

BEYOND CONTAINMENT

***Alternative
American
Policies
Toward the
Soviet Union***



***Aaron Wildavsky
Editor***

BEYOND CONTAINMENT

**(Alternative American Policies
Toward the Soviet Union)**

Edited by
AARON WILDAVSKY

ICS PRESS



Institute for Contemporary Studies
San Francisco, California

Copyright © 1983 by the Institute for Contemporary Studies.

Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Inquiries, book orders, and catalog requests should be addressed to ICS Press, Suite 811, 260 California Street, San Francisco, California 94111—415-398-3010.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Main entry under title:

Beyond containment.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. United States—Foreign relations—Soviet Union—Addresses, essays, lectures. 2. Soviet Union—Foreign relations—United States—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Wildavsky, Aaron B.

E183.8.S65B49 1983

327.73047

83-12902

ISBN 0-917616-61-8

ISBN 0-917616-60-X (pbk.)

PREFACE

Until very recently, American policy toward the Soviet Union has been premised upon the essentially defensive concept of "containment." In many respects, this policy has unquestionably served us well. But in the past few years, a series of ominous developments—the vast buildup of Soviet nuclear and conventional forces, the marked proliferation of Soviet-sponsored insurgencies, the unilateral deployment of over 350 new intermediate-range nuclear missiles against Europe, the suppression of Poland's Solidarity, and the brutal invasion of Afghanistan—has given us reason to rethink the long-standing assumptions of our foreign policy.

For all of its historical advantages, containment has been limited from the beginning by two drawbacks: its inherently defensive nature, and its dependence for final success on long-term changes in the fundamental character of the Soviet regime. It is partly on the basis of this latter promise that George Kennan sought to persuade Americans to adopt a containment policy in the wake of the Second World War.

Not only does this promise of change remain totally unfulfilled, but the defensive shield containing Soviet expansion has proved to be increasingly porous. The question has arisen whether our basic policy could not at least be supplemented by more active measures.

In an attempt to examine this question, political scientist Aaron Wildavsky gathered together six leading foreign policy experts in February 1983 for a weekend of seminars at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, California. The chapters of this book are based on papers prepared by the authors before the meetings and revised on the basis of discussion.

The final volume, while reaffirming the necessity for containment, explores a number of alternative strategies and tactics that could add up to a more “activist” policy stance designed to accomplish more without incurring notably greater risk.

Beyond Containment continues the Institute for Contemporary Studies’ ongoing examination of U.S. options in this central area of foreign policy, treated in such volumes as *Defending America* (co-published with Basic Books in 1977) and *National Security in the 1980s: From Weakness to Strength* (1980).

It is hoped that this volume will make an important contribution to the reevaluation of U.S. foreign policy and strategy now under way.

Glenn Dumke
President
Institute for Contemporary Studies

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Don Collins for his interest in and encouragement of this project, and the Scaife Foundation for its financial support. Don Van Aatta, our research assistant, helped all of the authors by providing excellent material on the Soviet regime. Pat Glynn, of the ICS staff, attended our sessions and enlivened our discussions. My secretary, Doris Patton, kept us supplied with a steady stream of accurate communications. And LeRoy Graymer, president of the Institute for Policy and Management Research, arranged our meetings with his usual flair.

Aaron Wildavsky

CONTENTS

PREFACE	ix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xi

I *Introduction*

1	CONTAINMENT: INDISPENSABLE YET UNSATISFACTORY	3
	Aaron Wildavsky	

II *Background*

2	DILEMMAS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY	11
	Aaron Wildavsky	
	Keeping Score 12 The Dilemma of Motives 15	
	The Dilemma of Defensiveness 17 The	
	Dilemma of Deterrence 21	
3	THE SOVIET SYSTEM	25
	Aaron Wildavsky	
	Structure 29 Privileges 30 Control 32	

4 REINSPECTING CONTAINMENT 39

Paul Seabury

Kennan's Vision 40 The Idea of "Balance" 42
 Détente as Therapy 44 The Original
 Debate 47 The Hope of Soviet "Collapse" 52
 Stark Alternatives 57

III

Policy Alternatives

5 CONTAINMENT AND THE SEARCH FOR
 ALTERNATIVES: A CRITIQUE 63

Robert W. Tucker

The Reagan Record 64 Disparity Between
 Words and Actions 66 Reagan vs. Carter 67
 The Defense Program 69 Alternatives to
 Containment 70 Desire for Decisive
 Outcome 83 Exaggeration of Dilemmas 86
 Implications of Recent Events 89

6 ON HEDGING OUR BETS:
 SELECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE
 SOVIET UNION 93

Ernst B. Haas

Toward a Strategy of Selective Engagement 94
 A History of Changing Moods 96 Six
 Strategies for Dealing with the Soviet Union 99
 What Do the Soviets Want? 103 Does Our
 Ignorance of Soviet Motives Matter? 110 Why
 the United States Can No Longer Dominate 114
 Aspects of Selective Engagement 117

