
This paper addresses the influence of a mechanistic world view of East-West relations. The "classic" model of mechanism orders reality into a relationship akin to a simple clock or pump. In the model, discrete and unmodifiable parts, with no natural functional relationship to each other, are balanced and engineered into functional unity.

This study shows how "environmental" conditions at the international level (ambiguity, complexity, and prolonged conflict) limit the ability of policy makers to define objective limits to containment, influencing them instead to follow the universal application of the "logic" of mechanism--that any imbalance must be checked by the container.
MECHANISTIC ASSUMPTIONS AND THE EAST-WEST
CONFLICT: A CRITIQUE

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Denton, Texas
December, 1983
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

... perhaps it is time for us ... to behave like anthropologists, sensitive to the uncertainties in our views of the world and willing to study our own cultural straitjackets as well as those of our adversaries. Such relativism will permit a deeper understanding of the limitations of calculations and analyses and permit us to develop preventive policies that pay more attention to uncertainty.

Fred C. Ikle
Former Head of U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

Mr. Ikle's views represent a significant minority of second generation theorists and policy makers who are beginning to question the received wisdom of their predecessors. And while his speculations are directed towards the established premises of strategic nuclear theory, they can easily be expanded to encompass the entire purview of East-West relations.

One pervasive characteristic of our "cultural straitjacket" is an affinity for a mechanistic image of society. And foreign relations, like the social sciences in general, has inherited a rich tradition that rests solidly on a mechanistic foundation. In his presidential address to

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2Ibid., p. 560.
the American Political Science Association in 1976, Austin Ranney noted this "faith" in mechanism:

Whatever we may think of their craftsmanship, the Republic's designers launched a new faith in political engineering that has persisted strongly in American culture ever since. The main articles of that faith still hold that for every problem there is a solution. That it is better to do something even though that something may be less than perfect.³

The implicit assumptions in this mechanistic "faith" reinforced the school of thought that came to dominate the analysis of the post-World War II world.⁴ At the conclusion of World War II, in response to the perceived failures of the utopianism of the interwar years, a solidly mechanistic approach to international relations emerged--realism. Western thinking shifted from the idealism of the League of Nations and the universal laws of morality to new ordering principles of power, national interest, and the balance of power.⁵ Realism's adherence to a mechanistic view of international relations merely reinforced the existing bias for an "engineering" approach to foreign relations. And its


continued currency, both as a theory and as a policy guide, is indicative of the strength and resiliency of that approach. In fact, James Eayers maintains that "the engineering approach to foreign relations is the United States approach to foreign policy." He notes how U.S. policy makers rely on mechanism and on the certainties of success such mechanism require.

The East-West conflict has been a prominent element in the immediate post-war foreign policy of the United States. In 1947, in response to the Soviet gains in Eastern Europe and fear of more gains in Greece and Turkey, the U.S. policy makers fashioned one such mechanism designed to check Soviet expansionism. That mechanism, termed containment by virtue of its mechanistic nature, was later coordinated with the mechanistic policy of deterrence, and U.S. policy designed to mitigate the East-West conflict in general came to rest on the viability and desirability of the mechanistic model. In this regard, William Zimmerman has noted not only that the "pre-eminent conception" of the U.S. analysts and policy makers during the Cold War was a "mechanistic approach," but that there appears to be a recent (1980), "resurgence of mechanistic

7 Ibid.
Some scholars have noted the almost
"built in imperative" of the American political system that
"virtually dictates that politicians and bureaucrats adopt
a mechanistic view of the world."\(^9\) The persistence of this
view may or may not result from the original conception and
design of the U.S. political system, but one thing is clear;
it is a pervasive and still timely characteristic of our
"cultural straitjacket." The mechanistic view not only
predominated the thinking of analysts and policy makers
during the height of the Cold War; containment and contain-
ment-like policies predominated through the "thaw," detente,
and persist to this day.

Dean Rusk, Secretary of State in the early and mid
sixties, frequently alluded to the mechanistic imperative
to engineer our destiny. He said it is "important that we
do not underestimate the opportunity and the responsibility
which flow from our capacity to act and influence and to
shape the course of events."\(^10\) The Secretary of Defense
who served at the same time, Robert McNamara, worked from
the premise that the world of the defense budget was com-
pletely knowable, quantifiable, predictable, and

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\(^8\)William Zimmerman, "Rethinking Soviet foreign policy:
(Summer, 1980), pp. 553-559.


\(^10\)Ibid.
controllable. Working under such a mind set, their policy decisions were bound to reflect the premises of mechanism. In this light, the U.S. containment effort in Vietnam can be seen as a characteristic of the mechanistic assumption of control. And in the 70s, though Nixon and Kissinger largely dropped the term containment, their foreign policy rhetoric still contained a basic realist/mechanistic thrust: the term "Vietnamization" was still containment of an ill-defined enemy, and "balance of power" came to be employed by both Nixon and Kissinger and predominated their conceptions and policies of foreign relation. More recently, with the "death of detente," a resurgence of the containment doctrine in the Reagan administration is evident. Robert Osgood has noted that the "Reagan administration is repeating the first beat of a familiar rhythm of America's international and political life," and containment as that familiar rhythm is "... the principle continuity of post-war foreign policy." 

This continuity of the mechanistic view, as it has been utilized across the various administrations since World War

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11 Ibid., p. 565.
II, has always preserved the notion of containment. Michel Tatu's categorization of the basic U.S. goals since the war all rest on the mechanistic premises of engineering, controlling, and balancing: "(1) to avoid war or aggression by deterrence; (2) to contain communist expansion; (3) if possible, to convert to a peaceful end a system deemed fundamentally evil and aggressive." Tatu further notes the administrations of Johnson, Nixon, and Carter tried to achieve these ends through various combinations of the "carrot and the stick." Admittedly, the policy of containment has varied from administration to administration as its means of implementation and geographical limitations have been re-defined to suit the needs of the current administration. What this means for the present, is that the underlying mechanistic assumptions of containment or deterrence and the costs associated with these assumptions are hidden from debate, as the argument is confined to a focus within the mechanistic framework itself. The premises and assumptions of the mechanistic view must be critically reassessed and questioned. As part of this reassessment process, this study will examine the theoretical foundation of mechanism, as it has coalesced into the cultural, intellectual, and

15 Ibid.
political web of United States foreign policy, outside of the variations within that mechanistic view.

Definition of Terms and Scope

The mechanistic framework requires an examination of the model itself. As a world view, its characteristics order reality into a unified description that carries with it certain biases. The organismic framework, as a different world view, orders reality differently and as a result has a different set of biases attached to it. Only the identification of each framework with the resulting biases sufficiently enlarges our scope to the frameworks themselves. And only through such a large scope is objectivity served; for if United States analysts and policy makers have been shackled by a proclivity for mechanistic assumptions, an assessment of the consequences and costs of the framework itself is not possible until it is held up for scrutiny and balanced against an alternative.

Mechanism vs. Organism

The "classic" model of mechanism is analogous to, appropriately enough, a simple working mechanism (clock or pump) which has certain mechanical characteristics that are generalized into a description of reality. These basic characteristics are: The mechanism is made up of individual parts, the sum of each part making up the whole. Each individual part has a discrete and quantifiable
function. The separate parts are not modified by one another nor by their own past. Finally, the parts are not naturally integrated; they must be properly engineered to achieve a stable and working mechanism.\(^{16}\) Karl Deutsch adds an important qualification to this classic concept. He reminds us that nothing completely fulfilling these conditions has ever existed. Furthermore, the more complicated a device becomes, the more important the interdependence between the parts and the environment becomes.\(^{17}\) Nevertheless, this model has been and continues to be employed not only in the natural sciences but in the behavioral sciences as well.

Machiavelli and Hobbes are illustrative of the theoretical significance of classical mechanism when applied to a political theory. Both employed a mechanistic view of human nature. Both theorists also assigned to that nature one overriding and determining characteristic on which they based their respective political "solutions." However, as Karl Deutsch points out, while the characteristics are


\(^{17}\)Deutsch, "Mechanism, Organism and Society," p. 238.
thought to be equally deterministic, they are also completely different. Hobbes' masses were active power seekers, requiring the institutionalization of a sovereign with limitless power. Machiavelli's politically apathetic masses allowed a wise Prince the luxury of complete pragmatism. Machiavelli and Hobbes each identified a completely different basis of human nature. Yet each theorist maintained that his view was an objective description of an unchangeable phenomenon. Indeed, little has changed in this regard since the advent of Hobbes. Modern day realists, as will be argued later, utilize the same mechanistic interpretations of human nature which serve the same function of propping up their political solutions.

The "classical" organism model of the world originated as a biologically based alternative to the mechanistic model. This view generalizes from a living organism (plant or animal) and organizes reality in terms of a complete system. That is, like a plant, the individual parts that make up that plant can only be properly explained in terms of their relationship to the whole. The plant, as a naturally integrated whole, is greater than the sum of its parts. Also, the plant exists in an open system, interacting with an environment that adds to the definition of the plant

18 Ibid., p. 240.

itself. Political theorists such as Plato, Burke, and Rousseau utilized an organismic image of society and human nature, in which each unit would perform its natural function as a part of a unified organic whole.²⁰

Such a conception would seem at first glance to be inappropriate for the study of international relations. And yet if one disregards the assumption of organic unity but retains the notion of an organic relationship (between nation-states), the implications of the model become quite significant. The rejection of a Plato-like notion of natural organic unity does not necessitate the complete rejection of an organic relationship of view. Similarly, the mechanistic assumption of inherent conflict is not validated by the simple existence of conflict in international relations. The validity of the model is predicated on its ability to describe and reflect the ordering principles of reality. Thus, the existence of divergent interests and conflicts between East and West does not necessarily flow from the immutable conflict producing elements described in the mechanistic model. As the classic model of mechanism will be the point of reference throughout this thesis, it becomes necessary to narrow our focus to that

framework and the differences along the length of the mechanistic spectrum.

It is the intent of this thesis, by utilizing the realist assumptions resting on a mechanistic model, to confine the critique to a relevant and timely focus. Another option would be to examine any and all mechanistic assumptions relevant to East-West relations. Within the continuum of the mechanistic model, the vague, universal, unlimited, and highly deterministic notions of complete mechanism occupy one end opposite the more refined, limited, and less deterministic notions of the other end.

In behavioral research, these conceptual frameworks become structured on the basis of what the observer regards as valuable or "real" in society. Donald Searing, after premising himself thusly, goes on to say that the important thing is whether the framework is introduced as unself-conscious images of society, or whether they are generated as tentative models for limited research purposes. Indeed, mechanistic images of man and society are closed systems of thought, supported by unsatisfactory metaphors such as "balance"; unsatisfactory because they are regarded as literal truths about what reality really is. They therefore discourage alternative ways of looking at the same experience.

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which might be more useful or insightful. In regards to the analysis of the Soviet Union, the use of mechanistic images by U.S. analysts and policy makers encouraged a similar closed analysis. A prominent assumption of this image was that the Soviet Union as a communist government could not be influenced by the United States as a democratic government until the Soviet Union became equally democratic.\textsuperscript{22} Models, on the other hand, differ from such images by their greater precision and limited scope. As a self-consciously explicit and limited analogy, a model identifies the major characteristics and generalizes about their interrelationships.\textsuperscript{23} Searing's distinction between images and models is roughly applicable to the range of scholarship within the mechanistic spectrum that has attempted to assess Soviet behavior. Welch's "ultra hard image" and Zimmerman's "essentialist approach" are two attempts to categorize the extreme political "right" of the mechanistic spectrum.\textsuperscript{24} Welch uses "ultra hard" to connotate the image's resistance to change similar to an ultra hard shell impregnable to outside influence.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22}Zimmerman, "Rethinking Soviet foreign policy," p. 552.


\textsuperscript{24}William Welch, American Images of Soviet Foreign Policy (New Haven, 1970); Zimmerman, "Rethinking Soviet foreign policy."

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid.
Zimmerman has a similar notion in mind when he uses the term "essentialist"; this kind of vague image explains behavior by virtue of what the essential nature of the Soviet Union is.26

These two categories of what Searing calls images are characterized by an almost exclusive micro-analytic orientation and a focus on what the two sides are (totalitarian and imperialist), rather than what they do. This image portrays the East-West conflict in sweeping generalizations of black and white: The capitalist democracy of the United States fights a highly deterministic battle with the communist dictatorship of the Soviet Union; universal constitutional democracy vs. universal communism. Fostered in part by what has been called the puritan ethic, this type of image is reflected in the highly moralistic slogans "Manifest Destiny," "No compromise with principle," "Make the world safe for democracy," "atheistic communism" and most recently, the Soviet Union as an "evil empire."27

There can hardly be any more mechanistic and deterministic an image than this primal struggle between good and evil.

The more refined sense of a model is categorized by Welch and Zimmerman as respectively, the "hard image" and

26 Ibid.

the "mechanistic orientation." 28 "Hard image" is defined as a less deterministic and less universal use of the mechanistic model, and yet still "hard" in the sense that, as Zimmerman also notes, "The impermeability of the Soviet Union to outside influence was an equally important part of the mechanistic image" (his terminology). 29 It is important to note that Kennan, as a realist, is considered by both Welch and Zimmerman to represent the less deterministic, more refined, but still mechanistic orientation of their respective categories. 30

This thesis' refinement of focus to containment, as a representative policy of realism, should not be construed as a barrier of sharp differentiation between the vague images and more refined models. A major contention of this essay will be that their similar commitment to the mechanistic framework tends to push the more refined and limited thrust of realism towards a vague, universal, black and white image of the world. For this reason, the focus on the mechanistic framework is further warranted because the momentum is generated out of the framework itself. The

28Welch, American Images; Zimmerman, "Rethinking Soviet foreign policy."


30Welch, American Images; Zimmerman, "Rethinking Soviet foreign policy."
assumptions of mechanism, when acted upon in a conflictual relationship (East-West conflict) push policy makers to select the universal image over the limits of the model. If this is so, and the mechanistic assumptions of realism encourage psychological tendencies that effectively exceed the theoretically limited and refined sense of realism, a cost is associated with these assumptions. To identify and assess this cost, this essay will examine the theory of realism for its mechanistic content; criticize two assumptions of realism necessary for the mechanistic model to function in international relations; illustrate how these two assumptions are untenable and unsupportable; link the invalidity of these assumptions to the failure of containment to provide objective limits to its application in the East-West conflict, which results in the destruction of realism itself; and offer an alternative organismic view more appropriate and less costly than mechanism.
CHAPTER II

REALISM, CONTAINMENT, AND

THE MECHANISTIC MODEL

This chapter will explore the link between the theory of realism and the realist policy of containment to the classic model of mechanism for the purpose of questioning the validity of a mechanistic view of international relations. It will therefore progress from Hans Morgenthau's realism to George Kennan's doctrine of containment, identifying their respective debt to the mechanistic model and the "logic" that model imposes on those who would use it to order international relations. In order to delineate realism's mechanistic structure, Hans Morgenthau's work Politics Among Nations, 3rd edition, will be employed.

K. J. Holsti considers Hans Morgenthau's work Politics Among Nations a "classic treatise" by virtue of its groundbreaking role as the first modern "grand theory" of international politics.¹ Inis Claude considers Morgenthau to be the "most important figure in contemporary thought" on the subject of balance of power theory.² By virtue of


Morgenthau's accepted status as an important figure in contemporary thought on international relations, his theory of realism as articulated in Politics Among Nations will serve here as the theoretical structure utilized. Unless otherwise specified, the term realism is meant to convey the conceptual framework of Politics, "This theoretical concern with human nature as it actually is, and with the historic processes as they actually take place, has earned for the theory presented here (Politics) the name of realism."³

A detailed analysis of Politics Among Nations will follow. The purpose of such an analysis at this juncture is to identify the link between Morgenthau's theory of realism and the premises of the classic model of mechanism; to reduce realism to its mechanistic assumptions. This will also facilitate the later task of identifying the doctrine of containment's similar reliance on the mechanistic model.

Realism and the Mechanistic Model

Morgenthau sought to make the diverse events of international relations coherent by erecting a model of power politics, ⁴ seeking to "bring order and meaning to a mass of phenomena . . . " by elaborating six principles of political

³Morgenthau, Politics, p. 4.
⁴Holsti, International Politics, p. 10.
The first principle is the conceptual bedrock on which the other five stand. The first principle of realism is, "Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature." He follows with this assumption, "Realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of the laws of politics, must also believe in the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects, however imperfectly and one-sidedly, these objective laws." Morgenthau then draws the link between objective laws and rational theory,

It (Realism) believes also, then, in the possibility of distinguishing in politics between truth and opinion--between what is true objectively and rationally, supported by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only a subjective judgement, divorced from the facts as they are and informed by prejudice and wishful thinking.

