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Spheres of Influence in Soviet Wartime Diplomacy*

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After three decades, a Europe partitioned into two opposing blocs has become a fact of international life, a division that the principal states have "normalized." Yet this east-west division of Europe, which solidified in the postwar period, was desired by neither the Soviet Union, nor Britain, nor by the United States. For, if the Big Three agreed on any postwar aim at all, it was—apart from the obvious desire to prevent a resurgence of an aggressive Germany—their aim to prevent the realignment of Europe into rival or hostile coalitions. Such a realignment, the Big Three leaders believed, would repeat the doleful history of pre-1914 Europe and make a third world war probable, perhaps inevitable.

Each member of the Big Three had, in addition, his own special reasons for opposing a postwar partition of Europe. Stalin feared the formation of a non-Soviet bloc in Europe, believing that such a bloc would spearhead a global, anti-Soviet, united front that would haunt the Kremlin even as the Allies waged war in close unity. Churchill feared a division of Europe that would leave Britain alone to face the USSR on the continent, or one that would grind Britain between the US and USSR and strip Britain of empire. Roosevelt feared that separate blocs would shatter the "One World," the global "Open Door" Washington believed essential for America's postwar prosperity. More immediately, he feared that US recognition or acquiescence in British recognition of the Soviet Union's frontiers of 1941 and other Soviet claims in eastern Europe would shatter America's unity-for-victory campaign and reinforce isolationist sentiments.

These concerns shaped the attitude of the U.S. government towards spheres-of-influence agreements.—What more certain way to split the world into hostile coalitions than divide Europe into separate spheres? Washington's opposition to such agreements respecting Europe stemmed largely from the assumption that spheres of influence were synonymous with hostile blocs. This assumption was

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not, however, shared by Stalin or Churchill. If the division of Europe into two antagonistic blocs had led to the Great War then in their view the failure to form an anti-German defense bloc in the 1930s caused the Second World War. And even Washington’s abhorrence of such agreements did not prevent a neutral US from extending its hemispheric defense line almost into European waters, a sphere of interest euphemistically, but justifiably, called a “security zone” against Axis aggression. Despite the glaring disparity between US practice in the western hemisphere and US preachments to Britain against spheres in Europe, the vast extension of the US security zone between 1939 and 1941 was of course enthusiastically aided by Churchill. And by the spring of 1941, even Moscow halted its attacks on “Monroe Doctrine” imperialism and tacitly supported U.S. action.1

Still, the U.S. refused Britain and the USSR a similar free hand in their respective security zones. Consequently Churchill and Stalin, too, were forced to take equivocal positions regarding spheres of influence in their respective zones of security. To placate Washington, the British and Soviet governments disingenuously disclaimed any intention of concluding spheres-of-influence agreements even as they sought such agreements. Despite Moscow’s insistence since 1940 that London recognize the Soviet Union’s sphere in eastern Europe and London’s conditional willingness to do so, USSR Commissar for Foreign Affairs Viacheslav Molotov and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden denied at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in October, 1943, that their governments desired to establish special areas or zones of responsibility or influence.2 In fact however each was still

1The US Ambassador in Moscow was impressed by the strong emphasis and the objective tone of Soviet press reports on the US defense program and aid to Britain. The Soviet press, he believed, had been instructed to refrain from publishing material critical of the US defense efforts. (“Steinhardt to Hull. Moscow, 7 May 1941,” Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers [FRUS], 1941, I:614). In 1945 Soviet historians described President Roosevelt’s policy of consolidating hemispheric defenses and extending them eastward as “perspicacious.” (Istoriiia diplomati, ed. V.P. Potemkin [Moscow, 1941-45], 3:712.)

2Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS], 1943, I:638-41. Also, the recently published Soviet record of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers contains more detail on these points than the aforementioned American papers: Moskovskiaia Konferentsiiia Ministrov Inostrannykh Del SSSR, SSHa i Veliko-Britanii. 19–30 oktibr’ 1943 g. Sbornik dokumentov. (Moscow, 1978), 192–4 and 261–2. This is volume one of six volumes projected in the series Sovetskii Soiuz na mezhdunarodnykh konferentsiiakh perioda Velikoi otechestvennoi voiny 1941–1945 gg.

True, USSR Ambassador Ivan Maisky told Eden in August 1943 that after the war the USSR and the Anglo-Americans each could have a sphere of influence in Europe, the Soviet Union in the east and Britain and America in the west. But the Soviet government preferred to regard Europe as one, each of the Big Three admitting each other’s right to an interest in all parts of the continent. Eden said that, too, was
planning to do just that. The British plan had been unfolded by Churchill in Washington in May 1943, when he proposed that Europe, under a "Supreme World Council" consisting of the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and perhaps China, be reorganized into some twelve regional federations, confederations, and states, including a Danubian and a Balkan Federation. These would constitute a "Regional European Council" or "United States of Europe" to be policed mainly by Britain, seconded by the USA. As for Russia, Churchill merely stated that Poland and Czechoslovakia "should stand together in friendly relations with Russia." Because Churchill's project to foster regional federations in Europe lacked strong US support, Soviet opposition and the westward advance of the Red Army forced Churchill in October 1944 to change tack: Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe might also be curbed by a secret Anglo-Soviet agreement delimiting their respective spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.³

Britain's preference. (Anthony Eden, The Reckoning [Boston, 1965], pp. 469-70.) On the eve of the capitulation of Italy, while the Soviet army was still fighting to liberate Soviet territory, it is not surprising that the Soviet ambassador should assert a right to an interest in all parts of the continent. In any event, these professions can not be taken seriously, since at no time during the war did any of the three allies evince great willingness to admit the other partners' right to a substantial interest in his own zone of security.


