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## WHO WON THE COLD WAR?

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Sometimes, history chooses the wrong hero.

George F. Kennan's "Containment strategy" is widely credited as the strategy that won the Cold War. Intellectuals on both the left and the right may debate nuances of containment, but everyone seems to agree that containment was the strategy which brought the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion. There is much appeal in this view for both ends of the political spectrum. For the right, containment exemplifies the principles of national strength and honor, of democracy standing against tyranny. For the left, one can find in containment their goals of restraint in the exercise of military power and the willingness to peacefully coexist with dictatorships. Strengthening the left's acceptance of containment is the fact that Kennan became a leading dove for the last half-century of his life.

Yet, by 1968, almost exactly midway between the lowering of the Iron Curtain and the fall of the Berlin Wall, containment was dead, destroyed by two wars in 15 years, large defense expenditures, allies which were willing to let the United States bear the entire burden of defending democracy alone, and generational conflict within the United States. American foreign policy, after 1968, was something far different than "containment" as that term had been defined.

What both conservative and liberal alike forget is that at the dawn of the Cold War, there was an alternative proposed by a senior official of the U.S. Government, an alternative which would have produced, and ultimately did produce, the collapse of Communism with less cost in lives and money had it been adopted in 1946. Employed by the Nixon administration without acknowledging (and perhaps without knowledge of) its origin, it was this strategy which finally brought about the peaceful and triumphant end of the Cold War. This strategy was proposed in a book called *Strange Alliance* by Major General John R. Deane,<sup>1</sup> who had been chief of the United States Military Liaison Mission to Moscow from 1943 to 1945.

### **John R. Deane and George F. Kennan.**

General Deane (1896-1982) was a career Army officer. He attended the University of California-Berkeley before joining the Army as an enlisted man when the United States entered World War I. Becoming an officer as a "90-day wonder" in an officer's training

program (where one of his tentmates was F. Scott Fitzgerald), he remained in the Army at war's end. A graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School and the U.S. Army War College, a diploma from both being a key to success, Deane followed the normal career of an infantry officer until World War II broke out, when he became the Assistant Secretary, and later the Secretary, of the Army General Staff, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the U.S./U.K. Combined Chiefs of Staff.<sup>2</sup> He served in these capacities until the fall of 1943, when he was sent to the Soviet Union at the request of Averill Harriman, the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In his role as chief of the Military Liaison Mission, he coordinated military policies between Washington and Moscow, a task which included organizing the receiving end of Lend-Lease shipments, sharing and developing joint strategies and, as the war neared an end, smoothing the friction which developed, particularly in the Balkans, as Western forces increasingly met Soviet troops on the battlefield. Deane was in daily contact with Soviet officials, making him, by war's end, probably the West's most experienced individual in negotiating with Soviet leaders.

Soon after the end of the war, Deane left Moscow and was reassigned as the military liaison to the United Nations (UN), retiring in March 1946. He then began writing *Strange Alliance*, completing it in September, 1946. The book was widely read at the time and an excerpt was published in *Life Magazine*.<sup>3</sup>

George F. Kennan (1905-2005) was a career diplomat. He graduated from Princeton University before joining the State Department, which sent him to school at the University of Berlin to become an expert on the Soviet Union in the late 1920s. He was assigned to the U. S. Embassy in Moscow for 3 years, from 1934 to 1937, but spent almost all of 1935 in Vienna due to illness. After further assignments to Berlin, Prague, and Washington, he returned to the Soviet Union in late 1944, almost a year after Deane.

