

THE CIA AND THE FORMULATION OF U.S. CONTAINMENT STRATEGY, 1946-1950.

EUAN W.S DOWNIE

(Resumen)

Con el propósito de evaluar la posible influencia de la recién creada CIA en la política exterior de los EE.UU. entre los años 1946 – 1950, sobre todo en cuanto a Europa y la Unión Soviética, el artículo estudia diversos aspectos. Entre ellos está el crecimiento de la CIA que resulta paralelo a la amenaza percibida de la URSS, la relación de esta agencia con otras de tipo militar y político, los destinatarios de sus informes como los comentarios de dichas personas acerca de los informes, y finalmente la coincidencia entre la sugerencia realizada en los informes desclasificados de la época y la política adoptada, tanto en discursos como en legislación. Evaluando de forma conjunta estas lecturas, el autor concluye que es altamente probable que la CIA influya de forma decisiva en la política exterior de los Estados Unidos durante esa época.

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE CIA AND UNITED STATES CONTAINMENT STRATEGY 1946-1950

The purpose of this article is to establish whether the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) influenced the development of United States containment strategy. It is, therefore, primarily an endeavor to discover the CIA's role in the development of United States policy towards the Soviet Union and, particularly, to ascertain the importance of CIA intelligence to decisions made. Ultimately, this is with a view to proving that the newly formed intelligence agency did, in fact, have at least an indirect input into policymaking.

Intelligence produced post-war and beyond was usually in the shape of reports composed by intelligence bodies for policymakers, based on information received from an assortment of sources. These ranged from intercepted foreign broadcasts to reports from U.S. embassies abroad. Hence, the job of the CIA was to look at all the evidence and evaluate it in statements to the President, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the State Department (SD), the National Security Council (NSC) and other policymakers. By working with de-classified CIA and SD intelligence documents from the period, this study aims to make a valuable contribution the subject of the CIA's role in post-war foreign policy by examining five issues. The growth of the CIA in proportion to the perceived threat, the rising ability of the agency to affect policy, the CIA's relationships with policymakers, the recipients of CIA intelligence reports, and most importantly, whether recommendations in CIA intelligence reports came out in actual government policy.

As yet, both intelligence historians and those interested in the cold war have largely ignored this topic; as a result, historiography is sparse. The subject has been touched upon by Trevor Barnes and Walter Laqueur, however neither has provided an in depth study focusing solely on the issue of the CIA and post-war foreign policy influence. Writing in the early 1980s, Walter Laqueur states that "the CIA played no significant role,

except perhaps by providing occasional information on Soviet military capabilities.”¹ Walter Laqueur studied de-classified intelligence documents; it should be noted that it took the collapse of communism at the end of the 1980s to stimulate wider declassification of documents on this subject. In 1981 and 1982, Trevor Barnes produced a stimulating two-part study looking at whether or not it was the CIA that prevented the post-war Soviet domination of Europe through covert action. Barnes’s research included not only de-classified documents, but also interviews with former CIA agents. Although it was only secondary to his thesis, Barnes did assert that after World War II, “the CIA expanded rapidly, as did its influence over the making of American foreign policy.”² Therefore, the function of this study is to add to such work and take it a step further using government policy as well as CIA intelligence, for the first time focusing precisely on this question.

This research focuses largely on the containment of Western Europe. Although containment was a policy applied worldwide with great significance in the Far East and Middle East, it was Western Europe that America identified as most essential because of the obvious economic and military potential of the region and, subsequently the huge problems that would have been created had the area fallen under Soviet domination. It is worth noting that directly after World War II the political, economic and social instability of Western Europe helped make this an issue of the greatest importance.

Post-war America badly needed a way of bringing information from various intelligence agencies together so that well informed estimates and reports could be produced efficiently for government officials. World War II ended on September 2, 1945, with the defeat of Japan, leaving Americans completely unprepared to fill the vacuum of power that had been created in Europe and Asia. There were two significant events in the mind of the Truman administration as it set about the task of founding a Central Intelligence Agency directly after World War II. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, amounted to nothing short of a complete intelligence failure that could have been prevented had there been the apparatus in place to bring together all the available clues of the impending assault. To assure that nothing of this nature happened again, the U.S. resolved to build a strong, well-funded intelligence service capable of correlating all sources of information from various government and military departments.

The second significant affair was the Soviet takeover of previously occupied territories directly after the war, which was causing alarm throughout the West, despite previous allied-Soviet cooperation. The main problem was that policymakers and military chiefs of staff could not say what the Soviets would do next, what their objectives were or what they were capable of, militarily and economically. One of the first jobs of the Central Intelligence Group, (CIG) which eventually became the familiar CIA, was to put together a comprehensive set of files on the Soviets, as well as prominent European and South American nations, and keep them up to date so that assessments could be made as to the threat posed to the United States.

One of the ways this study aims to show that the CIA influenced containment strategy is by establishing the symmetry between CIA growth and the development of

1. Walter Laqueur. *A World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence*. New York, 1985. 115.

2. Trevor Barnes. “The Secret Cold War: The CIA and the American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946-1956,” *The Historical Journal*, part 1. 1981 .399-415

containment. The CIG began as a fairly small organization, with limited power on January 22, 1946, with Admiral Sidney Souers as the director. Before fears of Soviet intentions began to take hold, the job of the CIG was simply to bring together intelligence from other agencies. This minimal role is reflected in the dismantling of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The SD inherited the influential research and analysis branch of the OSS, which had been the World War II intelligence and covert action agency headed by William J. Donovan. The War Department assumed the counter intelligence branch and named it the Strategic Services Unit (SSU).

From here the CIA grew both in terms of size and influence right through the tenure's of Lieutenant General Hoyt S. Vandenberg (Director of Central Intelligence, June 10th 1946 – May 1st 1947) and Rear Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter (Director of Central Intelligence, May 1st 1947 – October 7th 1950) and was an important source of information for Truman throughout the period when containment was developed. The growth of the CIA during the later part of the 1940s was a direct result of the branching effect of communism, whereby the Kremlin sought to project its influence throughout the world as much as possible.

In August 1946, the CIG was given the authority to analyze intelligence on foreign atomic weapons and development and, at the end of the year, eventually gained the SSU from the War Department, thus signifying its growing importance at this early stage. The inclusion of the SSU, gave the CIG the capability to gather and evaluate foreign intelligence without help or hindrance from other departments.³ Previously, hostile departments and the lack of proper investigative resources of its own had hampered the effectiveness of CIG estimates. According to Trevor Barnes, J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had gone to great lengths to obstruct the new agency as much as possible, predominantly by banning the recruitment, by the CIG of FBI men in South America. Furthermore he mentions that the SD and Department of War were very much against the inclusion of 'evaluation' in CIG reports.⁴ The SSU had branches and established contacts throughout the world, and in 1946 was far larger than the CIG; Michael Warner of the CIA history staff compares this merger to "a mouse eating an elephant."⁵ Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Vandenberg even managed to take the job of gathering intelligence on South America away from Hoover's FBI, thus further extending both the scope and influence of information gathered and subsequently, the strength of the agency.

Indeed, by the end of Vandenberg's tenure as DCI, the CIG had come far. Vandenberg himself deserves much of the credit for CIG ascendancy up to this point, although 1947 was a trying year for U.S.-Soviet relations as containment took hold of American foreign policy. In April 1948, Vandenberg went on to a post as Chief of Staff of the newly formed U.S. Air Force.

3. Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records: The CIA under Harry Truman*. Washington DC, 1994. 473.

4. Trevor Barnes. *The Secret Cold War: The CIA and the American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946-1956*. 404.

5. Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records: The CIA under Harry Truman*. Washington DC, 1994. 16.

