

## “PRESENT AT THE CREATION”

### *Constituting the New American Empire 1945–1950*

In a sense the postwar years were a period of creation. (Dean Acheson, 1969)

The dapper and witty Honorable Dean Acheson, a gentleman’s gentleman and President Harry Truman’s secretary of state (1949–1953), held the highest positions in US diplomacy during and after World War II. The postwar years he refers to in the quotation above are roughly the five years following the end of the war in 1945. They “were a period of creation,” of finding the parts and fitting them together in a colossal structural project to constitute the postwar US social being. This chapter, then, explores the exercise of force to achieve constructive powers, specifically those creating the post-1945 iteration of American Empire.

First, this chapter documents who did it; next it details the features of global human being as Acheson and his peers reflected on it, in doing their constitution. This postwar human being, inhabited by a Bear that was a Leviathan (an oddity explained later), presented US elites with a menacing hermeneutic puzzle. This puzzle, one of a political contradiction, is documented. The chapter goes on to show how the hermeneutic politics to resolve the puzzle engendered a series of public *délires* and institutions that constituted a novel social being—a three-tiered rental empire, called the New American Empire. Let us begin with actors, specifically the security elites who did the constituting.

#### Security Elites 1.0

The “River families” were born to this spacious sense of tradition and of leisure. Their world opened up to them, a solid and pleasant place, in which

their task was to carry on and fortify standards they inherited from their father. They moved with assurance in the outside world as well. (Schlesinger 1957: 327–328)

In the culture of postwar Washington, “security” generally referred to the military well-being of America. “Security elites” from economic, political, and military backgrounds headed government agencies that dealt with foreign affairs and defense. Generally they were, and are, referred to as “principals,” because their windows of authority gave them strategic command over foreign and military affairs. Principals were the agents of postwar US imperialism. Presidents, vice presidents, secretaries of state and defense, generals, admirals, intelligence chiefs, and all their senior officers—all were “present at the creation.”

Important members of the security elite after World War II came from the “River Families” in New York or their equivalents in other northeastern cities. They resided in splendid manors along the Hudson River, elegant mansions along the Philadelphia Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, or gracious townhouses on Boston’s Beacon Hill and Commonwealth Avenue. The Boston Brahmins thought of themselves as most eminent. They were the first American aristocracy, rich from pre-revolutionary commerce (including the slave trade) and ever so proper, with a Puritan rectitude absent in brash New Yorkers. Whether from New York, Philadelphia, or Boston, all were the Establishment, and though they were not proper nobility in the sense of English lords and ladies, they had something their British compatriots lacked: money—lots and lots of it—derived from ownership of capitalist enterprise.<sup>1</sup> Women, blacks, Italians, Orientals, and Hispanics need not apply, though a few Irish Catholics like Joe Kennedy, the future president’s father, hung around the fringes. Some Jews were tolerated, especially if they practiced ethnic self-cleansing. For example, Sam Laposki, a Polish Jew, changed the family name to the posh sounding Dillon, helping his boy, Clarence Dillon, make it all the way to the top of US finance as head of Dillon Read and Company, an investment-banking powerhouse. The Establishment tended to circulate. Members moved from one elite position to others in business and government.

Military elites were less likely to be from the Establishment. Generals Eisenhower, George C. Marshall, George S. Patton, and Douglas MacArthur, as well as Admirals Chester W. Nimitz, William “Bull” Halsey, and William D. Leahy, were from comfortable but not extraordinarily wealthy families that had long sent sons into the military. A fair number came from southern backgrounds. The majority were educated at military academies such as the Naval Academy, West Point, or the Virginia Military Institute. After retirement they generally joined companies doing defense work.

Establishment elites—including President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as well as such high office holders as Dean Acheson, Charles “Chip” Bohlen, Averill Harriman, Robert Lovett, George Kennan, James Forrestal, Paul Nitze, Edward Stettinius, Henry Stimson, and Sumner Welles—came from families that shared experiences, as “their lives had intertwined from childhood and school days, from their early careers on Wall Street and in government” (Isaacson and Thomas 1986: 19). These were “solid and pleasant” experiences full “of tradition and of leisure.” President Harry Truman and Paul Nitze were the exceptions to these northeasterners. Truman came from a comfortable but not rich Missouri family and never graduated from university. Nitze, a professor’s son, hailed from Chicago, though he went “back” east to Hotchkiss and Harvard, where he joined the Porcellian, the most prestigious of Harvard’s clubs.

Education was important in getting the Establishment “intertwined.”<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, boys in the ruling class who became “old boys” had attended private “prep” high schools (e.g., Andover, Exeter, Groton, Hotchkiss, or Taft), and then gone on to Ivy League universities (preferably Harvard, Yale, or Princeton).<sup>3</sup> Prep schools were Spartan. For example,

Groton had been founded on the British model, entering its boys in forms, with seniority maintained through a system of student prefects. The students lived in tiny cubicles, took a cold shower every morning, washed in black soapstone sinks and tin basins. . . . The curriculum was classical, taught always with efficiency and sometimes with devotion. But it was above all the Rector who put his stamp upon the school, infusing the routine and discipline with an awful moral significance.

Endicott Peabody was . . . dedicated with passion to the idea of Groton School as a community—if not, indeed, as a family—that would produce Christians and gentlemen. (Schlesinger 1957: 330–331)

Headmaster Peabody, like other private school headmasters, was trying to turn out “muscular Christians.” This was a late Victorian movement that sought to inculcate in young men cultural messages of vigorous masculinity wedded to the pursuit of Christian ideals in private and public life. An old boy had to be physically hard, intellectually responsible, and in the service of Christianity (Putney 2003). Such a person, as expressed in *Tom Brown at Oxford*, had a “body . . . brought into subjugation” for “the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men” (Hughes [1861] 1885: 106–107). Old boys were into “subduing.”

Ivy League universities were the old boys’ next stop. The African-American philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois, who attended Harvard in the 1890s, marveled that these universities were temples where “Wealth was God” (Du Bois 1968: 26). Thus, in the theology of their muscular Christianity,

the trinity was replaced by the quaterlaterality of Father, Son, Holy Ghost, and Money, and by the time they got to university the old boys had got their hands on the latter, prompting a lively hedonism in replacement of their earlier austerity. Old boys tended to join clubs like Harvard's Porcellian or Yale's Skull and Bones and Scroll and Key, in which they congregated exclusively with others in their set. At the Porcellian, for example, "Nitze drank martinis with his fellow club member Charles "Chip" Bohlen and kept a bottle of rum in his room's chimney. Members adhered to the club's motto, *Dum vivimus vivamus* ('While we live, let's live')." (Thompson 2009: 29)

While at university some old boys discovered social Darwinism, a late Victorian ideology that justified their wealth (Hofstadter 1955). Social Darwinism was Herbert Spencer's problematic extension of Charles Darwin's thought into social life, where it became a "new philosophy to justify" the economic elites' "political and economic dominance" (Dye and Zeigler 2009: 59). It was championed in the US by William Graham Sumner, John Fiske, and John Burgess. Social Darwinism's basic tenets were that all of life—biological or social—was struggle, which led to the "survival of the fittest." Because those that survived were the "fittest," they were "selected" for preeminence. Sumner (1963: 157), for example, justifying millionaires, asserted, "There is the intensest competition for their [millionaires'] place and occupation," and because of this rivalry, "millionaires are a product of natural selection, acting on the whole body of men to pick out those who can meet the requirement of certain work to be done. ... It is because they are those selected that wealth ... aggregates under their hands." Sumner taught at Yale, John Fiske at Harvard, and John Burgess at Columbia, so old boys, having acquired muscular Christianity in prep school, were then dosed with social Darwinism at university. Medieval knights lived for plunder after their opponents' defeat, and they learned how to go in for the kill in jousting yards and tournaments. Old boys learned to go in for their kills in prep schools and universities; and their plunder consisted of elite opportunities seized and exploited in a social Darwinian, muscular Christian manner.

Paul Nitze—whom we shall meet later as director of policy planning in the State Department (1950–1953)—explained how the fight for elite opportunities was waged when reminiscing over a dinner at his soon-to-be in-laws' New York mansion:

It was an elegant dinner party; another guest was Sir Montagu Norman, a distinguished British gentleman and governor of the Bank of England. ... [H]e said that the Great Depression was the result of universal overproduction. I was not over twenty-five years old, but that did not stop me from voicing my disagreement.

"Overproduction is not the problem," I said. ...

There was a moment of silence as my impertinence hung in the air ... but Sir Montagu was interested. ... Our debate dominated the rest of the evening’s discussion. (Nitze, Rearden, and Smith 1989: xix)

Relatively few young Americans, and certainly none from the slums of New York’s Lower East Side, got to challenge the governor of the Bank of England about overproduction. Young Paul remembered that his debating got Sir Montagu “interested,” and getting people interested was of course a way of creating elite networks and opportunities.

What a world old boys lived in. Consider one tête-à-tête young Paul had with Clarence Dillon on a drive through the countryside:

Clarence Dillon took an interest in me and invited me to spend the weekend at Dunnwalke, his estate in New Jersey. On the drive out in his Rolls-Royce, I asked him whether we were headed for a recession. “No,” he said, “it will be the end of an era. ... we will not have a recession, we will have a depression.”

...

That is why, he continued, he was disbanding the company’s entire national distribution network and would retain only a core of people. ... He said he had given notice to some four thousand well-trained, good, able people employed by Dillon, Read and Co. (Nitze et al. 1989: xvii–xviii)

One does not know whether Clarence was trying to impress young Paul as they drove in the big Rolls out to the 1,200 acres of Dunnwalke in the New Jersey hunt country, but Clarence certainly indicated one of his powers—bringing depression early to “four thousand well-trained, good, able people.”

The Achesons, Dillons, Nitzes, and their set made the postwar world. Their prep schools and Ivy League universities embedded in their neuronal fiber the world view that if they were tough, the world was theirs for the “subduing.” Concerning their achievements, Nitze confided, using himself as an example, “I have played some role in the affairs of state, working with others to bend what otherwise might have been called the ‘inevitable trends of history’” (Nitze et al. 1989: ix). Meanwhile, his boss in the State Department, Acheson (1969: xvii), reported that “the postwar years were a period of creation” in which, he modestly admitted, “I shared with others some responsibility.”

What accomplishments: “bending ... history” and “ordering” the world. It is time to present the essentials of the world the Security Elites 1.0 “ordered” as they went about creation.

### **Their World at Creation: “The whole structure and order ... was gone”**

The period ... 1941 through 1952 ... was one of great obscurity to those who lived through it... The significance of events was shrouded in ambiguity. (Acheson 1969: 3)

The old boys discovered that the years around the end of World War II, as Acheson makes clear in the preceding quotation, were ones of “ambiguity” and “obscurity.” What was this world? Why the ambiguity and obscurity?

On 20 October 1944, as World War II turned decisively against the Germans and Japanese, FDR (alumnus of Groton and Harvard) gave a speech in his fourth, final campaign for the presidency. He declared:

The power which this nation has attained ... has brought to us the responsibility, and with it the opportunity, for leadership in the community of nations. In our own best interest, and in the name of peace and harmony, this nation cannot, must not, and will not shirk that responsibility. (In Sherwood 1948: 817)

FDR was articulating what the old boys knew: They ran the most powerful economic and military institutions in the world.

After all, at war’s end, roughly 50 percent of world manufacturing was in the hands of American firms. Its “industrial production was more than double its annual production between 1935 and 1939. The US was producing more steel than Britain and Russia combined. The US economy was producing half the world’s coal, two thirds of the world’s oil and over half the world’s electricity” (Rees 2006: 41). Its industry produced munitions at vastly faster rates than any other country. For example, airplane production went from 6,000 in 1939 to over 96,000 in 1944 (*ibid.*: 40, 42). As Sumner Welles bluntly put it in 1945, “The United States [is] the greatest Power in the World today” (1945: 115). Importantly, FDR had articulated impending US domination as a matter of “responsibility” and, as a muscular Christian, declared that the US would “not shirk that responsibility.”