Morgenthau believes that objective reality can be distinguished by man because it is presumably "supported by evidence," and that this objective reality can be fully assessed and understood by rational man, as it is "illuminated by (his) reason." The two are linked philosophically,

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5 Morgenthau, Politics, p. 3.
6 Ibid., p. 4.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 4.
as a theorist who believes in the operation of objective laws in the world must also believe that man can identify that objective law through some process of assessing reality. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines "objective" in this manner,

1. existing independent of mind; relating to an object as it is in itself or as distinguished from consciousness or the subject; belonging to nature or the sensible world; publicly or intersubjectively observable or verifiable, esp. by scientific methods; of such nature that rational minds agree in holding it real or true or valid; expressing or involving the use of facts without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices. 2. perceptible to the senses or derived from sense perception.¹⁰ (my italics)

Rationality is an assumption that follows from objective reality because man must be rational enough to assess these "facts" and objective laws "without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices."¹¹ Webster's definition of "rational" fleshes out realism's assumptions of human rationality,

1. having reason or understanding. 2. involving only multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction and only a finite number of times; implies a latent or active power to make logical inferences and draw conclusions that enable one to understand the world about him, and relate such knowledge to the attainment of ends, often, in this use, opposed to emotional or animal; in application to policies or acts, Rational implies satisfactory to the reason or chiefly actuated by reason (the triumph of the rational over the emotional side of man).¹² (my italics)

¹¹Ibid.
¹²Ibid.
The two operating in tandem hold the conceptual structure of realism together. Morgenthau says, "For realism, theory consists in ascertaining facts" (objective reality), "and giving them meaning through reason" (rational man).  

Before Morgenthau makes objective law illuminated through human reason the basis of his theory, he makes another assumption. He not only elevates man's rationality to the level where he can understand his world by "logical references" through his "latent or active powers." Morgenthau also presumes that, "To give meaning to the factual raw material of foreign policy, we must approach political reality with a kind of rational outline, a map that suggests to us the possible meanings of foreign policy." He says "we must" to imply that a theory of politics would be unfathomable without such a "rational outline." This rational hypothesis, though by no means a "must," does elevate man's level of rationality to a level where he thinks and acts rationally. This rational premise is the final link between objective law and man's perceived ability to act upon it in order to construct international relations into harmony with objective law. Morgenthau says as much,

13 Morgenthau, Politics, p. 5.
14 Webster, "rational."
15 Morgenthau, Politics, p. 5.
In other words, we put ourselves in the position of a statesman who must meet a certain problem of foreign policy under certain circumstances, and we ask ourselves what the rational alternatives are from which a statesman may choose who must meet this problem under these circumstances (presuming always that he acts in a rational manner), and which of these rational alternatives this particular statesman, acting under these circumstances, is likely to choose.  

Morgenthau's second principle of political realism identifies what the objective law of international relations is. Based on his first principle of objective reality and human rationality, he defines what his own mind, supported by evidence and illuminated by reason, discovered as the objective law of international politics—"interest defined in terms of power." This objective law flows directly from his conception of human nature as inherently conflictual and power oriented, as the relationship between men is enlarged to encompass the relationship between nation-states.

Morgenthau's conception of human nature is akin to the classical determinism utilized by Thomas Hobbes. And like Hobbes, Morgenthau's theory aims ultimately at controlling human nature. Through mechanisms (balances and checks), the inherently conflicting interests of man are checked or curbed from their natural course of conflict and confined to acceptable levels of tension. In distinguishing

\[16\text{Ibid.} \quad 17\text{Ibid.}\]
his theory from utopianism, Morgenthau contends that international relations can be reduced to the inherently conflicting interests of mankind and can be improved only by working with these forces, not against them. 18 To accomplish this, Morgenthau substituted checks and balances for the utopian universal moral principles. He says, "This school, then, sees in a system of checks and balances a universal principle for all pluralist societies." 19

Realism, then, can be distinguished from utopianism largely on the basis of its fundamental belief in an inherently conflicting human nature; not for its element of determinism. Realism substituted the determinism of inherent conflict for the determinism of universal morality—both are equally deterministic. All of the other differences are merely outgrowths of this most basic conceptual difference. Yet, for all of the importance attributed to his assessment of human nature, Morgenthau utilizes precious little evidence to substantiate his assertion.

Morgenthau passes over the contemporary science of psychology as if the discipline has made no relevant contribution to the study of man since the days of Hobbes and Machiavelli. As a result, Morgenthau relies only on conjecture and subjective rationalism to substantiate his

18 Ibid., p. 4.
19 Ibid.
view of human nature. Doing little more than quoting
Machiavelli, Hobbes, Washington, Lincoln, and other historical figures, Morgenthau nevertheless claims to have
identified the "roots" of politics. After stating that
realism believes in "the possibility of distinguishing . . .
between what is true objectively and rationally, supported
by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only a
subjective judgement . . . ," 20 Morgenthau casually
observes, "Human nature, in which the laws of politics have
their roots, has not changed since the classical philosophies
of China, India, and Greece endeavored to discover these
laws." 21 This is a truism, for if man does have an
"essential nature," it is by definition something basic to
the species; however, this in no way substantiates the
classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece (whatever
those are) if their description of human nature is incorrect.

Morgenthau tries to supplement his basic Hobbesian
notion by sprinkling little tidbits of conjecture throughout
his work: "the human mind in its day-by-day operations cannot
bear to look the truth of politics straight in the face." 22
"Political realism is based upon a pluralistic conception
of human nature." 23 "The tendency to dominate, in particular,
is an element of all human associations. . . ." 24 "Political

20Ibid. 21Ibid. 22Ibid., p. 15.
23Ibid., p. 14 24Ibid., p. 34.
power is a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised.\textsuperscript{25} These disjointed statements do little to "distinguish between what is true objectively and rationally" precisely because of the lack of evidence to support these various claims. His allusions to the "tendency to dominate" and to political power as an outgrowth of a "psychological relation" offer no evidence supportive of such propositions. Morgenthau chooses to base his entire theory, not on contemporary psychological research, but on the classic and wholly subjective theories of the past, failing to follow his self-professed rules of scientific inquiry.

The proof of this human nature is supposedly revealed by history. Morgenthau says, "We assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and that the evidence of history bears that assumption out."\textsuperscript{26} However, the reverse is actually the case, as Morgenthau perceives history through a lens already shaped by his deterministic concept of human nature. This is borne out when Morgenthau asserts that a statesman's consciously directed behavior may not be an accurate representation of reality. Due to the peculiarity illuminated earlier, Morgenthau contends that the human mind cannot "bear to look the truth of politics straight in the face."\textsuperscript{27} Rather, the

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 29. \textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 5. \textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 15.
mind erects a kind of defense mechanism that disguises, embellishes, and distorts the truth (the struggle for power) into various "ideologies." A statesman may believe he is acting on the dictates of a moral principle or universal movement of history, but he is merely "playing an act" by "concealing the true nature of his political actions behind the mask of a political ideology." If an objective truth dictates the real "thoughts" and "actions" of statesmen over their own conscious will, history is not revealing the reality of the objective truth; the objective truth is determining the shape and flow of history.

Human nature, as an inflexible and unchanging entity, forces certain constraints to be imposed on the actions and relationships between men. History is, therefore, nothing more than a result or effect of the immutable forces of power, conflict, and opposing interest which spring from that nature and cause history to be so shaped. Human nature determines the shape and flow of history. A statesman may act in two ways. He can recognize the dictates of human nature, perceive every relationship in terms of "interest defined as power," and thus forsake the trappings of ideology, motives, and morality. Or he can fail to recognize what human nature dictates to society and follow a course influenced by these three vices to a degree of his choosing.

28 Ibid., p. 87. 29 Ibid., p. 88.
The degree of success enjoyed by these two choices will differ exactly to the extent that one follows and works with human nature while the other ignores and works against human nature.

By utilizing the analogy of a photograph and a painted portrait, Morgenthau distinguishes between international politics as it is (replete with ideologies, moral codes, and the like) and a rational theory derived from it (realism).

The photograph shows everything that can be seen by the naked eye; the painted portrait does not show everything that can be seen by the naked eye, but it shows, or at least seeks to show, one thing that the naked eye cannot see: the human essence of the person portrayed.

The photograph is capable of recording history to the extent that it illustrates the physical realities as they happen. Therefore, while statesmen, conquerors, and kings have frequently made use of ideologies and philosophies of various sorts as rationalizations of their "real" interests defined in terms of power, they are only a photographic or surface record of history. Furthermore, if these rationalizations blinded them to the real underlying dynamics of international relations, they were almost surely detrimental to the national interest.

The theory of realism as a portrait of the world attempts to reveal what has really happened. A painted

\[30\text{Ibid., p. 8.}\]
portrait of the world would reveal the manifestations of inherent conflict and the power relationships that spring from that conflict, painting over the conscious will of the statesman and portraying instead the stark profile of power politics. And while Morgenthau believes a perfectly rational foreign policy is impossible, a foreign policy that recognizes the "human essence" of conflict and power will at least add a few brush strokes to the photograph, improving that policy to the degree that the basic human essence is portrayed. Thus, the normative value of realism is presumed to be supportable by the degree to which the theory captures the "human essence" of international relations.

The mechanistic content in this conceptualization of reality is inescapable. Like the "classic" model of mechanism, Morgenthau's concept of human nature is made up of individual parts, the sum of which make up the whole. Vaguely termed "forces inherent in human nature," these forces exist in a static environment and are not modified over time. That is, these forces are not modified by each other or by the environment. Morgenthau makes this point very clear through his insistence on inherent conflict. Finally, these forces/parts that make up man do not create a naturally integrated psyche. Instead, human nature can

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Ibid.
only be controlled or engineered along acceptable and "less evil" paths, creating the impetus to artificially balance interests and check conflicts. If enlarged to encompass international relations, this concept means that the nation-states that make up the individual parts of the world mechanism can be no more naturally integrated than individuals are to each other. Given an inherently conflicting relationship between nation-states, any reduction in tension must be engineered through a system of checks and balances; by working with these forces and not against them. By working with these forces, a mechanism functions through a painstaking, careful and temporary engineering effort that fashions a functional balance between the parts.

The Balance of Power

You may cover whole skins of parchment with limitations, but power alone can limit power.  

John Randolph

The quotation above, noted in *Politics Among Nations*, serves as the conceptual framework Morgenthau works from in effecting his political solution. Since international relations is presumed to be ordered according to the mechanistic model, a mechanistic solution (balance of power) is the only appropriate solution to international imbalances of power, as it is a product of objective law. Morgenthau

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32 Ibid., p. 170. 33 Ibid., p. 169.
opens the chapter entitled "The Balance of Power" with this premise,

The aspiration for power on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain or overthrow the status quo, leads of necessity to a configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it.\textsuperscript{34}

This quote contains two basic meanings of the term "balance of power." The first meaning flows from Morgenthau's conception of international relations as an outgrowth of the objective laws of human nature. In this instance, balance of power is used to describe the "necessity" of viewing international relations in the context of interpersonal relations, or as Morgenthau says, in the context of "human nature as it actually is."\textsuperscript{35} It is, in Morgenthau's own words, "an actual state of affairs" created out of a rational preference for a balanced relationship over an imbalance of power by one or a few nations.\textsuperscript{36} The second meaning relates to the impetus to find "policies that aim at preserving it."\textsuperscript{37} This is an argument of what should govern the conduct of international relations. In this context, balance of power is used "as a policy aimed at a certain state of affairs."\textsuperscript{38} It is, therefore, both an explanation of the inevitable relationship between nations and a normative policy oriented guide as well. Therefore,

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 169. \textsuperscript{35}Ibid., p. 4. \textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 167. \textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 169. \textsuperscript{38}Ibid.
it is not surprising that the final two-thirds of Politics purports to show

... that the balance of power and policies aiming at its preservation are not only inevitable but are an essential stabilizing factor in a society of sovereign nations; and that the instability of the international balance of power is due not to the faultiness of the principle but to the particular conditions under which the principle must operate in a society of sovereign nations.39

The balance of power operates as an international mechanism, engineering the individual nation-states from natural disunity into functional unity based on the rational preference for balance and stability over the natural condition of imbalance and instability. As "an actual state of affairs," any balance in the international community was surely fashioned through the conscious engineering efforts of the statesmen that define the nation-state's foreign policy. There is nothing that presses for a natural balance other than the rational cost-benefit analysis of balance vs. imbalance made by individual statesmen. Two historical periods drawn from a European context are used as "proof" of the viability of its implementation and the desirability of its engineered balance of power between individual nation-states.

Morgenthau recounts "two periods of stability," one lasting from 1648 to 1772 and the other from 1815 to 1933.40 Each stable period is distinguishable from more turbulent

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39 Ibid.  
40 Ibid., pp. 204-205.
times by the international consensus that existed between the nation-states. That consensus was, logically enough, thought to be built around the "rational pursuit, within certain moral limitations, of the power objectives of the individual state." That is, each "player" recognized the rules of the "game" and played by the same limited stakes. In mechanistic terms, each part agreed as to the nature of the mechanism and engineered themselves individually into a harmonious functioning and balanced mechanism. This is where the requirements of the mechanistic model become vital. Since a working mechanism must be engineered and by virtue of the international level Morgenthau's balance of power mechanism must operate in, the parts of the mechanism must engineer themselves into functional unity.

It is not the balance of power itself that contributes to stability, for that would entail the existence of an engineer outside the individual nation-states. Rather, as a self-engineered process, it is the international consensus upon which the balance of power principle is built that preserves international stability. Morgenthau says,

Before the balance of power could impose its restraints upon the power aspirations of nations through the mechanical integrity of opposing forces, the competing nations had first to restrain themselves by accepting the system of the balance of power as the common framework of their endeavors.

\[41\] Ibid. \[42\] Ibid., p. 221.
Thus, a consensus, or complete agreement over the "blueprint" of the mechanism to be engineered is the vital condition necessary for the balance of power mechanism to operate. Morgenthau assumes that the statesmen of the stable periods of history actually formed such a consensus built on the presumption of "egotistical motives" and "power objectives" of the individual state which served to limit the stakes to the degree that "Whatever changes nations might seek in the status quo, they all had at least to recognize as unchangeable one factor, the existence of a pair of scales, the 'status quo' of the balance of power itself."\textsuperscript{43}

Morgenthau's adherence to the "classic" model of mechanism has markedly different ramifications for the international level he chooses to apply it in, as opposed to its more traditional application within a nation-state. The Founding Fathers, whom Morgenthau portrays as hard-headed, politically sophisticated analysts, engineered the U.S. Constitution to impose checks and balances on the states in order to form a working nation-state mechanism. As an engineering effort undertaking in the traditional manner, from outside of the parts to be so engineered, it could be imposed on the states and needed no complete "consensus" from the parts themselves in order to function.

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., pp. 221-222.
However, by utilizing the mechanistic model to order international relations, Morgenthau essentially places the tools in the hands of the individual parts and trusts in their "rationality" to create a balance of power mechanism. The "consensus" is in effect the blueprint, drawn up and arrived at by rationality working on each individual statesman. And,

Where such a consensus no longer exists or has become weak and is no longer sure of itself . . . the balance of power is incapable of fulfilling its functions for international stability and national independence.\(^44\)

This condition, in which the postwar world finds itself, begs the question: How is a consensus to be created that is capable of reimposing the stability of a balance of power?

After rejecting the consensus forming potentials of international morality, world public opinion, international law, the United Nations, and the World State, Morgenthau answers by placing his faith (and the world's) in diplomacy. He believes diplomacy, as an instrument of "peace through accommodation," can function if revived to its earlier pre-eminence, and if practiced through the traditional techniques of persuasion, negotiation, and pressure.\(^45\) As a consensus forming tool rather than in the promulgation of a universal ideology, "rational"

\(^{44}\text{Ibid., p. 222.}\) \(^{45}\text{Ibid., p. 568.}\)
diplomats will presumably form a balance of power consensus. The effect of ideology is easily thrust aside because it is a surface rationalization only, and as such is presumed to be easily discarded for a rational interpretation of national interest—to form a balance of power mechanism. Thus Morgenthau offers the postwar world his faith—faith in the likely existence of rational diplomats who choose to reconstruct a balance of power based on their similar awareness of objective reality (Morgenthau's mechanistic model) and the logical political implications dictated by reality (balance of power). Given the present resistance of international relations to embrace the balance of power as "an actual state of affairs," however, one tenuous thrust is left: Morgenthau's depiction of reality should govern conduct in the world. The circular logic of his determinism, based on objective law, ultimately fails to bear itself out: national interest defines the actions of nation-states; national interest is defined in terms of power; limited power aspirations are the only "rational" pursuit of power possible, thus national interest is limited power; and a limited, balanced consensus of power develops. Since this logic of objective rationality has failed to materialize, Morgenthau leaves us with a lucid and at times enlightening explanation of how the postwar world has been transformed into a bipolar one, but with no counterpart
explanation or solution for the creation of a more stable relationship. With the realization that

... a mistake in the evaluation of one of the elements of national power, made by one or more of the leading statesmen, may spell the difference between peace and war. So may an accident spoiling a plan or power calculation. ...\(^\text{46}\)

how can Morgenthau place our fate in such a precariously "balanced" framework? Plato's Philosopher-Kings would be hard pressed to adequately serve as capable diplomats by these strenuous standards. Basic philosophical questions are raised by his assumption of rationality: Can we know all of the relevant empirical phenomena? Does that knowledge even exist? Can a statesman reconstruct, without distortion, objective reality? Can he process that information into a true definition of the national interest?\(^\text{47}\)

Even if these questions could be answered in the affirmative, and even if his faith in the inevitable workings of absolute rationality and the subsequent production of automatically correct policies was justified, what is to be done in the interim between the current reality of a bipolar world and the inevitable solution to be worked out by the rationality of objective law? What kind of foreign policy does the United States practice? Due to this basic shortcoming, Morgenthau's

\(^{46}\text{Ibid., p. 569.}\)

\(^{47}\text{Richard Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, editors, Foreign Policy Decision Making (New York, 1962), p. 52.}\)
theory did not offer a definitive enough solution to the immediate postwar policy makers in the U.S. to use as a policy guide. However, another realist scholar, George F. Kennan, filled the gap between realist theory and the immediate needs of the postwar world with a clear and simple policy guide that has become a major instrument of the United States' management of the East-West conflict to this day: containment.

