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UKRAINIAN NATIONAL FACTOR IN GEORGE F. KENNAN'S STRATEGIC THINKING ON THE USSR

This article highlights G. Kennan's strategic views on Ukraine, and his recommendations regarding the Ukrainian national factor in the U.S. strategy. These issues were studied against the background of Kennan's strategic thinking on the USSR, and development of "containment" strategy, mostly in 1946–1952.

The conclusions emphasize that the ultimate goals of "containment" in Kennan's interpretation were to make the USSR abandon expansionist foreign policy, and to change its concept of international relations by means short of war. He believed that the threat from the USSR existed as long as the totalitarian regime was in power, and advocated for gradual and peaceful changes in the USSR towards liberalization and modernization. He rejected the idea of its disintegration, and recognized the right to secede only for the Baltic republics. He did not recommend any policies, and did not support any activities to promote independence of Ukraine. But he did not object to the revival of national life of some peoples, including Ukrainians, and development views among them that would help change Soviet conduct. Kennan viewed the USSR as "Russia", and believed that the U.S. should build its policy on cooperation with Russians. His personal sentiments, that is love for Russian people and Russian culture, also influenced his policy recommendations. For him, Ukrainians and Russians were too close ethnically, and their economic activities were tightly intertwined. Therefore, Ukraine's secession could cause a negative reaction and consequences for Russians. He predicted that sooner or later Russia would challenge an independent Ukraine, and Ukrainians would be forced to turn to the United States for military support. For these reasons, he viewed the future of Ukrainians in a federal union with Russians in

the “new Russia”. Some Kennan’s conclusions remain relevant today, and his strategic thinking on Russia and Ukraine continues to influence a significant number of U.S. political scientists and politicians.

Keywords: *G. F. Kennan, Ukrainian national factor, U.S. foreign policy, “containment” strategy, Truman administration, USSR*

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УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ ЧИННИК У СТРАТЕГІЧНИХ ПОГЛЯДАХ ДЖ. Ф. КЕННАНА СТОСОВНО СРСР

У статті висвітлюються стратегічні погляди Дж. Кеннана на Україну й український національний чинник у стратегії «стримування». Ці питання розглядаються на тлі оцінок Дж. Кеннаном СРСР і його зовнішньої політики та розвитку стратегії «стримування», переважно в 1946–1952 рр.

У висновках зазначається, що кінцевими цілями «стримування» в інтерпретації Дж. Кеннана були відмова СРСР від експансіоністської зовнішньої політики і зміни в радянській концепції міжнародних відносин невоєнними методами. Він вважав, що радянська загроза існувала, доки існував тоталітарний режим, і виступав за поступові й мирні зміни у СРСР у напрямку його лібералізації і модернізації. Він відкидав ідею дезінтеграції Радянського Союзу і визнавав право на відокремлення лише за Балтійськими республіками. Він не рекомендував політику і не підтримував будь-яку діяльність, яка би сприяла незалежності України. Проте він не заперечував проти відновлення національного життя деяких народів, включаючи українців, і розвитку серед них поглядів, які мали допомогти змінити поведінку СРСР. Дж. Кеннан розглядав СРСР як «Росію» і вважав, що США мали будувати свою політику у співробітництві з росіянами. Його особисті почуття — любов до російського народу й російської культури — також впливали на його політичні рекомендації. Він вважав, що українці та росіяни були надто близькими

етнічно, а їхня економічна діяльність — тісно переплетеною. Тому відокремлення українців могло викликати негативну реакцію росіян і несприятливі наслідки для них. Він передбачав, що рано чи пізно Росія кине виклик незалежності України, і українці будуть змушені звернутися до США за військовою допомогою. У зв'язку з цим він бачив майбутнє українців у федеративному союзі з росіянами в «новій Росії». Окремі висновки Дж. Кеннана зберігають свою актуальність, а його стратегічні погляди на Росію й Україну продовжують впливати на багатьох американських політологів і політиків.

