УДК 327.5
DOI: 10.28995/2073-6339-2021-2-37-54

The selective memory of US-Soviet cooperation during World War II

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Abstract. By the time the US formally recognized the Soviet Union in 1933, the American economy was in desperate circumstances. President Roosevelt hoped that the new relationship would generate a prosperous trade between the two countries. When Germany, Italy, and Japan threatened world peace, a vigorous "America First" movement developed to keep the US out of the international conflicts. By the time the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, this became increasingly difficult. The US, instead, became "the arsenal of democracy" and supported the efforts of the British and, by 1941, the Russians to defeat Nazi aggression, particularly through the Lend-Lease program. Although after the war, the Soviets tended to minimize American, the residual good will from that effort prevailed despite serious conflicts. The Cold War did not become hot, and even produced scientific and cultural cooperation on occasion.

Keywords: Lend-Lease, military cooperation, public policy, Cold War, space race

For citation: Goldfield, D. (2021), "The selective memory of US-Soviet cooperation during World War II", *RSUH/RGGU Bulletin. "Political Science. History. International Relations" Series,* no. 2, pp. 37–54, DOI: 10.28995/2073-6339-2021-2-37-54

Избирательная память об американо-советском сотрудничестве в годы Второй мировой войны

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Аннотация. К 1933 г., когда США официально признали Советский Союз, американская экономика находилась в безвыходном положении. Президент Рузвельт надеялся, что новые отношения приведут к процветающей торговле между двумя странами. В связи с угрозами миру во

всем мире со стороны Германии, Италии и Японии возникло энергичное движение «Америка прежде всего», целью которого было не допустить участия США в международных конфликтах. После того, как в сентябре 1939 г. немцы вторглись в Польшу, добиться этого было все труднее. Вместо этого США стали «арсеналом демократии» и поддержали усилия британцев, а к 1941 г. и русских по подавлению нацистской агрессии, в частности посредством программы ленд-лиза. Хотя после войны Советы были склонны преуменьшать значение Америки, остаточная добрая воля от этих усилий преобладала, несмотря на серьезные конфликты. Холодная война не стала горячей и даже порой приводила к научному и культурному сотрудничеству.

Ключевые слова: ленд-лиз, военное сотрудничество, публичная политика, холодная война, гонка в космосе

Для цитирования: *Goldfield D.* The selective memory of US-Soviet cooperation during World War II // Вестник РГГУ. Серия «Политология. История. Международные отношения». 2021. № 2. С. 37–54. DOI: 10.28995/2073-6339-2021-2-37-54

It has long been an axiom among diplomatic historians that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy. That is, political, economic, and social conditions in the US have had a significant bearing on how America views the world. This principle was apparent with US-Soviet relations during (and after) the Second World War. In order to understand the arc of that relationship, it is worthwhile to focus on US domestic interests in the global context.

The US did not recognize the Soviet Union until November 1933, sixteen years after the Bolshevik Revolution. It was among the earliest major foreign policy decisions undertaken by the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt that had taken power in March 1933. There were good foreign policy reasons for the recognition, chief among them was the growing concern about Japanese expansion in Asia. There were also domestic considerations, particularly the severe economic problems of the US during the depths of the Great Depression. The Roosevelt administration hoped that the diplomatic move would bolster American commercial activity in the Soviet Union[1].

[1] Perkins, E.R., Churchill, R.P. and Reid, J.G. (eds.) (1952), *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Soviet Union, 1933–1939*, Government Printing Office, Washington, available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1933-39 (Accessed 09 Feb. 2021). See also: [Hoff-Wilson 1974].

For most of the next eight years, the relationship between Washington and Moscow was frosty. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed in August 1939 between the Soviets and Nazi Germany plunged the US-Soviet relationship to its lowest point since before 1933. And there it remained until June 1941.

On June 22, 1941, the German *Wehrmacht* invaded the Soviet Union thereby substantially changing the relationship between Moscow and Washington. By that point, the US, still technically neutral, was openly supplying Great Britain with ships, munitions, and other war materiel. The British were the last effective holdout against the Nazi conquest of Europe.

With the entrance of the Soviet Union on the side of the Allied forces, Americans quickly resolved to expand aid to the new ally. The Roosevelt administration, however, met resistance from lawmakers and voters who hoped to keep the nation out of the war. These opponents of Roosevelt's policies, who rallied under the banner of "America First", feared that the Germans would perceive American aid to the Soviets as a serious provocation and would, therefore, be forced to retaliate.