However, the old boys also knew that just before the war the US, and the world, had experienced a Great Depression. First, as Clarence Dillon was letting his employees go, the stock market collapsed in October 1929. Both in the US and globally, market failure triggered a decade of high unemployment (reaching 25 percent in the US), poverty, low profits, deflation, plunging incomes, shrunken international trade (reduced by one-half to two-thirds), and lost economic growth. All US industries suffered, but the most affected were construction, agriculture, shipping, mining, and logging, as well as durable goods like automobiles and appliances. The economy bottomed out in the winter of 1932–1933; then came four years of modest growth, followed by the Recession of 1937 until the beginning of 1939, and a return to 1934 unemployment levels. By 1939, though it was not clear the depression was over, it was clear that World War II had begun.

The novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald confided during this time to fellow novelist Ernest Hemingway that, “The rich are different than you and me.” To

which Hemingway wisecracked, “Yes, they have more money.” Of course the rich still had more money during the Depression; they just had less of more. Some had lots less of it and threw themselves from windows as bankruptcies multiplied. To many it seemed as though capitalism was failing, which created a time of terrible reproductive vulnerability. Here was a great hermeneutic puzzle that elites’ were vexed to fix—as Nietzsche’s dinner debate with Sir Montague, referred to in the previous section, illustrates. Overproduction, high consumer debt, poor market regulation permitting overoptimistic loans by banks and investors, the lack of high-growth industry, and growing wealth inequality—all were said, sometimes alone but usually in concert with each other, to be causes of the calamity.

Moreover, the old boys never fixed the Great Depression. It just ended. Hoover and FDR, with differing hermeneutic politics, did everything they could to fix it. They failed. War followed, and when it ended the depression was over. Clearly, depression threatened capitalism, and the fact they capitalists did not have the power to fix it was depressing. The old boys might “have more money” now, but depression was shrouded in “obscurity,” and maybe they would not always have more money.

### *Collapse of the Old Empires*

The US had leadership not only because it was so economically powerful, but also because formal empires had buckled (further documented in chapter 6). The greatest of these, the British Empire, was terribly overstretched by 1945. Actually, some American elites had long realized that imperial England was in difficult place. In 1900, Brooks Adams told Henry Cabot Lodge, “England is sad—to me very sad,” to which Lodge responded, “Like you I hope she may revive, but I admit my hope is faint” (in Beale 1956: 450).

By the end of World War II, other old boys were aware Great Britain was in decline because their English counterparts had told them so. Lord Beaverbrook, publisher of the *Daily Express*, at that time the world’s most widely read newspaper, in a letter to Harry Hopkins, FDR’s close confidant, lamented,

Here in Britain we are passing through a strange place in public life. For the first time the English are not absolutely sure of themselves. They are anxious about their future. And this in some measure is due to the extent to which they have had to rely on outside assistance in the war. (In Sherwood 1948: 828).

The UK had accumulated external liabilities five times its prewar levels, liquidated most of its foreign assets, and lost much of export trade (ibid.: 92). On V-J Day (Victory over Japan Day), the US unilaterally terminated

the Lend-Lease program that had loaned supplies to US allies during World War II. The UK had received by far the largest part, fully \$31.4 billion. The termination of Lend-Lease threw Britain into even worse economic misery, with Lord Keynes declaring, it a “new Dunkirk” (Campbell and Herring 1975: 180).

President Truman reported how the British came requesting assistance, pretty much hat in hand, because “the postwar ‘austerity’ had forced the British economy to cut back to bare essentials ... and, as [Prime Minister] Attlee put it, ‘we can’t cut back much more; we don’t have any fat to sweat off’” (Truman 1956. Vol I: 429). Dean Acheson summarized the situation brutally: “Great Britain has lost an empire, and has not yet found a role” (1963: 162). Winston Churchill informed Acheson “that the hope of the world lies in the strength and will of the United States” (in Acheson 1969: 729). The old imperial lion Churchill’s communication indicated that the UK had found its new role. Its “special relationship” to the US was to be that of lapdog.

The situation was worse for the other formal empires. Germany and Japan were bombed-out, occupied ruins lacking basic necessities. Average caloric consumption in parts of Germany was reported at 1,050 calories per day per person in early 1947. Cannibalism was reported (Thompson 2009: 71). Other European empires were little better off, for the most part. Dean Acheson remarked, “In both Indochina and Indonesia colonial rule was beyond the power of either France or the Netherlands” (1969: 257). Summarizing this global landscape, President Eisenhower said, “Western Europe, as a result of the war, found itself in a state of economic collapse” (1963: 79), while “in the Far East the defeat of the Japanese Empire left chaos ... China itself was in a state of confusion” (ibid.: 30). What an opportunity for the Security Elites 1.0: the whole world for creation. This brings us to the bear that was a leviathan.

### *A Leviathan Named Bear, and What to Do about It*

On 29 August 1949, Joseph Stalin (“Uncle Joe” to FDR’s coterie), General Secretary of the Communist Party (1922–1953), announced detonation of Joe 1 (as the Americans called it), the Soviet Union’s first atomic bomb. Senator Arthur Vandenberg—a Republican who helped formulate Cold War legislation—captured some of Washington’s apprehension about this explosion when he said, “This is now a different world” (in LaFeber 2002: 91). The next few paragraphs explore the significance of Vandenberg’s observation.

The exploration begins by contemplating German military prowess. At the beginning of World War II, the Wehrmacht (army), with its *blitzkrieg*



procedural culture combining infantry, tanks, and air support, was arguably the most formidable offensive land force ever seen; however, it depended on oil, of which Germany had no domestic source. In Western Europe in 1940, the Wehrmacht overwhelmed the French and sent the British fleeing to their island refuge. In June 1941, Hitler turned east and attacked the Soviet Union with 4.5 million soldiers in Operation Barbarossa, in part to secure Caspian Sea oil. Bad move.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1941, the Red Army fought defensively, gave ground, and, though rarely, ceded strategic places such as the Baku oilfields. Then, in December at Moscow, the Germans were stopped and set back. They were beaten once more in 1942 at Stalingrad, defeated yet again in 1943 at Kursk, and devastatingly routed in 1944 in Belarus. Approximately 3.5 to 4 million German soldiers were killed on the Eastern Front, while another 3 million became prisoners (Overmans 2000: 265). Consequently, when the Americans and English initiated their 1944 Normandy offensive they faced a Wehrmacht already shattered by the Red Army (L. Hart 1968). Accordingly, the US military had every reason to be respectful of the Soviet military. They knew who had destroyed the Wehrmacht, whose ruin had made their Normandy invasion possible.

Yet the Soviet Union came out of World War II with enormous losses: roughly twenty million military and civilians killed, and the economy severely damaged and in desperate need of recovery funds. So whereas the Soviets were militarily strong, they were economically needy. The US, for its part, was about to become militarily vastly stronger. The first atomic device was tested in July 1945 in a desolate spot of New Mexico desert. At this test, J. Robert Oppenheimer, scientific director of the Manhattan Project that built the bomb, remembered a colossal flash of light on detonation, followed by a booming reverberation. Some observers laughed, others wept, most were still. “Oppenheimer himself recalled at that instant a line from the Bhagavad-Gita: ‘I am become death, the shatterer of worlds’” (in Stannard 1992: ix). Pugnaciously giddy at the US’s newly demonstrated strength, Truman told a visitor “that the Russians would so be put in their places; and that the US would then take the lead in running the world in the way that the world ought to be run” (in Williams [1959] 1972: 240). Truman was betraying something momentous. He intended to “run the world”; which of course was why Vandenburg had said, when the Russians detonated Joe 1, that it was “now a different world.”

Consider this world. If postwar human being is imagined as a sea, then the other formal imperial Leviathans were floundering or gone from it; save for the Soviets. The “Bear” is often used as a metonym for Russia. So out there in the sea of human being was another “shatterer of worlds”—the Soviet Bear, an ursine impediment to the old boys “running the world.”

This posed a hermeneutic puzzle, and with it a hermeneutic politics: How should the USSR be treated?

An old, deep antipathy to the Soviets went back to the Bolshevik Revolution. As President Wilson's Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby expressed it in 1920:

The Bolsheviki ... an inconsiderable minority of the people by force and cunning seized the powers and machinery of government ... and have continued to use them with savage oppression.... Their responsible statesmen ... have declared ... the very existence of Bolshevism ... depends upon revolution in all other countries including the U.S.... The Third International ... has for its openly avowed aim the promotion of revolution throughout the world. (In Hoover 1953: 360).

Colby represented the opinion of a Democratic administration. President Herbert Hoover expressed the view of a Republican administration several years later when he announced that, from the Soviets' "own books, speeches, and actions," the administration had "detailed knowledge as to Soviet aggressive intentions to destroy the free world" (ibid.: 361).

President Franklin Roosevelt had a different, less apocalyptic understanding. He did not believe the Soviets were "trying to gobble up ... the world" or that they had "any crazy idea of conquest" (in Gaddis 1972: 6). "Keenly aware of the realities of power," as John Lewis Gaddis (1972: 6) puts it,

Roosevelt knew that the United States and the Soviet Union would emerge from the war as the world's two strongest nations. If they could stay together, no third power could prevail against them. If they could not, the world would be divided into two armed camps, a prospect too horrible to contemplate.

In order to "stay together," Roosevelt came up with what the journalist Forrest Davis (1943) termed a "World Blueprint" that, as he explained to his *Saturday Evening Post* readers, was a plan to collaborate with the USSR in organizing the postwar world. The hermeneutic politics among the old boys revolved around the question of the USSR's appetite: Did it or did it not plan to "gobble up" the world?

One side in this politics followed FDR, tending to interpret the Soviets' intentions charitably. Chip Bohlen, who had served in Russia prior to and during World War II and thus had firsthand experience of the USSR, assured his security elite colleagues that the Soviets were not interested in expansion (Nitze et al. 1989: 98). General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, "still felt warmly about the Russians" (Bohlen 1973: 222). Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal (1944–1947), later the first secretary of defense (1947–1949), also believed "Uncle Joe"

to be a “fine, frank, candid, and generally delightful fellow”(1951: 14). In February 1945 Edward Stettinius, FDR’s secretary of State at the end of the war, reported “a high degree of cooperation on the part of Stalin” (Campbell and Herring 1975: 262).

There was another side to the politics. Nitze believed that Chip—his old drinking companion from Porcellian days—had it wrong, and that the USSR was bent “on extending the Kremlin’s domination as far outward as practicable” (Nitze et al. 1989: 96). Forrestal (1951: 47) ran into Averill Harriman, the ambassador to Russia at the end of the war (1943–1946), who—contradicting Bohlen, his predecessor in Moscow—stated “his strong apprehensions as to the future of our relations with the Russians. . . . He said the outward thrust of Communism was not dead.” Forrestal came to have second thoughts on the Russians. The editors of his diary report that at the beginning of 1946, he “had been filling up his diary with reported instances of Soviet aggression and domineering” (ibid.: 127). Even FDR, at the very end of his life, became exasperated. Forrestal (ibid.: 50) reported that “the President said . . . he felt our agreement with the Soviet Union so far had been a one-way street . . . if the Russians did not wish to join us they could go to hell.” A few months later on 12 April 1945, FDR suddenly said, “I have a terrific headache” (Sherwood 1948: 869) and died. Now the old boys were on their own. They would not finally solve the hermeneutic puzzle of what to do about the Soviets until 1949/50. How they would make the solution depended in some measure on their understanding of violence, which is discussed next.