Ключові слова: Дж. Ф. Кеннан, український національний чинник, зовнішня політика США, стратегія «стримування», адміністрація Трумена, СРСР

INTRODUCTION. George F. Kennan (1904–2005) was a diplomat, a scholar and a leading American Sovietologist, who contributed greatly to the U.S. “containment” strategy of the USSR. He was not the only author of this strategy, but he had a significant impact on its formation when he was the Director of the Policy Planning Staff, an analytical center of the Department of State (in May 1947 — December 1949). The Truman administration considered his policy recommendations, especially until spring–summer of 1949. Later, “containment” was interpreted differently, and Kennan lost his previous influence. However, his experience and deep knowledge of the USSR made him one of the most influential experts in Soviet affairs. His recommendations for political “containment” of the USSR had a significant impact on U.S. strategy until Soviet collapse in 1991. Kennan’s published works, analytical reports, lectures and public speeches had been thoroughly studied, and influenced significantly on the next generations of U.S. Sovietologists, as well as policymakers.

One of the components of the “containment” strategy was an exploitation of domestic vulnerabilities in the USSR to force the Soviet leadership to focus on solving them and divert its attention from ideas of foreign expansion. Among them was the national issue — the dissatisfaction of some peoples, particularly Ukrainians at the new post-WWII western borders of the USSR with the Soviet rule. This was evidenced by reports from the U.S. intelligence services, the heroic struggle of Ukrainian Insurgency Army against Soviet rule, the willingness of representatives of the Ukrainian liberation movement abroad to cooperate with U.S. intelligence, and the activism of the Ukrainian Congressional Committee of America (UCCA), which tried to convince the U.S. government to support the Ukrainian struggle for liberation.

LITERATURE REVIEW. There is an extensive academic literature that discusses G. Kennan’s strategic thinking, his contribution to the development

of “containment” strategy, its different interpretations and effectiveness. The bibliography includes, but is not limited to, the works (by H. Ross (ed.), M. F. Herz (ed.), J. L. Gaddis, J. F. Hough, K. Dawisha, L. E. Davis, W. Lippmann, A. Stephanson, H. Kissinger, W. Miscamble, B. Kuklick, J. Lukacs, and others)¹. Attention to Kennan’s thinking, activities and personality was spurred by changes in the U.S. policy or in the international relations, such as the beginning or the end of Détente, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR. A number of books about Kennan’s life and personality, his diplomatic and scientific activities were published after his passing (in 2005), including his authorized biography by J. L. Gaddis, and the memoirs of his daughter G. Kennan Warnecke². Russia’s invasion in Ukraine actualized G. Kennan’s strategic thinking in the new international environment. Among the most recent are the works by A. Kolesnikov, F. Logevall, and F. Costiglione³. The issue of Kennan’s attitude to establishment of the North Atlantic Security Alliance in 1948–1949 was briefly discussed in a monograph by Ukrainian researchers and diplomats O. Potekhin and Yu. Klymenko⁴.

While Kennan’s conclusions about the nature of Soviet foreign policy and his interpretation of “containment” have been covered in many scholarly works, his recommendations on application of Ukrainian national factor in this strategy have not been sufficiently studied. This issue was briefly discussed in the works by W. H. Chamberlain, A. Kaminsky and T. Kuzio⁵. In 2023, F. Costiglione discussed Kennan’s recommendations on Ukraine, based on two primary sources with his authorship⁶. The author of this paper launched research on the Ukrainian national factor in the U.S. strategy during her fellowship at the University of Münster in 2022⁷.

The purpose of this article is to highlight G. Kennan’s strategic views on Ukraine and his recommendations regarding the Ukrainian national factor in the U.S. strategy. These issues were studied against the background of Kennan’s strategic thinking on the USSR, and development of “containment” strategy, mostly in 1946–1952. The primary sources for this research include Kennan’s published articles and memoirs, his diplomatic correspondence and analytical reports, and selected strategic and other documents of Truman administration.

