

**AMERICA
RUSSIA
AND THE
COLD
WAR**

1945-1990

**WALTER
LAFEBER**

6th Edition



America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1990

SIXTH EDITION

Walter LaFeber
Cornell University

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AMERICA, RUSSIA, AND THE COLD WAR 1945-1990

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Walter LaFeber is the Marie Underhill Noll Professor of History at Cornell University. His publications include *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1865-1898* (1963), for which he received the Beveridge Prize of the American Historical Association; *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States and Central America* (1983, 1984) which won the Gustavus Myers Prize; *The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective* (1978, 1979, new edition 1989); *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad Since 1750* (1989); *The American Century: The United States Since 1890* (1985), which he coauthored; and *America in Vietnam: A History with Documents* (1985), also a coauthored work. Professor LaFeber won the first Clark Award for undergraduate teaching at Cornell.

FOREWORD

"The United States always wins the war and loses the peace," runs a persistent popular complaint. Neither part of the statement is accurate. The United States barely escaped the War of 1812 with its territory intact, and in Korea in the 1950s the nation was forced to settle for a stalemate on the battlefield. At Paris in 1782, and again in 1898, American negotiators drove hard bargains to win notable diplomatic victories. Yet the myth persists, along with the equally erroneous American belief that we are a peaceful people. Our history is studded with conflict and violence. From the Revolution to the Cold War, Americans have been willing to fight for their interests, their beliefs, and their ambitions. The United States has gone to war for many objectives—for independence in 1775, for honor and trade in 1812, for territory in 1846, for humanity and empire in 1898, for neutral rights in 1917, and for national security in 1941. Since 1945 the nation has been engaged in the continuing Cold War with the Soviet Union.

The purpose of the series is to examine in detail critical periods relating to American involvement in foreign war, from the war with Mexico down through the Cold War. Each author has set out to recount anew the breakdown of diplomacy that led to war and the subsequent quest for peace. The emphasis is on foreign policy, and no effort is made to chronicle the military participation of the United States in these years. Instead the authors focus on the day-by-day conduct of diplomacy to explain why the nation went to war and to show how peace was restored. Each volume is a synthesis combining the research of other historians with new insights to provide a fresh interpretation of a critical period in American diplomatic history. It is hoped that this series will help dispel the illusion of national innocence and give Americans a better appreciation of their country's role in war and peace.

ROBERT A. DIVINE

PREFACE

The chapter on the late 1970s and early 1980s in the fifth edition has been enlarged and updated for this edition to include events in the late 1980s and in early 1990 as well. It is longer than usual because of the momentous events in the U.S.-Soviet relationship that marked the decade but also because of a more extended treatment of the Soviet crises and, of course, the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev. Only a few changes have been made in earlier chapters; large sections of the book were rewritten for the last edition. The bibliography has been updated.

Friends have been most helpful in offering criticism, especially on the Soviet material: Myron Rush of Cornell, Paul Marantz of the University of British Columbia, Frank Costigliola of the University of Rhode Island, Douglas Little of Clark University, and Paul Dukes of the University of Aberdeen. I owe a large debt to other friends who have (at times unknowingly) provided materials and insights for this edition: Michael Kammen, Richard Polenberg, and Joel Silbey of Cornell; William Walker of Ohio Wesleyan; Eric Edelman, Dan Fried, and Bill Brownfield of the Department of State; Dan Weil of Reuters; Eric Alterman of Washington, D.C.; David Maisel of Chappaqua, New York; Mark Lytle of Bard College; Warren Kimball of Rutgers-Newark; David Langbart of the National Archives; Peter Kirstein of Saint Xavier College; Hirschel Abelson of New York City; Milton Leitenberg of Washington, D.C.; and Max Miller of Congressman Ron Dellums's staff, who, as always, provided key reading assignments. Since the first edition of this book a quarter century ago, and even before, one group has been of special importance: Bob Divine of the University of Texas, the series editor; Lloyd Gardner of Rutgers-New Brunswick; Fred Harvey Harrington and Tom McCormick of the University of Wisconsin; Marie Underhill Noll of Ithaca; and William Appleman Williams of Waldport, Oregon. I am grateful to Chris Rogers, Edna Shalev, and Suzanne Thibodeau of McGraw-Hill for their care with

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Robert Divine of the University of Texas, the editor of this series, Gaddis Smith of Yale, Myron Rush of Cornell, and Lloyd Gardner of Rutgers have immeasurably helped this manuscript by reading it in its entirety and making many constructive criticisms. To Lloyd Gardner and to Thomas McCormick of the University of Pittsburgh, William Appleman Williams of the University of Wisconsin, Fred Harvey Harrington, President of the University of Wisconsin, and Robert Bowers of Hanover College, I owe considerably more than mere thanks for professional advice. Knight Biggerstaff of Cornell read many of the sections on Asia and improved them greatly. William Gum of Wiley has been the most helpful and long-suffering editor that an author could wish for. Nancy Unger, also of Wiley, made this a better volume by taking care of the editorial work on the maps.