### *The Old Boys Reflect on Violent Force*

The world built by the ancestors of the Security Elites 1.0 was violent: “Within no more than a handful of generations following their first encounter with Europeans, the vast majority of Western Hemisphere native peoples had been exterminated” (Stannard 1992: 2). After the Civil War, lynching of blacks and other minorities with elite connivance was commonplace (Brundage 1993). Factory owners and their government allies repressed industrial unrest with brutal efficiency from the 1880s through the 1930s (Goldstein 2010). During the time of US experimentation with formal empire at the turn of the twentieth century, warfare was continual in the Caribbean and Pacific. Theodore Roosevelt (TR) was matter-of-fact about the need for violence: “In the long run civilized man finds he can keep peace only by subduing his barbarian neighbors; for the barbarian will yield only to force” (1899, in “Special Friday Dead Racist Blogging” 2007). The core message of what TR was saying at the turn of the twentieth century was “peace depends upon violent force.”

The old boys were hermetically sealed into TR's understanding. As FDR put it in 1944, "Peace ... can succeed only where there is a will to enforce it, and where there is available power to enforce it" (in Sherwood 194: 817). Stimson, speaking to Congress in 1945, was clearer about the matter: "I realize only too well, the futility of what the Chinese call 'spears of fire' and 'swords of ice.' In this disordered world, for decades to come, the success of a program for peace will depend upon the maintenance of sufficient strength" (Stimson and Bundy 1947: 597–598). And he was quite clear that what he meant by "sufficient strength" was "the use of force ... to prevent the depredations of an aggressor" (ibid.: 598). Eisenhower (1963: 445), writing in the early 1950s, said even more unambiguously that "to be prepared for war is one of the most effectual ways of preserving peace." However, he added one caveat when he insisted that "the United States on its own initiative would never start a major war" (ibid.: 446). Note that Eisenhower was talking about "major" conflicts. He did not swear the US off minor wars. Finally recall, at the turn of the twenty-first century, that when accepting his Nobel Peace Prize, President Obama said, "all responsible nations must embrace the role that militaries ... can play to keep the peace." How are these security elite statements to be grasped?

At the entrance to Auschwitz, Nazi officials put the phrase "Arbeit macht Frei" (Work makes you free), when work at the concentration camp actually made people dead. At the entrance to their geopolitics, Security Elites 1.0 effectively placed the sign "Gewalt macht frieden" (Violence makes peace). Note the hermeneutic of this world view: perceptually, it is a vicious world; procedurally, violence makes peace. True to the hermeneutic, on 6 and 9 August 1945, the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were attacked with atomic bombs. The military had cute names for their nuclear weapons: Hiroshima got Little Boy and Nagasaki, Fat Man. President Truman, in a radio speech on the day of the Nagasaki attack, told Americans, "The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima, a military base: That was because we wish in this first attack to avoid, in so far as possible, the killing of civilians" (Truman 1961: 212). Both Hiroshima and Nagasaki were civilian targets. Violence does make peace—that of the grave.

Consider the human being the old boys were in. The formal empires were disappearing. East and West muddled along in "chaos" and "collapse," in whose whirl there were two special eddies of "obscurity." What would the Bear do? What about the return of depression? But what a systemic moment: "Only slowly," Acheson put it, "did it dawn upon us that the whole structure and order that we had inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century was gone" (1969: 726). A "whole structure" gone meant a world to be made, and America was "the greatest Power." Its old boys would do the making,

and they would inflict violence. James Burnham (Princeton and Oxford), a significant postwar intellectual who had worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, the CIA’s predecessor) during the war, predicted that “a World Empire has become possible, and the attempt will be made to establish a World Empire” (Burnham 1947: 58–61). In a 1942 joint statement, the editors of *Fortune*, *Time*, and *Life* magazines suggested who should run this empire when they called for a “new American imperialism” that would “promote and foster [US] private enterprise” (in Panitch and Gindin 2004: 29). The next section follows the Security Elites 1.0 as they confronted a political contradiction and the reproductive vulnerability it produced along the way to creating the social being, the New American Empire, that fought the Cold War and beyond.

### Imperial Contradictions

Recall that imperial contradictions are one form of political contradictions. Imperial contradictions come in two main alternatives: dominator/dominated, and inter-imperial. These alternatives are distinguished from each other by antagonistic structural units. “Dominator/dominated” contradictions are those where the units in contradiction are elite dominators pitted against dominated subjects over distribution of the shares of value produced in the empire. Such contradictions occur *within* empires and often intensify to the level of warring, as in revolts, revolutions, or insurgencies. The American Revolution was an example of such a contradiction: the dominated colonists in the thirteen colonies revolted against elites at the core of King George III’s monarchy, largely disputing who was going to get how much of the spoils of commercial capitalism. Later, in a further example of an acute dominator/dominated contradiction, Native American insurgency against encroaching settlers and their protecting cavalry during the US’s westward imperial growth was a struggle over who was going to get how much of the land. Often these insurgencies were suppressed with grim violence. However, as the following chapter documents, the years after World War II were a time of especially successful revolt for the dominated.

“Inter-imperial” contradictions are those in which the units in the contradiction are the empires themselves and the conflict is *between* empires competing to accumulate value. The Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage (265–146 BC)—according to one source, the largest wars to have occurred up to that time (Goldsworthy 2007: 13)—were an example of such a contradiction: the expanding Roman Empire collided with the already existing Carthaginian Empire over domination of the western Mediterra-

nean, allowing the Romans to accumulate enormous quantities of force resources. The spoils of inter-imperial war can be sweet, to the winner. There are such quantities of force resources and so much value at stake that for the winners, the question of when to war may come any time in a logic of warring to expand, expanding to war more, and so on.

Such a dynamic leads, if successful, to “universal empire”—dominion over the entire globe, a dream of imperialists since time out of mind. Sargon of Akkad (2270–2215 BC), one of the world’s first emperors, thought he had it in the third millennium BC; however, he suffered from a poor geographic understanding and had only a few towns and cities in what is now southern Iraq. Alexander the Great came closer to such an empire. Below I show how an inter-imperial contradiction emerged and intensified after World War II between the US and the Soviets, provoking serious reproductive vulnerability. The following section explores a reproductive fix that, when implemented, constituted the New American Empire and set it sailing toward universal empire.<sup>4</sup> It focuses on documenting a US/USSR inter-imperial contradiction.

*The US/USSR Inter-imperial Contradiction:* The US, as we have established, had emerged from the Great Depression as by far the strongest economy in the world. However, memory of the depression was never far from leaders’ minds; nor was the belief, which as we saw began as far back as the 1870s, that economic expansion was necessarily the fix for problems like overproduction that provoked downturns. The historian William Appleman Williams expressed this mindset when he observed, “By the end of 1946 ... even government spokesmen warned that the US might ‘produce itself into a bust’ if it did not obtain more foreign markets and overseas investment opportunities” ([1959] 1972: 267). These same “spokesmen” judged that “Open Door expansion ... was the answer to all problems” (ibid.). These spokesmen were correct in the sense that areas that fell within the Soviet Empire’s orbit turned out to be largely closed to Western economic activities. By 1947 the Soviets, believing the Truman and the Marshall Plans were designed to frustrate their own expansion even in Eastern European territories where the Red Army was stationed, sought to institutionalize their expansion into Eastern Europe. Stalin’s wily Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov remembered of this time that “we were on the offensive” because “they (the West) hardened their line against us, but we had to consolidate our conquests. We made our own socialist Germany out of our part of Germany, and restored order in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia ... to squeeze out capitalist order. This was the Cold War” (in Gaddis 1997: 30). For Molotov in those days, Cold War in Eastern Europe was “to squeeze out capitalist order.”

Unsurprisingly, a perceptual cultural message that hostilities against Russia were possible circulated among the US ruling elite. William Bullitt Jr. (Yale University, Scroll and Key Society), first US ambassador to the USSR and onetime boss of Kennan, expressed this view in a 1947 speech when he said, “The final aim of Russia is world conquest” (in Ambrose and Brinkley 1997: 77). By the end of the 1940s the National Security Council, located in the president’s Executive Office, had become the preeminent security institution in the US. Its seventh directive, NSC 7 (1948), reinforced this perceptual cultural message, judging that although the USSR wanted a period of peace to build up its strength, it “might resort to war if necessary to gain its ends” (in Jervis 1980: 565). Military elites chimed in: General Lucius Clay, who during the Berlin Blockade had faced the Russians as they denied road and rail access to Berlin to the Americans and their allies (June 1948–May 1945), declared that war could come with “dramatic suddenness” (in Jervis 1980: 564). General MacArthur, US military commander in East Asia, said: “Here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest. Here we fight Europe’s war with arms” (in Jervis 1980: 124–127).

Importantly, there was a conviction that one US defeat could provoke a chain of other defeats. A Truman administration spokesman, testifying before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1947, expressed this as follows:

Anything that happens in Greece and Turkey inevitably has an effect on the rest of the Middle East, in Western Europe, and clear around into the Pacific because all these people are watching what the US is doing. . . . If the countries of the world lose confidence in us they may in effect pass under the Iron Curtain. (In Jervis 1980: 573)

This was the “domino theory” interpretation of conflict with the Soviets: if one country fell, others would follow, like a line of dominos. Was the interpretation valid? By 1950 the Russian Empire (1917), Eastern Europe (1945–1949), and China (1949) had fallen. Each of these areas had tumbled to violent force. The USSR had 21.4 million square kilometers, Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, and Romania) had 878,000 square kilometers, and China had 9.6 million square kilometers. Between 1917 and 1949 a total of 31,830,912 square kilometers had become Communist. The total landmass of the earth is on the order of 148.9 million square kilometers. Accordingly, by 1949 approximately 21.5 percent of the world’s landmass had fallen to Russia and its allies, and on average in the thirty-two years between 1917 and 1949 about 994,716 square kilometers of land were lost for capitalist enterprise every year, with all the territorial losses resulting from exercise of Communist

violent force. The domino theory seemed not so much theoretical speculation as frightening fact.

In sum, the expansion of the Soviet Union and its communist allies occupied 21.5 percent of the globe in the three decades between 1917 and 1949. This, to old boys peering out of their windows of authority, was a hard-to-miss intensification of the inter-imperial contradiction. They responded in muscular Christian fashion with a reproductive fix that constituted the New American Empire and, in so doing, added a “gargantuan” quantity of violent force to its governmental system.

### **The Fix: Onward Security Elites, Marching as to [Cold] War**

Before marching on, let us explore what was, during the 1950s and 1960s, a heated academic hermeneutic politics about causes of the Cold War that is relevant to understanding how the Establishment fixed the inter-imperial contradiction at the New American Empire’s creation. Two sides engaged in this politics. On one side were Arthur Schlesinger Jr. (Exeter, Harvard, and a member of President Kennedy’s administration) and John Lewis Gaddis (Yale’s doyen of Cold War scholars). These two hermeneuts of the US academic Establishment held that the Cold War was the Soviets’ fault, and more specifically that the problem was Uncle Joe. Forrestal, who as mentioned above considered Stalin a “generally delightful fellow,” was not alone: “no American policy-maker in the mid-1940s seems to have perceived Stalin’s paranoia” (Hoffmann and Fleron 1980: 214). Nevertheless, Schlesinger suddenly discovered him to be insane in 1970 (in Gardner, Schlesinger, and Morgenthau 1970: 72–73). Gaddis supported Schlesinger and, when the Cold War was over, wrote *Now We Know* (1997). What we now knew was that Stalin was a man of “brutality” who suffered from “paranoia” (ibid.: 8).<sup>5</sup> So, Gaddis queries: “Did Stalin therefore seek Cold War? The question is a little like asking: ‘does a fish seek water?’” (1997: 25).