³Winston Churchill, The Second World War, vol. 4, The Hinge of Fate (New York, 1962), pp. 696-700. See also footnote 44, below. McNeill regarded Churchill's scheme as designed to form a European political unit that "could hold a balance between Russian and American power." But Churchill was forced by American opposition to abandon this approach. (McNeill, America, Britain, and Russia, pp. 322-3.) In fact, however, Churchill and the Foreign Office still persisted in the hope that various kinds of European regional or federal organization might come about. (Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War [London, 1976], 5:59, 90-1, 117-19, 122, and 124.) Moscow, without attacking Churchill directly, violently denounced his proposals on federations in Eastern Europe as "anti-Soviet"; they negated the Anglo-Soviet Alliance and the necessity of friendship and cooperation between the USSR and its Allies in the postwar period. ("Chto skryvaetsia za proektom Vostochno evropeiskoi federatsii ili konfederatsii? Po stranitsam inostrannoi pechati." Voina i rabochii klass. No. 4, [July 15, 1943] p. 27.) This blast was followed up a few months later by "K voprosu o federatsiakh 'malykh' gosudarstv v Evrope," Izvestiia, November 18, 1943. On the Anglo-Soviet spheres-of-influence secret agreement, see Albert Resis, "The Churchill-Stalin Secret 'Percentages' Agreement on the Balkans, Moscow, October, 1944," American Historical Review, (April, 1978), 83:368-87.
Stalin and Molotov, for their part, surmised as early as 1942 that they had found an ideal spheres-of-influence policy. It would, they hoped, prevent a revival of German military power and abort, not generate, a potential anti-Soviet bloc in Europe, thus maximizing Soviet security and Soviet political influence abroad. And, if British participation and American acquiescence in such arrangements were secured, the Grand Alliance could be continued indefinitely into the postwar era in the form of a Big Three global condominium.

In this article I propose to recount the development of this spheres-of-influence policy from inception in the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty of August 23, 1939, to birth in the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance of 26 May 1942, and to adduce some of its immediate consequences, a study greatly facilitated by the release to the public of Britain’s wartime diplomatic papers.4

We should note at the outset that Soviet spokesmen indignantly deny that Soviet diplomacy ever engaged in spheres-of-influence arrangements respecting Eastern Europe with the Germans, or the British, or any one else. In such matters Moscow is obliged to reckon with Lenin’s axiom that any sphere-of-influence agreement under imperialism, however congenial the initial agreement, makes war inevitable.5 Since 1939, however, Lenin’s successors have been stuck with a fundamental contradiction between Leninist theory and Stalinist practice in Soviet diplomacy. Hence the angry refusal by Soviet spokesmen to acknowledge the elementary facts about Soviet policy towards Eastern Europe since that date.

The glaring disparity between Soviet claim and reality regarding spheres of influence in Europe was born in August 1939. Twice, on

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4 I have used for this article “British Foreign Office: Russia Correspondence, 1781–1945, Microfilmed for Scholarly Resources by the Public Record Office, London, England” (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1978), comprising “British Foreign Office, Collection 371, General Correspondence, Political” for each year. All documents deposited in the Public Record Office (PRO) which are used in this article are drawn from this collection unless otherwise stated. Crown copyright of these PRO documents is hereby acknowledged.

August 3 and again on the 15th, the German government offered
Moscow an agreement that would delimit the interests of both powers
all along the line "from the Black to the Baltic Seas." Soviet histo-
rians claim that Moscow rejected these offers. Moscow then signed a
nonaggression treaty with Germany on 23 August 1939, only after all
hope for an escape-proof, mutual-defense alliance and military con-
vention with Britain and France was lost. The treaty, which was
published, said nothing about agreement on territorial changes. But
the "Secret Additional Protocol" attached to the treaty called things
by their right name, stating that the northern border of Lithuania
constituted the frontier of the German-Soviet "spheres of interest"
in the Baltic area. In Poland the frontier would follow the line of the
Narew, Vistula, and San Rivers. Concerning southeastern Europe,
the USSR expressed its interest in Bessarabia, Germany its disin-
terest.6

On September 15, two weeks after the Germans invaded Poland,
Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop prodded the USSR to occupy the
sphere allotted it in Eastern Poland. Unless the Red Army moved up
to the agreed line in Poland, he warned, German troops might have to
pursue the retreating Poles to the existing Soviet frontier. Molotov
replied that the Red Army would move westward "perhaps tomorrow
or the day after."7 In fact Moscow had delayed, because the Red
Army was already engaged in an undeclared war to repel the
Japanese-Manchukuo invasion of the Mongolian People’s Republic.
The Japanese, still reeling under the shock of Berlin’s signing the
nonagression treaty with Moscow, themselves signed a cease-fire
agreement with Moscow, to take effect September 16.8 On the next
day, the Red Army entered Poland.

Devising a political cover for this invasion, Molotov notified Rib-
bentrop that Moscow would inform the Poles that the Red Army had
entered Polish territory in order to protect Ukrainian and Belorus-
sian brethren in a Poland that had "disintegrated." True, this expla-
nation might jar German sensibilities, Molotov admitted, but Moscow
saw no other plausible justification. The Soviet note bearing this
message to Poland was drafted by Stalin, who also drafted a joint

6 Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945 [DGFP], Series D (Washington,
Soviet claim that Moscow rejected the German offers see Istoria Velikoi Otechestven-
noi Voiny Sovetskogo Soiuza 1941–1945. [IVOVSS], ed. P. Pospelev (Moscow, 1960–
65), 1:174–5. This claim is not confirmed in the German documents.
7 DGFP, 8:69, 76–7.
74.
German-Soviet communique, which the Germans accepted in place of Ribbentrop’s draft. Molotov had rejected that draft because it presented the facts “too frankly.” The Stalin draft substituted the phrase, “the interests of Germany and of the Soviet Union,” for Ribbentrop’s reference to “German-Soviet natural spheres of interest.” The phrase “respective national interests” was employed in the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty signed September 28. The secret protocols, however, referred to “spheres of influence.”

In short, Moscow’s eagerness to conceal the German-Soviet spheres-of-interest agreements matched Berlin’s eagerness to proclaim them. To this day, the Soviet government has not acknowledged the authenticity of the secret protocols attached to the treaties of August-September 1939.