Containment and the Mechanistic Model

George F. Kennan, as a former counselor to the State Department and Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1952) and Yugoslavia (1961-63), is appropriately considered a leading expert on Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and their relations with the West. As Chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff in the early post-World War II period, he played a major role in the development of United States foreign policy, most notably with regards to the Soviet Union. In July of 1947, he published an explosive article that has echoed in official American thinking to this day. "X--The Sources of Soviet Conduct" is a realist's explanation and solution to "The Problem of Soviet Power."49

As a realist, Kennan builds containment on mechanistic assumptions identical in their impact and importance

to Morgenthau's similar assumptions. Using the previous discussion of Morgenthau's mechanistic framework as a backdrop, it is apparent that Kennan utilizes the same assumptions found in *Politics*: an inherently conflictual human nature, and as a vehicle for understanding the present world, history serves as a guide to the formation of new stable relationships based on an understanding of past stable relations. In *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, Kennan makes a rather rare reference to human nature. With equal Hobbesian imagery, he echoes Morgenthau by seeing the necessity for the "application of restraint by man over man . . . as a result of man's irrational nature, his selfishness, his obstinancy, his tendency to violence." 50

Kennan also treats the basic theoretical premise of human nature with the same contempt displayed by Morgenthau. Kennan appears to have no qualms about haphazardly assigning inevitable conflict to human nature without utilizing any empirical evidence, psychological expertise, or even mention of them. It is a given, an assumption that props up his theory with the assurance of common knowledge or common sense.

Kennan also employs a historical model that purports to show the stability of international relations when

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practiced with an understanding of human nature and the "power realities" dictated by that nature. He bases his historical evidence on American diplomacy practiced from the period of 1776 to 1812. Kennan formulates the link between the early American statesman's assumptions of the world around him and his foreign policy thusly:

American statesmen in the early part of the nineteenth century dealt very frankly and confidently with power realities. They assumed, correctly, that the European powers would have no love for us, no great respect for the value of our system, little regard for the importance of our continued evidence and prosperity as a separate state. They properly feared European intrigues in the New World. They worked vigorously to restrain the European powers in the territorial ambitions here. They proceeded with little compunction to extend our own sovereignty to the Pacific, as an alternative to the penetration of the western territories by European governments. They encouraged the severance, generally, of the political lands between the people of this hemisphere and Europe, and they made our country the guarantor of the permanence of this separation wherever it occurred. All of this involved power considerations. Yet none of it at the time was considered evil or Machiavellian or cynical. It was simply regarded as a response to the obvious and logical requirements of our situation.  

Unfortunately, in Kennan's opinion, the U.S. abandoned the practice of realism soon after 1812 to pursue what he calls the "... legalistic moralistic approach to international relations"—an approach to which Kennan attributes the self-defeating and dangerous policy of

51 Ibid., pp. 13-14.
52 George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900-1950 (Chicago, 1951), p. 82.
creating international legal judiciating bodies built on a consensus of right and wrong; a consensus easily translated into moral indignation against the perceived lawbreaker. Ironically, this approach may initiate greater violence and conflict than the older motives of national interest through the elevation of higher moral principles and the resulting impetus to achieve "total victory."\(^{53}\) Kennan implores U.S. foreign policy makers to employ the earlier more realistic practice of assessing power realities and making policy goals in response to the "obvious" and "logical" requirements of our situation.

Kennan maintains that our early statesmen "dealt very frankly and confidently with power realities."\(^{54}\) In other words, the situation was presumably readily apparent to them because they utilized the "human essence" of conflict as a premise for their assessment of the international environment and for the "logical" and "obvious" policy to follow. The ease and simplicity with which these statesmen conducted foreign policy is attributed to the rational logic that follows from an assumption of inherent conflict. They confidently assumed that the European powers would have "... no great respect for the values of our system, little regard for the importance of our continued existence ... "

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Kennan, Realities, p. 48.
and would as a result make "... intrigues in the New World."\textsuperscript{55}

In 1947, by utilizing the same procedure, Kennan "follows" the lead of the earlier more prudent American statesman and confidently assesses the "situation" of the postwar world, offering an obvious and logical response to the "requirements of the situation."\textsuperscript{56} In Kennan's assessment of the situation in 1947, the U.S.S.R. is purported to have largely ideologically determined designs on the eventual destruction of the U.S. and therefore policies that reflect

\begin{quote}
... no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and Capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious and persistent pressure toward the disruption and weakening of all rival influence and rival power.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

This assessment parallels the situation of colonial America in all respects except one—the existence of an ideological element. Kennan's assessment of the realities that confront the U.S. in 1947 adds to the "given" condition of inherent conflictual interests ("no abstract love of peace"), a new element, by noting the Soviets' ideological

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., pp. 13-14.

\textsuperscript{56} Kennan can be described as "following" the lead of earlier statesmen if his analysis of their motivation and actions is accurate and if he has not simply shaped the past to suit the needs of his present analysis.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
creed (Marxism) which sees "no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy co-existence of the Socialist and Capitalist worlds." This ideological element is not compatible with realism, as the rationally determined limited national interest is replaced by an unlimited universal interest which seeks the complete destruction of the ideological enemy. Again, Morgenthau's suggested remedy, to return diplomacy to its earlier pre-eminence, is lacking in any substantive direction for a foreign policy guide. Kennan is able to offer a more definitive solution by virtue of his mechanistic analysis of the Soviet "personality." Kennan responds to the requirement of the mechanistic model to define each part with a "discrete and quantifiable function" by defining the Soviet part as the dysfunctional part of the international mechanism. The problem, now confined to within one part, is to re-engineer that part back into functional unity. To facilitate the use of containment as "an engineer," Soviet expansionism is defined as a product of its "quantifiable function" in an almost Newtonian manner. "X" describes the Soviet Union in such strict mechanistic terms that William Zimmerman says machine imagery "permeates" the article.

58 Ibid.
59 Zimmerman, "Rethinking Soviet Foreign Policy," p. 553.
60 Ibid.
Its political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power. But if it finds unassailable barriers in its path, it accepts these philosophically and accommodates itself to them.  

Perhaps the most telling use of mechanistic imagery is an analogy drawn between the Soviet government and a windup toy,

"... the whole Soviet governmental machine, including the mechanism of diplomacy moves inexorably down the prescribed path, like a persistent toy automobile wound up and headed in a given direction, stopping only when it meets with some unanswerable counter force."  

The classic mechanistic model influences another stipulation in Kennan's analysis; the Soviet Union, as a discrete part cannot be modified by another part. Kennan meets with this requirement by defining a Soviet machine so encompassing that "the individuals who are the components of this machine are unamenable to argument or reason which comes to them from outside sources." Kennan's mechanistic solution is dictated by the logic of the mechanistic model. Since the dysfunctional part is a "fluid stream" that would accommodate itself to "unassailable barriers," an "unanswerable counter force" of resistance is required to dam up that fluid stream.

61 Kennan, American Diplomacy, p. 98.  
62 Ibid., p. 97.  
63 Ibid.
Containment is a simple engineering feat designed to check the mechanical ambitions of the Soviet Union by "confronting them with an unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world." This counterforce is to be applied, "... at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy." At this juncture, containment is functioning only in the capacity of a stabilizer, limiting the effects of the dysfunctional part on the mechanism. Once the "fluid stream" of Soviet expansion is dammed up, Kennan still faces the dilemma of a dysfunctional part seemingly "unamenable to argument or reason ... from outside sources." Thus, the primacy of nation-states, the discrete parts of the mechanism, the very ordering principle of realism represents a quandary for Kennan--how is the dysfunctional part to be re-engineered?

Kennan solves this dilemma by reducing the Soviet machine to what he calls its "political personality." His psychological analysis posits two personality shaping forces: basic Marxist-Leninist ideology and the particular circumstances of power the leadership in the Soviet Union

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64 Ibid., p. 104.  
65 Ibid., p. 99.  
66 Ibid., p. 97.  
67 Ibid., p. 94.
The Soviet personality is shaped by the leaderships' belief in the Marxist thesis of basic antagonism between communism and capitalism and the monolithic, highly cohesive, and infallible features of Stalinism. After reducing the dysfunctional part to a "personality," Kennan changes the very definition of that part by simply attributing a therapeutic value to the process of checking the Soviets' expansionist behavior. Containment not only serves the short term goal of checking Soviet expansion, but also serves the larger interests of re-engineering the international mechanism back into unity. It does so by providing a therapeutic environment within which the Soviet personality actually heals itself of its neurosis. Kennan describes the "therapy" thusly:

It is entirely possible for the United States to influence by its actions the internal developments both within Russia and throughout the international communist movement, by which Russian policy is largely determined. . . . The United States has in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power. For no mystical, Messianic movement--and particularly not that of the Kremlin--can face frustration indefinitely without eventually adjusting itself in one way or another to the logic of that state of affairs.

68 Ibid. 69 Ibid. 70 Ibid., pp. 105-106
It is in this way that Kennan bypasses the restriction of realism/mechanism, i.e. primacy of nation-states, by influencing the Soviets to accept the rationality of limited power aspirations.

Containment not only checks or counterbalances the mechanical aspirations of the Soviet Union, it attacks the source of the imbalance itself (ideology and circumstances) by "forcing" the Soviet mechanism to alter its expansionist tendencies and to "adjust itself to the logic of that state of affairs." 71 An international balance of power is engineered from the previous dysfunctional relationship between the parts (the Soviets' power ambitions were unlimited) by forcing the dysfunctional part to re-engineer itself. Kennan's theory fills the gap left by Morgenthau by expanding the mechanistic model to the point where a policy practiced by one of the individual nation-states is capable of forcing rationality onto the system. As articulated in "X," containment not only preserved the mechanistic world view, but by solving the inherent dilemma of the model in an international context (primacy of nation-states) with an equally mechanistic solution, containment reinforced the model itself and enlarged the ability of policy makers to engineer human relationships to the international level.

71 Ibid.
In conclusion, the theoretical structure of realism is a mechanistic one. (1) Realism presumes international relations to be ordered at the nation-state level, as each part makes up the sum of the international mechanism. (2) Each part (nation-state) is given a discrete and quantifiable function. That function is to pursue the national interest which is quantified in terms of power. (3) The pursuit of the national interest is the objective law of international relations and as such is an inherent and unmodifiable determinate. (4) And, each nation-state, by pursuing its national interest, conflicts, as a matter of course, with the national interest of another nation-state. As a result, the parts of the international mechanism are not naturally integrated; they are in fact inherently non-integrated, which creates the requirement to engineer a balance of power between the parts in order to create a stable and functioning mechanism. These four characteristics of realism parallel the mechanistic model exactly: (1) The mechanism is made up of individual parts, the sum of each part making up the whole; (2) each individual part has a discrete and quantifiable function; (3) the separate parts are not modified by one another nor by their own part; (4) the parts are not naturally integrated; they must be properly engineered to achieve a stable and working mechanism.
Containment, as a realist policy, shares this conceptual framework and enlarges the scope of the mechanistic model to the international level. It retains all of the elements of the classic mechanistic model while expanding the degree of influence one part has over another by opening up the closed environment to include interstate influence. Technically, containment does not seek to change the Soviet Union from the outside; it seeks to influence inner directed change to occur. Still, this is a fine distinction, for if the U.S. has the power to "increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate to force upon the Kremlin . . . a greater degree of moderation . . . ," the focus of the U.S. as a behavior modifier is still directed towards changing the Soviet Union.

The "container" is forced by the logic of mechanism into a relationship vis-a-vis the dysfunctional part that impacts certain costs on him. Though not the engineer by name, the United States nevertheless must have a conception of the blueprint, of what kind of behavior it expects from the Soviet Union. Furthermore, in its role as a therapist, throughout the course of the therapy, the United States must be able to accurately assess when inner directed change is occurring. The United States must be able to accurately assess when the Soviet Union is on the path to "recovery" and when it is on a dysfunctional path. And since the
Soviets are still presumed to have interests contrary to the United States, Soviet behavior motivated by nonideological concerns must be distinguished from more dysfunctional motives. Over the course of the "therapy" (and Kennan expected it to take 10 to 15 years), the United States must be able to maintain the detached objectivity of a therapist, never overreacting through fear or anger.

A second and related "cost" can be attributed to the necessary reactionary role of the container. The United States must first assess where Soviet expansion occurs and move to check it by establishing an "unassailable barrier" to that expansion. This reactionary role leaves the United States essentially at the mercy of the Soviets to choose the time and place of the confrontation. This reactive relationship restricts the ability of the United States to limit the purview of containment to some preconceived strategically vital areas of the world. If the Soviets are perceived as making an expansionist move in an area previously designated of little strategic importance, the logic of mechanism requires that the assessment of strategic importance be altered and, hence, containment expanded. This is the logic of mechanism—either the mechanism functions, or it does not. Working from the assumption that the

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73 Zimmerman, "Rethinking Soviet Foreign Policy."
74 Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, p. 98.
container must check the expansionist tendencies of a part over which it had no control, the time, place, depth, and breadth of the confrontation dictated by the expansionist part. There can be no limit to the ability of the container to respond to expansionist and dysfunctional behavior, and since the application of containment lies totally outside the control of the container, the purview of containment must be unlimited. This "logic" of mechanism, if it is to be utilized as a foreign policy, must be restricted in some sense to a politically acceptable means of application. The capabilities of the container and the political constraints to which the container is tied, limit to some extent the ability of the container and the scope of containment. However, beyond these vague and unreliable practical constraints, the logic of containment can still function to its full potential if the capabilities of the container are substantial (like the U.S.). Real restraints on the logic of containment must be fashioned by the policy makers themselves, as there is nothing in the mechanism itself that limits its scope. This fact returns the scope of this paper to the realist notion of objective reality and the rationality that allegedly follows. Realists contend that objective reality will define the rational limits to containment in the same manner that it defines the national interest. For containment, or any mechanism to be limited
from its logical application, the realist conceptual framework becomes the major point of contention, as it is the only means of limitation.
CHAPTER III

LOGIC OF MECHANISM VS.
LIMITS OF REALISM

Thus far this examination of containment has been limited to the mechanistic conception of the doctrine and the momentum generated as an outgrowth of its intended function. The preceding chapter showed that by enlarging the function of the United States to engineer or "force" functionally acceptable behavior from previously dysfunctional behavior, containment made an engineering approach to international relations more accessible to the needs of foreign policy. However, if the United States is to practice containment and occupy the position of "container," the policy must be more than accessible to the needs of foreign policy; it must be subservient to those needs as well. As a mechanism, the logic of its function must be properly tempered by political constraints and susceptible to human control within the framework of the United States foreign policy process. To examine these requirements, henceforth containment will be utilized more as a point of reference to the foreign policy process of today.

The scope of this chapter will differ from the previous as follows: First, from international relations the scope
will be refined to East-West relations, since containment operates on that level. Second, the conditions under which foreign policy is practiced will be confined here to the single condition of assessing and applying objective limits to the logic of the containment mechanism. If containment is to be practiced in the realist tradition, within certain politically "realistic" limits, objective reality must provide the readily identifiable limits to its application that realism promises.

This chapter will examine the capability of policymakers to accurately assess objective reality and identify the conditions which appear to mitigate against this ability within the East-West conflict.

The most fruitful approach would be first to analyze the process by which containment came to be transformed from "X" to doctrine and into policy and assess whether or not the United States policymakers' objective limits did confine its application to politically realistic boundaries.

The rapid process by which the prescriptions of Kennan's "X" article came to be transformed into "doctrine" was surprising to the author himself. In "A Rebuttal and An Apology," Kennan recalls his shock over the strong and immediate show of support for "X," "Life and Reader's Digest" reprinted long excerpts from it. The term 'containment' was picked up and elevated to the status of a doctrine
which was then identified with the foreign policy of the administration.\textsuperscript{1} As head of the newly formed Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State, Kennan's article was part of the current administration's attempt to dismantle the complaint of some before 1947 that the Truman administration had no foreign policy, only a series of disjointed reactions to specific international crises.\textsuperscript{2}

From its inception, "X" was intended to be more than a simple scholarly analysis; it was part of an effort within the Truman Administration to define its foreign policy. Containment, the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan, which emerged as the major elements of the Truman Administration's foreign policy, all served the same imperative: to halt Soviet expansionism. Truman observed, "The military assistance program and the European recovery program are part and parcel of the same policy. There is the closest relationship between economic recovery and military defense."\textsuperscript{3}

In 1947 Kennan had considerable influence as head of the Policy Planning Staff, and his "X" thesis was widely

\textsuperscript{1}George F. Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950 (Boston, 1967).