The America First Committee, founded in 1940, represented the culmination of agitation during the 1920s and 1930s against US involvement in international affairs. It had substantial support throughout the country. Isolationist sentiment particularly grew in the 1930s as war clouds formed over Europe and Asia. The movement brought together a disparate coalition that, for various reasons, opposed American foreign entanglements. First and foremost as a motivation for these isolationists was the bitter experience of World War I. The US had entered that war in 1917 with high ideals – America would help make the world "safe for democracy". It did not turn out that way. First, our European allies fastened a financially debilitating treaty on Germany, and second the allies seemed more interested in grabbing the colonies of the defeated forces – particularly those of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey – than in fostering a lasting peace [Churchwell 2018, Cole 1953, Nichols 2013).

Second, a Congressional committee, the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry during the First World War convened in April 1934. Gerald Nye, a Republican Senator from North Dakota chaired the committee. The Democratic-controlled Senate eventually shut down the committee in February 1936 after Nye made some intemperate remarks about Woodrow Wilson's complicity with munitions manufacturers in generating false rumors about alleged German military intentions against the US. By heightening animosity to-

ward Germany, American involvement in the Great War became almost inevitable, Nye's committee concluded[2].

Dorothy Detzer, a peace activist and executive secretary of the US branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, attended the Nye hearings and wrote a memoir of her time on Capitol Hill, *Appointment on the Hill* (1948) that included some damning testimony aired in Nye's committee. "The four solemn Du Pont brothers", Detzer wrote, explained that "the corporation's profits during the First World War seemed only the good fruit of sound business". Although the Nye Committee's work was short-circuited, sufficient information emerged to reinforce the nation's isolationist and pacifist organizations [Detzer 1948, p. 169].

Equally important, during the 1930s the US was mired in major economic depression. Domestic policy, particularly providing jobs and sustenance, took precedence over any concerns about troubling events abroad. The result was that, along with European indifference, the Germans were able to rearm and the Japanese advanced their predations in Asia unencumbered.

Finally, American Firsters betrayed a strong aversion to foreigners. In 1924, the US Congress passed a new immigration law that severely restricted immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Immigrants from those areas were overwhelmingly Jewish or Roman Catholic. With the revival of nativist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, the general belief was that immigrants from these regions and with these religious backgrounds would not fit into American life. Worse, they could be a disruptive political force bringing with them alien ideas such as Bolshevism[3].

The "America First" movement had a powerful spokesperson in Charles A. Lindbergh. By the 1930s, Lindbergh had attained iconic status as an aviator – the first solo flyer across the Atlantic in 1927, among other exploits. As Europe stumbled into war in September 1939, the Firsters threw up emotional slogans appealing to parents, such as "I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier" and "Save Our Sons".

But as early as 1935, the Roosevelt administration believed it could not remain on the sidelines with the growing aggressions of Japanese, German, and Italian military forces in Asia and Europe, respectively. In 1935, 1936, and 1937, the US Congress, at the President's urging,

[2] The Nye Report: Report of the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry, U.S. Congress, Senate, 74th Congress, 2nd sess., Feb. 24, 1936, pp. 3–13, available at: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/nye.htm (Accessed 09 Feb 2021); see also [Cole 1997, Coulter 1997].

[3] For a good overview of the influence of anti-immigration sentiment on public policy since the 1920s, see [Young 2017].

passed a series of Neutrality Acts. On the surface, the Neutrality Acts reinforced America's isolationist stance. The Acts allowed belligerents to purchase only nonmilitary goods from the US as long as they paid in cash and transported the goods in their own ships. As limited as they were, the Acts established the precedent of American aid to allies threatened by aggressive neighbors[4].

The threat became reality on September 1, 1939, when German forces invaded Poland. Within days, France and Great Britain had declared war on the Axis Powers and the Second World War was underway. On September 21, 1939, President Roosevelt appeared before a joint session of Congress and announced a revision to the Neutrality Acts called "Cash and Carry". The new policy now allowed the sale of military arms and the transfer of funds to belligerents, an important escalation of American involvement in the growing European conflict [Divine 1969, pp. 5–48].

