

Imagining the Enemy: A Constructivist Deconstruction of Daniel Yergin's Riga Axioms

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Abstract for Imagining the Enemy: A Constructivist Deconstruction of Daniel Yergin's Riga Axioms

This thesis is a constructivist analysis of James F. Byrnes and George F. Kennan, who were both key foreign policy figures in President Harry S. Truman's administration. Specifically, this thesis critically analyses and deconstructs Daniel Yergin's 1977 book *Shattered Peace: the Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State*. Yergin argues that the origins of the Cold War can be traced to the actions of a group of policy officials of the United States Department of State, who subscribed to a common view of the Soviet Union. In his book Yergin categorises the view of these State Department officials as the Riga axioms due to their views being formed in Riga, Latvia. This thesis argues that Yergin's theory is too simplistic when explaining the motivations of these officials. It uses Byrnes and Kennan as two case studies and examines them using the theory of constructivism, which looks at non material factors, to understand their motivations. This work also uses the theory of epistemic communities to better define whether a group of adherents to the Riga axioms even existed. This thesis concludes that in reality these foreign policy officials were motivated by their personal perceptions of the world, individual motivations, and interpersonal relations; and that aligned interests do not necessarily mean aligned beliefs.

Key words: Cold War, Byrnes, Kennan, Riga axioms, American Soviet Policy

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Chapter One: Introduction

What caused the Cold War? This question has prompted a myriad number of fascinating theories and explanations. This thesis does not aim to analyse and critique all the theories and explanations given for the conflict's origins. Instead, this thesis shall focus on dissecting only one theory. Specifically, this thesis shall examine the theory laid out by Daniel Yergin in *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State*.¹ Yergin presents a narrative where the classification of the Soviet Union as antagonistic to the United States had little to do with the Soviet Union's behaviour and had more to do with a group of American foreign policy agents who collectively subscribed to a specific set of anti-Soviet perceptions and beliefs, which Yergin calls the Riga axioms.² Opposing the Riga axioms, he identifies a set of counter axioms, the Yalta axioms, which argued that the United States and the Soviet Union could coexist harmoniously. Yergin argues the Yalta axioms were created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and that they had fewer adherents than the Riga axioms.³ Yergin's narrative paints the Riga axioms as triumphing over the Yalta axioms and becoming so powerful that they directed, controlled, and affected the decision-making of powerful American statesmen, including the President himself.⁴ This thesis aims to prove that Yergin attributes too much explanatory power to his theory of axioms and to the unity of the voices that supposedly promoted them.

This thesis shall dissect Yergin's claim by examining two figures: firstly, it shall deconstruct Yergin's explanation of the career of James F. Byrnes, the Secretary of State, who was appointed by Truman when he ascended to the office of the President.⁵ It does so because Yergin presents Byrnes as a figure caught between the Riga axioms, which were strongly anti-Soviet, and his own sense of diplomatic compromise and commitment to the Yalta axioms.⁶ This thesis shows that there were more factors in play regarding the complicated career of James F. Byrnes. Secondly, this thesis deconstructs Yergin's narrative of the career of George F. Kennan, who was an influential State Department foreign policy officer, who rose in prominence at the end of the Second World War. This thesis focuses on Kennan because Yergin describes Kennan as the chief ideologue of the Riga axioms.⁷ This thesis aims to show, through a detailed analysis, that Kennan was a more complex character than the one Yergin presents. It also analyses how strongly Kennan was linked to the Riga

¹ Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1978)

² *Ibid.*, 20

³ *Ibid.*, 68

⁴ *Ibid.*, 156

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27

⁶ *Ibid.*, 183

⁷ *Ibid.*, 27

axioms. If Kennan's connection to the Riga axioms is found to be weak then it calls into question whether such a group existed in the first place. Byrnes and Kennan are analysed together because Yergin argues Kennan's career progression along with his propagation of the Riga axioms conflicted with and hastened the decline of Byrnes's own career.⁸ By examining their careers individually, this thesis tests the validity of this claim.

In order to dissect Yergin's theory in a rigorous way, this thesis applies in its analysis the theory of constructivism, which is a theory concerned with the social construction of reality.⁹ This thesis argues that a constructivist analysis offers great insight when examining the mentalities of individuals. This thesis also utilizes the theory of epistemic communities in order to clearly define who the propagators of the Riga axioms were and if they can be bound together in a group. The theory of epistemic communities is concerned with communities of knowledge-based experts influencing policy making processes.¹⁰ This thesis uses the theory of epistemic communities in order to clearly identify whether a group existed around Yergin's Riga axioms and to what extent they affected the career of James F. Byrnes as well as to what extent George F. Kennan can be seen as the group's chief ideologue.

This method of analysis leads to the main research question "*How does a constructivist analysis of James F. Byrnes's and George F. Kennan's careers using the theory of epistemic communities challenge Daniel Yergin's Riga and Yalta axioms theory?*" This research question leads to four logical points of analysis. Firstly, examining how James F. Byrnes and George F. Kennan came to their positions of power may help to illuminate whether the Riga or Yalta axioms really played a part in their career ascendancies. This line of inquiry raises the sub question, "*How did Byrnes and Kennan come to their positions of power?*" Secondly, as the main research question above is using a constructivist analysis, social and historical construction must be examined. This raises the sub question, "*To what extent were Byrnes's and Kennan's views of the Soviet Union the product of social construction?*" Thirdly, the main research question above uses the theory of epistemic communities to challenge Yergin's claims. Therefore, the theoretical framework of this thesis defines the parameters of the Riga axioms as a potential epistemic community in order to objectively measure to what extent Byrnes and Kennan were influenced by a group subscribing to the Riga axioms. This leads to the sub question, "*To what extent did a community subscribing to the*

⁸ Ibid., 168

⁹ Christian Rues Smit and Duncan Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 298-310

¹⁰ Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination. (Winter, 1992): 2-4, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706951>

Riga axioms affect Byrnes's and Kennan's policy making decisions?" Finally, to truly challenge Yergin's claim that the Riga axioms drove American foreign policy immediately after the Second World War, his narrative of Byrnes's career degeneration must be examined closely. This thesis also seeks to demonstrate that a parallel analysis of Kennan's career decline shows contradictions in Yergin's Riga axioms. This leads to the sub question, "*To what extent were Byrnes's and Kennan's career deteriorations related to a set of axioms as defined by Yergin?"*"

In order to answer the main research question of this thesis, and its sub questions, a number of sources shall be draw upon. As this is a constructivist analysis of two specific individuals, it is imperative that their subjective views be analysed as presented by themselves; therefore, this thesis will treat the personal memoirs of both Byrnes and Kennan as primary sources. James F. Byrnes wrote two sets of memoirs called *Speaking Frankly*¹¹ and *All in one Lifetime*.¹² Both of these memoirs shall inform this thesis. Kennan wrote three sets of memoirs during his lifetime; however, only one of these, *George F. Kennan Memoirs: 1925-1950*,¹³ covers the relevant time period, and was written within a time frame where it would be credible to say that Kennan could accurately recall some if not all of his original views. These memoirs shall be the core texts of this analysis; however, this does not mean they are the only texts which shall be analysed. More traditional primary sources, such as primary documents in the form of speeches, policy documents and publications from the time, shall be used as well. This will be done to discover any inconsistencies, deliberate or otherwise, that are presented in the memoirs. This thesis shall also use a wide range of secondary sources, such as historical analyses. This thesis argues that drawing upon the vast wealth of existing historical research allows for balance between the subjective elements of the memoirs to be weighed against the more objective outlook that is naturally gained from analysing the aggregate research done by professionals. To keep this thesis consistent, all of these sources will be looked at with a constructivist lens, which focuses on social construction, whilst aiming to select information which is relevant to the key research question and its sub questions. It is important to note that these sub questions are not answered in the order as shown above. This is done for the sake of comprehension and chronology: Byrnes and Kennan did not have directly comparable career trajectories, which means when doing a chronological analysis these sub questions are best asked of each individual in an order which matches the appropriate point in each person's career

¹¹ James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1947)

¹² James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime: James F. Byrnes* (New York: Harper, 1958)

¹³ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950* (London: Hutchinson, 1968)

Chapter Two: Historiography

Cold War historians have given a substantial range of views to account for the shift in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union following the end of the Second World War, which led to the Cold War. The earliest analysis of the origins of the conflict predominately places blame on the actions of the Soviet Union. These views came to be seen as orthodox or traditional views of the Cold War.¹⁴ Thomas A. Bailey's *America faces Russia* can be said to fall into this line of argument.¹⁵ However, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a second set of historians began to question the orthodox accounts for the Cold War's origins; in time, these historians came to be known as revisionists.¹⁶ Revisionist scholarship can be traced back to William A. Williams' *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. Williams' overall argument was that the United States rigidly followed a policy of economic expansion, particularly in Eastern European markets, which consequently led to hostile relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁷

Early revisionist arguments pertaining to Eastern European markets (such as the one postulated by Williams) were quickly challenged by orthodox writers. For example, Norman A. Graebner argues that the revisionists overlooked how the policy making process was driven by abstract ideals; he argues it was these ideals, rather than market forces, which were the true source of Soviet-American enmity.¹⁸ Even though revisionist arguments relating to markets were successfully countered by the late 1960s, other arguments brought forward by revisionists gained widespread attention. One line of argument adopted by revisionists in the mid-1960s was to claim that the use of the atomic bomb was to blame for the antagonistic Soviet-American relationship. These arguments were first articulated by Gar Alperovitz in *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*. He argues the bomb was used to pressurise the Soviet Union, which in turn made the Soviet Union react in a hostile manner.¹⁹ Arguments linking the Cold War and atomic energy became more nuanced in the early 1970s; Martin J. Sherwin points to the fact that the orthodox explanation for the use of the bomb (it was deployed to shorten the war) and that the revisionist view, that the bomb was used to display power to the Soviet Union, were not mutually exclusive.²⁰

¹⁴ I. A. Gwinn, *Towards a critical historiography of orthodox-revisionist debates on the origins of the cold war: between disciplinary power and U.S. national identity*. (The University of Birmingham, 2009), 1-10

¹⁵ Thomas A. Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to Our Day* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1950), 320

¹⁶ Melvyn P. Leffler & David S. Painter, *Origins of the Cold War*. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 161

¹⁸ Norman A. Graebner, *Cold War Diplomacy: American Foreign Policy 1945-1960*. (Princeton: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1962), 20

¹⁹ Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*. (London: Pluto Press, 1965), 289

²⁰ Martin J. Sherwin, *The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War: US Atomic Energy Policy and Diplomacy*,

As the 1970s progressed, scholarship regarding Soviet-American relations started to move away from realist frameworks, which focused on material explanations for phenomena, and returned to examining the non-material mind-set's of the mutually hostile actors. Arthur Schlesinger (an orthodox historian) was one of the first in the field to give serious and in-depth thought to the mentalities of both Soviet and American policy makers. Schlesinger's seminal paper, *Origins of the Cold War*, claims that Soviet-American hostilities were spurred by each party having an incompatible ideological background to the others'.²¹ His work can be distinguished from earlier scholarly work in that it goes beyond analysing abstract ideals by examining the mind-sets that lead to such ideals. Revisionists also began to examine the mentalities of policy makers on both sides of the Soviet-American relationship. To counter Schlesinger's claims, revisionist historians, such as David Horowitz, argue that an anti-Soviet mind-set existed within American policy elites irrespective of Soviet thought and action. Horowitz in his book, *From Yalta to Vietnam*, makes the diametrically opposite argument to Schlesinger: he claims that Stalin and the Soviet Union did not have a teleological approach to creating foreign policy; therefore, incompatible ideologies were not to blame.²²

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, revisionist tendencies to blame American foreign policy officials for causing the Cold War became even more extreme. Perhaps the most extreme revisionist account came from Gabriel and Joyce Kolko in *The Limits of Power: the World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*. The Kolkos (like earlier revisionist writers such as Williams) claim American economic expansion was responsible for the onset of the Cold War; however, unlike earlier revisionists, the Kolkos do not place an emphasis on Eastern European markets, instead they emphasise the potential military and industrial capital gained from antagonistic relations with the Soviet Union.²³ The same year the Kolkos released *The Limits of Power*, John Lewis Gaddis released *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*. Gaddis's work was considered to be highly influential in ushering in a new era of Cold War scholarship, which came to be known as post-revisionism.²⁴ Gaddis makes a much more nuanced argument concerning the origins of the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States. He argues that the origins of the Cold War could not be attributed to one side's failings over another's, rather it was a series of intricate and interrelated flaws which were present in both Soviet and American policy that

1941-1945,' *American Historical Review* 78, (October, 1973): 945-968. 964

²¹ Arthur Schlesinger Jr, 'Origins of the Cold War', *Foreign Affairs*. (October, 1967): 22-52. 26

²² David Horowitz, *From Yalta to Vietnam*. (Oxford: Penguin Books, 1969), 87

²³ Gabriel Kolko and Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power: the World and United States foreign policy, 1945-1954*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 621

²⁴ Michael J. Hogan, 'Corporatism: A Positive Appraisal', *Diplomatic History* (1986) 363-372. 363

led to a deterioration in their relationship.²⁵

Following on from Gaddis's work came Yergin's work: *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State*, which is the work being critiqued in this thesis.²⁶ In *Shattered Peace*, Yergin argues that the origins of the Cold War can be blamed on the actions of American foreign policy officials. Specifically, he places blame for the war on the combat between two rival modes of thought in American foreign policy circles: those who believed in cooperation with the Soviet Union, dubbed the Yalta axioms, and those who believed that this was not possible, dubbed the Riga axioms.²⁷ Yergin's work can be seen as a revisionist attempt to counter the post-revisionist wave of scholarship started by Gaddis. Specifically, this thesis argues that Yergin's work was a revisionist response to Gaddis's brand of post-revisionism as presented in *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*. Yergin challenges some of Gaddis's central claims: Gaddis argues that American policy makers had vastly overestimated the compatibility of Soviet and American ideology.²⁸ Yergin, on the other hand, disagrees and argues that since the 1920s a group of American foreign policy officials had been advocating "a policy of sophisticated anti-communism in an axiomatic form."²⁹ Contrary to Gaddis's argument, Yergin claims the change from President Roosevelt to President Truman triggered a change in American foreign policy.³⁰ Yergin portrays the death of Roosevelt as a critical moment, noting how Averell Harriman raced across the world to reach Truman before Molotov, the Russian Foreign Minister, so as to influence the new President. Furthermore, Yergin argues that "Roosevelt's death gave Churchill an opportunity to reassert his views."³¹

To summarize, there have been three main veins of academic argument aiming to explain the origins of the Cold War. The first vein, which is called orthodox, tries to attribute the origins of the Cold War to the actions of the Soviet Union. The second vein of argument, called revisionism, tends to place blame for the war on the United States. The third vein of scholarship, called post-revisionism, explicitly avoids blaming either side for the conflict, opting to see it as the result of inevitable misunderstandings. This thesis argues that Yergin's work is a revisionist response to post-revisionism.

²⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972)

²⁶ Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 20

²⁸ Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, 42

²⁹ Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War*, 18

³⁰ Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, 200

³¹ Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War*, 76-78

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework and Research Question

This thesis aims to use the theory of constructivism and the theory of epistemic communities to analyse and disprove Yergin's central thesis, which is that American policy towards the Soviet Union following the end of the Second World War was driven by a specialist group of individuals who subscribed to the Riga axioms. Therefore, this chapter will outline both constructivism and epistemic communities. Constructivism, as a theory, claims that meaning is something which is socially constructed. Concerning the basic defining features of constructivism, this thesis maintains the ones outlined within *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*.³²

Firstly, constructivism argues that interpretations of history, rhetoric and behaviour are factors which generate views on the status of relationships. Therefore, constructivism should be defined as an alternative to materialism, which fails to explain why certain states who pose materialist threats to each other have cordial relations. Nor does materialism explain why states with mutual material interests sometimes develop relationships of enmity. An example of this can be seen within the topic of this thesis: after the Second World War the United States and the Soviet Union could have mutually benefited from post-war agreements on trade and finance; however, they did not pursue an amiable course.³³ It is important to note, as Wendt does in *Constructing International Politics*, that being an alternative to materialism is not a rejection of objective reality or material factors. Wendt elaborates that unlike neo-realists (political theorists who primarily believe that states act in self-interest), "constructivists argue that material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded."³⁴

Secondly, constructivism aims to analyse the historical construction of state interests. This gives it a distinct advantage over realist analysis of events; Weldes elaborates this is due to the fact that "political realism deals with the perennial conditions that attend the conduct of statecraft, not with the specific conditions that confront the statesmen."³⁵ Realist theories, simply put, do not consider the effects of history on state officials when national interests are identified and pursued.³⁶ As this thesis assumes a constructivist epistemology, historical construction's influence on both Byrnes and

³² Smit, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, 298-310

³³ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941- 1947* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1972), 42

³⁴ Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995): 73, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539217>

³⁵ Jutta Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," *European Journal of International Relations* 2; 275 (1996): 278, accessed January 21, 2015, doi: 10.1177/1354066196002003001.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 278

Kennan must be examined to paint a proper constructivist picture of their motivations. Historical construction's influence can manifest in a number of different ways from personal experience to acquired historical metaphors. An example of a historical metaphor is the Munich analogy: the Munich analogy criticizes a soft approach to diplomacy by equating any act of diplomatic accommodation to the failed attempt to appease Hitler during his expansion into Czechoslovakia in 1938.³⁷ A precursory reading of Cold War literature shows this analogy was in use during the Truman administration.³⁸

Thirdly, constructivism claims that the relationship between structures and agents are mutually constituted. *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* defines structures as 'the institutions and shared meaning that make up the context of international action', and defines agents as, 'any entity that operates as an actor in that context.'³⁹ What this means in the simplest terms is that structures are the rules and limitations we infer from shared norms. Norms are the meanings we apply to certain actions; agents are those who act within these rules. Structures and agents are interdependent and therefore can change each other. From a constructivist perspective, past interactions are especially important to note when examining the interdependence of structures and agents. Wendt explains the role of history by saying,

“If past interactions have created a structure in which status quo states are divided or naive, revisionists will prosper and the system will tend toward a Hobbesian world in which power and self-interest rule. In contrast, if past interactions have created a structure in which status quo states trust and identify with each other, predators are more likely to face collective security responses like the Gulf War. History matters.”⁴⁰

Simply put, the past affects both structures and agents. This insight must be factored in when considering the formation of United States policy regarding the Soviet Union. Hurd notes that when American actions are seen as legitimate in the international context they are more likely to gain support.⁴¹ This tenant of constructivist thought manifests itself within this work in its attention to the way the United States considered international norms in its relations with the Soviet Union. For example, one constraint that is often mentioned in literature is the Declaration of Liberated Europe,

³⁷ George A Lanyi, “The Problem of Appeasement,” *World Politics*, Volume 15, Issue 02, (January 1963): 316 – 328, accessed January 21, 2015, DOI: 10.2307/2009378

³⁸ Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 57

³⁹ Smit and Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, 303

⁴⁰ Wendt, “Constructing International Politics”, 77

⁴¹ Ian Hurd, Breaking and Making Norms: American Revisionism and Crises of Legitimacy,” *International Politics*, 44 (2007): 194-213, accessed January 21, 2015, doi:10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800184

which was a pledge made by the allied powers to let the people of Europe create their own democratic institutions at the end of the war.⁴² This pledge can be seen as a pre-existing structure limiting the range of options foreign policy-makers had when Truman ascended to the Presidency.

The fourth and final defining feature of constructivism is that it sees multiple versions of the concept of anarchy. Anarchy, when defined by realists and neo-realists, is strictly defined as a social system which exists without legitimised institutions, lacking hierarchical structures of authority and command.⁴³ It is important to note that anarchy in this context is not unpredictability, as it is used in casual speech; rather, it is a system without a clear authority. Waltz and other neo-realists have claimed that the international system operates in this state of anarchy, and have inferred that this condition of anarchy leads to predictable behaviours by states. Waltz claims “internationally, the force of a state is employed for the sake of its own protection and advantage.” This self-help and self-interest model put forward by realists and neo-realists implies that states are in a constant state of ‘rivalry’.⁴⁴ However, constructivists have pointed out that this theory lacks explanatory power. If all states are indeed in a condition of rivalry, this would mean that from a single state's perspective all other states with larger material capabilities would be more threatening than states with proportionally smaller material capabilities. However, this simply does not reflect reality. Wendt demonstrates this by pointing out that “500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are friends of the United States and the North Koreans are not.”⁴⁵ Wendt explains in *Anarchy is what States make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, that anarchy has no logic except in the practises that create one structure or identity over another.⁴⁶

When trying to apply this kind of constructivist analysis to Byrnes and Kennan a secondary problem with Yergin’s terminology arises: Yergin does not clearly define the characteristics of the group which subscribed to and propagated the Riga axioms; he simply states that they “advocated a policy of sophisticated anticommunism in an axiomatic form”.⁴⁷ After mentioning this Yergin tends to refer to the axioms as an agent. He fails to clearly distinguish what made those propagating the Riga axioms a ‘they,’ beyond a shared geographic location. This thesis seeks to give the group associated with the Riga axioms a much stricter definition. It does so because when the group itself

⁴² James R. Arnold & Roberta Wiener, *Cold War: The Essential Reference Guide* (Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 249

⁴³ Smit and Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, 304

⁴⁴ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 112.