Tom Rogers, Coordinator of Research at Cornell, Frank Long, Vice President of Research at Cornell, Stuart Brown, Dean of Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences, and Sandy Cheney, Associate Dean of that college, have literally made this book possible by providing the research funds that enabled me to investigate materials in various libraries and to have the manuscript typed. I particularly thank Mrs. Nancy Bressler of the Princeton University Library staff for making the Dulles and Baruch papers so easy to use and also for expediting the clearance of my notes through the Dulles Committee. Phillip Brooks and Phillip Lagerquist were very helpful at the Truman Library. I am, of course, primarily obligated to the fine library staff at Cornell, particularly to Giles Shepherd and Evelyn Greenberg. Herman Phleger, General Nathan Twining, and Sherman Adams graciously consented to allow the use of the quotations from their oral history interviews in the Dulles manuscripts at Princeton. Mrs. Robert Ludgate and Mrs. John Quincy Adams of Ithaca typed the manuscript with great care.

I thank those persons who either supplied me with research materials or somewhat narrowed the boundaries of my ignorance by talking with me about the Cold War: David Brion Davis, Walter Pintner, Michael Kammen, and Richard Polenberg, all professors at Cornell in the Department of History; Andrew Hacker, Clinton Rossiter, John Lewis, and George Kahin in the Cornell Government Department, Paul Marantz, a graduate student in government at Harvard; David Maisel, an undergraduate at Cornell; Raymond G. O'Connor, professor and chairman of the History Department at Temple University; Professor Barton Bernstein of Stanford; Professor Athan Theoharis of Wayne State University; John Windmuller, professor in the Industrial and Labor Relations School of Cornell; and George Kennan of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. I am particularly indebted to Professor Carl Parrini and the History Department at the University of Northern Illinois for allowing me to try out some of my ideas about the Cold War at their N.D.E.A. Institute in the summer of 1966. The dedication is to a person who has yet to lose a war—either hot or cold—and this has been fortunate for me.

