

## Presidential Cold War Doctrines: What Are They Good For?\*

It is no overstatement to say that access to formerly classified material produced by and for the highest levels of the U.S. government has been and will remain fundamental to our field, even as scholars continue to push the field in new and exciting directions that move well beyond the confines of official government actors.<sup>1</sup> The program for the 2023 Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Conference provides ample evidence of the importance the Society places on access to previously classified materials.<sup>2</sup> Many of the papers presented and books discussed over the conference's three days made use of previously classified materials, as did much of the recent scholarship announced in publishers' advertisements and arrayed at their display tables. The conference's plenary session highlighted past and ongoing efforts to ensure access, and issues surrounding records access were the subject of Director of the National Security Archive Tom Blanton's talk at the Saturday luncheon. Tom and his team have spearheaded all manner of efforts on behalf of records access.<sup>3</sup> Our collective debt to them is enormous.

Executive Order 13526 of 2009, which currently governs the handling of information related to U.S. national security, provides for three levels of classification: "Confidential," "Secret," and "Top Secret," depending on a document's degree of sensitivity, and delineates who within the federal government can have access to such materials. While recognizing "that the American people

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\*SHAFR Presidential Address delivered at Arlington, Virginia, June 16, 2023. The author would like to thank Anne Foster and Abby Whitaker for their comments on the address.

1. Representative works in this vein include: Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY, 2015); Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004); Jeannette Eileen Jones, *In Search of Brightest Africa: Reimagining the Dark Continent in American Culture, 1884–1936* (Athens, GA, 2011); Julia F. Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (New York, 2013); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley, CA, 2003); and Gregory A. Daddis, *Pulp Vietnam: War and Gender in Cold War Men's Adventure Magazines* (New York, 2021).

2. The program for the SHAFR Annual Conference held June 15–17, 2023 in Arlington, VA can be found at <https://shafz.org/sites/default/files/2023%20SHAFR%20Program%20Final.pdf> (last accessed September 3, 2023).

3. For the National Security Archive's outstanding work on behalf of records access see its website at: National Security Archive, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>.

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[must] be informed of the activities of their Government” and that U.S. “progress depends on the free flow of information both within the Government and to the American people,” it goes on to note that restricting access to some information is necessary “to protect our citizens, our democratic institutions, our homeland security, and our interactions with foreign nations.” Most previously classified materials are supposed to be released within twenty-five years of origination, at which time they become open to researchers.<sup>4</sup> The reality, however, has been very different. Delays in basic declassification have become the norm, and the National Declassification Center, established by EO 13526 “to advance the declassification and public release of historically valuable permanent records while maintaining national security,” has a backlog totaling millions of pages.<sup>5</sup> Ongoing glitches and delays in routine declassification aside, the books and articles that make up the corpus of writing in our field make abundantly clear that scholars have used previously classified materials to great effect. Their many deep dives into formerly classified materials have unraveled the intricacies of internal policymaking, tracked the give and take of high-level discussions, and helped us to understand efforts to achieve consensus, the costs of dissent, and the various considerations that go into making key foreign policy decisions.

But notwithstanding the importance that classified materials have played in our field, there is also value, I believe, in public-facing foreign policy statements. Such statements can take many forms. Presidents often use their inaugural addresses to spell out their foreign policy goals.<sup>6</sup> And international developments are often included in annual State of the Union addresses.<sup>7</sup> The norms of an open society require these kinds of statements so that the public can be kept informed about the United States’ role in the world. Presidents also often discuss foreign policy matters in speeches to civic groups, political organizations, and other entities, most commonly in an attempt to gin up public support for new initiatives.<sup>8</sup> And, of course, they often deliver dedicated addresses to Congress or the nation on foreign policy question of extreme importance.

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4. Barack Obama, “Executive Order 13526—Classified National Security Information,” December 29, 2009, National Archives, The White House: President Barack Obama, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/executive-order-classified-national-security-information>.

5. “About the NDC,” National Archives, last updated January 12, 2021, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.archives.gov/declassification/ndc/about-ndc>.

6. For all inaugural addresses since George Washington’s, see: “Inaugural Addresses,” The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/app-categories/spoken-addresses-and-remarks/presidential/inaugural-addresses>.

7. “Annual Messages to Congress on the State of the Union (Washington 1790–the present),” The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/presidential-documents-archive-guidebook/annual-messages-congress-the-state-the-union>.

8. The American Presidency Project is a terrific resource for such speeches. See: The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>.

The discussion that follows will briefly explore some of those statements, specifically, six discrete presidential doctrines during the Cold War period. These doctrines were enunciated in a variety of media, from stand-alone addresses on specific international crises, to State of the Union addresses, remarks to reporters, and public speeches. Whatever the form, they were all performative pieces crafted with the express purpose of advancing a foreign policy goal or principle. They carry no force of international law.<sup>9</sup> Yet they were not mere words on a page—or in a radio or television broadcast or public speech or address. They were important statements of U.S. policy at the time and can be invaluable vehicles for scholars today. They illuminate the Cold War's progression from Western Europe to other parts of the world. They demonstrate the way the nation's domestic conditions affected foreign policy decisions, whether that meant expanding or contracting them. And they reveal that the exigencies of the Cold War often placed a greater priority on containing communism than promoting democracy and other traditional American values. Collective study of these doctrines has heretofore been the province of international relations specialists, while historians have primarily considered individual doctrines in relative isolation from each other.<sup>10</sup> This essay, a preliminary attempt to rectify that situation, will explore each doctrine's purpose, contemporary context (both foreign and domestic), and overall importance, particularly for the evolving conception of the U.S. national interest. By considering these doctrines from a long-term historical perspective, its overall goal is to demonstrate their utility for helping to explicate U.S. Cold War foreign policy.

Although the story of the Truman Doctrine's promulgation is well known, recounting its major contours in some detail will help to provide a general framework for my study of presidential doctrines in their totality.<sup>11</sup> On March 12, 1947, the thirty-third president, Harry S. Truman, delivered an

9. This point is well covered in Heiko Meiertöns, *The Doctrines of US Security Policy: An Evaluation under International Law* (New York, 2010).

