

**AMERICAN
FOREIGN POLICY
AND ITS
THINKERS**



PERRY ANDERSON

American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers

By the same author

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Perry Anderson



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CONTENTS

Preface

Acknowledgements

I. IMPERIUM

1. Prodromes
2. Crystallization
3. Security
4. Keystones
5. Perimeters
6. Recalibration
7. Liberalism Militant
8. The Incumbent

II. CONSILIUM

9. Native Traditions
10. Crusaders
11. Realist Ideals
12. Economy First
13. Outside the Castle

Annexe

Postscript

Index

PREFACE

The two parts of this book, ‘Imperium’ and ‘Consilium’, offer an account of the American imperial system that reaches across the world today. It is reasonable to ask what particular contribution they could make to a subject that has attracted a large existing literature, composed essentially of diplomatic history and geopolitical strategy. The scope of ‘Imperium’ differs from much of the former in three ways, temporal, spatial and political. The first is a question of chronological span. An extensive body of research, much of it of the highest quality, exists on American foreign policy. But it characteristically divides into widely separate bodies of historical writing—principally, studies of US territorial and overseas expansion in the nineteenth century; analyses of US conduct in the struggle against the USSR during the Cold War; and discussions of US power projection since the last decade of the twentieth century. What is attempted here, by contrast, is a connected understanding of the dynamics of American strategy and diplomacy in a single arc from the war on Mexico to the war on Terror. The second difference is a question of geographical attention. Coverage of the exercise of US imperial power has tended to focus either on its operations in what was once the Third World of former colonial lands, or on its battle with what was once the Second World of communist states. There has on the whole been less concern with the objectives pursued by Washington within the First World of advanced capitalism itself. Here an effort is made to keep all three fronts of US expansion concurrently in focus.

Finally, there is a political difference. Much of the literature on American imperial power is critical of it, often—though, as I will note, by no means invariably—written from standpoints that can be regarded as broadly of the left, as distinct from mainstream celebrations of the role of the United States in the world, which tend to come from the centre or right of the ideological spectrum. A common characteristic of this writing on the left is not only criticism of the global hegemony of the United States, but confidence that it is in steepening decline, if not terminal crisis. Radical opposition to the American empire, however, does not require reassurance of its impending collapse or retreat. The changing balance of forces at whose centre its hegemony continues to lie must be reckoned objectively, without wishful thinking.

How far much of the American elite itself is from any such sober stocktaking forms the subject of the second part of this book, 'Consilium', which looks at the current thinking of its strategists. This forms a system of discourse about which relatively little has been written. The survey of it here offers a first synoptic account. To this I have added, in an annexe, an earlier consideration of one of the best known of all its contemporary minds.

I owe composition of 'Imperium' and 'Consilium' to a year at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Nantes, finishing the last in October 2013; they first appeared in *New Left Review* in the following month. In the time that has elapsed since, the international scene has been dominated by a number of developments, in the extended Middle East, the former Soviet Union and the Far East, that have renewed debate about the condition of American power. A brief postscript considers these and their upshots, still ongoing.

Perry Anderson
October 2014

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IMPERIUM

Since the Second World War, the external order of American power has been largely insulated from the internal political system. If party competition in the domestic arena has rested on rival electoral blocs, combining significant fluidity of contours with increasing sharpness of conflicts, in the global arena such differences are far less. Commonality of outlook and continuity of objectives set the administration of empire apart from rule of the homeland.¹ In some degree, the contrast between the two is a function of the general distance between the horizons of chancelleries or corporations, and of citizens in all capitalist democracies—what happens overseas is of much greater consequence to bankers and diplomats, officers and industrialists, than to voters, issuing in correspondingly more focused and coherent outcomes.

In the American case it also follows from two further local particulars: the provincialism of an electorate with minimal knowledge of the outside world, and a political system that—in strident contradiction with the design of the Founders—has increasingly given virtually untrammelled power to the executive in the conduct of foreign affairs, freeing presidencies, often baulked of domestic goals by fractious legislatures, to act without comparable cross-cutting pressures abroad. In the sphere created by these objective conditions of policy formation, there developed from mid-century around the Presidency a narrow foreign-policy elite, and a distinctive ideological vocabulary with no counterpart in internal politics: conceptions of the ‘grand strategy’ to be pursued by the American state in its dealings with the world.² The parameters of these were laid down as victory came into sight during the Second World War, and with it the prospect of planetary power.

