

Example of article review on the beginning of the cold war

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



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In 1961 W. R. Schilling published the article “ The H-bomb Decision: How to Decide without Actually Choosing.” That was eleven years after the initial decision by President Harry Truman to explore the possibility of building a thermonuclear bomb. (Schilling 44) Schilling researched the decision to build a hydrogen bomb and concluded that the least that could be decided was decided by Truman (24). His article explains the reasons he reached this conclusion. M. J. Sherwin (1973) published a different view twelve years after Schilling in an article titled “ The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War: U. S. Atomic-Energy Policy and Diplomacy 1941-145.” Whereas Shilling identifies the start of the policy change at the time the U. S. A. government learned that the USSR exploded the H-bomb; Sherwin identifies the development of the H-bomb for military use rather than a pivotal policy issue during WWII.

Los Alamos and the Development of the Bomb

During 1941 and 1942 Churchill adamantly supported British-American collaboration in order to produce the H-bomb before either Russia or

Germany. In discussions with Vannevar Bush (Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, OR&D) and James B. Conant (President of Harvard University and Deputy to Bush) he argued for such collaboration. Bush and Conant saw obstacles that would make the development of the bomb by the U. S. and Britain move more slowly than envisioned by Churchill. Sherwin (1973) explained that in general the Americans were concerned that the British wanted the scientific information to use after the war for industrial purposes and they did not want to give up the secrets of the bomb. (950) On the other hand President Roosevelt's considerations were more in line with those of Churchill; he is still famous for the diplomatic policy 'walk softly and carry a big stick.' In other words Roosevelt supported diplomacy for problem solving if it was backed up with military power. For example, Roosevelt shared his idea with the leaders of France and England as well as with Stalin to build up a police force large enough to keep the peace, but if that was not enough then cities containing violators of the peace would be bombed. (Sherwin 953)

Precisely how Roosevelt expected to integrate the atomic bomb into his plans for keeping the peace in the postwar world is not clear. However, against the background of his atomic-energy policy decisions of 1943 and his peace-keeping concepts, his actions in 1944 suggest that he intended to take full advantage of the bomb's potential as a postwar instrument of Anglo-American diplomacy. (Sherwin 954)

Niels Bohr, a Danish physicist part of the Los Alamos project, convinced his old friend Justice Felix Frankfurter of the possibilities of a post war arms race to ensure the balance of power in Europe. Frankfurter then found a willing

listener in Roosevelt. The secret development of the bomb in Los Alamos had become known to the Russians in 1943; Roosevelt was greatly concerned with the impact the knowledge would have on the American relationship with the Soviets. (Sherwin 956)

Pre-Nuclear American Security and the Russian Fission Bomb

After the Civil War ended the chances of a military conflict on the conflict on the continental USA were very small. Shilling explains that was because a) the ability to build weapons quickly due to the weapons industry WWI and WWII, and b) the Great Powers were did not trust each other whom the viewed as potential enemies not the USA. (25) The only possible threat could arise if the Old World powers joined together to threaten the USA which was highly improbable. Shilling asserts though, that the end of WWII though caused two changes in the American security situation: Europe was not able to establish a balance of power on the European continent. The USSR had gained territory reaching to the Berlin Wall in Germany. So the USS now stretched across the Eurasia continent. According to Schilling the USA designed policies to attempt to bring some balance with the Truman Doctrine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and by supporting the Western Europeans. The news reached the US government that a fission bomb (thermonuclear) was exploded in September 1949. President Truman, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of Congress, plus the State and Defense Departments had to make policy decisions, military and diplomatic, based on the news. (Schilling 24) Schilling (1963) argues that that the bureaucratic

decision-making process on whether or not to build a thermo nuclear bomb started at this point (24). On the other hand Sherwin (1973) explained that President Truman inherited the atomic policy of Roosevelt which left him few options (962).

Conclusion

According to the research of Sherwin (1973), Truman's attitude became much more confident when dealing with Stalin in July 1945. (967) Truman even told Stalin that Stalin would understand the immense power of the new weapon developed very soon. (Sherwin 967) Truman was alluding to the planned bombings of two Japanese cities, Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Sherwin (1973) therefore concluded through his research that the USA, not the USSR, was the key initiator of the Cold War. On the other hand Schilling (1963) concluded that the explosion of the bomb by Russia in 1949 started the Cold War. Schilling (1963) blamed Truman for his inability to make anything but "minimal decisions" concerning the H-bomb (43). Not only that, Schilling (1963) concluded that the USA did not institute a policy to develop the H-bomb until 1950 (44).

In 1973 Sherwin had available documentation that would not have been available to Shilling in 1963. Sherwin has made a convincing argument that the U. S. A. in fact, started the Cold War which puts to rest many theories and assumptions. Shilling makes the point that regardless of the timing of who made the bomb first; the inability to develop a better solution for balancing power was a tragic policy failure. Unfortunately the repercussions of that failure are still present today.

Works Cited

Sherwin, M. J. "The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War: U. S. Atomic-Energy Policy and Diplomacy 1941-45." *The American Historical Review*, 78. 4 October 1973, Web. Accessed 21 September 2012 doi: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1858347>

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