10. For general treatment of presidential doctrines, see: Robert P. Watson, Charles Gleek, and Michael Grillo, eds., *Presidential Doctrines: National Security from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush* (New York, 2003); Aiden Warren and Joseph M. Siracusa, *Understanding Presidential Doctrines: U.S. National Security from George Washington to Joe Biden* (Lanham, MD, 2022); Lamont Colucci, *The National Security Doctrines of the American Presidency: How They Shape Our Present and Future*, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA, 2012); and Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy: Their Meaning, Role, and Future* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1982). The fullest historical treatment of the Cold War period exclusively is "Special Issue: Presidential Doctrines," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 1–88, which covers the Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, and Reagan Doctrines. On individual doctrines, see the various notes that follow.

11. For general coverage of the Truman Doctrine and its consequences, see: Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism* (Lexington, KY, 2006), chapter 3; Eugene T. Rossides, ed., *The Truman Doctrine of Aid to Greece: A Fifty-Year Retrospective* (New York, 1998); Howard Jones, "A New Kind of War": *America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece* (New York, 1997); and Lawrence S. Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943–1949* (New York, 1982).

eighteen-minute midday address to a joint session of Congress.<sup>12</sup> Officially titled “Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey,” it was a response to Great Britain’s announcement that it could no longer support the conservative government in Greece’s struggle against a multi-faceted insurgency. In this way, it was like most other presidential doctrines during the Cold War in responding to an immediate crisis. The heart of Truman’s message was the assertion “that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”<sup>13</sup>

The Truman Doctrine drew on a host of internal documents, most notably George F. Kennan’s February 1946 “Long Telegram” and the so-called Clifford-Elsey Report, “American Relations with the Soviet Union,” completed in September of that year. Painting the Soviet Union as implacably motivated by ideology and dismissing all thought that Moscow might be pursuing legitimate security concerns in its foreign policy, they advocated a concerted policy of containment.<sup>14</sup> Thus, rather than a sudden response to the British withdrawal from the Mediterranean, the Truman Doctrine message packaged for public consumption ideas that had actually been circulating within the administration for some time.

Like U.S. propaganda during World War II, Truman’s message used bipolar framing to distinguish the hopeful non-communist world led by the United States from the controlled, repressive, and fearful societies of the Soviet Union and its satellites.<sup>15</sup> While the former was “based upon the will of the majority” and “distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression,” the latter was “based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority” and reliant “upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.”<sup>16</sup> The idea that the world could be divided neatly into two

12. For an interesting and insightful analysis of the language of the Truman Doctrine see: Denise M. Bostdorff, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms* (College Station, TX, 2008).

13. Harry S. Truman, “Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine,” March 12, 1947, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/special-message-the-congress-greece-and-turkey-the-truman-doctrine> (hereafter “Truman Doctrine”).

14. “The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State,” telegram 511, February 22, 1946, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm>; and Clark Clifford, “American Relations with the Soviet Union,” September 24, 1946, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/report-american-relations-soviet-union-clark-clifford-clifford-elsey-report?documentid=NA&pagenumber=1>. The Long Telegram was later published, in moderately revised form, as X, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (1947): 566–582.

15. For World War II see: David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt’s America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago, IL, 2001).

16. Truman Doctrine.

camps was an oversimplification of the world as it existed in 1947. Yet it remained the dominant worldview of every U.S. presidential administration through Ronald Reagan's.<sup>17</sup>

The traits Truman attributed to the Free World would later be included as what Mary Ann Glendon has termed “the spiritual, public, and political rights” enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) approved by the UN General Assembly in December 1948.<sup>18</sup> These sorts of rights reflected the best of the U.S. political tradition and constituted areas where the United States considered itself to set the world standard. Although the Truman Doctrine predated the UDHR by twenty-two months, it anticipated the political rights listed in that document in the way it described the U.S.-led Free World.<sup>19</sup> It also signaled the United States' intention to cast the East-West dichotomy in ideological and political terms, showcasing what the administration saw as the most positive features of U.S. society—coincidentally areas where Soviet society was particularly lacking.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, from the Truman Doctrine on, the United States embarked on a campaign to expose Soviet violations of human rights, or what officials took to calling the “conspiracy of Soviet imperialism.”<sup>21</sup> In this way, they sought to link political repression in the Soviet bloc with the larger human rights project as reflected in the UDHR.<sup>22</sup>

17. For accounts of the bipolar conflict that, to one degree or another, highlight ideology, see, for example: William O. Walker III, *National Security and Core Values in American History* (New York, 2009); Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (Boston, MA, 1997); H. W. Brands, *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York, 1993); and Michael H. Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007).

18. Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York, 2001), 174. For this point see also: Roger Normand and Sarah Zaidi, *Human Rights at the UN: The Political History of Universal Justice* (Bloomington, IN, 2008), 188–196; and Carol Devine et al., *Human Rights: The Essential Reference* (Phoenix, AZ, 1999), 103–105.

19. See Articles 19, 20, 21, Resolution 217A (III), “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” December 10, 1948, last accessed September 3, 2023, [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_217\(III\).pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_217(III).pdf).

20. In this vein, see, for example: John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000); and Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ, 1994).

21. Porter McKelver (director of information, USUN), “Memorandum on Public Information Staff Needed for Paris Session of the General Assembly,” August 3, 1951, enclosure to McKelver to Gordon Gray (director, National Psychological Strategy Board), August 3, 1951, folder 334 United Nations, box 26, Harry S. Truman Papers, Staff Member and Office Files: Psychological Strategy Board Files, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, Independence, MO (hereafter “Truman Library”); Discussion Brief for Bilateral Talks on Colonial Policy To Be Held at London and Paris (Agenda Item IV (b) 8), September 4, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, vol. II, The United Nations; The Western Hemisphere, eds. Ralph R. Goodwin et al. (Washington, D.C., 1951): doc. 445.

22. Implementation of this theme at the UN General Assembly is explored more fully in Mary Ann Heiss, “Exposing ‘Red Colonialism’: U.S. Propaganda at the United Nations, 1953–1963,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 17, no. 3 (2015): 82–115.