¹ For the former: ‘Homeland’, *New Left Review* 81, May–June 2013. In presidential contests campaign rhetoric will routinely assail incumbents for weakness or mismanagement of foreign policy. Victors will then proceed much as before.

² For the general composition of foreign policy-makers, see the best succinct study of the arc of US foreign policy in the twentieth century, Thomas J. McCormick, *America’s Half-Century*, Baltimore 1995, 2nd edn,

pp. 13–15: one third made up of career bureaucrats, to two-thirds of—typically more influential—‘in-and-outers’, recruited 40 per cent from investment banks and corporations, 40 per cent from law firms, and most of the rest from political science departments.

PRODROMES

The US imperium that came into being after 1945 had a long pre-history. In North America, uniquely, the originating coordinates of empire were coeval with the nation. These lay in the combination of a settler economy free of any of the feudal residues or impediments of the Old World, and a continental territory protected by two oceans: producing the purest form of nascent capitalism, in the largest nation-state, anywhere on earth. That remained the enduring material matrix of the country's ascent in the century after independence. To the objective privileges of an economy and geography without parallel were added two potent subjective legacies, of culture and politics: the idea—derived from initial Puritan settlement—of a nation enjoying divine favour, imbued with a sacred calling; and the belief—derived from the War of Independence—that a republic endowed with a constitution of liberty for all times had arisen in the New World. Out of these four ingredients emerged, very early, the ideological repertoire of an American nationalism that afforded seamless passage to an American imperialism, characterized by a *complexio oppositorum* of exceptionalism and universalism. The United States was unique among nations, yet at the same time a lodestar for the world: an order at once historically unexampled and ultimately a compelling example to all.

These were the convictions of the Founders. The radiance of the nation would in the first instance be territorial, within the Western Hemisphere. As Jefferson put it to Monroe in 1801: 'However our present interests may restrain us within our limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our multiplication will expand it beyond those limits, and cover the whole northern, if not the southern continent, with people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws'. But in the last instance, that radiance would be more than territorial: it would be moral and political. In Adams's words to Jefferson in 1813: 'Our pure, virtuous, public spirited, federative republic will last forever, govern the globe and introduce the perfection of man'.³ Towards mid-century, the two registers fused into the famous slogan of an associate of Jackson: 'the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and possess the whole continent that providence has given us for the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government'. For a land 'vigorous and fresh from the hand

of God' had a 'blessed mission to the nations of the world'. Who could doubt 'the far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness'?⁴ The annexation of half the surface of Mexico followed in short order.

Once the current boundaries of the United States were largely reached, the same sense of the future took more commercial than territorial form, looking west rather than south. Lincoln's secretary of state exhorted his compatriots: 'You are already the great continental power of America. But does that content you? I trust it does not. You want the commerce of the world. This must be looked for on the Pacific. The nation that draws most from the earth and fabricates most, and sells the most to foreign nations, must be and will be the great power of the earth.'⁵ What Manifest Destiny and the conquest of Mexico were on land, Commodore Perry and the Open Door could be on sea—the horizon of an American marine and mercantile primacy in the Orient, bearing free trade and Christianity to its shores. With the outbreak of the Spanish–American War, classical inter-imperialist conflict brought colonies in the Pacific and the Caribbean, and full-fledged entrance into the ranks of the great powers. Under the first Roosevelt, Panama was carved out of Colombia as a US dependency to link the two seas, and race—Anglo-Saxon breeding and solidarity—added to religion, democracy and trade in the rhetoric of the nation's calling.

This was never uncontested. At each stage, eloquent American voices had denounced the megalomania of Manifest Destiny, the plunder of Mexico, the seizure of Hawaii, the slaughter in the Philippines, attacking every kind of racism and imperialism as a betrayal of the anti-colonial birthright of the republic. Rejection of foreign adventures—annexations or interventions—was not a break with national values, but always a possible version of them. From the beginning, exceptionalism and universalism formed a potentially unstable compound. Conviction of the first allowed for belief that the United States could preserve its unique virtues only by remaining a society apart from a fallen world. Commitment to the second authorized a messianic activism by the United States to redeem that world. Between these two poles—'separation' and 'regenerative intervention', as Anders Stephanson has described them—public opinion could more than once abruptly shift.⁶