⁴⁵ Wendt, “Constructing International Politics”, 73

⁴⁶ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2. (Spring, 1992): 395, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858>

⁴⁷ Ibid., 20

is more clearly identified it makes it easier to test the notion that a group subscribing to the Riga-axioms affected Byrnes's and Kennan's careers whilst promoting an anti-Soviet stance in the Truman administration. To achieve this, this thesis has opted to use the theory of epistemic communities to define the propagators of Yergin's Riga axioms. It does so because this thesis argues that the concept of an epistemic community not only fits within the parameters of Yergin's conception of the Riga axioms but actually defines the group which propagated them.

This thesis will use the definition of epistemic communities given by Peter M. Haas. He outlines them as, "networks of knowledge-based experts proposing specific policies, and identifying salient points for negotiation."⁴⁸ Haas claims that policy makers turn to epistemic communities in times of uncertainty, which is relevant as uncertainty was a defining feature of US foreign policy following the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt; Truman by his own admission felt somewhat under-prepared for the task of the presidency, particularly foreign policy formation.⁴⁹

Haas outlines four key defining features of an epistemic community. Firstly, they share a set of normative and principled beliefs. Secondly, epistemic communities share causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practises, leading or contributing to a set of problems in their area, which then serve as the basis for clarifying links between policy actions and outcomes. Thirdly, they share notions of validity, which they inter-subjectively define. Finally, they use a common set of practices which their efforts are directed towards.⁵⁰ This thesis will apply these definitions of an epistemic community in relation to the Riga axioms to see if Yergin's narrative regarding Byrnes and Kennan is correct. Henceforth in this thesis the Riga axioms (the ideas) will be separated from the prospect of a Riga epistemic community (a collective who promoted these ideas). With this definition clarified a constructivist analysis of James F. Byrnes and George F. Kennan can be done.

⁴⁸ Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,"

⁴⁹ Melvyn P. Leffler, "The emergence of American Grand Strategy, 1945-1952," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 67

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

Chapter Four: The Rise of James F. Byrnes

This chapter will use a constructivist lens in order to tackle the sub question, “*How did James F. Byrnes come to his position of power?*” Specifically, it shall analyse how James F. Byrnes came to be elevated to the position of Secretary of State. It will do so in order to show that Yergin overemphasises Byrnes’s connection to the Yalta axioms. When examining Byrnes’s appointment as Secretary of State, contradictions quickly emerge. Conflicting accounts of Truman's selection of Byrnes exist. Admiral William D. Leahy claimed that Truman had already decided on replacing Stettinius with Byrnes when he ascended to office on the 12th of April, 1945.⁵¹ However, Miles S. Richards in *James F. Byrnes on Foreign Policy*, points to the fact that Truman had told a correspondent at TIME that he was not considering Byrnes for that position at all and argues that he changed his mind later due to key Democratic senators claiming Byrnes was their preferred choice.⁵² When tackling this question it immediately becomes apparent that James F. Byrnes was not an obvious candidate for Secretary of State. Byrnes was an odd choice as he did not have any history of being a foreign affairs expert. In fact, in the Senate, Byrnes spent most of his time focusing on domestic issues; his foreign policy involvement being nothing more than a strong anti-isolationist sentiment.⁵³

Why then did Truman give the position to Byrnes? To answer this question satisfactorily a constructivist perspective has been taken, which accounts for interpersonal history. This chapter has done so by focusing on two key areas of Byrnes’s personal history preceding his appointment. The first is Byrnes’s and Truman's personal history together. The second area is Byrnes's role at the Yalta Conference. Though Byrnes was considered an unlikely choice for Secretary of State, (humorously) he seemed a much more probable candidate for the position of President. Robert L. Messer, in *The End of an Alliance*, highlights how Byrnes was a much stronger candidate to be Roosevelt's running mate than Truman for the Presidential election of 1944; Roosevelt himself assured Byrnes that he would win if he ran for the Democratic Vice Presidential position.⁵⁴ Yet in the end it was Truman, a stranger to the President, who won the position that Byrnes had coveted.⁵⁵ Roosevelt chose the unknown Truman over Byrnes due to Byrnes's poor track record regarding race relations: Roosevelt

⁵¹ Robert L. Messer, *The End of an Alliance, James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman and the Origins of the Cold War* (NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 66.

⁵² Miles S. Richards, “James F. Byrnes on Foreign Policy,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (Jan., 1991), 35

⁵³ Jukka Leinonen, “*The Beginning of the Cold War as a Phenomenon of Realpolitik – U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes in the Field of Power Politics 1945 – 1947.*” (PhD diss., University of Jyväskylä, 2012), 53

⁵⁴ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 22

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 27

did not wish to lose the Presidency by choosing Byrnes, who in the eyes of many was a racist.⁵⁶ Therefore, some tactical manoeuvring was done at the Democratic Convention to exclude Byrnes in favour of Truman.⁵⁷ This political manoeuvre deeply wounded Byrnes and left him bitter.⁵⁸ This dynamic is important because Truman felt guilt over this manoeuvre as he felt he owed Byrnes a debt: when Truman was a new Senator he frequently consulted the much more senior Byrnes to learn the ropes of Washington.⁵⁹ This view was supported by Byrnes's special aide, Charles Bohlen, who in his memoirs, claims that Byrnes's appointment was due to "Truman's debt of honor."⁶⁰ Messer's work also promotes the view that honour played a part in Byrnes's appointment as Secretary of State.⁶¹

However, it is incredibly improbable that Truman selected Byrnes solely out of a sense of guilt alone. This thesis argues the key to Byrnes's appointment was his involvement at the Yalta Conference. When Truman ascended to the Presidency he despairingly stated, "Everyone around here that should know something about foreign affairs is out."⁶² However, one thing Truman would have known is that Byrnes had been at the Yalta Conference. The Yalta Conference had been a critical one: at Yalta, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill seriously began working on the shape of the peace to come following the end of the war. Byrnes was initially reluctant and somewhat surprised that he had been asked to attend the conference, as at the time he was the Director of the Office of War Mobilization, which meant he could not easily leave Washington.⁶³ In this role Byrnes had unparalleled control over the wartime economy of the United States. In fact, the press had dubbed him "Assistant President for the Home Front."⁶⁴

Reluctant as he was to go, it was on the foundation of his Yalta visit that Byrnes built his reputation as one knowledgeable on the Soviet Union. This is one factor that subsequently led to his appointment as Secretary of State.⁶⁵ Important details can be gleaned from studying Byrnes's first set of memoirs. He recounts that on the transatlantic journey to the Yalta conference, he got the impression that, "the President had made little preparation for the Yalta conference."⁶⁶ Byrnes paid particular attention to the briefing materials provided by the State Department. In his memoirs he

⁵⁶ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 55

⁵⁷ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 4

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 16

⁵⁹ Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: Norton, 1973), 243-246

⁶⁰ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 93

⁶¹ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 12-16

⁶² *Ibid.*, 53

⁶³ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 55

⁶⁴ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 21

⁶⁵ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 57

⁶⁶ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 23

states “When I saw some of these splendid studies I greatly regretted that they had not been considered on board ship.”⁶⁷ This thesis argues that Byrnes's perceived expertise primarily comes from his legalistic consumption of these documents. Messer uses this instance as an opportunity to demonstrate a fundamental difference between Byrnes and Roosevelt. He concludes that Byrnes's view of the Yalta Conference was “almost exclusively defined by his independent reading of the State Department's pre-conference position papers.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, Messer argues that Byrnes had overlooked the fact that Roosevelt acted as his own Secretary of State, and State Department.⁶⁹ Therefore, to a large degree these documents were redundant.

Byrnes, in his memoirs, shows a self-conception as one of the President's closest advisers.⁷⁰ However, some historians point to the fact that this was highly unlikely. For example, Leinonen argues that Byrnes's ability to manipulate and influence the President was probably limited.⁷¹ Supporting this view, Messer argues that Byrnes was simply at Yalta as a part of Roosevelt's strategy to lobby Congress and to sell to the public the agreements decided upon at Yalta, and that his appearance at the conference “was primarily aesthetic”.⁷² If it is the case that Byrnes was at Yalta only for cosmetic purposes, it is critical to examine not only what Byrnes observed at Yalta but also what he did not observe, so as to gain an understanding of his social construction of the Yalta axioms. In his first set of memoirs Byrnes argues that “our chief objective for the conference was to secure agreement on the Dumbarton Oaks proposal for the *creation of an international peace organization* (emphasis mine), but the rapid advance of our armies required also that urgent consideration be given to European political and military problems.”⁷³ Messer argues, “Byrnes left Yalta largely ignorant of its military importance. Either because of his preparation or Roosevelt's deliberate exclusion.”⁷⁴ Theoharis corroborates this view by noting that: “In February 1945 Byrnes did not know the specifics of the Yalta Far Eastern agreements. He had not participated in any of the Yalta meetings when the Far East was discussed.”⁷⁵

Byrnes's ignorance of the Far Eastern agreements meant that he perceived the conference to be euro-centric in nature and primarily concerned with building the machinery of peace. All this evidence builds a picture which calls into question Yergin's conception of Byrnes as someone

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 40

⁶⁹ Ibid., 40

⁷⁰ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 20-25

⁷¹ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 78

⁷² Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 37-38

⁷³ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 24

⁷⁴ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 45

⁷⁵ Athan Theoharis, “James F. Byrnes: Unwitting Myth-Maker,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (Dec., 1966), 584-585

caught between the Yalta and Riga axioms. It appears that Byrnes barely understood the Yalta Conference, let alone the Yalta axioms and their creator. Even regarding euro-centric issues Byrnes seems to have missed some key details. For instance, Byrnes noted that, “during all the consideration of the German question at Yalta, reparations were the chief interest of the Soviet delegation.”⁷⁶ However, Byrnes's memoirs fails to mention, due to his lack of knowledge, that Stettinius had provisionally agreed to discuss reparations for the Soviets from the Germans in the amount of \$20 billion, which was considered to be reasonable.⁷⁷

This is not to say that all the observations made by Byrnes were distorted. He made some astute observations regarding Poland. His original notes from the Yalta Conference show that he heard Stalin argue the case

“For the Russian people the question of Poland is not only a question of honor but also a question of security... not only because it is on our frontier but because Poland in history was always the corridor through which the enemy passed into Russia.”⁷⁸

This led him to conclude in his 1947 memoirs that “Not only Poland's boundaries but Poland itself was one of the serious issues of the entire conference.”⁷⁹ This was a very astute observation as Poland did in fact become one of the tinder blocks which helped to ignite the Cold War.⁸⁰ What Byrnes did not realise about Poland was that Roosevelt was completely willing to concede the Soviet Union a sphere of influence which included Poland, just not publicly.⁸¹

Byrnes's memoirs also demonstrate his awareness of the Soviet Union's puppet regimes, “the truth is the Soviet Republics are no more independent than the states of our union.”⁸² His memorandum attached to his Yalta Conference minutes shows the long term consistency of this view. The memorandum informed Truman that Byrnes had urged Roosevelt to persuade Stalin to withdraw his request for the Soviet republics to have a vote in the assembly of the United Nations.⁸³ As this memo was given to Truman very soon after Roosevelt's death, and before relations with the Soviet

⁷⁶ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 26

⁷⁷ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 48

⁷⁸ James F. Byrnes, *The Crimean Conference : Minutes of Meetings*, February 5-9, 1945, Map Room Messages of President Truman, Reel 2, 0837, Roosevelt Study Centre.

⁷⁹ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 31

⁸⁰ Lynn E. Davis, *The Cold War Begins: Soviet American Conflict Over East Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 3

⁸¹ Martin McCauley, *Origins of the Cold War 1941-49*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 108

⁸² Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 40

⁸³ Byrnes, *The Crimean Conference : Minutes of Meetings*, February 5-9, 1945, Map Room Messages of President Truman, Reel 2, 0811, Roosevelt Study Centre.

Union truly deteriorated, there would be no need for Byrnes to stress his concerns about Soviet puppet regimes. It is important to note, Byrnes's memoirs are not entirely unsympathetic to the Soviet Union. In response to Stalin's comment that "diverse interests tend to divide allies", Byrnes concedes that all parties had some legitimate and understandable self-interest.⁸⁴

So, it can be ascertained from Byrnes's Yalta Conference minutes and his memoirs that he was involved in or at least present at some key discussions, primarily those regarding what would come to be the United Nations and the future of Europe (particularly Poland.)⁸⁵ However, though these meetings were important, they most certainly did not give Byrnes a comprehensive understanding of the conference. In fact, of the eight formal sessions Byrnes only attended four.⁸⁶ Yet, the most salient fact to mention is that Byrnes was either excluded from or did not attend any of the morning or noontime foreign ministers meetings.⁸⁷ Therefore, Byrnes's construction and scope of understanding on the Yalta Conference was significantly skewed. Truman knew none of this when he ascended to the Presidency. From Truman's perspective Byrnes's notes from the conference were of great importance, as they were the only verbatim record of the meetings between Roosevelt, Truman and Stalin.⁸⁸

As stated above, Byrnes's appearance at the conference was primarily a cosmetic one and his role was to lobby Congress.⁸⁹ This then leads to the question as to why Roosevelt would select Byrnes. To answer this it is important to take into account that Roosevelt was trying to avoid the pitfalls encountered by President Woodrow Wilson in his attempts to get Senate Republicans to work with him in the establishment of an international organization.⁹⁰ Therefore, Roosevelt needed someone who had two key qualities: firstly, someone who shared his Wilsonian ideals and secondly, someone who was a tenacious Senate negotiator. Byrnes was both of these things. Leinonen draws particular attention to the fact that Byrnes was a noted and loyal follower of Woodrow Wilson in the Senate.⁹¹ Indeed, Messer highlights that Byrnes characterized himself, after 1919, as a Wilsonian internationalist.⁹² Byrnes's ability as a negotiator and salesman cannot be overstated; he had built up excellent credit with many senators by his willingness to compromise in the past. Byrnes himself

⁸⁴ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 44

⁸⁵ Byrnes, *The Crimean Conference : Minutes of Meetings*, February 5-9, 1945, Map Room Messages of President Truman, Reel 2, 0809-0843, Roosevelt Study Centre.

⁸⁶ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 78

⁸⁷ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 48

⁸⁸ Robert H. Ferrell, *Harry S. Truman* (Washington: CQ Press, 2003), 230

⁸⁹ Theoharis, "James F. Byrnes: Unwitting Myth-Maker," 583

⁹⁰ Wilson D. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima, and the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 62

⁹¹ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 5

⁹² Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 32

identifies this characteristic in his second set of memoirs by stating, “all relationships in life and happiness can be achieved only by a willingness to make concessions... the art of legislating is the art of intelligent compromise.”⁹³ Messer identifies that “one reporter estimated that, as a result of his private meetings with Senate and House members, individually and in groups... Byrnes had delivered his reports on Yalta to “at least three fourths of the Senate.”⁹⁴ Byrnes prolific ability to lobby was demonstrative of his salesmanship.

Having understood why Byrnes was selected as an observer, and how Roosevelt potentially steered him, it becomes easier to see why Byrnes only got a partial view of the Yalta Conference, and how his social interaction and thus his social construction of the conference was formed.⁹⁵ The crucial thing Byrnes misunderstood was that the conference was as much about military strategy in the ongoing war as it was about international order. This is highlighted by Theoharis in his paper, *James F. Byrnes: Unwitting Yalta Myth-Maker*, in which he argues that Byrnes's lack of knowledge of the Yalta Far Eastern Agreements seriously distorted Byrnes's understanding of Yalta.⁹⁶ Byrnes then passed his distorted interpretation of Yalta onto the American public, which had severe implications for the Soviet-American relations.⁹⁷ He transferred his misguided confidence to the American people through his first post-Yalta speech; in this speech Byrnes began by asserting that the Declaration on Liberated Europe was the keystone of allied post-war unity.⁹⁸ Byrnes's announcement was met with great positivity from the general public even though this was a catastrophic misunderstanding of the true purpose of the conference. Messer shows that the State Department was aware of Byrnes's misinterpretation and its effects at the time. A State department summary on the public reaction concluded that “public ignorance concerning the actual decisions of the Crimea declaration is colossal.”⁹⁹ This ignorant view with its focus on a liberated Europe undoubtedly meant that the American public were destined to see the future actions of Soviet government as duplicitous as opposed to consistent with their sphere of influence tactics.

Nevertheless, this misinterpretation was the shaky foundation which Byrnes used to come to his position of influence. When Roosevelt died on the 12th of April, 1945, Byrnes capitalized on the moment by immediately sending a message to Truman offering his support. Even before Truman received this message he had told James Forrestal that he wanted to see Byrnes “first thing in the

⁹³ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime: James F. Byrnes*, 5

⁹⁴ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 62

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 69

⁹⁶ Theoharis, “James F. Byrnes: Unwitting Myth-Maker,” 583

⁹⁷ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 45

⁹⁸ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 60

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 61

morning”.¹⁰⁰ Byrnes recalls in his second set of memoirs how Truman, “was overwhelmed by the task that had developed so suddenly on him”.¹⁰¹

The most illuminating evidence for the view that Byrnes sold himself as an expert comes in his 1947 memoirs. Byrnes states that after taking Roosevelt's body to Hyde Park on the 14th of April,

“On the train returning to Washington the President and I discussed many matters. As I had been out of the White House only for a few days, I was able to acquaint him with the status of many serious problems in our foreign and domestic relations. The following day he told me he wished to appoint me Secretary of State.”¹⁰²

This recollection shows that Byrnes understood the new President's lack of confidence. Byrnes used Truman's lack of confidence to position himself to take the role of Secretary of State. He did this by overemphasising his knowledge of American foreign policy directives, particularly those concerning Yalta. Had Truman taken the time to consult the State Department he would have been given a more complete account of the Yalta Conference.¹⁰³ However, Truman did not trust the State Department experts, so he relied upon Byrnes, thus making Byrnes the second most powerful man in America.¹⁰⁴

To conclude, this chapter sought to answer the sub question, *How did James F. Byrnes come to his position of power?* A constructivist analysis notes two primary factors involved in Byrnes's rise to power. Firstly, it discovered that Byrnes's personal history with Truman meant that Truman was more likely to give Byrnes the position of Secretary of State. Secondly, Byrnes's participation at the Yalta Conference meant that he could claim foreign policy legitimacy. Some of these details are covered in Yergin's book; however, he only briefly sketches them out.¹⁰⁵ This analysis reveals that Byrnes's knowledge of the Yalta Conference was extremely skewed due to his very narrow set of interactions. In fact Byrnes and Roosevelt had very different conceptions of Yalta, which means Yergin's claim that Byrnes was stuck between the Yalta axioms and the Riga axioms must be called into question. Yergin treats the Yalta axioms as the product of Roosevelt's own views, yet clearly Byrnes and Roosevelt subjectively experienced Yalta in completely different ways.

¹⁰⁰ Arnold A. Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 24

¹⁰¹ James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 280

¹⁰² Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 49

¹⁰³ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 69

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 69

¹⁰⁵ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 110-111

Chapter Five: Byrnes's Perception of the Soviet Union

This chapter uses a constructivist lens to analyse how James F. Byrnes came to view the Soviet Union. It will do so in order to tackle the sub question; “*To what extent was Byrnes's view of the Soviet Union the product of social construction?*” This thesis argues Byrnes's opinion of the Soviet Union had more to do with interpersonal social construction than a set of axioms as Yergin would argue.