Truman's call to assist the Greek government aside, his message to Congress also admitted that that government was "not perfect" and "ha[d] made mistakes."<sup>23</sup> As Lawrence Wittner and other scholars have detailed, its mistakes were many and far-reaching indeed, resulting in a near doubling of the nation's prison population "to more than 16,000" and the dispatch of "thousands of suspect persons, their spouses, and children, without trial or charges, to remote island concentration camps."<sup>24</sup> The Greek government's actions were not in keeping with the sort of openness and freedom Truman extolled in his speech. Nevertheless, he argued that it deserved U.S. support because it was not communist. Once freed from the burden of fighting against communist subversion, the president implied, the Greek government could evolve into a truly democratic state. This look-the-other-way attitude regarding the shortcomings if not actual abuses of non-communist governments became a consistent feature of U.S. foreign policy moving forward. As a result, as David F. Schmitz has forcefully argued, the United States sacrificed support for democracy on the altar of anticommunism.<sup>25</sup>

But U.S. assistance would have consequences far beyond Greece and Turkey, the president claimed. In an early articulation of what would later become known as the domino theory, Truman warned that failing to prevent the collapse of Greece and Turkey would allow "confusion and disorder" to "spread throughout the entire Middle East." It "would [moreover] have a profound effect upon those countries in Europe whose peoples are struggling against great difficulties to maintain their freedoms and their independence while they repair the damages of war." In other words: the very countries that the subsequent European Recovery Program was designed to assist. Failure to act, the president cautioned, would lead to "discouragement and possibly failure" for "neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence." With the prospect of "far reaching [consequences] to the West as well as to the East" of "fail[ure] to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour," Truman advocated "immediate and resolute [U.S.] action."<sup>26</sup>

The president's call for aid to Greece and Turkey was revolutionary and set the United States on the road to a massive program of peacetime foreign aid

23. Truman Doctrine.

24. Lawrence S. Wittner, "The Truman Doctrine and the Defense of Freedom," *Diplomatic History* 4, no. 2 (1980): 163. See also: André Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of the Soviet-American Rivalry, 1943-1949* (New York, 2004); Gerolymatos, *An International Civil War: Greece, 1943-1949* (New Haven, CT, 2016); Spyridon Plakoudas, *The Greek Civil War: Strategy, Counterinsurgency and the Monarchy* (London, 2017); and Polymeris Voglis, "Between Negation and Self-Negation: Political Prisoners in Greece, 1945-1950," in *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943-1960*, ed. Mark Mazower (Princeton, NJ, 2016), 73-90.

25. David F. Schmitz, *Thank God They're on Our Side: The United States and Right-wing Dictatorships, 1921-1965* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999); and Schmitz, *The United States and Right-wing Dictatorships, 1965-1989* (New York, 2006).

26. Truman Doctrine.

throughout the Cold War.<sup>27</sup> It also reflected the nation's material strength, especially compared to other countries. Unlike Great Britain, for example, which was "reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece," the United States had the capacity, Truman's message made plain, to take on new commitments. "No other nation," he said, was "willing and able" to step forward and prevent the collapse of Greece (and Turkey) to communism.<sup>28</sup> The \$400 million ultimately appropriated for those two nations opened the door to additional U.S. expenditures in service to the containment of communism, including the \$13 billion European Recovery Program (better known as the Marshall Plan), the Truman-initiated Point IV Program, and direct economic and military assistance programs with a growing host of Cold War allies and clients.<sup>29</sup> Although Truman admitted in 1949 that the material resources the United States could devote to assisting "other peoples" were "limited," he also asserted in his final State of the Union message in 1953 that they were "equal to the task."<sup>30</sup> More than that, Truman was convinced that the American people had the will to do what was necessary to win what he called in his Farewell Address the "terrible fight against communism."<sup>31</sup>

By the time Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed office in January 1953, that "fight" was going poorly, despite the Truman administration's dramatic

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27. Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, and Domestic Politics* (Chicago, IL, 2007); and Thomas W. Zeiler, "Genesis of a Foreign Aid Revolution," in *Foreign Aid and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman*, ed. Raymond H. Geselbracht (Kirksville, MO, 2015), 33–42.

28. Truman Doctrine.

29. For these initiatives see, for example: Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947–1952* (New York, 1989); Spalding, *The First Cold Warrior*, chapter 4; Tarun C. Bose, "The Point Four Programme: A Critical Study," *International Studies* 7, no. 1 (1965): 66–97; Thomas G. Paterson, "Foreign Aid under Wraps: The Point Four Program," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 56, no. 2 (1972–1973): 119–126; Stephen Macekura, "The Point Four Program and U.S. International Development Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* 128, no. 1 (2013): 127–160; and Chester J. Pach, Jr., *Arming the Free World: The Origins of the United States Military Assistance Program, 1945–1950* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991). Generally, see also: John A. Thompson, *A Sense of Power: The Roots of America's Global Role* (Ithaca, NY, 2015), chapter 6.

30. Harry S. Truman, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1949, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-4>; Harry S. Truman, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," January 7, 1953, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/annual-message-the-congress-the-state-the-union-18>.

31. Harry S. Truman, "The President's Farewell Address to the American People," January 15, 1953, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-farewell-address-the-american-people>. Truman had not always been confident of the public will, as evident in his initial efforts to keep NSC-68, which laid out the high cost of fighting the Cold War, secret. For the document, see: National Security Council, "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," April 14, 1950, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://irp.fas.org/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>. Truman's efforts, as well as a variety of interpretations of the document, can be found in Ernest R. May, ed., *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (New York, 1993). See also: Curt Cardwell, *NSC 68 and the Political Economy of the Early Cold War* (New York, 2011).

expansion of the United States' role in the world. The 1952 GOP platform had catalogued a litany of Democratic giveaways and losses that stretched from Yalta to the then-stalemated war in Korea. Republicans pledged to end "the negative, futile and immoral policy of 'containment'" and "look[ed] happily forward to the genuine independence" of the "500 million non-Russian people in fifteen different countries [who] have been absorbed into the power sphere of communist Russia."<sup>32</sup> Events ultimately proved the hollowness of Republican support for the liberation of "captive peoples," and in the main the Eisenhower administration adopted a containment-driven foreign policy just like its predecessor.<sup>33</sup>