As charge d'affaires, Kennan's duties were largely restricted to routine management of the Embassy and its personnel. It was "the President's view that the preferred source of advice for matters of high policy in wartime was the military establishment," he wrote in his *Memoirs*.<sup>4</sup> Describing his own role, he said that "what was wanted [by the State Department], at that particular juncture, was someone who could direct the routine work of the embassy proper under unusual wartime conditions."<sup>5</sup>

Although both Kennan and Deane were close to Ambassador Harriman, it is clear from Kennan's *Memoirs* that he did not attend many meetings with Soviet officials. He does not mention any negotiations with Soviet officials during his time in Moscow and only refers to one meeting with Stalin, when he introduced a congressional delegation to Stalin in a purely ceremonial gathering. He complains about the "isolation" of the diplomatic corps by Soviet officials.<sup>6</sup> His descriptions of meetings consist almost exclusively of meetings with congressional delegations or diplomats from other Western countries who were also assigned to Moscow. Kennan stayed in Moscow until May 1946.

### Deane's Three Part Strategy.

Deane's personality is well-captured in his memoirs. He was an acutely intelligent extrovert, and his book contains perceptive observations about the events and personalities of the day. He is able to capture the essence of someone's personality in a few skillfully turned phrases. Most notably, Deane makes proposals for dealing with the Soviets in the last section of his book.<sup>7</sup>

The theme of this section is that it would be difficult, but not impossible, to deal with the Soviet leadership on peaceful terms. He divides this last section into three chapters, setting forth a three-part strategy: "The Soviet Leaders and their Policy," "The Russian People," and "The Situation." Deane had no illusions about the Soviet Union. He believed that the Soviet leaders were convinced that Communism offered "salvation to mankind," and that they were "determined upon a program pointed toward imposing Communism" on countries under their control and to create conditions elsewhere to assist the triumph of Communism over capitalism.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, he thought that there were a number of factors which would contribute toward the failure of the Soviet goal of expanding Communism. The foremost roadblock to Soviet designs, Deane believed, was the character of the Russian people, who loved Russia more than they loved Communism and would not provide the "moral force" to support the goals of the Communist leaders.<sup>9</sup> Second, he did not believe that the Soviet Union had the physical strength needed for world domination: "democracies of the world had let their attitudes and actions be influenced by a gross overestimation of the Soviet Union's present and potential strength," he wrote.<sup>10</sup> Deane cited the difficulty of establishing heavy industry, atomic energy, communication, and consumer goods (the failure of this last class of items would, he argued, increase the discontent of the average Russian) as hindrances to Soviet goals. Third, Deane argued that the structure of Communism itself doomed its goal, since it suffered from the disadvantages of centralized authority, an oppressive atmosphere which made "subordinates answerable with their lives for their mistakes" and the waste, inefficiency, and political uncertainty inherent in the Communist system.<sup>11</sup>

Deane did not believe that armed confrontation was inevitable. He offered a fully integrated strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union. There were three legs to his strategy, each one outlined in a separate chapter in his book. In "The Soviet Leaders and their Policy," he proposed that negotiations be conducted in a tough, but fair manner.<sup>12</sup> In "The Russian People," he proposed open trade and free exchange of information to wean the Russian people away from their government.<sup>13</sup> Finally, in "The Situation," he proposed maintaining a strong military and a willingness to challenge Soviet adventurism.<sup>14</sup>

With regards to Soviet leadership, Deane proposed that negotiations should be carried out on what he called a "*quid pro quo* basis," by which he meant that the West should be hard bargainers, making concessions but only after getting concessions in return, holding the Soviet Union to the letter of their agreements and not counting on obtaining good will by making concessions without adequate concessions in return. He

noted that generosity was taken as a sign of weakness and that, from his own experience, "Soviet officials are much happier, more amenable, and less suspicious when an adversary drives a hard bargain than when he succumbs easily to Soviet demands."<sup>15</sup>

He carefully probed the sources of the friction between Americans and Russians; many of them, he suggested were mere cultural differences which could be alleviated with a little understanding. For instance, he blamed some of the discord to the structure of the Russian and English languages. Russian, he observed, is a more precise language than English. This leads to Russian documents translated into English as sounding "blunt and unnecessarily offensive" while English documents translated into Russian are "likely to result in an interpretation not intended."<sup>16</sup> In his analysis, he is remarkably even-handed in allocating blame.