\textsuperscript{2}Thomas G. Patterson, editor, Containment and the Cold War (Reading, Mass., 1973), p. 1.

\textsuperscript{3}Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1949, as cited in Patterson, Containment, p. 98.
circulated in government circles before it was published, possibly inspiring the Truman Doctrine itself. Furthermore, as a department head under Secretary of State Marshall, Kennan exercised some influence over the contents of the Marshall Plan. And though Kennan would later claim in Memoirs 1925-1950 that he had serious misgivings about the universal language and military aid of the Truman Doctrine, "X"'s comprehensiveness supported the doctrine's mechanistic analysis (the good/evil dichotomy) and the implication of foreign involvement, "The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms." To some extent, Kennan was the link between Containment, the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan, both in a philosophical sense and by virtue of his position in the Truman administration.

To be sure, Kennan was not solely responsible for U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. However, with his influence in the official circles of government, which also included Secretary of Defense Forrestal, and the widespread acceptance of the rationale of "X" as the ideological touchstone of the East-West conflict, Kennan and containment can

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4 Patterson, Containment, p. 11.
5 Ibid., p. 98.
6 Truman, Public Papers, 1953, cited in Patterson, Containment, p. 127.
be credited with helping to set the mood, philosophy, and direction of U.S. foreign policy. And while he has taken great pains to dissociate himself from the universal attributes his theory has since taken on, he is nevertheless partially responsible, however unwittingly, for some of its misuses.

By expanding the scope of mechanism to include international-state influence, and by placing the United States into a strict reactive role, Kennan created a universal logic of application. In "X" he requires that the Soviets be frustrated "at every point" where their designs for power threaten stability. 7

Kennan has since retreated from the universal language in "X" and insists that he meant to limit its scope to Western Europe. 8 The "X" article represents the logic of mechanism: the either/or, zero-sum game property of mechanism that stems from the analogy itself. In the analogy, the parts either mesh into a stable functional order or they do not. With the adoption of the premise of mechanism, that one must create a working mechanism in international relations (balance of power), the conceptualized limits of realism run head-on into the imperative of creating and maintaining a balance. Containment can be a limited policy

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7Kennan, American Diplomacy, p. 104.
8Kennan, Memoirs, pp. 313-324.
only if the United States policy makers restrict its employ-
ment; only if they recognize the objective limits to its 
application and restrict the logic of mechanism. Since 
there are no self-restricting properties in the notion of 
mechanism as to its scope or political feasibility, policy 
makers seeking to conduct realistic policy must resist the 
logic to check any imbalance and impose restraints instead. 
Limits must be imposed upon it and will always run contrary 
to the logic of the policy. Containment cannot function if 
certain areas of the world are inaccessible to its appli-
cation, and any restraints, however politically realistic, 
threaten the ability of the mechanism to perform its 
intended function.

Containment, if used as a tool of foreign policy, rests 
on the realist notion to

. . . [distinguish] in politics between truth and 
opinion--between what is true objectively and 
rationally, supported by evidence and illuminated 
by reason, and what is only a subjective judgement, 
divorced from the facts as they are and enforced 
by prejudice and wishful thinking.\(^9\)

It is necessary, as in Kennan's analysis of early American 
foreign policy, that policy makers can deal "frankly and 
confidently" with power "realities" and fashion policies 
that respond to the "obvious and logical requirements"

\(^9\)Hans Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York, 
of the situation. The mechanism of containment must be susceptible to human control, and the nature of that control must be "readily definable" and "obvious." The logic of the mechanism must be subservient to the political constraints of realism, or the two cannot coexist as they are intended.

Unfortunately, the policy makers and analysts of the Cold War era could not develop a consensus over the objectively defined points where the containment of Soviet expansion was necessary. A debate ensued over precisely where such objective constraints to containment were—where geography and power capabilities limited the United States' ability to re-engineer the Soviet Union. In the early 1950s, the policy of containment was literally pulled apart as both ends of the mechanistic spectrum fought for control. In 1950, Dean Acheson's "Berkeley speech" laid down seven prerequisites the Soviet Union would have to meet, not for peace, but as conditions for negotiations—prerequisites so restrictive as to reduce the Soviets' bargaining posture to that of accepting unconditional surrender as the price of not fighting a war. Two years later, John Foster Dulles argued for a "positive" policy of liberation, effectively enlarging the "stalemate" goal.

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11 Patterson, *Containment*, p. 62.
of containment to one dedicated to the complete destruction of communism. These policy makers pulled containment towards the universal end of the mechanistic spectrum.

Morgenthau pulled from the other direction, attempting to impose a tighter human control over its application in the East-West conflict. In 1950, he urged United States policy makers to discriminate between the areas where it is tactically possible and strategically necessary to contain the Soviet Union with the "military might of the United States" (Western Europe), and those areas where "... they cannot be defended" (Asia). Mechanism is served by each because any method that brings the dysfunctional part back into a stable and functional relationship with the rest of the parts serves mechanism. Containment serves this requirement, but "liberation" serves it equally as well by making the Soviet Union democratic.

Likewise, "disengagement" serves the needs of mechanism if a more isolationist and restrictive attitude by the United States diffuses the Soviet's need to expand. This continuum of possibilities remained committed to the same imperative—to engineer into a functional balance the discrete parts of the international mechanism by


13 Hans Morgenthau, In Defense of the National Interest (New York, 1950), p. 120.
re-engineering the Soviet Union. As a policy, containment could offer no limits to its implementation. As a result, in response to the real ambiguity of objective limits, a broad continuum of limits evolved, stretching from liberation to isolation but with each "end" equally committed to the containment of Soviet expansion. That such a continuum developed in response to one policy severely damages realism's assumption of objective limits, "supported by evidence." The ambiguity of objective reality is simply not conducive to a precise definition of how the mechanistic model should be employed. As a result, the mechanistic model cannot be readily translated into foreign policy. A basic incompatibility exists between the necessary universal logic of mechanism and the political constraints of foreign policy.

If the limitations on containment could be as readily definable and identifiable as realists contend, if objective reality could provide guidelines that rational policy makers would follow, containment can be controlled. However, if the "evidence" of objective reality can only confine the mechanism to within very wide limits, the logic of containment is freed to push the container (United States) to intervene in the world wherever the Soviets, or those deemed as their representatives, manifest any

14Morgenthau, Politics, p. 4.
tendencies that seem to threaten the stability of the mechanism. Kennan cannot disallow the use of any means, nor restrict the purview of containment without forsaking the whole of the policy.

In order to properly examine the ability of policy makers to know objective reality and fashion an objective and easily recognizable definition of national interest, the objective law on which this ability is premised needs to be addressed. Morgenthau contends that the inherently conflictual nature of man as an objective law governs "politics, like society in general," and that "in order to improve society, it is first necessary to understand the laws by which society lives." Without regressing into a pure psychological analysis, a brief discussion of objective law and the nature of that law is in order.

There is no consensus within the discipline of psychology as to the nature of man or as to the determinism of that nature (if one exists). Between the determinism of Freud's concept of personality and the determinism of Skinner's concept of environment, the bulk of psychological theory combines the two into various relationships that

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15 Patterson, Containment, p. 107.
16 Ibid.
17 Morgenthau, Politics, p. 4.
18 Ibid.
vary in degree and determinism. For the purposes of this study, no attempt is being made to stake out one particular position or theory as the correct mix of inner nature and environment. Instead, the reliability and utility of realism's definition of human nature will be questioned. Is realism's conception of human nature reliable enough to accept it as an immutable law on which foreign policy is based? And does that conception have a greater utility than any other in the analysis of international relations?

The reality of realism's Hobbesian-like conception of human nature can be questioned on two accounts: the definition itself and its determinism. Chapter II touched on the absence of psychological evidence to substantiate Morgenthau's concept of human nature. His conception, however vague, more closely resembles that of Sigmund Freud than any other psychological theorist. Freud's inner personality shaping forces of id, ego, and superego are engaged in a power struggle and do produce inner conflicts, but a presumption of immutable power struggles between individuals outside of their respective personalities did not follow. Furthermore, Freud's personality existed almost entirely in the subconscious, never in the rational cost-benefit type mind that

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20 Ibid., p. 97.
Morgenthau suggests. For Morgenthau to base his entire theory on the shaky foundation of an objective law of immutable conflict between individuals in order to explain conflict in international relations is fraught with pitfalls.

The reputed determinism of man's personality is equally vexing. While history demonstrates the continuity of war and various desires of the flesh: sadism, masochism, altruism, as well as creative, heroic and adventurous impulses, certain "variations" are equally worthy of note. Human sacrifice in religious rites, slavery, sorcery, and most forms of child labor have largely disappeared in the behavior of industrialized nations. One hallmark of civilization is the steady reduction in the sanctioning of personal violence.\(^2\)\(^1\) The continually evolving social, cultural, and political conditioning process has effectively limited some of the behavioral possibilities once open to society.\(^2\)\(^2\) And the evidence of such processes lends support to a hypothesis that human nature responds in some measure to the changing environment. To some extent then, man is modifiable. His attributes, feelings, and behavior are molded by the group to which he belongs; while society transmits to him its values, standards, and ideals.\(^2\)\(^3\) Man's


\(^{2\text{2}}\)Ibid.

\(^{2\text{3}}\)Ibid., p. 259.
history has undoubtedly been highlighted by certain self-aggrandizing trends, but it has also exhibited altruistic trends. Without assigning one trend as the deterministic force of man's nature, it is possible to permit the operation of both trends. This means that it is equally fallacious for a realist to limit his focus to the self-aggrandizing part as it is for a utopian to focus only on altruistic ethical standards. It is extremely doubtful that war or peace is psychologically inevitable. E. H. Carr's critique is still illustrative of this point: he took both realists and utopians to task. Whereas the idealist exaggerates freedom of choice, the realist exaggerates fixed causality and slips into determinism. Furthermore, according to Carr, while the utopian may confuse national self-interest with morality, the realist is disposed towards unwarranted cynicism. Viewing the development of realism as a response to utopianism is a useful insight in this regard. Realism simply replaced the determinism of utopian morality with the determinism of inherent conflict. Realists were justified in this respect.


25 Ibid.

for criticizing utopianism; however, the adoption of an opposite but equally determinitive nature is not the only answer. The realist's magnification of inherent conflict contributes to a self-fulfilling prophecy; it makes conflict more likely. Exaggeration of the inevitability of peace has a similar effect; it suppresses the intense effort necessary to create the conditions for a durable and stable peace.27 Unlike both the realists and utopians which each stress drives as determinates of social conflict and social harmony, our premise is that a policy maker cannot know reality in a direct fashion.

Perception and Objective Reality

... if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.28

A fundamental theorem of the psychological and social sciences is that man's behavior is determined by the world he perceives.29 Man perceives the events of the world outside him and internalizes that experience by assessing in a wholly subjective manner, the "facts" as he sees them. Our premise, then, is that we cannot know reality, either physical or human, in a direct fashion.30 Instead, we know

27 Deutsch, Preventing World War III, p. 372.
29 Ibid., p. 4.
30 Ibid., p. 12.
images. Kenneth Boulding puts this notion into the proper perspective we are seeking, "The people whose decisions determine the policies and actions of nations do not respond to the objective facts of any situation, whatever that may mean, but to their images of the situation."31 Richard Snyder and his colleagues32 have further shown that all the historical, political, and psychological factors that influence foreign policy should be viewed as acting through the decision makers as they conduct policy. Snyder finds that the decision makers' perception or "definition of the situation," as opposed to objective reality, determines a nation's foreign policy.33 This assumption, that policy makers cannot have a direct knowledge of reality, only images, requires an analysis of the environment in which policy makers work; in this case the East-West conflict.

The context in which decision makers assess reality and formulate their image, or "definition of the situation," is in the present, quite different from the context fondly recalled by both Morgenthau and Kennan. Foreign policy has evolved from the level of an "aristocratic game"34 to a

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31Kenneth Boulding, "National images and international systems," Journal of Conflict Resolution, 3 (1959), p. 120.
33Ibid.
34Morgenthau, Politics, p. 560
level where it is "played" in highly bureaucraticized departments of government. Furthermore, the world that policy makers now perceive is highly complex and quick moving, as technology adds ever evolving complexities and blurs once easily definable calculations of power and capabilities. The effects this evolution has on the appropriateness of a mechanistic view of international relations are profound and far reaching. To illustrate these effects, an analysis of the United States' decision to intervene in Korea will follow.

The U.S. decision to implement containment in Korea in 1950 is an example of how policy makers actually construct the reality in which they operate. Instead of perceiving objective reality, a decision maker works from his perceptions of events and fashions an image that grapples with the essential structure of the stimuli.35

This is not to say that objective events in the environment have no influence in the decision; rather they set limits on the number of possible legitimate interpretations. Perception is always a choice or guess about the real nature of the stimulus.36 For instance, if a person closes one eye and looks down a dark tunnel at a ball of reflected light, he may see either a large ball that is far away or

35 Joseph M. de Rivera, The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy (Columbus, 1968), p. 21.
36 Ibid., p. 42.
a small ball that is much closer. Either choice, either perception fits the data, while a perception of a small ball farther away is not a legitimate interpretation. In this regard, the limits to possible legitimate interpretations of international relations are much wider, given the complexity of international events versus a ball of reflected light. There are two primary reasons for this: one is that as objective stimuli increase in complexity, fewer perceptions seem to grasp the essential structure and a reliance on creative insight is heightened. The growing complexity of international events requires a greater and greater reliance on the image to capture the essential structure of the stimulus. This reliance on a "creative" image entails a narrowed perceptual focus as more and more diverse events are conformed to the image, and a widened range of objective limits as the number of possible legitimate interpretations grows. The second reason is also an outgrowth of the growing complexity of modern international relations. The foreign policy organizational hierarchy is dependent on information received by others rather than on a direct experience of reality by the statesman. This creates a communication chain which, like the perceptual powers of the individual, is also highly selective. Just as the perception of a complex event by a single individual

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37 Ibid.  
38 Ibid., p. 44
is likely to rely on creativity, becoming less detailed, more abstract, and less complex than the event which is perceived, the communication chain further simplifies the image as the same process operates at each link of the chain. The more human links in the communication of information about an event, the more simplified and distorted the representation of the event is likely to be. This chain of communication exists at each level of the foreign policy hierarchy and between the levels as well. Thus, foreign policy necessarily generates within a framework of common beliefs. A set of common beliefs is necessary to coordinate the various levels at which foreign policy is conducted. The practice of different goals or policies within the same administration would make for a chaotic foreign policy to say the least. These beliefs or images are invariably "creative" in the sense that they attempt to define the essential structure of reality and are therefore less detailed, more abstract, less complex, and hence are distortions of reality.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, three commonly held beliefs shaped the United States foreign policy hierarchy's general image of East-West relations:
(1) North Korea was a puppet governed by the Soviet Union;
(2) the Soviet Union would not have an atomic capability to

39Deutsch, Preventing World War III, p. 375.
offset the American nuclear advantage until 1954; (3) and that until it had this capability, the Soviets would not attempt an attack of any hemispheric magnitude. This belief was formulated against and complemented with a basic pragmatic approach to foreign affairs.

In late 1947, the Truman administration undertook a political balancing operation designed to meet "limited" budgetary requirements without endangering U.S. security. This pragmatic approach, smacking of realism, mapped out the strategically significant areas thought to be significant in a global sense; the global context dictated by the third "belief." Secretary of State Acheson defined the United States defense perimeter as running from the Aleutians through Japan and the Ryukyus to the Philippines, thereby excluding both Korea and Formosa from the purview of national interest. In response to this pragmatic assessment, by 1949 the last of the U.S. troops that had been maintained in Korea were withdrawn.

The Truman administration's approach is a logical response to the belief structure. Korea's strategic significance, in the global context of the East-West conflict was negligible compared to the United States' interests and involvement in Western Europe. At this

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40 De Rivera, Psychological Dimension, p. 70.
41 Ibid., p. 67.
formulative stage, United States foreign policy can be considered "realistic," operating on the objective reality of its accepted image and fashioning policies that were a "logical" and "obvious" response to that reality. United States foreign policy revolved around the contingencies of a global war, to be fought in key strategic areas, but not likely until after 1954--this being the obvious response to the conditions of its image.

In early June, 1950, the foundation of the United States' belief structure began to crumble. The United States Ambassador to Korea sent a cable to the State Department, reporting in detail the heavy North Korean arms deployment along the 38th parallel. This information, processed by the existing image, was resisted by the State Department. Images are not passive structures; they have a dynamics of their own that is resistant to change from incoming contrary information. As a result, the State Department perceived the cable as a politically motivated scare tactic supportive of the Ambassador's well known weaponry requests for the South Korean army, and the cable was dismissed.42 A few weeks later, the State Department received a cable less easily dismissed. The same Ambassador reported four separate attacks by the North Korean army along the 38th parallel, and the Korean War had begun.43

42 Ibid., p. 19. 43 Ibid., p. 35
At the outset of the North Korean attack, little U.S. military aid had reached the country, a third of the South Korean Army was on leave, the Chief of the South Korean Navy and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army were in Honolulu, and the acting Commander of the Korean Military Aid Group was in Tokyo. The steady amassing of 100,000 North Korean troops, 1,400 pieces of artillery, and 126 troops had not served as a warning signal of events to come.44 Somehow, the realistic formulation of American foreign policy had failed to accommodate reality. The United States planned its foreign policy around the supposed link between objective reality and realistic policy. The assumption that one follows from the other does not take into account the dynamics involved between the existing image and incoming information. Since information is processed by existing images, policy makers, in this case the State Department, only pay attention to the areas of agreement within the image framework and do not give real consideration to alternate policies that fall outside the framework.45 This is why the earlier cable from the Korean Ambassador was dismissed by the State Department, and why the Defense Department, preoccupied with global war, had no war plans outside of that context and as a result, no plans for the limited war that soon evolved.46 The failure to be

prepared for what actually transpired in Korea resulted from the failure of the United States' image to adequately reflect reality and was largely a conceptual failure.

