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Nuclear Rivals: Anglo-American Atomic Relations, 1941–1952

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important lessons for the practitioners of military operations other than war. Effective peacekeeping and nation building are not cheap, easy, or brief, but their execution can be greatly facilitated by competent, cohesive, and effective interservice and interagency teams.

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Paul, Septimus H. *Nuclear Rivals: Anglo-American Atomic Relations, 1941–1952*. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 2000. 266pp. \$42.50

With the collapse of Soviet power and the end of the Cold War, the paradigm that helped to explain that era shifted. Scholars seeking to understand better the period are now free to reassess that era, taking into account other variables in the power calculus with the same degree of attention previously concentrated upon the Soviet Union. To cite just one example of this paradigm shift, since the opening of recent British archives scholars have concluded that British foreign and defense policy had a much more decisive impact on the early Cold War than was apparent in earlier considerations. The new study by Septimus H. Paul is one such reassessment.

Paul is a professor of history at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois. His *Nuclear Rivals* is a meticulous examination of Anglo-American wartime collaboration in the development of the atomic bomb, followed by the decision of the United States after the war to deny Great Britain the fruits of that collaboration—the requisite technologies to build a British atomic bomb. To British eyes, this was a betrayal of solemn (if secret)

promises made by President Franklin Roosevelt to Prime Minister Winston Churchill during the war and of understandings between President Harry Truman and Prime Minister Clement Attlee afterward.

Part of the complexity of Anglo-American relations is to be explained by their multileveled nature. The alliance against Hitler during World War II forged a common front, which coexisted with substantive differences over grand strategy and the postwar political-economic settlement, particularly on questions relating to open markets and decolonization. The desire of the British to exercise joint partnership with the United States in the monopoly of the atomic bomb, and the American reluctance to do so, proved to be particularly divisive. These profound differences continued into the postwar world but were overshadowed by the American and British governments' perceived fear of the common threat from Soviet Russia. One of the truly valuable contributions of *Nuclear Rivals* is Paul's fidelity to this complexity and to the sources in relating the story of American collaboration and noncollaboration with Britain in atomic weapons development. Paul makes no attempt to sweeten or marginalize the differences between the two nations in this area; his approach is explicit, without attention to peripheral issues.

The major contribution of this book is its attention to what used to be called in the literature “the raw materials question.” This relates to the American attempt during World War II to secure a monopoly of the world's uranium supply. One complication for the Americans was that the source of the highest-quality uranium, absolutely indispensable for building an atomic bomb, was the then Belgian

Congo. Paul presents a compelling picture of Anglo-American maneuvering—on the American side, for an indefinite monopoly over the uranium output of the Shinkolobwe Mine; and on the British side, to secure first an allocation of uranium on a fifty-fifty basis with the United States, and then to trade off the British allocation in return for the technical details of the American atomic bomb. In this relationship, the British had rather decisive advantages, which they did not fail to exploit fully—a particularly close relationship with the Belgian government, and the fact that British investors owned 30 percent of the shares of Union Menère du Haut Katanga, which owned the Shinkolobwe Mine. Paul’s appreciation of this intimate relationship and its consequences for the United States is worth noting. Should Great Britain be so disposed, “it could and would secure a monopoly over the Belgian Congo raw materials. The United States would then be in a most disadvantageous position.” When the British in 1946 threatened to end the Combined Development Trust (CDT), the agency, established in 1944, responsible for joint acquisition and allocation of raw materials, the United States capitulated to British demands and agreed to a fifty-fifty allocation of uranium with Britain. This equitable allocation allowed Britain to amass a huge stockpile, without which it could never have detonated an atomic bomb in October 1952. By 1947 the United States was experiencing a severe shortage of uranium, which could be met only from supplies in the Congo and from that British stockpile. Tough negotiations secured Britain an exchange of atomic information in return for American access to all Congo allocations to be made in 1948–49 and, if needed, additional supplies from the British stockpile.