As the US entered the new century, however, such mood swings were of less significance than the sheer economic and demographic growth of the country. By 1910, American capitalism was already in a league of its own, with an industrial magnitude larger than that of Germany and Britain combined. In an age permeated with social Darwinist beliefs in the survival of the fittest, such indices of production could only mean, for ambitious contemporaries, the coming of a power commensurate with them. As the Civil War felled half a million of his countrymen, Whitman exulted that 'we have undoubtedly in the United States the greatest military power in the world'.⁷ Yet after Reconstruction, the peacetime strength of the army remained modest by international standards. The navy—marines dispatched for regular interventions in the Caribbean and Central America—had more future. Symptomatically, the entrance of the United States into the intellectual arena of *Weltpolitik* came with the impact of Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, closely studied in Berlin, London, Paris and Tokyo, and a touchstone for both Roosevelts, which argued that 'everything that moves on water'—as opposed to land—possessed 'the prerogative of offensive

defence'.⁸ A decade later, Brooks Adams laid out the global logic of US industrial preeminence in *America's Economic Supremacy*. In 1900, he wrote, 'For the first time in human experience a single nation this year leads in the production of the precious metals, copper, iron and coal; and this year also, for the first time, the world has done its banking to the west and not to the east of the Atlantic.' In the struggle for life among nations, empire was 'the most dazzling prize for which any people can contend'. Provided the American state acquired the necessary organizational form, the US could in future surpass the imperial wealth and power of England and Rome.⁹ But when war broke out in 1914, there was still a wide gap between such premonitions and any consensus that America should involve itself in the quarrels of Europe.

II

With the arrival of Woodrow Wilson in the White House, however, a convulsive turn in the trajectory of American foreign policy was at hand. As no other president before or after him, Wilson gave voice to every chord of presumption in the imperial repertoire, at messianic pitch. Religion, capitalism, democracy, peace and the might of the United States were one. 'Lift your eyes to the horizons of business', he told American salesmen, 'and with the inspiration of the thought that you are Americans and are meant to carry liberty and justice and the principles of humanity wherever you go, go out and sell goods that will make the world more comfortable and more happy, and convert them to the principles of America.'¹⁰ In a campaign address of 1912, he declared: 'If I did not believe in Providence I would feel like a man going blindfolded through a haphazard world. I do believe in Providence. I believe that God presided over the inception of this nation. I believe he planted in us the visions of liberty.' A 'divine destiny' was furthermore in store for America: 'We are chosen and prominently chosen to show the way to the nations of the world how they shall walk in the paths of liberty'.¹¹ The route might be arduous, but the bourne was clear. 'Slowly ascending the tedious climb that leads to the final uplands, we shall get our ultimate view of the duties of mankind. We have breasted a considerable part of that climb and shall presently, it may be in a generation or two, come out upon those great heights where there shines unobstructed the light of the justice of God'.¹² After sending US troops into more Caribbean and Central American states than any of his predecessors—Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua—in 1917 Wilson plunged the country into the First World War, a conflict in which America had 'the infinite privilege of fulfilling her destiny and saving the world'.¹³

If US entry into the war made victory for the Entente a foregone conclusion, imposing an American peace proved more difficult. Wilson's Fourteen Points, a hurried attempt to counter Lenin's denunciation of secret treaties and imperialist rule, were distinguished mainly by their call for a global Open Door—'the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers'—and 'impartial adjustment', not abolition, of 'all colonial claims'. Contrary to legend, self-determination appears nowhere in the enumeration. Wilson's bulletins of democratic deliverance were treated with disdain by his partners at Versailles. At home, the League he proposed to avert future conflicts

fares no better. ‘The stage is set, the destiny disclosed’, he announced, presenting his arrangements for perpetual peace in 1919, ‘the hand of God has led us into this way’.¹⁴ The Senate was unmoved. America could dispense with Wilson’s ambitions. The country was not ready for an indefinite extension of regenerative intervention into the affairs of the world at large. Under the next three presidents, the United States concentrated on recovering its loans to Europe, otherwise limiting its operations outside the hemisphere to ineffectual attempts to get Germany back onto its feet and restrain Japan from overdoing expansion into China. To many, capsized to the pole of separation—in the vocabulary of its opponents, ‘isolationism’—seemed all but complete.