The shock, bewilderment, and rage the German-Soviet treaties aroused in the antifascist public need no description here. Many observers in the West regarded the treaties as an alliance. More seasoned observers, however, saw in them quite the opposite. On 1 October 1939 Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty in the Chamberlain government, said in a radio report on the war that he could not forecast the action of Russia, since “it is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” But we should note that Churchill went on to say, “perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.” He wished only that Russia stood on its present line as allies of Poland instead of as invaders. In any event this line was “clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace.” Churchill not only expressed his understanding and approval of Soviet action in Poland; he also surmised that Ribbentrop had just been summoned to Moscow to learn that “Nazi designs upon the Baltic States and the Ukraine must come to a dead stop.” Russia had also drawn a line in southeastern Europe against Germany, for it could not “be in accordance with the interest or safety of Russia that Germany should plant itself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that it should

9 DGFP, 8:79–80, 95–7, 105, 113–14, and 164–67. Soviet historians assail Molotov’s contemptuous dismissal of the Polish Republic as “the misshapen offspring of the Versailles Treaty.” Molotov’s language is, apparently, the only aspect of Soviet conduct toward Germany in 1939–1940 that Soviet authorities find discreditable or mistaken. (IVOVSS, 1:249.)

10 The existence of the secret protocol of August 23, which was found in the archives of the German Foreign Ministry captured by American and British armies, became public knowledge at the Nuremberg Trial of War Criminals in 1946. The protocol was denounced as a forgery by the Soviet Prosecutor at the main trial. (Gerhard Weinberg, Germany and the Soviet Union, 1939–1941 [Leiden, 1954], p. 47.)
overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of southeastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life interests of Russia." Thus, Churchill concluded, Russia's vital interests made her a natural ally of Britain and France whose interest coincided with Russia's in preventing Germany from carrying the war into the Balkans and Turkey.11

Nor was Churchill's qualified endorsement of Soviet action mere idiosyncrasy. Prime Minister Chamberlain declared on October 26 in the House of Commons that there was nothing in Mr. Churchill's "personal interpretation" of events that was at variance with the view of the government.12 The Churchill-Chamberlain statements of October were tantamount to an official but gratuitous invitation for Moscow to extend a Soviet protectorate over the Baltic states, precisely what Moscow was setting up at the moment and would presently attempt to set up in the Balkans.

Stalin breathed not a word in public of his spheres-of-influence agreement with Hitler. Meanwhile, each dictator used the secret agreements to his best advantage in dealing with other states. Stalin, for example, on October 3 told the Latvian foreign minister in Moscow that Latvia had best permit the USSR to build military and naval bases in Latvia, because Latvian resistance would find no support from Germany. Germany had signed a spheres-of-interest agreement with the Soviet Union and as far as Germany was concerned, "we could occupy you."13

Hitler had no ideological qualms about such agreements. Countering Churchill's contention that the USSR had closed Germany's path to the east, Hitler claimed a German-Soviet community of interests in


12 House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, Fifth Series, 1938-1939, 352, cols. 1570-71. The Roosevelt administration, too, interpreted Soviet action in September and October as directed against Berlin. (Robert Dallek, Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945 [New York, 1979], p. 208.)

13 Boris Meissner, Die Sowjetunion, die Baltischen Staaten und das Völkerrecht (Cologne, 1956), p. 62; quoted by Edgar Thomson, "The Annexation of the Baltic States," in The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers, ed. Thomas T. Hammond (New Haven, 1975), p. 219. But, according to Soviet sources, Stalin also told the Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs that the possibility of a German attack on the USSR could not be ruled out. The sudden shift in German policy favorable to the USSR could not be relied upon; therefore timely preparations for another shift would have to be made. (Soviet Archives of Diplomatic History quoted in V. Ia. Sipols, Sovetskii soiuz v bor'be za mir i bezopasnost' 1933-1939 [Moscow, 1974], page 404, n. 289.)
eastern Europe. In his Reichstag speech of 6 October 1939 Hitler boasted that Germany and the USSR had agreed on a clearly marked boundary between "their two spheres of interest." Since the two great powers had agreed that Poland would never rise again, continuation of the war by Britain and France for the restoration of Poland made no sense.  

By June 1940 the USSR had extended its rule over the territories specifically allotted it under the secret protocols of August-September 1939. Five new Soviet Socialist Republics entered the USSR: the Karelian, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Moldavian Republics. Northern Bukovina and eastern Poland were absorbed in the Ukrainian and Belorussian Republics. Soviet diplomacy then aimed to win London's *de jure* recognition of these gains, the Baltic States in particular, and Berlin's nonencroachment on the Soviet sphere. The USSR, treated more or less as an international pariah in the old collective security days, now found itself a much-aggrandized neutral, ardently wooed (at least briefly) by the principal belligerents. Moscow's aversion for spheres-of-influence agreements had no doubt abated greatly; they could be used to divide the imperialist world against itself and enable the USSR to emerge from the war as the *tertius gaudens*.

The British, fighting on alone since the fall of France, sought through Ambassador Cripps in Moscow a Soviet neutrality toward Britain as benevolent as that toward Germany, one which would culminate in an Anglo-Soviet nonaggression treaty. In exchange, Britain offered *de facto* recognition of the USSR's territorial gains. *De jure* recognition would be given sympathetic consideration by Britain in consultations regarding a postwar settlement. After the war Britain would pledge not to enter into any anti-Soviet agreement if the USSR abstained from anti-British action. Ambassador Cripps' negotiations with Moscow broke down, however, because the USSR made *de jure* recognition of Soviet sovereignty over the Baltic States the precondition for any further agreements.  

Thus, the British government offered British recognition of Soviet gains in eastern Europe—but at a price. That price was too high for

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14 The Times (London), October 7, 1939.
15 Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London, 1970–1976), 1:492-96; I. M. Maisky, *Vospominanitia sovetskogo posla. Voina 1939–1943* (Moscow, 1965), pp. 130–132. Cripps asked Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs Andrei Vyshinsky whether the USSR intended to allow a German hegemony in the Balkans. Vyshinsky replied that it was not the habit of the Soviet government to give away anything, especially if such action were in conflict with their interests. (Woodward, 1:496.)
Moscow. The British offer, if accepted, would have entailed worsening of German-Soviet relations and the likelihood of war with Germany. In any case the immediate threat to the Soviet position in eastern Europe came from the Wehrmacht, not from British diplomacy.

