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A World Destroyed, The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance

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as far to the east as possible, then they advocated a steadfast order for Anglo-American troops in the Soviet zone in Germany.

In his analysis Sharp runs into difficulty on several issues. For one thing, there is little discussion of the changing political situation after Yalta in Eastern and Central Europe and its accompanying effect on Allied relations that contributed to the sudden shift in British attitude. Second, there is slight explanation neither of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's refusal to provide direction for his planners in the establishment of zones nor of the delays caused by Sumner Welles' scheme in 1943 for the dismemberment of Germany, which forced Hull at the Moscow Conference to opt for a vaguely conceived European Advisory Commission. Third, in explaining why the President finally relented to British pressure over allocation of the two Western Zones, the author overlooks the views of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson who as early as June 1944 advocated accepting the southwestern zone. Fourth, Sharp argues that Eisenhower in his final strategy followed political rather than military considerations, that he hoped to race the Russians to areas not settled by zonal protocol. This view, based on an article by Eisenhower in 1961, after 16 cold war years, is not convincing. The author does have a point, however, as illustrated by Eisenhower's desire to capture Lubeck and cut off Denmark from Soviet encroachment. Finally, the study fails to explain fully why the United States decided to withdraw from the Soviet zone.

The research, with a few striking exceptions, is excellent. Sharp has combed recently declassified British records and has seen some of the unpublished American materials. He has also corresponded with some of the participants. A more thorough study of State Department records or use of the Stimson Diary might have eliminated

many of the difficulties in the text. And he has omitted two important published sources: *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conference at Quebec, 1944*, released in 1972, and an excellent essay by Paul Y. Hammond, "Directives for Germany," in Harold Stein, ed., *American Civil-Military Decisions* (1963).

The most serious weakness of the book is its style. The author is dealing with a complex issue and his presentation is often so complicated as to confuse the reader, even specialists in the field. He has a penchant for abbreviations, often of obscure committees, such as MSC (British Military Subcommittee), or CAC (Combined Administrative Committee). It is necessary to refer constantly to the long list of abbreviations at the front of the book. Adding to the confusion is the placing of material concerning military strategy in the first chapter, out of context, forcing repeated use of the term "see above" in the notes for this chapter.

DAVID HERSCHLER
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Sherwin, Martin J. *A World Destroyed, The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance*. New York: Knopf, 1975. 315pp.

The many questions surrounding the development of the atomic bomb by the United States during World War II and the reasons for its use against Hiroshima and Nagasaki continue to generate a public and historiographical debate. The controversy over whether the weapon was used out of perceived wartime necessity or as an attempt to warn the Soviet Union of America's great postwar power has gone on for over a decade. It began with Gar Alperovitz's *Atomic Diplomacy—Hiroshima and Potsdam* in 1965 and continued through the flurry of books and articles published last year on the 30th anniversary of the

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destruction of the two Japanese cities. With the publication of Martin Sherwin's impressively researched, well-written, and balanced account of the high-level United States and British diplomacy surrounding the wartime "Manhattan" project and the eventual use of its creation against Japan, much of the cause for controversy—resulting from lack of complete documentation—has been removed.

Sherwin has taken a fresh look at the entire question of atomic diplomacy. He wisely begins with proposals for the development of an atomic bomb before World War II and proceeds through the intricate wartime interactions between scientists, administrators, military officers, diplomats, and Roosevelt and Churchill themselves, to the high-powered deliberations in which Harry Truman was involved from the moment he succeeded to the Presidency through the end of the war. In the first half of the book, Sherwin details the initial scientific skepticism about the possibility of perfecting nuclear weapons (the MIT Radiation Laboratory was so named in order to fool the Germans into thinking that the laboratory was working not on radar, but on "something completely impractical and useless like an atomic bomb." He goes on to cover the many problems involved with establishing the organization that would build the bomb and the ups and downs of the partnership between the United States and the United Kingdom in the weapon's development, especially tensions over its postwar disposition. The book's description of the efforts of the great Danish physicist Neils Bohr to achieve wartime disclosure of the bomb's secrets in order to gain the postwar cooperation of the Soviet Union; the British Government's, and particularly Winston Churchill's, opposition to such a move; and President Roosevelt's own views on the importance of the weapon in the potential policies of the two English-speaking

nations as the "two policemen" of the postwar world sheds new light on F.D.R.'s thinking about postwar policy.