By the end of 1940, the situation in Europe was desperate. Essentially, only the British remained to fight the Third Reich. Roosevelt was the first president to make extensive use of the radio to communicate with Americans. His "Fireside Chats" brought Americans up-to-date on the economy and global events. On December 29, 1940, the President, recently re-elected to an unprecedented third term, informed listeners that their country was going to escalate its support for the British.

He had recently concluded a Destroyers-for-Bases treaty that went well beyond "Cash and Carry". Now, he asserted, the national security of the US was at stake, and the best way to remain out of the war was to vigorously support the British. He proposed to make America, "the arsenal of democracy". Roosevelt warned,

> If Great Britain goes down, the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and the high seas. <...> It is no exaggeration to say that all of us, in all the Americas, would be living at the point of a gun.

Many in the administration believed it would only be a matter of time, before the US became actively involved in the Second World War[5].

America's aid to the allies increased with the passage of the Lend-Lease Act on March 11, 1941. The Act marked a significant departure

[4] For an excellent discussion of the Neutrality Acts, see [Dallek 1995].

[5] Roosevelt, F.D. December 29, 1940: Fireside Chat 16: On the "Arsenal of Democracy", Miller Center, Presidential Speeches, available at: https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-29-1940-fireside-chat-16-arsenal-democracy (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

from earlier measures and was a major step toward entering the war itself. The Act would lease (not sell, as with earlier legislation) war materiel to any country deemed "vital to the defense of the United States." Great Britain was running out of cash, so "Cash and Carry" was no longer an option. The administration framed this bold step as a defensive measure, that stronger allies would benefit the security of America. As Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson explained to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1941,

> We are buying... not lending. We are buying our own security while we prepare. <...> By our delay during the past six years, while Germany was preparing, we find ourselves unprepared and unarmed, facing a thoroughly prepared and armed potential enemy[6].

The timing turned out well. Just a few months later, on June 22, 1941, the German army launched Operation Barbarossa, and invaded the Soviet Union. Soviet authorities, lulled by their treaty with the Third Reich, were unprepared for the assault. The US declared that the Soviet Union was eligible for Lend-Lease, and on generous terms: no interest and repayment would not begin until five years after the war was over. An appreciative Josef Stalin wrote to Roosevelt,

> Your decision, Mr. President, to give the Soviet Union an interest-free credit of $1 billion in the form of materiel supplies and raw materials has been accepted by the Soviet government with heartfelt gratitude as urgent aid to the Soviet Union in its enormous and difficult fight against the common enemy – bloodthirsty Hitlerism[7].

By August 1941 the first war supplies were on their way to the Soviet Union. The goods were transported alone one of three routes. The Arctic route was the shortest and most direct, but it was also the most

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[6] Documents Related to FDR and Churchill // National Archives, available at: https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/fdr-churchill (Accessed 09 Jan 2021); Transcript of Lend-Lease Act, 1941, OurDocuments.gov., available at: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=71&page=transcript (Accessed 09 Jan 2021). The best work on Lend-Lease is [Kimball 1969]; see also [Herring, Jr. 1969, Weeks 2010]. The statistics on US aid to Russia are derived from these latter two sources.

[7] Josef Stalin quoted in: Franklin Roosevelt Administration: Stalin Replies to Roosevelt Letter of October 30, 1941 (November 4, 1941), Jewish Virtual Library, available at: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/stalin-replies-to-roosevelt-letter-of-october-30-1941-november-1941 (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

dangerous as it required ships to sail past German-occupied Norway. But, of the 3,964,000 tons of goods shipped along this route (twenty-three percent of the total aid), only seven percent of the cargo was lost. Two other routes were safer and, by 1943, they were the best avenues for aid to the Soviet Union. By then, routes via the Persian Gulf through Iran, and across the Pacific from Alaska to Vladivostok were preferred to the Atlantic route to Murmansk.

The aid was significant. The Soviets received more than 14,000 American planes, 44,000 jeeps, 376,000 cargo trucks, 8,000 tractors and 13,000 tanks. In addition, the Russians received 1.5 million blankets, 331,000 liters of alcohol, 15 million pairs of army boots, 107,000 tons of cotton, 2.6 million tons of petroleum products, and, probably most important, 4.5 million tons of food supplies. This last item was especially welcome for the children. These figures do not include assistance from U.S. Russian War Relief (a private, nonprofit organization) and the Red Cross.

