald Radosh and Allis Radosh, however, suggest that concerns about communist influence were justified.[80] Britain did not witness any comparable campaign to root out communist influence: there was no British equivalent of HUAC and its purging of 'subversives'. As Tony Shaw pointed out, in his compelling study of the involvement of British filmmakers in the Cold War between 1945 and 1965, many such figures moved to Britain to work. He identified three phases. Between 1945 and 1949 the newsreels covered the Cold War but feature films eschewed Cold War themes. The early 1950s, however, saw filmmakers take up these themes, but by the close of the decade a more critical attitude to the Western position began to surface. The arms race was a particular focus of concern. Shaw suggested that British cinema was less crude in its depiction of the Cold War than either the Americans or the Soviets. That British films were more varied than Hollywood's in their treatment of the conflict was no doubt due to less government interference. Nevertheless, the government was able to exert an influence through talking to directors and producers and the release of finance. Shaw was rightly reticent about the impact of the 130 films with Cold War themes between 1945 and 1965. They might not have told people what to think but they 'helped to define how many aspects of the Cold War – political, economic, ideological, material, personal – were perceived by the millions who saw them'. Like the best cultural studies, Shaw connected his work with government thinking and policies. His book was based on careful and extensive reading of British government papers.[81]

Popular films have given a good deal of attention to, and often sensationalized, the intelligence war between East and West. Moreover, as the studies by Lucas and Saunders make clear, American cultural and psywar activities overlapped, taking us from public diplomacy to the world of intelligence. Some of the fiercest debates now focus on the role of covert activities in the Cold War. A common theme among many American and British scholars is the unacceptable behaviour by these two countries' intelligence services. This

[78] On the role of John Paul II, see Gaddis, *Cold War*, pp. 192–7.

[79] Andrew Preston, 'Bridging the gap between the sacred and the secular in the history of American foreign relations', *Diplomatic History*, 30 (2006), pp. 783–812. On the relations between religion and politics, see Michael Burleigh, *Sacred causes: religion and politics from the European dictators to Al Qaeda* (London, 2006).

[80] Ronald Radosh and Allis Radosh, *Red star over Hollywood: the film colony's long romance with the left* (San Francisco, CA, 2005).

[81] Tony Shaw, *British cinema and the Cold War: the state, propaganda and consensus* (London, 2001), quotation at p. 196

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condemnation sits alongside a curiously restrained attitude to those who betrayed their country to spy for the Soviet Union.

Espionage has been a hardy perennial of popular works on the Cold War. It has taken the work of Christopher Andrew, Richard Aldrich, and others to establish a more historically reliable understanding of this area.[82] One central issue, particularly in the United States, concerned the so-called McCarthy witch-hunts in the early 1950s. Releases of materials from Moscow have allowed a fuller understanding of the extent of Soviet espionage in the US. This has given rise to historical controversies about the guilt, or otherwise, of figures such as Harry Dexter White and Alger Hiss. John Earl Haynes has been a leading contributor to this debate. His latest book, written with Harvey Klehr, sought to assess the state of scholarship. They did so in a robust way that was hardly likely to please their antagonists: 'Far too much academic writing about communism, anticommunism and espionage is marked by dishonesty, evasion, special pleading and moral squalor.'[83]

Haynes and Klehr claimed that work on American communism came to be dominated by revisionist historians from the late 1960s: the unpopularity of the Vietnam War and the belief that anti-communism led to American involvement in it combined to discredit anti-communism. Revisionists conflated all types of anti-communism, unwilling to see a clear difference between a liberal anti-communist like Arthur Schlesinger and the demagoguery of Senator McCarthy. Anti-communism, the revisionist historian, Ellen Schrecker, would write, 'tap[ped] into something nasty in the human soul'. The releases of materials from the Soviet Union after 1991 undermined many of the revisionists' claims about American communism. Moscow massively subsidized the American Communist Party (CPUSA), which co-operated with Soviet intelligence. One line of counter-argument was to focus on CIA activities, with Saunders, for example, claiming that CIA funding of the CCF tainted the organization. Haynes and Klehr accepted that its CIA funding must alter our understanding of the operations of the CCF. 'But when the money trail leads to Moscow, they [the revisionists] lose their taste for the hunt.' For Haynes and Klehr, a clear sign of the impact of the new documentation in weakening the revisionists' case could be seen by their desire to move on. They castigated those writers who tried to downplay the importance of the issue of espionage during the Cold War, regarding it as 'redolent of political antiquarianism', that the topic 'has run out of steam', above all that the 'Cold War is over'.[84] They next turned to the intercepted Soviet messages, known as Venona, whose value and importance the revisionists were anxious to minimize. In an adept chapter they demolished a series of implausible claims about the innocence of a number of Soviet agents: Alger Hiss, Lauchlin Currie, and Harry Dexter White.