One key difference between Byrnes's views towards the Soviet Union compared to others associated with a potential Riga epistemic community is that he was never too pessimistic. Especially when compared to figures such as Kennan. Soon after his secretaryship, Byrnes came to a fixed stance on Soviet-American relations: he advocated firmness but with the aim of minimizing conflicts.¹⁰⁶ In short, he believed the Soviet Union and the United States could reach some kind of amicable compromise. This of course was consistent with Byrnes's reputation as a compromiser. However, it was precisely for this reason that Byrnes's appointment as Secretary of State was met with criticism, particularly from Arthur H. Vandenberg (Vandenberg was a powerful Republican Senator and influential member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.)¹⁰⁷ Despite his optimistic outlook in 1947, Byrnes is primarily remembered as one of the principal forces in kick-starting a 'get tough' policy with the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁸

His first official foray onto the battlefield of international politics was at the Potsdam conference. The Potsdam conference was the first post-Roosevelt meeting of the leaders of the Grand Alliance. It was still very early into Truman's presidency and the new President was still insecure in his position; in fact, he was positively loathed to go.¹⁰⁹ Byrnes, contrastingly, was enthusiastic in his new role given that the President was giving him a lot of latitude.¹¹⁰ As Leinonen highlights, this is where Roosevelt's mixed legacy impacted Byrnes the most: the Wilsonian aspects of Roosevelt's legacy Byrnes could accept, the other parts he could not. He was unprepared for and unaware of the more problematic power politics that Roosevelt and the Soviets had been using.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 44

¹⁰⁷ Thomas M. Hill, “Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the Politics of Bipartisanship, and the Origins of Anti-Soviet Consensus, 1941-1946”, *World Affairs*, 235

¹⁰⁸ Gregg Herkin, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb in the Cold War, 1945- 1950* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 182

¹⁰⁹ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 34

¹¹⁰ Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima and the Cold War*, 173

¹¹¹ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 66

As stated earlier, Byrnes had a very misconstrued view of the Yalta conference: he believed the issues were primarily about the building of international order. However, both Molotov and Stalin had no interest in international order and assumed that Roosevelt's quid pro quo approach would continue at Potsdam.¹¹² Unfortunately, the new President was not a maverick like the old one; he did not talk international order and power politics at the same time.¹¹³ Byrnes too was unprepared for what the Russians saw as continuity. In his memoirs he recalls that when discussions turned to the topic of submitting the forthcoming treaties to the UN, "Stalin said this was superfluous and the powers present at Potsdam would represent the interests of all."¹¹⁴ This disregard for the will of nations most probably shocked both Truman and Byrnes. This of course led Byrnes to believe that the Soviets had changed tracks since Yalta, when actually it could be argued that it was the United States which was changing its ways because of Truman and Byrnes. At Potsdam, Byrnes became suspicious of Soviet interests, "their effort to secure possession of Italian colonies in the Mediterranean convinced me their talk of security was pure hypocrisy."¹¹⁵ On the other hand, at this point Byrnes argued that he "possessed no sympathy for the more hard-line attitude that certain State Department officials aimed toward the Soviet Union."¹¹⁶ His mixed attitude was probably a reflection of the advice of his retinue mixing with his own sense of optimism. Indeed, one of his chief advisers was Charles E. Bohlen, whom Yergin identifies with the anti-Soviet Riga axioms.¹¹⁷

This thesis theorises that Bohlen probably encouraged Byrnes not to compromise on any American proposal and to reject any talk of spheres of influence. It argues this case because Bohlen was intimately linked with the anti-Soviet group Yergin associates with the Riga axioms.¹¹⁸ Byrnes eventually came to see this position as getting tough. However, Byrnes was clearly negotiating toughly from a position of ignorance. Leinonen highlights that the correspondence between Byrnes and Harriman show that Byrnes was oblivious to the supplementary protocols of the Far Eastern Treaties.¹¹⁹ Theoharis supports this position by pointing out that Byrnes himself admitted to only seeing the Far Eastern protocols on returning from Yalta.¹²⁰ Difficulties at Potsdam were exacerbated by other issues as well, such as reparations. Neither side could agree on a suitable reparations amount. In the end a tentative compromise was reached where the Soviets could take

¹¹² Ibid., 110

¹¹³ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 72

¹¹⁴ James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 293

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 295

¹¹⁶ Wilson D. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman*, 181

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 180

¹¹⁸ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 28

¹¹⁹ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 119

¹²⁰ Theoharis, "James F. Byrnes: Unwitting Myth-Maker," 587

reparations from their own zone.¹²¹ Byrnes achieved this by packaging this problem with an agreement on both the Polish westward border and the recognition of Italy in the United Nations.¹²² When analysing an exchange between Senator Warren R. Austin, following the conference, it can be seen that Byrnes chose a package deal because he believed “the only way to negotiate with the Russians is to hit them hard, and then negotiate.”¹²³

The tough stance taken at Potsdam also appears to strongly correlate with the development of the atomic bomb. Initially, the primary American objective at Potsdam was securing Soviet participation in the war effort against Japan.¹²⁴ Stalin on the first day of the conference committed the Soviet Union to the war by the 15th of August at latest. This was a ruthlessly efficient accomplishment of a major objective, Truman even privately joked that they could go home having achieved this.¹²⁵ However, the following day Truman became aware that the atomic bomb test had worked. This immediately reversed his thinking. In his diary Truman wrote that, “Believe Japs will fold up before Russia comes in. I am sure they will when Manhattan appears over their homeland. I shall inform Stalin about it at an opportune time.”¹²⁶ Byrnes was equally enthusiastic about the atomic bomb, yet he was more apprehensive about informing the Soviets. For example, before the conference George C. Marshall had suggested Soviet delegates be invited for the test detonation in Alamogordo but Byrnes used his prerogative to block discussion about Stalin being informed about the existence of the bomb before it was used.¹²⁷

Byrnes was also trepidatious regarding Soviet involvement in the Far East. He argues in his 1947 memoirs that “I must admit that in view of what we knew of the Soviet actions in Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria, I would have been satisfied had the Russians determined not to enter the war... I believed the atomic bomb would be successful and would force the Japanese to accept surrender on our terms.”¹²⁸ Messer gives support to the validity of Byrnes's retrospective claim by drawing focus to how his receptiveness to Joseph E. Davis's conciliatory approach towards the Soviets changed during the Potsdam conference; Davis came to discuss his fears about the deterioration of relations

¹²¹ Roger S. Whitcomb, *The Cold War in Retrospect: The Formative Years* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 36

¹²² United States Department of State, *Foreign relations of the United States : Diplomatic Papers : the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), 1945* Volume II (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945), accessed online, July 31st 2015, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1945Berlinv02>, 503

¹²³ Thomas G. Paterson, “Potsdam, the Atomic Bomb, and the Cold War: A Discussion with James F. Byrnes,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol 41, No. 2 (May, 1972), 228

¹²⁴ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 113

¹²⁵ Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*, 198

¹²⁶ Harry S. Truman Library, Papers of Harry S. Truman. Diary, July 17, box 333, president's secretary files, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/truman-diary/> (accessed March 15, 2015)

¹²⁷ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 87

¹²⁸ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 208

between the United States and the Soviet Union, yet he found that Byrnes's attitude had changed dramatically since they had last spoke, Davis attributed this to the successful development of the New Mexico bomb test.¹²⁹

The atomic revelation provided Truman and Byrnes with the gusto they needed to push the package deal as they no longer needed nor desired Soviet assistance. Even though this gusto was seen to make the package deal a success, closer inspection shows, despite Byrnes's tactical manoeuvre, key issues were yet to be discussed and had been deferred. Therefore, a Council of Foreign Ministers was created to deal with all deferred problems. Byrnes personally took credit for the inception of this institution.¹³⁰ Despite its problems, Byrnes left the Potsdam Conference in a hopeful and optimistic mood. In his memoirs he notes: “we considered the conference a success. We firmly believed that the agreements reached would provide a basis for the early restoration of stability to Europe.”¹³¹ However, this optimism was to be short lived due to the serious fractures which emerged at the London Conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

The London Conference began on the 11th of September, 1945 at Lancaster House, yet it ended in failure by the 2nd of October, 1945.¹³² When looking for probable causes it is important to note that Byrnes was accompanied by John Foster Dulles, who became known for proposing adversarial methods with the Soviet Union; the term Cold Warrior has been used to define his stance.¹³³ It can be postulated that Dulles stoked Byrnes to be more combative with the Soviets. Byrnes’s report of the conference supports this position, “He has been more than an adviser; he has been a partner.”¹³⁴ This again points to Byrnes’s interaction with Soviet officials being influenced by the opinions of anti-Soviet American officials. Though Dulles was not directly associated with the Riga axioms, he appears to have shared similar beliefs, and it is likely he would have exchanged ideas with Bohlen.¹³⁵

Byrnes attributed the failure of the London conference to Molotov's focus on Japan, which was not a part of the conference agenda, and due to his insistence that China and France be excluded from

¹²⁹ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 107

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 70

¹³¹ James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 313

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Mark G. Toulouse, “The Development of a Cold Warrior: John Foster Dulles and the Soviet Union, 1945 – 1952” *American Presbyterians*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (FALL 1985), pp. 309-322

¹³⁴ Avalon Project of Yale Law School “First Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, London , September 11 to October 2, 1945” http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade18.asp (accessed June 30, 2015)

¹³⁵ Toulouse, “The Development of a Cold Warrior: John Foster Dulles and the Soviet Union, 1945 – 1952” 309-322

the conference.¹³⁶ In his 1958 memoirs Byrnes offers further explanations, putting an emphasis on discussions regarding Eastern Europe, particularly on the topics of securing free elections for Bulgaria, and on the validity of the Groza regime in Romania.¹³⁷ This thesis argues Byrnes neglects to mention that some of the problems at the London Conference were in part due to his gross misunderstanding of Roosevelt's objectives at Yalta. In his report on the London Conference, Byrnes states that “The Yalta Declaration on the liberated and ex-satellite countries was based on a proposal submitted by President Roosevelt...That policy sponsored by President Roosevelt was America's policy and remains America's policy.”¹³⁸ As this thesis has shown, Byrnes’s interpretation of Yalta was actually based on Roosevelt's machinations to lobby Congress.¹³⁹ In his memoirs Byrnes notes that,

“Mr Molotov had concluded that I was unfriendly to Russia, and he declared that our policy had changed since President Roosevelt's death...He could not understand why we would not accept his interpretation that “friendship” between our governments required that we let the Soviets establish complete suzerainty over the Balkan states.”¹⁴⁰

This interpretation of Molotov, in Byrnes's memoirs, clearly shows that Byrnes himself was not fully aware that policy had in fact changed. This meant that from Molotov's perspective it was the Americans who were renegeing on their implicit agreements. Therefore, on an interpersonal level they both acted with hostility towards each other. In fact, Messer highlights that Byrnes personally blamed Molotov for a breakdown at the conference and claimed that he was a Hitler-like figure.¹⁴¹ However, it is important to note that Molotov was indeed reacting in a hostile manner. This thesis identifies two reasons as to why Molotov would have become hostile at the conference. The first reason had nothing to do with Byrnes himself, rather it relates to a previous encounter that had taken place between President Truman and Molotov: on the 23rd of April, 1945, Molotov visited the White House en route to the San Francisco Conference; no doubt Molotov thought this would be nothing more than a ceremonial visit.¹⁴² However, this meeting turned out to be an utter disaster. At the meeting Truman confronted Molotov aggressively, which Molotov was completely unprepared

¹³⁶ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 102 – 103

¹³⁷ James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 314

¹³⁸ Avalon Project of Yale Law School “First Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers” http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade18.asp (accessed June 30, 2015)

¹³⁹ Theoharis, “James F. Byrnes: Unwitting Myth-Maker,” 583

¹⁴⁰ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 104 -105

¹⁴¹ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 134

¹⁴² Richard S. Kirkendall, *The Civil Liberties Legacy of Harry S. Truman* (Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2012). 119

for.¹⁴³ Before Molotov even reached Washington, Truman conferred with Stettinius, Stimson and Forrestal.¹⁴⁴ It is important to note that Forrestal in particular is associated with an anti-Soviet position.¹⁴⁵ When Molotov met Truman, the President went on to insist that the United States had gone as far as it could to meet Soviet demands over Poland; he was swift to dismiss Molotov's attempts to explain Soviet security concerns.¹⁴⁶ In the end Molotov was so shocked by Truman's treatment of him that he said, "I have never been talked to like that in my life."¹⁴⁷ The President's attack was so extreme that even a staunch anti-Soviet like Averell Harriman regretted that the altercation had taken place.¹⁴⁸ Though not present for it, Byrnes was aware of the incident. In his first set of memoirs he simply states "I learned upon my return from Washington, it was not a very harmonious meeting and ended rather abruptly."¹⁴⁹ This thesis postulates that Molotov was bitter about his altercation with Truman, yet could not attempt any kind of reprisal against the President, as Stalin was the only Soviet representative of equal rank. Therefore, Molotov redirected his animosity towards Byrnes.

The second reason for Molotov's hostility at the London Conference was due to Byrnes's attempt to use the atomic bomb to apply diplomatic pressure. Messer discusses how both General Marshall and Secretary of War Stimson were in agreement that the atomic weapon would have little diplomatic value in affecting Soviet ambitions. John Lewis Gaddis makes the case that Byrnes did not share this perspective, in *We now Know* he argues that Byrnes believed that he could use the implicit threat of the bomb to make the Soviets conform to American objectives.¹⁵⁰ However, some historians, such as Wilson D. Miscamble, contest this view by arguing that atomic diplomacy was never a serious gambit.¹⁵¹ This thesis agrees with Gaddis's interpretation, because prominent figures such as atomic scientist Leo Szilard, who was a member of the Manhattan Project, argued that Byrnes was a key proponent of Atomic Diplomacy.¹⁵² Whatever the case, Molotov was unmoved and unimpressed. Molotov even jokingly asked if Byrnes had "an atomic bomb in his side

¹⁴³ Henry H. Adams, *Witness to Power: The Life of Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy* (Michigan: The Naval Institute Press, 1985), 284

¹⁴⁴ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 287

¹⁴⁵ Su-Mi Lee, "Understanding the Yalta and Riga axioms and Riga Axioms through the Belief Systems of the Advocacy Coalition Framework" *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 11 (2015): 303

¹⁴⁶ Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953*, 33

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 33

¹⁴⁸ William Averell Harriman, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946* (New York: Random House, 1975), 454

¹⁴⁹ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 61

¹⁵⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 89

¹⁵¹ Wilson D. Miscamble, *The Most Controversial Decision: Truman, the Atomic Bombs, and the Defeat of Japan* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 129

¹⁵² Christos Frentzos and Antonio Thompson, *The Routledge Handbook of American Military and Diplomatic History* (New York, Routledge, 2013), 147

pocket?”¹⁵³ Therefore, Byrnes was forced to pursue more conventional diplomatic measures. However, as Messer points out, Byrnes was not alone and was accompanied by John Foster Dulles, who was in no mood to compromise.¹⁵⁴ Dulles equated compromise with Molotov with appeasing Hitler.¹⁵⁵ This meant Byrnes was put in a position where he could not work with the Molotov.¹⁵⁶ As the conference came to deadlock, Byrnes decided it was best to try to appeal to Stalin himself.¹⁵⁷

In his 1947 memoirs Byrnes claimed that, “I believed that if we met in Moscow, where I would have a chance to talk to Stalin, we might remove the barriers to the peace treaties... so, against the advice of diplomats and columnists, I went to Moscow.”¹⁵⁸ It is important to note, as Messer does, that Walter J. Brown's diary proves that Byrnes decided to appeal directly to Stalin on the 18th of September, 1945, which was two weeks before the end of the London Conference. Yet in his memoirs Byrnes portrays the decision as one he made carefully after some deliberation.¹⁵⁹ Byrnes used Harriman to send word to Molotov that the meetings of the big three (excluding France and China) were to continue in Moscow.¹⁶⁰ Byrnes's memoirs show he went to Moscow with four key issues in mind. Firstly, he wanted to resume negotiations on the peace treaties. Secondly, he wanted to get the Soviets to cooperate in creating a commission of the United Nations for international control of atomic energy. Thirdly, he wanted to establish democratic governments in the Balkans. Finally, he wanted the Soviet Union to withdraw from Iran.¹⁶¹ When examining the original diplomatic papers from the Moscow Conference it can be seen that in Byrnes's negotiations with Molotov he encountered difficulties on almost every key point. Firstly, regarding the peace treaties, Molotov was obtrusive even about which states were entitled to be in discussions. The American minutes state that Molotov argued “that he could not ignore that some countries had fought in it [the war] and others not.”¹⁶² Secondly, regarding the issue of atomic energy, Byrnes presented his proposal on atomic energy on the 18th of December,¹⁶³ but Molotov did not prioritise atomic control as much as Byrnes. Herken argues that Molotov instead wished to focus on U.S. involvement in China.¹⁶⁴ Even when Molotov responded on the issue of atomic energy he suggested amendments

¹⁵³ Richard Rhodes, *Dark Sun: The Marking of the Hydrogen Bomb* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 198

¹⁵⁴ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 133

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 133

¹⁵⁶ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 105- 109

¹⁵⁷ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 145

¹⁵⁸ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 109

¹⁵⁹ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 135

¹⁶⁰ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 161

¹⁶¹ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 331-332

¹⁶² U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1945* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967), 648

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 663 - 668

¹⁶⁴ Herkin, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb in the Cold War, 1945- 1950*, 77

to reduce UN control of atomic energy to the Security Council.¹⁶⁵ Thirdly, regarding the Balkans, Byrnes raised his deep reservations about the undemocratic nature of the Rumanian and Bulgarian governments, which were highlighted in the Etheridge study; Byrnes, being a true Wilsonianist, could not abide by this. Yet, Molotov simply argued that Etheridge was biased and working for Byrnes.¹⁶⁶

Byrnes soon found that he could make little headway with Molotov and arranged to meet Stalin himself, he believed this would be much more productive.¹⁶⁷ In his meeting with Stalin Byrnes mainly faced difficulty on the topic of Iran. Stalin argued that the Soviet Government was simply trying to protect its Baku oil fields.¹⁶⁸ However, Byrnes was not at all convinced by this argument.¹⁶⁹ Yet, besides this one sore point, Byrnes believed he succeeded in his talks with Stalin. He successfully engineered the resumption of work relating to the peace treaties in the Balkans.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, in the minutes of the meeting it can be seen that Stalin accepted Byrnes's suggestion that the governments of Bulgaria and Rumania be expanded and made more inclusive.¹⁷¹ Even Harriman believed that “we have reached complete agreement as to the peace conference and the resumption of work on the peace treaties with Italy and enemy Balkan States.”¹⁷² Byrnes found further success on the 27th of December with the Soviets and the British agreeing to his idea of creating a commission on atomic energy (with some minor amendments).¹⁷³ Byrnes even got an enthusiastic response to his suggestion on a twenty year treaty amongst the great powers to keep Germany disarmed.¹⁷⁴

This thesis argues that Byrnes's discussions with Stalin show that by the time of the Moscow Conference he had abandoned any attempt at atomic diplomacy and started speaking the language of power politics and spheres of influence. This view is also supported by Vladislav M. Zubok in *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Zubok argues that “In general, both sides bargained in the give-and-take style Stalin felt was his strong suit, including mutual consolidation of spheres of influence.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1945 Volume II*, 741

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 644

¹⁶⁷ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 322

¹⁶⁸ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 119

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 119

¹⁷⁰ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 336

¹⁷¹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers Volume II, 1945*, 753 - 755

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 760

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 822 - 823

¹⁷⁴ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 337

¹⁷⁵ Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 33

To conclude, this chapter aimed to answer the sub question, *To what extent was Byrnes's view of the Soviet Union the product of social construction?* It did this to challenge Yergin's argument that Byrnes was caught between a set of opposing axioms. This thesis argues that for the most part Byrnes's view of the Soviet Union was the product of interpersonal social construction along with his own misperceptions of the Yalta Conference. Specifically, his social interaction with American and Soviet officials, which helped shape his view of the Soviet Union, and not a set of abstract axioms. The analysis in this chapter shows that Yergin was partially right, in that Byrnes did come into contact with powerful American foreign policy officials who could be connected to a kind of Riga epistemic community. Specifically, this chapter has shown that both Charles E. Bohlen and John Foster Dulles positioned Byrnes to be confrontational with the Soviet Union. However, Yergin's characterisation of Byrnes being caught between a set of axioms is somewhat simplistic when understanding how Byrnes came to his perception of the Soviets. In fact, Byrnes's motivations for compromise with the Soviet Union had little to do with Roosevelt's Yalta axioms. As this chapter has demonstrated, Byrnes had a very different conception of Yalta to Roosevelt. Byrnes's misperceptions at Yalta put him in a position to clash with Molotov regardless of Yergin's narrative of conflicting axioms. To exacerbate the issue, Molotov had been angered and aggravated by Truman in their disastrous meeting in Washington, which meant that a confrontation between Byrnes and Molotov was overwhelmingly likely. This thesis argues that instead of being caught between a set of axioms, Byrnes was trying to reconcile his perceptions of the Soviets at Yalta with his later interactions with them. Byrnes finally began to understand the Soviets at the Moscow Conference. This could explain why Byrnes left the conference in a positive mood. In his memoirs he states "the only important question on the conference agenda not resolved was (...) our common problem in Iran."¹⁷⁶ However, when he returned to Washington he was shocked to find that the press had branded him an appeaser.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 122

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 122

Chapter Six: The Influence of Arthur H. Vandenberg on James F. Byrnes

This chapter will seek to answer the question, “*To what extent did a community subscribing to the Riga axioms affect Byrnes’s policy making decisions?*” It does so in order to challenge the strength of Yergin’s claim that Byrnes was restricted by a group of individuals dedicated to the Riga axioms. Instead, this chapter argues that it was Arthur H. Vandenberg who influenced Byrnes the most. Vandenberg was a powerful Senator who, more so than Byrnes, helped forge the bipartisan consensus on foreign policy. In order to understand what forces were constraining and affecting Byrnes it useful to examine why he was branded an appeaser on his return from the Moscow Conference. This thesis argues a large part of this branding was the product of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg.¹⁷⁸ Before understanding Vandenberg’s influence on Byrnes, a brief summary of Vandenberg’s background is given.