Although the second part of his three-part strategy, which covered the Russian people, shows that he was as fond of average Russians as he was skeptical of their leadership, he did not adopt a dogmatic position with respect to either. He began his chapter by noting that Soviet leadership had the "support, confidence and acclaim" of the Russian people.<sup>17</sup> He predicted, however, that Soviet leadership would fail and that the people would ultimately be divorced from their leaders, "that they will surrender much of their freedom but never freedom of thought, that they will remain docile to a point but, if sufficiently provoked, will fight and die for their ideals, and that on the whole they are intensely nationalistic in their devotion to Mother Russia."<sup>18</sup>

Politically minded even as they feared to discuss politics, having a "tremendous capacity for pleasure and enjoyment," fascinated by foreigners with a thirst to learn as much about them as they could, the Russian people, he thought, had the capacity to break free of their restraints. Even in early 1946, he had detected signs that the Kremlin was giving ground in its fight to control the people's character, citing the abandonment of the Kremlin's efforts to separate the people from the Russian Orthodox religion and the replacement of Soviet propaganda plays with Russian classics in the theater.<sup>19</sup>

Deane believed that, with the encouragement of the West, the Russian people would bring down the government itself.

With education, youth will become more sophisticated and inquiring. With continued physical and spiritual growth, he may become too big for chastisement. With added knowledge of the outside world, he may develop an unconquerable urge to copy rather than to conquer. He may discover that his masters have feet of clay and insist on restoration of his lost illusions. His basic traits of character are sound and he may refuse to participate in a national program which violates his principles. Herein lies the greatest hope for peace in our time and in the future.<sup>20</sup>

The primary way to accomplish this, he suggested, was through increased trade and communication with the Russian people.

In the third chapter of his book's final section, constituting the third part of his strategy, Deane advocated the maintenance of the military strength of the West and a willingness to challenge any aggressive acts of the Russians. One of the Soviet Union's strengths that Deane identified was that it was maintaining its military at a time when the West's was "disintegrating."<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, Deane called for maintaining a strong

military force to deter Soviet expansion and to be fully prepared to go to war if need be. He argued that this should be a last resort and believed that the West could halt Soviet expansion by negotiation with Soviet leadership, working with the Russian people to wean them away from their leadership and becoming "fully prepared in case war is forced upon us."<sup>22</sup> He warned his readers, however, that the West should not get bogged down in ground wars in Europe and Asia.<sup>23</sup>

### **Kennan's Strategy: Containment.**

In February of 1946, Kennan drafted the "Long Telegram," a response to the current Soviet situation.<sup>24</sup> The Long Telegram was an astute consideration of the attitude of the Soviet leadership, as well as the causes of that attitude. Kennan did not suggest "containment" as a policy in the Long Telegram. In fact, the Long Telegram was shy of any policy proposal, offering only "comments" to advance the debate on U.S. policy, such as the need to educate the American public about the Communist threat.<sup>25</sup> Despite its shortcomings, the Long Telegram was sufficiently noteworthy to draw Washington's attention to the situation. It became a major reference source for the Clifford-Elsey Report<sup>26</sup> in the fall of 1946, where, for the first time outside of Deane's book, government officials suggested that the U.S. goal should be to "restrain" the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup>

The Long Telegram later became the basis of Kennan's article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," published in the July 1947, issue of *Foreign Affairs*,<sup>28</sup> and one of the most influential articles ever published in that journal. Published anonymously under the by-line "X" (hence its popular name, "The 'X' Article"), Kennan's authorship was soon discovered. As with the Long Telegram, the X Article was a long and careful analysis of where relations were and how they got there, but it was very short on prescription.