By spring 1940, the Germans were rapidly encroaching on the ill-defined Soviet sphere in the Balkans. To strengthen the Soviet bargaining hand against this action, Molotov informed Berlin on 13 July 1940 that Ambassador Cripps had on July 1 suggested to Stalin that the USSR provide the leadership required to block the German advance into the Balkans. Stalin told Cripps that he did not think that the Germans sought control of the area. Moreover, "no power had the right to an exclusive role in the consolidation and leadership of the Balkan countries. The Soviet Union did not claim such a role either . . ." although she was "interested" in Balkan affairs.16 Moscow thus hoped that Stalin's disclaimer of any intention to secure control over the Balkans might persuade the Germans to stay out of the area. Alternatively, Cripps' suggestion might serve to warn Hitler that continued German encroachments on the Balkans could provoke the USSR into entering the area with British backing. Both ploys failed.

Shortly after the signing of the Tripartite Pact on 27 September 1940, Ribbentrop invited Molotov to Berlin in order to share with Germany, Italy, and Japan the historical mission of "delimiting their interests on a world scale." Moscow accepted the invitation. In Berlin, Molotov was informed on November 12 by Hitler and Ribbentrop that the time had come to parcel out the "bankrupt estate" of a defeated Britain and for the Soviet Union to sign a four-power pact with Germany and its two major partners. The Germans invited the Soviet Union to move southward in the direction of the Indian Ocean, which would constitute the Soviet sphere. They also offered to seek replacement of the Montreux Convention by an agreement giving unrestricted right of passage through the Turkish Straits to the warships of the Soviet Union and other Black Sea powers exclusively. Germany would claim central Africa, Italy northern and northcentral Africa, and Japan east Asia as their respective spheres. But Molotov pressed Hitler and Ribbentrop to explain German troop movements in Finland and Rumania. The next day Ribbentrop offered Molotov an added inducement to sign the draft four-power pact: Germany might prevail upon Japan to recognize Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang as a Soviet sphere, if the Soviet Union would sign a nonaggression pact

16 DGFP, 10:207–08. Cripps' letter to Collier, Moscow, July 16, 1940. N 6526/30/38. FO 371/24845. PRO.
with Japan and reduce its military aid to China. Spurning these blandishments, Molotov doggedly pursued the question of German action in Finland and the Balkan states. Existing agreements, he insisted, must be fulfilled before taking up proposals for new spheres of influence. No definite reply to the German offer could be given until the matter was discussed by the Kremlin.\textsuperscript{17}

On 25 November 1940, Molotov gave his government’s reply. The USSR would sign the German draft four-power pact of November 13 if Germany acceded to the following conditions: One, Germany must immediately withdraw its troops from Finland. Two, the USSR must acquire military and naval bases within range of the Turkish Straits and conclude a mutual assistance treaty with Bulgaria, “which geographically is situated inside the security zone of the Black Sea boundaries of the Soviet Union.” Three, “the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf” shall be recognized as the center of Soviet aspirations. Four, Japan shall renounce her coal and oil concessions in northern Sakhalin.\textsuperscript{18}

The Soviet counteroffer to the Germans clearly reflected Stalin’s main security concerns: First, German military penetration of Finland and southeastern Europe constituted the most immediate threat to Soviet security interests. Second, the Soviet Union preferred the establishment of Soviet bases at the Straits to Axis guarantees as the means of ensuring free passage of the Straits for warships of the Black Sea powers exclusively. Third, Moscow ignored Berlin’s invitation to move against India, because such a move would risk provoking war with Britain over an area still marginal to Soviet security interests. Moscow preferred instead the risk of expanding in a primary security zone, in the direction of eastern Turkey, the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and western Iran. (It will be recalled that Britain and France had planned during the Soviet-Finnish War in 1939–40 to bomb the Soviet Union’s Baku oil fields from Allied air bases in the Middle East.) Finally, Moscow appeared to be confident after the defeats it inflicted on Japan in the undeclared wars of summer 1938 and 1939 that Japan no longer posed an immediate threat to the Soviet far east.

Three weeks after Molotov transmitted the Soviet counteroffer to Germany, Hitler signed “Operation Barbarossa,” his directive for the German invasion of the USSR scheduled for 15 May 1941. But Bar-

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{DGFP}, 11:714–15.
barossa was not inspired by Moscow’s insolent counteroffer—it represented the culmination, not the starting point, of German planning for war on Russia. Indeed, Hitler had used the Berlin talks with Molotov to divert Soviet attention to Asia and away from the Balkan and Finnish spheres claimed by the USSR. Stalin clearly underestimated the danger Germany posed to Soviet security in these spheres because he refused to recognize Germany’s moves there for what they were: preparations for invasion of the Soviet Union. For Stalin was blinded by the suspicion that the British might already be collaborating with Germany in a deal at Soviet expense,\(^{19}\) or the fear that they might push the Russians into a needless war with Germany even as he resisted German efforts to embroil the USSR in a needless war with Britain over India.

Early in 1941 the Soviet government mixed cajolery with vociferous protests to curb German encroachments in the Soviet Union’s Balkan sphere. On 17 January 1941 Molotov asked Ambassador Schulenburg why Berlin had not responded to the Soviet note on Soviet terms for adhering to the draft four-power pact. Molotov then said that if German troops concentrating in Rumania should enter Bulgaria, Greece, and the Straits area, the British would surely attempt to forestall them, thus turning the Balkans into a theater of war. The Soviet government had stated repeatedly to the German government that Moscow considered the territory of Bulgaria and of the Straits as “a security zone” of the USSR. It was therefore the duty of the Soviet Government to give warning that it would “consider the appearance of any armed forces on the territory of Bulgaria and of the Straits as violation of the security interests of the USSR.”\(^{20}\)

Meanwhile, the British were trying to swing the USSR away from Germany. Churchill hoped that the USSR would (with active British aid) combine with Turkey, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia in January 1941 to form a Balkan front to stop Hitler. But, Churchill wrote, Moscow lost this golden opportunity to enter the war with a second front already in existence. Thus, Stalin and his commissars showed themselves at this moment “the most completely outwitted bunglers of the Second World War.”\(^{21}\)

Nevertheless, the British, in order to secure closer military ties

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\(^{19}\) *Istoriia diplomatii*, ed. A. A. Gromyko et al. (Moscow, 1959- ), 4:150–51.


with the USSR, were almost prepared on the eve of the Nazi invasion of the USSR to recognize Soviet sovereignty over the Baltic states.\textsuperscript{22} The German invasion on 22 June 1941 temporarily ended such Anglo-Soviet bargaining. On that evening Prime Minister Churchill announced on the BBC Britain's unstinting support for her new ally despite all ideological differences.

