U.S. Foreign Policy After Hiroshima

The Winning Weapon. The Atomic Bomb in the Cold War, 1945–1950. GREGG HERKEN. Knopf, New York, 1980. xiv, 428 pp., illus. $15.

Based on extensive research in archival sources and manuscript collections, *The Winning Weapon* is a provocative and timely examination of the role of the atomic bomb in shaping American diplomacy and molding American military strategy between 1945 and 1950.

The author dwells upon a series of illusions and inconsistencies that characterized American policy-makers' attitudes toward the bomb. Most American officials believed the United States would preserve its atomic monopoly well into the postwar years and would maintain its superiority even after the Soviet Union developed its own bomb. Likewise, American officials assumed that the bomb would prove to be a trump card in diplomatic bargaining and a decisive weapon in war. These attitudes, Herken argues, were misguided and erroneous. They accentuated the importance of the bomb in American diplomacy and strategy, fostered a climate of secrecy and suspicion at home and abroad, accelerated an armaments race, and intensified the Cold War.

Herken does a fine job elucidating the conflicting views within the Truman Administration on how to use the bomb most effectively to implement American foreign policy goals. A small group of policy-makers, including Dean Acheson and David Lilienthal, were influenced by the retiring Secretary of War, Henry Stimson. They sought to share scientific knowledge with the Soviets in order to secure Russian cooperation for a program of international control of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. In 1945, Herken claims, they were strongly influenced by atomic scientists who argued that the American monopoly would be short-lived in any case; hence it made sense to use the prospect of sharing scientific knowledge, much of which the Soviets already had, to elicit Russian cooperation on a host of postwar issues.

Opposed to this orientation was a much larger group of officials led by General Leslie Groves, Admiral William Leahy, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, and Secretary of the Treasury Fred Vinson. Groves, who had been wartime director of the Manhattan Project, played a particularly significant role in shaping the Truman Administration's postwar policies. Disregarding considerable scientific advice, Groves insisted that the American nuclear monopoly would endure indefinitely. He repeatedly maintained that the Russians had insufficient raw materials and an inadequate industrial and technological infrastructure to develop the bomb quickly. Accordingly, he argued that the United States should not share any scientific information lest it augment Soviet capability to acquire the bomb. He and others believed that the American monopoly could instead be used to intimidate the Soviets into peacetime concessions or to obliterate them through an atomic blitz in wartime.

Herken demonstrates, however, that such thinking proved naïve and counter-effective. At the first postwar conference of foreign ministers in September 1945 Secretary of State James Byrnes thought he could use the bomb as leverage to secure a relaxation of Soviet policies in Eastern Europe. Such attempts were fruitless and seemed to intensify Soviet intransigence. Byrnes returned to the United States convinced of the need to adopt a different approach. Thereafter, he argued within Administration circles for a more cooperative policy on international control of atomic energy.

But Truman already had made up his mind. After an initial period of vacillation, the president succumbed to the advice of his hard-line advisers and to political pressures. The Canadian spy scandal of early 1946 was shrewdly manipulated by Groves and other opponents of international control to defeat the Acheson-Lilienthal forces. In this regard Herken does a superb job demonstrating how the Baruch Plan for international control of atomic energy differed from its progenitor, the Lilienthal-Acheson report. Indeed, the Baruch Plan seems to have been purposely designed to be non-negotiable. Hence the American position on atomic energy at the United Nations was aimed at avoiding serious dialogue and at achieving propaganda victories. Herken alludes to several Soviet concessions that were dismissed outright by Baruch.

American intransigence on the issue of international control of atomic energy was a consequence of growing alarm about Soviet intentions and mounting consternation about Western capabilities. During the early months of 1946 a consensus was emerging among top policy-makers in which the Soviet Union was regarded as an expansive, totalitarian power. Whereas heretofore intelligence reports and State Department experts had referred to the understandable, if not legitimate, Soviet quest for security, new appraisals by George Kennan and Forrestal dwelled upon the unlimited aims of the paranoid communist ideologues in the Kremlin. This coincided with the rapid demobilization of American forces and the growing American recognition of the unprecedented vacuum of power in Europe, which invited Soviet adventurism. All the more reason, then, for the United States to maintain its atomic monopoly as the only possible deterrent to Soviet expansion.

The latter part of Herken's book is a thorough examination of how dependence upon the bomb gradually shaped American military strategy. Initially, most military officials were slow to integrate atomic weaponry with traditional doctrine and strategy. Army officers, like General George Marshall, sought universal military training and naval officers feared that the Air Force would use the bomb to enhance American air power at the expense of the Navy. Accordingly, initial postwar planning was beleaguered by demobilization problems, fiscal constraints, service rivalries, and pervasive ignorance about the number of bombs and the prospects of using them effectively. At this time even Army, Navy, and Air Force planners were unaware of the dearth of bombs in the American arsenal and of the problems being encountered by the newly formed Atomic Energy Commission.

By mid-1947, however, serious war planning was under way. With budgetary constraints persisting and popular pressures precluding universal military training, there seemed to be no alternative to exclusive dependence on the bomb. The Air Force saw the opportunity to push its own interest and relentlessly called for a strategy based on air and atomic power. But the war plans assumed, and their success depended upon, either a short-term American monopoly or a long-term American superiority in atomic weapons. These war plans, in Herken's view, were inadequate not only because of the complacent view of Soviet atomic capabilities they embodied but also because of the gaps between military goals (a

devastating atomic blitz of Soviet urban and industrial areas) and military means (insufficient bombs and bombers) as well as between strategic doctrine and American ethical standards and wartime political objectives.

