

*Chapter 12 Anticolonialism, Nationalism, and Revolution • 465*

there. . . . People swarm into the houses of local tyrants and evil gentry who are against the peasant association, slaughter their pigs and consume their grain. They even loll for a minute or two on the ivory-inlaid beds belonging to the young ladies in the households of the local tyrants and evil gentry. At the slightest provocation they make arrests, crown the arrested with tall paper-hats, and parade them through the villages, saying, "You dirty landlords, now you know who we are!" . . . This is what some people call "going too far," or "exceeding the proper limits in righting a wrong," or "really too much." Such talk may seem plausible, but in fact it is wrong. First, the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords have themselves driven the peasants to this. For ages they have used their power to tyrannize over the peasants and trample them underfoot; that is why the peasants have reacted so strongly. . . . Secondly, a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the power of the feudal landlord class. Without using the greatest force, the peasants cannot possibly overthrow the deep-rooted authority of the landlords which has lasted for thousands of years. . . . To put it bluntly, it is necessary to create terror for a while in every rural area. . . .

A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of three systems of authority: (1) the state system, . . . ranging from the national, provincial and county government down to that of the township; (2) the clan system, . . . ranging from the central ancestral temple and its branch temples down to the head of the household; and (3) the supernatural system (religious authority), ranging from the King of Hell down to the town and village gods belonging to the nether world, and from the Emperor of Heaven

down to all the various gods and spirits belonging to the celestial world. As for women, in addition to being dominated by these three systems of authority, they are also dominated by the men (the authority of the husband). These four authorities—political, clan, religious and masculine—are the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology, and are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people, particularly the peasants. . . .

The political authority of the landlords is the backbone of all the other systems of authority. With that overturned, the clan authority, the religious authority and the authority of the husband all begin to totter. . . . In many places the peasant associations have taken over the temples of the gods as their offices. Everywhere they advocate the appropriation of temple property in order to start peasant schools and to defray the expenses of the associations, calling it "public revenue from superstition." In Liling County, prohibiting superstitious practices and smashing idols have become quite the vogue. . . .

In places where the power of the peasants is predominant, only the older peasants and the women still believe in the gods, the younger peasants no longer doing so. Since the latter control the associations, the overthrow of religious authority and the eradication of superstition are going on everywhere. As to the authority of the husband, this has always been weaker among the poor peasants because, out of economic necessity, their womenfolk have to do more manual labor than the women of the richer classes and therefore have more say and greater power of decision in family matters. . . . With the rise of the peasant movement, the women in many places have now begun to organize rural women's associations; the opportunity has come for them to lift up their heads, and the authority of the husband is getting shakier every day. In a word, the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology is tottering with the growth of the peasants' power.

466 • *The Global Community and Its Challenges*

### Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War [1936]

What then are the characteristics of China's revolutionary war?

I think there are four.

The first is that China is a vast semi-colonial country which is unevenly developed both politically and economically. . . .

The unevenness of political and economic development in China—the coexistence of a frail capitalist economy and a preponderant semi-feudal economy; the coexistence of a few modern industrial and commercial cities and the boundless expanses of stagnant rural districts; the coexistence of several millions of industrial workers on the one hand and, on the other, hundreds of millions of peasants and handicraftsmen under the old regime; the coexistence of big warlords controlling the Central government and small warlords controlling the provinces; . . . and the coexistence of a few railway and steamship lines and motor roads on the one hand and, on the other, the vast number of wheel-barrow paths and trails for pedestrians only, many of which are even difficult for them to negotiate. . . .

The second characteristic is the great strength of the enemy.

What is the situation of the Guomindang, the enemy of the Red Army? It is a party that has seized political power and has relatively stabilized it. It has gained the support of the principal counter-revolutionary countries in the world. It has remodeled its army, which has thus become different from any other army in Chinese history and on the whole similar to the armies of the modern states in the world; its army is supplied much more abundantly with arms and other equipment than the Red Army, and is greater in numerical strength than any army in Chinese history. . . .

The third characteristic is that the Red Army is weak and small. . . .

Our political power is dispersed and isolated in mountainous or remote regions, and is deprived of any outside help. In economic and cultural conditions the revolutionary base areas are more backward than the Guomindang areas. The revolutionary bases embrace only rural districts and small towns. . . .

The fourth characteristic is the Communist Party's leadership and the agrarian revolution.