The American government developed containment as the plan for dealing with apparent Soviet aspirations because of information received from advisers on Soviet aims and objectives, such as George F. Kennan, various embassies worldwide and intelligence bodies including the CIA. The JCS, the SD, the NSC and the president were among the principal policymakers who formulated foreign policy based on these sources of information. The conduct of the Soviets themselves was also to be decisive early on, not only in alarming the Truman administration, but also in promoting the strength of the CIA. In 1947, communist run strikes in France, the February 1948 coup d'état in Czechoslovakia and the establishment of a communist 'cominform' in July, to coordinate opposition to the Marshall plan, merged with critical reports on Soviet intentions to convince the government that Kremlin propaganda and manipulation abroad would have to be met by covert operations aimed at countering and destabilizing the aggressors. This is, therefore, when the Cold War erupted as the U.S. and the USSR became engaged in warfare based on intelligence and manipulation rather than tanks and guns. Consequently, on September 18, 1947, under the terms of the National Security Act, the CIG became the CIA. With improved presence and powers, it was to be at the forefront of covert espionage. The CIA has thus been rightly referred to as "the Cold War Agency."

The purpose of this study is, then, to look at the involvement of the CIA in the whole question of Soviet aims and objectives, and determine how much the intelligence it produced really influenced the Truman administration as they set forth to contain Soviet expansionism. I will look at containment policy itself and show how it grew in proportion to the CIA and, furthermore, whether the agency was in a position to influence foreign policy in this field. Section two will use evidence to speculate upon a link between early CIA reports and the three significant doctrines of containment, the Truman doctrine, the Marshall plan and NSC directive 68. This is all with a view to answering the question; did the CIA influence U.S. containment strategy between 1946 and 1950?

2. CIA STRENGTH AND THE FORMULATION OF CONTAINMENT.

The problem of ascertaining Soviet aims and objectives from 1946 through to and including 1950, was an issue of rising importance to the makers of American foreign policy throughout the period. As containment strategy matured so did the size, power and importance of the CIG. Consequently, the relationship between the development of containment and CIA growth must be evaluated in conjunction with the agency's increasing capability as a civilian government department capable of guiding policy. Thereafter, the ability of the CIA to influence government opinion on the major foreign policy issues of the time can be properly examined.

Containment was effectively the United State's strategy to stop the spread of Soviet backed communism. The origins of containment are transparent when events directly after the war are properly considered. Just four days after VE day, Prime Minister Winston Churchill telegraphed President Truman warning him of the *Iron Curtain* that had fallen across Europe and urging him of the folly of the West dropping its guard. In February 1946, Stalin announced that communism and capitalism were incompatible, and a month later Churchill re-affirmed his status as an early proponent of containment by reiterating his *Iron Curtain* warning in front of a Missouri audience. Despite protests from

Harvard students saying, "Winnie, Winnie, go away, G.I Joe is here to stay,"⁶ Churchill's speech had a significant effect on public and government opinion.

George F. Kennan was to be another early influence in defining how the Americans approached the Soviet threat. Kennan had been Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow (January 1945 to April 1946) and, after a short stint at the National War College, was Director of policy planning staff at the Department of State from May 1947 until December 1949. In addition, he was appointed as DCI Vandenberg's special consultant in June 1946 to aid in the comprehension of the Soviet issue. This explains why early CIA estimates often reiterated Kennan's long telegram from Moscow. George F. Kennan was a strong figure in foreign policy throughout this period because few men in U.S. politics could rival his knowledge and understanding of Russia. His article in *Foreign Affairs* July 1947, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," spoke of a distinct communist mentality and how Russian concepts of national security were incompatible with the needs of U.S. foreign policy. Today intelligence historians such as Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, Walter Laqueur and Trevor Barnes agree that this was a dramatization of the Soviet threat, albeit an influential one, and possibly the first to urge a policy of containment towards the USSR.

Soviet psychological warfare in 1947 and 1948 confirmed earlier (and often-exaggerated) reports on Kremlin intentions as it became clear to policymakers that the Soviet Union was pushing to undermine American democracy by means of influencing events abroad. In August 1947, a document stolen from a Soviet intelligence official predicted that eventually, "U.S capitalism would collapse and that, in anticipation of that gratifying event, the Soviet Union should continue their unyielding policy, whatever the cost."⁷ The fact that DCI Hillenkoetter spoke of this in a memo shows how seriously Russian attitudes were taken. In October, the world Communist leaders held a conference to discuss collective propaganda. Leaders attended from the USSR, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. Therefore, against such a background of mounting suspicion, this must have caused U.S. policy makers much concern. This pressure only increased as time went on. In February 1948, communists in Czechoslovakia staged a coup d'etat backed by the Russians and again the Americans were reminded of the need to further develop containment to strike more deeply at Soviet aims of expansion and influence. In April, came the Bogotá incident in Columbia, where Liberal party opposition leader Jorge Eliecar Gaitan was murdered by a street assassin, unnerving the U.S. delegates who were close by. Rioting followed with a further 1200 deaths. A Scripps-Howard journalist wrote that the specific timing of the disorder indicated Soviet involvement designed to disrupt events and hamper free government. The event was also cited as the first instance of European style communism in Latin America and Secretary of State Marshall, who was attacked by a mob during the incident, promptly blamed the Kremlin.⁸ Thus, the CIA was condemned for failing to warn officials of possible unrest, although DCI Hillenkoetter had twice notified of plans to impede U.S. delegates from attending.

6. Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. "Why was the CIA established in 1947?" in *Eternal Vigilance?: 50 Years of the CIA*. Ed. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Christopher Andrew. London, 1997. 23

7. R. Jeffreys-Jones. *The CIA and American Democracy*. London, 1989. 47.

8. *ibid* 53

Shortly after events in Columbia came the Soviet blockade of West Berlin and, in August, former Roosevelt aid, Alger Hiss, was accused of being a Soviet agent. Clear instances of Russian psychological warfare, such as the Hiss controversy, the Bogotá incident and the Berlin blockade, were the making of U.S. containment strategy that in turn required the development of the CIA to allow the Americans to carry out psychological warfare of their own.

The birth of U.S. psychological warfare came with the development of the Office of Special Operations (OSO) and later the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC). The U.S. got its own operations underway to prevent Soviet action abroad and to secure, for itself, future dominance in key areas of the globe, particularly in Europe and South America. The Organization of American States (OAS) charter was finalized in April 1948, while events in Bogotá boiled, impairing Roosevelt's non-intervention principle that had been in place since 1933. Despite various clauses prohibiting foreign intervention in South America, articles 24 and 25 of the charter allowed the Americans to intervene when a Latin American nation showed signs of turning to communism, favoring clandestine methods that confirm the relevance of the CIA to this issue. As a result, the charter was, in fact, little more than a ticket for the Americans to intervene when necessary to maintain foreign policy objectives. U.S. covert operations, involving issuance of unattributed publications, false attribution, forgery and secret subsidization of publications abroad that could undermine communist activities became widespread. In April 1948, this brought real results when the world's second largest communist party was defeated in elections in Italy.

To view clearly how the idea of containment evolved in the U.S. against a background of international tension, it is necessary to look briefly at the policy that amounted to Containment. March 12, 1947, saw the announcement of 'The Truman Doctrine,' at a joint session of congress in which the President spoke of "the peoples of a number of countries of the world" who have "recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will." The summer of that year witnessed the approval of the Marshall Plan, whereby money was to be made available for the economic recovery of Europe, in the hope that communist action in this area of prominent espionage would be weakened. NSC directive 68 (NSC-68) came later, in June 1950, and offered a complete re-examination of U.S. strategic objectives in the midst of China turning communist and Stalin's development of the atomic bomb. NSC-68 prompted the government to shift from a defensive position to "a vigorous political offensive against the Soviet Union."⁹ The Korean situation in June 1950 prompted almost total government acceptance of NSC-68, which was to govern U.S. foreign policy throughout the 1950s. These events are what made and shaped containment, as they show clearly what action the government decided to take, as this began to look more like Soviet aggression and fears of Kremlin intentions began to stand on increasingly firm ground.

Having discussed the early development and escalation of containment strategy by linking events to foreign policy, it is now time to look at the development of the CIA, showing how events from around the globe helped it to grow into an intelligence agency capable of affecting government policy.

