“Don’t Step on My Blue Suede Shoes” —Deterrence and the Origins of Dissent in Cold War America

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On January 6, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt delivered his “Four Freedoms” speech in which he laid the ideological ground not only for American entry into the Second World War but for policies the United States would pursue in the years immediately following the war. Two of Roosevelt’s “four freedoms,” freedom of speech and “ freedom of every person to worship God in his own way,” derive directly from the American Bill of Rights, the first set of amendments to the American Constitution, and were envisioned as universal in scope−freedoms, as Roosevelt reiterated in his speech, to which human beings “everywhere in the world” were entitled (“Speech to Congress”). With the war drawing to a close, Roosevelt, in his fourth inaugural, would declare America “the hope of all peoples in an anguished world” and the American people prepared “to strike mighty blows for freedom” (“Fourth Inaugural Address”).

Whether Roosevelt had the atomic bomb in mind when he made these remarks, the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki would leave the United States undisputed victor in a war that had devastated the societies and economies of allies and adversaries alike, and American policy makers eager to rebuild the world in its own image. Confronting a prostrate Japan and a Europe that had been reduced, as reported to Roosevelt’s successor, Harry Truman, by John J. McCloy,

chief aide to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, in April, 1945, to a state of "complete economic, social and political collapse the extent of which is unparalleled in history unless one goes back to the collapse of the Roman Empire" (Walker 28), America was, as Truman announced in his victory proclamation, not only "the strongest nation in the world" but "perhaps in all history" (Fousek 38, 26). It was a victory rooted, as Truman asserted in his VJ Day speech, in "Liberty," a principle which "provides the greatest strength and the greatest power which man has ever reached" (Fousek 35). With the United States, in Winston Churchill's words, "at the summit of world power" (Fousek 37), American policy makers, convinced the "planet needed a new system and the American one was the best candidate," were prepared to realize Roosevelt's vision of freedoms for the individual and "a world of free markets, national sovereignties and open borders" (Campbell and Radchenko xv).

There was little in August 1945, it would seem, that stood in America's way. The foundations of the new American *imperium* had been laid in the course of mobilization and building up the logistical systems necessary for waging war across two oceans and four continents. In marshalling, dispatching and maintaining over sixteen million military personnel on fronts located in dozens of countries and territories thousands of miles from North America, the American armed forces had created a globe-spanning network of army, navy and air force bases, civilian suppliers, and transport routes−in terms of numbers of personnel and scope of operations, outstripping by several degrees of magnitude anything that had been created by Europe's great colonial powers. With war's end, the United States occupied broad swathes of Europe, exercised de facto control of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and, with its chain of bases extending across the western Pacific from the Philippines to northern Japan, dominated Asia's eastern flank. American fleets ruled the Atlantic, the Pacific and Mediterranean; its air forces were unchallenged

in the world's skies. In the former Axis powers, the United States had quickly exercised its prerogatives as victor and established military governments, which assumed all vital political and administrative functions. With a vastly expanded industrial capacity built up in the course of the war and its enormous, untapped reserves of raw materials, the United States possessed an economic power which no nation at the time could begin to rival.[1] But most decisively, with the production and deployment of the atomic bomb, America possessed the most powerful, most destructive weapon ever devised; a weapon with which, as Truman put it in reporting the bombing of Hiroshima, the United States had "harnessed the basic power of the universe" (Webb 43).

But if America "stood at the summit of world power," the Soviets, who had launched their own atomic program in 1942, were loathe to acknowledge, much less accede to, American leadership. At war's end, Truman and his advisers, again following Roosevelt's lead, had continued to negotiate with Stalin, but the installation of Soviet-backed regimes in Eastern bloc countries, quickly persuaded Truman further cooperation with America's erstwhile ally would accomplish little. What is perhaps most striking about the politics of the immediate postwar period is not simply the rapidity with which policy proposals of unprecedented geopolitical scope were put forward and implemented, but the speed with which they were ratified by the United States Congress, the press and media, and by the broader American public. Beginning with his letter to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes in January 1946 in which for the first time an American president asserted the necessity of "a permanent American overseas commitment," Truman was to argue not only for continued deployment of American troops in Europe but for "complete control of Japan and the Pacific … we should rehabilitate China and create a strong central government there … we should do the same for Korea" (Walker