But Churchill received no direct acknowledgment from Stalin until Stalin's broadcast of July 3. Then, to break the ice, Churchill sent Stalin two personal messages on July 7 and 10 but again received no direct reply.\textsuperscript{23} Stalin in the meantime, however, proposed to Ambassador Cripps an Anglo-Soviet alliance, which they signed on July 12. The Anglo-Soviet Agreement on joint action against Germany provided that the two governments mutually undertake to render each other all kinds of assistance and support during the war against Hitlerite Germany. Neither ally would negotiate or-conclude a separate armistice or peace treaty except by mutual consent. The agreement said nothing, however, about Soviet frontiers.\textsuperscript{24}

Now having an alliance with Britain, Stalin on July 18 replied to Churchill's personal messages of support and encouragement. Stalin turned directly to a defense of his non-aggression treaty with Germany. Hinting at the secret protocol on spheres of interest, he argued that the USSR's desperate military situation would have been immeasurably worse if the invaders had jumped off at the Soviet border of 1 September 1939, instead of the border of 22 June 1941. Implying that this border was now Britain's, too, he implored Churchill to open a second front in Northern France and in Norway.\textsuperscript{25}

But Stalin attempted more than exculpation of his dealings with Hitler; he was also setting the stage for negotiations with Britain concerning Soviet frontiers. His first step, however, was to obtain fighting alliances with the other victims of Nazi aggression. Talk of frontiers could come later. On July 3, the day Stalin had emerged from his self-imposed seclusion, Moscow instructed Ambassador


\textsuperscript{24} Woodward, 2:14. At the July 10 meeting of Cripps with Stalin to negotiate the alliance, Molotov had attempted to interject questions affecting third countries, but Stalin summarily silenced him. ("Steinhardt to Hull, Moscow, 11 July 1941," \textit{FRUS}, 1941, 1:183.)

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Correspondence}, 1:12–13.
Maisky to begin negotiations for alliances with the émigré Polish, Czechoslovak, and Yugoslav governments. According to those instructions, the USSR favored the restoration of the independence of these countries and regarded their political regimes as a purely internal matter. In mid-July Maisky was instructed to conclude with Poland and Czechoslovakia an alliance modeled on the one just signed with Britain.26

A mutual assistance agreement with Czechoslovakia was quickly concluded on July 18. Poland, however, was another matter. The Poles insisted on the restoration of their prewar eastern frontiers, the Soviets on their western frontiers of June 1941, modified for “a national Poland, including cities and regions that had recently passed to the USSR.” In order to get a mutual assistance agreement signed, Maisky and Premier Sikorski of Poland were constrained to defer the frontier problem. In the agreement they concluded on July 30, the USSR recognized as nugatory the German-Soviet treaties of 1939 respecting territorial changes in Poland. The Polish government declared that it was not bound by any anti-Soviet agreement with a third power.27

But the question of future frontiers, peace, and security could not be deferred for long. Soviet insistence on its 1941 frontiers in negotiations with Poland raised for President Roosevelt the specter of the secret treaties of the Great War, as did the Anglo-Soviet agreement. Hence the proclamation of the Atlantic Charter by Roosevelt and Churchill on August 15, 194128 on the heels of the Soviet-Polish agreement. The Charter might well be cited to bar the restoration of the 1941 boundaries of the USSR. For it opposed territorial aggrandizement and territorial changes effected without consent of the peoples concerned and favored the restoration of sovereignty and self-government to those peoples forcibly deprived of them. Moreover, the Charter seemed to aim at disarmament of all nations except the US who would join Britain in policing the postwar world. Or, so Churchill interpreted the final point.29

As German armies pressed toward Moscow for the kill, Stalin was hardly in a position to challenge parts of the Charter he might deem “anti-Soviet.” Ambassador Maisky, in the name of the Soviet gov-

29 Churchill, Grand Alliance, p. 375.
ernment, enthusiastically praised the principles of the Charter, then attached an "interpretation" that enabled the USSR to construe the Charter any way Moscow wished:

Considering that the practical application of these principles will necessarily adapt itself to circumstances, needs, and historical peculiarities of particular countries, the Soviet government can state that a consistent application of these principles will secure the energetic support of the . . . Soviet Union.

Lest his point be missed, Maisky stressed that the principle of respect for the sovereign rights of peoples had always marked Soviet domestic and foreign policy. In short, the Soviet government endorsed the Charter only insofar as the terms were compatible with the Soviet frontiers of 1941.

By September, the USSR had signed mutual assistance military agreements with Britain, Czechoslovakia, and Poland and had established close ties with DeGaulle. But these agreements covered only the war period and provided no guarantees of the Soviet frontiers of 1941. All appeals to Britain to open a second front proved unsuccessful, and Allied military cooperation remained uncoordinated. Anglo-Soviet relations were still crippled by mutual suspicion, Stalin contended, because the USSR and Britain had no understanding on war aims, or plans for the postwar organization of the peace, or treaty of mutual military assistance against Hitler. While the German army hammered at the gates of Moscow, Stalin sought a treaty of alliance with Britain that would strengthen their military cooperation, provide guarantees against a resurgent warlike Germany in the postwar era, and recognize the Soviet frontiers of 1941, all to be embodied in an Anglo-Soviet spheres-of-influence agreement.

Stalin, therefore, accepted Churchill's proposal that Stalin receive Foreign Secretary Eden in Moscow. Eden undertook the visit to allay Stalin's suspicions that Britain and the US intended to exclude the Soviet Union from the postwar peace settlement and that they planned to treat a defeated Germany leniently. Eden hoped to strengthen Anglo-Soviet ties of alliance without Britain's entering into commitments, secret or open, respecting frontiers, and he sought to secure Stalin's approval of Britain's war aims in Europe: one, the disarmament of Germany; two, the reorganization of Europe in conformity with the Atlantic Charter ("no aggrandizement, territorial or

31 "Stalin to Churchill, November 8, 1941," Correspondence, 1:33.
other") and with Stalin's speech of 6 November 1941 ("no intervention whatever in the internal affairs of other peoples"); and three, "the encouragement of confederations of the weaker European states."