For a strategy, Kennan offered one word, "containment," without any guidance as to what he intended by that term, other than to suggest that America "measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation,"<sup>29</sup> a noble suggestion, but one which is insufficiently detailed to provide any guidance. Nevertheless, the X Article became the lodestar of the Truman administration, and in 1950, strongly influenced by the X Article, the Truman administration issued NSC-68 which converted "containment" into doctrine.<sup>30</sup> Kennan had a hand in drafting National Security Council (NSC)-68,<sup>31</sup> but had fallen out of favor with the State Department once Dean Acheson, who did not have a high opinion of Kennan, became Secretary of State.<sup>32</sup> Kennan left the State Department 6 years after writing the X Article, retreating to Princeton and the life of an academic, producing critically acclaimed histories of Russia. He reappeared on the public stage twice, first, as Ambassador to the Soviet Union and later to Yugoslavia, distinguishing himself in neither role, getting ordered out of Russia by the Soviet government<sup>33</sup> and being asked to resign his ambassadorship to Yugoslavia by Secretary of State Rusk.<sup>34</sup>

## Deane's Three Part Strategy vs. Kennan's Containment Strategy.

In 1946, the United States was fortunate to have two very intelligent and patriotic men in positions of influence, both of whom reached the same conclusion regarding the intent of the Soviet Union. Both the Long Telegram and the X Article concurred with *Strange Alliance*. There are, however, subtle differences between the analyses of Deane and Kennan. Kennan, for instance, argued that after Stalin's death, there was a very real likelihood of the Soviet Union would collapse into a protracted battle for succession, whereas Deane briefly entertained that possibility, but did not put a very high probability on its occurrence, noting institutional changes in the Soviet government since the 1920s.<sup>35</sup>

To compare Deane's strategy with Kennan's is like comparing an occupied house to one in which only the framework has been built. Deane and Kennan both advocate "containment," although Deane spells out the parameters of what he has in mind better than Kennan does. But there Kennan's proposals stop. For all its influence, containment was a mere word, a marketing slogan which meant different things to different people. By contrast, Deane's strategy was a complete strategy, with concepts designed to maintain the status quo (containment), while dealing with Soviet leadership to smooth the inevitable frictions (*quid pro quo*) and providing for a long-term program for victory (by separating the Soviet leadership from the Russian population through a "populist" engagement).

The biggest distinction between Kennan and Deane is that Kennan believed that the average Russian would remain blindly obedient to his masters, while Deane did not. Kennan specifically repudiated the "populist" and most important leg of Deane's tripart strategy: the increase of trade and information to improve the image of Western values among the average Russian. In his *Memoirs*, Kennan admits to a "deep skepticism about the absolute value of people-to-people contacts for the improvement of international relations."<sup>36</sup> Kennan acknowledged that Communist leadership was pushing in a direction its people did not want to go, but, in the Long Telegram, Kennan dismissed Deane's central point by suggesting that "party line is binding for outlook and conduct of people who make up apparatus of power—party, secret police, and Government—and it is exclusively with these that we have to deal."<sup>37</sup>

What is fascinating about the competing doctrines is that while both men reached the same conclusions about the problem, their solutions differed significantly. It was a combination of the different experiences of the two men and their different character which led them to the different solutions. Kennan, with his intellectual orientation, was more interested in the theoretical aspects and historical origins of the Soviet state, while Deane, with his sensitivity to human nature, his military background (which required him to lead normal human beings to solve concrete problems), and his deep experience with the Soviet government, was focused on a practical route to a peaceful future.