37). George Kennan's "Long Telegram" of February 1946, with its characterization of Soviet communism as a contagion requiring a quarantine; Churchill's "iron curtain" speech delivered in Fulton, Missouri in April 1946, which portrayed the Soviets as "a peril to Christian civilization;" Clarke Clifford's memorandum of July 1946 which advocated that the United States "should be prepared to join with the British and other Western countries in an attempt to build up a world of our own," all contributed to the new sense of urgency and crisis. The promulgation of the Truman Doctrine and the request for $400 million in aid for Greece and Turkey in March 1947 in which Truman committed the United States to the defense of "free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures ;" the unveiling at Harvard University in June 1947 of Secretary of State George C. Marshall's plan for massive economic aid to assist in prompt European economic recovery and "the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist" (Walker 42-51); the passage of the National Security Act in July 1947 which brought into being the National Security Council and Central Intelligence Agency, and consolidated the armed services for the first time into a single Department of Defense "in order to bring military strategy more directly under the purview of the president" (McMahon 53), all served to strengthen and consolidate American power, to justify commitment of American resources across a broad series of fronts, and signaled a fundamental shift towards a globally-oriented defense and America as a hegemonic super-power.[2]

But whatever America's ambitions, and whatever its military and economic strengths, by 1947 the Soviets had developed a long-range bombing capability and in September 1949–several years before American scientists and military experts had believed possible–the Soviets tested their first atomic bomb, bringing into question assumptions about American military superiority underpinning the policy

of containment. With the Soviets in possession of the atomic bomb and long range aircraft capable of reaching American soil, the United States found itself on uncharted strategic terrain. Addressing the issue of this historically unprecedented vulnerability, key advisers became less concerned with containing the communist menace than assessing the immediate military implications of the atomic bomb itself. Strategists like Bernard Brodie and Thomas Schelling, academics associated with the RAND Corporation, the think tank founded in 1946 by the United States Air Force, understood the most urgent problem America faced was defending the country in the event of renewed hostilities, a conflict which would almost certainly be fought with nuclear weapons. Eschewing the ideological issues which absorbed politicians and policy makers, Brodie and Schelling directed their attention almost solely to problems of military strategy and of what a country could do to prepare itself for war in the atomic age, irrespective of a country's particular political goals. The key question was that posed by the existence and deployment of the atomic bomb itself, its terrifying destructiveness, and what could be done to build up a nation's defenses, not only on the part of the military, but by those who in all likelihood would be the principal targets– civilian populations for the most part centered in the cities. How would the bomb be used in the event of a war in which both sides possessed the weapon? With postwar demobilization and Americans eager to return to some form of normal life, would Americans be prepared for a war in which the continental United States could, for the first time in its history, become the target of an attack launched from outside North America? In seeking to answer these questions, Brodie and Schelling would come to play a key role in determining not only national defense policy but, given the degree to which war now involved whole populations, efforts to shape collective behavior in the Cold War.

Bernard Brodie, a University of Chicago trained political scientist who had seen service as a naval officer during the war and had published a widely-distributed book on naval strategy, would assert that the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had rendered virtually all previous thinking on military strategy irrelevant, and that the new weapon posed an unprecedented set of problems for defense experts. In *The Absolute Weapon*, the seminal work on Cold War military strategy published in 1946 (Brodie was editor and chief contributor), the atomic bomb is described as "the toughest problem which (military strategists) had ever had to face" (5). Unlike military thinkers who saw the bomb as simply offering vastly increased firepower in highly compact form,[3] Brodie understood that both the speed with which atomic war would be fought and the scale of the destruction had "altered the basic character of war" (4): "It is now physically possible for air forces no greater than those existing in the recent war to wipe out all the cities of a great nation in a single day" (25). Brodie clearly grasped that development of the bomb and modern air power meant "the distance separating the Soviet Union from the United States offers no immunity with respect to atomic bomb attack" (40). Having comprehended the horrifying consequences of nuclear war, he was "not concerned about who will *win* the next war" because war now meant "the probable annihilation of both victor and vanquished" (4). Thus Brodie would conclude while "the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars," its "chief purpose from now on must be to avert them" (76).