The CIG got off to an insecure start in 1946. Its initial job was merely to coordinate the flow of intelligence to policymakers thus, "The Primary function of C.I.G in

9. Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 23

the production of intelligence, however, will be the preparation and dissemination of definitive estimates of the capabilities and intentions of foreign countries as they affect the national security of the United States.”¹⁰ Therefore, the early CIG had no authority to collect intelligence of its own or use field agents, and furthermore, lacked its own budget and personnel. In a CIG memorandum to DCI Vandenberg, Lowell L. Montague (Acting Deputy Assistant Director for Research and Evaluation) complained of the problem of acquiring key personnel for the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE).¹¹ CIA Soviet expert Harry Reize, later commented on the low quality of espionage against the Soviet Union adding that, in his opinion, the CIA had not begun to drop its own agents into Russia until 1949. Nevertheless, between 1947 and 1949, the agency rapidly gained its own budget, personnel and facilities, thus greatly expanding the functionality of the group proportionately to the growth of the Soviet threat. Therefore, in the words of one of Britain’s prime authorities on CIA history, “The agency’s growth, then, was a specific response to the Kremlin’s plan’s for expansion”¹² The National Security Act of 26 July, 1947, officially set out and reformed the functions of the CIA, just as Soviet psychological warfare was about to cause alarm. Section 102 D lists CIA duties as, advising the National Security council on intelligence activities, correlating and evaluating intelligence relating to national security and, providing for appropriate dissemination of such intelligence.¹³

Although progress had been made, the CIA was still a mere shadow of what it was to become by the very end of the decade, a well funded, well staffed organization in charge of psychological warfare, and ultimately containment of Soviet activity. The real stimulus did not come until later when the Soviet threat intensified and the U.S. government realized that the CIA was its best answer to the problem of Soviet foreign policy. Thus, departments within the CIA were reformed with greater authority and power and new ones created, to better deal with the rising communist threat.¹⁴

The OSO was the agency’s first concrete attempt at authorized spying. Its mission was to conduct “all organized federal espionage and counter espionage operations outside the United States and its possessions for the collection of foreign intelligence information required for the national security.”¹⁵ Information gathered was to be made usable, graded for reliability and delivered to the CIA’s office of research and evaluation (ORE) where appropriate.

However, the real boost came in December 1947, with NSC directive 4A (NSC-4A), which directed the CIA to use covert psychological operations specifically designed to

10. “Progress report on the Central Intelligence Group, 7 June, 1946..” In Michael Warner, ed., CIA Cold War Records. 48.

11. Ludwell L. Montague, Memorandum for General Vandenberg, “‘Procurement of Key Personnel for ORE.’ 24 September, 1946.” In Michael Warner, ed. CIA Cold War Records. 85.

12. Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. *The CIA and American Democracy*. 43

13. ‘National Security Act of 1947’, 26 July 1947 (Excerpt). In Michael Warner (ed), CIA Cold War Records. 133

14. *ibid* 131-135

15. Vandenberg, Memorandum for the Assistant Director for Special Operation, [Donald Galloway]. “Functions of the Office of Special Operations,” 25 October 1946. In Michael Warner, ed. CIA Cold War Records. 87

subvert Soviet inspired activities aimed at undermining democracy. Despite the obvious significance, NSC-4A was principally a media related directive. This assignment made the CIA a significant part of U.S. foreign policy as it was doing a job of vital importance to the Truman administration. Incidentally, NSC-4A came only a few months after the previously mentioned capture of a Soviet document indicating the collapse of U.S. capitalism and, the October conference of communists, therefore, showing both the importance the government had now placed upon the CIA and its work and how escalation of events equaled rising CIA strength and influence.

Nevertheless, in June 1948, NSC-4A was subsequently displaced by NSC-10/2 to arm the agency for political warfare with the Kremlin. This new directive created the OPC to cover new covert operational guidelines. Propaganda, economic warfare, sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition, subversion and assistance to guerrilla organizations were all added to the CIA's repertoire of covert action to be implemented defensively or against the Soviet Union.¹⁶ OPC was a branch of the CIA although the SD and the military were to be allowed to supervise at a low level. Furthermore, Frank G. Wisner, who had been deputy to the Assistant Secretary of State for occupied areas, became head of the branch that September, which seemed to further strengthen the influence of the SD in OPC affairs. Wisner and DCI Hillenkoetter enjoyed a good professional relationship; however, Wisner often appeared to look more to George F. Kennan in the SD for guidance. Inevitably, it was not long before feuding broke out between OSO and OPC on various insignificant issues because of the similarity of their work. The Dulles-Jackson-Correa report at the beginning of 1949, in fact, suggested a merger of the two branches, although this failed to happen until NSC-10/5 in August 1952. Despite the feuding, and the apparent influence of the SD, OPC was still a CIA department and the NSC's decision to confer greater covert responsibility upon the CIA, further confirms the agency's importance. Consequently, the CIA now had both the resources and the authority to gather, evaluate and present intelligence reports to the government that had the potential to influence foreign policy.

The Central Intelligence Act of 1949, furthered the gains of the July 1947 National Security Act, giving training for CIA officers, setting employment conditions, allowing personnel borrowing from other departments and most importantly, permitting money dealing without the consent of Congress. Effectively, the government had acknowledged the CIA as an organization in its own right and given it free reign in significant issues allowing increased functionality. In 1949, OPC funding was \$4.7 million but by 1952, had risen to \$82 million, a plain illustration of the rising importance of the agency and the intelligence it produced. Congressional legislation and NSC directives between 1947 and 1950 evidently made a major impact on the scope of CIA action. Not only had the agency grown from rather humble beginnings, it had blossomed into an organization capable of influencing government because of the need for a U.S. strategy to combat Soviet psychological warfare. The reports produced by ORE and other departments of the CIA, certainly had the potential to shape policy maker's opinions and interpretations of Soviet aims and objectives as they set about containing them.

However, we have not yet looked directly into CIA politics; therefore a more focused examination of the agency's relationship with the policy making bodies of the SD, the JCS and the President is now required. Walter Laqueur wrote of CIA intelligence

16. List from Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones. 55-56

reports that "the reports were primarily think pieces, and it is open to doubt whether they were widely read in the higher echelons of the bureaucracy, let alone the president,"¹⁷ let us also test this assertion.

SD-CIA relations up to 1950 were colored by the SD desire to control the CIA. This desire had existed since the formation of the CIG in 1946. The SD had, in fact, been one of the organizations directly after the war that proposed one of many models for the new intelligence service that everyone agreed was essential to President Truman. The SD proposal was not fully adopted; as a result the SD appeared to have trouble letting go until the independent power of the CIA became undeniable at the very end of the 1940s with the legislation already discussed. Consequently, the relationship between the CIA and the policymaking SD was often strained. In his study, Trevor Barnes noted that the SD was "scornful and jealous of the fledgling agency."¹⁸

In a conversation from April 1948, SD Executive Secretary C.H. Humelsine, complained to DCI Hillenkoetter that a CIA report from an agent in Bogotá dated March 23 had not been forwarded to the SD.¹⁹ The conversation appears to have turned into a forum for voicing grievances on mutual bad conduct, as Hillenkoetter then asked why his repeated efforts to get more agents from the SD to enlarge the CIA overseas staff had been unsuccessful. Next they argued politely over the SD's failure to help the CIA who was accused of failing to predict the Bogotá incident. Hillenkoetter concluded by stating that the SD should have issued a statement on the quality and quantity of information available at Bogotá and, that if relations did not improve soon, he would have to inform the President, as the current situation was limiting his ability to obtain intelligence information. In a later memorandum the SD voiced further grievances at the CIA for failing to consult before producing intelligence papers relevant to other departments. The example given is that the Air Force had no part in two recent reports, one on 'Reinforcing the Israeli Air Force,' and the second entitled 'Uncontrolled International Air Traffic,' both of which were obviously U.S. Air Force issues. Prescott Childs, (chief of interagency coordinating and policy staff, SD) states his case thus: "All State wants is to be consulted orally or advised of the subject under consideration. We think it would be no hardship, and not at all difficult for ORE to advise State, or Air, or any IAC member of the subject under consideration."²⁰ These examples show both the CIA's desire to shake off those who would limit its powers and the SD's mission to maintain input into the new agency's affairs. In fact, later in the same document the SD push for input into the CIA's significant monthly *Review of the World Situation*, which illustrates the point clearly.