If that was true generally, it was especially true of the doctrine that bears Eisenhower's name.<sup>34</sup> Like Truman's, it was born of crisis, in this case instability in the Middle East. The last months of Eisenhower's 1956 reelection campaign had been set against growing tension in the region that culminated in the catastrophic late October Anglo-French-Israeli military operation in Suez. The dangers wrought by the Suez Crisis were compounded by the virtually concurrent Soviet intervention in Hungary. Together, those two events illustrated the dangerous regional power vacuum left by Britain's declining influence and the possibility that the Soviets would try to step in and fill it.<sup>35</sup>

To deal with these dangers, fifteen days before his second inauguration, Eisenhower spoke to a joint session of Congress. That he did not wait until his usual State of the Union Address suggested the import of what he had to say. Acknowledging that fact upfront, he declared that while that address would allow him to "review the international situation generally," there was "a special situation in the Middle East" that needed immediate attention. That situation, he explained in an address that privileged geostrategic considerations over the Truman Doctrine message's lofty appeal to principle, was that purely because of "power politics," the forces of "International Communism" had cast their sights on the region, which was an important "gateway between Eurasia and Africa" and a vital supplier of oil to "many nations of Europe, Asia and Africa." Because Soviet control of the Middle East would be "a tragedy for the area and for many other free nations whose economic life would be subject to near

32. "Republican Party Platform of 1952," July 7, 1952, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/republican-party-platform-1952>. See also: John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness," *Life*, May 19, 1952, 146–157.

33. David Mayers, "Eisenhower's Containment Policy and the Major Communist Powers, 1953–1956," *International History Review* 5, no. 1 (1983): 59–83; and Fred Greene, "The Eisenhower Administration and the Cold War," *Current History* 35, no. 206 (1958): 229–233.

34. Randall Fowler, *More Than a Doctrine: The Eisenhower Era in the Middle East* (Lincoln, NE, 2018); and Ray Takeyh, *The Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine: The US, Britain, and Nasser's Egypt, 1953–57* (New York, 2000), chapter 7.

35. David A. Nichols, *Eisenhower 1956: The President's Year of Crisis—Suez and the Brink of War* (New York, 2011); and Alex von Tunzelmann, *Blood and Sand: Suez, Hungary, and Eisenhower's Campaign for Peace* (New York, 2017).

strangulation,” Eisenhower argued that “the United States must make more evident its willingness to support the independence of the freedom-loving nations of the area.”<sup>36</sup>

So far, this sounded much like the Truman Doctrine. But Eisenhower’s assertion that U.S. assistance could “include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence” of regional nations “requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism,” moved well beyond the economic and military assistance of the Truman Doctrine and was most definitely new.<sup>37</sup> (U.S. troops were dispatched only once under the auspices of the Eisenhower Doctrine, to Lebanon in 1958.<sup>38</sup>) In addition to flying in the face of Eisenhower’s initial desire in the New Look to downplay conventional forces in favor of more cost-effective nuclear weapons, it also set a precedent for the subsequent dispatch of U.S. troops to other places and reflected an unfortunate U.S. tendency to all too often seek military solutions to what were essentially political problems.<sup>39</sup>

The relatively straightforward nature of Eisenhower’s message belied the complexity of the situation in the Middle East, where much more was at work than Soviet expansionism. Without question, by 1957, the Soviet threat was real indeed, where it had been merely potential a decade earlier. Beyond the communist victory in China, the ongoing civil conflict in Vietnam, and other episodes, the Soviet invasion of Hungary gave U.S. officials great pause.<sup>40</sup> But the administration drew the wrong conclusion from these developments, as there was no evidence that the Soviets were responsible—directly or indirectly—for the unrest in the Middle East. The real issue there was nationalism, a force that U.S. officials poorly understood and poorly handled.<sup>41</sup> In fact, as the Eisenhower Doctrine suggested and as subsequent developments confirmed, U.S. policymakers during the Cold War tended to equate nationalism with communism and set the United States against a host of national leaders who were merely trying to break free of traditional Western domination, or, as the

36. Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East,” January 5, 1957, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/special-message-the-congress-the-situation-the-middle-east> (hereafter “Eisenhower Doctrine”).

37. Eisenhower Doctrine.

38. Douglas Little, “His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon, and the 1958 Middle East Crisis,” *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 1 (1996): 27–54; and Irene L. Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon, 1945–1958* (New York, 2006).

39. For the New Look, see: Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower’s New-Look National Security Policy, 1953–61* (New York, 1996).

40. Robert A. Divine, *Eisenhower and the Cold War* (New York, 1981).

41. For this point, see: Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004).

Non-Aligned Movement later made clear, steer a course that avoided taking sides in the Cold War at all.<sup>42</sup>

By the time Eisenhower left office in January 1961, communism had come to the Western Hemisphere in the form of Fidel Castro's Cuba. If John F. Kennedy was ultimately forced to accept the presence of a communist state in the Americas, he was determined that the Western Hemisphere "remain the master of its own house," which meant no further communist advances in the United States' backyard. Kennedy never issued a formal "doctrine" articulating this principle, but it was the theme of his last foreign policy speech, to the Inter-American Press Association in Miami on November 18, 1963, just four days before his assassination. After surveying the general problems facing Latin America, which he had previously described as "the most dangerous area of the world," as well as the efforts of his Alliance for Progress to address them, Kennedy implicitly invoked the Monroe Doctrine and asserted that "if . . . one . . . principle has run through the long history of this hemisphere it is our common determination to prevent the rule of foreign systems or nations in the Americas." If European colonization was the threat in 1823, the danger now was communist expansion. To combat it, the president called on all states of the Americas to "be ready to come to the aid of any government requesting aid to prevent a take-over linked to the policies of foreign communism" and to "use every resource at our command to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in this hemisphere." "My own country," he vowed, "is prepared to do this."<sup>43</sup>

Several things about Kennedy's speech are worth noting. One was the way it confirmed the doctrine of containment in seeking to prevent further communist inroads in the hemisphere, as well as the prevailing view of communism as monolithic and the domino theory-inspired belief that the presence of one communist state could lead other regional states in the same direction. (This fear, of course, had inspired the disastrous 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion as well as subsequent Kennedy administration efforts to destabilize the Castro regime or even

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42. H. W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947–1960* (New York, 1989); Jürgen Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927–1992)* (Leiden, 2019); Jason C. Parker, "Small Victory, Missed Chance: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Turning of the Cold War," in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, eds. Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns (Lanham, MD, 2006), 153–174; Robert B. Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* (New York, 2012); and Lorenz M. Lüthi, "The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War, 1961–1973," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18, no. 4 (2016): 98–147.