This characteristic is the inevitable result of the first one. It gives rise to the following two features. On the one hand, China's revolutionary war, though taking place in a period of reaction in China and throughout the capitalist world, can yet be victorious because it is led by the Communist Party and supported by the peasantry. Because we have secured the support of the peasantry, our base areas, though small, possess great political power and stand firmly opposed to the political power of the Guomindang which encompasses a vast area; in a military sense this creates colossal difficulties for the attacking Guomindang troops. The Red Army, though small, has great fighting capacity, because its men under the leadership of the Communist Party have sprung from the agrarian revolution and are fighting for their own interests, and because officers and men are politically united.

On the other hand, our situation contrasts sharply with that of the Guomindang. Opposed to the agrarian revolution, the Guomindang is deprived of the support of the peasantry. Despite the great size of its army it cannot arouse the bulk of the soldiers or many of the lower-rank officers. . . . Officers and men are politically disunited and this reduces its fighting capacity. . . .

Military experts of new and rapidly developing imperialist countries like Germany and Japan positively boast of the advantages of strategic offensive and condemn strategic defensive. Such an idea is fundamentally unsuitable for China's revolutionary war. Such military experts point out that the great shortcoming of defense lies in

*Chapter 12 Anticolonialism, Nationalism, and Revolution • 467*

the fact that, instead of gingering up [enlivening] the people, it demoralizes them. . . . Our case is different. Under the slogan of safeguarding the revolutionary base areas and safeguarding China, we can rally the greatest majority of the people to fight single-mindedly, because we are the victims of oppression and aggression. . . .

In military terms, our warfare consists in the alternate adoption of the defensive and the offensive. . . . It remains a defensive until a campaign of "encirclement and annihilation" is smashed, and then it immediately begins as an offensive; they are but two phases of the same thing, as one campaign of "encirclement and annihilation" of

the enemy is closely followed by another. Of the two phases, the defensive phase is more complicated and more important than the offensive phase. It involves numerous problems of how to smash the campaign of "encirclement and annihilation." . . .

In the civil war, when the Red Army surpasses the enemy in strength, there will no longer be any use for strategic defensive in general. Then our only directive will be strategic offensive. Such a change depends on an overall change in the relative strength of the enemy and ourselves. The only defensive measures that remain will be of a partial character.

## Chapter 13

# The Global Community Since 1945

WRITING THE HISTORY of the recent past presents unique challenges for early twenty-first-century historians. Their basic task—getting the facts right and determining “what happened”—is relatively easy. Although the inability of historians to examine certain sealed documents in government archives is an obstacle, this is offset by many advantages. Historians of the recent past have lived through many of the events they are describing, can interview eyewitnesses and participants, and have access to not only information contained in books, newspapers, and government documents but also in films, video recordings, and photographs. Many important documents have been digitized, making it possible to do historical research in front of one's computer screen rather than in distant archives and libraries.

Writing history, however, requires more than factual accuracy and telling “what happened.” It also entails making interpretations, judging what's important and what's trivial, and determining how events fit into patterns and trends. To do these tasks well, historians need a perspective that includes knowledge of what preceded and what followed the events they are discussing. Historians of the recent past, not knowing the future, will always lack this perspective and thus can make only educated guesses about the meaning of recent events.

Consider, for example, the sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Politicians, journalists, and historians—indeed, everyone who had anything to say about it—agreed at the time that a historic turning point had occurred. The demise of the Soviet Union, they argued, not only ended the Cold War and diminished the threat of nuclear holocaust, it also revealed fatal flaws in communism,

*Chapter 13 The Global Community Since 1945 • 469*

confirmed the triumph of capitalism, and opened up new possibilities for world peace and cooperation. The U.S. political scientist Francis Fukuyama went even further in his book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). To him, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the democratization of its eastern European satellites meant the “end of history.” Liberal democracy and capitalism had proved their superiority to all other ideologies, paving the way for their general acceptance around the globe.