The difficulty, of course, had been primarily conceptual. The war which the State Department (and everyone else) had not expected the Russians to start, at least until they had achieved a nuclear capability, had been World War III, not a satellite attack in Asia.\(^4^7\)

Within an individual analyst or decision maker, once an image is formed, it takes on an active role in his assessment of information. An analyst studying the Soviet Union is restricted in many ways. Any analysis of another country is always slightly out of date, since it is based on recent history rather than current events. This restriction of information is particularly acute to an analyst of the Soviet Union, due to its closed system, further limiting access to information. When the access to information is limited and when the data that is available is ambiguous, as when one is looking at a society that is not his own, the individual's image or model becomes

\[\ldots\] simultaneously more necessary and potentially more dangerous. There is an increased tendency to interpret the very data which would lead one to change one's model in such a way as to preserve that model. Without the model one could not say if change had taken place, but with the model, one is less likely to see the evidence for change.\(^4^8\)

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\(^4^8\) De Rivera, *Psychological Dimension*, p. 29.
Within an organization, the tendency for the perceptions in an organization to conform to one similar set of ideas fosters the same resiliency and distortion associated with an individual.\textsuperscript{49} In fact, since an organization is dependent on a chain of communication for its inflow of ambiguous and limited information, there are more points at which selective perception impacts on decisions. Thus, the complexity of reality is just as susceptible to selective perception in an organization while conformity may make an organization's image more resistant to change than an individual's, which is more subject to psychological differences. The State Department fitted the event that could have been interpreted as damaging to the image (the North Koreans are planning an attack) to reinforce the image (the Korean Ambassador is only trying to drum up support for more military aid). In such an organization, the resistance to a change in belief is likely to be overcome only by an event so unambiguous that different interpretations are not legitimate explanations. Short of instances of overt aggression, very few events at the international level are unambiguous. The complexities of the modern world and the ever present problem of analyzing across cultures, political systems, etc., gives existing images a powerful self-validation of reinforcement. Only

\textsuperscript{49}\textsuperscript{49} Deutsch, \textit{Preventing World War III}, p. 374.
the act of overt Korean aggression induced the State Department to change its belief structure. Even then, the State Department's first reaction was to check its original estimates of Soviet capabilities and to entertain the possibility that the Soviets were risking a global attack—thus attempting a last-ditch effort to preserve the original structure. The resiliency of existing images to change makes the link between images and behavior even more important.

The actions taken by the North Koreans necessitated the implementation of a new belief structure capable of accommodating the events. At the juncture where an old belief is shattered and a new one fashioned to replace it, the first impression of an event, as the initial attempt to grasp its structure, becomes extremely critical as it fashions, however loosely, predispositions through which information that follows is processed. President Truman's first impression of the North Korean attack was based on the remaining elements of the existing belief structure that were still supportable. He therefore immediately linked the North Korean action to the Soviet Union and feared that they might be attempting a global move earlier than anticipated. Precipitated by his first

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50 De Rivera, *Psychological Dimensions*, p. 29.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., p. 30.
perception of the invasion, Truman said he acted to "prevent a third world war and the terrible destruction it would bring to the civilized world." This perception was not shared by everyone within his administration. Owing to the nature of perceptions, three different individuals perceived the attack in three different ways.

President Truman believed that a nation did not become belligerent unless it thought its opponents too weak to fight (the "lesson" learned in World War II) and saw the attack as one similar to Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that the Soviet Union's more "logical" first move would be in Iran, and when news of the attack came, he saw it as a diversionary move taken before the real move in Iran. Kennan, believing as he did that the Soviets were "patient, cautious and yet unrelenting in their expansion," believed that the action by the North Koreans was a tentative thrust of a Soviet bayonet, probing for a weakness.

Whether because of his position as the final arbiter of foreign affairs or because his perception was superior to Kennan's in a political sense, Truman's perception

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54 De Rivera, Psychological Dimensions, p. 29.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
predominated over the others. The events that followed after the North Korean attack indicate a powerful link between his newly crystallizing image and the actual behavior response of the United States. In light of the earlier removal of U.S. troops from Korea and the low strategic significance attributed to Korea in the original global context, expert opinion from Washington "insiders" and Allied elites immediately following news of the attack was almost unanimous in their opinion that the United States would not act to resist the invasion. However, Truman's new perception, necessitated by the shattering of the old, viewed the invasion in a context that made armed resistance imperative. Expert opinion, an outgrowth of the dominant original belief structure of the administration, was proven wrong. The reality of the Soviets' determination to expand in a manner similar to Hitler is not the determining element (and there is considerable doubt that this is what the Soviets expressly intended in Korea; doubt even to their control of the invasion). If Truman perceived this to be so, and he wields the political


58 De Rivera notes evidence gathered by a North Korean defector of a key North Korean leader overestimating the degree of popular support in the South for a Communist invasion from the North, and a Polish advisor's statements to the effect that the Russian advisors even tried to prevent the invasion.
clout necessary to act on his perception, the United States will likely resist the expansion.

Containment was again pushed to the forefront of United States foreign policy. This time it was being expanded to encompass an area previously designated of little geopolitical significance. The logic of mechanism, freed by an ambiguous international environment, pushed the United States to expand containment to fill current needs. The logic of "X"—its universal language, its Newtonian imagery, its enlargement of realism—combined to create a momentum of its own, a momentum Kennan became acutely and painfully aware of later, as the United States used containment to maintain hemispheric solidarity.\(^5\)

Nothing is more illustrative of the power and resiliency of mechanistic logic than is George Kennan himself. Kennan was critical of the United States' establishment of NATO for reasons central to this paper's critique of containment. Kennan notes, "There is no logical stopping point in the development of a system of anti-Russian alliances until that system has circled the globe and embraced all the non-communist countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa."\(^6\) Significantly, Kennan himself was not immune

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\(^5\)Kennan, Memoirs.

to this momentum. In 1950 he endorsed the decision to aid South Korea because of the psychological effect its collapse would have on the West. Only a few years earlier, he had been an ardent supporter of realistic limits based on strategic significance and had advocated a quick withdrawal of all U.S. troops, "Since the territory is not of decisive strategic importance to us, our main task is to extricate ourselves without too great a loss of prestige."\(^1\)

The momentum of containment pushed Kennan, an avowed realist, to slide from the belief that a balance of power could be maintained in a few strategic areas to a conviction that the balance could be maintained only by a massive application of force in a peripheral area!\(^2\)

The strong logical and emotional pull of Truman's perception to "prevent a third world war" by containing Soviet aggression in Korea made any geopolitical limits and capability ceilings highly elastic. In April, 1950, just prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, a sudden re-evaluation of Soviet capabilities warranted by their explosion of an atomic bomb and the "fall" of China initiated the Truman administration to shift from an absolute ceiling of 15 billion dollars, (imposed in 1947) based

\(^1\)U.S. Department of State, Resume of World Situation by George F. Kennan, Policy Planning Staff 13 (1947) as cited in Etzold, Containment, p. 96.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 36.
on the assumption that the economy could stand only a fixed amount of government expenditures, to the formulation of NSC-68, which lifted the ceiling and called for much greater defense spending. The fundamental realist assumption that the United States lacked the resources to sustain world-wide commitments was suddenly viewed as limiting rational choice, and NSC-68 was proposed as a more rational choice in light of new circumstances. Paradoxically, this new rational choice which maintained that military expenditures could be increased without adversely affecting the economy, led to a significant broadening of the conceived limits to U.S. resources and hence broadened the limits of containment. The answer to this paradox is that resource capacity is as much psychological as it is material; and an image that combines a strong emotional appeal with comprehensive logic is capable of destroying any preconceived limits intended to restrict its completion. Furthermore, as has been illustrated, the logic of containment is capable of such a momentum, as U.S. involvement, in Korea, illustrates. For the logic of containment, if broadened to Korea, can just as easily be broadened to other geographic areas in order to facilitate

63 De Rivera, Psychological Dimension, p. 14.
64 Ibid.
65 Etzold and Gaddis, Containment, pp. 385-442.
the containment effort in Korea itself. The United States decision to defend Formosa as a contingency to the containment of the Soviets broadened the scope of containment further. The Joint Chiefs of Staff originally opposed the defense of Formosa on the ground that the effort would be beyond American capacities. However, after Truman implicated the Chinese in the Korean attack by attributing it to a "Communist" action, he also justified the interposition of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in Formosa.\footnote{Ibid.}

The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances, the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to the United States Forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area.\footnote{Department of State Press Release, 1950, as cited in De Rivera, Psychological Dimension, p. 29.}

What before seemed undesirable now seemed quite reasonable. In this instance, containment was expanded by including a peripherally related area to the containment effort in Korea. Once again, the logic of such an approach is unlimited since peripherally related areas designate other peripheries, etc. By linking Formosa to Korea, our image could now include Formosa in the task of containment. Containment has a momentum of its own, making
possible decisions that were impossible before and rendering impossible what was yesterday's common sense. De Rivera capsulizes the chain of events that flowed from this momentum,

Thus in June the United States avowed sincerely that its only purpose was to throw the invaders out of South Korea. By August, the United States had declared that it must destroy the North Korean Army. By September, the announced policy of the United States was to unify all of Korea. In June, the President's advisors were reluctant to send planes across the 38th parallel. In August, in spite of the possibility of Chinese intervention, only one man opposed sending infantry across the parallel.68

The foregoing has been a criticism of the realist contention that objective law and objective assessments of national interest are guiding policy makers' thoughts and behaviors. It has also focused on the conceptual dichotomy of containment as the logic of mechanism fights for sway with the limits of realism. A new element has also been introduced, the resistance to a change in belief; a resistance where the image is preserved even in the face of evidence to the contrary. In an environment where information is necessarily limited and events often ambiguous and complex, once an image is operable and information is being processed through it, that information is likely to be conformed to fit the image. Thus, the image is not a passive structure, but rather a dynamic one; shaping,

68De Rivera, Psychological Dimension, p. 89.
distorting, and ignoring information in a manner consistent with the image. Instead of clearly definable objective limits, East-West relations is conducted within extremely elastic limits in which many legitimate interpretations to an event are possible. As a result, the logical momentum of containment is freed to stretch geopolitical limits to new peripheral areas while broadening budgetary constraints and raising capability ceilings to new heights. Because of its inherent logic and the complex, ambiguous international context it is employed in, the policy of containment is not only illustrative of the lack of identifiable objective limits, but of the predominance the universal logic has over limitations in such an environment. In such an environment, the contradiction within the structure of containment between the logic of mechanism and realist limits not only favors the logic but, once in place, reinforces it as well.
CHAPTER IV

RATIONALITY VS. IRRATIONALITY

In the preceding chapters it has been argued that mechanism places a premium on rationality throughout the process in which the dysfunctional mechanism is engineered by man into a functional order. Furthermore, as realism relies on the mechanistic model, it also relies on the reasonableness of statesmen, or in Morgenthau's words, on the "extraordinary moral and intellectual qualities" of diplomats.¹ But even more than that, Morgenthau utilizes the premise of rationality as a "rational outline," or as an approach through which the "facts" of foreign policy are made "meaningful."² He suggests that without this "map," not only would the meaning of international relations be lost, but a theory of politics would not be possible.³

His assumption will be questioned on two grounds. The first is that the primary criterion for a premise about human behavior should not be its theoretical usefulness,

²Ibid., p. 5.
³Ibid.
but rather its empirical soundness. A premise that assumes rationality, is theoretically more useful in that the logical argument of the theory is not made assailable to human frailties. And there is little to quarrel over realism's progression from deterministic premise to deterministic conclusion. However, if the premise of rationality is not valid, the conclusion, however logical, is invalid as well. This chapter will present empirical evidence that the assumption of rationality is invalid, and more importantly, that it obscures more than it reveals about international relations, especially in the context of the East-West conflict.

The assumption that in order to construct an intelligible theory, a premise of human rationality must be included is not warranted. There is adequate social-psychological evidence to suggest that policy makers not only behave irrationally, but that the psychological factors and the environmental conditions that are conducive to irrationality are predictable, empirically testable, and hence, give equal "meaning" to international relations.

The philosophical foundation of realism and containment is found in this quotation from *Politics Among Nations*, Realism [believes] in the possibility of distinguishing in politics between truth and opinion—between what is true objectively and rationally, supported by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only a subjective judgment, divorced
from the facts as they are and informed by prejudice and wishful thinking.\textsuperscript{4}

In Chapter II, the philosophical predisposition to utilize them in tandem was addressed. Objective law strongly implies the existence of rational man if it is to be discovered and used as a basis for society. Webster's definition of "objective" includes the utility of a rational premise, "expressing or including the use of facts without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices."\textsuperscript{5}

A rational policy maker is presumed to accurately assess objective reality and process that evidence without distortion or prejudice, but with reason. Coupled with the theoretical utility of such a premise, Morgenthau is able to support the statement that, "Statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and the evidence of history bears that assumption out."\textsuperscript{6} In order to discern how much this statement actually reveals about the East-West conflict, this chapter will complement Morgenthau's assertion with an alternate perspective: that statesmen may think and act in terms of psychologically motivated patterns of irrationality under conditions of stress, and

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 4

\textsuperscript{5}Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, unabridged (Springfield, Mass., 1981).

\textsuperscript{6}Morgenthau, Politics, p. 5.
the evidence of the East-West conflict bears that assumption out.

In the first three chapters, an attempt was made to separate the analysis of the conditions of international ambiguity from inner psychological processes. The third chapter linked the logic of containment to the practice of containment, and postulated why the ambiguous conditions of modern international relations selects for the logic over the limits, largely independent of purely psychological tendencies of irrationality. This chapter, in following Morgenthau's philosophical linkage of objective reality and rationality, will explore the linkage of subjective perceptions to irrationality. If policy makers cannot know objective reality, what effect does this have on their ability to be rational?

A social-psychological approach is more suitable to the study of international relations than psychology because individual behavior is viewed in its societal and organizational context. A social-psychological approach takes account of the institutional processes that shape the behavior of individual actors and are in turn shaped by it.7 Utilizing this approach and working from the premise of Chapter III, that policy makers fashion images based on

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their perception of the essential structure of an object or event, it is necessary to confine that image to its psychological element.

Images differ not only in terms of the specific elements they contain, but also in terms of the way in which the specific elements relate to each other--this being their cognitive structure.\(^8\) This is not meant to imply that the cognitive structure of an image is necessarily highly consistent or well defined. In the sense that there is some organized structure, however, there is a tendency to relate the different elements of the object to each other and create a more efficient structure.\(^9\) The specific contents of an image are likely to differ from one individual to another, but "structure" is used here to describe the cognitive structure in which different contents may be imbedded but which is applicable to all images and individuals regardless of the specific image content.

The structure of an image can be thought of in terms of three elements: (1) the cognitive attributes of its object; (2) the effective or evaluative attributes of its object; and (3) the actions or responses deemed appropriate to the assessment of attributes.\(^10\) The clear cut distinction

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\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid., p. 72.
among the different elements is misleading, however, as the three elements cannot be separated out empirically. William Scott notes that, "Beliefs about nations, feelings towards them, and notions of what ought to be done in relation to them are probably closely intertwined in the typical image structure."\(^{11}\) Not only are the different elements of an image difficult to separate empirically, but they tend to organize themselves into a balanced and supportive relationship.

The concept of "cognitive balance" holds that basic to any image, besides lending meaning to a cognized object, an affective or evaluative response to the object is part of the image as well. Cognitive balance is the psychological tendency to bring the two elements into a balance.\(^{12}\) Scott says,

> There is considerable evidence, at both psychological and cultural levels of analysis, for a tendency towards correspondence among these image components. Favorable characteristics tend to be attributed to liked nations and unfavorable characteristics to disliked nations.\(^{13}\)

A related concept, "cognitive dissonance," is the same tendency working in an obverse manner,

\(^{11}\) Ibid.


\(^{13}\) Scott, *Psychological Correlates*, p. 100.
The person who recognizes that his images are internally inconsistent, finding his situation psychologically uncomfortable, will try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance by actively avoiding situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.\(^4\)

In both cases, intra-image consistency and balance is actively pursued in response to an inner drive. This general tendency is the major item of agreement between the groundbreaking models of consistency: Heider (1946, 1958), Osgood (1955, 1962), Tannenbaum (1955), Cartwright and Harary (1956), Newcomb (1953), M. J. Rosenberg (1956, 1960), and Festinger (1957).

For our purposes, Charles Osgood's approach is best suited, as it combines the condition of stress to the concept of cognitive balance and examines their effect on the formulation and maintenance of images. This focus of human nature under conditions of stress is assumed to be generally applicable to the conditions under which the East-West conflict has operated since World War II.