WALTER LAFEBER

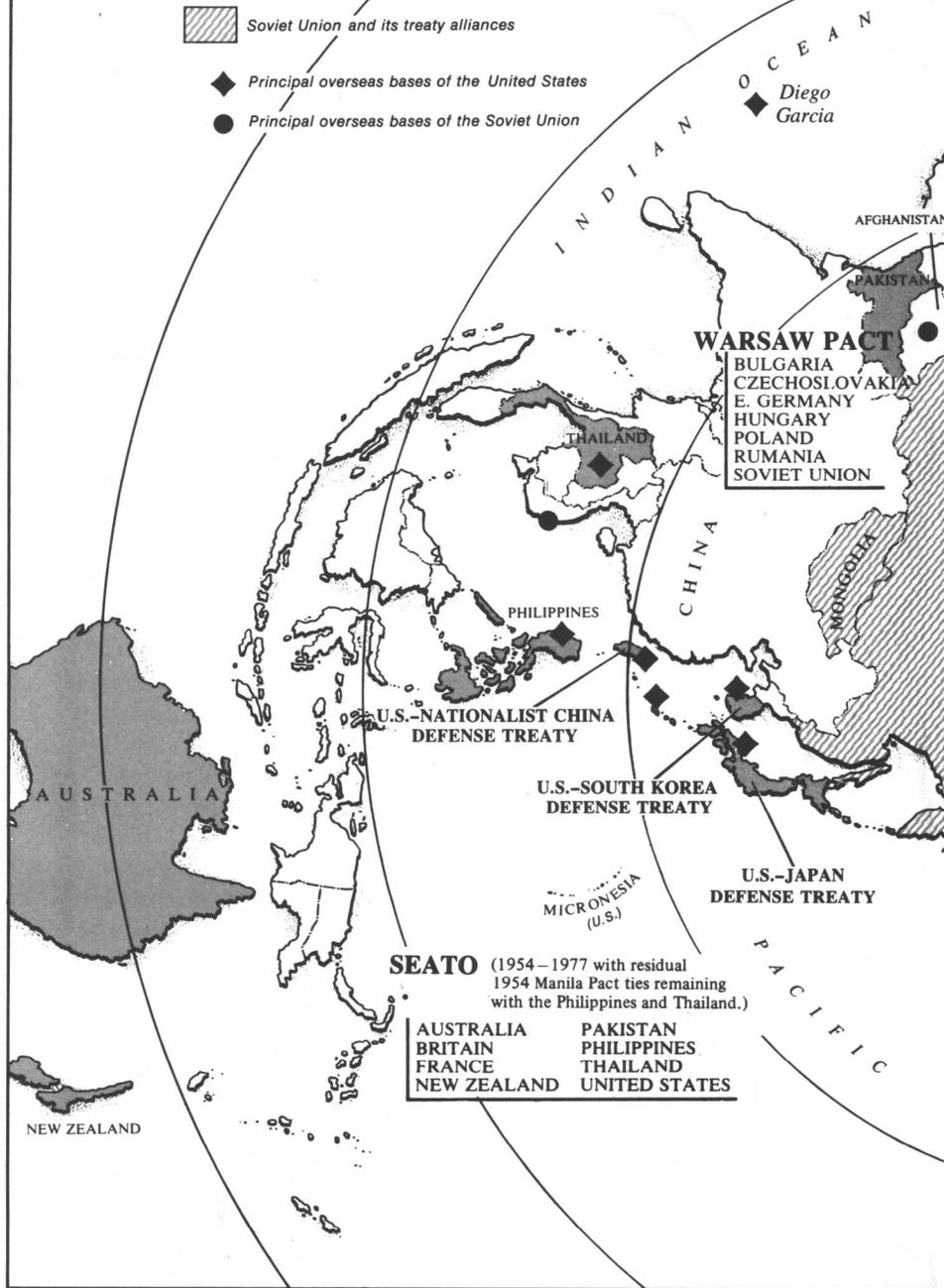
U.S. and U.S.S.R. OVERSEAS COMMITMENTS

 United States and its treaty alliances

 Soviet Union and its treaty alliances

 Principal overseas bases of the United States

 Principal overseas bases of the Soviet Union



WARSAW PACT
 BULGARIA
 CZECHOSLOVAKIA
 E. GERMANY
 HUNGARY
 POLAND
 RUMANIA
 SOVIET UNION

SEATO (1954–1977 with residual 1954 Manila Pact ties remaining with the Philippines and Thailand.)

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| AUSTRALIA | PAKISTAN |
| BRITAIN | PHILIPPINES |
| FRANCE | THAILAND |
| NEW ZEALAND | UNITED STATES |



NATO

- | | | |
|------------|---------|---------------|
| BELGIUM | GREECE | NETHERLANDS |
| BRITAIN | ICELAND | NORWAY |
| CANADA | ITALY | PORTUGAL |
| DENMARK | LUXEM. | TURKEY |
| W. GERMANY | SPAIN | UNITED STATES |

INTER-AMERICAN TREATY
24 NATIONS

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Introduction: The Burden of History (to 1941)

The Cold War has dominated American life since 1945. It has cost Americans \$4 trillion in defense expenditures, taken the lives of nearly 100,000 of their young men, ruined the careers of many others during the McCarthyite witch hunts, led the nation into the horrors of Southeast Asian conflicts, and in the 1980s triggered the worst economic depression in forty years. It has not been the most satisfying chapter in American diplomatic history.

These tragedies can only be understood – and, it is hoped, some future disasters averted – by understanding the causes of this struggle between the United States and Russia. That conflict did not begin in 1945 or even with the communist victory in Russia during 1917. The two powers did not initially come into conflict because one was communist and the other capitalist. Rather, they first confronted one another on the plains of north China and Manchuria in the late nineteenth century. That meeting climaxed a century in which Americans had expanded westward over half the globe and Russians had moved eastward across Asia.

Until that confrontation the two nations had been good friends. Whenever conflicts arose (as over settlements in California and Alaska), the Russians retreated before the demands of United

States expansionists. Encounters outside the New World, however, could not be settled so easily. Americans swept across a continent while sending out tentacles of trade that quickly seized upon Asia as the great potential market for their magnificently productive farms and factories. By the 1890s Russia, after five centuries of expansion, controlled a grand continental empire containing (like the United States) peoples of many cultures. Americans believed that a "manifest destiny" of supernatural force directed their conquests. The Russians similarly viewed their czar, or emperor, as an instrument of God's will.

But the two nations also differed sharply. The American empire was decentralized, or "federal," with states and outlying territory enjoying considerable freedom. The Russian empire was tightly centralized, with an army of bureaucrats working antlike for the czar (and, later, a small Communist party elite in Moscow). Russian officials agreed that only rigidly enforced order from above could preserve the nation. Such bureaucracies are not renowned for imagination and originality. (In part because of the resulting uncreativity, Russia, both before and after 1917, necessarily borrowed technology and new industrial methods from the West.¹) The oppressive bureaucracy also was brutal, especially in the post-1880 era when it condemned political dissenters to Siberian prison camps and accelerated pogroms against Russian Jews. Anti-Russian feelings spread across the United States. Congress threatened to cut trade with the czar. Mark Twain caught the mood when he exclaimed that if the regime could be ended only with dynamite, "then thank God for dynamite."