The second half of the book deals with the effect of Harry Truman's succession to the Presidency, the perceptions of Russia held by the new President and his key advisers, and their growing realization of the potential power of the atomic bomb as a bargaining chip to be used coercively, in combination with American economic power, against the U.S.S.R. after the war. Sherwin emphasizes the complexity of the situation that Truman faced and his lack of preparation for the demands of office, and concludes that the emerging cold war policy was "cynical rather than sinister, damaging rather than destructive, the product of frustrated expectations and the insecurity of the new President. Though Truman adapted this stance quite naturally, the position was developed for him slowly. He was the recipient rather than the instigator."

With respect to the decision to drop the bomb without warning on Japan, Sherwin recounts how the momentum of the weapon's development carried those involved along until it became virtually inevitable that the bomb would be used. He concludes that it was this dynamic, with its profound implications for the United States/U.S.S.R. postwar confrontation, which was the underlying reason for the dropping of the bomb, but that the specific decision to use it was primarily motivated by immediate wartime objectives. Sherwin is refreshingly willing to abandon the "either/or" approach of earlier studies and brings a considerable understanding of human nature and the workings of government to bear in his analysis of this extremely complex question.

In addition, there is much new factual material in this book, which fills in the details of a fascinating story. Sherwin reveals, for example, that two U.S. Navy aviators were killed by

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radiation poisoning while imprisoned at the city jail in Hiroshima. By using newly declassified sources, such as the records of the Manhattan Engineer District at the National Archives, the President's Map Room files at the Franklin Roosevelt Library, Henry L. Stimson's diary and papers at Yale University, and Prime Minister Churchill's official files at the Public Record Office in London, he fleshes out the skeleton of news reports, official documents, and technical information previously available to historians. Sherwin also performs a valuable service by reprinting in an appendix 17 key documents concerning the diplomacy and development of the atomic bomb.

A World Destroyed is a chronicle with a sobering theme: that while the United States may have developed the atomic bomb in part to achieve a new and peaceful world order, the fact that that technology was developed in secret and diplomatically utilized to achieve national ends meant that the effort helped to create the very situation it was intended to prevent. Such a thesis is difficult to prove as there is no way of knowing how the Soviet Union would have behaved if Stalin had been told of the bomb's secret in 1943 or 1944 and had been invited to join in an international control movement at that time. In fact, Sherwin's underlying assumption that the United States might have avoided much of the cold war if it had pursued different policies is perhaps the book's only real flaw. Nevertheless, Martin Sherwin has produced a study that answers to this writer's satisfaction the major questions about the role of the atomic bomb in World War II diplomacy.

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Stevens, Robert W. *Vain Hopes, Grim Realities*. New York: Franklin Watts, New Viewpoints, 1976. 229pp.

In a book written mainly for non-

economists, R.W. Stevens attempts to assess the economic costs of the Vietnam war. The book is billed as "the first complete analysis of the impact of the Vietnam war on the United States economy." The work has some strengths. Stevens examined a large volume of economic and political science literature and consulted with numerous authors and bureaucrats. The result of his efforts is a reasonably complete and balanced economic history of the 1964-1973 period, although some of his interpretations are arguable. For example, he underplays the role of monetary expansion in 1967 as the major cause of the subsequent inflation that monetarist economists believe it was. He does not mention at all the fact that the temporary (as opposed to permanent) nature of the 1968 tax surcharge was responsible, in the eyes of many analysts, for the observed failure of the tax to dampen significantly aggregate demand.

The book suffers from two major flaws. First, despite disclaimers to the contrary, Stevens blames everything on the war—the recession of 1970, the inflation, the failure of the War on Poverty to eradicate poverty, and the collapse of the international monetary arrangements set up at Bretton Woods in 1944. The war played a role in all of these, but in each case there were other contributing factors which were at least as significant. Particularly arguable is the attempt to link the collapse of the international fixed exchange rate system to the war. The seeds of the collapse of the system existed long before the war. Indeed, the system itself was built on a contradiction. U.S. balance of payments deficits were necessary to the expansion of world reserves, but U.S. deficits also eroded confidence in the dollar, which in turn made the dollar less acceptable as a world reserve. A case can be made that the war hastened the collapse. Increased military purchases and, mainly, inflation, which was induced in part by the war, worsened the U.S.