7 CONTAINMENT PLUS PLURALIZATION 125

Aaron Wildavsky

The Theory: Change Abroad to Prevent Change
 at Home 126 The Practice: Pluralizing the
 Soviet Union 131 Counterarguments 139

8	EXTENDED CONTAINMENT	147
	Charles Wolf, Jr.	
	<i>Mirror-Imaging vs. Power-Maximizing</i> 149	
	Reversing Expansion of the Soviet Empire 153	
	Extending Containment 156 Extending	
	Containment in the Economic Realm 161	
	Pluralism and Extended Containment 167	
9	DYNAMIC CONTAINMENT	169
	Max Singer	
	The Soviet Problem 170 Soviet Prospects and	
	Dangers 174 Fundamentals of Soviet Foreign	
	Policy 175 The Nature of the Threat 179	
	Dynamic Containment 181 The War of	
	Ideas 184 Communism and the War of	
	Ideas 187 Political Action 191 Strategic	
	Nuclear Forces 191 A Different Direction for	
	Arms Control 197	
10	FOREIGN POLICY FOR AN IMPULSIVE PEOPLE	201
	James L. Payne	
	Limiting the Danger of War 202 Human	
	Rights 209 The Opposition to	
	Containment 211 Toward a Policy of	
	Rhetorical Simplicity 216 Improving	
	Persuasion: An Illustration 219 Objections to	
	a Policy of Rhetorical Simplicity 221	
	"Speaking Out" vs. Rhetorical Simplicity 224	
	The President's Role 226	

IV

Conclusion

11	FROM MINIMAL TO MAXIMAL CONTAINMENT	231
	Aaron Wildavsky	

NOTES	241
CONTRIBUTORS	253
INDEX	255

I

Introduction

1

AARON WILDAVSKY

Containment: Indispensable Yet Unsatisfactory

This is the first of four projected volumes on alternatives to existing American foreign policy. The other volumes will consider American foreign policy in relation to our defense policy, to our allies, and to the Third World. Certain vital aspects of Soviet-American relationships—the compatibility of Soviet and American defense postures with the foreign policies of the two nations, the roles of allies and satellites, the relative importance of regions of the Third World—are reserved, therefore, for fuller future discussion.

This book begins with basic considerations affecting American foreign policy: chapter 2 deals with the dilemmas that make American foreign policy difficult; chapter 3 describes the Soviet system, which produces the problems with which American policy

must grapple; and chapter 4 reviews the history of the doctrine of containment around which this policy has been organized since the Second World War. Chapters 5 through 10 are devoted to different levels of American foreign policy—from responses to attack against our vital interests to preventative measures, from the refusal to subsidize the Soviet economy to an attempt to pluralize their political system. Although the authors engaged in three days of intense discussion, during which time much mutual education took place, each is solely responsible only for his own policy proposal. Taking the proposals from the least to the most active, from minimum to maximum containment, I prefer, as my conclusion indicates, “all of the above.” My objective is to help develop a maximal containment policy as an alternative to the existing policy of minimal containment.

There can be no doubt that the Soviet Union behaves aggressively, although it is hardly the only state that does so. But why do the Soviets act aggressively, and how aggressive are they? There are three alternatives: either the Soviet Union behaves essentially as other national states have in the modern world; or it is determined to attack, like Nazi Germany; or it is more aggressive than other nation-states but less so than Hitler’s Germany.

Traditional nation-states have at times been quite aggressive, but their aggression has been rationally calculated and (at least in theory) limited in objective and time. In principle, such “normal” nation-states are constrained by the other nation-states, which by maintaining their own sovereignty prevent any single state from accumulating too much power and coming to mortally threaten the others. The mechanisms of the “balance of power,” together with the common interest of all states in their own survival and hence in a minimal level of international cooperation, should ensure that international conflict is limited. If the Soviet Union is, in this sense, a “normal” state, then it can be dealt with by constructing an international system in which the balance of power constrains it.

But what if the USSR is *not* a normal state? What if, because of the way its internal political system operates, the Soviet Union must be endlessly aggressive? Or what if Soviet leaders use a different standard of rationality in calculating their moves, one that is predicated on the need of their state constantly to expand

its control? What if the Soviet leaders feel it necessary to use any means, up to and including a nuclear first strike, to achieve these objectives? Then, clearly, the only appropriate American response is to declare an immediate state of national emergency and mobilize for war, as Britain and France should have done in the 1930s.

Perhaps the Soviet Union is aggressive for internal political reasons, but its aggressions are calculated and limited by a shrewd appreciation of the realities of international politics. If this analysis is correct, the sensible policy proposal is neither a return to the old European system of balance of power nor preparation for inevitable total war, but some form of containment. Such containment seeks to deny the Soviets gains from aggression. Within the consensus on the need for containment, however, there is disagreement about the relative importance of the aggressive impulse, and therefore about the level of American mobilization needed to counter the threat.