Opposing the Establishment’s heavyweights were leftist scholars—importantly, the University of Wisconsin historians William Appleman Williams ([1959] 1972) and Walter LaFeber (2002)—who argued that the Cold War was the Americans’ fault. Their central point was that elite US governmental policy makers shared an overarching concern with maintaining capitalism, and it was this anxiety that had provoked the conflict. What are we to make of these two views?

Schlesinger and Gaddis proceeded to argue by calling their opponents names. First Schlesinger went after Williams, red-baiting him as “pro-communist” in 1954 during the McCarthy era (Grandin 2009). Then



Schlesinger and Gaddis went after Old Joe, denouncing him as a “bad” paranoid (Gaddis 1997: 294). A. J. P. Taylor, the magisterial historian of *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961), argued that blaming this conflict, or any conflict, on the actions of an evil maniac oversimplified the complex interplay of causes. Schlesinger and Gaddis’s position explains away the sources of the Cold War by making it literally a freak show produced by a bad, mad Stalin.

For their part, Williams and LaFeber take the analysis into the realm of the actors controlling the institutions with the most political and economic force resources, and hence agency, at their disposal. These actors—sane old-boy security elites—were indeed desirous of supporting capitalism. They did so by instituting nonviolent and violent institutions and practices to facilitate its reproduction; thereby constructing the social being, the New American Empire. Examining the actors with the authoritative resources to choreograph other US force resources seems a useful way of examining how the Establishment fixed the inter-imperial contradiction and built the social being that waged the Cold War. What follows is such an analysis.

### *The Hermeneutic that Solved the Unbearable*

Hemingway and Fitzgerald had thought the old boys were different. In certain ways, they were a lot like everybody else. They had to rise and shine in the morning, shuffle off to their ablutions, go to work, sit at their desks, and face the day; for, as Acheson preached, “Always remember the future comes one day at a time” (Acheson n.d: 1). Here is where the differences began. The offices of the Security Elites 1.0 featured outsized windows of authority that gave them responsibility over vast domains of events. Peering into the “chaos” of the postwar world through the windows of their authority, one of the things they noticed was the Russian Bear, and as Acheson said, “We groped after interpretations of them” (1969). Their groping finally resolved the hermeneutic puzzle of the Bear, resulting in a hermeneutic that began the march to the new empire and [cold] war. Let us follow this string, starting with the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences in 1945.

*Yalta and Potsdam:* Acheson had said, “the future comes one day at a time.” Of course, what “comes” is what security elites directly see as they peep out of their windows of authority. The Yalta Conference (4–11 February 1945) and four months later the Potsdam Conference (17 July–2 August 1945) were important because in their course, US security elites looked out their windows to see their Soviet counterparts staring directly back at them. Though there was still fighting, the war had been won. The conferences

were about how to establish a postwar world or at least start the process. The conference leaders were the heads of the three victorious states—the USA, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. At Yalta, a frail FDR, Churchill, and Stalin presided. FDR was pleased with the results. His concern had been, as much as possible, to ensure that the Atlantic Charter formed the basis of planning. An agreement was reached to reconstruct occupied countries in ways that, according to the Protocol of the Proceedings of the Yalta Conference, would allow them “to create democratic institutions of their own choice. This is a principle of the Atlantic Charter—the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live” (“Protocol of the Proceedings” 1945: 1569). Trade barriers were to be removed, and the Open Door policy instituted. The Soviets too had hopes. Advisers to Stalin, such as his chief economist Eugen Varga, assumed that the capitalist countries would return to their prewar conflicts over trade and colonies. Further, Varga believed there would be a return to overproduction and a consequent recession, inducing the US to offer the USSR assistance as a way of investing their way out of overproduction (McCagg 1978). Both the Americans and the Soviets were to be disappointed. Critically, the Americans believed that after Yalta the Bear would permit democracy and the Open Door in Eastern Europe.

What a difference five months made. The Potsdam Conference was held after FDR’s death (12 April) and the Germans’ surrender (8 May). Potsdam’s goal was to concretely negotiate postwar territorial realities. The US representative was the new president, Harry Truman. For the Americans, the basis of negotiations was again the Atlantic Charter. The problem was that the Bear seemed to be renegeing on its Yalta agreements. The Red Army occupied Eastern Europe on a north/south line roughly from Stettin in the north to Trieste in the south, and seemed indisposed to withdrawing. Forrestal (1951: 1) was concerned about the possibility of “disorder and destruction,” because the “Soviets, like Hitler, have become victory drunk and are embarking on world domination” so that the “situation in Poland is becoming increasingly serious.” Furthermore,

Berry’s dispatches from Bucharest and Harriman’s from Moscow indicate that the Russians have no idea of going through with the Allied Nations statement of policy about Rumania, namely to permit the establishment of free and democratic institutions in Rumania. Steinhardt makes strong recommendations from Czechoslovakia against the complete withdrawal of American forces. He says this will be an open invitation to the Communists in the country and to Russian influence from without to take over. (Ibid.)

On 23 April—only a few days after taking office—Truman sternly rebuked Molotov over the USSR’s refusal to allow democratic elections in Poland (Gaddis 1972: 243). Harriman, then the US ambassador to Russia,

made a point of seeing Stalin when he arrived for the conference. Seeking to be tactful, he politely said, “It must be gratifying ... to be in Berlin after four bloody years of battle.” Old Joe hesitated for a moment, “thought of other Russian imperialists who had pushed even farther west, and replied, ‘Czar Alexander got to Paris’” (in Isaacson and Thomas 1986: 333–304).

July came, and the Red Army had not budged. Panicked refugees fled westward. Britain and America protested, but Stalin defended his actions, insisting that his control of Eastern Europe was defensive. History supported the Soviets’ claim. France invaded Russia under Napoleon; the Germans invaded during World War I; at the end of that war, the US and its Western European allies invaded the nascent Soviet Union; and in 1941 Hitler invaded yet again. However, to the Americans and British at Potsdam, the Kremlin was insisting “on complete domination of the areas under its control” in the name of defense (Isaacson and Thomas 1986: 307).

Worry over the obstinate Soviets came to a head at Potsdam. Ultimately, as we have seen, the debate concerned territory and its domination. In the territory under which Russia exercised “complete domination” there would be no democracy, no Open Door policy. Just five months earlier Uncle Joe and the US had been wartime buddies. Roosevelt had promised the American people that Stalin would allow free elections. He did not. The State Department, according to one State Department official, was “floundering about” (in Thompson 2009: 59). The Bear was a hermeneutic nightmare. Somebody needed to offer a definitive interpretation of what was happening and what to do. Who could the old boys turn to?

*Mr. Kennan Gives His “Interpretive Analysis”*: The necessary analysis had to be offered by the State Department as the institution responsible for US foreign affairs, so the interpreter had to be one of their own. Why not George F. Kennan (Princeton), the deputy chief of mission in Moscow and the State Department’s top Soviet expert? He was a brainy hermeneut and, according to one commentator, a “poster child for the theory that mild-to-clinical depression actually enhances one’s ability to analyze the world” (Youngsmith 2010: 2). Occasionally he strayed off message—once, for example, he informed an audience that “there is a little bit of the totalitarian” in all people (in Harlow and Maerz 1991: 168) at a time when US hermeneuts were pushing the message that only the Russians were totalitarians. Critically, according to Nitze (Nitze et al. 1989: 85), he had “intimate familiarity” with the Soviet Union. Iconic of this intimacy was a 1944 entry in Kennan’s (2000: 90) diary: “The women had broad faces, brown muscular arms, and the powerful maternal thighs of the female Slav.” Fantasize on, George. The year 1944 was one of famine in the USSR, and a lot of those powerful thighs would have been pretty withered.

Nevertheless, the State Department had to work with what they had. George was the old boys' hermeneut-on-the-spot, so in February 1946 he was summoned by a State Department cable: "We should welcome receiving from you an interpretive analysis of what we may expect in the way of future implementation of [Stalin's] announced policies" ( in Thompson 2009: 56). He went to work lickety-split and on 22 February cabled his 5,300-word interpretation back to Washington. Known now as the Long Telegram, it went, in the language of the Internet, "viral." It was

distributed ... throughout the State Department and then rerouted ... to every embassy in the world. ... Averell Harriman passed a copy to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, who passed copies to hundreds of colleagues. The Secretary of State read it. The President read it. Soviet spies in Washington read it. (Thompson 2009: 59)

What did they read? The text was divided into five parts. The first four parts interpreted the Soviets and Communism. The final part proposed policy possibilities based on the first four parts. Nothing good was said about the Soviet governance or Communism. The government suffered from an "instinctive ... sense of insecurity." Its members had a "neurotic view of world affairs." They harbored "disrespect ... for objective truth." Their Communism was a "malignant parasite." The most quoted sentence of the telegram stated that "we have here," in the Soviet Union,

a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the US there can be no permanent modus vivendi, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our [US] society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure. (This quotation and prior ones from the Long Telegram come from Kennan 1946)

The interpretation was clear. The USSR was a neurotic, fanatic, insecure beast out to disrupt and destroy the American "way of life," all of which was unbearable. Part of the hermeneutic puzzle had been resolved. Uncle Joe was reclassified as paranoid, and the old boys had an enemy upon which to practice muscular Christianity.

However, the fifth part of the Long Telegram had not been especially clear about what this practice might be. That lacuna was addressed when Kennan was asked to bring the Long Telegram to a wider audience by publishing it in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, which he did in an anonymously published text and mysteriously dubbed the "X-article." It was brought to ordinary citizens in excerpted versions printed in mass media magazines like *Reader's Digest*, *Life*, and *Newsweek*. It insisted that the Kremlin should be handled with "firm and vigilant containment, designed to confront the

Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world” (Kennan 1947). This “containment,” a term Kennan used three times in the X-article, was the missing procedure regarding what to do with the Bear: contain it in a cage.

Kennan’s Long Telegram and the X-article instituted a hermeneutic that solved the unbearable Bear’s hermeneutic puzzle. The first message of the hermeneutic was that of perceptual culture: If you saw the Bear, you saw the enemy. The second message was procedural: Contain it with “counter-force.” Because these two messages existed in written form, they became part of the public culture. Learned by large numbers of Americans perusing their *Readers’ Digests*, they became part of the country’s neuronal culture. However, this hermeneutic was especially relevant for the old boys, because as members of the official Establishment they were obliged by their windows of authority to deal with the Soviets. Hence, the Long Telegram and the X-article might be thought of as shaping how they experimentally fixated upon the unbearable Bear.

Aware of Kennan’s interventions, the Soviets asked their Washington ambassador, Nicolai Novikov, to respond by assessing the Truman administration’s foreign policy intentions. Novikov’s response was cabled to Molotov in September 1946. The cable’s first line announced:

The foreign policy of the United States, which reflects the imperialist tendencies of American monopolistic capital, is characterized in the postwar period by a striving for world supremacy. This is the real meaning of the many statements by President Truman and other representatives of American ruling circles; that the United States has the right to lead the world. All the forces of American diplomacy—the army, the air force, the navy, industry, and science—are enlisted in the service of this foreign policy. (Novikov 1946)

Between 1946 and 1950, as the next section shows, the old boys marched on to transform the containment hermeneutic into public *délires*, thereby making Ambassador Novikov’s announcement to be prophetic. In fact, they would fix the inter-imperial contradiction by constituting a New American Empire that did seek “world supremacy.”

### *Instituting the Public Délires of the New American Empire*

Instituting empire meant building up the institutions of the economic system of capitalist accumulation and fusing them to those of the governmental system. This choreographing was the work of devising public *délires*; whose implementation made possible performance of force extraction and its support. Two sorts of public *délires* were needed to perform these opera-

tions: (1) those whose implementation resulted in economic system force extraction, and (2) those whose implementation in the political system supported force extraction. At the same time, two specific sorts of political system public *délires* were necessary: (1) those whose implementation peacefully supported the economic system, and (2) those whose implementation violently supported the economic system. Finally, two types of violent public *délires* were instrumental in violently supporting resource extraction: (1) those whose implementation resulted in violent institutions, and (2) those whose implementation guided the level and the direction of violence. The next few pages explore the old boys constituting public *délires* and creating empire on the job.