Nevertheless, Brodie believed strategists had to understand the power and complexities of the bomb and, indeed, that atomic war, too, had to be prepared for. Only by taking steps to prepare for atomic war could one hope to prevent it. In making this argument–which did much to undercut efforts by atomic scientists

and others seeking to “internationalize” the bomb–Brodie was the first strategist with access to the policy establishment (a colleague of George Kennan at the War College, he was subsequently assistant to General Hoyt Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff) to formulate in explicit terms the modern notion of ‘deterrence;’ thus laying the foundations for the strategy on which American defense policy was built and maintained up to the end of the Cold War. Deterrence, as Brodie described it, relied on a certain notion of retaliation or, more precisely, the necessity of taking all measures to ensure that a nation would be in the position to retaliate no matter how much damage it had sustained were it to be attacked. For Brodie, this required deploying a force of such magnitude, or sufficiently protected, that enough aircraft and bombs would survive, thus providing the capability to strike back. Only in this fashion could an adversary be dissuaded from any thought of launching an attack in the first place. Deterrence meant taking “all possible steps to assure that the aggressor who uses the bomb will have it used against him” – what Brodie called “retaliation in kind” –and that an adversary plainly understood this (75-76). Communicating to the enemy not only the nature of one’s military strength and one’s readiness to use it, but a people’s support of its government, to a potential adversary lay at the heart of what in the course of the Cold War would be called “credibility.” Brodie’s insistence on the strategic preeminence of a nation’s air forces, on the production and stockpiling of a large quantity of bombs, and a nation’s need to maintain its ‘credibility,’ would all become key elements in America’s (and later, for that matter, the Soviets’) Cold War defense strategy. Indeed, as the new logic of deterrence was absorbed by policy makers, it became clear that containment policy itself–in particular, lending economic and political support to nations near to or on the periphery of the Soviet Union–assumed an increasingly military aspect as the United States came to perceive allies in terms

of their strategic value. Following the thinking initiated by Brodie, President Dwight Eisenhower would create the Strategic Air Command, which, with the rapid development of jet-powered aircraft under Curtis LeMay, would become the much publicized, central pillar of American Cold War defense and the basis of Eisenhower's air-force based nuclear "New Look" –a strategy Eisenhower believed offered the U.S. maximum power in a world where experts saw ground forces playing an ever-diminishing role.

In *The Strategy of Conflict*, Thomas Schelling, a young economist with an interest in 'game theory' and how 'competitors' behaved when engaged in a bargaining process (Schelling would win the 2005 Nobel Prize in economics for this work), pursued some of Brodie's ideas, in particular, the fact that in atomic war not only military and industrial sites but whole populations become targets. For Schelling, as for Brodie, the development of the atomic bomb signaled the beginning of a new "epoch in warfare" (23). The atomic bomb and the long range bomber changed not only "the speed of events" –the rapidity with which an aggressor could dispatch its forces and reach targets within an adversary's territory– but also "the relation of victor to vanquished," (23), i.e. the difficulty, given the massive destructiveness of an atomic attack, of determining what precisely constituted victory. Stressing that "Nuclear weapons change the relation of homeland to fighting front" (23), Schelling came to the insight that "deterrence" relies on "a massive and modern version of an ancient institution–the exchange of hostages":

> In older times, one committed himself to a promise by delivering his hostages into the hands of his distrustful 'partner'; today's military technology makes it possible to have the lives of an enemy's women and children within one'

> s grasp while he keeps those women and children thousands of miles away. As each side has the power to destroy a nation’s population in response to an attack by the other, hostages may be the only device by which” war can be prevented (239).