Clearly the relationship between the CIA and the SD was rather overburdened by the SD's initial vision of how the CIA should operate and function, although this must not

17. Laqueur, Walter. *A World of Secrets*. 110

18. Barnes, Trevor. *The Secret Cold War: The CIA and the American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946-1956*. 400

19. Memorandum of Conversation. Washington April 16 1948. P312-315. In Glenn W. LaFantasie, ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945-1950, The Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*. Washington, DC: Department of State, 1996. 1148

20. Memorandum from Chief of the Intelligence Coordinating and Planning Staff (Childs) to director of Central Intelligence Hillenkoetter, February 8 1949. In LaFantasie, general ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States*. 916

be exaggerated. As has been shown, poor communication and bickering were really the extent of this and, fundamentally, the CIA needed SD support at times. The SD often worked with the CIA on intelligence matters; George Kennan, an SD man, had after all been one of the first proponents of a Central Intelligence Agency. Like all other departments, the SD found itself relying increasingly on the CIA's ORE intelligence reports regarding Soviet intentions for its own policy guidance.

By contrast, the CIA's relationship with the JCS was generally good. All DCI's throughout this period were high-ranking officers themselves and, furthermore, the JCS were clearly a more powerful body, which the CIA would have to go out of its way to accommodate. Nevertheless, two issues seem to emerge consistently when examination of instances of disagreement are made. The JCS's intelligence wing, the Joint Intelligence committee (JIC) seemed at times to be carrying out work very similar to that of the CIA. In September 1946, DCI Vandenberg complained to the National Intelligence Authority that JIC intelligence often received priority over CIG reports in military circles because of the obvious link. In the same meeting, Secretary of War Robert Patterson and Admiral William Leahy (who presided over the Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 1942 – January 1949) agreed that the JIC could be disbanded at some point.²¹ Predictably, the JCS were, to say the least, unenthusiastic about losing their intelligence branch. On June 20, 1947, Secretary of War Patterson asked General Chamberlain if the JIC "at present served any useful function." Chamberlain replied stating that it did and that he was not comfortable with the idea of an outside, civilian agency being a party to projected war plans.²²

This all appears to indicate that the JCS may have paid more heed to the reports of its own intelligence branch whilst ignoring CIA estimates. While this may have been true on certain issues, it is unlikely to be the case on matters of Soviet foreign policy and intentions, as the JIC will have been more concerned with estimations of Soviet military strength and the positioning of units. The evidence suggests that the CIA was still the best equipped and most qualified when it came to the kind of intelligence that became so vital from the end of the 1940s. Therefore, despite small instances of toe stepping, the CIA did enjoy a certain dialogue with the influential JCS and thus was able to help guide its opinions on containment policy.

The CIA's main function towards President Truman's day to day work was the daily summary, provided by ORE, to be '*Written for the President and for the President alone*' containing "the foreign intelligence he should have to meet his responsibilities as President of the United States of America."²³ Truman liked the daily and weekly summaries as they removed the need to flick through intelligence reports from many different departments. Consequently, this put rather a lot of power in the hands of the CIA from an early stage as, to an extent, they were directly advising the President of what, in

21. Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the National Intelligence Authority. Washington, September 25 1946 11.15am. In LaFantasie, general ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States*. 415

22. Minutes of the 10th Meeting of the National Intelligence Authority. June 26 1947 10.30am. In LaFantasie, general ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States*. 775

23. Donald Edgar, Memorandum for the Executive to the Director [Edwin K. Wright], 'An Adequacy Survey of the CIG Daily and Weekly Summaries as it was Prepared by OCD on 9 December 1946.' 2 January 1947. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 94.

their view, was the best course of action for dealing with the growing Soviet threat. The President often sought reports relating to Containment directly or indirectly from the CIA or CIG. One example is ORE-1 on 'Soviet Foreign and Military Policy,' (which will be examined in depth in the next section). Another is a letter from Clark Clifford (Special Counsel to the President, 1946-1950) to Admiral Leahy, in which by order of the President, Clifford asks that the National Intelligence Authority instruct the DCI to prepare estimates for the President on "the present and future military policies of the Soviet Union."²⁴ Additionally, Trevor Barnes writes that "Truman certainly read the intelligence bulletin prepared daily by the CIA, and sent to the President,"²⁵ based on evidence from Truman's memoirs. Importantly, the evidence accumulated, strongly discredits Walter Laqueur's claim that policymakers, particularly the President, ignored CIA intelligence reports.

This evidence indicates that from the outset, the CIG and later the CIA had a significant influence upon Presidential interpretation of Soviet aims and, therefore, the adoption of containment. Certainly, there appears to be a degree of Presidential faith in the new agency. For example, the Whitehouse was one of the few bodies not to criticize the CIA over the Bogotá issue, and Truman had been receiving well-prepared reports on world issues from the very beginning of the agency's formation as the CIG in 1946.

Several important issues are now clear. Firstly, that Containment strategy developed, principally, as a result of Soviet psychological warfare and that the U.S. government gradually conferred increasingly important authority upon the CIA, designed specifically for dealing with this new post-war threat. Furthermore, this direct link between CIA growth and the escalating world situation is transparent in the co-development of U.S. and Soviet psychological warfare up to 1950. In addition to the agency's rising importance, they appear to have been advising the President almost from day one. Subsequent relations with other policy-making departments were not by any means so poor that CIA intelligence reports could not also guide policy there. In fact, there is substantial evidence that the President read, and placed great importance upon, CIA intelligence reports. Therefore, the evidence would suggest that the CIA was in a position by the late 1940s, and certainly possessed the resources and apparatus, to affect the way policymakers approached the rising problem of Soviet aims and objectives.

3. DID CIA INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT CONTAINMENT STRATEGY?

Having discussed U.S. reactions to Soviet post-war foreign policy, showing how it produced a Central Intelligence Agency with the apparatus and status to influence containment, the time has now come to look more closely at the real effects of the intelligence composed by comparing CIA intelligence to actual policy. Containment developed between 1946 and 1950, culminating in NSC directive 68 (NSC-68) in April

24. Letter from Clifford to Leahy. 18 July 1946. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 63.

25. Barnes, Trevor. *The Secret Cold War: The CIA and the American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946-1956*. 400

1950, which discussed four options for U.S. foreign policy before selecting containment as the most viable. The core ideology behind containment, as voiced by George F. Kennan, was that the Kremlin could be thwarted if it was frustrated by superior force each time it attempted to exert influence and expand territory. The aim here is to show that by providing intelligence reports that went directly to policymakers, the CIA was, in fact, able to condition the way the U.S. government approached national security and the subsequent nature of containment. From the beginning, the CIA produced harsh but calculated estimates of Soviet intentions, based on the growing ensemble of resources available, of which the President, SD officials, the JCS and many others, read. Such information must have affected the reasoning and rationalization behind the major speeches and documents of the time, which geared the nation towards containment.

This approach is essentially speculative, as the secret nature of the topic makes it impossible to make bold statements asserting, beyond all doubt, that the CIA influenced government containment policy. Nevertheless, based on what has been established in the previous section, particularly the President's dependence upon the agency for information and, the CIA's increasing ability to produce intelligence on Kremlin aims up to 1950, in line with the intensifying threat, it would seem likely that a degree of influence did exist. The only way such an assertion can be bolstered and expanded is by looking at both declassified CIA documents and government policy, in an effort to detect links that suggest the further likelihood of CIA influence.

Between 1946 and 1950, two speeches and two policy documents shaped and molded U.S. containment strategy more than any others, setting the standard for the next forty years of American foreign policy. Each brought a new dimension, which aimed to sustain U.S. security by preventing the spread of Soviet authority into areas identified by Americans as vital to their continued dominance of global affairs.

In 1947, the British announced their withdrawal from Greece raising American fears of a communist rebellion, which would allow the extension of Soviet power into Western Europe. The struggling British economy was no longer capable of protecting this area and its loss to the Soviets conflicted directly with U.S. foreign policy. Therefore, on March 12, 1947, President Truman addressed Congress arguing for American aid to both Greece and Turkey. The speech was designed to harness congressional opinion behind the principle of containing Western Europe. The President spoke of the right to freedom and the communist preoccupation with the will of the minority, against the majority. What is most interesting about the Truman doctrine is that it is the first real instance of a commitment to U.S. containment. The American government consented to the British decision to leave, but feared that the extension of Soviet influence into the area was inevitable; therefore, they intervened with the backing of the American public.