The character of the two individuals is illuminated by comparing Kennan's *Memoirs* with Deane's *Strange Alliance*. The intelligence apparent in Kennan's *Memoirs* is scholarly and abstractly analytical. Everything is very clearly funneled through Kennan's own

consciousness and his ego is deeply invested in his ideas. By contrast, Deane displays an intelligence rooted in empathy, incisive observation, and practicality. Deane is virtually invisible in his own autobiography, more interested in the people he meets than in conveying to the reader what his own opinions are. Kennan has remarkably little to say about the Soviet leadership or the Russian people but a great deal to say about Communism in the abstract. Deane's memoir is the exact opposite. Nevertheless, both books mention the author of the other book. Kennan in particular has very high praise for Deane, calling him "a senior military aide of the highest quality: modest, unassuming, scrupulously honest, fair-minded, and clear-sighted."<sup>38</sup>

### **Failure of Containment.**

After NSC-68 became U.S. doctrine, creating the framework for confrontation with Communist governments, containment became a force beyond its creator. Containment prompted President Truman to send American troops into Korea, served as the inspiration for President Eisenhower's "massive retaliation" policy, and provided the basis for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson to intervene in Vietnam.

By the time policymakers turned their attention to Vietnam, containment had even begun to influence military tactics. "Graduated response" called for measured retaliation, so that when a Communist country made an aggressive move against its neighbors, the United States would respond with a measure of force calculated by Washington to be just enough to deter the aggression. If the aggressor backed off, the United States would back off. If the Communists escalated, the United States would escalate. The flaw of "graduated response" was that it enabled the aggressor to set the agenda, eliciting a U.S. response which did little to discourage aggression more than temporarily, at best. Instead, the doctrine surrendered the initiative to the aggressor, giving it the opportunity to "game" the United States.<sup>39</sup>

By the time he published his *Memoirs* in 1968, Kennan himself had repudiated his own doctrine.<sup>40</sup> Many contemporary observers, including Kennan himself, felt that the failure in Vietnam constituted the death knell of containment. Kennan's harsh repudiation of the very work that gave him his fame is almost unique in intellectual history. He claimed in his *Memoirs* that he intended containment to mean something else, but 20 years after the X Article was published, he was remarkably vague about what he did mean. He also argued that the validity of containment was soon made obsolete by the passage of events, including the death of Stalin, but he apparently never made this clear at the time.

### **The Triumph of Deane's Strategy.**

When Richard Nixon assumed the Presidency in 1969, he inherited a repudiated Cold War strategy. His response to the failure of containment was to introduce two additional elements to U.S.-Soviet relations: *détente*, which, as practiced by Nixon, was General Deane's *quid pro quo* under another name, and increased trade and cultural

contact with the Soviet Union, which Deane had advocated in the “populist” leg of his strategy.

There is no record that Nixon knew of Deane’s ideas or consciously applied them. There are no references to General Deane in the indices of books about the Nixon administration, including Nixon’s own memoirs. In addition, neither General John R. Deane, Jr., USA (Ret.), General Deane’s son, a distinguished Soldier who spent the Nixon years in the Pentagon; nor Deane’s grandson, John Russell Deane III, who was a Staff Assistant to the President for Legislation in the Nixon administration, recall their forebear’s name being used in connection with the shift in strategy.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Nixon was an omnivorous reader,<sup>42</sup> and he almost certainly would have been aware of a best selling book on U.S.-Soviet relationships which appeared when he was a newly elected Congressman.

Détente as practiced by Nixon involved more than normal diplomacy. There was always a tough mindedness behind the talk. Nixon, after all, was sinking Soviet ships in Haiphong Harbor even as he negotiated arms limitation with the USSR.<sup>43</sup> When the Soviet Union encouraged Egypt to attack Israel in the Yom Kippur War, the United States went on a nuclear alert, and Nixon ordered the massive airlift which allowed Israel to stop the Egyptian offensive.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, his approach to China managed to open a second front in negotiations with the USSR, causing turmoil in Moscow. While Nixon’s public rhetoric emphasized peaceful coexistence, his deeds signaled the *quid pro quo* approach which Deane had advocated.