G. Kennan’s assessment of the Soviet foreign policy in the “Long Telegram” and Article “X”. First and foremost, G. Kennan has been known as the author of a secret “Long Telegram” from Moscow in February 1946⁸, and an influential “X” paper (July 1947)⁹, in which he recommended a strategy of “containment” of the USSR.

The secret “Long Telegram” sent by the diplomat of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow George F. Kennan to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes was a response to a number of questions regarding his vision of the prospects for Soviet foreign policy.

In early 1946, Kennan characterized Soviet foreign policy as a continuation of the expansionist policy of the Russian Empire. He described the skill and falsity of Soviet propaganda, and exploitation of Soviet “agents of influence” abroad, including the Russian Orthodox Church and its foreign branches, and pan-Slavic and other movements, based on “racial” groups in the USSR (Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Turkmens, and others).

G. Kennan correctly stated that one of the directions of Soviet policy was to expand the borders and the political power of the USSR to new territories whenever the opportunity arose. After this happened, at any time questions could arise about others. In early 1946, these Soviet efforts were limited to Northern Iran and Turkey. Over time, however, a “friendly Persian government” might ask to guarantee USSR (“Russia”) a port in the Persian Gulf or, in the event of a Communist victory in Spain, the question of a Soviet base in the Strait of Gibraltar might arise.

According to Kennan’s analysis, Soviet leaders perceived the outside world as hostile and threatening. They believed that the USSR continued to exist in an antagonistic capitalist environment with which there could be no permanent peaceful coexistence in the long run. At the same time, the capitalist world was full of internal conflicts, and was doomed to perish due to the growing power of socialism. In this regard, the USSR had to increase its military power, spread its influence in the world, and not miss any opportunity to reduce the power and influence of the capitalist states, and deepen conflicts between them. In domestic politics, such assessments justified further isolation of the USSR population from the outside world and the expansion of the “police power”¹⁰.

The analysis that Kennan outlined in the “Long Telegram” was impressive, and expressed in a timely manner. It partially overlapped with the provisions of Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech, delivered in March 1946 in Fulton (Missouri, U.S.).

Most of Kennan’s conclusions remain relevant today to characterize Russia’s aggressive and expansionist policy. However, in our opinion, the “Long Telegram” also contained some misleading provisions that, given G. Kennan’s credibility, were entrenched in the American expert community and influenced the U.S. policy.

First, in the “Long Telegram” and in subsequent works and diplomatic dispatches, G. Kennan constantly referred to the USSR as “Russia”, and its population as “Russians” and “Russian people.” Such incorrect definitions made it difficult to understand the separateness of Ukrainian nation, its different interests from Russians, and the efforts of its representatives, including in the U.S., to liberate it from Soviets.

Second, Kennan believed that the motive for Soviet expansionism was “a traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity”. Although he considered

that the main reason for this “insecurity” was the weakness of the foundations of the authority of “Russian rulers”, he recommended that the U.S. policy should not reinforce this feeling. This perception encouraged Kennan to make concessions and compromise with the USSR to avoid situations in which its leaders could feel cornered to the point where they could resort to a decisive action, i.e., a war with the United States. In this regard, he opposed the foundation of NATO, and admission of the Federal Republic of Germany to it. Later, this negative attitude Kennan spread to NATO’s eastward expansion, and Ukraine’s cooperation with it or accession to it, in order not to increase the Russia’s sense of “insecurity”.

G. Kennan developed some ideas set forth in the “Long Telegram” in the article “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”, written in late 1945, and published in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947 under the pseudonym X. This time, he formulated some recommendations for “long-term, patient, but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansionist tendencies” that was to become the main element of the U.S. policy¹¹. Such a policy could have forced the Kremlin to exercise much greater moderation and caution, and fostered trends that would eventually lead to the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power. Later, he explained that he meant not the Soviet system of governance, but a totalitarian regime.