The reality was that American entry into the First World War had answered to no determinable national interest. A gratuitous decision by its president, enforced with sweeping ethnic persecution and political repression at home, it was the product of a massive excess of US power over any material goals procurable by it. The rhetoric of American expansionism had typically projected markets overseas as if they were an external frontier, with the claim that US goods and investments now required outlets abroad that only an Open Door could assure. Yet the American economy, with its abundant natural resources and vast internal market, continued to be largely autarkic. Foreign trade accounted for no more than 10 per cent of GNP down to the First World War, when most American exports still consisted of raw materials and processed foodstuffs. Nor, of course, was there any Open Door to the US market itself, traditionally protected by high tariffs with scant regard for the principles of free trade. Still less was there the remotest threat of attack or invasion from Europe. It was this disjuncture between ideology and reality that brought Wilson’s millenarian globalism to an abrupt end. The United States could afford to dictate the military outcome of war in Europe. But if the cost of its intervention was small, the gain was nil. Neither at popular nor at elite level was any pressing need felt for institutional follow-through. America could look after itself, without worrying unduly about Europe. Under the banner of a return to normalcy, in 1920 Harding buried his Democratic opponent in the largest electoral landslide of modern times.

But within a decade, the arrival of the Depression was a signal that the pre-history of the American empire was approaching its end. If the initial Wall Street crash of 1929 was the bursting of an endogenous credit bubble, the fuse of the bank failures that burnt the US economy into the real slump was lit by the collapse of the Creditanstalt in Austria in 1931, and its knock-on effects across Europe. The crisis brought home that, however relatively insulated American factories—farms less so—might still be from world trade, American deposits were not from international financial markets, in a signal that with the passing of London’s role as pivot of the system, and the default of New York as successor, the order of capital as a whole was at risk in the absence of a stabilizing centre. The immediate concerns of Roosevelt’s first term lay in domestic measures to overcome the crisis, prompting unceremonious abandonment of the gold standard and brusque rejection of any coordinated international attempt to manage exchange rates. But by previous standards the New Deal was not protectionist. The Smoot–Hawley Act was dismantled, tariffs selectively lowered, and an impassioned champion of free trade—to American specifications—

put in charge of foreign policy: Cordell Hull, the ‘Tennessee Cobden’, becoming the longest-serving secretary of state in US history.

Towards the end of Roosevelt’s second term, as war raged in East Asia and threatened in Europe, rearmament started to make good the weaknesses (highlighted by the recession in 1937) of domestic recovery, giving the New Deal a second wind. The internal fortunes of the American economy and external postures of the American state were henceforward joined as they had never been before. But though the White House was increasingly on the *qui vive* to developments abroad, and military readiness stepped up, public opinion remained averse to any prospect of a rerun of 1917–1920, and within the administration there was little or no conception of what the American role or priorities might be, should one materialize. Roosevelt had become increasingly alarmed at German and to a lesser extent Japanese belligerence. Hull was concerned above all by the retreat of national economies behind tariff walls, and the erection of trade blocs. At the War Department, Woodring resisted any thought of involvement in a new round of great power conflicts. Beyond conflicting negative apprehensions, there was not yet much positive sense of the place of American power in the world ahead.

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- 3 See Robert Kagan’s clear-eyed *Dangerous Nation: America in the World 1600–1900*, London 2006, pp. 80, 156; for an assessment, ‘Consilium’, pp. 136–41, below.
 - 4 John O’Sullivan, coiner of the slogan and author of these declarations, was an ideologue for Jackson and Van Buren: see Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*, New York 1995, pp. 39–42, unsurpassed in its field.
 - 5 Seward did not neglect territorial expansion, acquiring Alaska and the Midway Islands and pressing for Hawaii, but regarded this as means not end in the build-up of American power.
 - 6 Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, pp. xii–xiii; it is one of the strengths of this study, which assembles a bouquet of the most extravagant pronouncements of American chauvinism, that it also supplies the (often impassioned) counterpoint of its opponents.
 - 7 Victor Kiernan, *America: The New Imperialism: From White Settlement to World Hegemony*, London 1978, p. 57, which offers a graphic account of imperial imaginings in the ‘Middle Decades’ of the nineteenth century.
 - 8 Captain A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*, London 1890, p. 87. A prolific commentator on international affairs, adviser to Hay on the Open Door Notes and intimate of the first Roosevelt, Mahan was a vigorous proponent of a martial spirit and robust navalism: peace was merely the ‘tutelary deity of the stock-market’.
 - 9 ‘Within two generations’, Adams told his readers, America’s ‘great interests will cover the Pacific, which it will hold like an inland sea’, and presiding over ‘the development of Eastern Asia, reduce it to a part of our system’. To that end, ‘America must expand and concentrate until the limit of the possible is attained; for Governments are simply huge corporations in competition, in which the most economical, in proportion to its energy, survives, and in which the wasteful and the slow are undersold and eliminated’. Given that ‘these great struggles sometimes involve an appeal to force, safety lies in being armed and organized against all emergencies’. *America’s Economic Supremacy*, New York 1900, pp. 194, 50–1, 85, 222. Adams and Mahan were friends, in the White House circle of TR.
 - 10 Address to the World’s Salesmanship Congress in Detroit, 10 July 1916: *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 37, Princeton 1981, p. 387.
 - 11 Campaign address in Jersey City, 26 May 1912: *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 24, Princeton 1977, p. 443.
 - 12 Address to the Southern Commercial Congress in Mobile, 27 October 1913: *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 28, Princeton 1978, p. 52.