Support for such aid to the Soviet Union, despite its obvious benefits, was not unanimous in the US. Rumors surfaced that the Russians were trading some lend-lease aircraft to the Japanese in exchange for rubber. Japan, the story went, then used those planes against American forces in the Pacific. A thorough investigation revealed that the story was what we call today, "fake news."

Also, William Standley, the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, complained to his superiors often about Josef Stalin's tendency to diminish the American contributions to the Russian war effort in public statements. In March 1943, for example, Standley charged, "It seems that the Russian government wants to hide the fact that it receives help from outside. Obviously it wants to ensure its people that the Red Army is fighting this war alone"[8].

But such petulance was beside the point. The major objective of Lend-Lease and similar programs was to sustain the Russian war effort. The collapse of the Eastern front would be a terrible blow to the Allied war effort against the Axis powers. That was significantly more important at the time than doling out appropriate credit.

Lend-Lease was the most visible program of wartime cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union. By the end of January 1945, the US had spent $36 billion on the Lend-Lease program, $11 billion of which went to the Russians. Although Stalin never revealed the full

[8] For William Standley's comments and their context, see: Lend-Lease: "How American supplies aided the USSR in its darkest hour", *Russia Beyond*. March 14, 2016, available at: https://www.rbth.com/defence/2016/03/14/lend-lease-how-american-supplies-aided-the-ussr-in-its-darkest-hour_575559 (Accessed 09 Jan. 2021).

extent of Lend-Lease to his people, he noted at the 1945 Yalta Conference that "Lend-Lease is one of Franklin Roosevelt's most remarkable and vital achievements in the formation of the anti-Hitler alliance". The aid had a significant impact. The Russian offensive which drove the Germans out of White Russia and Ukraine was a product of the American transfer of thousands of guns, planes, tanks, and trucks.

On April 25, 1945, Soviet and American soldiers greeted each other at the Elbe River near Torgau, Germany to celebrate the impending defeat of Nazi Germany. Two weeks later, in Reims, France, the Germans unconditionally surrendered to the Allied forces. On June 5, 1945, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, met Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov, his Russian counterpart, in occupied Berlin. Within a few months, the Cold War would replace the bonhomie of the Second World War between these allies in arms and, almost just as quickly, Josef Stalin and his successors would revise the narrative of wartime cooperation with the US and deny the crucial role American support provided to the Soviet effort[9].

The tensions of the Cold War were not only a result of Stalin's machinations in postwar Eastern Europe. The Soviet menace played well in American politics. President Harry S. Truman, FDR's successor, understood the political benefits of taking a strong stance against the Soviet Union, and, often, Stalin obliged, as with meddling in Greece and Turkey, and the Berlin blockade, the latter of which resulted in the Berlin Airlift.

These events immediately following World War II were played out in the context of a remarkable memorandum, the so-called "Long Telegram" sent to the Truman administration in February 1946 by George F. Kennan, the American charge d'affaires in Moscow. The telegram sounded the alarm of Soviet intentions to effectively subjugate Eastern Europe, and it recommended the policy of containment to ensure that the Soviet Union would not expand its political and military control over Western Europe as well. The upside, Kennan wrote, was that although the Soviet Union was "impervious to logic of reason", it was "highly sensitive to logic of force". The policy of containment and its implied threat of military intervention persisted throughout most of the Cold War[10].

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[9] On the meeting of Marshal Zhukov and General Eisenhower, see: "Allies Leaders Signing the Berlin Declaration in Berlin, Germany, June 1945", *The National WWII Museum*, available at: https://www.ww2online.org/image/allies-leaders-signing-berlin-declaration-berlin-germany-june-1945 (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

[10] George F. Kennan's "Long Telegram" may be accessed here: https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

This adversarial cast not only informed President Truman's foreign policy, but also fueled anti-Soviet sentiment in the US to the point where Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin launched a successful political career looking for Soviet spies and informants in the US government, in educational institutions, in the entertainment industry, and in the press. The untold damage in personal lives ruined by the McCarthy probes was finally halted when the Senator pushed too hard in his investigation of alleged Communist influence in the US Army in 1954. The McCarthy era was less a studied and effective response to Soviet espionage than a self-inflicted wound on the American body politic [Shogan 2009][11].