*The Economic System:* Actually, the economic system was already constituted and was operating well at the end of the war. US firms were in a commanding global economic position, as other advanced capitalist states and the Russian economy were shattered. Consequently, it was believed that American firms would invest in foreign places, take over their economies, and repatriate profits to accumulate back in the US core. This process would hasten core US corporations' progression from national to transnational enterprises—and thus establishing global domination of capital accumulation. Global capital accumulation would turn out to be no easy thing. Not all would go well. However, exploration of this is reserved for the following chapter. The remainder of this section documents the construction of the nonviolent and violent institutions of governmental system.

*Developing Peaceful Governmental Support:* Old Joe was right—Czar Alexander's troops, upon Napoleon's defeat, had made it as far as Paris. However, Metternich and Bismarck had successfully kept Russia out of Central Europe. Stalin succeeded where the czar had failed. After Potsdam, it was clear that the Soviets were extending their domination throughout Eastern and Central Europe. Unclear, and nerve-racking, was whether there would be additional expansion into Western Europe and the Middle East. Essentially, the old boys developed iterations of the Open Door public *délire* to help prevent this development. These iterations involved the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

In early 1947, the financially exhausted British government informed its American counterpart that it would cease supporting the Greek state after 31 March of that year. This was ominous. The Greek government was engaged in a civil war with its Communists, and cessation of British support offered the Bear a tempting opportunity. State Department officials feared that Greece's fall could have a ripple effect, spreading Soviet power throughout the Middle East. President Truman responded by addressing a

joint session of Congress (12 March 1947) with a request for \$400 million to aid both Greece and Turkey. This speech’s substance became known as the Truman Doctrine. It did not directly mention the Soviets, but it did say that “the seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want,” with everyone knowing that the Kremlin was the totalitarian regime. So the money would contain Soviet expansion, serving as “an investment in world freedom and world peace” (Truman 1947).

The Truman Doctrine applied to only two countries. However, the following year it was expanded to effectively cover all of Western Europe. This expansion had begun as a bee-in-the-bonnet of Forrestal, who wanted a “face-off” against the Soviets that would directly “pit capitalism against Marxism” (in Isaacson and Thomas 1986: 404). The point of this face-off was that successful capitalism alone would contain the Soviets. After all, who would want a decrepit economy like the USSR’s when they could have a shiny new capitalist model? Forrestal enlisted two other old boys—Clark Clifford, then an influential White House counsel, and George Marshall, who had just become secretary of State—in his projected face-off. Marshall, in turn, gave the job of turning Forrestal’s idea into policy to George Kennan, who after his Long Telegram success had been made chief of the newly formed (on 7 May 1947) Policy Planning Staff. For a time this blandly named unit would be the geostrategic brains of the State Department.

Marshall first announced the plan that would bear his name at the Harvard graduation on 5 June 1947. He stated:

It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health to the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is not directed against any country, but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Any government that is willing to assist in recovery will find full co-operation on the part of the U.S.A. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. (Marshall 1947)

Marshall promised “the world” US “cooperation” in its “recovery” so that “free institutions,” meaning capitalist ones, would prevail. The USSR and its Eastern European allies, now pejoratively called its “satellites,” were initially offered participation in the Marshall Plan. They rejected it, fearing it was a Trojan Horse meant to weaken socialist economic organization. So “cooperation” extended only to Western Europe in the form of \$13 billion dispensed by the European Recovery Program (1948–1951).

The considerable debate over how to evaluate the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan has ranged from viewing it as an example of US generosity to considering it out-and-out economic imperialism (Kolko and

Kolko 1972). Both views have their merits, though one questions whether US goodwill was all that compassionate. Together the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were important ways for the old boys to go about supporting their economic system.<sup>6</sup> Both provided US money to Western European governments. This was “goodwill.” But these investments were carrots to entice those governments to construct “free,” that is to say, capitalist institutions. The preceding makes explicit that money-giving was client-making, and that clients would, at least to some degree, run their economies in capitalist ways. Thus, US goodwill was not extended out of compassion, but as a way to open the door to US businesses. As such, was an iteration of the Open Door public *délire*.

Other policies the old boys implemented at the time further promoted the Open Door public *délire*. For example, Western European states that still had formal empires and wished to receive Marshall Plan funding had to allow US companies access to their colonies (Kiernan 1978: 285). Further, the US government sought to make it possible for US capitalist firms to conduct business without restrictions in Eastern Europe, in effect attempting to extend the Open Door policy there.

This threatened Soviet domination. Stalin and Foreign Minister Molotov, as already discussed, insisted that Eastern Europe must remain as a barrier against renewed Western invasion, and that these countries would be of little use as a buffer if they had capitalist economies. Additionally, any implementation of the Open Door policy in Eastern Europe threatened to divert economic benefits from Soviet to capitalist enterprise. Consequently, in the years immediately after Potsdam the USSR began to institute what might be termed a Closed Door policy, working in the late 1940s to create a relatively autarkic economic and political space in Eastern Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, by the early 1950s the US, through iterations of its Open Door public *délire*, was providing nonviolent governmental support to its economic system, which in Eastern Europe had obliged the Soviet Union to withdraw into semi-isolation. Let us now consider the building of violent capabilities in the governmental system.

*Developing the Institutions of Violence: The War-Making Institutions Public Délire:* The US military had demobilized rapidly after wars in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Initially, World War II was no exception. The annual rate of US military spending plunged from \$83 billion at the end of 1945 to \$7 billion in 1945 (“Defense Spending and Troop Levels” 2014). The US seemed to be turning pacifist. However, about a year and a half after the Long Telegram, and just as Kennan’s X-article was being published, Truman signed the National Security Act (26 July 1947). Its first line stated, “In enacting this legislation, it is the in-



tention of Congress to provide a comprehensive program for the future security of the United States; to provide for the establishment of integrated policies and procedures for the departments, agencies, and functions of the Government relating to national security” (National Security Act 1947). The CIA, in its public “Featured Story Archive,” tells the world: “The importance of the National Security Act cannot be overstated. It was the central document in the US Cold War policy and reflected the nation’s acceptance of its position as a world leader” (CIA 2008: 1). It was the work of many old boys, but Forrestal, even though he initially opposed certain portions of it, and Kennan were especially important in bringing it to a Congressional vote. It constituted the postwar US security apparatus.

The act merged different military institutions into a common agency, the Defense Department, headed by a secretary of Defense. Forrestal, who had been worried about a “face-off” with the Soviets, became the first Defense secretary. Further, the act formed the National Security Council (NSC), which was allocated “the function ... to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security” (National Security Act 1947: 7).<sup>8</sup> Advice to the president was offered through the issuance of consecutively numbered policy “directives.” In the early years of the Cold War, the personnel of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff did much of the work preparing the NSC policy directives.

Finally, the Act authorized the CIA to, “provide overall direction for and coordination of the collection of national intelligence outside the United States through human sources by elements of the intelligence community” (National Security Act 1947: 30).<sup>9</sup> Kennan had been particularly interested in refurbishing the US’s intelligence and covert action capabilities after Truman terminated the OSS. Kennan confided to Forrestal that he wanted the CIA to be a “guerilla war corps” (in Weiner 2008: 29) specializing in covert operations. Kennan tended to call these operations “political warfare.” He regretted the US was deficient in them because, he was convinced, “the creation, success, and survival of the British Empire has been due in part to the British understanding and application of the principles of political warfare.” So, he further believed, “we have been handicapped however by a popular attachment to the concept of the basic difference between peace and war” (in Thompson 2009: 84). Kennan’s view was unsettling: empire depended in part on covert operations that, being intrinsically violent, are hidden; hence, they hide war in the illusion of peace.

The Defense Department, the CIA, and the NSC were and are the anatomy of governmental violence because the first two institutions did, and do, much of the warring—covert or overt—and the latter institution

does much of the planning of that violence. The National Security Act was a “central document,” then, in that it constituted the institutional anatomy of US violence. Three additional NSC directives further shaped that anatomy.

Several months after passage of the National Security Act, the National Security Council issued a directive concerning covert action. This was NSC 4-A (NSC 4-A 1947), which specified that covert action would be conducted by the CIA and would occur in times of peace as well as war. NSC 4-A increased presidential authority by placing covert operations within the CIA, which was within the US government’s executive branch, overseen by the president. However, NSC 4-A’s definition of the CIA’s covert activities referred to “psychological warfare,” and this terminology prompted hermeneutic debate among the Washington elites as to the precise meaning of such activities. NSC 10/2, formulated by Kennan’s Policy Planning Staff and issued 18 July 1948, replaced NSC 4-A and clarified the matter. The directive first ordered that, “a new Office of Special Projects shall be created within the Central Intelligence Agency to plan and conduct covert operations” (NSC 10/2, 1948). It additionally directed that such operations

are understood to be all activities (except as noted herein) which are conducted or sponsored by this Government against hostile foreign states or groups or in support of friendly foreign states or groups but which are so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them. Specifically, such operations shall include any covert activities related to: propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups, and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world. Such operations shall not include armed conflict by recognized military forces, espionage, counter-espionage, and cover and deception for military operations. (Ibid.)

NSC 10/2 made it clear: during peacetime a branch of the US government, the secretive Office of Special Projects would conduct hidden warfare against enemies.

In sum, the National Security Act of 1947 had constituted overt US war-making within the new Defense Department, covert war-making within the CIA, and security planning within the NSC. As such, the act was indeed a “central document” and can be termed the War-Making Institutions public *délire*. The act, however, had not clarified what level of violent force would be at the disposal of the New American Empire, nor the

direction in which this violence would be directed. Kennan would address this oversight in another NSC decision.

*Kennan Addresses the Level and Direction of Violence:* Three months after settling the question of covert US violence in NSC 10/2, Kennan addressed the issue of the level and direction of violence in NSC 20/4 (23 November 1948). Here, as had been the case in the Long Telegram and the X-article, the argument was made in terms of a Soviet bogeyman. The directive begins by asserting, “Communist ideology and Soviet behavior clearly demonstrate that the ultimate objective of the leaders of the USSR is the domination of the world” (NSC 20/4 1948). Paranoid Old Joe wanted the world. He had to be stopped. In order for this to happen the US had to “develop a level of military readiness which can be maintained as long as necessary as a deterrent to Soviet aggression” (ibid.). Additionally, America had to “maximize our economic potential, including the strengthening of our peace-time economy” (ibid.). NSC 20/4 is both clear and obscure at the same time. It indicated the direction of US violence by making clear that military containment of the Soviets was “necessary.” However, it says nothing concerning how much military force was “necessary.”

Perhaps this murkiness was because Kennan was beginning to harbor reservations about just how much violent force was needed to militarily check the USSR. These hesitations sparked a hermeneutic politics. In a letter of 6 April 1948 to the influential columnist Walter Lippmann, well before NSC 20/4, Kennan claimed, “The Russians do not want to invade anyone. It is not in their tradition. . . . They don’t want war of any kind” (in Isaacson and Thomas 1986: 446). This letter was unsent. The Europeans, for their part, had their own fears about the Soviets, and on 17 March 1948 they signed the Treaty of Brussels, which bound Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, and the United Kingdom in a mutual defense pact against Russia. However, because US participation in the treaty was thought necessary to make it credible to the Kremlin, talks for a new military alliance began almost immediately with Washington. Kennan opposed US membership in any such alliance, believing it a needless provocation. This reluctance to bait the Bear cost Kennan credibility among other “old boys.” McCloy thought Kennan was “too damn esoteric”; Lovett said, “I liked him more as Mr. X”; and Acheson finished him off with the observation that he was a “horse who would come up to a fence and not take it” (Isaacson and Thomas 1986: 449–450). Kennan suffered from a “muscular Christianity” deficit.