- 13 Address in the Princess Theatre in Cheyenne, 24 September 1919: *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 63, Princeton 1990, p. 469.
- 14 *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 61, Princeton 1981, p. 436. After whipping up hysteria against anyone of German origin during the war, Wilson had no compunction in declaring that ‘the only organized forces in this country’ against the Versailles Treaty he presented to the Senate were ‘the forces of hyphenated Americans’—‘hyphen is the knife that is being stuck into the document’ (*sic*): vol. 63, pp. 469, 493.

CRYSTALLIZATION

The vacuum of longer-range reflections in Washington would be underlined with the appearance of a remarkable work composed before Pearl Harbour, but published shortly after it, *America's Strategy in World Politics*. Its author Nicholas Spykman—a Dutchman with a background in Egypt and Java, then holding a chair at Yale—died a year later.¹ In what remains perhaps the most striking single exercise in geopolitical literature of any kind, Spykman laid out a basic conceptual grid for the understanding of contemporary relations between states, and a comprehensive map of American positions and prospects within it. In an international system without central authority, the primary objective of the foreign policy of every state was necessarily the preservation and improvement of its power, in a struggle to curb that of other states. Political equilibrium—a balance of power—was a noble ideal, but ‘the truth of the matter is that states are only interested in a balance which is in their favour. Not an equilibrium, but a generous margin is their objective’. The means of power were four: persuasion, purchase, barter and coercion. While military strength was the primary requirement of every sovereign state, all were instruments of an effective foreign policy. Combining them, hegemony was a ‘power position permitting the domination of all states within its reach’.²

Such hegemony the United States had long enjoyed over most of the Western hemisphere. But it was a dangerous mistake to think that it could therefore rely on the protection of two oceans, and the resources of the interlinked landmass lying between them, to maintain its power position vis-à-vis Germany and Japan. A detailed inventory of the strategic materials needed for success in modern war showed that Latin America, for all its valuable raw materials, could not supply every critical item missing from North America.³ Nor was it realistic to imagine unaffected support for the United States to the south. The record of Washington in the region, where ‘our so-called painless imperialism has seemed painless only to us’, precluded that. Nothing like the ‘modern, capitalistic credit economy’ of the United States, with its highly developed industrial system, giant corporations, militant union struggles and strikebreaker vigilantes existed in the still largely feudal societies of Latin America, while the ABC states of its far south lay ‘too far from the centre of our power to be

easily intimidated by measures short of war'.⁴ Any purely hemispheric defence was an illusion; still more so, quarter-sphere defence confined to North America alone, if the US was to avoid becoming a mere buffer state between German and Japanese empires. American strategy would have to be offensive, striking out across the seas at the two powers now at war—by the time the book came out—against the US on the other side of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

Spykman's rebuttal of isolationism became conventional wisdom once the US entered the war. But not his wider vision, which in its cool dismissal of American verities that would be recycled by the administration as wartime objectives remained incompatible with any of the doctrines that came to be formulated in Washington during the conflict. *America's Strategy in World Politics* explained that liberal democracy had become a stale myth; laissez-faire led to increasing monopoly and concentration of economic power; free trade was a fiction mocked by state subsidies; at home, class struggle, declared nonexistent, was settled by tear gas and violence; abroad, American bayonets taught lesser breeds modern accounting.⁵ Declining to take the standard rhetoric of the struggle at face value, Spykman arrived at conclusions that could only be jarring to the policy-makers of the hour. The US should already be reckoning on a reversal of alliances when the war was won. In Europe, Britain would not want to see Russia any more than Germany on the shores of the North Sea, and could be counted on to build Germany back up against Russia; while in Asia, America would have to build Japan back up against China, whose potential power was infinitely greater, and once 'modernized, vitalized and militarized' would be the principal threat to the position of the Western powers in the Pacific.⁶ As the Red Army fought off the Wehrmacht at the gates of Moscow, and Japanese carriers moved towards Midway, such provisions were out of season. Their time would come.