There was a broader range to talks with the Soviet Union, as well. Whereas tentative negotiations since the Eisenhower administration had focused on narrowly defined issues such as modest limitations to nuclear testing and issues involving Berlin, Nixon’s talks were far more wide ranging, including trade issues, discussing “hot spots” around the world and even reductions in nuclear weaponry.<sup>45</sup>

Nixon’s combination of toughness with concessions, of carrot with stick, was a crucial element to his success. When President Carter tried his version of détente without the toughness, the Soviet leadership saw this as an open invitation to adventurism.<sup>46</sup> President Reagan reversed Nixon’s approach, combining tough rhetoric with conciliatory gestures, such as his offer to Premier Gorbachev to jointly eliminate the two countries’ entire nuclear arsenals.<sup>47</sup> This played better domestically, since Reagan managed to hang onto his political base throughout his two terms in office while keeping peace with the Soviets.

The Nixon administration’s most significant move was the boosting of trade and cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union, especially the introduction of Western consumer goods to the Russian people. Voice of America could be partially neutralized by Soviet accusations that it was mere propaganda. It was far more effective to expose the average Russian youth to the bright city lights of the West and entice him with Pepsi Cola, Levi’s jeans, and Bob Dylan music. The foreign trade in consumer goods separated the Soviet leadership from the Russian people, breaching the wall containment created by showing the Russian people the consumers’ paradise on the other side of the Iron Curtain. This approach had interested Nixon at least since the “kitchen debates”

with Premier Khrushchev in 1959.<sup>48</sup> Consciously or not, Nixon's détente policy owes a debt to Deane's advocacy of direct contact with the Russian people.

It was not without costs. Nixon's trade initiatives managed to alienate his conservative base, who thought that he was easing the burden on Soviet leadership by letting the United States supply the demand for consumer goods. Meanwhile, Nixon's leftwing critics in Congress opposed his trade policies for a variety of reasons.<sup>49</sup> Here was a case where both sides of the partisan divide were united in their criticism (albeit for very different reasons), and both sides were very wrong. The strength of Nixon's trade policies were the strength of America: the ability to satisfy the needs of the average citizen. Elites of whatever political persuasion failed to grasp what a profound revelation that would be to the average Russian.

Presidents Carter, Reagan, and Bush continued and increased President Nixon's "populist" strategy. By the time Boris Yeltsin climbed onto a Soviet tank to address a crowd of Russian demonstrators, the divorce between the Soviet government and the Russian people was complete: a confrontation between a mob of Russian citizens opposing the government and a Russian army unwilling to defend that government was mediated by a senior Soviet official who sided with the mob.<sup>50</sup> Deane's predictions were spectacularly realized 45 years after *Strange Alliance* was published.

## **Conclusion.**

What is interesting about containment and "graduated response" is that containment had evolved into a device by which diplomatic concepts of negotiation were imported into military operations. By contrast, Deane's *quid pro quo* provided for the importation of military concepts into diplomatic negotiations. As the latter half of the Cold War proved when dealing with a totalitarian government, hard diplomacy is more effective than soft combat.

It is not surprising that an Army officer would propose a less truculent approach to dealing with potential adversaries. Richard K. Betts, in his landmark book, *Soldiers, Statesmen and Cold War Crises*,<sup>51</sup> found that military advice tended to be more dovish than civilian advice until the shooting started, at which point it became more hawkish. Since the military advisors actually have to fight a war, one should expect them to be more reluctant to challenge an adversary unless important national interests were at stake, and more committed to seeing a war through to success once human lives are lost. But Deane's advice was not just less hawkish; it was a much more informed, thoughtful, and holistic strategy than that offered by Kennan or NSC-68. The fundamental conflict of the Cold War was inevitable, but Deane's plan may have resulted in a Warm Peace instead of a Cold War, it may have led to less internal conflict within the United States and a swifter collapse of Communism.

The question remains why Deane's advice was neglected. Some observers prefer to see conspiracies where human nature provides a better explanation. That is certainly the case here, despite the tendency of some to blame the "military industrial complex" for Cold War tensions. Since Deane's plan was also premised on a strong military, it is

ridiculous to blame self-interest or corporate greed. There are several other more plausible reasons, none of them very flattering to the way the American government makes decisions.