Western Europeans’ negotiation of a mutual defense treaty against the Russians progressed smoothly, culminating in the April 1949 signing of

the North Atlantic Treaty, which inaugurated the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The treaty members

agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. Consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense will assist the Party or Parties being attacked, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force. (NATO 1949)

NATO was significant because it bound the US to militarily support its Western European allies. Such military alliances would become commonplace throughout the world in the coming years. If the Truman and Marshall Plans provided carrots of economic assistance, NATO provided another sort of carrot. The US offered to kill for its client states. Who could ask for anything more?

Kennan had lost on NATO. In the summer of 1949 he made Paul Nitze his deputy at the Policy Planning Staff. Also that summer, he wrote that he had begun to feel “like a court jester . . . not to be taken fully seriously” (in Isaacson and Thomas 1986: 474). He had reason to feel as he did. Acheson, who had now replaced Marshall as secretary of State, curtailed Kennan’s influence. In September Kennan informed the secretary of State that he wished to be relieved of his Policy Planning Staff duties. He left the State Department in June 1950. The court jester had become nobody’s fool.

Nitze succeeded to his post, and very soon was involved in drafting what was to become the most important of the NSC directives. In the midst of this rearranging of the security elites building the US Leviathan, something happened that frightened them, and fear brought a particular perceptual “theory” of the way the world could change.

*The Bomb and the Domino Theory:* As we have seen, the US military was the first to acquire nuclear weapons. Thereafter, American killing elites slept contentedly at night knowing they could incinerate anybody, anywhere, without reprisals. How did they know this? They had done it, cremating gratifyingly large numbers of civilians in Japan in 1945—showing the world who’s who, militarily speaking. So when the Soviets detonated their own atomic bomb (29 July 1949), they created a world where they could do for Americans just as Americans had done for the Japanese.

The Security Elites 1.0 now knew dread. They began to interpret what defeat might look like, imagining a situation where one US defeat could provoke a chain of other defeats. This was the previously mentioned “domino theory”—a perceptual cultural message that the fall of one country to the

Communists would lead, like dominoes falling, to the loss of a whole string of countries.<sup>10</sup> It was not entirely fanciful. Since its inception, the Soviet Union had announced its intention of expanding Communism. Gaddis recollected how Lenin,

convinced that capitalism required exploitation of colonies for their raw materials and markets ... launched an appeal soon after the Bolshevik Revolution, for the “peoples” of the East” to overthrow their masters. He even authorized a congress of such peoples, held in Baku in 1920 ... at which fellow Bolshevik Grigorii Zinoviev called for jihad against imperialism and capitalism amidst a frenzied waving of swords, daggers, and revolvers. (1997: 158)

Actually, in the 1920s and 1930s through World War II the USSR did rather little to help those in the East “overthrow their masters.” But Moscow never gave up on Asian revolution. Thus, Stalin justified withdrawal of Soviet troops from China and Iran in 1946 as a way of exposing British and American imperial exploitation, thereby unleashing “a movement of liberation” in the colonies (in Gaddis 1997: 158). Hence, the intention to expand was announced from the inception of the Soviet Communist project, and to American elites this meant elimination of places where their capitalism could go about its accumulation.

Consequently, nagged by the double anxiety of the Soviet bomb and the possibility of losing territory in domino-theory scenarios, President Truman directed his National Security Council to reevaluate US policies toward the Soviet Union. The Soviets had immensely augmented their military capabilities. How would the US respond? This spawned hermeneutic politics among the old boys as to whether to up the ante and build a bigger bomb, the hydrogen bomb. Nitze strongly favored building it. The “court jester” Kennan, almost as his last act in government, argued powerfully against it; writing on 20 January 1950 a seventy-nine page document stating his case and expressing fear that development of the “atomic weapon ... will carry us to the misuse and dissipation of our national strength” (in Thompson 2009: 106). Spending escalating amounts on the military Kennan said would cause “dissipation” because the Soviets would meet each military advance with their own innovations. The language was strong: the string of events of escalating militarization led to “dissipation.” Eleven days later Truman publicly announced his plan to build hydrogen nuclear weapons. Thus the old boys responded to fear with a bigger bomb, and American schools from sea to shining sea were instructed to institute the practice of “duck and cover,” in which, after the bell rang, you ducked under your desk and shielded your head with your arms to protect against the nuclear fireball.

NSC 68: *The Global Domination Public Délire*: At the same time that the hydrogen bomb was being debated, the Policy Planning Staff was instructed to prepare a NSC directive that put the H-bomb's acquisition within a larger strategic perspective. By this time Kennan had been replaced by Nitze, whose disposition toward violence differed greatly from Kennan's, perhaps due to childhood experience. Nitze's father had been a University of Chicago professor. The neighborhood around the university was tough. For a while a gang roughed Nitze up on his way to school. He responded by joining another gang, which beat up members of the first gang, thereby freeing Nitze from difficulties with the first gang. The conviction that *Gewalt macht Frieden* had literally been beaten into Nitze. His Policy Planning Staff would author NSC 68 and make this point the prime national security goal.

NSC 68, issued in 1950, became the old boys' ultimate resolution of the hermeneutic puzzle of what to do about the Soviets in a nuclear world. To understand the interpretation taken, first note NSC 68's rhetorical strategy, which has been described as "apocalyptic" (Youngsmith 2010: 5). Its discourse plays on the trope of a "design." The Soviets had an "evil design," a "design ... for the complete subversion or forcible destruction" of the entire non-Soviet world, a "design for world domination" whose implementation would be "violent and ruthless" (NSC 68 1950: 6,13). This rhetorical strategy was set to the substantive chore of arguing that the US and Soviet Union were the earth's two greatest powers and that this world was in "crisis." The crisis was due to the Soviets, and the Soviets alone, who "unlike previous aspirants to hegemony" were "animated by a fanatic new faith, antithetic to our own" that drove them to "impose ... absolute authority over the rest of the world. Conflict has, therefore, become endemic and is waged ... by violent and non-violent means" (ibid.). NSC 68's understanding of the Russians was piece of perceptual culture. Moreover, it was a hermeneutic break that dispensed with John Quincy Adams's injunction, "America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy." Nitze had gone in search of monsters and had found one in the Bear. If the Soviets were the Americans' Other; Nitze's NSC 68 made certain they were understood as a "fanatic" monster-alterity.

Given this interpretation, NSC 68 proposed a procedural solution for the "crisis" with enduring global implications for US power. NSC 68 announced that "our position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility on the US for leadership. We must organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world in a positive program for peace which will frustrate the Kremlin design for world domination" (ibid.).

NSC 68 conjures up a monstrous social being, the Soviet Leviathan. Opposing the Soviet Empire is a good social being, "the free world"—

of capitalism and liberal democracy—which America, as its “center of power,” “must organize” to “frustrate.” However, if “the free world” is understood as a euphemism for US Empire, then NSC 68 calls upon the US to “organize” its subordinates to “frustrate” the evil empire’s “design for world domination.” Of course, if the US was to “organize” the “free world” it would in fact be dominating it, and this domination meant that if the US thwarted the Soviets, its only competitor for world domination, then the US itself would achieve “world domination.” Ganging up on the USSR, according to the text of NSC 68, was to occur through “a rapid and concerted [military] build-up of the actual strength of both the US and other nations of the free world” (ibid.). The good guys in the free world were to arm themselves, big time. Nitze of the Security Elite 1.0 (and Hotchkiss and Harvard, via Chicago’s mean streets), proposed that the US organize a violent gang on a global scale, call it the “free world,” and set it up to “frustrate” the monster-alterity. NSC 68 instituted a particular public *délire*: perceptually there might be threats to US global domination; procedurally, these were to be eliminated, violently if necessary. This might be said to be the NSC 68 iteration of what was literally a global domination public *délire*. There would be other iterations.

What was, and is, NSC 68’s significance? NSC 68 validated Ambassador Novikov’s interpretation of postwar America because it affected the level and the direction of US violence. John Quincy Adams’s warning was summarily jettisoned. The New American Empire would now sail out of its territory to all places in the world in search of monsters to slay. Because some of these, like the Bear, were very violent, the level of US violence had to be even greater. Novikov had said Washington sought “world supremacy.” He was correct, and NSC 68 was an iteration of the global domination public *délire* designed to achieve it.

President Truman was alarmed when first informed of NSC 68, realizing that it had immense budgetary implications because US violent force had to be sufficient to nullify the Soviets’ violent force. Consequently, rather than immediately authorizing NSC 68 Truman initially shelved it, requesting further study of its financial implications.

However, over the following years it was instituted. In fact, by the early twenty-first century the US security budget was judged to be “enormous” (Hartung 2007: 1), a description applicable since the early 1950s. In the early 2000s it was estimated to be around a trillion dollars annually (Higgs 2007). Currently this spending represents roughly half of the world’s total military expenditures, and when the expenditures of Atlantic Community clients (NATO, Japan, South Korea, and Australia) are added in, the figure rises to 72 percent (Hellman and Sharp 2009). Approximately 50 percent of US tax revenues are spent on military items. These funds purchased

approximately 1.45 million active-duty US soldiers in 2011 (Infoplease 2011: 1). Additionally, in the 1980s the UK had 344,150 soldiers, West Germany had 495,000 soldiers, and France had 500,000 soldiers (LaFeber 2002: 284).

However, “The crucial military superiority is not nuclear weapons or weight of numbers but global deployment and firepower” (M. Mann 2003: 20). The US had fourteen bases outside its borders in 1938 (Lutz 2009). According to the Defense Department’s annual Base Structure Report for 2003, the Pentagon owned or rented 702 overseas bases in 130 countries, with another 6,000 bases in the US and its territories (C. Johnson 2005). If the number of countries in the UN is taken as a proxy indicator of the number of countries in the world, then the US had bases in 67.4 percent of all the world’s states in 2003. Lutz and Vine estimated there were from 900 to 1,000 bases throughout the world by 2009 (Lutz 2009; Vine 2009); personnel, according to the Defense Department, were in 150 countries in 2011 (“US Military Personnel by Country” 2011)—that is, 78 percent of the countries in the UN. The New American Empire has not instituted formal colonies. Why bother, when your soldiers are there to violently enforce your interests?

In the 1990s US firepower was especially enhanced by a “revolution in military affairs” (RMA), which refers to “a major change in the nature of warfare brought about by the innovative application of new technologies which, combined with dramatic changes in military doctrine and operational and organizational concepts, fundamentally alters the character and conduct of military operations” (M. Mann 2003: 23).<sup>11</sup>

The inter-imperial contradiction intensified as the Soviets expanded following World War II. Such a situation promised reproductive vulnerabilities, so the old boys became fixated on the hermeneutic puzzle of the nasty Bear. Between 1947 and 1950 five governmental acts (the National Security Act in 1947, NSC 4-A in 1947, NSC 10/2 in 1948, NSC 20/4 in 1948, and above all NSC 68 in 1950) instituted the Open Door, war-making institutions, and global domination public *délires*. All this created governmental support for the US imperial social being’s economic system, whose capitalist institutions were doing quite well extracting value at home and abroad. It is time now to specify the overall structural form and glue of this New American Empire.