This arrangement was sanctified in a “modus vivendi” signed on 7 January 1948. The political counterpoint to this “agreement” could be found in the characterization by Edmund Gullion, a special assistant to Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett: Gullion had suggested calling this agreement a “modus vivendi,” since that was “a term most often used to describe the relations between adversaries driven by circumstances to get along together.”

The single area where I find myself in disagreement with Paul is his assertion that “American postwar atomic energy policy would be formulated, for the most part, not by the President but by this [government] bureaucracy.” This is a very wide generalization, not supported by the evidence. On the contrary, no president has abdicated his responsibility for the formulation of nuclear weapons policy to a bureaucracy, however talented. Paul himself makes this very point at the outset of his book, arguing that when Roosevelt and Churchill secretly negotiated the Hyde Park aide-memoire in September 1944, they agreed to continue postwar atomic cooperation. While that promise was disingenuous on Roosevelt’s part, the key point was that “the decision was made with no input from the President’s advisers.” President Truman’s action in signing the McMahon Act in August 1946 is perhaps the clearest indicator of his intent to oppose the sharing of America’s atomic secrets with *any* nation, Britain included. The McMahon Act prohibited transferring to any other nation the scientific and technological information necessary to manufacture an atomic bomb. The successful detonation of a British hydrogen bomb in May 1957 led President Dwight D. Eisenhower to overrule such advisers as the chairman of

the Atomic Energy Commission, Admiral Lewis Strauss, and to secure an amendment to the Atomic Energy Act of 1958. This amendment provided for a renewed bilateral exchange of nuclear weapons technologies with Great Britain. The extent to which presidential advisers got out in front of nuclear policy and played the role of staunch opponents of bilateral cooperation is well and properly documented in *Nuclear Rivals*. Indeed, the accurate portrayal of their roles in both the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, in war and peace, is a major asset of this book. Yet any implication of presidential abdication of the policy formulation role in this sphere is a misconception.

The caveat above notwithstanding, Septimus H. Paul has made a particularly valuable contribution to the literature. In his use of sources, Paul reveals a sophisticated understanding of the power calculus and refocuses our attention on some of the seminal issues and disagreements of the early Cold War period, with all their complexities. For just these reasons, *Nuclear Rivals* should be required reading not only for historians of this era but for all students of national security policy making.

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Daso, Dik Alan. *Hap Arnold and the Evolution of American Airpower*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000. 233pp. \$23.95

Henry “Hap” Arnold was one of our great commanders. The only airman to hold five-star rank, he led the Army Air Forces through World War II with a strength, tenacity, and vision that was instrumental to victory, while at the same

time breaking his own health. Dik Daso, a former Air Force fighter pilot, Ph.D., and curator at the National Air and Space Museum, tells Arnold’s important story with unusual insight and verve.

Graduating from West Point in 1907, Arnold earnestly desired an assignment to the cavalry but instead was posted to the infantry. Despite exciting and formative experiences in the Philippines, he still hankered for the cavalry. Once again he was refused. He then transferred to the Signal Corps, and in 1911 he became one of our first military pilots. Fate. Over the next three decades he became widely recognized as an outstanding aviator (he won the coveted Mackay Trophy twice), commander, and staff officer. When Oscar Westover, chief of the Air Corps, was killed in a plane crash in September 1938, Arnold took his place and led the air arm for the next seven years. But the long hours and incredible pace he set for himself took their toll. He suffered severe heart attacks during the war, and another in 1950 took his life.

Other books have been written about Arnold, and his memoirs are packed with detail. Nonetheless, Daso was able to uncover family sources and documents not previously used that shed new light on Arnold the man, husband, and father. This approach makes for fascinating reading; it is always a comfort to know that great men are as human as ourselves.

Daso also highlights a unique aspect of Arnold’s life—his appreciation for the integral relationship between science, technology, and airpower. Early in his career Arnold recognized that a second-rate air force was worse than none at all. The path to aviation leadership was a strong research-and-development program and a commitment to progress. Arnold’s vision in this regard was extraordinary. He