In their first conversation, held 16 December 1941, Stalin offered Eden two draft treaties, one on wartime military cooperation and the other on cooperation in the postwar peace settlement. Since both drafts were for publication and contained nothing specific on frontier questions, they were quite acceptable to Eden; but he was not empowered to sign an agreement in the form of a treaty, which Stalin insisted upon. Then Stalin without warning pulled out of his pocket a draft protocol that laid out a grand plan for the postwar arrangement of all Europe, including details on frontier changes. On the following evening, Stalin said that what really interested him most was British recognition of the USSR's frontiers of 1941.

Stalin's aims and the terms he set for the postwar territorial settlement and for continental security were:

One, Stalin told Eden that he regarded the question of the USSR's western frontiers as "the main question for us in the war"; Eden inferred that Stalin regarded British recognition of the Soviet frontiers of 1941 as the "acid test" of the sincerity of his British ally. The USSR must, Stalin said, have the three Baltic states and the Finnish border of March 1940 with Petsamo returned to the USSR; Bessarabia and northern Bukovina; and the territory to the east of the Curzon Line with slight variations. He proved willing, however, to put the question of the Soviet-Polish frontier in abeyance.

Two, in order to prevent the postwar revival of a German military threat and to punish Axis aggression, the allies should dismember


35 "Record of Interview between Foreign Secretary and M. Stalin, 16 December 1941, at 7 p.m.," W. P. (42) 8. 5 January 1942. CAB 66/20 PRO. "Record of a Meeting between the Foreign Secretary and Stalin, on the night of December 17, 1941," *Ibid*. The microfilmed "Correspondence" states that these records were "missing." In fact, however, they are available in the Cabinet papers just cited and are microfilmed by the PRO.
Germany and require her to pay reparations in kind, and they should reduce her allies territorially in favor of the victims of aggression. Accordingly, he said, transfer east Prussia to Poland and extend Poland’s western frontiers to the Oder. Add Tilsit and Germany north of the Niemen River to the Lithuanian SSR. Detach the Rhineland from Prussia, perhaps accord Bavaria independence, and restore Austrian independence. Return the Sudetenland to Czechoslovakia. Transfer territories from Hungary to Czechoslovakia and to Rumania, who would cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR. Add the Italian Islands and certain coastal towns of the Adriatic to a restored Yugoslavia.

Three, Stalin proposed that the USSR and Britain should each set up its own sphere of influence in Europe, although he did not use that term, and the British did not yet have plans to establish military bases on the continent. To secure the western approaches to the USSR, Stalin desired alliances with Finland and Rumania, who would allow Soviet naval military and naval bases on their territory. Stalin would have no objections to Britain’s taking similar measures. “If France is not restored or revived as a great power in the near future,” Stalin said, “it would be in [Great Britain’s] interest to have on the French Coast some military and naval bases, such as Boulogne and Dunkirk.” To guarantee the independence of Holland and Belgium, Britain should be in open alliance with them, Britain having the right to maintain naval and military bases, and, if necessary, troops in those countries. Nor would the Soviet government object to Britain’s acquiring naval bases in Norway or Denmark, but the USSR would like an international guarantee regarding the entrances to the Baltic Sea.

Four, Stalin also implied that the Soviet and British spheres of influence should be separated by a large buffer zone. This would consist of a dismembered Germany and the smaller states who would recover their national independence. Czechoslovakia should be restored with her pre-Munich frontiers slightly enlarged at Hungarian expense. An independent Yugoslavia should be restored and somewhat enlarged at Italian expense. Albanian independence should be revived. Turkey should receive the Dodecanese Islands and extend its European frontier at Bulgarian expense. Greece should receive additional islands in the Aegean and should be reestablished as an independent state, as should all other occupied countries, within prewar frontiers.

The Oder is not mentioned, however, in Foreign Office papers I have seen, e.g., minutes on the meeting with Sir Orme Sargent on April 21, 1942, to examine Stalin’s ideas on the future map of Europe. N 2182/G FO 371/32880. PRO.
Five, there remained the matter of the peace and security of postwar Europe against a revived, expansionist Germany. Eden proposed to Stalin at their first meeting that they ought to encourage the federation and confederation of the weaker states. Stalin replied that if certain countries of Europe wished to federate, then the Soviet Union would have no objection. But he also suggested that postwar peace and security be preserved by a military alliance of the "democratic countries," who would form an international peace-keeping military force. Thus two projects for multilateral security organization, which would soon come into conflict, were proposed: the British scheme for political federations of weak states, opposed by the Soviet proposal for military alliance of democratic countries headed by the USSR and Britain.

In sum, Stalin, as these conversations reveal, came forward as a conservative nationalist prepared to make frontiers in Europe coterminous with ethnographic boundaries, except where the punishment of Germany and her associates and where the security of Britain and the USSR were concerned. Perhaps he already discerned the possibility of the USSR’s emerging from the war as the preponderant power in all Europe. Mastny has suggested that as early as July 1941 Stalin’s desire for land was limitless, because "his craving for security was limitless." In fact, however, Stalin came forward as a Soviet "isolationist" advancing (at least for the present) relatively modest territorial claims. Eden, on his return to London, assessed Stalin’s demand that Britain recognize the Soviet Union’s frontiers of 1941 as "very reasonable" when one recalls how much Stalin might have demanded: for example "control of the Dardanelles; spheres of influence in the Balkans; a one-sided imposition on Poland of the Russo-Polish frontier; access to the Persian Gulf; access to the Atlantic involving cession of Norwegian and Finnish territory." President Roosevelt for his part did not find Soviet demands unreasonable although he did stigmatize the Eden-Stalin conversations as "provincial." 37 We might add that Stalin did not yet suggest that the "World Police" force Roosevelt and Churchill envisaged as an Anglo-American body needed a third "policeman," the USSR. Moreover Stalin had, in deference to his Anglo-American partners, abandoned