From the perspective of the early twenty-first century, it is unclear how many of these judgments will prove correct. In post-Soviet Russia, democracy has hardly flourished. Under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, who took power in 2000, the government took control of much of the media, stifled unfriendly journalists, and harassed and prosecuted critics. Putin had strong public support and was re-elected with 71 percent of the vote in 2004. Public opinion polls have suggested that Russians have few reservations about his policies and those of his hand-picked successor, Dmitry Medvedev, who was elected in 2008 and promptly named Putin as prime minister. Meanwhile, relations between Russia and the United States and, to a lesser degree, between Russia and the states of Western Europe have not been without tension. Russian leaders have resented Western carping about Russia's democratic failings. They also strongly opposed the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to include many former communist states in eastern Europe and the plan announced by President George W. Bush in 2007 to build a missile-defense system in Central Europe. For their part, U.S. leaders have been aggravated by Russia's meddling in its neighbors' politics, its tepid support for their Middle East policies, and its willingness to use its vast gas and oil reserves as a political weapon. In 2008 the world press proclaimed that the harsh U.S. reaction to the Russian invasion of Georgia brought tensions to a “Cold War level.”

Will the Cold War return? Will Russia remain an authoritarian state? Will some future leader tap the wellsprings of Russian nationalism to launch post-Soviet Russia on a path of conquest and expansion? Or are steps taken by President Obama (the decision to scrap the proposed missile defense system in Central Europe in 2009 and the agreement with President Medvedev to reduce nuclear weapons in 2010) harbingers of improved relations? Until questions such as these are answered, no historian will be able to gauge the true significance of what happened to the Soviet Union in 1991.

What is true of the fall of the Soviet Union also applies to many other recent events and developments. Is the emergence of radical Islam a prelude to a “battle of civilizations” between the West and Islam or a passing phase in Islam's history? What are we to make of the bursting

470 • *The Global Community and Its Challenges*

of the dot.com bubble between 2000 and 2002 and the worldwide economic collapse following the crash of the U.S. housing market in 2008? Are they signs of capitalism's fatal flaws or simply unfortunate bumps in the road toward ever greater prosperity? The stunning reemergence of China as an economic powerhouse raises many questions, the most basic of which is whether its distinctive form of authoritarian capitalism provides a viable alternative to the democratic capitalism of the West.

Many other unanswered questions exist. Are the recent gains of Western women in education, job opportunities, and legal status the first stage toward greater gender equality worldwide or will they remain a uniquely Western phenomenon? Will the environmental movement be hailed as a triumph of human foresight or mourned as something that came too late and accomplished too little? Will Africa lift itself from the curse of economic underdevelopment? No one will be able to answer these and countless other questions for another 50 years or more, and until then it is well to keep in mind the response of Chinese foreign minister Zhou Enlai to a question posed to him about the long-term significance of the French Revolution of 1789 during an interview with U.S. national security advisor Henry Kissinger in the early 1970s: "It's too soon to tell."

## The 1950s and 1960s: Cold War Origins and Decolonization

Despite the enormous costs and casualties of World War I, international political relations in the 1920s and 1930s remained essentially what they had been before 1914. Not only did European powers retain their African and Asian colonies, but they also extended their authority into new regions such as the Middle East, where Syria and Lebanon came under control of the French and Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq came under control of the British as a result of the mandate system established at the Paris Peace Conference. With the United States withdrawing into isolationism and the new communist regime in the Soviet Union shunned as a pariah, international affairs continued to be dominated by Great Britain, France, and later Germany. Japan was the only non-European state that could boast of great power status.

The aftermath of World War II was far different. With ruined economies and exhausted populations, European states relinquished their dominance of world affairs to the United States and the Soviet Union, the two states whose size, industrial might, and military strength largely had been responsible for defeating the Axis powers. The unlikely alliance between the democratic, capitalist United States and the totalitarian, communist Soviet Union began to break down, however, in the

### Chapter 13 The Global Community Since 1945 • 471

closing stages of the war and disintegrated completely after the war ended. The establishment of Soviet-dominated regimes in Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union's annexation of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and parts of Poland confirmed the West's fears about communist designs for world domination. Simultaneously, staunch Western opposition to Soviet expansion reinforced Soviet leaders' conviction that capitalist nations were determined to destroy communism. Out of these mutual fears began the Cold War, the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States that dominated world diplomacy until the late 1980s.

Another symptom of Europe's diminished international role after World War II was the disintegration of its colonial empires. Decolonization had many causes, including the military and financial exhaustion of postwar Britain and France, the expansion and subsequent collapse of Japan's Asian empire, Soviet and U.S. opposition to colonialism, the upsurge of nationalism in the colonies, and the leadership of such men as Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in India, Sukarno in Indonesia, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, and many others. By the mid-1960s, just short of 90 former European colonies, most of them in Asia and Africa, had become independent.