II

The mental framework of the officials charged with American foreign policy was far from uniform. But central assumptions were widely shared. When European war broke out in 1939, virtually all its possible outcomes filled planners in Washington with alarm. Dire, certainly, would be German success: few had any illusions in Hitler. But a British victory won by statist mobilization, entrenching the sterling bloc yet further, might not be so much better. Worst of all, perhaps, would be such mutual destruction that, in the ensuing chaos, one form or another of socialism would take hold of the continent.⁷ Once Washington entered the war, and alliance with London and Moscow was essential to winning it, the priorities of the battlefield took precedence over the calculations of capital. But these remained, throughout, the strategic background to the global struggle. For Roosevelt's planners the long-term priorities were twofold.⁸ The world must be made safe for capitalism at large; and within the world of capitalism, the United States should reign supreme. What would this dual objective mean for the postwar scene?

First and foremost, in point of conceptual time, the construction of an international framework for capital that would put an end to the dynamics of autarkic division and

statist control that had precipitated the war itself, of which Hitler's Third Reich and Japan's Co-Prosperity Sphere had been the most destructive examples, but Britain's Imperial Preference was another retrograde case. The free enterprise system in America itself was at risk without access to foreign markets.⁹ What would be needed after the war was a generalization of the Open Door that Washington had urged on its rivals in the race to seize command of markets in China: an all-round liberalization of trade, but henceforward—this was crucial—firmly embedded in new international institutions. Such an economic order would be not only a guarantee of peaceful relations between states, but allow the US to assume its natural place as first among them. From the time of Jefferson and Adams onwards, conspicuous national traditions had been generically expansionist, and as now far the largest and most advanced industrial power in the world, the US could be confident that free trade would ensure its hegemony at large, as it had Britain's a century earlier. The political complement of this economic order would be founded on the principles of liberal democracy, as set forth in the Atlantic Charter.

From 1943 onwards, as victory came nearer, the requirements of this vision moved into sharper political focus. Three concerns were overriding.¹⁰ The first was the threat to a satisfactory post-war settlement from the potential maintenance of imperial preference by Britain. Washington would brook no barrier to American exports. From the outset, the US had insisted that a condition of the lend-lease on which Britain depended for survival after 1940 must be abandonment of imperial preference, once hostilities were over. Churchill, furious at the imposition of Article VII, could only seek to weaken the American diktat with a vaguely worded temporary escape clause. The second concern, mounting as the end of the war approached, and fully shared by Britain, was the spread of resistance movements in Europe—France, Belgium, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece—in which variegated currents of the left were leading forces, just as planners in Washington had originally feared. The third was the advance from the spring of 1944 of the Red Army into Eastern Europe, which soon became an acute preoccupation. If the prospect most immediately present in the minds of American planners at the start of the war was the danger of any reversion to the conditions that had produced Nazi Germany and militarist Japan, as it drew to an end a still greater threat was taking shape in the form of its most important ally in the battle against them, the Soviet Union.

For here was not just an alternative form but a negation of capitalism, intending nothing less than its overthrow across the planet. Communism was an enemy far more radical than fascism had ever been: not an aberrant member of the family of polities respecting private ownership of the means of production, but an alien force dedicated to destroying it. American rulers had, of course, always been aware of the evils of Bolshevism, which Wilson had tried to stamp out at their inception by dispatching an expedition to help the Whites in 1919. But though foreign intervention had not succeeded in strangling it at birth, the USSR of the interwar years remained an isolated, and looked a weak, power. Soviet victories over the Wehrmacht, long before there was an Anglo-American foot on European soil, abruptly altered its position in the postwar calculus. So long as fighting lasted, Moscow remained an ally to be prudently assisted, and where necessary humoured. But once it was over, a reckoning