Charles Osgood used the term "Neanderthal mentality" in order to connote our reliance on "primitive" emotional defense mechanism under conditions of stress.\(^5\)


examines the dynamics of thinking under stress and finds an alarming tendency to push every group conflict towards annihilation; a tendency Osgood terms "psycho-logic."  

The push behind psycho-logic is the "logic" of cognitive balance. That logic connects the person who is doing the perceiving (P), some other person (O), and some action, person, or object (X) that is connected with O in P's mind, in a balanced triangle--P likes O, P likes X, and O likes X.  

Psycho-logic forms this triangle by substituting emotional consistency for rational consistency.  

Psycho-logic is propelled by the Neanderthal in all people that strives to force a complicated world into an oversimplified model. This frequently manifests itself in a tendency to associate emotional concepts of good people, for instance (our parents, our leaders, our friends), with the objects in the environment that are emotionally valuable to us (America, God, and Freedom). Osgood draws this parallel,

> It is emotionally consistent for things and people we like to be associated favorably with each other (our friends should love America), and also for things and people we dislike to be associated favorably with each other (it "feels right" for

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16 Ibid., pp. 26-30.


18 Ibid.
Communism to be called slavery); but it is not emotionally consistent for people we dislike to be favorably associated with things we like... the people we dislike should be against the things we like and vice versa (so it should be that Communists hate Freedom).

Psycho-logic achieves a cognitive balance within an image by substituting emotional consistency between the cognitive and evaluative elements of the image for rational consistency which may be lacking.20

Under the constraints of a personal relationship, the corrective process of reality-testing can modify psycho-logic because the situation is relatively unambiguous and actual personal contact with the individual is possible. The greater ambiguity of East-West relations and the limited level of personal contact inhibits reality testing, and hence, the ability to restrain psycho-logic from operating. As the East-West conflict exists between diverse cultures, political systems, and histories, and since the international environment in which the conflict is waged grows more complex with time, a great many international situations and objects are ambiguous. The application of reality testing is further exacerbated by the East-West conflict owing in a large part to the closed system of government in the Soviet Union. This creates an even greater lag time between an event (succession of

20Ibid.
power, leadership maneuvering, shift of policy) and the information gleaned about an event than would otherwise be the case.

The same conditions which limit the accurate perception of objective reality limit the degree to which rational consistency can be applied in the image to satisfy the psychological pull of balance. The level of East-West relations restricts the formation and operation of rationally consistent images because the degree of reality testing in that context is limited, and the rational images psychologically unsatisfying. As a result, the image balances itself by conforming to its emotional consistency. The evaluative polarity of good vs. bad becomes the emotional consistency that operates in psycho-logic. Once the fundamental polarity between "we" and "they," "friend" and "enemy," "good" and "bad" is established, the image becomes highly resilient to change. The interpretation of incoming information is distorted by the "Bogey Man" conception of the adversary, serving to justify any aggression on our part while nullifying any non-aggressive actions by the opponent. One effect is to push both sides down the reciprocal paths of self-delusion. An illustration of this is the self-delusion practiced by both sides with

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21 Ibid., p. 28.

22 Ibid., pp. 28-29.
respect to their current ability to command events in the world. The rise of nationalization since World War II has continually pressed for structural change in the world even as the superpowers solidified their bipolar relationship during the Cold War. The determined quest by smaller states for a non-ideological identity and freedom of decision not tied to hemispheric solidarity has led to a growing opposition to the United States in the West, growing opposition to the Soviet Union in the Eastern Bloc, and growing opposition to both in the Third World. But the momentum of psycho-logic is difficult to halt. The United States and the Soviet Union continue to march down reciprocal paths of delusion, clinging to habits of thought and action utilized during the height of the Cold War but inappropriate for the changing world. Structural changes in the international environment press the two adversaries to acknowledge the erosion of their ability to command events, and their ability to maintain spheres of influence; yet the United States has directly intervened to various degrees in Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Vietnam while the Soviets have sought to maintain hegemony in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Afghanistan.

24Ibid.
Another reciprocal effect of psycho-logic is the setting up of double standards of morality: The same behavior is moral if WE do it but immoral if THEY do it. Psycho-logic distorts perception so that different motives are attributed to WE as opposed to THEY in the context of identical behavior. 25 Witness the moral indignation engendered by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968: Secretary of State Dean Rusk said the invasion sent "a shock wave of indignation and apprehension around the world . . . ." 26 President Johnson said, "The tragic news from Czechoslovakia shocks the conscience of the world." 27 Soon to become president Nixon similarly described the Soviet action as "an outrage against the conscience of the world . . . ." 28 Such was the moral fervor with which WE treated the immoral action of THEY. The Soviet rationalization of the invasion, the "Brezhnev Doctrine," was similarly greeted in the United States. This "arbitrary" doctrine was believed to be conducive to unpredictability and instability in international relations. Harland Cleveland, then the U.S. permanent


representative to NATO, displayed the selective blindness of the double standard with his statement, "The disturbing fact is that we do not really know what the Soviet leaders have in mind when they advance their new principles . . . " and consequently, "Soviet behavior must now be seen to be less predictable." These "new" principles of the Brezhnev doctrine so rigorously condemned by the U.S. are outlined in a speech made by Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko at the U.N. Assembly,

The countries of the socialist commonwealth have their own vital interests . . . including those of safeguarding their mutual security and their own socialist principles. . . . This commonwealth constitutes an inseparable entity cemented by unbreakable ties such as history has never known. . . . The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have on many occasions warned those who are tempted to roll back the socialist commonwealth to snatch at least one link from it, that we will neither tolerate nor allow that to happen.

From the United States' perspective, this arbitrary doctrine of regional hegemony merely confirmed its belief in the immoral and unpredictable motives of THEY; forgotten were the identical motives used by the United States to rationalize the military intervention in the Dominican Republic only three years earlier.


The obverse of the double standard of morality is apparent in the Soviets' indignation over the United States action in the Dominican Republic in 1965. N. T. Fedorenko, who presented the official Soviet response, displays here the psycho-logic fervour later displayed by officials of the U.S. government, "Such an act of undisguised arbitrariness is a cynical violation of the elementary norms of international law ..." Fedorenko even advanced a theory of U.S. motivation which previews the later U.S. view of Soviet motives in Czechoslovakia, because of their object poverty in the sphere of ideology ... they have nothing with which to counter advanced ideas and a progressive outlook; in their rage and frenzy, they rush to take up arms and try by but brute force to put down any people which is trying to achieve independence. Again, the state of affairs feared by both, uncertainty, was allegedly propagated by such actions. Fedorenko filled out the double standard by stating his fear that as long as the U.S. "in its hysteria ..." asserts, "that democracy can be preserved only at the point of its soldier's bayonets ..." and its policies are set by "murderous," "irrational," "reckless" imperialists who are, "obsessed with plots and see ghosts, mysteries, and conspiracies ..."

31 Franck and Weisband, Word Politics, pp. 97-98.
a state of international instability will exist in response to the United States' "frenzied anti-communist hysteria . . . "33

As if the reciprocal path of self-delusion and the operation of double standards of morality needed to be charted any clearer, the verbalization of the "Johnson Doctrine" previews the rationale employed in the Brezhnev Doctrine in 1968. In a statement on May 2, 1965, President Johnson previewed the motive, content, and rationalization of action later employed by the Soviets, "Our goal, in keeping with the great principles of the Inter-American system, is to help prevent another Communist state in this hemisphere."34 And in light of the "international conspiracy from which the United States servicemen have rescued the [Dominican] people," he verbalized the hemispheric thrust of the Johnson Doctrine, " . . . American nations cannot, must not, and will not permit the establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere."35

In a relationship where conflict and stress is the norm, and the operation of psycho-logic is largely unrestrained,

33Ibid., p. 13.
this ironic reciprocal behavior is common. The term "mirror image" aptly captures the essence of this phenomenon. The good-bad emotionally consistent image propagated by psycho-logic effectively lowers a pane of reflecting glass between the two, and one becomes a mirror image of the other. Each side effectively "mirrors" the attitudes and perceptions of the other. Each side blames the other for the mutually aggressive relationship. Each sees the other as untrustworthy and not sincerely desirous of peace; each sees the other as warlike but itself as peace-loving. But more importantly, each side is equally constrained in its capacity to engage in a reality testing operation by its international level of interaction and less inclined to do so once the black-and-white image is in place.

The reciprocal behavioral phenomenon, the mirror image, stems from the polarization of the Soviet Union's image of the United States and the United States' image of the Soviet Union into respective black-and-white images. The black-and-white image represents psycho-logic at its extreme. This extreme image is no more inevitable than the logic of mechanism, and yet certain identifiable tendencies found in the East-West conflict illicit a powerful momentum that strains toward polarization and universality.

Ralph K. White has identified three elements that operated in the Vietnam War to create and sustain the
reciprocal use of black-and-white images. He analyzes three cognitive distortion devices that not only strain toward a black-and-white image but seemed to operate as a mirror image in the Vietnam War. White draws a strong relationship between the basic image of the adversary and the employment of irrational thinking by linking the origination and support of the two central beliefs of the conflict held by the United States to the operation of cognitive distortion.

One central belief held by the United States was that the North Vietnamese had committed unequivocal aggression against their South Vietnamese neighbors. The second was that the United States must resist their aggression in order to avoid appeasement and to deter further Communist aggression. White, Nobody Wanted War, p. 155. President Johnson summed up both themes which were to recur throughout the U.S. involvement,

The first reality is that North Vietnam has attacked the independent nation of South Vietnam. Its object is total conquest . . . let no one think for a moment that retreat from Vietnam would bring an end to the conflict. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another. The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. Nixon called it "naked aggression" and conjured up the familiar analogy of Hitler and Munich. White, Nobody Wanted War, p. 155.

Ibid., pp. 155-156.
assumptions were regarded by the United States as obvious and self-evident. However, the North Vietnamese and the Soviet Union generally regarded the opposite assumption as equally self-evident. The result, each side blames the other for the mutually aggressive relationship. Each side sees the other as warlike but itself as peace-loving and denounces the other's mirror image as fantastic. Each side "talks past each other." Three cognitive defenses, the diabolical enemy image, the virile self-image, and the moral self-image, coalesce into a reciprocal polarized black-and-white picture of the conflict.

The "diabolical enemy" image is a reaction to perceived aggression; aggression that is perceived as the evil of war and the evil of one country imposing its will upon another. White conducts a modest scale value-analysis of four North Vietnamese and Soviet statements and two statements made by President Johnson and Secretary McNamara to test the existence of this image. His analysis reveals the depth of the black and white picture by finding that out of three hundred and thirty-seven "communist" characterizations of their enemy, three hundred and thirty-seven were in terms of evil rather than good. The corresponding figure for the United States was one hundred twenty-seven

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39 Ibid., p. 208.
40 Ibid., p. 88.
The diabolical enemy image can operate reciprocally because, depending upon the perspective, time frame, and point of reference, the definition of aggression is a wholly subjective operation. Two major points of contention over the definition of aggression existed between the adversaries in Vietnam: the boundary line definition and the first use of force definition. In Korea, the 38th parallel was the established boundary line, and in Vietnam it was the 17th parallel, both of them regarded by the United States as clear and well established. Therefore, since there are North Vietnamese fighting south of that line, the United States assumes that North Vietnam has committed aggression. On the other hand, since the North Vietnamese and the Soviets regard the shoreline of South Vietnam as the proper boundary, the U.S. landing of troops there was an act of aggression. Who is the aggressor?

Even more prolific, in prolonged conflicts as well as wars, is the first use of force definition of aggression. The United States version usually begins with the Viet Cong campaign of assassination in 1957. In this version, North Vietnam declared war against the South Vietnamese government in 1957 and has been intervening more openly and

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41 Ibid., p. 89.
42 Ibid., p. 165.
on a larger scale since then to the culmination of overt Soviet and Chinese support. In this version, the United States did not use any actual force until 1965.\footnote{Ibid., p. 166.} The "communist" version is much different. The conquering of Vietnam by the French was perceived as the first aggressive act of white men from overseas. In the war of liberation (1946-54), the French with the aid of the United States tried to reconquer the country. Since 1954, the U.S. had escalated its massive amount of economic and military aid to a Diem government that has turned against "the people" in a brutal fashion, thus precipitating the reaction of the Viet Cong in 1957.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 166-167.} Who is the aggressor? The kernel of truth you choose will dictate who is the diabolical enemy. The subjectiveness of such a choice gives credence to the possibility that both adversaries' images may be genuine, and that their image is simply not propaganda as is frequently asserted. The virile self-image of the United States was connoted with action images of "clobbering the North" or "breaking the back" of the Viet Cong. It is representative of the national self-image at the time of impending war, where the recurrent theme is not "noble" but "virile."\footnote{Ibid., p. 92.} The tenacity of the Viet Cong through twenty-five years of warfare suggests that their virile self-image
was quite genuine. Verbally it is expressed thusly—
"Naturally the criminal actions of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys aroused hatred throughout Vietnam and gave rise to a wave of boiling anger throughout the world."  
The inability of heavy U.S. bombings in the North to bring them to the bargaining table as the result of "punishment" is an ultimate testimony to the strengthening qualities such actions and images can have. Closely related is the desire for prestige, and most applicably for the East-West conflict, fear of losing prestige. Morgenthau himself notes the motivating force of prestige leading to intervention, "The critical observer is struck by the motivating force which considerations of prestige exert both in Washington and Moscow."  

The moral self-image operates by conceptualizing one's motives as wholly good and righteous. As it operated in the Vietnamese conflict, the value system by which the United States judged itself was mirrored by the other side. That is, both East and West regarded peacefulness, respect for the independence of other nations, patriotism, loyalty to allies, social justice, truthfulness, and humanity as

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46 Ibid., p. 94.  
common values. As the obverse side of the diabolical enemy image, it distorts by denying, ignoring, or interpreting in terms of one's own frame of reference the moral motives of one's own actions. The value analysis conducted earlier shows that the white side is every bit as purely white as the black side is purely black: among the 287 evaluative references to the self by the communists, 287 were positive, while 217 of 220 self-references made by Johnson and McNamara were positive.

These three images are emotionally consistent of the black-and-white image they make up. They predominate over rational images because the Neanderthal mentality clings to his restricted world in an attempt to avoid uncertainty by restricting himself to emotionally pleasant facts. To admit the possibility of bias in his image of THEM is to shake the very foundation of his world view. As psycho-logic substitutes emotional consistency for rational consistency, a fundamental polarity develops. This universal logic not only presses for a black-and-white image, but once the image is in place on both sides, a momentum of self-confirmation is set in motion where each side begins to behave in a manner which increasingly fulfills the expectations of the other.

48 White, Nobody Wanted War, p. 66.
49 Ibid., pp. 98-99.
For many years psychiatrists expected patients at mental hospitals to be violent and unmanageable, in keeping with their preconception of unstable behavior, placing them in isolation rooms, locking them in chains, and wrapping them in straitjackets. In response, the patients fulfilled these expectations and acted in a violent and unmanageable fashion. When the psychiatrists changed their "prophecy" and expected the patients to be able to control themselves, the patients promptly responded with behavior that fulfilled these expectations.50 This is the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Leaders of the United States have similarly held a "prophecy" of suspicion with regard to any moratorium on nuclear tests. As "cheaters" and "liars," the Soviets are assumed likely to conduct clandestine nuclear tests.51 In 1959, the Eisenhower administration sent a group of strategic experts to Geneva for nuclear testing negotiations with the Soviet Union. One of those "experts," Dr. Hans Bethe, participated in the initial nuclear testing negotiations with the Soviets. He reports that the experts' tendencies to expect trickery from the Soviets led them to consuming most of their time and energy on the discovery of technical


"loopholes" in the Soviet proposal, thus effectively undermining any trust-forming prospects before they were allowed to emerge. Not surprisingly, these experts did discover such a loophole; it seems that if the Soviets could dig a hole big enough, they could detonate underground explosives without being detected! Dr. Bethe recounts the episode,

I had the dubious honor of presenting the theory of the big hole to the Russians in Geneva in November, 1959. I felt deeply embarrassed in so doing because it implied that we considered the Russians capable of cheating on a massive scale. . . . The Russians seemed stunned by the theory of the big hole. In private, they took Americans to task for having spent the last year inventing methods to cheat on a nuclear test cessation agreement. Officially, they spent considerable effort in trying to disprove the theory of the big hole. This is not the reaction of a country that is bent on cheating.52

A chain of misperception and irrationality gives a cognitive balance to East-West relations: Psychol-ogical emotional consistency is facilitated by an environment where reality testing methods are difficult to fully employ; the black-and-white emotionally consistent image frequently polarizes and crystalizes into a mirror image phenomenon; this image, in turn, provides the basis for a prophecy of expected behavior that is self-confirming, as each side responds to predicted aggressive behavior with its own aggressive actions that create the behavior so prophesized.