IV

If intelligence has received a great deal of attention, a surprisingly under-considered dimension has been the economic Cold War. Despite its centrality to revisionists' claims about American economic imperialism, there are few detailed studies. Too often the critics of US policy have asserted economic motivation rather than established it through detailed

[82] See, for example: Christopher Andrew, *Secret service* (London, 1985); idem, *KGB* (London, 1990); Richard J. Aldrich, *The hidden hand* (London, 2001).

[83] John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *In denial: historians, communism and espionage* (San Francisco, CA 2003), p. 231.

[84] Ibid., pp. 49, 68, 86.

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scholarship. Martin Walker is one of the few writers of a general history of the Cold War to examine the economics of the confrontation.[85]

The immediate post-war era saw a number of studies clustered around the origins and beneficial results of the Marshall Plan.[86] Debate then subsided until, in the 1980s, releases from archives led to more thoughtful examinations by academics (Michael Hogan was the most prominent), as well as a number of assessments by participants.[87] Robert Pollard wrote an impressive study of American policy in the first years after the war that mainly explored the State Department's belief in security through a new global economic order. The different outlook of the Pentagon received limited consideration. He maintained that America was expansionist and pursued a world economic order that suited its interests, but that this policy was not a cause of the Cold War.[88] Both Hogan's and Pollard's claims about American influence need to be read in the light of Alan Milward's challenge to the economic significance of the Marshall Plan.[89]

In *Butter and guns* (1997) Diane Kunz provided the first survey of the economic dimension to the Cold War, concentrating on US economic policy and its impact on Americans. This was 'a total conflict' between East and West which left the United States 'on a permanent war footing'. The new 'national security state won the Cold War' and the United States witnessed unparalleled domestic affluence while it created a huge military capability. Eisenhower was wrong about the dangers of the military-industrial complex to domestic prosperity: 'The national security state fathered economic growth at home while underpinning American economic diplomacy abroad.' In addition, Washington lay at the centre of a financial and trading framework, the Bretton Woods system of the IMF, the World Bank, and GATT. Yet US–Soviet military tension, not economic imperatives, dominated the Cold War. Economic diplomacy, however, was crucial in responding to the communist assertion about the superiority of its economic organization to that of American capitalism. Although virtually all American leaders supported a multilateral economic order, the links between this and the political stance against communism were inadvertent. Contrary to the claims about conspiracies, 'few officials or business leaders in fact sought the Cold War to manufacture domestic prosperity. Instead, Americans waged the Cold War for geopolitical and ideological reasons.'[90] Kunz concluded that economic diplomacy was a 'superb interalliance tool but of limited usefulness against the other side'. The economic alliance based on the Bretton Woods system and the order that replaced it 'complemented and reinforced the NATO security relationship'. Indeed, 'economic diplomacy played a vital role in winning the Cold War. American economic might, the combination of butter and guns, gave us the wherewithal to win the Cold War.'[91]

A vital aspect to US economic statecraft – action against the Soviet Union – received little attention from Kunz. It was a theme addressed by Alan Dobson in a more

[85] Martin Walker, *The Cold War* (London, 1993).

[86] Two early celebratory studies were Howard S. Ellis, *The economics of freedom: the progress and future of aid to Europe* (New York, NY, 1950) and Harry B. Price, *The Marshall Plan and its meaning* (Ithaca, NY, 1955).

[87] Hogan, *Marshall Plan*. Participants' experiences were gathered in Stanley Hoffman and Charles Maier, eds., *The Marshall Plan: a retrospective* (London, 1984).

[88] Robert A. Pollard, *Economic security and the origins of the Cold War* (New York, NY, 1985).