The notion of an entire population being held ‘hostage’ would raise a host of questions pertaining to the reaction and response of civilians to the threat of atomic war–and indeed would become an increasingly critical issue in efforts to grasp the larger social and political consequences of deterrence and how to maintain the nation and its people in a state of constant readiness. If whole populations were now to play an explicit role in strategists’ equations–both as targets and in their new, somewhat odd guise as hostages–the question of how a people as a nation would respond and how its behavior would be perceived and assessed by an adversary became decisive. Were an adversary to perceive fear or a people wavering in its commitment to its government or its defense policies, this could conceivably tempt an opponent to launch a strike in the belief a targeted nation would not in fact possess the political will to retaliate. For this reason what Lori Lyn Bogle has characterized as a “unified national will” (84) became not simply a political desideratum but an essential requirement of modern deterrence. In a study of how to “reduce vulnerability to atomic bombs,” Ansley Coale would speak of creating “an organic complex within the nation, constituted of combat personnel and their accumulated equipment; the industrial structure to produce further materials; the labor force to support the war-producing economy; and the administrative nucleus to keep the organism in proper function” (17).[4]

With the Soviet atomic test in September 1949, the ideas of Brodie and Schelling were no longer simply a matter of conjecture, hypothesis and ‘game theory.’

The speed with which the Soviets had gained a nuclear capability prompted President Truman to call for a comprehensive review of national defense policy, which led in April 1950 to the issuance of National Security Council Memorandum 68, a document which became the blueprint for American Cold War policy. Reaffirming America's commitment to 'containment' and the ideological basis on which containment had been predicated– "the defense of free peoples everywhere" –NSC 68 continued to characterize the United States as "the center of power in the free world," and called upon the United States to "organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world" to "frustrate the Kremlin design for world domination" (5/7).[5] Indeed, given what was perceived, in the wake of communist victory in China, as a newly emboldened Soviet Union, the document sought to justify further extension of containment: "a defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere" (3/7). NSC 68 nevertheless confirmed that with Soviet development of an atomic bomb the strategic situation had changed dramatically and Americans, while in "the ascendancy of their strength," now found themselves in their moment of "deepest peril … the integrity and vitality of our system in greater jeopardy than ever before in our history" (2/2; 1/4). It had become imperative "the American people, and all free peoples" understand "that the survival of the free world is at stake … the issues that face us momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself" (6/7; 2/2).

In line with the thinking of the nuclear strategists, NSC 68 made it clear that what John Fousek has called a "politics of national unity" –unequivocally displayed support by Americans for the nation, its government and government policies–was a matter of the highest national priority. Signs of 'disunity' or, in political terms, lack of 'loyalty,' could be interpreted by an adversary as symptoms of discontent, apathy or outright opposition to a country's nuclear policies. Given

the role played by civilian populations in nuclear war and concerns that Americans remained vulnerable to 'subversion,' national security required that Americans remain 'unified' in their "moment of greatest peril." But given what Lori Lyn Bogle has referred to a "the nation's diffuse pluralism" (84), how would one go about ensuring the American people displayed the "unified national will" (84) essential to the implementation of deterrence?

While repeatedly invoking the freedoms Americans enjoyed and America's leadership of the "free world," NSC 68 underscored that in a time of national emergency "A large measure of sacrifice and discipline will be demanded." It would be necessary that Americans "give up some of the benefits which they have come to associate with their freedoms" (3/4). While asserting the freedoms Americans enjoyed made for a more "cohesive" society than that of the Soviets, NSC 68 also argued that from a strategic perspective "a police state has an enormous advantage in maintaining the necessary security and centralization of decision required" in time of war (2/7). Pursuing such claims, NSC 68 would recommend "Development of internal security programs" (15/17)-many, such as Truman's institution of loyalty oaths for federal employees, already in existence, but vastly expanded following the first Russian atomic test in September 1949. The FBI and other organizations, including the United States Congress, were thus to extend their surveillance of citizens and organizations viewed as capable not only of "espionage, subversion and sabotage" but of instigating "prolonged economic instability" (e.g. labor union activists) or those who might sow the seeds of "internal political and social disunity" (2/7).

It is largely in terms of a national defense policy grounded in the specific requirements of deterrence that the social and political dynamic of the early Cold

War era can be understood–not simply the demand by anti-communist crusaders that Americans demonstrate their "loyalty" and remain alert to 'subversion,' but that Americans go about living their lives in accord with American ideals of freedom. Americans were in a certain sense subject to two distinct sets of demands: one in line with the ideological emphasis of containment, dictating that they demonstrate, by their participation in the political system and their way of life, their commitment to freedom: that they serve, on the level of ideology, as a model for what a free society could be. But Americans were simultaneously called upon to sacrifice liberties in the name of national security, a demand all the more urgent in light of anxieties arising from awareness of what the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1947 called "the atomic bomb's power to 'break the will of nations and of peoples'" (Oakes 35).