52Ibid.
It is crucial that the dynamic element of irrationality be appreciated. Irrational behavior is constructed, on the original response to cognitive balance. It is not inevitable nor determinitive that the psychological tendency to seek inner balance lead to the ultimate irrationality of the self-fulfilling prophecy. However, a chain of irrationality may be fashioned one link at a time, as psycho-logic operates to simplify, distort, ignore, and polarize at each link, making it easier and logical to add another irrational link. As the polarization process grows and the black-and-white image solidifies into a mirror image of the conflict, the emotional stress to which psycho-logic originally responded is apt to increase; and a momentum of irrationality is produced. Beyond some optimal level (at which behavior is maximally flexible and creative), further increases in tension reduce the human capacity for selecting among alternatives and increases a reliance on habitual responses.53 Under an emotional strain, i.e. conflict, time spans narrow to the present moment and perception orders things in terms of the most probable expectations, making behavior more predictable or stereotyped.54 Paradoxically, under heightened levels of tension, the greater the urgency

54 Ibid., p. 32.
for a novel solution to a problem, the less likely is one to be found.

Cognitive stereotyping reduces the capacity to solve problems by inhibiting creative and imaginative impulses and redirecting energies down the beaten path of habit. Anthropological evidence warns against following in the footsteps of societies who blindly adhered to once realistic practices, only to commit suicide in the process. Realism's adherence to a mechanistic solution requires the establishment of a balance of power which theoretically holds the key to a stable and balanced relationship. Is a mechanistic solution realistic today, or is it a form of stereotyping, attempting to impose what was once feasible to conditions which require a more creative and imaginative solution? Based on once realistic practices when international relations was conducted with the simplicity and ease of an aristocratic game, is a contemporary balancing under different conditions and different constraints feasible?

Under current conditions, a focus restricted to the assessment of the power capabilities of the adversary inhibits the ability of a "response" allegedly made in a purely reactive and defensive manner to satisfy the requirement of balance, precipitating instead a counter reaction

\[55\] Ibid.
of an equal or greater magnitude. But the United States' mechanistic bias runs deep, as evidenced by the fact that it still correlates bigger and better weapons with more security, even in the nuclear age. In Vietnam, by virtue of its quantitative superiority in military power, the United States continued to achieve quantitative "victories" over the Viet Cong in terms of men killed and battles won, throughout the duration of a war that was slowly being lost. Containment, as a policy of reaction, has taken on the qualities of an arms race, by propagating spheres of influence. As such, containment increases the instances of conflict and enlarges it, by following its own logic that every corner of the earth is within the defensible security interests of the United States. If realism is a product of cognitive stereotyping, is it realistic to practice the traditional rites of balance of power in an age that renders them useless at best and suicidal at worst?

"Possibilism" is another cognitive defense more prone to operate under conditions of tension and stress. For a long time, psychologists have been making a correlation between how confidently people expect something to happen and how strongly they wish or fear it would happen. In other words, if the stakes in the conflict are perceived

56 Ibid., p. 20.
as escalating, a zero-sum game orientation to the conflict is encouraged. Under such conditions, the stakes become paramount, and the game, which should be played in response to the "odds," is played under possibilistic patterns of thinking. "Possibilism" is an irrational tendency operated out of fear or strong desire and can originate from many sources particularly related to the East-West conflict. The impact of possibilism on the East-West conflict is probably most visible in the perception of threat.

Threats are generally inferred from two kinds of subjective "evidence": evidence of capability and evidence of intent. A fundamental premise of realism is that there is a causal relationship between the two; that intent can be inferred from capability. Since capability (power) is presumed to be definable in some sense, the task for policy makers becomes one of accurately assessing their nation's power, their power in relation to another nation's power, and the international relationship of power—the balance of power. Morgenthau recognizes the "precariousness" of such a task but nevertheless places international stability in the hands of the "extraordinary moral and intellectual qualities that all the leading participants

must possess." The assessment of capability is so paramount to stability that Morgenthau states,

A mistake in the evaluation of one of the elements of natural power, made by one or the other of the leading statesmen, may spell the difference between peace and war. So may accident spoiling a plan or a power calculation.

Psychological evidence suggests that instead of a cause and effect relationship between capability and threat, the perception of a threat is dependent on both capability assessments and assessments of intent. Singer has proposed a rough formulation that suggests why the British, who possess a formidable military capability, are not perceived by the United States as a threat:

\[ \text{Threat - Perception} = \text{Estimated Capability} \times \text{Estimated Intent}. \]

Threat perception, like any perception, is a psychological process where "evidence" of capability and intent is processed through images that selectively assess the information by the criteria of the image.

Dean Pruitt makes two generalizations about images and images not yet completely formed (predispositions) and their relationship to the "evidence" perceived: (1) the stronger the predisposition, the more influence it will have on what is inferred; (2) the weaker or more ambiguous the evidence,

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58 Morgenthau, Politics, p. 569.
59 Ibid.
60 Pruitt, "Definition of the Situation," p. 400.
the greater the influence of predisposition. Thus, a threat is inferred through the selective processing of evidence on the basis of an existing predisposition or image. Under conditions of expected dread (fear of communist expansion), the evidence from reality may be distorted by the image, or more likely, selectively weighted; evidence supporting the image is given a greater weight than it deserves and evidence contrary to the image is ignored or discounted. Possibilism is frequently a combination of the two in a mutually reinforcing relationship where the supportive evidence increases the resiliency of the image, which increases the predisposition to ignore further contrary evidence, which increases the level of threat perceived, which increases the level of fear and tension, which increases the use of possibilism, etc.

Many of the origins of possibilism are particularly related to the East-West conflict. The vague attitude of "distrust," where one nation is seen as basically hostile to the interests of one's own nation, may create a predisposition to perceive a threat from that nation. This general sense of distrust may be propagated by ideological

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid. Realism is premised on distrust, as national interests are assumed to be opposed to one another.
creeds that assert one nation's "basic" hostility to another. Predispositions to perceive threat may also arise from past experiences. Since the Neanderthal mentality part of a policy maker encourages him to interpret ambiguous stimuli in terms of things in the past, a threatening past experience may sensitize him to evidence suggesting that the experience is likely to recur. The threatening experiences that have occurred between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. hardly need elaborating, but from the Soviets' perspective, their acute experience in World War II and their long history of outside domination may account for what is often perceived in the West as ridiculous and unfounded fears of outside threat.

Another source of threat perception relates to the large organizational structures used today to conduct foreign policy. A product of the new environment is the supposedly rational practice of contingency planning which has a direct relationship to possibilism. A contingency planner's job is to deal in possibilities; to selectively assess evidence that his nation is threatened and ignore evidence suggesting otherwise. Presumably this provides the decision maker with a bottom line, or a "worst case scenario" from which he develops policies based on the future probability that the

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
the worst case will occur. If the worst case is nuclear war, or communist domination, such high stakes make it only a short psychological step from the assessment of one sided evidence to the conclusion that the nation is in danger. With the ambiguities of modern warfare, where does the policy maker draw the line between an acceptable margin for error and a dangerous imbalance? The very institutionalization of foreign policy may also encourage possibilism to flourish.\(^6\) The State Department and the Defense Department are two institutions designed for the express purpose of coping with threat. As institutions, they provide financial support, status, and a sense of personal identity to individuals associated with them. This vested interest in an institution designed to cope with threat may result in a predisposition to perceive threat.\(^7\) And, on a psychological basis, policy makers are likely to find it inconsistent to prepare for a threat that does not exist. When an institution is created to cope with a threat, policy makers are likely to try and bring reality in line with the purpose of the institution. This would have an especially debilitating impact on any change, any new situation of diminished threat, as the institutionalization of threat tied to one nation may not allow any alteration in that perception even if conditions warrant a change.

\(^{66}\)Ibid. \(^{67}\)Ibid.
These systematic distortions in the perception of evidence lead to possibilistic thinking. Possibilistic thinking is also likely to occur, like the other cognitive defenses, when the "evidence" of threat is generally ambiguous. The evidence may be inherently ambiguous, like evidence about intent, or it may be ambiguous because conditions of the relationship impair the ability to get reliable information about the other nation. Conditions that lead to ambiguous evidence are: (1) the smaller the number of highly placed people who know the other nation well; (2) the poorer the capacity to empathize with the other nation; and (3) the fewer the channels of communication with the other nation. These conditions at least partly resemble the conditions of the East-West conflict. In short, conditions for East-West relations are such that accurate perception is at a minimum and misperception at a maximum. Nothing is more illustrative of this than the expansion of containment from a probabilistic doctrine to a possibilistic policy.

Kennan's containment strategy is based on his analysis of probable Soviet intentions. Evidence of capability did have some impact on containment, but Soviet intentions served as his primary focus as evidenced by his emphasis

68 Ibid., p. 405.
on the "political personality of Soviet power." His analysis of that "personality" was premised on his belief that their political power "is the product of ideology and circumstances." The Soviets' chosen ideology, Kennan believed, dictated the method that their power aspirations were to be achieved through, and thus, dictated their intentions. He concludes,

It does not mean that they [Soviet Union] should be considered as embarked upon a do or die program to overthrow our society by a given date... The forces of progress can take their time in preparing the coup de grace... The promotion of premature, adventurist revolutionary projects abroad which might embarrass Soviet power in any way would be inexcusable, even a counter-revolutionary act. The cause of Socialism is the support and promotion of Soviet power as defined in Moscow.

To this ideological analysis, Kennan added his supportive analysis of their circumstances, which further substantiated in his mind, the Soviet's general patient, cautious but persistent intentions of achieving power, intentions which dictated the "long term, patient but firm and vigilant..." nature of containment.

Kennan perceived certain circumstances as limiting factors to the Soviets' absolute capabilities: the "terrible

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70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p. 96.
72 Ibid., p. 99.
cost of forced labor," the "tremendous toll of destruction, death, and human exhaustion from World War II," the "absolute limits to the physical and nervous strength of the people," "the previously spotty and uneven economic development," and the "neglect and abuse of Soviet agricultural consumer goods, housing, and transportation."\textsuperscript{73} Russian history further buttressed Kennan's assessment of Soviet intent,

\begin{quote}
Again, these precepts are fortified by the lessons of Russian history: of centuries of obscure battles between nomadic forces over the stretches of a vast unfortified plain. Here caution, circumspection, flexibility, and deception are the valuable qualities; and their values finds national appreciation in the Russian or the oriental mind.\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

This analysis is a powerful realist argument; the determinitive strength of ideology, power, and history all point to limited, cautious, and persistent, Soviet behavior. As an eloquent and comprehensive argument, it throws the weight of a conclusive realist analysis of objective reality behind it. Containment, designed to respond as a logically devised mechanism to combat Soviet expansion, is an equally powerful realist policy. The two operating in tandem should have been as sustainable an analysis and policy as realism could possibly create to meet the foreign policy needs of the United States.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p. 100. \hfill \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p. 98.
Possibilism destroyed Kennan's analysis because his argument, based on probable intent, was highly susceptible to ambiguous evidence to the contrary and the "Cold" conditions of East-West relations. Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia, Berlin, and Korea could be construed as an indication of the Soviet's more global intentions, and coupled with the "rational" imperative of the "worst case scenario," Kennan's probabilistic analysis quickly eroded. Furthermore, the shock of an unanticipated nuclear capability suddenly raised the stakes to mutual destruction and encouraged the more psychologically satisfying possibilistic scenarios to govern policy. It was much more satisfying for the United States to base strategy on Soviet capabilities and thus possibilities than intentions or probabilities. The result was a persistent overestimation of Soviet strength, and an equally persistent lack of enthusiasm for negotiations until the perceived strategic inadequacies had been remedied.\textsuperscript{75}

The premise of human rationality, either as a construct of human nature, or as a "map" by which facts are made fathomable, is inappropriate for the context in which it is applied. In fact, there are few contexts where such a premise could serve to obscure reality to such a degree. Especially in the East-West conflict, the rational premise

fails to account for empirically verifiable phenomenon; the mirror image, the self-fulfilling prophecy, the stereotyping of behavior, and the prevalence of possibilism. More than that, the assumption of rationality neither translates into the reality world of a policy maker nor offers him an insight into the essence of international relations.

The inner drive for cognitive balance is neither determinitive nor necessarily debilitating to rationality, in certain individuals and under certain conditions. However, evidence seems to suggest that certain individuals with the power to make foreign policy have been influenced by this tendency, and that it has impaired their ability to think and behave rationally. Conditions of ambiguity and conflict simply do not encourage rational consistency to predominate over emotional consistency. And, the dynamic quality of irrationality under these conditions as evidenced by the simple construction of an image, and in its more extreme form, the self-fulfilling prophecy, lends a momentum of self-perpetuation to irrational behavior.

The application of social psychological evidence to the East-West conflict does not make it less fathomable; it merely makes it less reasonable. There are still identifiable causes, predictable relationships, and elements of order, in the East-West conflict, but they are less determinitive, less rational and less supportive of
mechanism. Social-psychological order suggests a world view that repudiates the applicability of the mechanistic model to the analysis and explanation of international relations. The prevalence of the mirror-image in East-West relations is testimony to the impact these inner psychological processes have on human behavior at the international level, for it seems to operate even across the diverse cultures of East and West.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: THE COSTS OF MECHANISM

The cost of practicing realism is directly related to its mechanistic heritage, and on an international level, its costs clearly outweigh the benefits. This is so because international relations has transcended many of the conditions necessary to make realism feasible. Realism denies this because the mechanistic model is a closed system that does not evolve, change, or interact with the environment. Nevertheless, basic structural change has occurred, and realism's inability to cope with it can be attributed to the mechanistic model.

A mechanistic model of international relations orders reality in a manner that requires several assumptions to be made. The two key realist assumptions of objective reality and rational man have been addressed in chapters three and four for the remoteness of their applicability and their limitations as an insightful framework of international relations.

The next step is an analysis of the structurally determined costs associated with practicing East-West foreign policies on the basis of mechanism. Morgenthau assumes that the normative value of realism, as a prescription
for international relations, is substantial. In two short paragraphs in Politics, Morgenthau attempts to protect his theory from anticipated criticism: Is realism insightful or useful to policy makers if actual foreign policy does not and cannot live up to his theory? Since the preceding chapters raise this question as well, the normative utility of realism will be addressed here.

What are the costs of "making reality intelligible for theory"?¹ Does the normative value of realism preserve the theory in a world that shows little evidence for becoming "intelligible" for theoretical purposes? Does the assumption that foreign policy makers "think and act in terms of interest defined as power"² give other policy makers an insight into what is required of them to practice rational foreign policy? Is the assumption that "political realism considers a rational foreign policy to be a good foreign policy" valid?³

Morgenthau's analogy of the painted portrait and the photograph to the reality of international relations is that realism provides a level of understanding and insight capable of giving flesh to the photographic recording of surface reality. Realism presumably digs deeper,

² Ibid., p. 5. ³ Ibid., p. 8.
underneath the veneer of ideology and irrationality and paints a portrait which reflects the "human essence" of reality.\textsuperscript{4} The preceeding chapters have questioned the validity of the "essence" his portrait reveals. But even Morgenthau's evaluative twist to that analogy, "Political realism wants the photographic picture of the world to resemble as much as possible its painted portrait" suffers from the same inadequacies of his theory.\textsuperscript{5}

At the juncture where the mechanistic assumption of realism meets with reality, the costs of the mechanistic model are made apparent. The mechanistic concept of balance, for example, carries with it certain costs when applied to the international level. Morgenthau faces a dilemma; his ordering of the world into the mechanistic model necessitates a mechanistic relationship between the parts, and a mechanistic solution to any dysfunctions that might occur. His solution, balance of power, must be imposed upon the individual parts owing to their discrete, unmodifiable and inherently imbalanced relationship. An engineering process is dictated by the model, as only a functional unity between them is possible. This premise does give man control over his destiny. The mechanistic model is subject to control, and so, too, is the order of

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 7. \\
\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., p. 8.
international relations made subject to that same human control. Here is the dilemma: How is the engineering process accomplished on an international mechanism, if no independent engineer exists? If international relations is ordered mechanistically, how is the solution—balance—imposed by man on a level where he has only partial control?

Morgenthau is forced to compromise his model in a subtle but significant way. Owing to the inherent difficulty in applying a mechanistic solution to international relations, Morgenthau shifts the burden of the engineer to an international consensus.6 In Morgenthau's European state system, this consensus meant that "Whatever changes nations might seek in the status quo, they all had at least to recognize as unchangeable one factor, the existence of a pair of scales, the 'status quo' of the balance of power itself."7 With historical evidence, Morgenthau illustrates both the desirability of such a consensus and the possibility that such a consensus can be formed. But he does not explain how it is formed.

To practice realism, to see it work its balance, some method of transferring its benefits onto the international system is required. Morgenthau assumes the balance of

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6 Ibid., p. 222.
7 Ibid., pp. 221-222.
power that existed in the past was based on a consciously
formed consensus between the statesmen of each nation.
In other words they recognized what was true objectively,
"supported by evidence," and acted on that objective truth
rationally, "illuminated by reason." They were rational
enough to perceive the objective reality of their mechanistic
relationship ordered around separate "... interest
defined in terms of power," and rational enough to form
a consensus of limited interests and limited desires for
power to serve their collective interests of international
stability. Morgenthau infers this from his model. He
offers evidence only that these stable periods represented
certain structural conditions which encouraged more limited
aspirations to prevail as the norm. The conscious human
control, on which mechanism is based, is not identified nor
proven, only that under certain conditions, certain nation-
state behavior prevails. For application in the present,
in an age Morgenthau freely admits is not currently operat-
ing under a similar consensus, what does realism provide
the international system with to re-engineer a balance, to
actually control and manipulate the international relation-
ship of nation-states by conscious human will?