[89] Alan Milward, *The reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945–1951* (London, 1984). See also John Killick, *The United States and European reconstruction, 1945–1960* (Edinburgh, 1997).

[90] Diane Kunz, *Butter and guns: America's Cold War economic diplomacy* (New York, 1997), pp. 1–5.

[91] Ibid., p. 331.

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sophisticated analysis that focused on 'what American officials thought about how to conduct economic statecraft in order to further American national interests under conditions of strategic threat to the survival of the USA'. He identified alternative types of such a policy. During the Second World War it had been possible to wage economic warfare – to mount a naval blockade or to launch bombing raids against economic targets – but neither was feasible during the Cold War. Policies could now involve a military-strategic embargo or a wider embargo aimed at condemning Moscow or at damaging, perhaps even causing the collapse, of the Soviet economy. Dobson called such action cold economic warfare, even though policymakers preferred the terms strategic embargo or economic warfare.[92]

Since George Kennan and others in Washington did not think that the Soviets were about to attack against the West, containment of 'the spread of communism thus took the form of economic priorities'.[93] One approach was to strengthen Western economies, which was the aim of the Marshall Plan. By 1948, however, Washington favoured policies against the Soviets as well. Ian Jackson's monograph examined this policy up to 1963. The aim was to deny to the communist powers items of strategic value. From 1948 onwards various forms of restrictions were placed on exports first to the Soviet Union and then to China. A special Co-ordinating Committee (COCOM) was established to oversee this policy. Jackson argued that the policy pursued through COCOM did not amount to a scheme of economic warfare. He maintained that 'Western export control policy in the Cold War years must be viewed as "economic containment" or "economic defence".' The Americans sought to persuade their allies to join in the embargo.[94]

This strategy became even tougher after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, although the restrictions were somewhat reduced in 1953 and 1954 with the end of the Korean War and French departure from Indochina. In 1957 the British managed to secure the removal of the greater restriction on Beijing, known as the 'China differential'. By the end of Kennedy's presidency in 1963, in the light of the better US–Soviet relations after the Cuban missile crisis, there were moves to ease trade restrictions. The Johnson and Nixon administrations witnessed the lifting of the remaining obstacles to non-strategic trade with China and the Soviet Union.[95] Nixon expanded East–West trade, pursuing linkage between Soviet behaviour and opportunities for trade with the West. The policies of Nixon and Kissinger, however, proved over-complex and also upset allies. As Dobson noted, 'after preaching the merits of a tight embargo policy for so long, the US now took the lead in requesting exceptions from COCOM'.[96] Under Ford and Carter there was a reversion to tougher economic restrictions, particularly in high technology. During the presidency of Ronald Reagan no effective strategy of economic warfare was deployed because of bureaucratic infighting and the resistance of those like Haig, Shultz, secretary of the treasury Donald Regan, and US trade representative William Brock who opposed the policy.[97]

The disagreements of the Reagan administration revealed how notions of economic statecraft had evolved from a strategy aimed at denying armaments and strategic

[92] Alan P. Dobson, *US economic statecraft for survival, 1933–1991: of sanctions, embargoes and economic warfare* (London, 2002), pp. 9, 87. See also the neat summary in Alan P. Dobson and Steve Marsh, *US foreign policy since 1945* (London, 2001), pp. 46–55. [93] Dobson, *US economic statecraft*, p. 86.
[94] Ian Jackson, *The economic Cold War: America, Britain and east–west trade, 1948–1963* (London, 2001), quotation at p. 6. [95] Ibid., p. 184. [96] Dobson, *US economic statecraft*, p. 213.
[97] Ibid., p. 349n.

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technologies and enfeebling or, more optimistically, hastening Soviet economic collapse, to a policy that concentrated on 'psychological effects, sending messages, and bargaining'. Moreover, American economic statecraft against the Soviet Union, like that pursued against Germany and Japan, principally focused on 'economic defence, rather than commercial gain'.[98]