Increasingly aware of Americans being "subject to new, harrowing tests of resolve," and the possibility of Americans succumbing to fear, panic, and dissension, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations undertook to address concern about "the emotional stability of Americans" (Oakes 21, 39), instituting an array of policies Americans (what Guy Oakes has in fact dubbed a "comprehensive system of emotion management" [33]) designed to bolster the confidence of Americans but, more crucially, intended to gain support for a national defense policy which relied on the use–or the threatened use–of the atomic bomb. Andrew Grossman writes of how "the logic of (deterrence) entail(ed) a strategic role for home-front preparedness": specifically, that "the general population not only had to be made aware of (the) possibility (of an attack) but had to be prepared for such an attack in order to deter it" (43). What this meant was not that Americans retreat into what Wini Breines has called an "engineered passivity," but that in various ways Americans show their active support of the government and its policies (63). As

Leo Alexander, a psychiatrist participating in a series of conferences on the social impact of the Cold War funded by the Macy Foundation, made clear, it was essential that Americans keep up their morale, "morale" being defined as "a high degree of optimism and purposeful activity in the face of adversity" (105). If it has been the intimidation and coercive aspects of the early Cold War which have attracted the interest of cultural historians (in particular, the new postwar anti-communism and Senator Joe McCarthy's rise to power with his virulent persecution of State Department and other government officials in the wake of the first Soviet atomic test),[6] neither quiescence nor mere obeisance were sufficient indicators of 'unity.' Government, universities and foundations devoted considerable resources to formulating policies that would energize Americans and induce them to contribute to the national defense effort, such measures as would enable Americans to overcome, on the one side, anxieties about the atomic bomb, but, on the other, to prevent them from being lulled into "passive contentedness" by the prosperity of the postwar years and the apparent 'normality' of everyday American life (Alexander 106). The New York Academy of Medicine organized symposia attended by national security experts on "Panic and Morale," published a book of this title with material on assisting victims of an atomic bomb attack, and called for leaders who displayed a "calm and stability that inspired confidence and trust" (Alexander 114). In efforts to inform Americans and help them come to grips with the possibility of an attack, the Atomic Energy Commission in 1950 issued a volume *The Effects of Atomic Weapons*, detailing how communities could protect themselves against blast and radiation. In *Total Atomic Defense*, Sylvian G. Kindall recommended steps to be taken to minimize the damage and number of deaths resulting from an atomic war, including dispersal of the American population into safer, rural areas in accord with a new government 'homesteading' program' (160ff).

The principal efforts of the government to prepare civilians for atomic war, however, centered on the Federal Civil Defense Agency (FCDA), created by Truman in 1951 and charged with the task of disseminating information, providing civil defense training, and advising local governments on the most effective methods for ensuring the safety and survival of individuals, families and communities. Among programs instituted by the FDCA were the "Alert America" campaign which sought to make Americans aware of the effects of nuclear attack, "while avoiding 'at all costs the creation of any feeling of helplessness or resignation on the part of the people once they (were) made to understand the gravity of the situation'" (Bogle 88). Its initial efforts met with considerable success. By 1951 the FDCA had recruited 1.8 million civil defense workers, a number that would rise to 4.5 million in 1953 (McEnaney 62). Over 800,000 were recruited by the Ground Observer Corps for such programs as "Skywatch", which relied on ordinary citizens manning over 8,000 observation towers, mostly in states along the northern border, to function as America's first early warning system (Schaffel 134-157).