43. John F. Kennedy, "Address in Miami Before the Inter-American Press Association," November 18, 1963, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-miami-before-the-inter-american-press-association>; Kennedy quoted in Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999), 91. For Kennedy and Cuba see: Rabe, "After the Missiles of October: John F. Kennedy and Cuba, November 1962–November 1963," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (2000): 714–726.

remove him from the picture altogether.<sup>44</sup>) Another was how its readiness to use every available resource, presumably up to and including the use of direct U.S. force “to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in the hemisphere,” reflected the soaring rhetoric of his inaugural address, which affirmed the readiness of the United States to “pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, like Truman before him, Kennedy believed the American people were prepared to do whatever it took to secure victory in the Cold War. Finally, it also echoed Eisenhower’s earlier call for U.S. military intervention in the Middle East.

Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, ultimately acted on the pledge to prevent further communist gains in the Western Hemisphere, even if that required the use of U.S. troops. The specific site for U.S. military intervention was the Dominican Republic, where ongoing anti-government protests had generated the sort of chaos that could provide an opening for communist expansion. Johnson had alerted the American people to the general contours of the unfolding situation in the Dominican Republic and explained his decision to send U.S. troops to protect the lives of Americans as well as others there in a nationwide address on April 28 and remarks to reporters on April 30 that were transmitted live over radio and television.<sup>46</sup> After communist rebels inched closer to taking control, the president delivered a Sunday evening television address to the nation on May 2. “The American nations cannot, must not, and will not permit,” this eventuality, Johnson insisted. “The establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere,” in other words, was unthinkable. Johnson placed that pledge within the context of the Organization of American States’s January 1962 condemnation of communism as “incompatible with the principles of the inter-American system,” to suggest that U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic conformed to the wishes of the other states of the hemisphere.<sup>47</sup>

44. Rabe, “After the Missiles”; Thomas G. Paterson, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York, 1995); and Paterson, “Fixation with Cuba: The Bay of Pigs, Missile Crisis, and Covert War against Fidel Castro,” in *Kennedy’s Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961–1963*, ed. Paterson (New York, 1989), 123–155.

45. Kennedy, “Address in Miami”; John F. Kennedy, “Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1961, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-2>. See also: Louise FitzSimons, *The Kennedy Doctrine* (New York, 1972), chapter 1.

46. Lyndon B. Johnson, “Statement by the President Upon Ordering Troops Into the Dominican Republic,” April 28, 1965, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-president-upon-ordering-troops-into-the-dominican-republic>; and Johnson, “Statement by the President on the Situation in the Dominican Republic,” April 30, 1965, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-president-the-situation-the-dominican-republic-0>.

47. Lyndon B. Johnson, “Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in the Dominican Republic,” May 2, 1965, The American Presidency Project, September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/radio-and-television-report-the-american-people-the-situation-the-dominican-republic> (hereafter “Johnson Doctrine”);

Buried deep in the president's speech was a brief passage reminiscent of the Truman Doctrine's enumeration of the characteristics that made the nations of the Free World "free." After noting, again, the importance of preventing "the establishment of [another] communistic dictatorship" in the Western Hemisphere, Johnson expressed his hope that the Dominican Republic would be able to establish a government that was "freely chosen by the will of the people" and "dedicated to social justice for every single citizen," attributes traditionally associated with democratic states. But in language that echoed his vision for the Great Society at home, he hoped further that such a government would be "working, every hour of every day, to feeding the hungry, to educating the ignorant, to healing the sick—a government whose only concern is the progress and the elevation and the welfare of all the people."<sup>48</sup> In this way, despite the military focus of his message, the president expressed the same sort of reformist hopes for the world—or at least the Dominican Republic—that Truman almost two decades previously had for Greece and Turkey.

Johnson's dispatch of troops to the Dominican Republic should be considered against the nearly concurrent dispatch of U.S. ground forces to Vietnam. (The first Marine units landed at Danang in March 1965; more followed in April; and the first Army units arrived in May.) Stabilizing both nations was vital to prevent communist gains that could destroy Johnson's presidency and challenge the Great Society at home. As the president himself put it, "What can we do in Vietnam if we can't clean up the Dominican Republic?"<sup>49</sup> Both episodes reflected Washington's tendency to favor military solutions to political problems, its reliance on unpopular right-wing dictators, and its prevailing view of monolithic, Moscow-directed communism.

The Nixon Doctrine was alone among presidential Cold War doctrines in not being a direct response to an international crisis.<sup>50</sup> It was instead a reaction to long-simmering issues, particularly the conflict in Vietnam. First articulated in informal remarks to newsmen in Guam during U.S. President Richard M. Nixon's multination tour of Asia in August 1969, what became known as the Nixon Doctrine was fleshed out more fully in a November 3, 1969 "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam." In a nutshell, Nixon advanced three principles: the United States would "keep all of its treaty commitments"; it would

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Organization of American States, "Resolutions Adopted at the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Punta del Este, Uruguay," January 22–31, 1962, "Resolution I. Communist Offensive in America," last accessed September 3, 2023, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/intam17.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam17.asp). See also: Stephen G. Rabe, "The Johnson Doctrine," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 48–50.

48. Johnson Doctrine.

49. As quoted in Stephen G. Rabe, "The Johnson (Eisenhower?) Doctrine for Latin America," *Diplomatic History* 9, no. 1 (1985): 95.