European states continued to play an important though secondary role in world affairs in the second half of the twentieth century. After their impressive postwar economic recovery, the people of Europe, especially Western Europe, enjoyed high incomes, excellent health care, and exceptional educational opportunities. But the age of European domination had come to an end.

## U.S. Perceptions and Cold War Strategies

### 103 • NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY (NSC PAPER NUMBER 68)

Of the thousands of papers, memoranda, reports, and policy statements produced by U.S. officials in the opening stages of the Cold War, two stand out as particularly important. The first, the so-called "Long Telegram," was written in 1946 by career diplomat George Kennan while serving in the U.S. embassy in Moscow. In a telegram to the State Department, Kennan argued that Soviet expansionism and hostility to the outside world were rooted less in Marxism than in a deep sense of Russian inferiority and insecurity. He argued further that the USSR's influence had to be "contained" in areas of vital strategic importance to the United States.

Of equal importance was a report entitled "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," which was submitted to President Truman in April 1950. It was prepared by the National Security Council, an advisory body to the president that in 1950 consisted of the president himself; the vice-president; the secretaries of state, defense, and the treasury; and the chairman of the National Security Resources Board. Its function was to advise the president on the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to national security.

472 • *The Global Community and Its Challenges*

In early 1950, when the report was being prepared, many of the key events in the Cold War had already occurred. Winston Churchill had warned of the dangers of Soviet expansionism in his famous Iron Curtain speech in March 1946. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 pledged military aid to Greece and Turkey and any other country resisting a communist takeover; the Marshall Plan (1947) sought to blunt the appeal of communism by allocating millions of dollars to rebuild the economies of Western Europe; and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in 1949 to counter Soviet military strength in Eastern Europe. Although no European countries became communist after Czechoslovakia in 1947, American fears of international communism deepened in 1949, when China became communist and the Soviets detonated their first atomic bomb. Against this background, President Truman approved the formation of an *ad hoc* committee to prepare a position paper on a suitable U.S. response to the perceived communist threat. Under the chairmanship of Paul Nitze, the Director of Policy Planning for the State Department, the committee produced a blueprint for U.S. Cold War strategy in April 1950, two months before the onset of the Korean War.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to this document, how did World War II fundamentally alter diplomatic relationships?
2. What view of the Soviet Union does this document present?
3. According to the report, what is the Soviet strategy for subverting the free world?
4. What does "containment" mean?
5. What must be done to ensure containment's effectiveness?

Within the past thirty-five years the world has experienced two global wars of tremendous violence. . . . During the span of one generation, the international distribution of power has been fundamentally altered. For several centuries it had proved impossible for any one nation to gain such preponderant strength that a coalition of other nations could not in time face it with greater strength. The international scene was marked by recurring periods of violence and war, but a system of sovereign and independent states was maintained, over which no state was able to achieve hegemony.

Two complex sets of factors have now basically altered this historical distribution of power. First,

the defeat of Germany and Japan and the decline of the British and French Empires have interacted with the development of the United States and the Soviet Union in such a way that power has increasingly gravitated to these two centers. Second, the Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world. Conflict has, therefore, become endemic and is waged, on the part of the Soviet Union, by violent or non-violent methods in accordance with the dictates of expediency. . . .

On the one hand, the people of the world yearn for relief from the anxiety arising from the risk of

Source: NSC-68, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 1950, vol. 1.

*Chapter 13 The Global Community Since 1945 • 473*

atomic war. On the other hand, any substantial further extension of the area under the domination of the Kremlin would raise the possibility that no coalition adequate to confront the Kremlin with greater strength could be assembled. It is in this context that this Republic and its citizens in the ascendancy of their strength stand in their deepest peril.

The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself. They are issues which will not await our deliberations. With conscience and resolution this Government and the people it represents must now take new and fateful decisions. . . .

Our overall policy at the present time may be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish. It therefore rejects the concept of isolation and affirms the necessity of our positive participation in the world community.

This broad intention embraces two subsidiary policies. One is a policy which we would probably pursue even if there were no Soviet threat. It is a policy of attempting to develop a healthy international community. The other is the policy of "containing" the Soviet system. . . .

As for the policy of "containment," it is one which seeks by all means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power, (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions, (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin's control and influence and (4) in general, so foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system that the Kremlin is brought at least to the point of modifying its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards.