In its efforts to distribute information about civil defense, the FCDA targeted American schools which became the site of widespread efforts to prepare American children and their families for the eventuality of an attack. Andrew Hartman has shown how for many educators schools became not only training sites for civil defense (air raid drills were conducted on a regular basis in American elementary, junior and senior high schools beginning in the early 1950s), but how schools were also charged with instilling fortitude and "maturity," thus helping Americans "adjust" to the realities of the atomic age. Hartman writes of how an ideology of "maturity" emerged from the crucible of the Cold War:

Ignorant, irresponsible, and immature Americans were thought to be helpless

> in the face of the wily communist enemy … Immaturity was a psychological affliction to which adjustment was designated the cure. This belief in the easy manipulation of immaturity was transposed upon U.S. society as a whole. Unless the United States collectively matured and adjusted to its difficult but necessary role as the leader of the “free world,” the nation was at serious risk. Thus, nothing less than the nation’s survival was thought to be dependent on the secondary schools as a means to inculcate maturity. In this way, the crisis of the Cold War was experienced as a crisis in education. (58)

There was thus on the one side an attempt to make American schools more democratic in the belief this would contribute to a new sense of responsibility and commitment among American youth. On the other, educators like James Conant, president of Harvard, sought a more talented, more highly motivated ‘elite.’ Conant believed America required “a better-trained and more organized class of managers to replace the American leadership system … a stagnant, New England-style aristocracy that lacked the prerequisite imagination and authority for the massive task of waging the Cold War” (Hartman 64). It was partly to advance Conant’s goals that, for instance, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was introduced to “depose the existing, undemocratic American elite and replace it with a new one made up of brainy, elaborately trained, public-spirited people drawn from every section and every background” (Hartman 64). Ideally, the newly democratized educational system would increase the sense of opportunity, thus contributing further to realization of the “American way of life” and eliciting a renewed sense of commitment among American youth.

But as Elaine Tyler May and Laura McEnaney have shown, the central focus of Civil Defense campaigns was ultimately the American family. May has described

how a certain image of the American family was propagated in the belief that involvement in domestic life would insulate Americans from “dangerous social forces” perceived to threaten Cold War America (14). The home was the “center of postwar ideals,” a means of affirming faith in the future and the continued possibility of a normal life (20). But as May observes, the postwar ideology of the family served to reinforce boundaries between the domestic on the one side and the public or political on the other, a development which explains what she calls “the apolitical tenor of middle-class postwar life” (14).

In a somewhat different take, President Truman himself had evoked images of families as bastions of home-front defense; recalling a frontier past “When Indians mounted assault,” he spoke of how “the men armed themselves. Women reloaded rifles, and older children looked after younger siblings” (Oakes 130)–in other words, family perceived not as a place of refuge but as a fighting unit taking an active role in its own defense and signaling the readiness of the American people to deal with whatever the consequences of conflict might be. Family became the principal target of civil defense efforts not only in practical terms (the building of shelters, the stockpiling of food, water and medical supplies) but as the social unit most immediately responsible for instilling traits of character–staunch determination and steadfastness–required in a time of national emergency. As the political scientist Robert Jervis notes in a study of psychology and deterrence, “Early critics of deterrence argued that fear would lead to rage, increased conflict, and miscalculation” (5). Dean Acheson, Truman’s Secretary of State, had spoken of preparedness in terms of “self-discipline, rational calculation and level-headed judgment” –qualities which would be associated with the re-domesticized nuclear family, in which the father had resumed his position of authority and leadership (McEnaney 34).

The affirmation of family as a frontline of defense, however, also brought with it a new preoccupation, in what McEnaney calls “the psychiatric culture of civil defense,” with the psychological dynamics of the family, in particular the relation between parent and child, and questions of how precisely the “character” of children and adolescents was formed. This interest was fuelled in part by growing alarm about perceived anti-social tendencies among America’s youth. If the national unity required by Cold War defense policy rested on overt displays of loyalty and unequivocal commitment to an American ‘way of life,’ it was put to the test by those at the margins of society, i.e., adolescents who were seen to occupy a boundary zone between the confines of the family and an uncertain adulthood beyond it. No longer subject to monitoring by parental figures but not as yet integrated into adult society, juveniles were viewed as a potential threat to a socially cohesive polity. Anxiety about American youth was reflected in the ‘panic’ over juvenile delinquency in the early fifties–which for any number of politicians represented more of a threat to American society than communism. Senator Robert Hendrickson, a member of the Kefauver committee investigating juvenile delinquency in the early fifties, saw the menace posed by juveniles as greater than that of communism: “Not even the communist conspiracy could devise a more effective way to demoralize, disrupt, and destroy our future citizens than apathy on the part of adult Americans to the scourge known as juvenile delinquency” (Hartman 56).

