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Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union 1933-1941

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achieved, more difficult challenges are coming center stage which will complicate our intelligence collection and analysis efforts.

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Maddux, Thomas R. *Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union 1933-1941*. Tallahassee: University of Florida Presses, 1980. 238pp. \$15

The period between the American recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933, and the extension of Lend-Lease Assistance to Moscow in 1941, has generally been overlooked by historians of US-USSR relations. As Thomas R. Maddux rightly notes, however, it was during this time that many American attitudes toward the Soviet Union were molded—attitudes that continue to shape the foreign policy of the United States. *Years of Estrangement* hence fills a gap in American diplomatic history in this particularly crucial decade before the emergence of the United States as a global superpower.

In addition to his general account, Maddux makes several points that are of particular interest today. The current disillusionment with affairs in Europe has led many Americans to turn their attention to the Pacific Basin (and the Indian Ocean) as the future center of world power. This is certainly not an unprecedented position for the United States. America determined to turn its back on Europe after the end of world war in 1815, and the subsequent rise of the Holy Alliance, through the Monroe Doctrine and westward expansion. Even before the United States acquired California and became officially a two-ocean nation, the government in Washington (to say nothing of enter-

prising American traders) had evidenced an interest in Hawaii and points farther west. In this century, even though the United States has been forced to re-concern itself with the balance of power in Europe, America has also retained an interest in the affairs of Asia, and its marginal seas and islands.

When President Franklin Roosevelt negotiated with the USSR for the restoration of relations between the two nations in 1933, his primary strategic motivation was not cooperation with Moscow against the threat of Nazi Germany. Instead, Maddux argues persuasively, his intention was to make the Soviets more resolute in their opposition to Japan in Asia. By March 1933, Japan had created the puppet state of Manchukuo in Manchuria, and had moved south of the Great Wall to within 13 miles of Peiping. During this same time, Hitler had only just appeared on the European scene, and was several years away from taking his first unambiguous steps toward continental conquest.

Even though the United States had never fully and formally accepted the Versailles Treaty, Roosevelt could only assume that the principal European guarantors of the peace of 1919 (Britain and France) would restrain another German drive for European supremacy. But in doing so, the European colonial powers would be forced to turn their attention away from Asia, creating opportunities for Japanese expansion. The logical strategic arrangement would be, therefore, for the United States—with its own considerable interests in the Pacific, including Hawaii and the Philippines—to assume the major responsibility in deflecting Japanese advances in Asia. But the United States' freedom of action was greatly limited by the reigning isolationism in public opinion—hence Roosevelt's opening to Stalin as

the most available means of influencing events in the Far East.

In the short term, Roosevelt appears to have been unsuccessful: the Kremlin signed nonaggression pacts with both Germany and Japan. Although the Soviet Union later came into the war against Berlin, and eventually Tokyo, Roosevelt's long-term performance is equally open to challenge. Maddux concurs in the judgment of most historians that Roosevelt was not sufficiently aware of Stalin's ambitions.

But Maddux also argues that the president's own shortcomings as a diplomat were magnified by the restraints imposed by public opinion, and by opposition from within the bureaucracy, most notably the State Department. (For example, the State Department tended to emphasize Stalin's weaknesses, and to demand a much harder line on negotiations with the Soviets.) Within the bureaucracy, there developed the now familiar split over Soviet intentions that further clouded (and continues to cloud) American foreign policy. Such men as William C. Bullitt and Joseph E. Davies contended that Stalin was a sincere revolutionary who aimed for the ultimate triumph of communism. The George Kennan school, in turn, emphasized power and security as the object of the Soviet state.

Maddux himself clearly comes down on the side of Kennan, with a few bows thrown in the direction of Stalin's ideology, during his critique of Roosevelt. Because the author offers no clear resolution of this debate, *Years of Estrangement* does not rise above the level of a competent historical survey of the period. In fairness to Maddux, however, this complex task is beyond the scope of his work. Perhaps the most useful way to view Soviet strategy in such a context is to emphasize its continuity. In 1938, for

example, the Soviets attempted to have a 35-knot, 60,000-ton battleship designed and constructed in the United States. This proposal was eventually thwarted by the Navy Department, but Roosevelt finally approved the construction of a 45,000-ton battleship with 16-inch guns for the USSR. In the 1980s, as the *Kirov* and its sister ships enter service with the Soviet Navy, the Kremlin no longer need ask America's leave for the development of its fleet.

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Public Research, Syndicated

Kaplan, Stephen S. *Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1981. 733pp. \$29.95 paper \$14.95

Identifying some 190 occasions from the final stages of the Second World War to the massive intervention into Afghanistan in December 1979 wherein Soviet military power was employed as a foreign policy instrument, this work is a solid analytical counterpiece to the earlier work Kaplan wrote, with Barry Blechman, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington: Brookings, 1978). Reading the two one can make a relative assessment of American and Soviet perspectives and applications of military force in the furtherance of their foreign policy objectives. Kaplan points out that the Soviet military was employed as a purely coercive instrument in 158 of the 190 incidents and that the Soviets' propensity to seek military solutions to political issues has increased proportionately with the recent substantial growth and modernization of their military machine.

Organized into three main sections, the work begins with a historical analysis of the immediate foreign policy contexts