37 Mastny, Russia’s Road, p. 41. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [Eden], "Policy Towards Russia." W.P. (42) 48. 28 January 1942. FO 371/32875. Roosevelt granted that the USSR was entitled to obtain "full and legitimate security," but that question could not be settled until after the war. Meanwhile he would take up the matter directly with Stalin. "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under-Secretary of State [Welles]," 20 February 1942. FRUS, 1942, 3:521.
for the duration of the war at least Moscow’s stock antiimperialist rhetoric. He asserted no Soviet interest in the western hemisphere or in the British Empire. He would leave western Europe in the custody of his partners and acknowledge central Europe, rendered harmless by the dismemberment of Germany, as a buffer zone—or field of east-west contention, depending on circumstances. He even carefully recognized Britain’s special interest in Greece, Turkey, and Yugo-
slavia by proposing that they be aggrandized territorially, while he made no claims on them. Thus Rumania’s southern frontier would constitute the line setting off the Soviet and the British spheres of influence in Southeastern Europe. He was even willing to shelve for the present the question of the Polish-Soviet frontier. All that Stalin asked in exchange was that his partners concede him the free hand in the USSR’s eastern European sphere that he was willing to concede them in their western European, Mediterranean, and north Atlantic spheres. In short, as early as 1941–42, Stalin assumed that the future peace and security of Europe and the postwar fate of the Grand Alliance hinged on each ally’s recognizing and honoring his partner’s core security zones, while the Anglo-Soviet allies, assisted by their smaller allies, policed the continent.

An Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance was not concluded in Moscow. Without consulting London, the Dominions, and Washington, Eden could not sign Stalin’s secret protocol endorsing the Soviet frontiers of 1941 let alone the secret protocol encompassing Stalin’s grand plan. Stalin, for his part, made recognition of the 1941 frontiers, except for Poland, the precondition for an alliance. The result was a deadlock.

Six months of assiduous but fruitless efforts to reach agreement ensued, in the course of which Moscow raised its demands. Moscow reverted to the requirement that London accept Stalin’s proposals for Anglo-Soviet spheres of influence as well as recognize the 1941 frontiers of the USSR, except for Poland. And now Moscow would not accept London’s minimum condition, the provision that the allies agree to encourage the formation of federations and confederations in

Europe. Stalin and his lieutenants had concluded that the British proposal prefigured a new *cordon sanitaire* against the USSR, despite Eden’s indignant denials to the contrary.\(^4^0\) Each party for the moment wearily gave up efforts to have his desiderata accepted by the other. Just when all hope for agreement seemed doomed, the British offered Molotov, who had come to London, a simple, long-term, draft treaty of alliance that contained neither the British nor the Soviet minimum conditions. To the amazement of Maisky, the Kremlin, when consulted by Molotov, readily scrapped its previous proposals and approved the draft.\(^4^1\) The treaty was signed on 26 May 1942.

Part One of the treaty was identical with the 1941 alliance agreement, except that the treaty called for joint struggle against Germany’s associates in Europe as well as against Germany. Part Two concerned the postwar aim of preventing a repetition of aggression by Germany or states associated with her. The allies declared their desire to unite with other like-minded states in common action to preserve peace and resist aggression. Pending such a union, the two allies would do all in their power to render impossible such aggression. If either ally became the victim of an attack by Germany or a state associated with her, the other ally would forthwith give its partner all possible military and other support. The allies pledged not to enter into an alliance or coalition directed against the other. Unless superseded by the aforementioned union for common action, the treaty would remain in force for a period of twenty years.\(^4^2\)

After bitter resistance to anything less than recognition of the USSR’s frontiers of 1941, why did Moscow for the moment drop this demand? For one thing, another summer offensive by the Germans was in the offing and an Allied second front in France assumed greatest urgency for Stalin. Signing the alliance might smooth the way for the Anglo-American allies to stage in 1942 the second front they had promised. In any event, it must have become clear to Stalin, as it was to Eden, that if the war ended with Soviet troops occupying the territories the Soviet government claimed, the Allies would hardly try to drive them out.\(^4^3\) In short the Soviet frontier problem would be

\(^{40}\) Molotov said he had information that some federations might be directed against the USSR. Eden replied that the British government “would never be parties to any scheme directed against the Soviet Union; that was the very opposite of their policy. They were interested only in the formation of federations as a defense against Germany.” (“Second Meeting with the Soviet Delegation at No. 10 Downing St. 21 May 1942,” N 2902/G FO 371/32882. PRO.)

\(^{41}\) Maisky, *Vospominaniia*, p. 247.

\(^{42}\) For the text of the treaty, see *Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. Rothstein 1:158–60.

\(^{43}\) Eden Memorandum, “Policy Toward Russia,” 28 January 1942. W.P. (42) 48, FO
solved by the Red Army, not by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Given future military success, Moscow would nevertheless still need a timely means of checking the movement toward European federation and confederation Churchill designed to maintain a future balance of power against the USSR.44

Ironically, the political means by which the USSR might block Churchill's plan to build a new anti-Soviet equilibrium was suggested by the Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance, which the British themselves had drafted. If the USSR could conclude similar treaties of alliance with the smaller states of Europe, Germany would be "encircled," eliminating the menace of future German aggression. And to bar any "anti-Soviet" federation or confederation, the USSR could invoke Article Seven, which stated that each party pledged not to conclude an alliance and not to take part in any coalition against the other party. Accordingly, Moscow now sought similar mutual defense alliances with the weaker European states. The British were thus hoist by their own petard.

And the British quickly realized it, but too late. When Molotov, on 9 June 1942, stopped off in London en route home from Washington, Eden asked that Molotov not conclude a treaty of alliance, then under discussion, with the exiled government of Yugoslavia. Feigning surprise, Molotov asked, if alliance with Britain, why not with Yugoslavia? Eden replied that a long-term Soviet alliance with Yugoslavia, which would support Yugoslav territorial claims, might start a treaty-making race between Britain and the USSR for favor of minor allies. A whole network of conflicting treaties would then arise to entangle the postwar peace conference. To avert that complication, Eden proposed a "self-denying ordinance": the British and Soviet governments should pledge not to conclude a mutual assistance treaty with a minor ally without prior agreement between London and Moscow. Molotov agreed to consult his government on Eden's proposal.45

371/32875. PRO. Eden found harmonizing relations with the allies difficult, because "Soviet policy is amoral; United States policy is exaggeratedly moral, at least where non-American interests are concerned."