In seeking to respond to the potential for disruption posed by American youth, psychologists and sociologists sought to understand the challenges confronting youth in the postwar period. The Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons, a member of the Committee on National Morale, argued that sweeping change associated with the war had caused vast social and economic upheaval–a situation which persisted into the postwar years with the uncertainties associated with the atomic bomb (Buxton

108). The demands of a new technologically and defense-oriented economy meant youth spent more time in schools before assuming adult roles associated with job, marriage, and family, a situation which hindered the development of the 'maturity' and kinds of commitment policy makers deemed critical to a 'politics of national unity.' Thus, just as 'family' was assuming a critical role in the eyes of defense planners, youth were being viewed, by virtue of the very demands society was placing on them, as potentially undermining efforts to achieve a 'unified national will.' Parsons wrote of "a mood of bewilderment and frustration" among youth, which he ascribed to the fact that, despite increased educational and job opportunities, their achievement required overcoming ever-higher hurdles. This resulted in "a growing proportion of (youth) prolong(ing) formal education into the early adult years," which in turn raised "problems about marriage and financial independence," but more significantly contributed to a heightened sense of marginality (23).[7]

But, paradoxically, just as youth were perceived as a potential source of disruption, they were also coming to be viewed, in the very fact of their marginality, as free of the strictures the Cold War security regime imposed on the American people. Youth embodied the freedom and independence which Americans believed the nation to be defending but which they themselves had been compelled to forfeit for the sake of maintaining a unified 'national will.' Just as psychologists and sociologists were paying new attention to adolescent behavior, American youth were showing a new willingness to flaunt postwar norms associated with family, education and work. The first tentative signs of youth rebellion could be seen in the emergence of new cultural forms: music, like be-bop, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, which emphasized a heavy beat, fast rhythms, and a new vocal style with its uninhibited shouts, wails and moans; dance styles which emphasized

freer movement and display of the body and assigned the individual dancer (rather than partners) a greater role ("Don't step on my blue suede shoes!"); the advent of more relaxed apparel (T-shirts, jeans, sneakers) which marked a rejection of the formality which had characterized dress-styles in the American home, school, and workplace; together with the first signs of freer sexual behavior–all signaling a readiness on the part of youth to go their own way.

Both anxieties associated with the challenge this freedom was seen to pose and an implicit endorsement of youth were reflected in postwar fiction and drama. While postwar writers almost invariably focused on the family, they asserted – in contrast to Modernist fiction which tends to be conjugally or couple-focused – the centrality of the relation of parent to child–more specifically, the adolescent or already-adult child. If this can be understood in the context of nuclear anxiety and fears about human survival–youth as invariably symbolizing what will carry a community and its ideals forward–Leerom Medovoi has suggested that preoccupation with the child and the adolescent can be correlated with the larger Cold War reaffirmation of American ideals and the rise of America as leader of the "free world." Thus, Medovoi sees the interest of the period in the nation's early history and frontier ideals of individualism exemplified in the rejection of school and the 'phony' world of postwar America by Holden Caulfield, the sixteen-year old protagonist of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. While the Holden character represents "the increased autonomy of youth" which "was often feared for its delinquent potential … (this autonomy) was also widely accepted as part of the cold war agenda" (Medovoi 257); 'youth' itself a 'cold war trope of the American democratic character" (257). Invoking Fredric Jameson's notion of the 'political unconscious,' Medovoi suggests an American public eager to uphold ideals of freedom welcomed Salinger's novel and saw in Holden "the Jeffersonian,

human-rights-focused, democratic America of the West" (279).[8] In expressing views suppressed in the name of national unity, Salinger's novel offered the first intimations of youth as a new dissident social formation. As the fifties progressed, segments of American youth would seize on the symbolic linkage of 'democratic' values and 'youth' to legitimize itself as a broad-based democratically-oriented opposition. Characters like Holden Caulfield, Biff Loman, Brick Pollitt, Esther Greenwood or writers like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, however different in tone and style, were committed to the pursuit of ideals–re-assertion of the self, willingness to break with expectations associated with school and work, openness and tolerance–which implied independence of family, parents or the larger society. Out of the cultural and political contradictions which came to characterize the Cold War, American youth were perceived as both embodying the nation's ideals and defying its realities, keepers of liberty's flame at a time when Americans believed that to go one's own way was to place the nation in peril.[9]