Still, the fraught relations between the US and the Soviet Union did not dissolve the good will generated by wartime cooperation. Although Josef Stalin attempted to bury the memory of US-Soviet collaboration during the Second World War, or at least minimize the American contribution to Russian forces, other Soviet leaders knew better. And once Stalin was gone, they were less constrained to hide the truth of the two countries' collaboration even if the official "story" of the war continued the Stalinist perspective.

In 1963, Marshal Zhukov who, probably more than any Russian could accurately assess the impact of US aid, challenged the Party line:

> Now they say that the allies never helped us, but it can't be denied that the Americans gave us so many goods without which we wouldn't have been able to form our reserves and continue the war. ...We didn't have explosives [or] gunpowder. We didn't have anything to charge our rifle cartridges with. The Americans really saved us with their gunpowder and explosives. And how much sheet steel they gave us! How could we have produced our tanks without American steel? But now they make it seem as if we had an abundance of all that. Without American trucks we wouldn't have had anything to pull our artillery with[12].

Zhukov's view was not an outlier. Nikita Khrushchev wrote unequivocally in his memoirs, published in the US in 2004, about the timeliness of American aid during the war:

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[11] See also: Menand, L. (2020), "Joseph McCarthy and the Force of Political Falsehoods", *The New Yorker,* Aug. 3 & , available at: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/08/03/joseph-mccarthy-and-the-force-of-political-falsehoods (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

[12] Marshal Zhukov's comments may be accessed at: https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/ww2/great-patriotic-war-05.htm (Accessed 09 Jan. 2021).

> If the United States had not helped us, we would not have won. One-on-one against Hitler's Germany, we would not have withstood its onslaught and would have lost the war. No one talks about this officially, and Stalin never, I think, left any written traces of his opinion, but I can say that he expressed this view several times in conversations with me[13].

Boris Sokolov, one of the most prominent Russian historians of World War II, endorsed Zhukov's and Khrushchev's assertions:

> In a hypothetical battle one-on-one between the U.S.S.R. and Germany, without the help of Lend-Lease and without the diversion of significant forces of the Luftwaffe and the Germany Navy... Stalin could hardly have beaten Hitler.

Sokolov asked his readers to imagine the Soviet Union without the Lend-Lease program:

> Without Lend-Lease, the Red Army would not have had about one-third of its ammunition, half of its aircraft, or half of its tanks. In addition, there would have been constant shortages of transportation and fuel. The railroads would have periodically come to a halt. And Soviet forces would have been much more poorly coordinated with a constant lack of radio equipment. And they would have been perpetually hungry without American canned meat and fats[14].

Marshal Zhukov's comments are particularly noteworthy for their timing. US-Soviet relations were very strained at the time, and it was possible to argue that those relations were at a particularly dangerous juncture. A trio of provocative events occurred between 1960 and 1962, each one of which could have escalated into a full-fledged armed conflict.

On May 1, 1960, the Soviets shot down a high-altitude reconnaissance plane – essentially a spy craft – over their air space. The so-called U-2 incident, named after the secret military aircraft involved in the surveillance, not only netted the sophisticated plane, but also the pi-

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[13] Nikita Khrushchev's comments from his memoirs may be accessed at: Coalson, R. (2020),"'We Would Have Lost': Did U.S. Lend-Lease Aid Tip the Balance in Soviet Fight against Nazi Germany?", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 07, available at: https://www.rferl.org/a/did-us-lend-lease-aid-tip-the-balance-in-soviet-fight-against-nazi-germany/30599486.html (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

[14] Ibid.

lot, Francis Gary Powers, who the Soviets promptly put on trial for espionage. President Dwight D. Eisenhower who, just fifteen years earlier, had embraced Marshal Zhukov in Berlin, had to acknowledge the deed and the fact that such spy planes had routinely crossed into the Soviet Union. A Soviet court sentenced Powers to ten years in prison, though he served less than two years, winning his release as part of a spy exchange between the US and Russia. The U-2 incident poisoned a scheduled Four Powers Summit meeting in Paris two weeks later when Premier Khrushchev abruptly left the conference after one day. He also rescinded an invitation to President Eisenhower to visit the Soviet Union later that year [Beschloss 1986, Pickett 2007].

In April 1961, a failed invasion of Cuba by a private army (with secret backing from the Central Intelligence Agency) further roiled relations between the US and the Soviet Union. By this time, Fidel Castro's Cuba had become a client state of Russia and a valuable asset just ninety miles from the US mainland. How valuable, the US would find out the following year when the Soviet's installed ballistic missiles on the island [Rasenberger 2012].