And Americans were also finding another fault with their former friends. The United States honored not bureaucracies, but businessmen who moved across the oceans to profit in open world marketplaces. Russians, however, moved across land, not water. They developed an empire that was more political than commercial. After annexing land in Asia, they tried to control it tightly by closing the markets to foreign businessmen with whom they could not compete. This highlighted the problem between the two countries in the 1890s: the United States believed its prosperity increasingly required an "open door" to trade in China's rich province of

¹Robert Wesson, "Soviet Russia: A Geopolitical View," *Survey*, XVII (Spring 1971): 1-13.

Manchuria, but the Russians were determined to colonize and close off parts of Manchuria. Two hostile systems confronted one another, much as they would during 1945 in Eastern Europe, and for many of the same reasons.

From the 1890s until 1917 the United States tried to contain Russian expansion, usually by supporting Japan, which, for its own purposes, also wanted an open Manchuria. President Theodore Roosevelt exemplified American sentiments: the Russians "are utterly insincere and treacherous; they have no conception of the truth . . . and no regard for others." As for the czar, he was "a preposterous little creature." More to the point, TR feared Russia was trying to "organize northern China against us."²

These views did not change even in 1914 when the czar allied with England and France against Germany. Colonel Edward House, President Woodrow Wilson's closest advisor, starkly outlined the alternatives that would haunt Americans throughout the twentieth century: "If the Allies win, it means the domination of Russia on the continent of Europe; and if Germany wins, it means the unspeakable tyranny of militarism for generations to come."³ Either way the United States would lose.

The traditional Russian danger grew more threatening in late 1917. Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik movement used the devastation, chaos, and poverty caused by World War I to overthrow the Russian government and establish a Soviet. The ever-expanding czarist empire now possessed an ideological force, Marxism, that was supposedly driven by historical law and dedicated to world revolution. Between 1918 and 1920 Woodrow Wilson dispatched more than 10,000 American soldiers as he cooperated with Allied attempts to overthrow Lenin by force, and, simultaneously, tried to prevent an invading Japanese army from colonizing and closing off Siberia. The President finally stopped the Japanese, but the Allied intervention was a disaster. In the short run many Russians fled from the foreign troops to support Lenin. In the long run Soviet leaders would not forget that the intervention seemed to confirm their belief that "capitalist encirclement" aimed at strangulating the communist regime.

²Quoted in William Henry Harbough, *Power and Responsibility: The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, 1961), p. 277.

³Quoted in Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality, 1914-1915* (Princeton, 1960), p. 48.

At the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, the Allies sought another approach. With the shadow of Lenin darkening every discussion, the Western powers tried to isolate the Soviets by creating such buffer states as Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia in Eastern Europe. As a young, embittered American official named Walter Lippmann then phrased it, the Allies created a military *cordon sanitaire*, when peace required a "sanitary Europe," that is, a prosperous, less militarized area that could build a more attractive and equitable society than Lenin could devise.⁴ (In 1947, as dean of American journalists, Lippmann would again condemn American postwar policy, and again be rejected by Washington officials.)

Attempting to isolate the Soviets, Woodrow Wilson refused to open diplomatic relations. Sounding like Theodore Roosevelt discussing the czar, Wilson declared that Lenin's government "is based upon the negation of every principle of honor and good faith." But others refused to follow his lead. England began trading with Russia in 1921. A year later the two outcasts, Russia and defeated Germany, signed a treaty of cooperation. Though shocking Americans by condemning religion and private property, the Soviets were apparently here to stay.

The United States by no means ignored the Bolsheviks. An American relief mission distributed over \$60 million worth of aid to starving Russians in the 1920s. When Lenin announced in 1921 he would welcome foreign capital for reconstruction projects, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover believed this meant communism was collapsing. Hoping that Americans could control as well as profit from a more capitalist Russia, Hoover encouraged businessmen to look upon Russia as an "economic vacuum" that, like all vacuums, invited invasion. They responded. Ford, General Electric, and Westinghouse were among the many major firms that invested millions of dollars. Young W. Averell Harriman also took the plunge. Heir to a great railway fortune, Harriman began to develop a billion-dollar manganese concession in Russia during 1926. When his venture ran into financial trouble, the Soviets freed him from his contract. (Harriman found them less cooperative when Franklin D. Roosevelt named him Ambassador to Russia during World War II.) Meanwhile, between 1925 and 1930 Soviet-American trade rose to over \$100 million, well above the prewar figure.

⁴Walter Lippmann, *New Republic* (March 22, 1919), supplement.