50. For general discussion of the Nixon Doctrine see: Earl C. Ravenal, *Large-Scale Foreign Policy Change: The Nixon Doctrine as History and Portent* (Berkeley, CA, 1989); and Robert S. Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969–1976* (New York, 1984).

“provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security”; and it would expect its allies, especially in Asia, “to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for [their] defense.”<sup>51</sup> Nixon’s first two points were the sorts of truisms to which a great power like the United States might be expected to adhere. The last, though, was a major departure from the global activism that had characterized U.S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War. It was also an idea that Nixon had advanced previously, specifically in an August 1967 article in *Foreign Affairs* titled “Asia after Viet Nam.” In a wide-ranging survey of the region’s recent history, Nixon also offered up some thoughts on U.S. policy moving forward. “The role of the United States as world policeman is likely to be limited in the future,” he asserted, and “the central pattern in the future in U.S.-Asian relations must be American support for Asian initiatives.”<sup>52</sup> In practice, this idea was embodied in the process of Vietnamization.<sup>53</sup>

The biggest reason for Nixon’s reappraisal of U.S. commitments in Asia was the toll the war in Vietnam had taken on the nation, as he put it in his *Foreign Affairs* article, “not only militarily and economically but socially and politically as well.” Gone were the days when the nation could “pay any price, bear any burden” in service of its foreign policy.<sup>54</sup> Moving forward, it had to balance its desired policy ends with the available means, both material and psychological. The cost of the war in Vietnam, in other words, had torn asunder Truman’s assertion that the American people had the will to keep up the fight against communism. Yet Nixon was careful to explain that devolving more responsibility on local states for their own defense did not mean a U.S. retreat from superpower status. On the contrary, he reasoned, more selective involvement in the world would allow the nation to remain a great power because it could use its resources more effectively and at a lower overall cost.

Nixon reiterated many of these ideas in his second inaugural address in January 1973. “The time has passed,” he asserted, “when America will make every other nation’s conflict our own, or make every other nation’s future our responsibility. . . . Just as we respect the right of each nation to determine its

51. Richard M. Nixon, “Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam,” November 3, 1969, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-the-war-vietnam>. See also: Richard M. Nixon, “Informal Remarks in Guam With Newsmen,” July 25, 1969, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/informal-remarks-guam-with-newsmen>.

52. Richard M. Nixon, “Asia after Viet Nam,” *Foreign Affairs* 46, no. 1 (1967): 114, 124.

53. On Vietnamization see: David L. Anderson, *Vietnamization: Politics, Strategy, Legacy* (Lanham, MD, 2019).

54. Nixon, “Asia,” 114; Kennedy, “Inaugural Address.” For the costs of the U.S. war in Vietnam, see: Anthony S. Campagna, *The Economic Costs of the Vietnam War* (New York, 1991); and Robert Buzzanco, “The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1968: Capitalism, Communism, and Containment,” in *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World since 1945*, eds. Peter L. Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss (Columbus, OH, 2001), 94–120.

own future, we also recognize the responsibility of each nation to secure its own future.” (The historical record, of course, makes a mockery of Nixon’s claim that the United States permitted other nations “to determine [their] own future,” but this is not the place to address that issue.) Nixon went on to link the idea of shared responsibility abroad with a similar concurrent push for smaller government at home. Referring to both, he contended, “We have lived too long with the consequences of attempting to gather all power and responsibility in Washington. Abroad and at home,” he proclaimed, “the time has come to turn away from the condescending policies of paternalism—of ‘Washington knows best.’”<sup>55</sup>

The Nixon Doctrine initiated a major transfer of U.S. military equipment to friendly states in the Persian Gulf region, which played a major role in protecting the area from communist penetration.<sup>56</sup> Those states, which included Iran and Saudi Arabia, were not democracies. But they were most assuredly anti-communist. And that made them eminently worthy of U.S. assistance as, once again, the United States looked the other way at the domestic shortcomings and outright abuses of important non-communist states. U.S. policymakers felt they had no choice but to support regional allies no matter how unsavory they might be. In this way, when it came to both Asia and the Persian Gulf, like previous Cold War doctrines, Nixon’s was not designed to foster democracy. It was exclusively concerned with stopping the expansion of communism. In other words, it was rooted in containment.

Given Jimmy Carter’s support for human rights, it is not unreasonable to expect that any doctrine associated with his name would lean in that direction.<sup>57</sup> The 1976 Democratic platform on which he ran had affirmed “the fundamental American commitment to human rights across the globe,” rights that were first articulated in the 1948 UDHR and then asserted more recently in the 1975 Helsinki Accords.<sup>58</sup> And Carter’s inaugural address had indicated his intention to craft a foreign policy that rested on “a quiet strength based not merely on

55. Richard M. Nixon, “Oath of Office and Second Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1973, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsba.edu/documents/oath-office-and-second-inaugural-address>.

56. Michael Klare, *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America’s Growing Petroleum Dependency* (New York, 2004).

57. David F. Schmitz and Vanessa Walker, “Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (2004): 113–143; David Skidmore, “Carter and the Failure of Foreign Policy Reform,” *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 4 (1993/1994): 699–729; and Gaddis Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years* (New York, 1986).

58. “1976 Democratic Party Platform,” July 12, 1976, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsba.edu/documents/1976-democratic-party-platform>. See also “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” December 10, 1948, last accessed September 3, 2023, [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_217\(III\).pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_217(III).pdf); and Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, “Helsinki Final Act,” Basket Three, “Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields,” August 1, 1975, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/c/39501.pdf>.

the size of [the nation's] arsenal but on the nobility of [its] ideas."<sup>59</sup> Taking office after the twin traumas of the war in Vietnam and Watergate, Carter sought to return "moral values" to the nation's foreign policy. "Because [Americans] know that democracy works," he told the 1977 graduating class of the University of Notre Dame, "they can reject the arguments of those rulers who deny human rights to their people."<sup>60</sup> U.S. officials, of course, had long condemned communist violations of human rights, so Carter was signaling a new determination to hold U.S. allies accountable for their domestic policies. This is not the place to address the consequences of that policy. Suffice it to say, they were enormous, and often unintended.<sup>61</sup>

Carter's attempt to move U.S. foreign policy away from the Cold War came crashing down in late December 1979, when Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan.<sup>62</sup> In a 9:00 p.m. radio/television address to the nation on January 4, 1980, Carter called the Soviet invasion "a callous violation of international law and the United Nations Charter" and the "deliberate effort of a powerful atheistic government to subjugate an independent Islamic people," characterizations that focused on moral considerations in a fashion reminiscent of the Truman Doctrine. In the vein of the Eisenhower Doctrine, however, he went on to assert, "a Soviet-occupied Afghanistan . . . is a steppingstone to possible control over much of the world's oil supplies."<sup>63</sup> He reiterated the strategic importance of the region nineteen days later in his State of the Union Address, declaring, "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."<sup>64</sup> In stating a willingness to meet a Soviet military threat with a U.S. military response, Carter

59. Jimmy Carter, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1977, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-0>.