Vandenberg for most of his career was a well-known isolationist.¹⁷⁹ Yet, he dramatically changed his position, via a speech on the Senate floor just before the Yalta Conference. Brownstein argues that Vandenberg's conversion was due to his new understanding that the United States could no longer be kept safe by isolation in an Atomic age.¹⁸⁰ James A. Gazell supports this view in his article, *Arthur H. Vandenberg, Internationalism, and the United Nations*, by pointing to the fact that on the 2nd of February, 1940 Vandenberg wrote in his diary how modern technology was making isolationism impossible. In his Senate conversion speech Vandenberg argued that “Russia's unilateral plans appear to contemplate the engulfment, directly or indirectly, of a surrounding circle of buffer states... Russia's announced reason is her insistent purpose never again to be at the mercy of another German tyranny. That is a perfectly understandable reason. The alternative is collective security.”¹⁸¹ Vandenberg's Senate speech clearly demonstrates that he was committed to collective security led by the United States. A study of his private papers shows that as early as 1942 Vandenberg was arguing that he supported the Republican National Committee's stance on the United States’ obligation “in the bringing about of comity and cooperation among the nations of the world.”¹⁸² Hill argues Vandenberg’s desire for international order was complemented by his rejection of Europe, where the practise of power politics and imperial interests characterised

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Michael Hill, “Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the Politics of Bipartisanship, and the Origins of Anti-Soviet Consensus, 1941-1946” *World Affairs*. Vol. 138, No.3, (Winter, 1975-1976), 219

¹⁷⁹ Ronald Brownstein, *The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 85

¹⁸⁰ Brownstein, *The Second Civil War*, 85

¹⁸¹ Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 136

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 30

international relations.¹⁸³ However, when looking at Vandenberg's private papers it can be seen that domestic political forces were also in play. A large number of Vandenberg's Michigan constituents were of Polish descent, which meant that Vandenberg had a special interest in Soviet ambitions in Poland.¹⁸⁴

Wanting to capitalize on Vandenberg's conversion, Roosevelt appointed Vandenberg to the U.S. delegation to the San Francisco Conference on International Organization.¹⁸⁵ As Morey notes, Roosevelt knew he needed Vandenberg's support to gain Senate approval of the treaty which would determine U.S. membership in the UN.¹⁸⁶ Roosevelt's machinations were not lost on Vandenberg. A letter written by Vandenberg to Roosevelt shows that Vandenberg would have been hesitant to join if he were to be restricted from expressing his opinion; yet, in the same letter Vandenberg claimed it would be a blunder if the Republican Party rejected Senatorial cooperation.¹⁸⁷ Vandenberg wished to cooperate with Roosevelt's administration so that the Republicans could direct foreign policy and avoid accusations of being inexperienced in foreign policy.¹⁸⁸ The relationship between Roosevelt and Vandenberg was by no means a harmonious one: long before the San Francisco Conference, Vandenberg was one of the President's most ardent critics regarding his New Deal policies.¹⁸⁹ However, in the case of San Francisco the two men worked with their adversary for political gain. However, this thesis agrees with Morey's view that of the two it was Roosevelt who was the master politician.¹⁹⁰

Roosevelt's death completely changed Vandenberg's scope as a foreign policy agent. Firstly, Roosevelt's presence had been holding back the influence of John Foster Dulles, who was anti-Soviet in his thinking. Byrnes's predecessor, Stettinius, was able to dissuade Vandenberg from bringing Dulles to the San Francisco Conference by stating that "the President greatly dislikes Tom (Dewey) and Dulles."¹⁹¹ Secondly, in Vandenberg's eyes Roosevelt's death washed "the slate clean of whatever undisclosed commitments F.D.R has made to Stalin or Churchill."¹⁹² In fact, Vandenberg felt positively empowered by the President's death; on the 13th of April he noted in his

¹⁸³ Hill, "Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the Politics of Bipartisanship", 223

¹⁸⁴ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 148

¹⁸⁵ Roy D. Morey, *The United Nations at Work in Asia: An Envoy's Account of Development in China, Vietnam, Thailand and the South Pacific* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2013), 6

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6

¹⁸⁷ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 152

¹⁸⁸ Hill, "Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the Politics of Bipartisanship", 226

¹⁸⁹ Thomas J McCormick, *Behind the Throne: Servants of Power to Imperial Presidents, 1898-1968* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 236

¹⁹⁰ Morey, *The United Nations at Work in Asia: An Envoy's Account of Development*, 6

¹⁹¹ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 157

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 167

diary that “we are returning to a government in which Congress will take its rightful place.”¹⁹³ Yet, curiously, the President's death did not encourage Vandenberg to recede back into isolationism. In fact, his involvement with San Francisco made the Senator fully committed to the United Nations and internationalism.¹⁹⁴ This commitment can be evidenced in an undated letter he wrote to his wife, after Senate ratification of the proposed United Nations charter, in which he says “I must confess, now that it's all over, that I am very proud to have been at least one of its fathers.”¹⁹⁵ However, his experiences at San Francisco also clearly show how Vandenberg would be with the Soviets in the future, he remarked “at what point is it wise to stop appeasing Stalin? Otherwise a new “Munich” will be followed by comparable tragedies.”¹⁹⁶ When applying a constructivist lens it can be seen that Vandenberg was affected, like Dulles, by the change in international norms brought about by the Second World War.

Another consequence of Roosevelt's death was the replacement of Stettinius with Byrnes in the role of Secretary of State. Vandenberg's diary clearly shows that he disapproved of Byrnes from the very start. Firstly, Vandenberg was stunned by what happened to Byrnes's predecessor, “I was shocked by the sudden Presidential decapitation of Stettinius. I think it was grossly unfair.”¹⁹⁷ Secondly, he argued that “Jimmy Byrnes is a grand guy (for any other job down here) but his whole life has been a career of compromise.”¹⁹⁸ A point which Byrnes would have conceded if he were ever faced with this accusation, in his memories Byrnes states that success was based on “concessions.”¹⁹⁹ Hill notes that from the very start Vandenberg took an objection to the appointment of Byrnes and directly blamed him for what he viewed as concessions at Yalta.²⁰⁰ Therefore, Vandenberg was on an inevitable collision course with Byrnes. Yet, Byrnes was not affected by the wrath of Vandenberg until the Moscow Conference. Before the conference Byrnes decided that he would get support from his critics in Congress by outlining his strategy for Moscow. However, as Herken points out, this attempt backfired spectacularly. Byrnes only vaguely conveyed his strategy to Vandenberg and Connally.²⁰¹ Vandenberg said of Byrnes in his private papers that

“He said he proposed an exchange of atom scientists and scientific information with Russia as his first step...we consider an “exchange” of scientists and scientific

¹⁹³ Ibid., 167

¹⁹⁴ Morey, *The United Nations at Work in Asia: An Envoy's Account of Development*, 6

¹⁹⁵ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 218

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 177

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 224

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 225

¹⁹⁹ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime: James F. Byrnes*, 5

²⁰⁰ Hill, “Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the Politics of Bipartisanship”, 235

²⁰¹ Herkin, *The Winning Weapon: The Atomic Bomb in the Cold War, 1945- 1950*, 76

information as sheer appeasement.”²⁰²

When examining the original proposal in the Moscow Conference minutes, the terms of reference for the hypothetical atomic commission listed fourthly “effective safeguards by way of inspection and other means to protect complying states against the hazard of violations and evasions.”²⁰³ It was the fact that this was listed fourth, instead of first, which Vandenberg found alarming.²⁰⁴ This thesis argues that it is quite telling that Vandenberg uses the term appeasement, which alludes to Chamberlin’s appeasement of Hitler. Vandenberg claimed “it is our [foreign relations committee] unanimous opinion that the Byrnes formula must be stopped.”²⁰⁵ Therefore, as Hill shows, Vandenberg was left with two options. The first option was to resign as a delegate to the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations if instructed to act against his convictions.²⁰⁶ The second option was to enlist the help of Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson to arrange a meeting with President Truman to work against Byrnes before Byrnes arrived in Moscow.²⁰⁷ Vandenberg chose the second option.

Why did Acheson help Vandenberg? As Leinonen highlights, Byrnes only accepted Dean Acheson's appointment reluctantly and did not have much confidence in him, which meant that Acheson had good cause to be bitter against his superior.²⁰⁸ Acheson was so dissatisfied that he pre-emptively handed in a letter of resignation to Byrnes which was to be used in case of some future disagreement.²⁰⁹ Therefore, it can be understood that Acheson along with Leahy became powerful allies to Vandenberg in stopping Byrnes's foreign policy endeavours. Vandenberg and his supporters met with the President on the 11th of December, 1945.²¹⁰ Vandenberg's diary entry shows that the President must have initially approved of Byrnes's course. Vandenberg writes, “to our amazement we found that the “directive” fully justify the precise sort of plan which Byrnes told us he intended to pursue.”²¹¹ However, Vandenberg made a forceful case, which pressured Truman into sending a pastoral letter to Byrnes.²¹² Worse still, outgoing Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson had already used up all his influence in arguing against tough diplomacy.²¹³ Consequently, Byrnes was left with

²⁰² Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 218

²⁰³ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1945 Volume II*, 665

²⁰⁴ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 137

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 137

²⁰⁶ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 235

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 235

²⁰⁸ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 98-100

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 100

²¹⁰ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 229

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 229

²¹² Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 182

²¹³ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 138

very few allies in Washington. However, Byrnes being so far away from Washington did not gauge the forces working against him in the United States. Instead, he was too focused on his new brand of give and take diplomacy. This meant that at Moscow Byrnes did nothing to alter his course, which led to Vandenberg's wrath. When news reached Washington on the 26th of December on a joint communique released by Byrnes, Molotov, and Bevin, Vandenberg did not take it well. He wrote in his diary a week later on what action he took at the time,

“It listed four stages for the work of the UNO Commission - “disclosure” first and total “security” last...I immediately presented the matter to Acting Secretary Acheson, who in turn, phoned the President in Missouri.”²¹⁴

This thesis argues that whatever message was conveyed by Acheson would have been to the maximum benefit of Vandenberg and to the maximum detriment of Byrnes. Due to Vandenberg's needling, Byrnes received a reprimand of some kind once he returned from Moscow; however, the extent of it is contested. Some historians, such as Leinonen, subscribe to the narrative that Truman summoned Byrnes via his press secretary and gave Byrnes a severe dressing down by reading a critical letter which he had prepared.²¹⁵ This view comes from Truman himself in *Mr President*, his 1952 memoirs; in it he reproduced the scathing handwritten letter that he had supposedly given to Byrnes.²¹⁶ However, Byrnes himself argues that no such talking down took place, and that he would have resigned immediately had he been treated in such a manner.²¹⁷ Some historians, such as Ferrell, have even argued that it was the Chief of Staff, Admiral William D. Leahy, and not the President who reprimand Byrnes.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, this thesis argues that the more aggressive attitude Byrnes adopted following the Moscow Conference was a direct consequence of Vandenberg's message to the President in Missouri.

No matter who reprimanded Byrnes, one thing that is clear is that Byrnes never again practised his personal brand of diplomacy. In his memoirs Byrnes writes, “Some of the criticism I recognized was personal in character, but much of the criticism, unfortunately came from people so unreasonably anti-Soviet in their views that they would regard any agreement with Russia on any subject as appeasement.”²¹⁹ This thesis postulates that this vague reference to some people included Vandenberg and his followers. After the Moscow Conference the political tides had changed so

²¹⁴ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 234

²¹⁵ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 189

²¹⁶ George W. Egerton, *Political Memoir: Essays on the Politics of Memory* (London: Psychology Press, 1994), 269

²¹⁷ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 345

²¹⁸ Ferrell, *Harry S. Truman: A Life* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 238

²¹⁹ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 122

much that Byrnes had to change directions just to keep with the flow. From this point onwards, as Messer points out, Byrnes never again acted as a sole operator.²²⁰ An examination of Byrnes's 1947 memoirs shows that very few favourable references to the Soviets appear after the Moscow Conference.²²¹ Byrnes explained his growing criticism by saying the Soviets had reneged on their promises.²²² This thesis argues in truth Byrnes was adapting to his critics by adjusting his tone. Furthermore, Vandenberg's, now permanent, presence meant that after December, 1945 Byrnes could only hold a view of the Soviets that would please Vandenberg.

From January 1946 till the end of his secretaryship, Byrnes worked tirelessly with Vandenberg and Connally. Messer argues Vandenberg and Connally both had influence over Byrnes as they became aware Byrnes's claims of expertise regarding Yalta were patently false.²²³ Byrnes's next big test as Secretary of State came at the first session of the United Nations General Assembly in London in January, 1946. Byrnes left for the conference on the 7th of January, 1946, however, this time Byrnes was preceded by Connally and Vandenberg. Byrnes claims in his 1958 memoirs that since the "Moscow episode" he insisted on Vandenberg's presence till the end of his secretaryship.²²⁴ However, this thesis argues that Byrnes entire history of acting as a sole operator makes this explanation unsatisfactory. It argues that in truth Truman had appointed the Senators to both maintain good relations with Congress and to watch over Byrnes. This thesis comes to this conclusion by noting that Truman had always been suspicious of Byrnes. Even as early as the 7th of July, 1945 Truman wrote in his diary that Byrnes was a "conniving Secretary of State."²²⁵

In Byrnes's second London performance he was much firmer in his approach. When Iran filed a complaint to the Security Council in the opening debate Byrnes urged, "The Soviet government in accordance with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and its treaty obligations, withdraw its armed forces immediately from the territory of Iran."²²⁶ Due to Vandenberg, Byrnes was starting to believe for himself that this firmness actually worked and became enthusiastic about it. However, Byrnes was yet to convince Vandenberg that he had converted to Vandenberg's position. When examining Vandenberg's feelings in London, Kaplan shows in *The Conversion of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg* that Vandenberg was actually annoyed at Byrnes's performance at this conference. He was annoyed because he felt that it was Ernest Bevin of the United Kingdom,

²²⁰ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 168

²²¹ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 96-97

²²² Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 87

²²³ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 171

²²⁴ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 347

²²⁵ Robert H. Ferrell, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (London: Harper and Row, 1997), 49

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 352

and not Byrnes, who was applying pressure to the Soviets.²²⁷ Evidence of Vandenberg's dissatisfaction manifested when he returned to the Senate, where he gave an extremely critical speech on Soviet Russia.²²⁸ This speech met with a very positive reception in the Senate and in the press.²²⁹ It was even quoted in Life magazine for the basis of an article which was called "getting tough with Russia"²³⁰ Vandenberg's speech represented a problem for Byrnes: it praised various members of the American delegation glowingly except Byrnes.²³¹ This thesis agrees with Hamby's assessment that Vandenberg's speech was a demand to Byrnes and the Truman administration to take a harder line.²³²

Leffler argues in *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration and the Cold War* that before Vandenberg's speech there was no consensus on the Soviet Union in elite circles,²³³ however, his speech created one. Therefore, Byrnes could not ignore Vandenberg's speech. Byrnes delivered his Overseas Correspondence Club Speech the very next day. In it he said "all around us there is suspicion and distrust, which in turn breeds suspicion and distrust. Some suspicions are unfounded and unreasonable. Of others that cannot be said."²³⁴ In his second set of memoirs, Byrnes indicates that this speech was aimed at the Soviet Union and greatly pleased Truman.²³⁵ Byrnes's Correspondence Club speech became a primer for Churchill's 'Iron curtain' speech, which was delivered only a few weeks later.²³⁶ Despite the initially negative reaction to Churchill's speech it became an integral part of the language of the Cold War, with historians such as Ramsden going as far to say it has acquired "a mythic significance."²³⁷ This thesis agrees with Hill's perspective that Byrnes's shift to an anti-Soviet position in his Correspondence Club speech finally met Vandenberg's prerequisite for an acceptable bipartisan foreign policy.²³⁸

However, Vandenberg was not the only critic Byrnes had to satisfy. As mentioned above Byrnes was also influenced by Bohlen. Furthermore, he also faced pressure from another person Yergin connects with the Riga axioms, George F. Kennan. Kennan's own memoirs demonstrate his distaste

²²⁷ Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The Conversion of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg: From Isolation to International Engagement* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 146

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 147

²²⁹ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 250

²³⁰ "Getting Tough With Russia," *Life*, March 18, 1946, 36

²³¹ Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 347

²³² *Ibid.*, 347

²³³ Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 107

²³⁴ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 352

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 352

²³⁶ Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 188

²³⁷ James W. Muller, *Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech Fifty Years Later* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 15

²³⁸ Hill, "Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the Politics of Bipartisanship", 237

for Byrnes, in them he notes of Byrnes,

“His weakness in dealing with the Russians is that his main purpose is to achieve some sort of agreement, he doesn't much care what...He wants an agreement for its political effect at home.”²³⁹

Just a week before Vandenberg's speech Kennan sent his, now famous, long telegram to Washington. In it he made the case that the Soviet Government could not be reasoned with and in doing so simplified the issue of Soviet-American relations.²⁴⁰ This telegram met with approval everywhere it went and due to Harriman and Forrestal's promotion it was given wide circulation.²⁴¹ This thesis argues that the telegram gave structure and clarity to American foreign policy in a way which Byrnes had failed to do so. Messer supports this view: he argues that “Kennan did not create the Cold War consensus, he made it visible and unified behind a single, usable interpretation of why the Russians acted the way they did and what to do about it.”²⁴² From this point onwards Byrnes's actions would only take place in Kennan's containment paradigm. This thesis argues that a combination of Vandenberg's speech, the proliferation of Kennan's telegram, and Churchill's concept of an iron curtain meant that Byrnes actions were restricted, so he was propelled on a course of what he called “firmness as well as patience in our relations with the Russians.”²⁴³

Byrnes approached his next endeavour as Secretary of State with this firmness in mind. His next mission as Secretary of State was the second meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. This time he would not compromise. The second Council of Foreign Ministers conference took place in Paris, beginning on the 25th of April, 1946.²⁴⁴ Byrnes's memoirs show that the Paris conference was as problematic as the first general assembly of the United Nations. In fact, some of the issues at the United Nations had a direct bearing upon the Paris meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. Byrnes noted, in a private meeting Molotov complained that Byrnes's attitude regarding Iran at the Security Council had been unacceptable.²⁴⁵ At this session of the council Byrnes was so anti-Soviet that he failed to even praise Soviet concessions: when Byrnes wrote his first set of memoirs he said that when the Soviet Union conceded the control of the Dodecanese that the action was a ploy, “I had known all the time that they had no real objections to the transfer... they opposed it so that when

²³⁹ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 288

²⁴⁰ Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 109

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 109

²⁴² Messer, *The End of an Alliance*, 182

²⁴³ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 318

²⁴⁴ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 262

²⁴⁵ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 359

they finally agreed it would appear to be a generous concession.”²⁴⁶ Vandenberg noted that on the very first day of the conference Byrnes came to him to solve the problem of dealing with Germany. Vandenberg writes

“He proposed a Four-Power Treaty under which Germany shall be permanently disarmed...This goes back to the basis of my proposal in my speech of January 10, 1945, which thus may yet be vindicated.”²⁴⁷

This quote from Vandenberg shows that Byrnes was working within the Senator's agenda. This is also evident in a later entry from the conference in which Vandenberg claims that Byrnes was no longer giving any signs of “appeasement.”²⁴⁸ However, Molotov was more interested in extracting reparations from Germany than in any treaty. Vandenberg took Molotov's obstinate attitude as evidence of veiled Soviet expansionism. Amusingly, Molotov's aggravation at Byrnes led him to say that it was in fact the Americans who were pursuing a policy of imperialist expansion.²⁴⁹

This thesis argues that Vandenberg was overlooking the fact that the Soviet Union had little reason to trust treaties. After all they tried to protect their sphere of influence by signing a pact with the Nazis: The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which was broken by Germany only two years after its signing.²⁵⁰ Molotov's aggressive pursuit of reparations along with Byrnes's uncompromising attitude brought the conference to a bitter crossroads. Vandenberg recalls that Molotov argued “We get 100 million or there will be no Italian Treaty.”²⁵¹ However, this backfired spectacularly. Byrnes responded by calling Molotov's bluff: he agreed that the conference should be ended if these were the conditions. Molotov immediately retracted his previous comment.²⁵² Byrnes was now playing hard ball. His position was now more aligned with Vandenberg's view, and he maintained this view throughout the Paris meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. It is important to note during the break in the council, between May and June, Byrnes made his tougher position crystal clear to the general public. On the 20th of May, 1946, Byrnes delivered a radio report on the conference's progress where he said “we must take the offensive for peace as we took the offensive for war... there is no iron curtain that the aggregate sentiments of mankind cannot penetrate.”²⁵³

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 359

²⁴⁷ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 264

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 267

²⁴⁹ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 128

²⁵⁰ Josepha Sherman, *The Cold War: Chronicle of America's War* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 2004), 15

²⁵¹ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 272

²⁵² Ibid., 272

²⁵³ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 130

To conclude, this chapter sought to answer the sub question, *To what extent did a community subscribing to the Riga axioms affect Byrnes's policy making decisions?* This chapter has highlighted that there is some merit to Yergin's argument that Byrnes was pressurised by anti-Soviet forces. A number of people advising Byrnes met some of the characteristics of being members of an epistemic community focused around the Riga axioms. For example, both Kennan and Bohlen were actually in Riga in the 1930s and advocated some form of non-engagement with the Soviet Union. However, this chapter has also identified a number of flaws with the narrative of Byrnes as presented by Yergin. This thesis argues that Yergin understated and missed that Byrnes was mostly influenced by Vandenberg, closely followed by Dulles in his interactions with Soviet officials. A constructivist lens shows that Vandenberg and Dulles, though likely receptive to the Riga axioms, were not necessarily driven by them. Vandenberg, as this chapter has shown, was motivated by domestic concerns, such as pressure from the Polish Americans in his constituency, and his party political concerns, as well as his own internationalist inclinations.