44 Churchill considered European confederation crucial to bar the "measureless disaster if Russian barbarism overlaid the culture and independence" of Europe. ("Churchill to Eden, 21 October 1942," Churchill, Hinge of Fate, p. 488.) He thought that a Danubian Federation and a Balkan Federation, and the recreation of a strong France, were particularly necessary "for the prospect of having no strong country on the map between England and Russia was not attractive." (Ibid., p. 697.)

45 "Seventh Meeting with the Soviet Delegation Held at the Foreign Office at 3:30 p.m. on June 9, 1942." N 3000/G FO 371/32882. PRO. On the fate of the "self-denying ordinance," see Woodward, British Foreign Policy, 2:595–99.
For the next seventeen months the British tried fruitlessly to win Soviet agreement to their "ordinance" and confederation plan. But the Soviet leaders had correctly assessed this plan as one designed to counterweigh Soviet power in Europe. At the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, Molotov in effect killed the "self-denying ordinance" and the confederation scheme proposed by the British. The Soviet delegation stated that it had not given, and could not give, its assent to a requirement that the USSR and Britain consult before a long-term alliance could be concluded with a bordering state, e.g., Czechoslovakia.\(^{46}\) Eden had proposed a joint declaration, which stipulated that the Big Three powers should seek neither to create nor recognize any separate spheres or areas of responsibility in Europe, and they should assist other states in forming federations or confederations. Molotov assailed the declaration as premature, dangerous, and superfluous. The three great powers should not artificially force the pace of federation; after all, the plan could be reexamined when the time was more ripe. The plan was dangerous, because it projected a new \textit{cordon sanitaire} against the USSR, and superfluous since there was no disposition on the part of the Soviet government, or, as far as he knew, on the part of the British, to divide Europe into separate spheres of influence. The declaration was not acted upon.\(^{47}\)

Moscow did not sign a mutual assistance treaty with the Royal government of Yugoslavia. By war's end, however, the USSR did sign an anti-German treaty of mutual assistance with Czechoslovakia (12 December 1943), France (10 December 1944), Tito's Yugoslavia (11 April 1945), and Poland (21 April 1945).\(^{48}\) Thus Churchill's federation scheme proved stillborn, and Stalin and Churchill reached a secret agreement dividing southeast Europe into spheres of influence. The triumph of Soviet arms was accompanied by the triumph of Soviet diplomacy, whose degree of success can be gauged by reference to the aims Stalin formulated back in December 1941.


\(^{48}\) For the texts of the treaties, see \textit{War and Peace Aims of the United Nations}, ed. Louise W. Holborn (Boston, 1948), 2 vols: 2:761–63; 780–81; 783–84; and 784–86. All four treaties contained virtually the same language with regard to hostile alignments as that included in article Seven of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty: "Each High Contracting Party undertakes not to conclude any alliance and not to take part in any coalition directed against the other High Contracting Party." Deferring to the British desire for
Most of these aims had been achieved and more. But Stalin had yet to fulfill his grand plan for postwar security: an alliance of European states to keep Germany down. On the eve of the founding meeting of the United Nations Organization in San Francisco, Stalin studiously ignored the embryonic UN and bluntly placed his faith in such an alliance system. For he hailed the signing of the Polish-Soviet Treaty as completing an eastern united front “from the Baltic to the Carpathians” against German imperialism. If that were now supplemented by a similar grouping in the west, that is, by an “alliance between our countries and our Allies in the west,” German aggression would not be free to run amok. Therefore, he did not doubt that the western Allies would welcome this new treaty.49

But quite the contrary proved true. Stalin’s intention of enlarging the Soviet alliance system only heightened fears in the west of a Pax Sovietica. From November 1944, therefore, Eden remonstrated with Churchill that Britain must immediately proceed to organize a western defense bloc, including a rearmed France, ostensibly in order to restrain Germany but also to guard against potential Soviet expansion. Otherwise, Britain’s western European allies, especially the French, might get the impression “that their only hope lies in making defense arrangements not with us, but with the Russians.” Thus was conceived the idea that led to the Brussels Pact in 1948 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949.50 In short, the very success of Soviet wartime diplomacy recoiled on Moscow by generating the western political-military alliance that Soviet diplomacy was designed to forestall.

Irony of ironies, Stalin, a classical balance-of-power practitioner, had in the meantime reverted to Leninist theory on “spheres of influence” to explain the widening split. On 9 February 1946, Stalin

Polish-Czechoslovak federation, Moscow rejoined to its treaty with Czechoslovakia a protocol permitting adherence of Poland, which would make it a trilateral alliance. (Woodward, British Foreign Policy, 2:597–99. Barker, British Policy, pp. 136–37).

But none of these treaties contained both parts of an important proviso found in article Five of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty: the signatories “will act in accordance with the two principles of not seeking territorial aggrandizement for themselves and of noninterference in the internal affairs of other states.” The Soviet alliance with Czechoslovakia (article Four) and with Poland (article Two) did, however, pledge friendly cooperation between the two countries in accordance with the principles of mutual respect for their independence and sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of the other state.


asserted in an "election" speech that neither the First World War nor the Second was caused by "accidents" or by "mistakes" committed by statesmen, though mistakes were made. Such conflicts inevitably break out, because the group of capitalist states "which considers itself worse provided than others with raw materials and markets usually makes attempts to alter the situation and repartition the 'spheres of influence' in its favor by armed force. The result is a splitting of the capitalist world into two hostile camps and war between them." Stalin implied that this process was leading to a third imperialist war, now among his former allies. Nevertheless, the USSR, he decreed, needed at least another three or more five-year plans to guarantee itself against "all possible accidents."51

But Stalin's projection of a new intra-imperialist war did not materialize. Instead, the USSR found itself confronted by NATO, a western bloc that embodied some of Stalin's worst fears. In sum, Soviet postwar diplomacy, basing itself on the great gains scored from 1939 to 1945, had failed in the end to prevent the breakup of the wartime alliance and to avoid an east-west partition of Europe. Historians have yet to establish conclusively the share of responsibility each ally must bear for this split, and statesmen have yet to make the old world one again.