60. Jimmy Carter, "Address at Commencement Exercises at the University of Notre Dame," May 22, 1977, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-commencement-exercises-the-university-notre-dame>.

61. Joshua Muravchik, *The Uncertain Crusade: Jimmy Carter and the Dilemmas of Human Rights Policy* (Lanham, MD, 1986); Sandy Vogelgesang, *American Dream, Global Nightmare: The Dilemma of U.S. Human Rights Policy* (New York, 1980); and Kenneth Cmiel, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (1999): 1231–1250.

62. The best account of the Soviet invasion and its aftermath is Elisabeth Leake, *Afghan Crucible: The Soviet Invasion and the Making of Modern Afghanistan* (New York, 2022).

63. Jimmy Carter, "Address to the Nation on the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," January 4, 1980, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-the-soviet-invasion-afghanistan>.

64. Jimmy Carter, "The State of the Union Address Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Congress," January 23, 1980, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-state-the-union-address-delivered-before-joint-session-the-congress>.

was reverting to the Eisenhower Doctrine's authorization of force in the Middle East and the Kennedy/Johnson willingness to use military force to prevent further communist inroads in the Western Hemisphere. But where Soviet control of Middle Eastern oil during Eisenhower's presidency would primarily have hurt U.S. allies, Carter believed the growing U.S. reliance on Middle Eastern oil by 1980 made the prospect of hostile Soviet control over the region a direct challenge to vital U.S. interests.<sup>65</sup>

Like Truman and Eisenhower, Carter oversimplified the contemporary situation. There was no evidence that the Soviet Union intended to use the invasion of Afghanistan as the jumping off point for a larger assault on the Persian Gulf.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the likelihood of such a move diminished as the Afghani operation drew on. Moreover, the president's single-minded focus on Soviet aggression in Afghanistan belied the complex social, religious, economic, and political forces that were at work in the Middle East in the same way the Eisenhower Doctrine had earlier. Iran's Islamic Revolution perfectly illustrated the effects of these forces. By driving the shah into exile and ending the nation's decades-long position as a staunch U.S. ally, it posed a much larger direct challenge to U.S. petroleum sources than the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>67</sup>

If it took the shock of that invasion to remind Jimmy Carter that the Cold War still simmered, his successor needed no such reminder. Ronald Reagan had spent his life as a die-hard anti-communist, famously—or infamously—using his position as president of the Screen Actors Guild to “name” his fellow actors to the House Un-American Activities Committee during the 1940s.<sup>68</sup> Succeeding decades had done nothing to dim his feelings. The GOP platform on which Reagan ran in 1980 declared that the “premier challenge facing the United States and its allies . . . is to check the Soviet Union's global ambitions,” which just during the Carter administration had resulted in “the Soviets or their clients hav[ing] taken over Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and South Yemen, and hav[ing] solidified their grasp on a host of other nations in the developing world.” Harkening back to the bipolar language of the Truman Doctrine, the platform asserted that under GOP leadership, the United States would “spare no efforts to publicize to the world the fundamental differences in the two systems,” “articulate U.S. values and policies,” and “highlight the weaknesses of totalitarianism.”<sup>69</sup>

65. Meg Jacobs, *Panic at the Pump: The Energy Crisis and the Transformation of American Politics in the 1970s* (New York, 2016), 250–257.

66. On this point, see, for example: Melvyn P. Leffler, “From the Truman Doctrine to the Carter Doctrine: Lessons and Dilemmas of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 7, no. 4 (1983): 257–259.

67. On the Islamic Revolution, see: Darioush Bayandor, *The Shah, the Islamic Revolution, and the United States* (New York, 2019); and Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran* (New York, 1986).

68. H. W. Brands, *Reagan: The Life* (New York, 2016), 80–97.

69. “Republican Party Platform of 1980,” July 15, 1980, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/republican-party-platform-1980>.

Reagan emphasized these ideas throughout his presidency. Speaking before the British Parliament in June 1982, he waxed hopefully about what he termed the “global campaign for democracy now gathering force” throughout the world. Reflecting the bipolar language of the Truman Doctrine, he asked, “Who would voluntarily choose not to have the right to vote, decide to purchase government propaganda handouts instead of independent newspapers, prefer government to worker-controlled unions, opt for land to be owned by the state instead of those who till it, want government repression of religious liberty, a single political party instead of a free choice, a rigid cultural orthodoxy instead of democratic tolerance and diversity?” The answer, of course, was no one.<sup>70</sup>

But Reagan did much more than merely publicize the differences between the free and communist worlds. He did what Eisenhower had merely talked about by actively trying to roll back communist gains around the world. What came to be called the Reagan Doctrine was articulated in the president’s State of the Union Address in February 1985.<sup>71</sup> In its simplest form, it stated, “We must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth.” In arguing that “support for freedom fighters is self-defense,” the president linked the outcome of struggles against communist regimes in far-away lands with the well-being of the United States in the same way Truman had done with Greece and Turkey and Eisenhower had with the Middle East. But where Truman’s tools had been economic and military aid and Eisenhower’s the direct use of U.S. troops, Reagan, like Nixon, would rely on proxies.<sup>72</sup>

The ongoing struggle in Nicaragua, where the leftist Sandinista National Liberation Front had overthrown the pro-U.S. Somoza family dictatorship in 1979, received special mention in his address, but the Reagan Doctrine was not bound geographically and ultimately led to U.S. support for the Contras in Nicaragua, the Afghani mujahideen, Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA in Angola, and others.<sup>73</sup> As Chester Pach has noted, “Most of the ‘freedom fighters’ that the

70. Ronald Reagan, “Address to Members of the British Parliament,” June 8, 1982, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-members-the-british-parliament>.