There are no comparable studies of Soviet political economy. Odd Arne Westad has stressed the poor quality of the Soviet alliances, which were not based on mutually beneficial trade, investments, and technology transfers. Rather, the USSR had to donate or barter technology, goods, and educational resources to its poorer alliance partner.[99] In an impressively thorough study, based on research in archives and literature in over half a dozen languages, Westad added that Soviet (and US) involvement in the Third World was a vital component of the Cold War. He concluded that 'the most important aspects of the Cold War were neither military nor strategic, nor Europe-centred, but connected to political and social developments in the Third World'. Each superpower was driven by a sense of mission to intervene in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. American action and pressure to adopt the Bretton Woods system, with its stress on free trade, harmed many countries in the Third World and pushed them towards the Soviet Union in the 1970s.[100] David Engerman explained how Americans failed to recognize the appeal of the USSR and its stress on production to the Third World: the Soviet 'model of rapid industrialization through central planning inspired newly independent nations'.[101] The direct economic costs of foreign intervention, Westad suggested, were not crucial in the Soviet collapse – they constituted about 2.5 per cent of state spending, compared with some 33 per cent for military expenditure. It was the political costs of continued involvement that proved disastrous, as the Soviet people, through Gorbachev's democratization, began 'to count their own part of each expense within a declining economy'.[102]

V

This survey of selected studies offers a flavour of the scale, variety, and intensity of the continuing debate on the Cold War: discussion is as lively and impassioned as during the conflict. Much is known about the origins, character, and demise of the confrontation; and about superpower negotiations and the thinking behind policy – though more is needed, especially for China. The economic dimension on the Western side is under-developed, on the Eastern side it is barely explored. If there is an abundant literature on Western (if not Soviet) nuclear strategy, there have been few studies devoted specifically to the Cold War character of the wars of the era. The overlapping areas of propaganda, cultural activities, and intelligence are increasingly analysed. Most of this work has focused on the United States and, to a lesser extent, on Britain. If there is still much to be done on France, Germany, and other NATO members, there are huge gaps in our understanding of the Soviet Union, the East European states, and China in these fields. Scholarship in the last

[98] Ibid., pp. 305, 306.

[99] Odd Arne Westad, 'Secrets of the second world: the Russian archives and the reinterpretation of Cold War history', *Diplomatic History*, 21 (1997), pp. 268–9.

[100] Westad, *The global Cold War*, quotation at p. 396.

[101] David C. Engerman, 'The romance of economic development and new histories of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History*, 28 (2004), p. 53.

[102] Westad, *The global Cold War*, p. 402.

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decade has confirmed that the Cold War was much more than a diplomatic confrontation and nuclear competition. It pervaded all aspects of life.

Against the exciting expansion into new areas, David Caute has warned of a narrowing of current scholarly focus. There has been too great a concentration on America, with English often 'the only operative language tool'. A new generation of US scholars have 'settled for a unilateral cold war – an essentially domestic quarrel between a citizens' America and the "Amerika" of the national security state'. Caute has criticized the 'relentless pursuit of exposure – who paid the piper? who pulled the strings? where was the hidden hand?'. This 'investigative' approach has led to the 'false conclusion that he who paid the piper wrote the tune; that promotion explains the product'. On the contrary, 'real conviction lay at the root of most cold war production'.[103]

There remains a real need to ally Caute's wider linguistic and geographical perspective to the huge and growing historiography and the rich documentary and visual sources in order to produce a general history that does justice to the full range of geopolitical, economic, cultural, and military activities that constituted the Cold War. There is a need not only to explore this array of activities, but also to integrate these components: to scrutinize, for example, the cultural influences on policy, or the degree to which sporting boycotts became part of general strategy. The opportunities for deepening our understanding are considerable. There are two major journals dedicated to the topic, *Cold War History* and the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, while *Diplomatic History* and *International Affair*s (Moscow) publish many articles in this field. The Cold War International History Project and National Security Archive in Washington each continue to unearth new documents. The projected *Cambridge history of the Cold War* promises to capture its multifaceted nature while offering an understanding of the confrontation as a whole.[104] Yet, John Lewis Gaddis's words in 1983 remain relevant: 'the field remains a fruitful one … those who toil in it are doing promising work that ought to be more widely known, but … there is still a lot that remains to be done'.[105]

[103] Caute, *The dancer defects*, pp. 614–17.

[104] Melvin Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *Cambridge history of the Cold War*, I: *Origins, 1917–1962*; II: *Crises and détente, 1962–1975*; III: *Endings, 1975–1991* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

[105] Gaddis, 'Emerging post-revisionist synthesis', p. 190.

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