

policies — that had unsettled the Lebanese political system, and had led to war in April 1975, remained unsolved.

Chapter 5 deals with the fifth Arab-Israeli war, June-September 1982, which Dr. Rabinovich claims “departed radically from the patterns of the previous thirty-four years of conflict. The war was fought in Lebanon, to some extent for Lebanon, but primarily by Israel and the PLO and to a lesser extent by Syria. It was the first Arab-Israeli war fought during a period of partial Arab-Israeli peace.” The concluding chapter of the book and a postscript deals with events from September 1982 to the fall of 1983 which served to underline “the continuing acuteness and importance of the Lebanese crisis.”

In sum, this is a scholarly book that deals with a complex and emotional topic. Accordingly, it will draw mixed reviews. It is an informative, relevant, and timely study that will appeal to the specialist. Maps, interspersed throughout the book, a thirty-page Appendix, reprinting the July 20, 1976 speech by Hafiz al-Asad, President of Syria, chapter endnotes, and a glossary provide valuable source data for the serious reader and researcher.

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Gelman, Harry. *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Detente*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Wildavsky, Aaron, editor. *Beyond Containment*. San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1983.

In trying to come to terms with the Soviet challenge, two key questions present themselves: 1) What is the nature of Soviet foreign policy and the source of Soviet conduct; and, 2) What specific policies should the West follow in attempting to deal with the acute challenge posed by the Soviet Union. The two works under review complement each other very effectively since Harry Gelman's study is directed at answering the first question while the book edited by Aaron Wildavsky grapples with the second.

One of the central purposes of Gelman's book is to illuminate the mindset with which the Soviet leadership approaches East-West relations. His conclusions are fundamentally at odds with many of the optimistic assumptions adopted by supporters of detente in the 1970s, and for this reason, one hopes that this work will stimulate a good deal of thought and self-examination. His core argument is that the Soviet leadership views the world “as a single interrelated, many faceted

battlefield" requiring "lasting struggle with the main antagonist."¹ Drawing upon Nathan Leites' work on the Bolshevik mind, he sees this offensive orientation as originating in Soviet ideology with its "compulsion to attack." "Underlying all such attitudes and behavior is the unspoken assumption that if the Soviet Union does not press ahead in its universal struggle against the United States, it may fall back."²

Gelman recognizes that Soviet assertiveness cannot be explained by any one single factor, and thus he also refers to the role that is played by the Soviet sense of insecurity. However, in his view this "profound sense of vulnerability" springs not from mistakes or excesses in Western policy, but from deep anxieties on the part of the Soviet leadership concerning "both the legitimacy of party rule and the stability of Soviet gains."³ During the 1970s, these anxieties coexisted in the minds of the Soviet leaders alongside their belief that the decline of American fortunes and the growth of Soviet power would lead to the gradual supplanting of American ascendancy by eventual Soviet predominance. Briefly summarized, Gelman's conclusions tend to sound more stark and to contain less of the nuances than they might if presented in full. His case is put forcefully and effectively, along with much supportive evidence, and it needs to be carefully weighed — especially by those prone to more optimistic assumptions about Soviet behavior.

Beyond this examination of the sources of Soviet conduct, Gelman's book also provides a wealth of valuable and thought-provoking analysis, as in his discussion of the highly selective nature of Soviet support for Third World national liberation movements, his remarks on the asymmetrical advantages that the Soviet embassy in Washington enjoys compared to the situation of American diplomats in Moscow, and his argument as to why the West should not expect "moderate" Soviet policy advisers (such as Georgi Arbatov and Aleksandr Bovin) to have much influence. In addition, Gelman's lengthy account of Brezhnev's prolonged struggle with his rivals in the Politburo makes effective use of classic Kremlinology to increase understanding of the dynamics of leadership politics.