On June 5, 1947, Secretary of State Marshall announced the plan for economic assistance to Europe during his honorary degree ceremony at Harvard. This followed the tide of the Truman doctrine three months earlier. The Americans realized that many of the post-war economies of Europe were on the brink of collapse and that this dire situation presented an excellent opening for the Kremlin to broaden its influence in this hugely significant region. Therefore, in another obvious containing maneuver they offered vast financial aid that was accepted by all Western European nations and predictably rejected by the Soviet satellite countries in the East. In doing so, the U.S. succeeded in preventing the extension of Soviet control while at the same time furthering their own in the name of free

will and democracy. Furthermore, Secretary of State Marshall took the opportunity to warn the Kremlin and communists worldwide that,

Any government, which maneuvers to block the recovery of other countries, cannot expect help from us. Furthermore, governments, political parties, or groups which seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit there from politically or otherwise will encounter the opposition of the United States.²⁶

The Marshall plan could also be construed as a successful attempt to explain proposed U.S. foreign policy to the American people or more plainly, a rallying cry for containment strategy. Although Marshall announced his plan in June, congressional approval was not granted until that autumn. Trevor Barnes writes that DCI Hillenkoetter anticipated the danger posed by economic crisis in Europe before the Marshall plan could be implemented and thus sent "bateful intelligence summaries" to policymakers to prevent a situation advantageous to the Kremlin.²⁷

Having identified Western Europe as highly significant to U.S. national security, policymakers set about uniting the region to form a power bloc which, in time, would itself repel Soviet aggression and influence. Although attempts to politically unite Western Europe went on throughout the period, it was not until April 1949, that the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) was signed by the various European governments, bringing promises of mutual self-help in time of war. Notably, it was the Americans who drove the treaty forward and not the Europeans themselves. The then Secretary of State Dean Acheson, barely a month in office, had labored at length to resolve the questions of French insecurity and German recovery as well as to ensure the inclusion of Norway and Denmark. Ultimately, it was the Americans who wanted a NAT, a treaty that would ally with the U.S. and force the Kremlin to contemplate before extending their influence into the region.

NSC-68 is the definitive containment document from this period. In April 1950, the SD sent the 70-page transcript to the NSC who labeled it NSC-68 and stamped it top-secret. What the document did was to explore four possible courses of action: (1) the continuation of current policies, (2) isolation and (3) war before recommending (4) a more rapid build up of the political, economic and military strength of the free world. The document was sent to the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the JCS and the DCI. NSC-68 is important because up until 1950, the Cold War, which was well underway, had been largely economic and political. It argued that if the situation continued so, the West would loose and, therefore, the only way to fulfill U.S. objectives was to build up the military force and presence of the West. By this it meant, not only the U.S. military, but also that of Western Europe. Perhaps it is worth stating the obvious here that, unlike the other three instruments of containment already mentioned, NSC-68 was a secret government paper available only to high-level people. Therefore, its

26. Richard Maidment and Michael Dawson, eds. *The United States in the Twentieth Century, Key Documents*. 2nd Edition. London, 1999. 323.

27. Barnes, Trevor. *The Secret Cold War: The CIA and the American Foreign Policy in Europe, 1946-1956*. 407-412.

stern tone and extreme suspicion towards the Kremlin are genuine and not for the purposes of propaganda.

As the U.S. government was developing and implementing its policy, the CIA was always behind the scenes producing reports and estimates on Soviet intentions that were sent directly to policymakers. ORE-1 was produced on July 23, 1946 and marked top secret. On July 18, 1946 Clark Clifford (Special Counsel to the President from July 1946), wrote to DCI William Leahy stating that the President had directed him to, "obtain from the Central Intelligence Group estimates of the present and future foreign and military policies of the Soviet Union."²⁸ This is clear evidence of the President seeking direct CIA input into government affairs. According to Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, ORE-1 was, "to set the tone for a certain genre of CIA document right up to the end of the Cold War more than 40 years later."²⁹

Seven months later came ORE 1/1, entitled, 'Revised Soviet Tactics in International Affairs,' claiming that the Kremlin had decided upon a temporary breathing space for ideological and economic rehabilitation although none of the objectives described in ORE-1 had been abandoned. The September 1947, "Review of the World Situation as it relates to the Security of the United States" again re-examined U.S. foreign policy issues, particularly in Europe, identifying various strengths and weaknesses. It distinctly pinpoints the USSR as the only nation capable of threatening U.S. national security and was classified 'secret'. On February 24, 1949, ORE released another document with the title, "Effects of a U.S. Foreign Military Aid Program," which was produced before the establishment of a NAT to estimate the effectiveness of American policy in Western Europe. This file was marked 'top secret' at the time of production.

By 1949, CIA documents such as this were following a more regular format, with a distribution list on the inside cover showing exactly who had the authority to read it. This is apparent on all documents after January 1948, which allows us to assume that older papers also went to the following offices: the President, NSC, SD, Secretary of Defense, the Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force, the JCS, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Research and Development Board. It has already been established that policymakers read these reports, therefore, probability dictates that if the CIA produced intelligence for such significant departments, it must have been able, to some extent, to influence policymaking through the way it evaluated the evidence and events. Having introduced the principal speeches and documents of the time, the problem that remains is whether or not the assertions and recommendations made in CIA papers actually affected the policymakers who drafted and implemented the great doctrines of the period.

In essence, the U.S. policy of containment in Western Europe was rather straightforward: to build up the economies and armies of the region enabling them to resist Soviet aggression, be it psychological or military, and to promote mutual cooperation between these nations, to further cement their collective strength. Thus, NSC-68 suggests the development of a healthy international system, capable of containing the Soviets by all means short of war. The premises that led to the eventual adoption of policy all relate to the notion of a strong and friendly Europe. Therefore, to trace the development of

28. Clifford to Leahy, 18 July 1946. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 63.

29. Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. "Why was the CIA Established in 1947" in *Eternal Vigilance?* Edited by Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Christopher Andrew. 24.

containment theory, CIA influence in each instance must be examined. The logic is as follows: that Western Europe was vital to U.S. security and, subsequently, due to the depleted strength of Europe the Soviets were capable of successful military aggression and coercion. It then logically follows that the U.S. must strengthen Western Europe and itself, to effectively contain communism.

That American policymakers branded Western Europe as essential to U.S. national security is, therefore, of great significance. On different occasions NSC-68 addresses the point that, if the Kremlin were to extend its dominance any further, it might become very difficult to confront the Soviets with greater force. For this reason, the paper states, that Soviet efforts will be primarily directed towards Europe as well as Asia. It goes further still by identifying allied strength as crucial, "The capabilities of our allies are in an important sense, a function of our own."³⁰ Melvyn Leffler, a significant authority on Cold War history, makes the point that both SD and Pentagon officials wanted Soviet forces held at the Rhine should war break out. This particular premise guided policy throughout the period; plain examples are the Marshall Plan and the NAT, both of which were clearly to promote European strength. The economic potential of Western Europe was such that Soviet control would have gone some way to redressing the U.S. economic lead and, therefore, prevention of Soviet hegemony, particularly in Germany, was foremost on the list of American imperatives. In addition, the Americans saw this region as an important site for U.S. military bases, which could be used to strike behind the iron curtain should the need arise. Quite simply, Western Europe was vital in many ways to U.S. security, and this lay at the heart of containment philosophy up to and beyond 1950.