The Soviet missiles were a direct response both to the American deployment of ballistic missiles in Turkey and Italy, as well as the U-2 spy plane incident. Historians believe that this confrontation was the closest the Americans and Soviets came to a hot war during the existence of the Soviet Union. But President Kennedy agreed (privately) to dismantle the ballistic missiles in Turkey and Nikita Khrushchev agreed (publicly) to remove the missiles from Cuba. In a public declaration, President Kennedy promised not to support or initiate an invasion of Cuba again. The incident led to the establishment of a Washington-Moscow hotline, the better to defuse potentially dangerous confrontations in the future [Stern 2005].

These incidents, however, did not characterize the general tenor of US-Soviet postwar relations. That is, the countries were not consistently on the brink of war. The consequences of a potential nuclear conflict and, I would argue, the remembrance of cooperation during the Second World War, particularly among Soviet citizens and several prominent leaders, inhibited a more bellicose response.

Russia and America were competitive adversaries, to be sure, particularly in the space race, for one prominent example. But again, despite dire predictions from some American political leaders about the untoward military consequences of the Soviet edge in space and the need for a strong US response, the American reaction focused much more on the shortcomings of US advances in scientific and technological research than on militarizing outer space. It was also fortunate that former general Dwight D. Eisenhower was president.

On October 4 1957, the Soviet Union launched a satellite into orbit around the earth. The Russians called it *Sputnik*, or "fellow traveler". The small satellite was just over 180 pounds and no bigger around than a beach ball. But it circled the earth every ninety-two minutes at eighteen thousand miles per hour. To compound the surprise and embarrassment to the US, the Soviets launched a larger craft one month later, with scientific instruments and a dog that had medical instruments strapped to its body. Worse still, in December, the US launched its response, a Vanguard missile. It rose two feet off the launching pad and then crumbled to the ground in flames[15].

The series of events highlighted two issues: the technological superiority of the Soviet Union, and the military consequences of such superiority. Under enormous pressure from the military, members of Congress, and many American citizens, Eisenhower had to decide how best to respond to the new threat. Rather than request significant increases in military spending, the president instead emphasized the need to expand the nation's educational capabilities, especially, though not exclusively, in the sciences. Investing in people rather than in hardware, Eisenhower believed, was the best way to ensure the nation's security in the long term.

This was a new way of thinking and, fortunately, it came from a former general. Rather than escalating the tension between the two countries, the president decided to send Americans to school. This strategy did not sit well with many Americans and some political leaders. Lyndon B. Johnson (D-TX), the Majority Leader in the US Senate, proclaimed that *Sputnik* was "a disaster... comparable to Pearl Harbor"[16].

Eisenhower's military background and familiarity with Russian military capabilities played well in the crisis. He realized that the military significance of *Sputnik* was minimal. Besides, to ramp up America's nuclear program would be an expensive and ultimately useless endeavor. At a news conference shortly after the launch of the first *Sputnik*, the president asked, "What is going to be done with this tremendous number of weapons?" How many times "could [you] kill the same man?"[17]

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[15] For a detailed discussion of *Sputnik* and its impact on US public policy in the late 1950s, see [Goldfield 2017, pp. 215–220].

[16] Price, G.R. (1957), "Arguing the Case for Being Panicky", *Life*, Nov. 18, pp. 125–126.

[17] Foreign Relations of the United States, The Soviet Union, 1933–1939. URL: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v19/d152 (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

Eisenhower dismissed calls for increased defense expenditures. His rationale was that these appropriations would come at the expense of civilian needs. Reminding Americans of the broader picture, the president noted, "We must remember that we are defending a way of life." Turning America into a "garrison state" would mean taking the risk that "all we are striving to defend... could disappear"[18].

A wiser policy Eisenhower believed would be to invest in scientific and engineering fields where he cited "glaring deficiencies". To address these shortcomings, Eisenhower promised, "The federal government... must and will do its part". The first result was the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 to strengthen education in the sciences, foreign languages, and area studies in universities. It represented an important breakthrough for the federal government with respect to direct aid for college students[19].