### A Three-Tiered Rental Empire

Since 1945 the US has developed what might be termed a three-tiered imperial system. The “imperial core” of the US, with the most force and



power, has been at the top of this hierarchy. Beneath the US has been a second tier of countries that Dean Acheson spoke of in a radio speech to the nation on 18 March 1949, when he said, “North America and Western Europe have formed the two halves of what is really one community,” which he called the “Atlantic community” (Acheson 1949). Acheson’s use of “community” appears to reflect to his belief that many people in North America and Western Europe broadly shared liberal cultural ideologies. The Atlantic Community originally included capitalist Western Europe but has increasingly grown to include honorary members such as Japan and Australia. Taken together, the original members of the community and the later additions might be called the “greater Atlantic community.” Since the final elimination of formal empire, the US has tended to utilize certain geopolitically significant states in the developing world as sub-imperialist satrapies in the sense that they defend US interests in their region. Iran under the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1953–1979) was such an ally in the Middle East. Considerable strategic rent has been paid to the second tier via programs such as the Marshall Plan and NATO.

Second-tier states have considerable force and power; consequently, they have some ability to negotiate relations with the core. Their autonomy varies. Some, such as France under President De Gaulle, have been more independent. Others, like Germany, have been more compliant with US demands though at times showing independence, for example with the development of *Ostpolitik* under Willi Brandt in the 1960s, or Gerhard Schroeder’s opposition to Bush II’s war in Iraq. Still others have been spear-carriers of US imperialism, for example, Great Britain. However, all of these second-tier states—Atlantic Community members and others alike—basically operate in ways consistent with US public *délires*. They are for capitalism—their own and that of America—and they will defend this world with violence if necessary. Because of their privileged position in the New American Empire, these states might be termed “advantaged clients.”

The New American Empire’s governmental elite tolerate informal sub-imperialisms among advantaged clients, so second-tier countries in the US empire have regions where they too continue, or try to continue, imperial activities. The countries doing this are former formal empires, and the regions they do it in are where they had their colonies. France, for example, does this in past sub-Saharan colonies in an informal sub-empire termed “*Françafrique*” (Verschave 1999). A key rule of such regional imperialisms is that while doing their own imperial business they should also mind the store of the US empire. Consider, for example, that the US government desires to weaken Hezbollah in Lebanon because it possesses considerable military capabilities, is an ally of Iran, is anti-Israeli, and consequently is an opponent of US Middle Eastern interests. France, especially under Presi-

dent Sarkozy, pursued its interests in Lebanon, including opposing Hezbollah, thereby doing Washington's work. Israel assisted the CIA in the 2008 assassination of Imad Mughniyah, Hezbollah's international operations chief (Goldman and Nakashima 2015).

A third tier of client states exists largely in the less developed world. These countries possess natural resources or markets coveted by countries in the first two tiers of the empire. The more important third-tier clients are petroleum-producing countries, especially those in the Persian Gulf area and, increasingly, Central Asia and Africa. These third-tier states have the least force and power in the tripartite imperial hierarchy. They tend to be provided with fewer strategic rents from the core, and to be accorded fewer opportunities to negotiate relations with the core. They do what they are told. They are the Haitis, Panamas, Dominican Republics of the world. They might be termed "ordinary clients." Although this organization of imperial core, advantaged clients, and ordinary clients does not include all the countries in the world—certainly the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) in 2010 were not US clients—it does include countries in all parts of the world, and is therefore a global empire. The following will consider the actors who work with core elites to choreograph operations throughout the global New American Empire.

*Advantaged and Hybrid Elites:* The US requires its handler elites to manage its client states' subject elites, because it is these latter actors who perform the chores equivalent to those done by colonial officials and compradors in the colonies of formal empires. In the countries of the original Atlantic Community, this is not much of a problem. English, French, and German elites come from families and go to schools that produce actors with worldviews resembling those of their American counterparts. Graduates of Oxbridge, a *grande école*, or a German dueling club differ little from their Harvard or Yale counterparts. Because of such backgrounds, they are privileged. These people, once they have grown up and gotten jobs in either large transnational corporations or government, should be called "advantaged" elites.

Matters are more complicated in the developing world, where the elites are culturally different from their American counterparts. To do the job of imperial management in the developing world, however, there have emerged what Jonathan Friedman (1999: 409) calls "hybrid cosmopolitans."<sup>12</sup> I prefer the term "hybrid elites" because it is not clear that elites are all that cosmopolitan.<sup>13</sup> They are subject elites in strategic positions in developing client countries' government or economic institutions who have been Euro-Americanized because their parents recognized the importance of sending them to schools and other establishments (camps, clubs,

employments, neighborhoods) favored by American or European elites. So they attended the “Harvards” and “Oxfords” of the world and during these years acquired aspects of old-boy positional culture in addition to their pre-existing positional culture. One US official judged Mexico’s president to be reliable during NAFTA negotiations because he was Harvard-educated and so, according to the official, was “one of us” (Rothkopf 2009: 11). However, these subject elites are hybrids, in the sense that they are part of whatever positional culture they came from and part old boy. They may root for the Boston Red Sox, but at the same time hold it as a possibility that Ganesh, “Remover of Obstacles,” made Boston’s 2013 World Series triumph possible.

Advantaged and hybrid elites participate in transnational networks by working with handler elites in the New American imperial core. The environment is chummy. They get along in the very best places at work and at play, treating each other to desired economic or political opportunities. These network opportunity flows exhibit reciprocities. When somebody gives you an opportunity, you are obliged to give something in return—to “scratch the back” of that somebody, in American slang. Consequently, if an American handler has given you something, you should reciprocate when s/he wants something back. Managing the New American Empire thus involves subject elites and core handlers scratching each other’s backs, which in economic anthropological terms means they perform generalized reciprocity (Sahlins 1972). Elites are unlikely to describe their relations as “back scratching,” which connotes corruption. More probably they will use the language of friendship and/or kinship, which has virtuous moral implications. For example, Hillary Clinton, when President Obama’s secretary of State, stated, “I really consider President and Mrs. Mubarak to be friends of my family” (in Radia 2011).

To illustrate the nature of hybrid elites, consider Saif al-Islam (literally “Sword of Islam”), Libyan President Gaddafi’s youngest son. On the one hand, as his father’s son he shared much of the positional culture of the kin network that surrounded President Gaddafi. On the other hand, he was a graduate of the London School of Economics who enjoyed the London social circuit. *Slate* reported that this social circuit enjoyed “parties in St. James’s Palace and sailed in yachts off Corfu.” The circuit included

Nat Rothschild, scion of the banking family, who gave a party for Saif when he completed his doctorate on “civil society” and “global governance” ... Sir Howard Davies, director of the LSE and one of Tony Blair’s economic envoys to Libya; Lord Peter Mandelson, a former Blair adviser, Cabinet minister, and European commissioner, who now advises “companies hoping to expand markets overseas”; Prince Andrew, who promotes British trade abroad; and, last but not least, Blair himself. (Applebaum 2011)

The *Slate* article further explained that “thanks to his [Saif’s] contacts, he became the conduit through which British companies invested in Libya—and through which the Libyan Investment Authority invested in British companies” (ibid.).

Saif’s handlers took him to nice parties. In reciprocation, Saif became a “conduit” for UK investment. A fine bit of back scratching. However, the case of Saif illustrates the risks of being a hybrid elite. Currently, Saif rots in a Libyan jail, betrayed by his handlers. However, one point should be clear: advantaged and hybrid elites in transnational elite networks replace the formal empires’ colonial administration, managing imperial operations across the three tiers of the New American Empire. It is time now to more exactly specify the social constitution of this empire.

*Integration by Invitation or Rent?* Social constitution is the manner in which social forms are integrated, “integration” being understood as the “glue” bonding social parts together. In this conceptualization, the analysis of social constitutions seeks to discover the forces that do the bonding. So the current chore is to sniff out the glue that integrates the particular imperial shape that the old boys created.

Consider one glue favored by certain liberal political thinkers. The US has been described by Lundestad (1986) and Gaddis (1997) as an “empire by invitation” where client states “invited” the US “to play” the role of an imperial core (Lundestad 1986: 263). This means that the empire was integrated by the *délirés* of elites in the different types of neo-colonies, who wanted US domination. Thus, unlike the formal empires, where colonies were ultimately attached by military compulsion, the US Leviathan was glued together by invitation, which took the form of programs like the Marshall Plan; other development programs (e.g., those provided by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961); and bilateral or multilateral military alliances (e.g., NATO or the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, SEATO). However, to insist that the US Empire was, and is, integrated because its clients’ elites desired imperial domination is an oversimplification.

This is so for two reasons. To understand the first, consider that the Empire of Bagirmi in precolonial Chad would defeat its opponents, whereupon they would ask—quite politely—to become tributaries (Reyna 1990). Further, throughout imperial history polities about to become colonies, perceiving the writing on the wall, usually either asked to be colonies or were in some way invited to do so. So there is nothing especially novel about the US being an empire by invitation. A second oversimplification in judging the US empire to be constituted by invitation is that it leaves unanswered a key question: What made motivated clients seek invitation? Only when

this question is answered does the investigator know what glues it together. Thus, attention turns to a search for the sticky glue adhering the US core to its clients.

Think carrots. The hybrid and advantaged elites were motivated to seek invitation by their handlers’ carrots, which raises the question, What is a carrot? One answer is that it is a form of rent. A common definition of rent is “income from hiring out land or other durable goods” (*The Economist* 2010). In premodern agricultural empires, the state (sovereign and lords) owned the land. Agricultural workers supplied the sovereign and lords with part of their labor or agricultural products as payment (rent) for the right to use the land. In modern formal empires, the core state was the ultimate owner of the land in its colonies by virtue of its sovereignty over the colonial territory. Consequently, colonial officials could demand income from their subjects—corvée labor, money, or in-kind products—by virtue of their ownership of the colonial territory, which meant that the subjects’ fees were effectively rents.

However, the US makes no pretense of owning the land of its client countries. American elites make no claim of empire or of colony, and they insist that client states are sovereign. Nonetheless, as in the formal empires a certain type of rent, was, and is, paid in the New American Empire, only it goes in the opposite direction, from the core imperial state to the dominated client states. The rent paid is not income specifically remunerating the use of land or other durable goods. Rather, it pays for general “backing” from client states in the form of some of the clients’ economic or violent force resources provided for the core’s needs. This type of rent is income derived from the hiring out of backing. Such rents were “carrots” earlier in this text, but they are more technically described as “strategic rents.” As an informal empire, the US pays strategic rents to assure backing.

Strategic rents can be paid in many forms. US payments made to countries as part of the Marshall Plan were strategic rents. US foreign assistance is an important strategic rent. Provision of military assistance is another form of strategic rent. Between 1950 and 2000, ten million US military personnel were stationed in Germany (Kane 2004). The money that Germany did not have to spend on military force resources during this time because the US underwrote its security was a strategic rent paid for its backing of the New American Empire. Some US security elites have indicated awareness that the US pays security rents. For example, Charles Freeman, US ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the Iraq Wars, once confided, “The basic bargain of Saudi-American relations was thus simple: in return for preferred access to Saudi oil, the United States undertook to protect the Kingdom against foreign threats” (in Rutledge 2005: 171).

Elmer's Glue-All held my sons' model airplanes together. Strategic rent is the Elmer's Glue-All of American Empire.

Let us turn to Malinowski and his understanding of the social constitution of the peoples he reported upon in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* ([1922] 1961), which furthers our grasp of the New American Empire's constitution. Malinowski's Argonauts were the Trobriand Islanders and their neighbors in the western Pacific. He understood them to have been organized by "forms of exchange" ([1922] 1961: 1), one of which, the *kula*, formed the topic of *Argonauts*. The *kula* involved exchange of valuables (*vaygu'a*) between men inhabiting the different islands surrounding the Trobriands. A type of bracelet (*mwali*) was given for a type of necklace (*soulava*). A *mwali* could only be exchanged for a *soulava* and vice versa. The exchange was immediate. When a *mwali* was given, a *soulava* had to be returned. Technically, this was balanced reciprocity (Sahlins 1972). The exchange never stopped, in the sense that a holder could never decide to hoard *vaygu'a*: it always had to be re-exchanged. Gifts had to be made against equivalent. Thus, the *kula* was an exchange system based upon equal reciprocities. It integrated the Trobrianders and their neighbors by connecting them in a network of continual acquisition of valuables.