This thesis postulates that Vandenberg saw an anarchic world where states being appeased would abuse the appeaser in a way which could only lead to war. This view was most likely a historical construction which came from Vandenberg observing the way Hitler had acted after being appeased. Vandenberg's preference for setting up an international order, as quickly as possible, in the form of the United Nations seems consistent with this world view. This thesis argues that Vandenberg wished to eliminate the anarchic structure in which nations and agents operated in, so that the politics of failed appeasement and war with belligerent nations could be eliminated. This in turn meant Byrnes had to utterly reject power politics in any form as he had become utterly subservient to Vandenberg's whims. For example, Vandenberg noted that on the 6th of May, "before we went to a meeting of the smaller group this morning. I was asked by Connally, at Byrnes's request, whether I was prepared to consider trading off Trieste, I said No."²⁵⁴ In short, Byrnes was influenced by powerful American officials; however, these officials were not necessarily driven by a shared commitment to the Riga axioms.

²⁵⁴ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 276

Chapter Seven: The Downfall of James F. Byrnes

This chapter aims to answer the sub question, “*To what extent was Byrnes’s career deterioration related to Yergin’s axioms?*” It does so in order to challenge Yergin’s claim that Byrnes's commitment to the Yalta axioms in the face of pressure from the Riga axioms was the cause for his resignation from the position of Secretary of State. This chapter shows that Byrnes’s personal position was rooted in his history as a lawyer, so he was concerned with adhering to written agreements and not abstract axioms. This chapter argues Byrnes’s focus on agreements combined with his compromising personality were they reasons for his disempowerment.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Paris session of the Council of Foreign Ministers marked the highpoint of Byrnes being influenced by anti-Soviet officials, such as Vandenberg. Yet, this influence was not total. As revealed by key differences in the policies pursued by Byrnes, and the positions that would have been pursued by someone who was a member of a Riga-epistemic Community. These differences are best understood by examining Byrnes's next diplomatic engagement, the Paris Peace Conference. To avoid confusion the reader should be clear that the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Paris, which took place earlier, was not the same as the Paris Peace Conference.²⁵⁵ The Paris Peace Conference took place from the 29th of July to the 15th of October, 1946; it involved the participation of the 21 nations who were considered the victors of the Second World War.²⁵⁶ Friction between the United States and the Soviet Union had been mounting since the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Paris.²⁵⁷ One of the key issues that caused distress for Byrnes at the conference was the issue of what should be done with Germany.²⁵⁸

Byrnes's solution was presented in his Stuttgart speech on the 6th of September, 1946. This thesis examines Byrnes’s Stuttgart speech to demonstrate the fact that Byrnes was not dedicated to a set of axioms but rather a personal belief in compromise within the limits of existing agreements. Historians such as Patricia Dawson Ward argue the Stuttgart speech was directed at the Soviet Union.²⁵⁹ They argue that Byrnes's speech was made to counter a speech made by Molotov on the 10th of July, 1946, which criticized plans for the dismemberment of Germany and sought to curry

²⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1946 Volume II Council of Foreign Ministers* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970), 88-493

²⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1946 Volume IV Paris Peace Conference: Documents* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970), V

²⁵⁷ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 247

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 220 - 251

²⁵⁹ Patricia Dawson Ward, *The Threat of Peace: James F Byrnes and the Council of Foreign Ministers, 1945-1946* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1979), 139-142

favour with the Germans.²⁶⁰ Byrnes, himself, argued in his memoirs that his Stuttgart speech was designed to tackle Soviet intransigence.²⁶¹ An alternative view presented by John Gimbel argues that Byrnes's speech had different objectives. One of these was to give American occupation officials "leverage for an experiment they had developed in the field to promote the economic unity of Germany."²⁶² Gimbel further argues that Byrnes's speech was also aimed to put pressure on the French, who were refusing to accept the Potsdam Agreement's key economic and political features.²⁶³ Gimbel presents evidence that Byrnes had actually adapted his speech from a policy statement summary made by the American Occupation General Lucius D. Clay.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, Byrnes wrote a letter three days after the speech, to John W. Snyder, admitting that his purpose for giving the speech aligned with Clay's aim, which was to help the American administrators in Germany to expand the American zone into an ad hoc government for all four zones.²⁶⁵ Simply put, Gimbel argues the speech was designed to appeal to Germans, rather than as a warning for the Soviet Union.

To verify Gimbel's claims, this thesis directly examined the Stuttgart speech. This thesis notes that Byrnes mentions the Soviet Union twelve times; however, he mentions the Potsdam agreement twenty three times.²⁶⁶ Referring to the letter of agreements would have been natural for an ex lawyer like Byrnes. Crucially, when read in context, three of the references to the Soviet Union are explanations of agreement's, three are statements of fact, three are statements referring to commitments to mutual agreement's, two even invoke the Soviet Union sympathetically, and only one is critical, highlighting that Silesia and other Eastern German areas should not be considered a part of the Soviet zone of occupation.²⁶⁷ Having reviewed the evidence this thesis agrees with Gimbel's theory for two reasons. Firstly, when speaking of coal and steel, Byrnes argues that "Germany must be enabled to use her skills and her energies to increase her industrial production and to organize the most effective use of her raw materials."²⁶⁸ When considering that the Ruhr, Germany's coal district, is on the western side of the country it must be concluded that this criticism must have been levied at France. Secondly, he argues that only the British Government had allowed

²⁶⁰ Hadley Arkes, *Bureaucracy, the Marshall Plan, and the National Interest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 36

²⁶¹ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 187

²⁶² John Gimbel, "On the implementation of the Potsdam Agreement: An Essay on U.S. Postwar German Policy," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 87, No. 2 (June., 1972), 246

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 246

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 247

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 248

²⁶⁶ James F. Byrnes, "Restatement of Policy on Germany, Stuttgart, September 6, 1946" *U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany*, last modified August, 2001, <http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga4-460906.htm>

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*

its zone to participate with the view to making Germany function as an economic unit.²⁶⁹ This criticism obviously applied equally to the French as it did to the Soviet Union.

Why then did Byrnes state that the objective of the speech was to send a message to the Soviet Union? This thesis considers two possibilities. Firstly, Byrnes would have realised that claiming his speech was directed at the Soviets would please Vandenberg, indeed Vandenberg thoroughly approved of Byrnes's speech, describing it as “earth shattering.”²⁷⁰ Secondly, Byrnes, when writing his memoirs, perhaps conflated his memories of the Stuttgart speech and his conflict with the former Vice President Henry A. Wallace, as both events happened around the same time.²⁷¹ Byrnes's conflict with Wallace helps to show that Byrnes was neither associated with a set of anti-Soviet Riga axioms, or the compromising Yalta axioms. This conflict began when Wallace made a speech on the 12th of September, 1946.²⁷² Wallace was a staunch liberal and one of the most notable critics of Byrnes's foreign policy.²⁷³ In his speech Wallace made several comments which were obvious attacks on Byrnes. For example, Wallace said “He who trusts in the atom bomb will sooner or later perish by the atom bomb”, which was clearly a criticism of Byrnes's attempts at atomic diplomacy.²⁷⁴ The most direct criticism of Byrnes is clearly noted in the twenty seventh paragraph of the speech in which Wallace states “'getting tough' never bought anything real and lasting – whether for schoolyard bullies or businessmen or world powers.”²⁷⁵ This can only be interpreted as a direct attack on what Byrnes called the 'get tough' policy.

Wallace's views, as problematic as they were, would have caused Byrnes little harm had his speech not contained the words, “when President Truman read these words, he said that they represented the policy of his administration.”²⁷⁶ Obviously, Byrnes could not effectively operate as Secretary of State whilst Wallace was undermining him with apparent Presidential approval. Byrnes took Wallace's speech and its criticism very personally.²⁷⁷ Truman gave contradictory statements regarding Wallace. At one point Truman claimed that Wallace's speech was “exactly in line” with Byrnes's policy on the Soviet Union, yet he later claimed he only approved of the speech being given.²⁷⁸ Byrnes was so outraged by the President's indecision that he sent Truman a telegram

²⁶⁹ Ibid

²⁷⁰ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 226

²⁷¹ Gimbel, ““On the implementation of the Potsdam Agreement: An Essay on U.S. Postwar German Policy”, 249

²⁷² Henry A. Wallace, “The Way to Peace”, Speech, New York, September 12, 1946 ” *New Deal Network*, last accessed 10/03/2015, <http://newdeal.feri.org/wallace/haw28.htm#27>

²⁷³ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 269

²⁷⁴ Henry A. Wallace, “The Way to Peace”

²⁷⁵ Ibid

²⁷⁶ Henry A. Wallace, “The Way to Peace”

²⁷⁷ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 215

²⁷⁸ Leinonen, “The Beginning of the Cold War”, 291

threatening his resignation if Wallace's speech were not countered by the President. The President obliged and forced Wallace to resign.²⁷⁹

This thesis argues that Byrnes's rejection of Wallace's stance was not an acceptance of the Riga axioms. Yergin portrays a stance of non-negotiation with the Soviet as a fundamental tenant of the Riga axioms, which he links to the views expressed in Kennan's telegrams.²⁸⁰ This thesis argues Byrnes's rejection of Wallace was not a rejection of negotiation. The Wallace incident helps to clarify that Byrnes's position was always distinct from Wallace's and the Riga axioms' position. In Byrnes's 1958 memoirs he argues "At one and the same time I was attacked (by Wallace and others) for being the leader of the "get tough with Russia" crowd and (by Admiral Leahy and others) for negotiating with the Russians at all."²⁸¹ It is clear from this statement that Byrnes both rejected what he saw as Wallace's soft approach, and Kennan's calls to abandon diplomacy altogether. Byrnes's Paris Peace Conference report, delivered on the 18th of October, 1946, validates the historical consistency of the views expressed in his memoirs.²⁸² In this report Byrnes says that "It is possible that the failure or inability of the Soviet leaders to rid themselves of the idea that war is inevitable lies at the root of our difficulties. We will not be able to rid the world of that belief if we ourselves become victims of it."²⁸³

Nevertheless, the evidence examined by this thesis shows that Yergin was at least partially correct: Byrnes was not completely immune from anti-Soviet forces. In his 1947 memoirs Byrnes uses the historically deterministic language of George F. Kennan. Byrnes argues,

"My experience merely confirms an answer that is actually found in Russian history. Few Americans are well informed on Russian history. I do not profess to be. But I have learned enough to conclude that many of the problems which perplex us today have their explanation in history. Despite the violence of the Russian revolution, the aims of Bolshevik diplomacy differ very little from those of the Czars."²⁸⁴

This thesis notes that it is quite curious that Byrnes would admit to being uninformed on the topic

²⁷⁹ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 240-242

²⁸⁰ George F. Kennan, *Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall* [Long Telegram]. February 22, 1946. Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers. Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/6-6.pdf

²⁸¹ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 390

²⁸² James F. Byrnes, "A Decade of American Foreign Policy 1941-1949 Paris Peace Conference, July 29 to October 15, 1946", *Yale Law School*, October 18, 1946. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decade21.asp

²⁸³ Ibid

²⁸⁴ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 282

of Russian history yet have such faith in a specific historical explanation for the Soviet mind-set. This thesis postulates that he acquired this view from George F. Kennan's long telegram.²⁸⁵ Furthermore, it is highly probable that Byrnes picked up many of his views on the Soviet mind-set from Charles E. Bohlen, another potential member of a Riga-epistemic community. This thesis builds grounds for the assertion that Byrnes was affected by Bohlen by drawing attention to Bohlen's own claims that he was a member of Byrnes's inner circle.²⁸⁶ Yet, even under Bohlen's influence, Byrnes retained his sense of optimism. In his 1947 memoirs he indicates that though the Soviet Union was seeking some form hegemony within Europe they "do not want war now. They will I believe, 'retire in a very decent manner,'" ²⁸⁷ Byrnes was also critical of the Truman Doctrine, which was arguably one of the strongest anti-Soviet pieces of legislation made by Truman.²⁸⁸ Despite his failings, Byrnes maintained the position that diplomatic accommodation with the Soviet Union was preferable, stating in 1958, "I do not think we can refuse to discuss the problems of peace with them. Even a battle of words is better than a battle with bombs."²⁸⁹

To conclude, this chapter has sought to answer the sub question, *To what extent was Byrnes's career deterioration related Yergin's axioms?* In this case it cannot be ignored that Yergin was partially correct. As this chapter has shown, Byrnes was influenced by the advice of Charles E. Bohlen, and the rhetoric of George F. Kennan. So Byrnes's career was negatively affected by those associated with Yergin's Riga axioms. Furthermore, the timing of Byrnes's resignation is clear evidence of pressure from anti-Soviet forces. Byrnes tendered his resignation on the 16th of April, 1946 with the understanding that it would take effect on completion of the peace treaties.²⁹⁰ Truman wrote back to Byrnes on the 7th of January, 1947 accepting Byrnes's resignation."²⁹¹ The timing and context of Byrnes's initial resignation letter is important because by this date George F. Kennan's long telegram had been circulating within the higher echelons of the government for almost two months.²⁹² Kennan's telegram helped to propagate the ideas that Yergin associates with the Riga axioms whilst simultaneously weakening Byrnes's position. However, this chapter argues this was only a partial factor for Byrnes's career collapsing.

This chapter has also identified another reason for the deterioration of Byrnes's career, which is

²⁸⁵ Kennan, *Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall*

²⁸⁶ Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969*, 243-246

²⁸⁷ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 295

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 303

²⁸⁹ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 389

²⁹⁰ Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 240

²⁹¹ Harry S. Truman, "Letter accepting the Resignation of James F. Byrnes as Secretary of State. January 7, 1947" in *Public Papers of the President of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1947, Vol 3* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1963), 12-13

²⁹² Kennan, *Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall* [Long Telegram]

understated by Yergin. That factor being that Byrnes held a consistent and distinct position of compromise towards the Soviet Union as long as it fit within the scope of written agreements. This would have been totally natural for a lawyer such as Byrnes, showing his position lacked the power politics of the Yalta axioms' focus on spheres of influence. It is clear his position was based on his personal preference for compromise which adhered to international agreements. This chapter has shown how Byrnes's Stuttgart speech was more about the Potsdam agreement than attacking the Soviet Union. This chapter has also shown that his personal brand of toughness did not satisfy liberals like Henry A. Wallace, who better fit Yergin's Yalta axioms.

To exacerbate issues by April, 1946 Byrnes had become the target of suspicion to Truman's inner circle: Admiral William D. Leahy, a close presidential adviser had been saying since 1945 that, "Secretary Byrnes is not immune to the communistically inclined advisors in his department."²⁹³ Some historians, such as Henry A. Adams, argue that Leahy had come to the belief that Byrnes must be replaced and could not be trusted.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, Byrnes had other powerful detractors, such as Averell Harriman, whose negative impression of Byrnes began as early as Potsdam.²⁹⁵ Another important issue was that Byrnes had lost the confidence of President Truman. As mentioned previously, Truman and Byrnes were rivals for the democratic Vice-presidential nomination, therefore a sense of interpersonal insecurity probably existed between the two men.²⁹⁶ However, it was not until the Moscow Conference that relations between them suffered dramatically. Bohlen argues in his memoirs that at the Moscow Conference Byrnes acted too independently, which led to Truman's irritation and anger.²⁹⁷ In his 1955 memoirs Truman writes that Byrnes account was not, "a proper account by a Cabinet member to the President. It was more like one partner in a business telling the other that his business trip was progressing well and not to worry."²⁹⁸ In the end it was Byrnes's character more than his subscription to one set of axioms over another that ruined his career as Secretary of State.

²⁹³ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 113

²⁹⁴ Adams, *Witness to Power: The Life of Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy*, 311

²⁹⁵ Harriman, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin 1941-1946*, 488

²⁹⁶ Leinonen, "The Beginning of the Cold War", 93

²⁹⁷ Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969*, 256-257

²⁹⁸ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Volume Two, Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 549

Chapter Eight: Kennan's View of the Soviet Union

This chapter aims to answer the sub question, “*To what extent was Kennan's view of the Soviet Union the product of social construction?*” It does so in order to challenge Yergin's claim that Kennan was the chief ideologue of the Riga axioms.²⁹⁹ Instead, this thesis argues Kennan was no such chief and was a diplomatic misfit up until the end of the Second World War. It argues that Kennan's perception of the Soviet Union was neither shared nor created with his Riga colleagues. Instead it argues that Kennan's views were shaped by a number of broader factors, such as education and personal experience. To truly examine Yergin's claims about Kennan it is useful to examine his personal history of social interaction. This thesis does this by applying a constructivist analysis to Kennan's opinion formation. This is followed by an analysis of Kennan's propagation of his views on the Soviet Union, in order to demonstrate that Kennan's views were not about propagating an accepted consensus but rather his strict adherence to his own ideas despite a lack of group support.

On first glance Kennan's highly specific and detailed understanding of the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War seems remarkable; after all, he was only the Chargé d'Affaires of the Moscow embassy in 1946.³⁰⁰ These complex perceptions of the Soviet Union can be understood by examining Kennan's education and his history of interpersonal interaction. When looking for subtle environmental influences on Kennan his early upbringing is insightful. Kennan himself offers some noteworthy details. He claims his family background was far removed from the social predicaments discussed within Marxism. He even goes on to say, “it was something which I could not relate myself personally either by my own experience or by that of family.”³⁰¹ However, unfamiliarity alone is not enough to explain Kennan's later attitudes and assessments. Another pertinent fact to consider is Kennan's formative education. Whilst attending Princeton University, Kennan developed a keen interest in history which would come to shape his understanding and approach to foreign policy.

Kennan notes that of all the teachers he had at Princeton, Joseph C. Green was particularly influential. Green taught a class called historical introduction, which was “designed to give students an idea of the effect of such things as *climate, geography and resources* on the character of human

²⁹⁹ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 27

³⁰⁰ Andrew Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda 1945-53* (London: Routledge, 2013), 36

³⁰¹ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 6

civilizations.”³⁰² This thesis argues that Green’s views mimic the Darwinist concept of natural selection in a social sphere. This predilection towards history as a deterministic explanation for national behaviour is something Kennan inherited from Green; Green's influence is evident in Kennan's rationalisation of Soviet behaviour, which gave precedence to history over ideology.³⁰³ His enthusiasm for historical analogies in regards to Russian relations is clearly evident within his now famous telegram, which advocated a more hostile approach towards the Soviet Union. Kennan points to Russian insecurities, not as the product of communist ideology, but rather, “traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity.”³⁰⁴

Furthermore, Kennan's formative education was compounded by his education in the Foreign Service, which was aimed at preparing him as a Russian specialist. Kennan was trained for five and a half years before he even set foot in Russia. This training took him from the Baltic capitals of Riga and Tallinn as well as Berlin, Germany.³⁰⁵ One would think, therefore, that Kennan would be intellectually well versed in the structure of Soviet society, and Soviet philosophy, however, this was not the case. Much of Kennan's preparation was in fields such as language, literature and history.³⁰⁶ However, Kennan himself cannot be blamed entirely for this; he did make some effort to learn more about Soviet ideology,

“I wrote to Kelly (Chief of Russian and Eastern European Affairs), pointing out to him that Berlin University, almost alone among the universities of the West at the time, had excellent courses and lecture series on strictly Soviet subjects. I asked whether he didn't want me to take one of these. The answer was negative.”³⁰⁷

Robert F. Kelly dissuaded Kennan from taking courses on Soviet subjects because he believed that the Soviet regime was a “pariah regime” which was obsessed with world conquest.³⁰⁸ Kennan appeared to have inherited some of this hostility directly from his mentor. In fact, much of the education Kennan received at the Orientalische Sprachen was taught by White Russian émigrés.