Shortly after submitting his proposal for the NDEA to Congress, Eisenhower named the first special assistant for science and technology, James R. Killian Jr., president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Killian formed and chaired the President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC), which included representatives from the nation's scientific and academic elites. By 1963 the federal government had, in fact, assumed primary responsibility for supporting basic research. Equally striking, but much less publicized was the rapid growth of federal funding of "nonscience" research projects through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). The NDEA and subsequent legislation boosted appropriations for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) [Goldfield 2017, p. 218].

In a sense, *Sputnik* turned out to be the Soviet gift to the US that kept on giving. Shortly after the second launch, the Pentagon, under the president's directive, established what would become the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). This agency laid the foundation for today's information economy, as it

[18] *Eisenhower D.D.* Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the International Press Institute. 1958. Apr. 17 // *The American Presidency Project*, available at: https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-american-society-newspaper-editors-and-the-international-press-institute (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

[19] Eisenhower, D.D. (1957), "Radio and Television Address to the American People on Science in National Security", Nov. 7, *The American Presidency Project*, available at: https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/radio-and-television-address-the-american-people-science-national-security (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

helped develop the Internet, chip design, and artificial-intelligence software. The federal government provided the seed money for Silicon Valley[20].

It would be a mistake, however, to depict the first few decades after World War II as an unrelenting series of adversarial encounters between the US and the Soviet Union. There were numerous areas of cooperation, particularly in arts and music. The Bolshoi Ballet, for example, toured the US in 1959. Cultural diplomacy or soft power was a hallmark of the Eisenhower years. Bolshoi dancers also performed on the popular Ed Sullivan Show, a Sunday night television staple in the US during the late 1950s and early 1960s [Richmond 2004].

And, of course, Van Cliburn wowed Russian judges at the first international Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1958. When he won the competition, he became a national hero in two countries and was treated to a ticker-tape parade in New York City – a very rare honor for a classical musician. In 2008, on the fiftieth anniversary of his Moscow triumph, Cliburn reminisced, "To know that these people [the Russian audience] knew all of this music and were interested in how I played it, that was such a thrill. They were sweet and friendly, so passionate about music"[21].

Perhaps the most important and positive interaction between the US and the Soviet Union during this postwar period related to polio, a dreaded disease that ravaged both the US and Russia, and to which children were especially susceptible. Dr. Jonas Salk, the son and grandson of Russian Jewish immigrants to the US, developed a vaccine that came into widespread use in 1955. However, the rollout was so rushed that some tainted batches of the vaccine went undetected, with predictably disastrous results. Salk and his team traced the problem to a laboratory in California and soon rectified the situation.

In the meantime, Albert Sabin, another Russian Jewish immigrant now resident in the US, had developed a live-virus polio vaccine in collaboration with some Russian colleagues. The stumble of the Salk vaccine (which used an attenuated version of the virus) enabled Sabin's vaccine to gain notice. The problem was how to test a vaccine that contained a live poliovirus. There were few volunteers in the US, but through his Russian colleagues, Sabin sent several million doses of

[20] On DARPA, see: Judis, J.B. (2013), "Steve Jobs's Angel: The Republicans Want to Kill It", *New Republic*, Sep. 2, no. 4, pp. 6–7.

[21] Simon, S. (2013), "Pianist Van Cliburn, Warmed Russian Hearts During Cold War", *NPR,* March 2, available at: https://www.npr.org/ 2013/03/02/173307757/pianist-van-cliburn-warmed-russian-hearts-during-cold-war (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

the vaccine to Russia in 1959. More than 1.5 million Russian schoolchildren received Sabin's oral vaccine with excellent results. American health authorities immediately approved the vaccine for use in the US and, by the early 1960s the Sabin oral vaccine had overtaken the Salk vaccine as the dose of choice for American schoolchildren [Horstmann 1991].

The point is that even at the height of the Cold War, the residual good feelings between the war generations in the Soviet Union and the US, respectively, as well as domestic politics and policy, allowed for cultural and scientific collaboration that not only benefited both countries, but the world as a whole. There were, of course, flash points in the 1950s and 1960s, such as the U-2 incident, the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, and the Cuban missile crisis, as noted. And there were significant strains in US-Russian relations following the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The US and Russia recalled the Second World War during the 1960s and beyond for reasons other than the nostalgic collaboration. There was the issue of money. Specifically, at the end of the war, the US asked recipient countries to pay for civilian supplies sent by the American government to sustain the allies. These included items such as civilian trucks, the construction of power plants, and items of food and clothing directed toward those citizens on the home front.