One possible explanation is that the State Department has always been an elitist institution, which is not to say that decisions are based on merit, but rather that they are based on credentials. In an elitist institution, Princeton University trumps the University of California and the State Department trumps the U.S. Army. General Deane's superior experience in actually negotiating with Soviet leaders was simply not relevant.

Nor were General Deane's unique qualities likely to have been appreciated by State Department planners. Empathy for a foreign people is more likely to be found in the military than in diplomatic circles. In the military, good leadership requires the leader to connect with his subordinates. Only in the military is the rule that "the enlisted men eat before the officers do" considered one of the requirements of leadership. Even in Communist countries, such a sentiment was never followed as strictly as it is in the U.S. Army. This focus gives military leaders a more complete awareness of an alien society because their job description requires them to observe all sectors of society, not just the top echelons.

By contrast, State Department officers are expected to focus on the elites, and the higher those elites may be in the hierarchy, the greater the focus required. Kennan looked at average Russians simply as masses of people: something to be controlled and manipulated by the leadership. Deane saw the Russian people as individuals with a common culture, but an ability to think for themselves.

Another reason Deane's advice might have been ignored is related to the first. Deane's book was based on experience, not on academic research. As a country, we have become increasingly enamored of intellectualism and dismissive of graduates of the "school of hard knocks." As a result, the approaches the two men took to their subject were polar opposites. Deane accepted the basic premises of Soviet adventurism and focused on methods to cope with it. Kennan, on the other hand, proposed inadequate solutions but spent the bulk of the Long Telegram and the X Article to a carefully argued, historical analysis of the origins of the Soviet attitude.

A third reason why Deane's theories were sidelined may have been because, in the United States, military authority is subordinate to civilian authority. This subordination is critical to the structure of a democracy, but all too often it leads to a belief among civilian leadership that military advice is inferior to civilian advice. Many of the worst blunders in American foreign policy have been made by civilians over the strong opposition of the military. President Kennedy's support for a coup in South Vietnam,<sup>52</sup> Robert McNamara's conduct of that war under President Johnson<sup>53</sup> and Donald Rumsfeld's "light footprint" in Iraq<sup>54</sup> all were ordered over the objections of military leadership.

Fourth, Deane was a modest and unassuming man, to use two adjectives which Kennan himself used to describe him. Kennan was ambitious and used both his ambition to further his idea and used his idea to further his ambition. Speaking of the publication of the Long Telegram, Kennan noted in his *Memoirs*, "My official loneliness came

in fact to an end . . . My reputation was made. My voice now carried.”<sup>55</sup> The self-centered nature of those sentences was alien to the character of General Deane. The United States is a country in which salesmanship has been elevated to a high art, and effective marketing can prevail over a better idea. Kennan may simply have been noisier than Deane.

Yet another possibility why the U.S. Government ignored Deane’s counsel is the common problem of institutional knowledge. By the time NSC-68 was drafted, Deane had retired and the Pentagon’s representative on the drafting committee was Major General (later General) Truman Landon, a distinguished officer, but one who served in combat units in the Central Pacific throughout World War II and had never set foot in the Soviet Union. Deane’s views may have been lost simply because its advocate retired. Military folk wisdom tells us that we did not fight in Vietnam for 10 years, we fought it for 1 year 10 times. As troops were rotated home, the knowledge of how to fight the war was lost. This is not a peculiarly military failing.

Finally, the very failing of Kennan’s X Article may have been what gave it its success. “Containment” is an empty word, which means different things to different people. People could agree to their own concept of the word without adopting the intentions of the author. Deane had a thoroughly well-defined plan, backed up by his own personal experiences. The ambiguities of containment may have increased the number of its supporters.