³⁰² Ibid., 14

³⁰³ Roland Vegso, *The Naked Communist: Cold War Modernism and the Politics of Popular Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 57

³⁰⁴ George F. Kennan, *Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall* [Long Telegram]. February 22, 1946. Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers. Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/6-6.pdf

³⁰⁵ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 24

³⁰⁶ Joel H. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists: Political Realism, Responsible Power, and American Culture in the Nuclear Age* (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 24

³⁰⁷ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 33

³⁰⁸ Walter L. Hixson, *George F. Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 6

They had as much, if not more, contempt for the Soviet regime than Kelly himself.³⁰⁹ This indicates that before going to the Soviet Union, Kennan had acquired his various mentors' and teachers' hostile feelings, whilst acquiring shockingly little academic insight into how the Soviet Union actually operated. In fact, it appears that Kennan was encouraged by his State Department training to think along the historically deterministic lines that Joseph C. Green had advocated. Kennan did exactly this. When trying to make sense of the Stalinist purges that took place in the early 1930s, Kennan proclaimed that he had to,

“go back into Russian history, and to probe the origins of traditional suspicion and diffidence on the part of Russian rulers. *I had to weigh the effects of climate on character*, the results of century-long contact with Asiatic hordes, the influence of medieval Byzantium, the national origins of the people, and the geographic characteristics so little favourable to normal administrative control, to the national unity, and to self-confidence.”³¹⁰

This quote shows that Kennan used Kelly's teaching as a model for analysis. However, it would be unfair to claim that Kennan's perspectives were simply rooted in his education and historical analysis of Russia: when Kennan first arrived in Moscow, in 1933, he had a less pessimistic view, along with many of his colleagues.³¹¹ Indeed, from 1933 to 1934 Kennan describes his experiences as adventurous and pleasant.³¹² It was a time where Kennan and his colleagues developed friendships within the Soviet Union and felt that Soviet society was accessible to them. However, many of these intimate friends and acquaintances were killed or exiled during the Stalinist purges of the mid-1930s. Kennan said this left a “lasting imprint on my political judgement.”³¹³ Therefore, Kennan's cold historically determined perspective of the Soviet Union was juxtaposed with a powerful and negative social construction derived from terrible interpersonal experiences. Mayers in *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* argues that these experiences shaped Kennan to believe that relations between Moscow and the West were fundamentally antagonistic.³¹⁴

The above exploration of Kennan's early years gives an insight into how his perspectives regarding the Soviet Union were developed. It appears that to a great extent his thoughts were formed

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 6

³¹⁰ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 74

³¹¹ Hannah Gurman, *The Dissent Papers: The Voices of Diplomats in the Cold War and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 24

³¹² Frank Costigliola, “Unceasing Pressure for Penetration: Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan's Formation of the Cold War” *The Journal of American History*, Vol 83, No.4 (Mar., 1997): 1317

³¹³ Ibid., 1321

³¹⁴ David Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 89

emotionally. However, it is equally important to understand how Kennan constructed his view of the United States itself, because Kennan's view of the United States informed his strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union. Kennan's concordance with United States foreign policy towards the Soviet Union was always precarious at best. Kennan, for the majority of his career, was a disaffected diplomat, always on the verge of resigning, right up until the end of the Second World War.³¹⁵ One event which contributed towards Kennan's dissatisfaction was the reorganisation and downsizing of the Russian division. Where some would see an innocuous reorganisation of administration, Kennan suspected that some secret Soviet or pro-Soviet influence was working its schemes.³¹⁶ Yet, Kennan never provided any basis for this accusation. John L. Harper claims that Kennan was less driven by realpolitik than colleagues such as Charles E. Bohlen. In fact, he goes on to say that Kennan was, “committed emotionally to his intuitions and ideas.”³¹⁷

It appears that even though Kennan was an emotional thinker, he most certainly held beliefs that can be attributed to a realist. Kennan concerned himself greatly with the balance of power within Europe. Along with Bohlen, he was concerned about post war power vacuums and how the balance of power could tip towards the Soviet Union.³¹⁸ The emotional component to Kennan's thinking was masked by elements of realism. Hixson even argues that Kennan used the realist paradigm to legitimize his “anti-democratic values through its sanction of elite authority over foreign policy.”³¹⁹ A manifestation of Kennan's realist thinking was his lack of faith in international institutions. Concerning the United Nations, Kennan said, “an international organisation for the preservation of the peace and security cannot take the place of a well conceived and realistic foreign policy.”³²⁰ Furthermore, he argued that an international organization could have no useful effect on the problems of Eastern Europe.³²¹ When taking these factors into account, Mayers distils Kennan's criticisms towards the Roosevelt administration down to two assumptions. The first is that international organizations cannot be effective in securing US security in the future. The second is that anyone who was informed about Russian history could not believe that the US-Soviet relations could last beyond the war.³²² Kennan further justified his pessimistic position by asserting that Stalin refused to pursue “decent and humane policies”, therefore the western powers should divide

³¹⁵ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 86

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33

³¹⁷ John L. Harper, “Friends, Not Allies: George F. Kennan and Charles E. Bohlen” *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Summer, 1995): 78

³¹⁸ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 94

³¹⁹ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 48

³²⁰ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 218

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 219

³²² Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 102

Europe in spheres of influence.³²³ Indeed, Kennan not only thought that the Soviet Union were doing this at the time, but thought they had always done so, and that they had never, “ceased to think in terms of spheres of influence.”³²⁴ Therefore, since the Soviet Union did not put much faith into international institutions neither should the United States. This thesis argues a lot of this feeling was shaped by personal experience. Despite his protestations about Stalin's lack of decency, he conceded that actually the Soviet interest in Poland, though immoral, was reasonable when thinking in spheres of influence. He even went as far as to argue that the Soviet Union would be respectful of an American sphere of influence, such as the one it held in the Caribbean.³²⁵ Having said this, Kennan never morally endorsed any Soviet interest in the region.

Kennan's experiences in the Soviet Union had made him so gloomy that he began to believe the United States should put principles aside when interacting the Soviet Union. He advocated abandoning Poland based on what he argued were realist inevitabilities: stronger states sought power over weaker neighbours.³²⁶ This stood in contrast to the more nuanced view of his colleague, Charles E. Bohlen, who believed that legitimate Soviet interests in Europe could be distinguished from illegitimate ones.³²⁷ Kennan, on the other hand, believed that the Soviets sought an unfair and unlimited sphere of influence. Kennan thought the only thing that could check their expansion was for the Western powers to abandon idealism for strong realist policies.³²⁸ Kennan's ability to separate his moral preferences from his political thought process can be seen more specifically when Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, the leader of the exiled Polish government, came to Moscow in August, 1944 to treat with Stalin about the prospect of setting up a representative post war government in Poland.³²⁹ Kennan, though extremely sympathetic to the Poles, was immediately pessimistic about the whole situation, “I knew regardless of present intentions the forces of circumstances would eventually transform such an agreement from a charter into a harness for the Poles.”³³⁰

It is critical to note that Kennan did not cite military, geo-strategic, political or economic factors for his negative outlook. As evidenced in his own memoirs, Kennan opted to make a historical analogy. He talks about how Alexander I of Russia offered the Poles certain rights in 1815 which were

³²³ John L. Harper, “George Kennan's Course, 1947-1949: A Gaullist before de Gaulle” in *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945-1990*, ed. Frederic Bozo et al. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 19

³²⁴ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 222

³²⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 183

³²⁶ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 53

³²⁷ Harper, “Friends not Allies”, 80

³²⁸ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 23

³²⁹ Denis J. Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt & Stalin: America's Ambassadors to Moscow* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 228-229

³³⁰ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 209

eroded within 15 years.³³¹ Kennan uses this event as a model to imply a similar fate for the exiled Polish government in London. However, Kennan did not deeply analyse differences between Russian history and the circumstances of the time. Kennan overlooked or disregarded factors such as pressure on the Soviet Union from the international community. Nor did Kennan think about broader events within the war, such as Soviet ambitions to be a part of the future invasion of Japan.³³² What Kennan was unaware of was that, despite surface level appearance, Roosevelt and his administration had already embraced a spheres of influence approach with the Soviet Union, which was as realist as Kennan would have liked.³³³ However, not knowing this, Kennan had come to believe that the Roosevelt administration lacked any kind of clear policy, which meant it was susceptible to changes of public fancy. Contrastingly, he believed the Soviet Union had a clear long term strategy, which could not be affected by public opinion.³³⁴ More evidence of his realist inclinations can be seen in his memoirs, where he ascribes the Soviet desire to expand not to a fanatical desire to communize Europe, but the desire to simply acquire as much power as possible so as to stabilise and secure traditional Russian expansionist tendencies.³³⁵

Kennan's frustrations meant he developed strong feelings against the Roosevelt administration's policy of unity with the Soviet Union. Hixson argues, "Kennan devoted his twenty-two months in the American embassy in Moscow between 1944 and 1946 to opposing the wartime marriage de convenance with the Kremlin."³³⁶ Examining how Kennan acted at this time reveals two things. Firstly, Kennan was consistent in his view of the Soviet Union. Secondly, his views were not backed by any specific group and became more accepted as circumstances changed. His first major attempt to argue his position was a paper called *Seven Years Later*, which he gave to Ambassador Harriman.³³⁷ This paper was similar to his highly successful later work. Surprisingly, Kennan received little attention with this endeavour. Several reasons have been put forward. John Lewis Gaddis argues that the essay was "too long and too discursive for policy prescription."³³⁸ Miscamble points to the fact that during the war Harriman devoted more of his time to military rather than political questions, therefore he turned to his military staff led by General John R. Deane

³³¹ Ibid., 208

³³² Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 136

³³³ Stefano Guzzini, *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: the continuing story of a death foretold* (London: Routledge, 1998), 50

³³⁴ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 182

³³⁵ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 89

³³⁶ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 21

³³⁷ Wilson D. Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950* (Cambridge, MA: Princeton University Press, 1993), 21

³³⁸ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 187

for advice, not Kennan.³³⁹ However, this thesis argues the best explanation for why Kennan's voice was not heard was that his ideas were simply too far away from the administration's point of view and nothing like a group subscribing to a set of Riga axioms existed.

This lack of recognition frustrated Kennan immensely; however this did not dissuade him from following his convictions. This persistence eventually paid off.³⁴⁰ However, at the time Kennan felt extremely frustrated with Washington policy-makers. In fact, Kennan was so frustrated that he even vented these frustrations in a letter to his friend Bohlen, just before the Yalta conference. Yet, Bohlen strongly admonished Kennan and told him to destroy all copies of his letter, going on to chide him for suggesting policies that were antithetical to the workings of a democracy.³⁴¹ Simply put, Kennan's essay *Seven Years Later* and his letter to Bohlen are evidence of two things. Firstly, Kennan had come to a settled view that it was not possible to negotiate with the Soviet Union. Secondly, Kennan did not have the support of an epistemic community bound by the Riga axioms.

To conclude, this chapter aimed to answer the sub question, "*To what extent was Kennan's view of the Soviet Union the product of social construction?*" It did this in order to disprove Yergin's assertion that Kennan was the chief ideologue of the Riga axioms. This chapter argues that Kennan's view of the Soviet Union came from social construction, rather than his view being shaped by a collective approach, making it unlikely he was a chief ideologue. This thesis argues that Kennan's view of the Soviet Union was shaped by two factors. Firstly, Kennan's family background and education played a large role in the way he viewed the Soviet Union. Kennan was particularly influenced by Joseph C. Green's lectures at Princeton. Kennan accepted Green's brand of environmental determinism of nations, which used "climate, geography and resources" to determine state interests.³⁴² The second factor which shaped Kennan's view of the Soviet Union was his observance of the Soviet purges of the 1930s. Yergin identifies this period and discusses it briefly.³⁴³ However, he fails to stress a contradiction in the evidence he presents. This chapter has shown that Yergin understates that Kennan came to the Soviet Union with flexible views, and that it was only here where his views became solidified. This undermines the strength of the Riga axioms actually having anything to do with Kennan's perspective on the Soviet Union. To sum up, this chapter has shown how Kennan's views were rooted in his own history of interactions and that his views were not accepted by some kind of epistemic community centred on the Riga axioms.

³³⁹ Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950*, 21

³⁴⁰ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 19

³⁴¹ Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969*, 207

³⁴² Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 14

³⁴³ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 23-31

Chapter Nine: The Rise of George F. Kennan

This chapter aims to answer the sub question, “*How did George F. Kennan come to his position of power?*” It does so in order to demonstrate that Kennan’s career was directed by two things: the interests of specific individuals and his conviction in his writing, rather than a commitment to the Riga axioms. Specifically, this chapter argues that Kennan’s rise to power had more to do with Averell Harriman’s personal perspective of the Soviet Union and his promotion of a telegram written by Kennan, rather than a collective commitment to a set of axioms. Harriman was the American Ambassador in Moscow when Kennan was there as Chargé d’Affairs. Mayers argues that Kennan had great sway with Harriman and that it is through Harriman that Kennan achieved prominence.³⁴⁴ This thesis agrees with Mayers’s stance because Harriman himself said of Kennan,

“It had taken Hopkins' help and nine months' effort on my part to pry him away from other duties for assignment in Moscow.”³⁴⁵

This work argues it is unlikely that Harriman would go to such lengths to procure Kennan simply to ignore him. However, this thesis argues Harriman, unlike Kennan, was much more politically shrewd and thought about his views in a wider political context. Harriman, though eager to promote Kennan, was waiting for the opportune moment to propagate Kennan's views, for he said, “I couldn't get George to understand – that our timing had to be right.”³⁴⁶ The right timing turned out to be the death of President Roosevelt. Mayers argues that Roosevelt would have rejected Kennan's views if they had been presented to him, and that only with the President's death did Kennan have any scope of being heard.³⁴⁷ As noted in Harriman’s own writing, Roosevelt's death led him to accelerate his trip to the United States because he knew the key to directing policy was getting to the new President as quickly as possible.³⁴⁸ Harriman's faith in Soviet-American relations waned quite sharply in this period. The Warsaw Uprising had affected Harriman deeply: the uprising was an attempt by the Polish resistance to expel the Nazis from Warsaw; however the Soviet army utterly failed to give any form of assistance.³⁴⁹ After the Warsaw uprising Harriman advocated a quid pro quo approach to the Soviets. So it can be seen that Harriman’s view of the Soviets had less to do with a preconceived set of axioms and more to do with events as they unfolded in 1945. The

³⁴⁴ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 98

³⁴⁵ W. Averell Harriman, *America and Russia in a changing world: A half century of personal observation* (London: Redwood Press, 1971), 34

³⁴⁶ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 219

³⁴⁷ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 86

³⁴⁸ Harriman, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin 1941-1946*, 446

³⁴⁹ Barbara Harshaw, trans., *The Warsaw Uprising of 1944* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006). 1-12

Warsaw uprising meant that Harriman was far more willing to promote the complaints of Kennan to Washington circles where they met a receptive audience.³⁵⁰

Harriman's concerns about the Soviet Union meant that he had been worrying about the outcome of the war for quite some time and therefore had made powerful allies in Washington. One such ally came in the form of the Secretary of the Navy, James V. Forrestal, who had concluded that Soviet ideology was, "as incompatible with democracy as Nazism or Fascism."³⁵¹ Forrestal, who was a close friend of Harriman, had long been a critic of Roosevelt's Soviet policy.³⁵² Furthermore, the White House Chief of Staff, Admiral William D. Leahy, also shared some of Harriman's perceptions of the Soviet Union.³⁵³ These key players were critical in promoting Kennan's most impactful work, the long telegram. The telegram itself is of near legendary status in Cold War history.³⁵⁴ Some historians, such as Gaddis, consider it to be the foundation of the strategy followed by the United States for decades.³⁵⁵ Other historians, such as Costigliola, blame the telegram for ending productive and intimate collaboration with the Soviet Union.³⁵⁶

To understand the success of this telegram, its connection to Harriman and Forrestal, and Kennan's subsequent fame, two points must be examined; firstly, who it was written for and for which context, secondly, what the content of the telegram itself reveals. When exploring the motivations for why the telegram was written Gaddis points out that even Kennan himself could not present coherent answers. In his memoirs Kennan claims that the telegram was "some eight thousand words," whereas the actual telegram was somewhere around five thousand words.³⁵⁷ More importantly this thesis argues Kennan misrepresented why the telegram was sent in the first place. Kennan claims the telegram was a response to "an anguished cry of bewilderment from the Treasury Department over the U.S.S.R.'s refusal to join the World Bank and International Monetary Fund." Gaddis points out that this clearly was not the case as Kennan's explanation of that issue had been sent out already.³⁵⁸ Furthermore, Costigliola draws attention to the fact that Kennan was invited to give an in depth critique by his state department colleagues, Harrison Freeman 'Doc' Matthews and Elbridge Durbrow.³⁵⁹ As to why such advice was solicited Gaddis draws focus to the

³⁵⁰ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 24

³⁵¹ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 195

³⁵² John V. Fleming, *The Anti-Communist Manifestos: Four Books that Shaped the Cold War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 337

³⁵³ William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1950), 330

³⁵⁴ John Bew, *Real Politik: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 202

³⁵⁵ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 227

³⁵⁶ Costigliola, "Unceasing Pressure for Penetration", 1314

³⁵⁷ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 216

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 216

³⁵⁹ Costigliola, "Unceasing Pressure for Penetration", 1331

actions of Stalin: a little time prior to the telegram's creation, Stalin made a speech designed to 'superfluously' win him an election. In it Stalin explained the need to increase production to three times the amount of what it had been in the war so as to be prepared for the eventual conflict with capitalism. Gaddis regards this speech as typical and unremarkable for Stalin, yet it still precipitated a strong reaction from the State Department. Therefore, Matthews and Durbrow sought an analysis from Kennan.³⁶⁰ Though Stalin's speech may have been typical, the atmosphere in Washington had changed under Truman. John O. Latrides argues President Truman had already embarked on a sterner approach to the Soviet Union.³⁶¹ The new President along with high press reaction to Stalin's speech meant that Matthew's and Durbrow's solicitation of Kennan was infinitely more likely than it would have been under Roosevelt. This thesis argues Kennan's position was clear amongst his colleagues, and therefore deliberately solicited.

Furthermore, it is important to note that certain members of the Washington audience which had been exasperated by Kennan in the past, such as Hopkins and Stettinius, were less intimately linked with the new President. Now, it was Harriman who held sway in Washington. Harriman wrote to Kennan saying "Congratulations on your long analytical message of February 22nd."³⁶² Harriman found the telegram so important that he had it reproduced and sent to Forrestal.³⁶³ Even before the long telegram, Forrestal tended towards the same historicising of current affairs which Kennan was fond of. Forrestal claimed, "we are not only dealing with Russia as a national entity but with the expanding power of Russia *under Peter the Great* plus the additional missionary force of a religion."³⁶⁴ Remarkable similarities existed between Kennan's and Forrestal's views with the exception of Forrestal's musings on Marxism which stood in sharp contrast to Kennan's view that "the fire of revolutionary Marxism has definitely died out."³⁶⁵ Therefore, it was no surprise that Kennan's analysis appealed to Forrestal so much so that Forrestal had the telegram reproduced and circulated to members of Truman's cabinet, high ranking officials in the armed forces, and even the President.³⁶⁶ Furthermore, Forrestal was not the only one distributing the telegram. At the same time Doc Matthews was spreading it through the entire State Department, sending copies to every mission.³⁶⁷ It can be concluded that the telegram was written at the behest of an audience looking to solicit Kennan's views and written in the context of anti-Soviet establishment reacting to Stalin's

³⁶⁰ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 216

³⁶¹ John O. Latrides, "George F. Kennan and the Birth of Containment: The Greek Test Case," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 3(Fall, 2005): 128

³⁶² Harriman, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin 1941-1946*, 548

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 548

³⁶⁴ James V. Forrestal & Walter Mills, *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 189-191

³⁶⁵ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 101

³⁶⁶ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 218

³⁶⁷ Costigliola, "Unceasing Pressure for Penetration", 1331

propaganda.

Analysis of the telegram's contents also reveals why it was successful. Costigliola shows that Kennan frames the Soviet leadership as mentally ill by stating they have a "psychosis which permeates and determines the behaviour of the entire Soviet ruling caste."³⁶⁸ Furthermore, Kennan argued that the Soviet Union had multiple personalities. This characterisation if accepted would have made it illogical and unproductive to negotiate with the Soviet Union. Costigliola even points out that Kennan wrote the telegram in such a way that agents in the Soviet Union were portrayed as abstractions such as "the official propaganda machine."³⁶⁹ This nullified any successful negotiation that Secretary of State Byrnes could have had with Stalin as the telegram argued the agents of Soviet behaviour were larger than the dictator himself. Costigliola goes as far as to say that Kennan undermined Byrnes's preliminary agreement on atomic co-operation.³⁷⁰ On the other hand, Matthews, who had distributed the telegram, argued that the telegram simply provided rationale for a course upon which the administration had already embarked.³⁷¹ Even if the latter is true, Kennan's telegram certainly hastened the direction in which United States policy was moving.