Morgenthau provides little, save for faith: leaving
the fate of the contemporary mechanism in the hands of the

9Ibid., p. 5. 10Ibid., p. 346.
"extraordinary moral and intellectual qualities that all the leading participants must possess."\textsuperscript{11} The preceding chapters have clearly demonstrated the failing of this proposition on both accounts. Policy makers, however "extraordinarily" gifted, can neither accurately assess objective reality, nor are they likely to act rationally enough to meet the requirements of mechanism in the contemporary age, "A mistake in the evaluation of one of the elements of national power . . . may spell the difference between peace and war."\textsuperscript{12}

One cost is basic: Unless a balance actually exists, there is little human action that can be undertaken to establish it save faith in the determinism of "balance" and the ultimate rationality all the leading statesmen must possess. Unless some fundamental element of the model is changed or altered, mechanism is difficult to apply. For the needs of 1947, George Kennan provided such an alteration: containment served as a policy of mechanism altered to the needs of foreign policy and allowed the assumption of human control to be more easily applied to international relations. Kennan's alteration of the mechanistic model does have certain costs. Kennan broadened the closed relationship between the parts to encompass interstate influence. "It

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 569.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
is entirely possible for the United States to influence by its actions the internal developments, both within Russia and throughout the international Communist movement . . . "\textsuperscript{13} Any alteration of this manner, however limited, opens up the mechanistic model to a contradiction: If the individual parts can affect each other through interaction at some level, the mechanistic model must allow any solution which reorders the mechanism into functional unity. Once limited to a consensus, mechanism now encompasses action by one part, and that one part's ability to influence functionalism. This opening up of the mechanistic model also opens up the choices available to United States policy makers. In order for the "correct" (realistic) choice to be made, a premium is again placed on the assumptions of objective reality and rationality. If the United States can "force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years,"\textsuperscript{14} that level of control places a heavy responsibility on the objectivity and rationality of its foreign policy. Thus containment is a contradiction; the mechanistic model is opened up to human control, but the type of human control is less definable. Containment opens

\textsuperscript{13}George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950 (Chicago, 1951), p. 82.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 105.
up a spectrum of policies ranging from isolation to "liberation," as long as both serve to re-engineer the dysfunctional part into unity with the others.

Kennan's particular conception of the limits and rational employment of containment is distinguishable from others only in the degree of control designated to the United States. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' "liberation" policy is not an aberration of mechanism; it is simply another individual's assessment of the United States' degree of control. Once Kennan grants control, nothing in the mechanistic model serves to limit itself or make itself politically feasible. In fact, Dulles' universal application is more faithful to the logic of mechanism than a limited application of containment.

Kennan sought to "contain" containment through political restraints on the abilities of the container; the limits of budgetary ceilings and geopolitical logistics serve as a barrier to the possibilities now available to mechanism. Only if definable objective limits and rational actions are imposed as restraints to the application of containment, can mechanism and realism coexist.

Chapters three and four explain why containment, as formulated, could not maintain a congruence between the two. The "logic" of mechanism is simple enough to allow human control over international relations, and it is a
psychologically powerful dictate once that control is granted. As a check to imbalance, the container must respond to every point where imbalance is threatened, or it is not serving the purpose of mechanism. The price for enlarging mechanism is that the container's actions are dictated by the logic of mechanism. If the goal is balance, and one discrete part is defined as dysfunctional to balance, the check on its dysfunctional behavior cannot be limited by arbitrary political or geopolitical considerations.

Unfortunately, containment must operate in an environment where objective political limits are prone to become highly elastic images fitted to the needs of the moment. There is little evidence to suggest that under the current ambiguities and complexities of the international environment, the limited dictates of realism are capable of restraining the logic of mechanism. Instead, the geographic application and the budgetary and military commitments of containment are extremely susceptible to universality and overcommitment. The gradual broadening of the United States' commitments throughout the Korean War, and the use of containment as a hemispheric mechanism of control is testimony to the cost associated with applying mechanism to conditions where political restraints, however realistic, are unlikely to halt the momentum of mechanism.
A related cost is associated with the impact that acting to the dictates of mechanism has on the rationality of policy makers. Containment is predicated on Kennan's assessment of the "Soviet personality."

A "personality" that must exhibit behavior susceptible to mechanistic control, "a persistent toy automobile wound up and headed in a given direction, stopping only when it meets with some unanswerable counter force," but also be modifiable in some sense by United States actions. This precipitated his analogy of Soviet expansion as flowing from two personality shaping forces. Since Kennan rejected an overt modification of the Soviet Union (making it democratic), he worked from a personality premise modified through the "therapeutic" benefits of containment. Thus, a model of the dysfunctional part, identifying the source of its dysfunctional behavior, dictates to some extent the method of containment. Chapter four suggests that under the conditions containment was formulated (fear of Soviet expansion into Western Europe, and the limited amount of information available), a black-and-white image is likely to emerge. The cost associated with forming a comprehensive explanation of why the Soviets desire to expand is unlimited, is considerable under these conditions. The conditions

15 Ibid., p. 89.
16 Ibid., p. 97.
supportive of slanting, selecting, ignoring, or distorting information fueled by the "possibilism" of high stakes, makes a rationally constructed image of the Soviet Union unlikely. This is not to say that a black-and-white image of reality is never valid. In this case, the model of totalitarianism formulated during Stalin's reign was probably applicable to the essential structure of the Soviet government at that time. However, the dynamic quality of such a model (any deviation from the totalitarian model can be designated a "tactical maneuver"), may preclude any change in the model, even when it no longer captures the essential structure of the Soviet system.

John Foster Dulles' psycho-logical image of the Soviet Union is the likely counterpart to the logical impetus of universal containment. The dynamics of a black-and-white image, and the psycho-logical ramifications of emotional consistency is evident in Dulles' image of the Soviet Union as an "atheistic, Godless" premise so determinitive that "Everything else flows from that premise." Basic to his image is the essentially evil nature of the Soviet Union

\[17\] Ibid., p. 96.

as a communist government. The evaluative dimension of his image, the Soviet Union as evil, provides his image with the emotional consistency that makes it highly resistant to change. By categorizing some 3,584 of Dulles' assertions about the Soviet Union, Ole Holsti offers graphic support of the self-reinforcing properties of a black-and-white image. Dulles' statements were independently grouped into four categories: (1) whether Soviet policy was friendly or hostile; (2) whether Soviet capabilities were strong or weak; (3) whether Soviet policy was succeeding or failing; and (4) whether the Soviet Union was good or bad. A rational statesman, operating by reason, is likely to perceive a relationship between more friendly Soviet actions (such as the relinquishment of Austria) and his belief of basic Soviet goodness or badness; that is, friendly actions would encourage a better rating. However, when Holsti measures Dulles' perception of hostility or friendliness of the Soviet Union to his evaluation of them as good or bad, he finds no relation at all (the correlation is +.03).\textsuperscript{19} Further, the data shows that Dulles assumed that Soviet capabilities had lessened whenever the Soviet Union exhibited more friendly behavior (the correlation is +.76).\textsuperscript{20} Dulles' image was so closed and self-reinforcing

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 26.

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
no objective stimuli could alter his basic belief that the Soviet Union was bad or evil. Without debating the correctness of his view, one question remains. If the Soviets did desire friendlier relations with the United States, what actions could it take (within politically practical limits) capable of altering Dulles' belief? If whatever the Soviets did, short of becoming a representative democracy, could not alter his basic image but is instead altered to preserve his belief, rationality is being thwarted unless the image of inherent and unchanging evil is correct. The logical and obvious foreign policy that is suggested by the black-and-white image is that the white destroy the black.

Morgenthau suggested few means of implementing mechanism in international relations. Kennan made mechanism feasible for foreign policy but contradicted it with restraints. Dulles divorced the mechanism from Kennan's realism and fashioned a policy consistent with mechanism. Kennan had to be content with ten to fifteen years of painstaking therapy before the Soviets' expansionist neurosis could be exorcized. Dulles' solution was more mechanistically sound: since the Soviets are the dysfunctional part, remove it and replace it with a functional one (democracy). If this can be attributed to the costs associated with practicing mechanism under current conditions,
the rationality of constructing policy on such a foundation is questionable. After all, Dulles' image of the Soviet Union was decisive in United States foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. Even in the face of President Eisenhower's predisposition toward reducing tensions, the death of Stalin, the Soviet "thaw" from 1954 to 1957, a reduction in Soviet army strength and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Austria, Dulles' image of the Soviet Union remained solidly intact. As a result of Eisenhower's reliance upon Dulles in foreign relations, his administration was characterized by Dulles' image, an attendant low priority for arms control, and a high priority for the formation of an alliance of nations against communism.21

An Alternative

Implicit in this critique is an alternative to the mechanistic model and the mechanistic policies it inspires. If the mechanistic model is neither insightful to the analysis of international relations, as chapters three and four suggest, nor useful to the needs of foreign policy as chapter five contends, an alternative with greater insight and utility is warranted.

The ordering relationship of the organismic model may have greater utility to the realities of current conditions

21Ibid., p. 25.
in international relations: (1) The international system is dominant; it gives definition to the parts (nation-states) as they function within the entire system. The international system, which has evolved to a global level, has a definition that is greater than the sum of its parts. (2) This international system exists in an open environment, and the relationship between the parts is not of a zero-sum nature. Furthermore, since environmental constraints may create evolutionary change, the definition of the system itself can evolve into a new and different definition. (3) The parts (nation-states) exist as interdependent units, and if the international system undergoes evolutionary change, this change affects each part and vice versa.

In the organismic model the determinitive element of realism and mechanism is rejected for a concept of interaction and interdependence. Secondly, the closed system of mechanism is opened up to account for change. Mechanism assures us that if a balance of power existed in Europe throughout much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it can be engineered into existence again to serve the needs of the twentieth century; if the international mechanism was balanced once, it can be balanced again. The continued resistance of international relations to reflect such a concept raises a few organismic hypothesis about the applicability of the past.
Structural change occurs in international relations at both the international system level and the level of interaction between the parts. And with these changes, the utility of mechanism has been affected. At the system level, this change is a product of the general pattern of evolutionary change—the march of progress.

In the seventeenth century, the international system was a much more simple and readily definable body than it was when containment was first being implemented by the United States, and than it is today. The current of technological and political change moved much slower then than it does today. By 1918, this current had become swift enough to erode the foundation of the European State System consensus that had prevailed since 1648.22 The gradual technological improvement of weaponry made by 1918, transformed the previous simple calculation of divisions and ships into a cumbersome and less trustworthy calculation of power. What was once more a game of arithmetic became prone to guesswork and the uncertainties of newly evolving military power.23 As a result, the stability of the balance itself suffered from this misfortune of change. By 1918, political change had also affected the stability of the consensus, as the evolution of democracy began to severely

23 Ibid., p. 276.
constrain the way the "game" had to be played. The steady growth of public influence on the international game, as public opinion developed into a more cohesive force, complicated and constrained the previous freedom enjoyed by statesmen. Together, these developments had by 1918 severely complicated the analysis of balance, and the stability of balance and severely hampered the freedom necessary to act on it, both previously enjoyed by the statesmen of the earlier era. Thus, as the world evolved and progressed, as massive destructive capabilities eroded traditional geopolitical restraints, and the growth of public influence hampered political pragmatism, the simple environment necessary for a balance of power consensus began to erode.

As the European State System "grew up," it was preparing the seeds of its own destruction in the sense that the balance of power consensus was becoming more and more difficult to sustain.

In this light, Morgenthau's fondness for European diplomacy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and Kennan's preference for American diplomacy from the Revolution to the early nineteenth century can be seen as primarily based on the convenience and the simplicity

\(^{24}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 274.\)
of those eras rather than upon their proof of the determinism of power.

In 1917, change born at the state level was thrust upon the international system. The ideological "virus" that infected the world body in 1917, has since impaired the operation of international relations and has proven resistant to any mechanistic contrivances designed to combat it.

In 1917, with the advent of the Bolshevik Revolution, the European State System and the balance of power was largely destroyed. The former unity of nation-states pursuing aims in response to characteristics of power evolved into a bifurcated policy of an ideological foreign policy as well as a state policy. The principle of "friends in peace and enemies in war" became transferred into a principle of "neither peace nor war." This does not mean that the Soviets should be blamed for espousing Marxism. The Bolshevik Revolution and the circumstances which allowed a tiny minority group of Marxist ideologues to control the reigns of government was simply an event, an unforeseen occurrence that an open environment always makes possible. Had the deterministic scenario of Marxism worked its miracle, international communism would have replaced the European State System as the new order of

\[25^{25}\text{Ibid., p. 303.}\\
26^{26}\text{Ibid., p. 281.}\]
international relations. Instead, its inability to replace the old creates a condition of international limbo, as the ideological element now serves more to hamper the creation of a new world order.

From 1917 to 1948 the ideological element introduced by the Bolsheviks served the Soviet Union well, as it enabled a special status to be granted to the Soviets. It was to be treated as a regular member of the community without relinquishing its ideological commitment to guide the overthrow of other government systems. By 1933, with all of the major powers, including the United States, recognizing the current regime as legitimate, the Soviets had obtained that special status. By 1933, the internal changes within the Soviet Union being wrought by Stalin also impacted on the effect this special status had for the international system as a whole. As Stalin replaced any lingering traces of internationalism with pure Russian nationalism, the Soviet Union became not a participant in world revolution, but the absolute masters. Such an occurrence shattered any remnants of the old world order—the Soviet Union could enjoy normal diplomatic relations and yet dictate to citizens of other nations a greater loyalty to the Soviet cause.

\[27\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 286.}\]
The ideological principle challenged the state sovereignty principle for a primacy over the previous international norms. The Soviet Union, as the primary instigator of the ideological component which had so drastically changed the nature of the international system, skillfully played both sides of the fence. The changes in the international system allowed Stalin the pragmatic freedom of movement to flip-flop alliances from the Soviet-German pact to the Grand Alliance without foresaking the Communist movement. What was good for Russia, was good for Communism.

However, the simple fact that Hitler forced the Soviets into the alliance was not heeded by the West. Especially in the United States, Stalin became instantly transformed into an "honorary democrat" by virtue of the alliance.28 By wishing away the ideological differences that existed, when after the war Stalin failed to fulfill these expectations, the ideological differences became accentuated. As Adam Ulam succinctly puts it, "Unfounded illusions during the war; unfounded disillusionment following it--here in a nutshell was the main source of America's unhappy experiences with the U.S.S.R. and the world."29

Thus, by 1947, partly because of legitimate security interests, and partly because of its "unfounded

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28 Ibid., p. 293.
29 Ibid.
disillusionment," the United States complimented the Soviets' ideological element with its own. Unfortunately, the "knee-jerk reaction" of the United States only contributed to the problem by obscuring it. The dynamic selectiveness of a black-and-white image like the Truman Doctrine not only further polarizes, but over time obscures the problem as well. The problem is an organismic one. It is not an outgrowth of the distinct power relationship between the two nation-states but in how the Soviet Union has affected the general character of international relations and the international system.\textsuperscript{30} In this organismic sense, a reaction to the Soviets' transformation of the international rules was predictable, but the United States' particular reaction was a choice. For the stability of the postwar world, it was a poor one.

Ulam calls the paradox that developed "a tragedy of errors, or rather of mutual misperceptions which largely shaped the postwar world."\textsuperscript{31} The "tragedy" is that containment, and the underlying mechanistic bias of the United States, contributed to the polarization of the East and West by adopting its own black-and-white image; and image which obscures evolutions in the international system that do not fit with it. It was terribly difficult for the United States to appreciate the significance of the complete break-up of the communist movement that began, ironically,

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 307 \textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 296.
at the same time the United States was gearing up its ideological challenge. Evolution had, in some sense, "caught up" with the Soviets, as two of its greatest success stories, Yugoslavia and China, began a process of devolution that continues today. The dynamic quality of the black-and-white image does not offer a great deal of hope that either the United States or the Soviet Union will change their mirror-image relationship. Even a "realistic" appraisal of the Soviets' advantage in carrying on a prolonged ideological crusade measured against the United States political constraints, is not likely to convince policy makers in the United States to shatter their side of the "mirror". The dynamics of the East-West conflict are likely to be perpetuated as long as the mechanistic model predominates among policy makers. Only by recognizing the limits of human control, the inability to engineer international relations into a predictable and balanced mechanism, and the evolutionary fluidity of international relations is the organismic quality of the East-West conflict likely to be recognized. The past realities are no more; it is no longer possible to find a fixed point of balance in the world or to maintain the fiction of absolute human control. The growing necessity of an organismic approach to international, and East-West relations, is eloquently stated by Emery Reves,
There is not the slightest hope that we can possibly solve any of the vital problems of our generation until we rise above dogmatic nation-centric conceptions and realize that, in order to understand the political, economic, and social problems of this highly integrated and industrialized world, we have to shift our standpoint and see all the nations and national matters in motion, in their interrelated functions, rotating according to the same laws without any fixed points created by our own imagination for our convenience."\textsuperscript{32}

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