The US Empire is also constituted as a system of exchange, though it differs structurally from that of the Trobriand Islanders because the *kula* did not operate so that one category of actors in the exchange accumulated value at the expense of others. Empires do not work this way. The imperial core extracts more than it gives. This is the case with the US rental empire. American rent-givers want the backing they receive from support-givers to provide force resources to fuel imperial projects, ultimately politically those of force accumulation or economically those of value accumulation. The empire only works when what is received in return for strategic rent payments exceeds that rent, that is, when the exchanges exhibit negative reciprocity. This is because when an empire receives less in backing than it gives out, it suffers decline in the force resources it requires to reproduce itself. Seen in this optic, it is clear that if support received does not exceed strategic rent paid, then the empire moves toward reproductive vulnerability. For example, money the US provided to the Atlantic Community via the Marshall Plan was intended to grow American capitalism by giving European economies the means to purchase American commodities. It succeeded and "fueled a tremendous demand for U.S. exports" (R. Scott 2002). The New American Empire might thus be viewed as a vast system of negative reciprocities whose elites deploy underlings to serve their *délire* of accumulating force resources. Now, drawing the various strands of this chapter together, I will respond to the question, what is new in the New American Empire?

## Not by Invitation, but by Invisibility?

We proclaimed a dream of an America that would be a Shining City on a Hill. (Ronald Reagan’s Nomination Acceptance Speech, 1984, in Michael Reagan and J. Denney 1997)

**Date:** February 21, 2010

**Place:** Convoy en route to Kandahar

**Circumstances:** U.S. aerial forces attacked a three-car convoy traveling to a market in Kandehar. The convoy had planned on continuing to Kabul so that some of the passengers could get medical treatment. At least three dozen people were passengers in the three cars. The front car was an SUV type vehicle, and the last was a Land Cruiser. When the first car was hit by U.S. air fire, women in the second car jumped out and waved their scarves to indicate that they were civilians. U.S. helicopters continued to fire rockets and machine guns, killing 21 people and wounding 13.

**U.S. /NATO acknowledgement that the people killed were unarmed civilians:**

Feb 24, 2010—General Stanley McChrystal delivered a videotaped apology. (Voices Co-coordinators 2010).

Contemplate two rather different beings: President Reagan’s dream and a three car convoy wending its way to Kandahar in Afghanistan. In the first quotation Reagan, a skilled hermeneut, evoked Governor Winthrop’s ghost. America is, he dreams, that shining city on the hill, representing the highest aspirations of humanity. Now consider the second quotation, an account of US aerial operations in Afghanistan. This concerns not what Americans dream, but what they actually do. In early 2010 US troops shadowing a three-vehicle convoy by helicopter opened fire on it, and when women left the vehicles and waved their scarves to signal they were civilians, the helicopter returned to rocket them again, killing twenty-one and wounding thirteen. Good shooting!

Lest one think this an atypical anecdote, consider what General Stanley McChrystal, then commander of US/NATO forces in Afghanistan, had to say about such incidents, “We’ve shot an amazing number of people ... and, to my knowledge, none has proven to have been a real threat to the force” (J. Elliott 2010). On the one hand, some elites insist that the US represents the highest of human aspirations; on the other, its soldiers butcher women. How might one apprehend the two opening quotations?

First, let us be clear about one matter. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the Harvard hermeneut introduced earlier who might be expected to be an empire-denier, endorses the basic premise of the present and the prior chapter, insisting, “who can doubt that there is an American empire?—an “informal” empire, not colonial in polity, but still richly equipped with imperial paraphernalia: troops, ships, planes, bases, proconsuls, local collaborators,

all spread around the luckless planet” (1986: 141). Empire-deniers have tried to disguise these actualities behind their claim that the US was, and is, a sacred, shining city on a hill representing humanity’s “highest aspirations.” This chapter and the previous one have demonstrated how, over two shape-shifting centuries, the US has been an aggressively expanding imperial social being.

But another question remains: Just what is “new” about the current shape of this empire? A helpful way to answer is to clarify what is old about it. Like the oldest of ancient empires—the Akkadians in what is now Iraq (2250 BC)—the New American Empire is a fusion of governmental and economic systems united in the extraction of force resources from dominated populations. Yet despite its ancient structure, it incorporates a novelty: it is concealed behind its informality. Think of this informality as a cloaking device, like the one featured in the famous television series *Star Trek*. Its “troops, ships, planes, bases, proconsuls, local collaborators” are not “imperial paraphernalia”—at least, not in any formal sense. They are just hardworking elites—American handlers working with their subject elites, going about everyday business. When Reagan rhapsodized about how America represents the “highest aspirations” of humanity, he was in effect acting like Captain Kirk switching on the starship *Enterprise*’s cloaking device. The novelty of the New American Empire is that it moves about not by invitation, but by invisibility, disguising its actors as ordinary folk in other peoples’ countries.

But this recognition alone does not do full justice to the originality of the American imperialism. Informal empire is not unique to the Americans. As observed in the last chapter, it was practiced by the British in nineteenth-century South America, for example. The difference is that the American Empire is *entirely* informal, whereas the British Empire for most of its history was mostly formal.

A further novelty pertains to scale. At its height the British Empire occupied roughly a quarter of the earth’s surface (N. Ferguson 2004: 15). That was big, to be sure, but US imperialism has striven for world domination since NSC 68, and following the end of the Cold War such dominion seemed realizable in part because of increased force, both economic and violent. The US gross national product grew from about \$3 trillion in 1950 to about \$15 trillion in 2011. In 1938 the US had fourteen military bases outside its borders. In 2009 it had approximately 1,000 such bases operating everywhere on the planet.

Here then is the full novelty of the being the old boys constituted at creation. The US has always been an imperial social being. But what is now out there is a triple-tiered rental empire, a global system wielding enormous amounts of violent force. This combination of global reach and



capacity for violence is the innovation in Acheson’s and the other old boys’ work at creation. Bluntly, it is the largest concatenation of human force the world has ever seen. In Nietzsche’s terms, it is a truly global “monster of energy” cloaked by empire-denying hermeneuts’ insistence that it is a “shining city upon a hill.”

The introduction of this volume promised readers a journey. So far they have been taken to “a period of creation” in the sea of late modernity and have glimpsed constitution of a social being, the New American Empire. The journey continues in the next chapter. Readers learn it is not easy being an imperial Leviathan navigating contemporary seas. American imperialism has toiled against a rising coalescence of political contradictions and the one-two punch of cyclical and systemic economic contradictions. The next chapter details the contradictory currents the empire itself generates, and in so doing reveals why it is a world of *very* late modernity.

## Notes

1. Useful discussion of the Establishment in the immediate postwar period can be found in Isaacson and Thomas (1986). Burton Hersh (2001) discusses the elites and the founding of the CIA. Thompson (2009) explores the roles of Kennan and Nitze in creation of the postwar world. Beisner (2006) does the same for Acheson.

2. Gatzambide-Fernández (2009) shows how students at private schools construct elite identities. Bird ([1998] 2000: 23–71) provides a rich account of the old-boy upbringing of the Bundy brothers, important security elites of the Vietnam War.

3. A distinction should be made between “good old boys” and “old boys.” The former phrase denotes networks of non-wealthy Southern men of rural background. The latter phrase is derived from the term used to designate graduates of English private schools. To enhance their distinction, graduates of certain American private schools began to also call themselves old boys.

4. Does competition between imperial social beings inevitably progress to warfare? Debates over this question are ongoing. Some non-Marxists have insisted that empire is a source of peace, as in the Pax Romana of the Roman Empire or the Pax Britannica of the nineteenth-century English Empire (N. Ferguson 2004). Marxist scholars, especially around the time of World War I, fell into two camps. Those like Rudolf Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg, Nicholai Bukharin, and Vladimir Lenin believed that imperialism was a stage of finance capitalism that led to war, whereas more moderate Marxists like Karl Kautsky argued that this was not the case. The text presents an argument explaining when two empires are likely to war. It does not address the question of its inevitability.

Certainly, imperial systems have frequently warred with each other in the modern world. The Spanish and Dutch empires fought in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The Dutch and English empires battled in the last half of the seventeenth century. The English and the French duelled from the seventeenth until the early nineteenth century. Next the German and the Japanese Empires took on the French and British Empires, aided by their informally imperial US allies, between 1914 and 1918 and then again in 1939 to 1945.

5. Gaddis’s position on Stalin’s mental state is equivocal. In 1972, he stated Stalin had “almost paranoid suspicion” but 349 pages later labeled him as exhibiting “paranoia” (1972: 10,

359). Later he admitted Stalin exhibited “extraordinary administrative performance” (1997: 8), something not associated with psychosis. Zubok and Pleshakov (1996: 274–277) revealed Soviet documents made available following the Cold War that undermine the case for Stalin’s paranoia.

6. Mitchell (2011) reports that a fair amount of Marshall Plan investment went into transforming Europe from coal to oil energy. Europe had large amounts of coal but lacked oil, which was largely controlled by US companies, deepening European client states’ dependency on America.

7. Two major institutions were instituted to do this. The first was the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) founded in 1949. COMECON was the USSR’s reply to the formation of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation in Western Europe. It included the USSR, Eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Albania. These countries—the Eastern Bloc—came to be referred to by US authorities as the “Soviet Empire” (Gaddis 1997: 28). COMECON was a centralized agency for initiating and directing economic development in Eastern Europe, which among other things involved mutual trade agreements. Soviet trade with Eastern Europe, at \$380 million in 1947, doubled in 1948, quadrupled by 1950, and exceeded \$2.5 billion in 1952. Fully three-quarters of Eastern European trade took place within Eastern Europe (LaFeber 2002: 75). The economic door had effectively shut.

The second major institution was the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance established on the USSR’s initiative in 1955 in Warsaw, Poland (hence its usual name, the Warsaw Pact). Members of this military alliance promised to assist each other if attacked. The Warsaw Pact included the same countries as COMECON, except that Albania was not a member. The Warsaw Pact meant that the Soviets would fight to keep the closed door of Eastern Europe shut tight and, on occasion, to band together exploiting targets of opportunity in other areas of the globe.

8. Inderfurth and Loch (2004) and Rothkopf (2006) have written major studies of the NSC.

9. James Carroll (2006) describes the origins of the Department of Defense and its growth thereafter. Risen (2006), and Weiner (2008) do the same for the CIA. Alfred McCoy (2006) documents CIA use of torture.

10. The origin of the domino theory is unknown. Frank Ninkovich (1994: xvi) believes that a general domino theory was ‘first elaborated’ during World War I by President Wilson. P. M. H. Bell (2001: 117) suggests that General George Marshall in 1947 was first to advocate the idea that communist expansion could be interpreted in terms of a domino theory. By the late 1940s it seems to have been diffused throughout the Truman administration.

11. The US government spends enormous sums of money on RMA. The US research and development budget for military in 2004 was \$69.9 billion compared to \$48 billion for all nonmilitary projects (Barlas 2004). In the 2000s US universities received on the order of \$4 billion annually for defense research (Ghoshroy 2011).

12. Friedman’s identification of hybrid cosmopolitans in the 1990s was followed by a series of studies of transnational or global elites (Sklair 2001; Rothkopf 2009; W. Carroll 2010). These researches are largely restricted to transnational capitalist classes. This, I believe, ignores political elites.

13. If one meaning of cosmopolitan is openness to difference, I am not certain that any elites are at all cosmopolitan. Rather, they are partisans defending their particular class positions. For example, certain privileged Chileans who took economics degrees at the University of Chicago in the 1950s and 1960s went on to work for Pinochet’s dictatorship. Being good hybrids, they worked to defend Chile’s upper class-interests using the ideology of Chicago-style neoliberalism.