When examining Kennan's own reflections on the telegram it can be seen that Kennan was deeply impressed by the reaction he received saying, "the effect produced in Washington by this elaborate pedagogical effort was nothing less than sensational."³⁷² Gaddis believes that the success of the telegram can be explained by looking at State department policy at the time. Bohlen and Geroid T. Robinson, a Columbia University historian of Russia who had worked in the Office of Strategic Services during the war, created a report which was designed to reflect both Foreign Service and academic expertise on the Soviet Union. Yet, the report was written with a certain degree of doubt and mildness which was not present in Kennan's telegram.³⁷³ Kennan's confidence had a profound impact on Bohlen, bringing Bohlen closer to Kennan's position.³⁷⁴ Hixson shows that not only did Kennan's telegram quash milder works such as the Robinson-Bohlen report but it also encouraged and bled into other analyses at the time. Presidential aides Clark Clifford and George Elsey quoted extensively from Kennan in their 100,000 word assessment of the Soviet threat. This report claimed the Soviet Union was a "direct threat to American security" and it called on "the United States to

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 1311

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 1332

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 1314

³⁷¹ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 226

³⁷² Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 294

³⁷³ Kennan, *Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall* [Long Telegram]. February 22, 1946.

³⁷⁴ Harper, "Friends not Allies", 82

hold the line in Europe and Asia until Moscow could be compelled to abandon its expansionism.³⁷⁵ Frazier highlights the fact that Kennan was intimately linked with the report. Being the only Soviet expert consulted. His contributions were quoted word for word. More importantly, Kennan on the following day of the report gave a speech to an assortment of State Department officials on the need to contain the Soviet Union. This appears to be the origins of the strategy which was to be implemented in the Truman Doctrine.³⁷⁶ Due to the telegram, Kennan gained the attention of Byrnes, Harriman, Forrestal, Bohlen, Leahy, Clifford and even the President himself. Despite Harriman's claims, Kennan's memoirs show he was not entirely oblivious to timing, he wrote, "Six months earlier this message would probably have been received in the Department of State with raised eyebrows and lips pursed in disapproval. Six months later and it would have sounded redundant, a sort of preaching to the converted."³⁷⁷

To conclude, this chapter sought to answer the sub question, "*How did George F. Kennan come to his position of power?*" This chapter found that Kennan's rise to power was directly linked to the patronage of Averell Harriman. Yergin also recognises this but fails to justify how Harriman was linked to the Riga axioms.³⁷⁸ In fact, this chapter has presented evidence that Harriman's thinking should not be linked to an abstract set of axioms but rather to events which unfolded towards the end of the Second World War, specifically the Polish Uprising. Kennan himself was clearly aware that timing and circumstance were integral to his success. Yergin also fails to highlight how Kennan's rise was not uniformly supported by some kind of Riga epistemic community. In fact it is clear from the evidence above that Bohlen, whom Yergin links closely with Kennan, attempted his own explanation for the Soviet mind set in the Robinson-Bohlen report, which was markedly different from Kennan's. This chapter has also shown that Kennan's sureness in his writing matched the mood of Truman's approach towards the Soviet Union following Stalin's election speech as mentioned above. Simply put, Kennan was lucky enough to have the patronage of the right individuals in Harriman and Forrestal as well as a confidence in tone which was being sought for by the Truman administration. These two factors in turn catapulted him to a position of influence and fame.

³⁷⁵ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 33

³⁷⁶ Robert Frazier, "Kennan, "Universalism," and the Truman Doctrine" *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol 11, Number 2. (Spring, 2009): 10

³⁷⁷ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 294

³⁷⁸ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 75-76

Chapter Ten: Kennan's Influence on American Soviet Strategy

This chapter seeks to answer the sub question, “*To what extent did a community subscribing to the Riga axioms affect Kennan's policy making decisions?*” It does so to further the case against Yergin's argument that Kennan was the chief ideologue of the Riga axioms. Rather, this chapter argues that after coming to a position of prominence Kennan attempted to advocate his own personal perspective of the Soviet Union as opposed to one shared by a community formed in Riga. Nevertheless, this chapter also argues that Kennan was not immune to external influences. His career was increasingly directed by James V. Forrestal, which led to his work being more strongly skewed against the Soviet Union than it already was.

As mentioned in the previous chapter the long telegram had projected Kennan's career much further than he could have anticipated. Kennan used his new found popularity to demand reassignment on threat of resignation.³⁷⁹ This threat paid off almost immediately; State Department officials regarded Kennan as too valuable to be lost. His effort got him assigned to the newly formed National War College. The War College grew out of early post-war concerns that the United States could no longer have military planning without considerations of political perspectives.³⁸⁰ His task was to design and teach the curriculum for an American grand strategy. His students were mostly a mix of mid-career officers from all three branches of the armed services, along with some State Department officers. Kennan was also sent to do a series of national lectures.³⁸¹ An examination of how Kennan came to his model of an American Grand Strategy shows that Kennan's policies were not linked to a Riga based epistemic community.

When examining Kennan's American grand strategy this thesis draws focus to Hixson's view, which is that Kennan turned to history for inspiration. Hixson argues Kennan looked to Edward Mead Earle's *Makers of Modern Strategy* and Bernard Brodie's *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order*.³⁸² Kennan took to heart Brodie's argument that the best way to avoid atomic warfare was to be prepared for it. From Earle's work he drew on the ideas of two post-Napoleonic grand strategists. The first was Antoine-Henri Jomini, who argued that the best strategy was to offer the enemy the options of either “withdrawing or accepting combat under unfavourable conditions.” This inspired Kennan to form a strategy where, “our task is to plan and execute our strategic

³⁷⁹ Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009), 62

³⁸⁰ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 231

³⁸¹ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 32

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 234

dispositions in such a way as to compel Sov. Govt. either to accept combat under unfavourable conditions (which it will never do), or withdraw.”³⁸³ The second grand strategist was Carl von Clausewitz. Clausewitz emphasised methods of disarming an enemy psychologically.³⁸⁴ Clausewitz’s influence is evident in Kennan’s first War College Lecture, where he argued “the greater your strength, the less likelihood that you are ever going to use it”³⁸⁵. As Kennan lectured, more and more members of the Truman administration and of the military establishment were converted to Kennan’s way of reasoning, which came to be known as containment.³⁸⁶ Kennan particularly maintained the interest of Forrestal, who became the Secretary of Defense in 1947. This examination of Kennan's sources of inspiration shows that his early educational training to seek solutions in historical examples was perhaps more important to him than his interaction with members of an epistemic community focused on the Riga axioms. This is evidenced by his use of pre-twentieth century strategist for inspiration such as Jomini and Clausewitz, who could not have conceived of the modern warfare of the twentieth century.

When examining the reception to Kennan's ideas in the Truman administration a complicated picture emerges. Though influential, Kennan was not the embodiment of the administration's position. The historically significant administration policy known as the Truman Doctrine is perhaps the best example of this. The Truman Doctrine helps to demonstrate that Kennan was acting alone as opposed to being a member of an epistemic community with influence: the Truman Doctrine originated from a speech given by the President to a joint session of Congress, recommending a program of economic and military assistance to Greece and Turkey.³⁸⁷ Though the President did not explicitly mention the Soviet Union, the speech spoke of a struggle between two ways of life. Truman argued to Acheson that the Doctrine should not be limited and should be applicable for worldwide use.³⁸⁸ In his memoirs, Kennan claims that he came to inspect the final draft of the speech before it was delivered; he commented that “what I saw made me extremely unhappy. The language to which I took particular exception was not the product of Loy Henderson's pen or any of his associates in the geographic divisions. It had been produced, at the initiative of the department's public relations office, in a subcommittee of the State-War-Navy Coordinating committee.”³⁸⁹ Kennan objected to the universalistic language of the Truman Doctrine and claimed

³⁸³ Ibid., 235

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 236

³⁸⁵ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 241

³⁸⁶ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 34

³⁸⁷ Howard Jones, *A New Kind of War: America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 43

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 43

³⁸⁹ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 315

Acheson shared his concerns.³⁹⁰

A closer examination shows that Kennan made two errors in his statement about the Truman Doctrine. Hixson points out that when Kennan raised objections to Acheson, Acheson declined to make revisions to the speech.³⁹¹ Gaddis corroborates Hixson's view: he argues Truman, Marshall, and Acheson had already made up their decision to help Greece without Kennan's input. In fact, Acheson had given a speech on February the 27th to legislators in Congress in which he made stark threats about the Soviet Union.³⁹² Kennan also misrepresents Loy Henderson's involvement. In fact, Henderson was the only Soviet specialist who had had a direct part in preparing the speech.³⁹³ Therefore, Kennan was more isolated in his protests than he claims. This evidence calls into question the cohesiveness of Yergin's argument that Kennan was closely linked to a group dedicated to the Riga axioms because he associates Kennan and Henderson as fellow proponents of said axioms.

Despite Kennan's protestations in his memoirs, his views on the Truman Doctrine are difficult to verify. One view is that Kennan's objections in his memoirs are retrospective. Frazier argues from this perspective and makes the case that Kennan actually supported the Doctrine at the time. He notes that much of the historical analysis done by academics such as Hixson and Mayers draws heavily from Marion Jones's *The Fifteen Weeks* and Kennan's own memoirs.³⁹⁴ Frazier supports his arguments by examining the actual notes Kennan wrote for Acheson on the day he saw the draft of the Truman Doctrine. In these notes Kennan suggested ten changes to language and style. Eight out of these ten recommendations were actually adopted. Furthermore, Kennan made no comments about the universalistic nature of the speech. However, it must be noted that Kennan did offer an alternative draft which in Frazier's own words "would have scared no one."³⁹⁵ To add weight to Fraizer's argument, Kennan's interview with Eduard Mark draws attention to the fact that Kennan had discussed the idea of sending American troops to Greece.³⁹⁶

On the other hand, this thesis draws focus to a telegram sent by Kennan in 1948 arguing, "I have always felt the Russians neither wanted nor expected a military contest with us."³⁹⁷ Wright's

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 321

³⁹¹ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 59

³⁹² Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 255-256

³⁹³ Frazier "Kennan, "Universalism," and the Truman Doctrine", 10

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 19

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 24

³⁹⁶ George F. Kennan and Eduard Mark, "George Kennan on Containment Reconsidered" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 56 No 3 (April, 1978): 645

³⁹⁷ United States Department of State. *The Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Secretary of State*,

analysis shows that Kennan demonstrated this perspective consistently. Wright uses Kennan's comments from a lecture at the War College, which took place on April 10, 1947, as evidence. In the lecture Kennan discussed the necessity for caution when considering preventive warfare; it is clear that he certainly was not advocating helping free people everywhere, however he was willing to use force in Greece.³⁹⁸ Therefore, with these pieces of evidence in consideration this thesis argues Kennan's leanings on Greece were probably an exception to his overall rejection of the Truman Doctrine.

Now that Kennan's particular views on Greece and the Truman Doctrine are understood a further question can be explored. Considering the fact that Kennan was a well-known Soviet expert, why were his objections to the Truman Doctrine ignored? There are two factors beyond Kennan himself that must be considered when answering this question. The first factor is the mood within the State department at the time, which was slowly erring towards opposing the Soviet Union. In fact, at the same time Kennan's long telegram was circulating around the State Department so too was another internal document claiming that Greece fit a pattern of Soviet expansion.³⁹⁹ By the end of 1946 this State Department officials became convinced that the Soviet Union and its Balkan allies were the reason for the Greek crisis.⁴⁰⁰ The second factor was the mid-term elections of November, 1946: Truman's Democratic Party had lost control of both houses of Congress. This meant that appeals for finances for foreign policy were far more likely to be defeated in Congress.⁴⁰¹ Hixson points out that to tackle this problem Truman courted the advice of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg. Vandenberg recommended that the President, "scare the hell out of the country."⁴⁰² Therefore, Truman grossly exaggerated the communist threat in order to obtain Congressional approval.⁴⁰³ Frazier shares this opinion but he attributes this exaggeration to Acheson, whom he argues was the chief architect of the Truman Doctrine.⁴⁰⁴ The analysis within this chapter shows that Kennan's views on the Truman Doctrine were ignored, which shows that Kennan was not a part of a group with a set of axioms, because he received neither backing nor any support. In fact, this chapter has shown that Acheson and Henderson, whom Yergin associates closely with Kennan, did not support Kennan's views.

This thesis argues that two other pieces of evidence demonstrates that Kennan's views were

MANILA, March 15, 1948—noon, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948 vol. 3 (accessed online: 04/05/2014), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v03/d520>

³⁹⁸ C. Ben Wright, "A Reply to George F. Kennan" *Slavic Review*, Vol. 35, No 2 (June, 1976): 318

³⁹⁹ Latrides, "George F. Kennan and the Birth of Containment", 137

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 137

⁴⁰¹ Frazier "Kennan, "Universalism," and the Truman Doctrine", 6

⁴⁰² Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 59

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 59

⁴⁰⁴ Frazier "Kennan, "Universalism," and the Truman Doctrine", 15

personal and not collective: the difference between the first and second draft of the X article. In his memoirs Kennan explains the paper which came to be known as the X article was originally written “for the private edification of Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal.” Kennan himself admitted that ever since the long telegram Forrestal had taken a personal interest in his views and consequently helped him advance in his career.⁴⁰⁵ In January, 1947 Kennan delivered a lecture at the Council of Foreign Relations, at the end of the lecture Hamilton Fish Armstrong, the editor of Foreign Affairs, asked Kennan if he had anything publishable with the same content. This is when Kennan remembered the piece he had written for Forrestal.⁴⁰⁶ In his memoirs Kennan does not go into the finer details of the drafting of this paper. However, Hixson’s work shows that Kennan was specifically asked to write a response to an existing paper written by Edward F. Willet on Dialectical Marxism. Initially Kennan declined, however under pressure from Forrestal he produced *The Soviet Way of Thought and Its Effects on Foreign Policy*. Forrestal found this first draft disappointing.⁴⁰⁷ So, Kennan was compelled to write another version, which was to become the famous X article. Forrestal reacted much more positively to this piece.⁴⁰⁸

This thesis examined and compared these two versions of the X article. The first noticeable difference between the two copies is how they tackle Soviet ideology. Kennan in virtually all of his essays between 1944 and 1947 argued that “traditional” issues (such as security) animated the Soviet leadership, not Soviet ideology.⁴⁰⁹ Though Kennan was the author of *the Soviet Sources of Conduct* (the X article), Forrestal's influence can clearly be seen when comparing drafts. In the first draft Kennan says, “I think it may be postulated at the outset that ideology is neither the real driving force nor the real program of Soviet action.”⁴¹⁰ Yet, in the X article he opens by saying, “The political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstances.”⁴¹¹ Furthermore, the first draft emphasises traditional Russian xenophobia being the main component in Soviet ideology. Additionally the first draft focuses more on the idea that Soviet rhetoric about external enemies was in reality used to combat internal enemies.⁴¹² On the other hand, the second draft states that the Soviet Union's “political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure

⁴⁰⁵ Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 354

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 355

⁴⁰⁷ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 40

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 41

⁴⁰⁹ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 42

⁴¹⁰ Giles D. Harlow and George C. Maerz, *Measures Short of War: The George F. Kennan Lectures at the National War College, 1946-1947* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1991), 112

⁴¹¹ George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, No 4 (July, 1947): 566

⁴¹² Giles D. Harlow, *Measures Short of War*, 116 – 120

it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power.”⁴¹³ The first draft also downplays Russia's expansionist tendencies referencing Russian security interests and power interests. However, the greatest degree of difference between the two drafts is in Kennan's recommendations for American policy-makers. In the first draft Kennan only makes one strong suggestion, which is that the Soviet's “inherent expansive tendencies must be firmly contained at all times by counter-pressure which makes it constantly evident that attempts to break through this containment would be detrimental to Soviet interests.”⁴¹⁴ On the other hand, in the X article he suggests that the United States must “continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival,” and he abandons subtle moves to encourage the Soviet Union from making 'detrimental' moves, instead he argues

“In actuality the possibilities for American policy are by no means limited to holding the line and hoping for the best. It is entirely possible for the United States to influence by its actions the internal developments, both within Russia and throughout the international communist movement.”⁴¹⁵

Forrestal was so pleased with the second version that he had it circulated on Capitol Hill. By the time it reached peak circulation Kennan had come to be the head of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, therefore he requested his name be removed and in its place he simply put an X.⁴¹⁶

Initially the article attracted little attention, however, when Arthur Krock of the New York Times saw that the essay's arguments matched the position of the Truman administration he postulated that it must be the product of someone within the higher echelons of government. This immediately set off a scramble for copies of Foreign Affairs.⁴¹⁷ The article got even more exposure when Life and Reader's Digest reprinted extracts of the article. This recirculation and distribution of the X article brought containment into the common American vernacular.⁴¹⁸ However, not all the responses to the X article were positive. Walter Lippmann, a famed essayist and journalist of the time, wrote a series of articles in *the New York Herald and Tribune* as a rebuttal to Kennan's containment thesis.⁴¹⁹ Finding it ludicrous, Lippmann took particular objection to Kennan's proposition that Soviet power

⁴¹³ Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” 575

⁴¹⁴ Harlow, *Measures Short of War*, 128

⁴¹⁵ Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” 575

⁴¹⁶ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 41

⁴¹⁷ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 271

⁴¹⁸ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 43

⁴¹⁹ Nathaniel Peffer, review of *The Cold War: A study in U.S. Foreign Policy*, by Walter Lippmann, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Jun., 1948), 283-285, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2144842>

would collapse within ten or fifteen years if it were contained.⁴²⁰ Lippmann was concerned that the United States would overextend itself with a policy of worldwide containment.⁴²¹ Years later Kennan did his utmost to distance himself from the article. In his memoirs he claims that “a serious deficiency of this article was the failure to mention the satellite area of Eastern Europe – the failure to discuss Soviet power, that is, in terms of its involvement in this area.”⁴²² Furthermore, he argues that he had not made it clear that containment was primarily a political strategy and not a military one.⁴²³ Hixson argues that Kennan's failure to do so was undoubtedly due to his attempts to please Secretary Forrestal.⁴²⁴ Simply put, this thesis argues the evidence above points to the fact that Kennan's X article was the product of encouragement from Forrestal, demonstrating that Kennan was not leading an epistemic community as an ideologue; in fact he was moulding his language to his benefactor, Forrestal.

However, this thesis does concede that Kennan demonstrated his own political influence beyond Forrestal. Kennan's career in the government following the X article highlights this. Kennan's return to the State Department from the War College in 1947 was administered by Acheson; however his appointment as head of the Policy Planning Staff was down to the urging of Forrestal and Walter Bedell Smith.⁴²⁵ Kennan became a key aid to Secretary of State George C. Marshall. Kennan concerned himself with developing policy to integrate Western Europe into an economic order centred in Washington.⁴²⁶ Lippmann's criticism of Kennan had a noticeable effect on Kennan's rhetoric at this stage of his career; Kennan, for the most part, selected American foreign interests on geopolitical criteria. However only a year after Lippmann's critique, Kennan began to specify exactly what these criteria were.⁴²⁷ The Truman Doctrine had already smoothed the way for a more ambitious plan of aid to Europe, which came to be known as the Marshall Plan.⁴²⁸ Examining the Marshall Plan and Kennan's role in it gives the best evidence for the argument that Kennan did object to the rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine. Indeed, Gaddis points out that Kennan in the conclusion to PSS/1 (The Marshall Plan) wanted to replace the Truman Doctrine, particularly its emphasis on resisting Soviet aggression wherever it occurred.⁴²⁹ Kennan's limited involvement in the Truman Doctrine speech contrasts strongly with his heavy involvement with the Marshall Plan.