The exclusive dependence of the United States on its atomic arsenal meant that news of the Soviet atomic explosion in August 1949 was particularly shocking. The response of American policymakers was to opt immediately for the "superbomb," that is, the hydrogen bomb. The quest for superiority in nuclear weaponry, Herken maintains, had become a psychological as well as a military imperative. Without fully understanding just how the new or old atomic weaponry fit into a theory of deterrence or constituted a superior war-fighting capability, American officials nevertheless had become habituated to a position of atomic superiority. Hence neither assumptions nor goals were adequately reassessed when the H-bomb decision was made. The arms race took another leap forward as American officials were convinced that security could be achieved only through nuclear superiority.

Herken's book appears at a propitious moment. With the Reagan Administration embarking upon another round in the arms race, indeed the most costly one in the history of the Cold War, it is imperative to consider assumptions, conclusions, and alternatives. *The Winning Weapon* suggests that the quest for strategic superiority is elusive and shortsighted—elusive because it simply triggers a commensurate, if not larger, effort by our potential adversary, and shortsighted because superiority, even if possible, does not easily translate into diplomatic leverage, meaningful deterrent doctrine, or usable war-fighting strategy. By demonstrating that at the inception of the Cold War the United States made little effort to negotiate arms control accords in a serious manner, the author underscores the need to approach such talks in an open, imaginative, and constructive manner. The assumption that such agreements are more likely to be achieved when the United States is in a position of strength is belied by the author's account of atomic diplomacy between the bombing of Hiroshima and the Korean war.

But what are the alternatives? On this point the author is conspicuously silent. Although he intimates that a more flexible stand by the United States would have elicited reciprocal Soviet concessions, the author is unable to demonstrate this persuasively. Suggesting throughout the volume that American policy-makers disregarded the best advice of scientists regarding prospective Soviet development of the bomb, the author informs us in a footnote at the very end of the book that at least two of the nation's most prominent scientists reversed their initial view and believed it would take the Russians much longer than, in fact, was the case. Predicting Soviet capabilities was not as easy as the author occasionally suggests. Nor was it a simple matter either to reconcile military strategy with American ethical standards and political goals or to develop a force structure that fulfilled the requirements of both deterrence and war fighting.

The Winning Weapon is a welcome addition to the literature on atomic diplomacy and strategy. If Herken sometimes underestimates the dilemmas encountered by American officials, he nevertheless demonstrates that a return to the shibboleths of the past is unlikely to curtail the arms race, elicit Soviet cooperation, or produce a safer and more peaceful world.

MELVYN P. LEFFLER
Department of History, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235

Medicinal Drugs and Public Policy

Taking Your Medicine. Drug Regulation in the United States. PETER TEMIN. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1980. xiv, 274 pp. $18.50.

Researchers of many disciplines have been attracted to the complex subject of drug regulation in the United States. Their work has illuminated significant aspects of the public policy problems that drug regulation seeks to address, but the light has been refracted by the disciplinary lenses through which it was focused. Peter Temin is an economic historian, but *Taking Your Medicine* is much more than an economic history of drug regulation.

Temin describes three "modes of behavior" that pertain to the real and ideal worlds of medicinal drug use and regulation. The instrumental mode is the type of behavior that economists assume prevails in market settings and that they generalize to all circumstances where rational man confronts choices that enable him to maximize his utility. The customary mode is behavior by tradition or habit: Individuals and organizations operate by rules of thumb until they can no longer perform above a threshold; then they temporarily search for new rules that can restore satisfactory achievement levels. The command mode is behavior determined by the direction of an authority figure; you do as you are told to do. These three modes provide a useful analytic framework for the examination of drug regulation because each has a parallel institutional structure—markets, communities, hierarchies, respectively—and because the faults of regulation can be seen as mismatches between the assumed and actual behavior patterns of the actors in the system.

Temin recounts history that will not make the reader complacent about the legislative and administrative processes of U.S. drug regulation. The legislative process is slow, and final action appears without exception to have been stimulated by crises that are largely irrelevant to the provisions of the bill under consideration. Temin is not the first to recognize this characteristic of the legislative process, but he provides new insight regarding the role of the Food and Drug Administration and its predecessor agencies in shaping bills that are passed and, more important, in interpreting their intent through implementing regulations.

The most striking example of administrative discretion in the interpretation of new legislation is the prescription-only regulation that was promulgated to enforce the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938. During hearings, FDA told the Congress that the 1938 Act would improve and facilitate self-medication, but the implementing regulations greatly curtailed it. The regulations went so far as to require that directions for use of prescription drugs "appear only in such medical terms as are not likely to be understood by the ordinary individual." This is the origin of the product descriptions and prescribing information that now appear in the form of official package circulars, which are largely uninformative even to the medical audience to which they are directed.

Temin's careful examination of the FDA administrative process tends to undermine the arguments of those who attribute the decline in new drug introduction in the 1960's to the 1962 Drug Amendments. These explanations, advanced by several economists, do not recognize the considerable delay between the 1962 amendments and the implementing regulations that, without question, served to make the drug-approval process more stringent. The mes-