Deane died in 1982, just as the Cold War was entering its endgame. Kennan survived for 15 years after the fall of the Wall. During that time, he reclaimed ownership of the containment strategy and worked tirelessly to obtain credit for it as the instrument which led to the fall of Communism.<sup>56</sup> But for history to serve as a useful tool for handling current and future problems, more must be demanded of it than a simple scorecard for the loudest advocate.

It is time to recognize that containment in and of itself was not enough to win the Cold War. The other two legs—tough negotiations on a wide variety of topics and increased contact with the Russian people—were the primary elements which allowed Communism to fall without armed conflict. The irony of this situation is that General Deane himself would see no reason for recognition simply for doing his duty. History should be concerned less with the merits of Deane or Kennan as human beings than about the merits of their ideas. Only this approach will provide lessons we can use to correct the way society operates. For that reason alone, it is important to recognize the opportunity we lost by failing to listen to Major General John Russell Deane.

## ENDNOTES

1. Major General John R. Deane, *Strange Alliance, The Story of our Efforts at Wartime Co-Operation with Russia*, New York: The Viking Press, 1946.

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3. John R. Deane, “Excerpts from *Strange Alliance*,” *Life Magazine*, January 20, 1947, p. 98.

4. George F. Kennan, *Memoirs*, Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1967, p. 180.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
7. Deane, p. 289.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 326.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 289-304.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 305-318.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 319-333.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
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17. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
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19. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
24. Copies of the "Long Telegram" are available from [www.ntanet.net/kennan](http://www.ntanet.net/kennan).
25. Long telegram, part 5.
26. A copy of the outline of the Clifford-Elsey Report is available from [trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop](http://trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop).
27. Clifford-Elsey outline, Chap. VI.b.
28. Copies of the X Article are available from [www.historyguide.org/Europe/kennan](http://www.historyguide.org/Europe/kennan).

29. The X Article, Part IV.
30. Copies of NSC-68 are available from [www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/nsc-68](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/nsc-68).
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32. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
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34. Thompson, pp. 193-194.
35. Deane, p. 329.
36. Kennan, *Memoirs*, p. 277.
37. Kennan, Long Telegram, Part 2.
38. Kennan, *Memoirs*, p. 231.
39. Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982.
40. Kennan, *Memoirs*, pp. 363-367.
41. Email, to the author from General John R. Deane, Jr., February 25, 2010.
42. See, for instance, William Safire, *Before the Fall*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975, pp. 533-535.
43. Herbert S. Parmet, *Richard Nixon and His America*, Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1990, p. 624.
44. Conrad Black, "Richard M. Nixon, A Life in Full," *Public Affairs*, 2007, pp. 923-928.
45. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon Volume 2 (1962-1972)*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989, p. 439.
46. Erwin C. Hargrove, *Jimmy Carter as President*, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988, pp. 121-122.
47. Stephen F. Hayward, *The Age of Reagan*, New York: Random House, 2009, pp. 446-461.
48. Nixon, Richard, *Six Crises*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962.
49. Richard C. Thornton, *The Nixon Kissinger Years*, St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1989, pp. 319-322.
50. John Morrison, *Boris Yeltsin, From Bolshevik to Democrat*, Boston, MA: Dutton, 1991, pp. 283-284.
51. Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen and Cold War Crises*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977.
52. Ellen Hammer, *A Death in November*, Boston, MA: E. P. Dutton, 1987, pp. 170, 281.

53. See generally H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, New York: Harper Collins, 1997.

54. Bradley Graham, "By His Own Rules," *Public Affairs*, 2009, pp. 383-386.

55. Kennan, *Memoirs*, p. 295.

56. See for instance, George F. Kennan and John Lukacs, "George F. Kennan and the Origins of Containment 1944-1946," *The Kennan-Lukacs Correspondence*, St. Louis, MO: University of Missouri, 1997. Curiously, unlike in his *Memoirs* where Kennan mentions Deane by name, in the Correspondence, he only makes a vague reference to the "realism" of "US military officers based in Moscow." Pp. 35-36.

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