Most of the contributors to the volume edited by Aaron Wildavsky share Gelman's outlook. For example, Paul Seabury observes that "the essence of the [Soviet] problem is that system's need to regard itself as being at war with us," while Max Singer sees Soviet foreign policy as being "insatiable."⁴ Whereas Gelman's book does not spell out foreign policy recommendations for the United States, the contributors to the Wildavsky volume are concerned first and foremost with such specifics. As the title of the book suggests, most of the contributors believe that the West needs to go "beyond containment" and follow more vigorous policy which aims at undoing many of the Soviet Union's recent gains. Max Singer advocates "dynamic containment" which places greater emphasis on actively waging the "war of ideas," while Charles Wolfe calls for a policy of "extended containment" which would include active support for "genuine and legitimate movements within the Third World that seek to achieve liberation from Communist imperialism and totalitarianism,

and that also seek to advance more pluralistic, open, and at least incipiently democratic forms of government.”⁵

The most ambitious program is set out in the contributions by Wildavsky which are appropriately entitled “From Minimal to Maximal Containment” and “Containment Plus Pluralization.” Wildavsky argues that the United States should “take the offensive” and do what it can to encourage the emergence of independent centers of power within the Soviet Union. This would involve more imaginative efforts to pierce the iron curtain, such as sending mail to random addresses, dropping mail over Soviet borders and supplying duplicating equipment to Soviet dissidents.⁶

Two of the seven contributors, however, dissent from this perspective. Ernst Haas calls instead for a policy of selective containment, one which involves the defense of only those countries ‘worth fighting for,’ defined as those whose defense is truly in the broadly conceived, U.S. national interest. Robert W. Tucker, in his trenchantly argued piece, warns against abandoning the classic policy of geographical containment in favor of the active exploitation of the weaknesses of the Soviet Union and its empire. Reduced to its essentials, his argument is based on several related contentions. First, a policy aimed at undermining Soviet power would be too dangerous since it would be furiously resisted by Moscow, and thus, such a policy would destroy the Western alliance whose preservation is vital to U.S. security. Second, American public opinion would not support such a policy over the long term once its dangers and costs were understood, and ultimately, therefore, such a policy would not work because neither military superiority nor economic predominance provides the means for bringing about significant change in the Soviet system. Tucker advocates a firm defense of vital American interests, defined to be Western Europe, Japan, and the Persian Gulf, coupled with a more relaxed attitude toward Third World competition. “The great fear of a generation ago,” he writes, “of a developing world that would fall under the increasing influence and even control of the Soviet Union, can no longer be entertained with any real semblance of plausibility.”⁷

Both books offer much food for thought. They are a useful antidote to wishful thinking and the tendency to embrace a “mirror image” perspective which sees the Soviet Union as little different from the American system. Yet these works also carry the risk of one-sidedness, and they go too far to the opposite extreme in their tendency to see and present the Soviet Union as a unique, unchanging, and unidimensional foe. While change has been slow, uneven, subject to reversal, and in constant conflict with many of the tendencies so effectively described by Gelman, post-Stalinist Russia is still very different from the system that Nathan Leites tried to analyze more than thirty years ago. Soviet perspectives on detente, both in the 1970s and at present, have been more tentative, more confused and more cautiously hopeful than Gelman indicates. For an alternative interpretation, one might consult Raymond Garthoff’s recent work, *Détente and Confrontation*, which attempts to

see detente through Soviet eyes and to understand the frustrations and difficulties the Soviet leadership has faced in its attempts to understand and deal with the vicissitudes of U.S. foreign policy.⁸

In attempting to understand an entity as controversial and complicated as the Soviet Union, one must recognize that insight is not the exclusive property of any particular segment of the political spectrum. A balanced perspective encompassing all the contradictory tendencies in the Soviet foreign policy is necessary. Hawks and doves in the West must develop a better capacity to listen and to learn from one another before anyone will ever be able to understand and deal effectively with the Soviet challenge.

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Footnotes

1. Gelman, *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Detente*, p. 25.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
4. Wildavsky, *Beyond Containment*, pp. 57, 177.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
8. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985).