Notes

1. Norman Friedman observes that in 1949 the United States accounted for "almost half of everything produced in the world" (28).
2. While the American postwar imperium cannot be characterized as colonialist strictu sensu, the political implications of America's new Cold War policies were soon apparent: no major political or strategic decision could be initiated by European or East Asian governments without prior consultation with and approval by the United States. The point was made with unambiguous clarity when in 1957, on their own initiative, Great Britain, France and Israel precipitated the Suez Crisis—an action the United States opposed, and which meant the failure of the operation. The system of alliances established by the United States—NATO in Europe; on a bi-lateral basis in eastern Asia and the Pacific—were essentially vehicles for the execution of policies formulated by the United States executive, in consultation with the U. S. State Department, the Pentagon and American intelligence services, however much support or criticism such policies may have received abroad.
3. Philip Morrison, a physicist who worked at Los Alamos, was reported as characterizing the atomic bomb as simply "more of the same" (Winkler 32).
4. Thomas Power, in seeking to define 'deterrence,' sees the "ultimate weapon in our design for survival (as) the American people, individually and collectively. They must be made to understand that, in the nuclear age, the primary mission of the military is no longer to win wars but to help deter them, and that the military can no longer do its job alone. It must be impressed on every citizen that he or she is a soldier in the battle for survival, because that battle must be waged on many fronts in addition to the military front and must be fought with many weapons in addition to military weapons … Deterrence is a sound economy and prosperous industry. Deterrence is scientific progress and good schools. Deterrence is effective civil defense and the maintenance of law and order. Deterrence is the practice of religion and respect for the rights and convictions of others. Deterrence is a high standard of morals and wholesome family life. Deterrence is honesty in public office and freedom of the press … for only a nation that is healthy and strong in every respect has the power and will to deter the forces from within and without that threaten its survival" (253-254).
5. References here are to the section and sub-section of the copy of NSC 68 available at the National Security Council web page http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm

6. It is worth noting that Senator Joseph McCarthy only first attracted attention with his speech in West Virginia announcing the presence of communists in the United States State Department in April 1950 in the months directly after the announcement of the first Soviet atomic test. The support McCarthy enjoyed in the early phases of his "witch hunts" was fuelled by knowledge the Soviets possessed the atomic bomb and were (or would be) capable of using it against the United States.
7. For discussion of 'marginal' youth in American postwar society, and efforts by psychologists and sociologists to account for juvenile 'deviance,' see my "Children of Empire: Generational Politics in Postwar American Social Theory." *Bulletin of the Faculty of Foreign Studies*. No. 116. March, 2006. 19-47.
8. Among writers, historians and literary critics, the early Cold War period witnessed zealous reaffirmation of American ideals and renewed interest in early American history — in particular the period of early settlement and American pioneering. In a series of seminal studies, Bernard DeVoto, Perry Miller, Henry Nash Smith and R. W. B. Lewis turned, as had Frederick Jackson Turner in an earlier phase of imperial expansion, with renewed attention to the question of America as shaped by a past associated with discovery, exploration and pioneering. In his introduction to *Errand Into the Wilderness*, Perry Miller speaks of his work as a "quest" (viii) to expound "the meaning of America" (ix), of his "mission" one of "expounding what I took to be the innermost propulsion of the United States" (viii). Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* opens with the question, "What is an American?" (3), and observes that "one of the most persistent generalizations concerning American life and character is the notion that our society has been shaped by the pull of a vacant continent drawing population westward through the passes of the Alleghenies, across the Mississippi Valley, over the high plains and mountains of the Far West to the Pacific Coast" (3). Nash notes that the image of the American as frontiersman is one which "many—perhaps most—Americans of the present day cherish, an image that defines what Americans think of their past, and therefore what they propose to make of themselves in the future" (4).
9. I would like to express my respect for Professor Takehiko Tabuki's high scholarly standards, and my thanks for his friendship and support.

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