According to US accounting, the Soviet bill came to $1.3 billion, a sum the Russian government stated flatly it could not pay. Instead, the Soviets offered $170 million. The standoff led to negotiations in 1972. The Soviet Union and the US signed an agreement that the Russians would pay a total of $722 million by 2001. To make good on this promise, the Soviet government soon transferred $48 million to the US. Then the payments stopped.

The halt in remuneration resulted from the passage of the Jackson-Vanik amendment to a trade bill Congress passed in 1974. Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson, a Democratic Senator from Washington State and Charles A. Vanik, a Democratic Congressman from Ohio offered the amendment in order to restrict trade with nations that impeded emigration and violated other human rights. A major reason for introducing the amendment was the growing concern about the Soviet treatment of its Jewish citizens, particularly the government's refusal to allow them to emigrate.

There the matter remained until 1990 when the Soviet Union returned to the war payment talks. The result was an agreement that the Americans would receive $674 million by 2030. One year later, the Soviet Union collapsed. But the successor government of Boris Yeltsin agreed to the debt repayment and, in fact, Russia soon paid

for all the non-military goods it had received through the Lend-Lease accord. By then, the right of Jewish citizens to emigrate freely had become a moot issue[22].

Debts paid and aid acknowledged, it was now time to memorialize US-Soviet cooperation during World War II. In a riverfront park in downtown Fairbanks, Alaska, American, French, Canadian, and Russian officials gathered on August 27, 2006 to dedicate the Lend-Lease Memorial. The sculpture depicts a US Army Air Force pilot alongside a Soviet pilot and a Bell P-39 Airacobra propeller. The Bell P-39 was a common aircraft featured in the Lend-Lease program. Fairbanks was the staging area for one of the three major routes to ferry war materiel to the Soviet Union[23].

Russian defense minister, Sergei Ivanov, was a featured speaker at the dedication. "We highly appreciate the way the Alaskans keep the memory of our fight against fascism during World War II alive". Ivanov hoped that the benefits of that cooperation would remain not merely a memory, but as an operating principle for the future: "The experience of cooperation that came from the war is a great example for the new generations of defenders. That experience should not be lost, but preserved"[24].

Relations between Russia and the US have deteriorated since that Alaskan summer, but it is important to remember two things about that relationship. First, even at the height of the Cold War during the 1950s through the 1980s, cultural and scientific connections persisted, and even flourished. Also, vital issues such as nuclear arms limitations were addressed. Even today, the cooperative spirit persists in some areas.

In October 2020, a Soyuz rocket blasted off from a Kazakhstan launch site. Nearly sixty years earlier, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to reach outer space as a Vostok rocket sent him into orbit from Kazakhstan. As with the two *Sputnik* launches three years earlier, the event shook the US. A headline in *Newsweek* magazine in April 1961 blared, "Why We're Behind – Will We Catch Up?" The event was instru-

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[22] Farnsworth, C.H. (1990), "Evolution in Europe; Soviets to Repay Lend-Lease After a Trade Accord", *The New York Times,* June 7, available at: https://www.nytimes.com/1990/06/07/world/evolution-in-europe-soviets-to-repay-lend-lease-after-a-trade-accord.html (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

[23] On the Lend-Lease Memorial, see: Weaver, J. (2006), "Memorial honors American, Russian pilots", *Eielson Air Force Base*, Nov. 15, available at: https://www.eielson.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/384452/memorial-honors-american-russian-pilots/ (Accessed 09 Jan 2021).

[24] Ibid.

mental in spurring our program to land a manned spacecraft on the moon by the end of the decade[25].

The Soyuz launch in 2020 included a Russian and an American team headed for the International Space Station. These joint flights had been going on for the previous twenty years. But, spokespersons for both countries indicated that this might be the last joint expedition, at least for awhile. Considering the unforeseen trajectories of US-Russian relations since the end of World War II, it is hazardous to make predictions. In 1961, joint space efforts with the US (and vice versa) were fantasies, assuming anyone was thinking about such collaboration[26].

But the history is clear. The collaborative efforts of World War II, the cultural and educational exchanges even at the lowest ebb of US-Soviet relations, and the cooperation on nuclear disarmament and in outer space demonstrate that there are strong historical bases for positive and productive relationships between the two countries. Domestic politics will be the filter through which the respective foreign policies will play out.

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