71. Robert W. Tucker, *Intervention and the Reagan Doctrine* (New York, 1985); and Mark P. Lagon, *The Reagan Doctrine: Sources of American Conduct in the Cold War’s Last Chapter* (Westport, CT, 1994).

72. Ronald Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union,” February 6, 1985, The American Presidency Project, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-joint-session-the-congress-the-state-the-union-5>.

73. Stephen S. Rosenfeld, “The Guns of July,” *Foreign Affairs* 64, no. 4 (1986): 698–724; Ted Galen Carpenter, “U.S. Aid to Anti-Communist Rebels: The ‘Reagan Doctrine’ and Its Pitfalls,” Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 74, June 24, 1986, last accessed September 3, 2023, <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/us-aid-anti-communist-rebels-reagan-doctrine-its-pitfalls>; Walter F. Hahn, ed., *Central America and the Reagan Doctrine* (Lanham, MD, 1987); American

administration supported were allies of convenience, more appealing for what they opposed than for the values they espoused.<sup>74</sup> None of these groups was democratic in any meaningful sense. But they were anti-communist, and that was what mattered, in the same way it had mattered previously in other places. Here, Reagan and others in his administration stood behind the emerging neo-conservative distinction between authoritarian states (which were acceptable) and totalitarian ones (which were not). Because the former could evolve into democracies, they could be tolerated. (As we have seen, this same argument had guided U.S. policymakers from Truman on.) Totalitarianism, however, meant communism, the “weaknesses” of which the 1980 Republican platform had pledged to “highlight.” Unacceptable in any form, it had to be turned back.<sup>75</sup> In other words, the Reagan Doctrine jettisoned the defensive posture of previous Cold War doctrines that sought to contain communism for an offensive posture of actively working, albeit through surrogates, to subvert communist governments around the world.

Presidential foreign policy doctrines advanced during the Cold War put forth a variety of principles. At the dawn of the East-West confrontation, Harry S. Truman drew on U.S. democratic traditions to commit the United States to aiding countries that were resisting internal or external communist pressures. Almost a decade later, after the Cold War had moved from Europe to the developing world, Dwight D. Eisenhower emphasized geostrategic considerations in pledging that U.S. troops would, if requested, assist countries in the Middle East that were being threatened by communism. After the establishment of a communist state, Cuba, in the Western Hemisphere, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson vowed to resist the establishment of another (and Johnson sent troops to the Dominican Republic to back those words with action). Confronted with the deep toll of the nation’s involvement in Vietnam, Richard M. Nixon, alone among Cold War presidents, called for a contraction of the U.S. role in the world in charging Asian states with providing the manpower for their own defense. Despite his best efforts to craft a foreign policy that moved beyond the Cold War, Jimmy Carter was ultimately forced to commit the United States to protecting access to Persian Gulf oil at all costs, including military intervention. And Ronald Reagan assured a variety of anti-communist

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Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, *The Reagan Doctrine and Beyond* (Washington, D.C., 1988); Cynthia J. Arnon, *Crossroads: Congress, the Reagan Administration, and Central America* (New York, 1989); Michael McFaul, “Rethinking the ‘Reagan Doctrine’ in Angola,” *International Security* 14, no. 3 (1989–1990): 99–135; Fareed Zakaria, “The Reagan Strategy of Containment,” *Political Science Quarterly* 105, no. 3 (1990): 373–395; and James M. Scott, ed., *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, NC, 1996).

74. Chester Pach, “The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism, and Policy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 88. See also: Robert H. Johnson, “Misguided Morality: Ethics and the Reagan Doctrine,” *Political Science Quarterly* 103, no. 3 (1988): 509–539.

75. Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 317–318.

resistance groups that they could count on U.S. assistance as they attempted to turn back communist gains across the globe.

For contemporaries, Cold War doctrines introduced or sought to “sell” new foreign policy directions or justified or explained policies that had already been implemented. They were also often reflections of domestic U.S. society. By focusing the nation’s attention on specific foreign policy developments, Cold War doctrines served as educational instruments, explaining to the American people how events thousands of miles from U.S. shores could still affect the nation’s security—and by implication, their general well-being. In this way, they were vehicles for engendering a basic sense of public internationalism. They were also reflections of U.S. power—whether economic, military, or moral. And by highlighting a succession of communist challenges around the world, they reminded the American people that the Cold War was a long-term struggle that required a long-term U.S. commitment. In this way, they argued for an activist U.S. foreign policy in service to the nation’s containment-oriented Cold War strategy.

For scholars, Cold War doctrines can demonstrate continuity and change within and across presidential administrations, illustrate the impact of the Cold War on the nation’s traditions and core values, and provide windows into shifting conceptions of Cold War national security. Taken together, they illustrate the global U.S. reach during the Cold War, particularly as the East-West struggle moved beyond Europe. Scholars can also use them as tools for charting the Cold War’s consequences. On a tangible level, this is evident in the U.S. economic and military commitments many of the doctrines proclaimed. Less tangibly, however, Cold War doctrines also reveal how the overarching goal of containing communism at virtually all costs led the United States to look the other way at the non-democratic practices of a host of Cold War allies and clients. In other words, they demonstrate the deleterious consequences of the Cold War for long-standing American principles, as political expediency overtook time-honored principle. Put simply, Cold War doctrines’ rhetoric rarely matched reality.

Although this brief tour of presidential doctrines has not been meant to suggest that they present a complete picture of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War, it has, I hope, made the case for giving those doctrines their due. Studying them, and other public-facing foreign policy statements, does not obviate the need to mine formerly classified materials, and those sources will remain a mainstay of scholarship in our field. But they should not be our only concern. In the end, U.S. Cold War doctrines are worth quite a lot and fully deserve our consideration.