A policy of containing Soviet aggression remains indispensable. There is no alternative but resistance. But piecemeal resistance, at a time and place dictated by the Soviet Union, has proved infeasible. The original idea behind containment was that the containment of Soviet-aided and Soviet-sponsored advances would allow time for an internal evolution of the Soviet regime in a less aggressive direction. Rebuffed in foreign adventures, the theory went, the Soviet Union would be impelled to concentrate its attention on improving the position of its people. Thirty and more years later it is obvious that these expectations have proved unfounded. Containment by itself is deficient, yet there is no coherent doctrine with which to supplant (or, more accurately, supplement) it so as to guide foreign policy. Few, it is fair to say, are happy with the existing situation. Yet no alternative commands significant support.

New approaches, or at least moods—such as President Carter's extension of the olive branch—are followed by rapid retreats. New strategies, or at least catchwords like "linkage," end up riddled with inconsistencies. What prevails is a case-by-case approach, usually called "pragmatism," meaning that the United States does not know what to do; its policy is based on not having a policy. Indeed, even the administration of Ronald Reagan, except for accelerating the military buildup begun by Jimmy Carter, does

not appear to have departed significantly from the policies of his predecessors. Some elements in the administration believe the Soviet Union cannot change its nature and, therefore, its foreign policy. This belief may account for the Reagan administration's emphasis on defense; but aside from early presidential rhetoric attacking the Soviet regime, this new emphasis has yet to lead to changes in foreign policy, which remains defensive, based as before on minimal containment.

Is this essential continuity, we may ask, due to circumstances imposing a very restricted range of choice on American decision-makers, or is it a result of a narrow vision? Both influences are important. The ultimate failure of the Nixon and Carter administrations to restrain Soviet behavior, whether in aiding North Vietnam or in invading Afghanistan, was not for want of trying. No one reading Henry Kissinger's memoirs would think containment (and its variant—a little more carrot, a little less stick, called *détente*) a deranged idea or its implementors evidently lacking in knowledge. As a recent reader of Jimmy Carter's memoirs, *Keeping Faith*, I was impressed by the number of issues—Soviet rearmament, the MX missile, the intricacies of Arab-Israeli affairs, the basing of nuclear weapons in Western Europe—that now recur in similar form and apparently with similar response in Reagan's time. Our attempt to devise departures from prevailing American foreign policy is not based on a "stupidity" theory of foreign policy.

The cacaphony of criticism itself makes it more difficult to gather support for existing policies or to risk trying new ones. It may well be that the only beating that hurts more than the one you take for defending current foreign policy is the one you get for proposing any (by definition, Dangerous with a capital "D") departure. Nevertheless, as encounters accumulate, there is more evidence on which to base consideration of different policies. As encounters remain unsatisfactory, there is better reason to consider novel ways of thinking and acting.

At a minimum, our efforts to appraise departures from existing policy should help better explain why the United States government, from the 1950s through the 1980s, regardless of party or personality, has pursued much the same sort of policy toward the Soviet Union. Nixon and Kissinger's policy of *détente*—co-

operation with the Soviets for domestic development as an incentive for them to reject foreign aggression—was apparently based on the perception that the Soviet Union had changed enough to engage in traditional balance-of-power politics. Whether because the Soviets did just that but the American polity would not accept it, or because the premise that the Soviet Union had become a state like any other was faulty, the “Nixinger” policy eventually was reduced from cooperation to competition and finally to containment. That is where we are today: containment remains indispensable, yet unsatisfactory. Our task in this book is to appraise whether and to show how the United States might break out of this box.

Each author has been asked to keep one thing in mind: his preferred policy is to be one that could be implemented within the American political system as it exists now. Obtaining and maintaining domestic support is an integral aspect of conducting foreign policy. That is why a policy of appeasement and a policy of retaliation (they attack one place, we another) have been ruled out. Aside from the evident dangers these policies present, we judge that there would be overwhelming opposition to them both by preponderant majorities of the American people and by the elected and appointed elites engaged in foreign affairs.

In chapter 2 I shall discuss the dilemmas that a policy of containment creates for American foreign policy. Central to all these dilemmas is the slippery subject of assessing Soviet intentions. Despite the understandable inclination to reject this theme either as obvious (if only blockheads with different views could see the manifest truth) or as hopeless (since we cannot psychoanalyze Soviet leaders or otherwise see into men’s souls), it is of vital importance. Advocates of opposing policies rationalize their harder or softer or different view in terms of a theory of Soviet intentions. So do the authors of this volume. In the conclusion, I shall draw together the various proposals in the book for fashioning as substantial a rival to present policy as a recalcitrant world permits.