But what part did the CIA play in establishing this? In ORE-1-1, written back in early 1947, the CIA had reported on continued Soviet efforts to gain political and economic control of Germany, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, using popular front governments and Russian agents to penetrate key administrative positions. These included the police, the military, and the judicial and educational systems, that is, anything that could be used to wield influence within a western society. The conclusion was that the Kremlin would intensify its militant communist activity in free Europe, promoting unrest through elaborate world propaganda. 'The Review of the World Situation' from September 1947, shows even clearer parallels with the policy recommendations in NSC-68 and government policy as a whole. It plainly identifies Europe as the most developed, most vulnerable and most accessible area to Kremlin influence. It even ranks regions in order of priority; Europe is first, followed respectively by the Middle and Far East. The same document goes as far as to spell it out, by stating that the greatest danger to the U.S. is monetary collapse in Western Europe followed by the accession of the communists.³¹

The situations in Britain, France, Italy and Germany are mentioned as being of direct consequence to U.S. national security in other CIA reports. For example, in ORE 47/1, entitled 'The Current Situation in Italy,' the CIA assesses the strength of the Italian government and its capacity to resist communist attempts at control. It concluded that the

30. From NSC-68, part 6. In Ernest R. May. *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC-68*. Boston, 1993. 53

31. CIA, Office of Reports and Estimates, CIA 1, Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the Security of the United States. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 141

Western orientated government of the time was stable, and that the communist 'People's Bloc' should perform badly in forthcoming elections. Vatican support and U.S. aid are recognized as vital to continued communist weakness. In addition, ORE 1, the first major CIA assessment of Soviet intentions, notes that, "the Soviet Union is concerned to prevent the formation of a Western Bloc, including France and the Low countries."³² That the CIA saw Europe as vital to U.S. strategy and security, and detrimental to that of the USSR, is of great importance. However, what is more significant is that through reports like the ones discussed, such statements were conveyed time and again to U.S. government officials, statements that were carried through into government policy.

Therefore, it seems clear that NSC-68 does appear to contain assertions made in previous CIA intelligence. Although this by no means reveals a link between intelligence and actual policy, it does, when coupled with things we do know, indicate the likelihood. However, at this stage it is only possible to speculate on CIA influence. We know that intelligence went directly to policymakers and that the President liked CIA daily and weekly reports. We know that the agency grew rapidly into an organization capable of influencing policymakers, and we know that some elements of intelligence did come out in real policy. The only way this can be taken further is by finding more parallels on differing issues to add credence to the assertion.

The next premise leading to containment in Europe was that post-war weaknesses in Western Europe were such that the Soviets were capable of overrunning and controlling the region at will with minimal resistance. Again this came out clearly in government policy and is apparent in NSC-68 which argued that should war break out in 1950, the Kremlin and its satellites were considered capable by the JCS of overrunning Western Europe, launching air attacks on the U.K, and making atomic strikes on Alaska, Canada, and parts of the U.S. It is worth mentioning that the JCS depended largely on the CIA for its intelligence with lesser contributions from military intelligence. As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, the JCS's own intelligence branch was slowly phased out and its boots filled by the CIA. As early as August 1946, DCI Vandenberg sent a memorandum to the President labeled 'top secret' advising, "that in view of the strength of the Soviet forces in Northern Asia and in Europe (as opposed to allied forces) a sudden offensive might secure these areas without much difficulty, and place the USSR in an impregnable economic and political advantage."³³

The same message was conveyed in the September 1947, 'Review of the World Situation,' that is that the USSR was capable of overrunning most of continental Europe at will due to "the preponderance of readily available Soviet ground strength."³⁴ Again in 1949, in a CIA paper concerning the effects of the foreign military aid program, the agency reported that not until 1952 or 1953, would Western Europe be strong enough to oppose, or

32. CIG, Office of Research and Evaluation, ORE 1, 'Soviet Foreign and Military Policy,' 23 July 1946. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 66.

33. Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President, 24 August 1946. In Michael Warner. *CIA Cold War Records*. 83

34. Review of the World Situation as it relates to the Security of the U.S. 26 September 1947. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 139

delay, a Soviet invasion, even with an aid program in effect.³⁵ Thus, once again it is visible that CIA intelligence estimates contributed towards government policy to contain Western Europe by warning from an early stage, the danger posed by the concept of Soviet Military dominance in Eurasia.

U.S. foreign policy followed logically from the previous two premises, that the loss of Europe could re-dress the U.S. economic advantage, and that the region was highly vulnerable to Soviet attack, to suggest that they reinforce Western Europe giving it the ability to resist the Kremlin both militarily and psychologically of its own accord. Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland summed up policy explicitly when he said that the U.S. was seeking to, "Put together such a preponderance of industrial plant, economic potential, friendly stability, inventive genius, military equipment ...and know how ...that is almost certain to keep the peace."³⁶ The government went about this policy by concentrating on three issues culminating in, (1) the Economic Recovery Program, (ERP) (2) the Military Assistance Program (MAP) and (3) the aforementioned NAT. Each was designed to solve a different problem and, thus, contribute to the overall goal of strengthening Western Europe. The ERP was principally taken care of through the Marshall plan and so needs no further attention. The success of the Marshall plan, made the MAP far more of an issue throughout the period and, as a result, there is substantial evidence to support claims of CIA inducing the need for such legislation to re-build the armies of Western Europe.

The MAP came about after Dean Acheson (Secretary of State, 1949 – 1953) pressed President Truman to submit the bill to congress. Under the terms of the plan, two thirds of the aid was to go to Europe and the rest to the Middle and Far East. The MAP aimed at bringing the long-term benefit of giving the West the ability to resist Soviet aggression on its own and, the short-term benefit of providing a confidence booster to a ravaged, post-war Western Europe. There is evidence of this in NSC-68, where British recovery is singled out as significant to the rebuilding of European defenses and, a strong U.S. military position is also identified as vital for improving Europe's will to resist.

In February 1949, one year and two months before NSC-68, the CIA had issued a paper entitled 'Effects of a U.S. Foreign Military Aid Program' which strongly suggested the implementation of such policy. Furthermore, the document stated that "*If the assumed military aid were to be withheld from the prospective recipients, the USSR would take advantage of the ensuing disillusionment in its efforts to extend its hegemony by all political, psychological and subversive means.*"³⁷ At a different point, the same source advises the execution of a MAP on the grounds that it would encourage resistance to Soviet aggression, a point also clearly noticeable in government policy, particularly NSC-68. It continues in its enthusiasm for the MAP by mentioning the imminent benefits for European internal security that the MAP would bring, and furthermore, that recipients are perhaps more interested in the assurance of U.S. intervention on their behalf, rather than the actual

35. ORE 41-49, 'Effects of a U.S. Foreign Military aid program'. 24 February 1949. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 251

36. Leffler, Melvyn. *A Preponderance of Power. National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*. Stanford, 1992. 281.

37. ORE 41-49, 'Effects of a U.S. Foreign Military aid Program.' 24 February 1949. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 264.

amounts of aid.³⁸ Subsequently, withholding this would constitute a breach of faith and trigger disillusion in nations already vulnerable to the desires of the Soviet Union. Additionally, the CIA's ORE-1, from July, 1946, warned of Soviet plans in Greece and Turkey eight months before the Truman doctrine informed the American public of proposed U.S. assistance in this region, thus "*the Soviet Union desires to include Greece, Turkey, and Iran in its security zone through the establishment of 'friendly' governments.*"³⁹ By suggesting instances of possible Soviet insurgence the CIA was undoubtedly, if not directly intentionally, urging the U.S. government to take some kind of counteraction. American policy in Western Europe was such that they would tolerate no Soviet advancement of any kind.

The NAT was signed in April 1949, signifying U.S. determination to build a collectively strong Europe capable of fulfilling American defensive objectives. The SD and the Pentagon rapidly observed that the NAT would create a power base potentially equal to that of the Soviet Union. A further benefit lay in the promotion of stability, as instability, be it economic, political or ideological, was one of the most obvious inducements to communist expansion. Historian Melvyn Leffler points out that the Truman Administration's enthusiasm for a North Atlantic Alliance was solely for the promotion of U.S. strength through European stability.⁴⁰ The CIA, of course, had already produced reports advising of the benefits of a NAT, calling it the best first step towards deterring Soviet aggression. It went further by noting that "The United Kingdom...would be greatly encouraged by the consummation of an Atlantic pact and the initiation of a US foreign military aid program,"⁴¹ and that the French would be less vulnerable to antagonization if a proper mode of collective security was in existence and the issue of German recovery resolved satisfactorily. It must be noted that the CIA's estimate of the possible effectiveness of a U.S. military aid program, from which the above quote comes, was produced around two months before signing of the NAT.