⁴²⁰ Richard J. Barnet, “A Balance Sheet: Lippmann, Kennan and the Cold War,” in *The End of the Cold War: Its meaning and implications*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 114

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 123

⁴²² Kennan, *George F. Kennan Memoirs 1925-1950*, 359

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 359

⁴²⁴ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 43

⁴²⁵ Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950*, 439

⁴²⁶ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 47

⁴²⁷ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 121

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 138

⁴²⁹ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 270

In fact, he was its principal architect.⁴³⁰ Having considered Lippmann's criticisms, Kennan made an attempt to reverse his language from the X article, particularly the phrase, "vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points."⁴³¹

Kennan now argued that there were only four centres of power beyond the United States. They were Great Britain, Japan, The Soviet Union and Western Europe. He argued the first two were not a problem; however the latter two, particularly Europe, posed problems for the security of the United States.⁴³² Regarding Europe, Kennan argued, "If economic and social deterioration continued unabated in Europe, the entire area would be lost."⁴³³ Kennan was not alone in his ideas concerning Europe; Bohlen on this occasion shared his enthusiasm for an economic recovery plan for Europe.⁴³⁴ In May, 1947, Kennan and Bohlen along with the chiefs of various State Department offices argued how aid in Europe should be distributed and who had a right to it. They even argued that it should be offered to the Soviet Union. Secretary Marshall became alarmed that the Russians would accept this aid, however, both Bohlen and Kennan were confident that they would not accept assistance least the terms effect their eastern sphere of influence.⁴³⁵ This confidence paid off, as the Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov stormed out of the Three Power Conference in Paris on the 2nd of July, 1947.⁴³⁶ Kennan's conviction in his four centres of power theory can be seen in practise in his recommendations to Marshall. For instance, on the 3rd of November, Kennan told Marshall how the loss of China would not be a complete catastrophe, whilst Europe was more critical. Marshall then passed on this recommendation to Truman himself. Truman in turn only requested \$570 million dollars in aid to China, whilst requesting \$17 billion for the Marshall Plan (\$13 billion was allocated).⁴³⁷ This move shows that Kennan did have objections to the universalism in the Truman Doctrine and that he could manifest those objections from the realm of theory into that of policy. It can also be argued that the Marshall Plan is evidence that Kennan favoured non-aggressive and non-military responses to Soviet expansionism.

To conclude, this chapter sought to answer the sub question, "*To what extent did a community subscribing to the Riga axioms affect Kennan's policy making decisions?*" It did in order to show Kennan did not strongly belong to an epistemic community focused on the Riga axioms, and that he was not the Riga axioms chief ideologue. This chapter has found evidence that Kennan was not

⁴³⁰ Latrides, "George F. Kennan and the Birth of Containment", 130

⁴³¹ George F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," 576

⁴³² Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 121- 122

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 141

⁴³⁴ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 291

⁴³⁵ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 138

⁴³⁶ Hixson, *Kennan: Cold War Iconoclast*, 55

⁴³⁷ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 298

strongly affected by a collective subscribing to the Riga axioms. Firstly, this chapter outlined how Kennan drew upon his personal research, not collective thinking, for his recommendations for an American grand strategy. Specifically, Kennan drew upon the works of two post-Napoleonic military strategists (Jomini and Clausewitz). Secondly, Kennan was clearly isolated from the others Yergin associates with the Riga axioms when it concerned the Truman Doctrine. As demonstrated above, Kennan in this issue did not have the confidence of either Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson nor of his Riga colleague Loy Henderson. In fact, Kennan even wrongly assumed that Henderson had little to do with the Truman Doctrine. This shows a clear lack of communication between these colleagues whom Yergin depicts as a close knit group focused on a collective set of axioms. Thirdly, this chapter has shown that Kennan's view on the Truman Doctrine was out of step with the State department in general and that his voice carried less power in the context of domestic politics, such as the 1946 mid-term elections.

Furthermore, this chapter has shown that Kennan was affected by the demands of his benefactor, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, and tailored his output to accommodate his views. This chapter has demonstrated this by examining two drafts of Kennan's X article (one version before Forrestal's input and the final version after Forrestal's input). When looking at the first draft it can clearly be seen that Kennan used the mode of thinking that he had learnt in his early education from Princeton compounded with his early Foreign Service training with its focus on history and geography, not ideology. Finally, Kennan's involvement in the Marshall Plan demonstrates that Kennan was willing to comprehend Soviet interests in its Eastern sphere of influence and was looking to tackle the Soviet problem using a strategy quite unlike the Truman Doctrine through the Marshall Plan. All these factors collectively point to two salient facts: firstly, Kennan's thinking was particular to him and consistent with those he developed through interpersonal interaction and secondly, he was not really a chief of any kind and was an individual political and policy force.

Chapter Eleven: Kennan's Downfall

This chapter seeks to answer the sub question, “*To what extent was Kennan’s career deterioration related Yergin’s Riga axioms?*” It does so in order to challenge Yergin’s claims that Kennan’s downfall was due to fact that “By 1950, Kennan was a critic, rather than a promulgator, of the Riga axioms”⁴³⁸ The best way to understand Kennan's isolation from policy is to remember that his rise in prominence was critically linked to the agendas of others. This chapter argues that Kennan's career propulsion was powered to a large extent by James V. Forrestal, who recommended Kennan to Secretary of State Marshall.⁴³⁹ Due to this, Kennan also enjoyed the respect of Marshall himself. However, both Forrestal and Marshall soon left their government positions. Forrestal rapidly lost favour throughout 1948 and was asked to resign as Secretary of Defense by Truman.⁴⁴⁰ When Forestall resigned Kennan lost his chief patron. To compound the impact of this, Secretary of State Marshall also resigned at the end of January, 1949. Marshall had held Kennan in high regard ever since their first meeting; therefore he had allowed Kennan a certain degree of freedom and did not impose himself too much on Kennan’s policy output.⁴⁴¹ The loss of these two key allies meant that Kennan lost his power base.

Marshall was replaced by Dean Acheson. Kennan's relationship with Acheson, though not hostile, was not as well founded as his relationship with Marshall. This is not to say that Acheson did not give Kennan consideration. He most certainly did. However, he relied on a broader set of advisers than Marshall, such as Dean Rusk and Philip C. Jessup.⁴⁴² This shows that Kennan instead of leading a community of advisors was competing for Acheson’s attention against other advisers. The greatest point of divergence between Kennan and the rest of the State Department came over the issue of shaping Europe. Kennan favoured a bloc of English speaking countries on the Atlantic coast, whilst keeping the rest of Europe non-aligned. His reasoning being that it stopped the United States from overextending itself and it kept tensions with the Soviet Union to a minimum.⁴⁴³ Kennan's policy recommendation came to be known as PPS-55. PPS-55 was a negative turning point in Kennan's State Department career. Even his own Policy Planning Staff disagreed with PPS-55. Whilst Kennan was abroad in the Far East the Policy Planning Staff argued that the Brussels

⁴³⁸ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 403

⁴³⁹ Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950*, 438 - 430

⁴⁴⁰ James Carroll, *House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 150

⁴⁴¹ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 128

⁴⁴² Wilson D. Miscamble, “Rejected Architect: George Kennan, Dean Acheson and Post war Europe” *The Review of Politics*, Vol 58, No 3 (Summer, 1996), 442

⁴⁴³ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 153

Treaty States should expand their membership to all of Scandinavia, Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, and Austria.⁴⁴⁴ Mayers attributes this mutiny to John Hickerson, who was one of group of State Department officials who had come to accept and successfully propagate the idea that collective security was the best strategy.⁴⁴⁵ In the end Kennan's proposal was completely rejected. Instead NATO was formed, which Kennan was against. After this Kennan became an internal dissenter.⁴⁴⁶ Even Bohlen and Averell Harriman disagreed with PPS-55, believing France needed to be reassured.⁴⁴⁷ Knowing that Bohlen and Harriman were dissenters to PPS-55 shows faults with Yergin's narrative. Bohlen and Harriman's rejection of PPS-55 shows that they did hold the same fundamental beliefs about dealing with the Soviet Union as Kennan. They clearly did not share a set of common practises with Kennan when it came to Soviet policy, therefore they did not form a clear epistemic community focused on the Riga axioms.

PPS-55 not only failed but also led to negative repercussions for Kennan. The proposal was arguably directly responsible for severing the precedent set by Marshall, which had given Kennan direct access to the Secretary of State. After PPS-55, Under-secretary James Webb informed Kennan that "he was no longer to send papers directly to Secretary of State Dean Acheson."⁴⁴⁸ Instead they were to be reviewed in order to reflect opinions of high officials.⁴⁴⁹ This consequently led to Kennan's resignation from his position as the Director of the Policy Planning Staff in December, 1949. However, it is important to note that Kennan was not pushed out and that the decision to resign was his own.⁴⁵⁰ Kennan's differences with Acheson embodied the sharp differences between the position the Truman administration was starting to take and the position that Kennan had. Kennan still believed that non-military policy was capable of limiting the scope of the Soviet Union; on the other hand, Acheson believed that military superiority was the most effective way of combating Soviet aggression.⁴⁵¹ This meant that Kennan became highly critical of militaristic policy, such as NSC-68, which advocated military action over diplomatic action.⁴⁵²

It is clear that Kennan, during his time in power, influenced and affected for better or for worse almost all of the key players Yergin associates with the Riga axioms including, Charles E. Bohlen, Chief of Staff Admiral William D. Leahy, and Presidential aide Clark Clifford, and Ambassador

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 154

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 159

⁴⁴⁶ Wilson D. Miscamble "Rejected Architect: George Kennan, Dean Acheson and Postwar Europe", 446

⁴⁴⁷ Harper, "Friends not Allies", 86

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 85

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 85

⁴⁵⁰ Miscamble, "Rejected Architect: George Kennan, Dean Acheson and Postwar Europe" 448

⁴⁵¹ Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy*, 160

⁴⁵² Harper, "Friends not Allies", 87

Averell Harriman. However, it is also clear that his source of power was linked to Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal. However, with the resignation of Forrestal it is obvious that Kennan soon lost control of the direction of the debate regarding Soviet policy. In fact, United States policy became even more stark and militaristic than he ever intended. Furthermore, this analysis shows that the Riga axioms were not monolithically followed by an epistemic community, as Kennan and Bohlen had incompatible views of how to deal with the Soviet Union. Kennan's divergences from government positions sometimes had the support of other members of his Riga colleagues, such as the Marshall Plan, whilst some of his positions were utterly unsupported by the same colleagues, such as PPS-55. A deep analysis of Kennan's history, as outlined in previous chapters, shows that interpersonal social interactions throughout Kennan's life were as important as the interaction with his State Department colleagues in Riga and Moscow. Kennan was always anti-Soviet but never an advocate of a militaristic approach.

To conclude, this chapter sought to answer the sub question, "*To what extent was Kennan's career deterioration related Yergin's Riga axioms?*" It did so to challenge Yergin's claim that Kennan changed his position from someone who was a promulgator of the Riga axioms to a critic of the Riga axioms. In contrast, this chapter argues that Kennan's loss of power had more to do with two factors. The first of these was the fact that Kennan lost both of chief benefactors, James V. Forrestal and George C. Marshall. As seen in previous chapters, Kennan's rise to power had more to do with his promotion by these individuals rather than his propagation of a set of axioms which was espoused a specific collective. Therefore, since Kennan's rise in power was matched to the fortunes of Forrestal and Marshall, so too was his fall from grace. The second factor was a specific policy prescription put forward by Kennan, PPS-55. PPS-55 was received extremely poorly within policy making circles because it did not match the universalistic language of the Truman Doctrine which set the tone for American Soviet policy thereafter. Simply put, this chapter argues that Kennan's downfall was subject to the fortunes of others, and that American policy towards the Soviet Union crystallised around the Truman Doctrine which was always an unacceptable proposition to Kennan. Therefore, Kennan did not turn against a particular set of axioms; rather he prescribed his personal initiatives and actions which were first perceived to be too tough and later perceived to be too gentle.

Chapter Twelve: Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to answer the question “*How does a constructivist analysis of James F. Byrnes’s and George F. Kennan’s careers using the theory of epistemic communities challenge Daniel Yergin’s Riga and Yalta axioms theory?*” The purpose of this question was to dissect Daniel Yergin’s theory of the Yalta and Riga axioms, which states that the origins of the Cold War can be traced back to the conflict between two opposing groups of American foreign policy officials who were dedicated either to the Yalta axioms, a conciliatory approach to the Soviet Union, or the Riga axioms, a combative approach to the Soviet Union.

Due to the complexity of the main research question above, four sub questions were created in order to more precisely answer the main question. The first sub question to be asked was, “*How did James F. Byrnes and George F. Kennan come to their positions of power?*” This thesis discovered that Yergin's narrative regarding the rise of Byrnes and Kennan was flawed. Regarding Byrnes, Yergin overstates Byrnes’s link to the Yalta axioms. Yergin argues Byrnes acquired the Yalta axioms at the Yalta Conference, which subsequently helped him into his position of power. However, this thesis using a constructivist analysis, which meant focusing on perception, has shown that Byrnes's perceptions of what Yergin calls 'Roosevelt's Yalta axioms' were different to Roosevelt’s actual perceptions. Therefore, the validity of Yergin's argument can be called into question. This thesis has shown Byrnes’s perception of Yalta was skewed because he only went to a limited number of conference meetings. This pattern of interaction meant he focused heavily on the pre-existing structure of the Declaration of Liberated Europe and got an incomplete and distorted image of the Yalta Conference. Subsequently, Byrnes painted his distorted and incomplete image of Yalta to Truman, who himself was not aware that Byrnes only attended a limited number of meetings. This thesis also revealed another reason for Byrnes’s rise to power was his personal history with Truman: they had both been rivals for the position of Vice President. Truman feeling guilty for getting the position over Byrnes was appointed him to his position in order to placate him. Therefore, Byrnes's appointment as Secretary of State had as much to do with his interpersonal history with Truman as it did his knowledge of Yalta. Concerning Kennan, Yergin broadly argues that Kennan was the chief ideologue of the Riga axioms; therefore his rise to power was linked to them. In Yergin’s defence, he correctly identifies that Averell Harriman and James V. Forrestal were linked to Kennan’s ascendancy. However, unlike Yergin, this thesis argues that they were not linked to the Riga axioms: Averell Harriman’s views did not fundamentally align with Kennan’s. For example, at one point Harriman was positive towards Byrnes's negotiations with the Soviet Union, whilst Kennan never

was.⁴⁵³ In fact, Harriman's views were shaped by events as they unfolded in the war, such as the Warsaw Uprising. Contrastingly, Kennan's view of the Soviet Union was formed in the 1930s and remained static. Therefore, the argument that they shared a set of axioms is unconvincing. Kennan's view also contrasted with Forrestal's. This thesis has shown that Forrestal was concerned with Soviet ideology whilst Kennan was focused on what he called "traditional Russian concerns", which he outlined as security and xenophobia. More importantly, this thesis has shown that Kennan was no chief ideologue. For example Bohlen, who according to Yergin belonged to the same ideological group as Kennan, did not help Kennan to achieve a position of prominence and even encouraged him to minimise his views and keep them personal. Therefore, this thesis found Kennan's rise to power was linked to luck, patronage and persistence in his arguments.

The second sub question asked was, "*To what extent were Kennan's and Byrnes's view of the Soviet Union the product of social construction?*" In the case of Byrnes, this thesis found that Yergin correctly identified that Byrnes was influenced by anti-Soviet officials, however Yergin overstates their influence and connects it too strongly to his Riga axioms. This thesis has found that Byrnes's views were heavily influenced by two other factors other than anti-Soviet officials. Firstly, Byrnes's perception of Yalta was so skewed that his later interactions with Soviet representatives would naturally have led to his belief that the Soviet Union had adopted a more hostile policy towards the United States. Secondly, exacerbating this issue was the fact that Byrnes's interactions with Molotov were tainted, because Molotov had become embittered by his interactions with President Truman. Yergin's use of axioms to explain the development of perceptions towards the Soviet Union becomes even more problematic when dealing with George F. Kennan. This thesis has found that much of Kennan's approach to the Soviet Union was the product of interactions which took place long before his placement in the Foreign Service, particularly lectures at Princeton given to him by Joseph C. Green.⁴⁵⁴ Kennan, through social interaction, gained Green's view that environment and geography could explain a country's political psychology. Therefore, his conception of the Soviet Union was very different to others such as Loy Henderson, and Charles E. Bohlen, whom Yergin also closely associates with the Riga axioms. Furthermore, Kennan's views were also rooted in his personal reaction to the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, and they were not entirely formed in Riga or through interactions with his colleagues. Simply put, this thesis argues that Kennan's perspectives were not the product of a shared set of axioms but rather a view rooted in his early education and his latter personal experience. When considering Kennan's position using the theory of epistemic communities it can be seen that Kennan fails to meet two of points of the criteria of an epistemic

⁴⁵³ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1945 Volume II*, 753 - 755

⁴⁵⁴ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 14

community. Kennan did not share the same principle beliefs as Harriman or Forrestal regarding the Soviet Union, and he did not use the same set of practise as Charles E. Bohlen. Therefore, Yergin's argument that a group existed around the Riga axioms seems questionable.

The third sub question asked in this thesis was, "*To what extent did a community subscribing to the Riga axioms affect Byrnes's and Kennan's policy making decisions?*" This is where Peter M. Haas's theory of epistemic communities was particularly useful in dissecting Yergin's work, because it helped to define a potential community by separating the Riga axioms and their potential propagators by applying the defining features of an epistemic community onto the group which Yergin puts around the Riga axioms.⁴⁵⁵ Regarding Byrnes, Yergin correctly identifies the forceful impact of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg; however, he ascribes too much influence to the Riga axioms.⁴⁵⁶ Yergin fails to emphasise that Vandenberg's concerns were due to two primary factors. The first being the large number of Polish people within his Michigan constituency who applied pressure on Vandenberg.⁴⁵⁷ The second being Vandenberg's perception and construction of recent world history, specifically the appeasement of Hitler, which made him committed to internationalism, not a set of anti-Soviet axioms. Therefore, Byrnes was pressurised not by the Riga axioms, instead it was the domestic political concerns of a powerful Republican. Regarding Kennan, whom Yergin identifies as the chief ideologue of the Riga axioms, this thesis found that the definitions of an epistemic community do not fit with the Riga axioms when examining Kennan. This thesis found that Kennan was a sole actor, not a member of a collective. For instance, the Grand Strategy Kennan produced for American foreign policy, at the War College, appeared to be a personal product based on his predilection towards finding solutions in history, rather than, "shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practises, leading or contributing to a set of problems in their area."⁴⁵⁸ In other words, Kennan's views on the causes for the Soviets actions did not come from collaborative analysis but rather his individual understanding. Moreover, this thesis has shown that Kennan shared different causal beliefs (beliefs which explain the causes of behaviour) about the Soviet Union to key benefactors, such as James V. Forrestal: Forrestal believed Soviet ideology was the root cause for Soviet action, whilst Kennan believed nationalism and xenophobia inherent to Russia motivated Soviet action. To sum up, the theory of epistemic communities helped to draw focus to the differences between the disparate individuals whom Yergin lumps together as a collective dedicated to the Riga axioms, ultimately a variety of individuals influenced Byrnes and Kennan for a variety of reasons, not for one set of axioms.

⁴⁵⁵ Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,"

⁴⁵⁶ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 153

⁴⁵⁷ Vandenberg Jr., *The Private Papers of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg*, 148

⁴⁵⁸ Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,"

The final sub questions asked in this thesis was, *“To what extent were Byrnes’s and Kennan’s career deteriorations related to a set of axioms as defined by Yergin?”* This thesis reveals that Byrnes’s fall from his position of power was related not to a struggle between the Yalta and Riga axioms. Though Yergin was partially correct in identifying that Byrnes was influenced by anti-Soviet officials, this thesis has shown that to attribute his career deterioration to this is overly simplistic. This thesis has laid out evidence to suggest that Byrnes held a position consistent with his character and profession as a lawyer. This personality coupled with a poor understanding of the Yalta Conference, compounded by a poor relationship with President Truman meant that Byrnes’s downfall was inevitable. Regarding Kennan, this thesis found that Yergin’s claim that Kennan switched his position from being a promulgator to an opponent of the Riga axioms was untrue. Instead it found that Kennan was persistently following an anti-Soviet position which was not militaristic in nature, unlike the Truman administration’s position. This along with Kennan’s sphere of influence proposal, PPS-55, were the reasons that Kennan lost his position of power.

The answers to all four of these sub questions help to answer the main question *“How does a constructivist analysis of James F. Byrnes’s and George F. Kennan’s careers using the theory of epistemic communities challenge Daniel Yergin’s Riga and Yalta axioms theory?”* The analysis within this thesis has shown that a constructivist approach to Yergin’s work helps to illuminate that neither Byrnes nor Kennan were ideologically wedded to a set of axioms. Yergin’s axioms thesis reduces complex and varied motivations for conciliatory and hostile attitudes towards the Soviet Union into two simple perspectives. Whereas this thesis has shown that in reality motivations and attitudes align and realign, and that they do so because of socially constructed perceptions. Most strikingly, this thesis has shown when examining the figures Yergin associates with the Riga axioms that they had vast differences amongst themselves. The use of epistemic communities theory helped to show that when defining a group of knowledge experts around Yergin’s axioms, contradictions in Yergin’s thesis emerge. Namely, that Kennan and Bohlen, who supposedly shared the same set of axioms, actually had different causal beliefs and different proposed solutions. Ultimately, this thesis has revealed that motivations are socially constructed and are subject to change through future interaction, and that aligned interests do not necessarily imply aligned principles.

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