It was and continues to be cardinal in this policy that we possess superior overall power in ourselves or in dependable combination with other like-minded nations. One of the most important ingredients of power is military strength. In the concept of "containment,"

the maintenance of a strong military posture is deemed to be essential for two reasons: (1) as an ultimate guarantee of our national security and (2) as an indispensable backdrop to the conduct of the policy of "containment." . . .

At the same time, it is essential to the successful conduct of a policy of "containment" that we always leave open the possibility of negotiation with the U.S.S.R. A diplomatic freeze—and we are in one now—tends to defeat the very purposes of "containment" because it raises tensions at the same time that it makes Soviet retractions and adjustments in the direction of moderated behavior more difficult. It also tends to inhibit our initiative and deprives us of opportunities for maintaining a moral ascendancy in our struggle with the Soviet system. . . .

It is quite clear from Soviet theory and practice that the Kremlin seeks to bring the free world under its dominion by the methods of the cold war. The preferred technique is to subvert by infiltration and intimidation. Every institution of our society is an instrument which it is sought to stultify and turn against our purposes. Those that touch most closely our material and moral strength are obviously the prime targets, labor unions, civil enterprises, schools, churches, and all media for influencing opinion. The effort is not so much to make them serve obvious Soviet ends as to prevent them from serving our ends, and thus to make them sources of confusion in our economy, our culture, and our body politic. The doubts and diversities that in terms of our values are part of the merit of a free system, the weaknesses and the problems that are peculiar to it, the rights and privileges that free men enjoy, and the disorganization and destruction left in the wake of the last attack on our freedoms, all are but opportunities for the Kremlin to do its evil work. Every advantage is taken of the fact that our means of prevention and retaliation are limited by those principles and scruples which are precisely the ones that give our freedom and democracy its

#### 474 • *The Global Community and Its Challenges*

meaning for us. None of our scruples deter those whose only code is, "morality is that which serves the revolution."

At the same time the Soviet Union is seeking to create overwhelming military force, in order to back up infiltration with intimidation. In the only terms in which it understands strength, it is seeking to demonstrate to the free world that force and the will to use it are on the side of the Kremlin, that those who lack it are decadent and doomed. In local incidents it threatens and encroaches both for the sake of local gains and to increase anxiety and defeatism in all the free world.

The possession of atomic weapons at each of the opposite poles of power, and the inability (for different reasons) of either side to place any trust in the other, puts a premium on a surprise attack against us. It equally puts a premium on a more violent and ruthless prosecution of its design by cold war, especially if the Kremlin is sufficiently objective to realize the improbability of our prosecuting a preventive war. It also puts a premium on piecemeal aggression against others, counting on our unwillingness to engage in atomic war unless we are directly attacked. We run all these risks and the added risk of being confused and immobilized by our inability to weigh and choose, and pursue a firm course based on a rational assessment of each. . . .

Our position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility upon the United States for leadership. We must organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world in a positive program for peace which will

frustrate the Kremlin design for world domination by creating a situation in the free world to which the Kremlin will be compelled to adjust. Without such a cooperative effort, led by the United States, we will have to make gradual withdrawals under pressure until we discover one day that we have sacrificed positions of vital interest. . . .

In summary, we must, by means of a rapid and sustained build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world, and by means of an affirmative program intended to wrest the initiative from the Soviet Union, confront it with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin design of a world dominated by its will. Such evidence is the only means short of war which eventually may force the Kremlin to abandon its present course of action and to negotiate acceptable agreements on issues of major importance.

The whole success of the proposed program hangs ultimately on recognition by this Government, the American people, and all free peoples, that the cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake. Essential prerequisites to success are consultations with Congressional leaders designed to make the program the object of nonpartisan legislative support, and a presentation to the public of a full explanation of the facts and implications of the present international situation. The prosecution of the program will require of us all the ingenuity, sacrifice, and unity demanded by the vital importance of the issue and the tenacity to persevere until our national objectives have been attained.

## Soviet Goals and Strategies in the 1950s

### 104 • NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV, SPEECH AT RECEPTION FOR MILITARY ACADEMY GRADUATES, NOVEMBER 1958

Under Joseph Stalin, postwar Soviet foreign policy was characterized by unbending opposition to the West, relentless propaganda, and willingness to risk military confrontation. After Stalin's death in 1953 and a brief period of collective leadership,