Additional evidence of CIA warnings about Western Europe's apparent inability to effectively resist Soviet communism can also be found in the CIA's 1948 document assessing the Italian situation in which the CIA makes a strong case for U.S. action in Europe. It warned that communist failure in the forthcoming elections would prompt communists to initiate "*a campaign of general strikes, or even to attempt armed insurrection should the Kremlin find such extreme measures necessary.*"⁴² Furthermore, the document assesses the ability of the Italian government to resist a communist uprising should this situation occur. It infers that governmental armed forces were only capable of preventing such action on the understanding that (1) "the current reorganization" continued and "had achieved an integrated defense system" by the time of hostility; (2) "additional modern equipment had been secured;" and (3) that "the communists had not received

38. *ibid*

39. ORE-1. 'Soviet Foreign and Military Policy,' 23 July 1946. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 66.

40. Leffler, Melvyn. *A Preponderance of Power*. 280.

41. ORE 41/49. 'Effects of a U.S. Foreign Military aid Program,' 24 February 1949. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 258.

42. ORE 47/1, 'The Current situation in Italy,' 16 February 1948. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 183.

appreciable outside aid.”⁴³ Nevertheless, it is also pointed out that the communists within Italy, possibly, had the military means to take control of Northern Italy, at least on a temporary basis, and that Italian armed forces were incapable of offensive war, able only to delay an attack from without Italy. Italy’s precarious proximity bordering communist Yugoslavia made this a real problem.

Rapid Military Build up

That the CIA produced documents and assessments advising policymakers of the need to toughen Western Europe, both militarily and psychologically, is now as clear as the fact that these documents were read by policymakers. Therefore, on account of this and the other evidence accumulated, even at this stage it seems sensible to speculate that the CIA did influence U.S. containment strategy in Western Europe.

The last element of NSC-68 that must be addressed is the rapid build up of American military strength. This component was to act as a deterrent to Soviet attack as well as a confidence booster to her allies. Moreover, NSC-68 justifies this position by highlighting the inadequate strength of the U.S. military when compared to that of the Soviets and, the seriousness of the international situation at the time. It claims that in 1950, the U.S. would not be properly able to defend bases in the U.K and the Middle East from Soviet attack and that, for the proposed policy of containment to work correctly, America needed a ‘strong military posture’ to back up political and diplomatic moves.

By 1950, the Americans understood that the Kremlin had developed nuclear warheads, but estimated that their ability to fire them accurately was still limited. Nonetheless, this caused much alarm and one of the chief reasons behind the production of NSC-68 was the U.S. need to re-evaluate its strategy allowing for Soviet atomic potential. As a result, it was said that effective opposition had to include air warning and air and civilian defense systems. In addition, NSC-68 dealt with the effectiveness of a U.S. retaliatory blow by advising an increase in the number and strength of atomic U.S. weapons. Perhaps the most alarming assessment was that the Americans now believed that communist ideology was such that when and if the Kremlin calculated that it could deliver a knockout atomic blow, it might well do so.

The CIA sent out its document concerning ‘The Effects of the Soviet Possession of Atomic Bombs on the Security of the U.S.’ on June 9, 1950, this time in collaboration with military intelligence, almost two months after NSC-68. The apparent two-month lateness of this paper does not discount CIA influence, as NSC-68 was not immediately adopted. In fact, it took the communist invasion of South Korea to trigger universal acceptance of the recommendations it enclosed. Therefore, still in time to influence policymakers through NSC-68, the CIA predicted that,

If, after attainment of a large atomic stockpile, US defensive and retaliatory capabilities were to remain so limited as to permit a Soviet belief that the

43. *ibid*

USSR could make a decisive attack on the United States with relative impunity, there would be grave danger of such an attack.⁴⁴

This assertion was clearly also contained in NSC-68. Likewise, and also apparent in NSC-68, the CIA addressed the issue of Soviet intimidation, whereby the atomic potential of the Kremlin was likely to be used to add to its diplomatic clout, weakening the will of non-communist nations to resist. The following quote illustrates this well: "*fear of a growing disparity between US and Soviet military power...may influence the present allies of the United States to refrain from joining this country in taking a more positive political position against the USSR.*"⁴⁵ Therefore, the CIA was also hinting of the U.S. need to hastily increase its military power, to act as a deterrent and a display of strength, capable of facing down the communists in a diplomatic or international confrontation. Again, this is largely in keeping with what government policy eventually became, thus adding weight to the allegation that the CIA influenced Western European containment strategy through its interpretation of Soviet aims and objectives.

Incompatible Ideology?

Aside from impacting on government strategy indirectly, through intelligence reports on particular issues, the CIA moreover helped shape government mentality towards the Soviets by underlining the ideological conflict between the U.S. and the USSR. ORE-1, which was produced in July 1946, on the specific request of the President to explore Soviet policy, made much of communist ideology, "*The Soviet Government anticipates an inevitable conflict with the capitalist world.*"⁴⁶ One month later, DCI Vandenberg sent a memorandum to President Truman explaining that, "*During the past two weeks there have been a series of developments which suggest that some consideration should be given to the possibility of near-term Soviet military action.*"⁴⁷ DCI Vandenberg based his assertion on information he had received suggesting that Kremlin propaganda against the U.S. had intensified since Stalin's February speech, which labeled the U.S. 'military adventurers' who sought, world domination by means of atomic diplomacy. Additionally, DCI Vandenberg mentioned that the Russians had re-opened the straits issue with Turkey and the Yugoslavs had shot down two American aircraft.

George F. Kennan first conveyed this concept of the Soviet mentality, when he sent his 'long telegram' on Kremlin intentions to the government from Moscow just after the war. However, the CIA kept the issue alive in ORE-1, which Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones identifies as setting the standard for future reports and estimates. Accordingly, NSC-68 devotes much time to "*the Underlying conflict in the realm of ideas and values between the*

44. ORE 32-50, 'The Effect of the Soviet Possession of Atomic Bombs on the Security of the United States,' 9 June 1950. In Michael Warner, *CIA Cold War Records*. 332.

45. *ibid*

46. CIG, Office of Research and evaluation, ORE-1, 'Soviet Foreign and Military Policy.' 23 July 1946. In Michael Warner, ed. *CIA Cold War Records*. 66.

47. Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President, 24 August 1946. In Michael Warner. *CIA Cold War Records*. 81.

U.S. purpose and the Kremlin design."⁴⁸ It was believed that this lay at the root of the Soviet yearning to control all communists throughout the world, through its demand for total power over all men within the Soviet state. The Russian system is, therefore, identified as irreconcilable to that of the democratic world through its rejection of individualism and its preoccupation with bringing the free world under its control. This is all highly significant as it goes a long way to explaining the American concept of post-war national security, which ultimately, put the U.S. government straight onto the road to containment of communism.

The way Americans approached National Security after World War II is therefore worth brief examination. A Gallup poll from February 1948, just as Soviet psychological warfare was becoming difficult to ignore and, incidentally, just after NSC-4A expanded CIA objectives to include psychological warfare of their own, is clear evidence of this. When asked whether the U.S. government should stop sending oil and industrial products to the USSR, 83% of ordinary Americans consulted answered yes. When asked if they thought the U.S. should increase the size of its army, 61% of people questioned answered yes. When asked if they believed Russia was trying to build herself up to be the ruling power of the world, or just for protection from attack, 77% answered that they thought Russia was trying to be the ruling power.⁴⁹ Soviet behavior directly after the war, whereby large areas of Eastern Europe were abruptly brought into the Soviet sphere, made Americans highly suspicious of the USSR from the outset. Pearl Harbor, whereby a foreign air force had penetrated U.S. defenses and attacked them on their own ground, prompted paranoia over the significance of foreign threats.

U.S. strategy in Western Europe came to rest on the principle that the region was of great strategic value to U.S. national security. Therefore, because of the weakness and vulnerability of these various nations, particularly France and Italy, and estimates on the implications of Soviet control, American policy very much favored economic and military recovery programs to prevent any such extension of Kremlin influence. Through the intelligence it provided, in and around the period, the CIA probably swayed both the adoption of containment and the way it was implemented.

The evidence shows that repeatedly, on varying issues, CIA intelligence is revealed in actual policy. Alone this means very little until one considers more certain elements: that the strength of the CIA increased steadily 1946-1950, in line with the rising threat, and that the intelligence produced was read by the very men responsible for foreign policy throughout the period. Surely it can be no coincidence, therefore, that strategy appears to have been guided indirectly, or possibly influenced by, CIA intelligence reports. In addition, the CIA played a significant role in keeping Soviet ideology firmly in the minds of government officials. The belief that the Soviets could strike first at the slightest sign of U.S. weakness played its part, together with the propaganda value contained in the concept of communism and its absence of civil liberties.

48. NSC-68 part 1 in Ernest R. May. *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC-68*. 28.

49. Gallup, George H. *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971*. Volume One, 1935-1948. New York, 1976. 709-721.

4. CONCLUSION

The evidence explored strongly suggests that between 1946 and 1950, the CIA did influence the American policy of containing Soviet communism. This study has approached the question in several different ways and applied the theory to each individually. This method is principally speculative because of the fact that a government intelligence agency is the focus of investigation and many documents vital to this type of research are most likely still classified. As a result, validity requires that more than one issue point to CIA influence.

That the CIA grew in proportion to the rising perceived Soviet threat is of great significance as it, at the very least, infers a link between the agency and the policy. Why expand a department, pumping in millions of dollars for no purpose? The international situation grew increasingly ominous in 1947 and 1948, with the communist conference in October 1947, the Coup d'état in Czechoslovakia four months later and, the hype in the U.S. surrounding the Bogotá incident in April of that year. The National Security Act came on July 26, 1947, instructing the CIA to launch psychological warfare against the USSR. From that point, the CIA hastily became the government's answer to uncertainties over Soviet intentions. Such an agency, developed to be at the forefront of such a major issue as U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union, is unlikely not to guide policy.

When one looks further at how the CIA expanded, both in terms of functionality and ability up to 1950, with greater resources for collecting and evaluating intelligence directly relevant to containment strategy, it becomes very noticeable that this was a department highly capable of affecting foreign policy at the highest levels. The Creation of OSO, OPC, and NSC-10/2 in June 1948 and, the CIA Act of 1949, all directed the CIA into new fields of counter-espionage. Fresh powers included, the use of propaganda, authority to assist guerrilla organizations abroad, training for officers and, independent financial dealing without the consent of congress, all of which clearly illustrate this point that the CIA grew into an organization capable of affecting policy.

Inspection of the CIA's relationship with the JCS, the SD and, the President uncovers no significant evidence to imply that the agency could not influence policymaking departments. In fact, it would seem that the President gratefully read and accepted daily and weekly reports, which included a summary page allowing him to digest the issues quickly, rather than having to sift through pages of intelligence from various sources. The CIA enjoyed a largely respectful relationship with the JCS simply because all DCI's in this period were high-ranking military officers, with much in common with the JCS. DCI Vandenberg in particular was highly respected within the military community. Additionally, the gradual erosion of the JIC meant that the JCS had to rely increasingly on CIA intelligence. The SD bickered with the CIA on several administrative issues throughout the period; nevertheless, the extent of this is not to be exaggerated. Eventually, as CIA standing grew, personnel were borrowed from the SD and interaction between them improved. As the Soviet threat increased, so did the government's reliance on the CIA.

In addition, there is ample evidence that intelligence reports went directly to policy-making departments, suggesting that intelligence produced was, indeed, circulated to the very people who formulated foreign policy by the department best equipped to provide information on Soviet intentions. Confirmation of this can be found on the inside cover of all major reports after 1948. The first one I came across being the report on, 'The Current

Situation in Italy' from 16 February 1948. Of course, this does not mean that it was the first, as undoubtedly there are many others as yet not de-classified; however this makes it extremely likely that previous documents went to precisely the same people. It must also be remembered that the CIA was a new agency whose directives and standard procedures were understandably prone to change in its infant years.

Lastly, and most importantly, the examination of both actual government containment policy and CIA intelligence reports has revealed that critical elements of CIA intelligence were reflected in actual policy. The reasoning behind the government's acceptance of containment can be easily traced throughout the period as events emerged and pressures intensified. When NSC-68 eventually recommended that the U.S. build up their own military strength, and that of the 'free world,' it was after Western Europe had been acknowledged as vital to U.S. security and, after policymakers learned of the regions vulnerability to Kremlin dominance. At each stage in the evolution of this philosophy the CIA was behind the scenes, delivering intelligence reports that most likely pointed policymakers in a particular direction. It is certainly the case that fundamentals of CIA intelligence do appear in NSC-68 and the Truman doctrine. Additionally, the CIA produced reports that clearly advocated a NAT that would augment stability in Europe, hence containing Kremlin desires to profit from disillusion. This is not to say that the agency purposely took upon itself to shape government foreign policy, only that it was unavoidable that an agency in its position did not influence how policymakers approached and reacted to Soviet moves.

Individually these points constitute a weak case for CIA policy input, but together they are strong speculative evidence that the CIA influenced U.S. containment strategy between 1946 and 1950. Consequently, this study has established that, at least to some extent, the CIA influenced U.S. foreign policy, particularly with regards to Western Europe. In addition I hope that this research paper might trigger further investigation in this field of intelligence history, as new information may emerge in the future. It would, indeed, be extremely controversial to provide significant evidence of any governmental intelligence branch from any nation that had the power to influence politicians from its own government.

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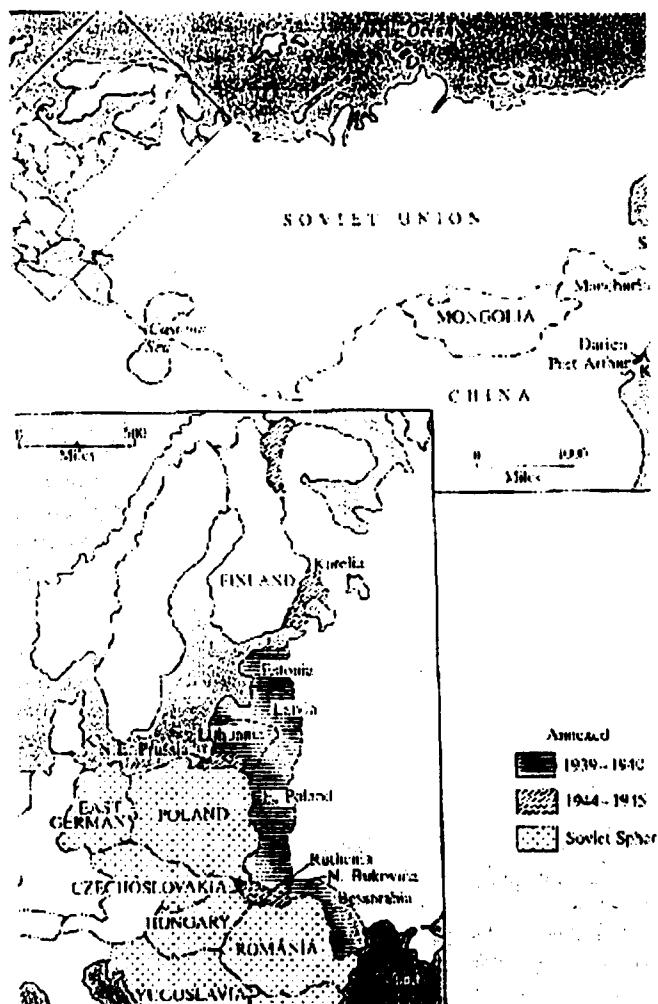
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Abbreviations

- CIA: Central Intelligence Agency
- CIG: Central Intelligence Group
- DCI: Director of Central Intelligence
- ERP: Economic Recovery Program
- FBI: Federal Bureau of Investigation
- IAC: Intelligence Advisory Committee
- JCS: Joint Chiefs of Staff
- JIC: Joint Intelligence Committee
- MAP: Military Assistance Program
- NAT: North Atlantic Treaty
- NSC: National Security Council
- OAS: Organization of American States
- ORE: CIA, Office of Research and Evaluation (later altered to) Office of Reports and Estimates
- OPC: CIA, Office of Policy Coordination
- OSO: CIA, Office of Special Operations
- OSS: SD, Office of Strategic Services
- SD: State Department
- SSU: Strategic Services Unit of the War Department, CIA early 1947

APPENDIX ONE

EXTENSION OF THE SOVIET SPHERE

The Soviet Union in Eurasia at the end of WW2. Leffler, Melvyn. *A Preponderance of power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*. Stanford, 1992. 4.