G. Kennan believed that the U.S. could well have influenced developments both inside the USSR and in the international communist movement, which largely determined Soviet policy, through economic aid to Europe, and dissemination of information about America and its foreign policy (mostly, via the Voice of America broadcasting). But his main hopes were placed on the “spiritual vitality” of the United States as a country and a World Power¹². At the same time, Kennan believed that the U.S. policy should not have used threats or unnecessary gestures of toughness. He viewed an indispensable condition for successful relations with “Russia” in the formulation of such requirements for its policy that would make it possible to fulfill them and “not damage Russia’s prestige”¹³.

Later, in 1952, Kennan explained that the concept of “containment” was mentioned in the article only as an alternative to appeasement of the USSR or acceptance of the idea of the inevitability of war. By the term “containment” he meant resistance, as far as the capabilities of the U.S. allowed, to a kind of political attack that the Bolshevik movement was carrying out against the free world. He did not consider the possibility of open military aggression by Soviet troops against other countries to be a major problem in the near future¹⁴. Overall, Kennan’s strategic approach was based on the assessment that the Soviet threat was political and psychological, not military. Therefore, it needed to be countered by non-military means. This strategy of “containment” of Soviet expansionism was designed for a long period of time.

National issue in the USSR in the U.S. strategic documents of 1948. G. Kennan did not summarize the strategy of “containment” in a single document. His vision of various aspects of this strategy was covered in separate reports, prepared by the Policy Planning Staff which he chaired in May 1947 — December 1949, and in his lectures at the National War College.

The U.S. objectives towards the USSR, including the possible use of the national factor in the “containment” strategy, were covered comprehensively in the secret analytical report PPS/38 (August 18, 1948). It was prepared by the Policy Planning Staff at the request of Secretary of Defense J. Forrestal in connection with the need to “assess the extent and nature of military preparedness as required by the world situation”. Notably, this report was titled “U.S. Objectives for ‘Russia’ (not the USSR)”¹⁵.

In Section D of PPS/38, entitled “Partition or National Unity”, two possible options were considered, according to U.S. interests: 1) should the present-day territories of the USSR remain united under one regime or separate; 2) if they remained united, what degree of federalism could be envisioned in the future for the major minorities, especially Ukraine?¹⁶

According to this report, the Baltic states could not be forced to remain under the rule of any communist government. In the case of a non-communist Russian government, the U.S. was to be guided by the wishes of the Baltic peoples. As for Ukraine, the situation was considered different. On the one hand, it was recognized that Ukrainians were the most developed of the peoples under Russian rule, were generally dissatisfied with Russian domination, and their nationalist organizations were active and determined abroad. From this, it was easy to conclude that the United States had to help them free themselves from Russian rule and create an independent state. However, the authors maintained that this conclusion was simplistic, and provided arguments to refute it.

First, Ukrainians were “an important and special” element of the Russian Empire. At the same time, they did not show any signs of a nation capable of independence in the face of Great Russian opposition.

Second, Ukrainians were not “a clearly defined ethnic and geographical concept”. According to the report, the Ukrainian population was formed largely from refugees from Russian or Polish despotism, and had no clear national identity from Russians or Poles. There were no clear lines dividing Russia and Ukraine. The authors believed that the real basis of “Ukrainism” was the sense of difference formed by a specific peasant dialect, as well as minor differences in customs and folklore. Against this background, political agitation was carried out by a small number of “romantic intellectuals” who had a poor understanding of the concept of “government responsibility.”

Third, Ukraine’s economy was inextricably linked to Russia as a whole. There has been no economic separatism in this territory since it was

“recaptured from the nomadic Tatars and developed in the interests of the settled population”. Therefore, an attempt to separate Ukraine from the Russian economy would be artificial and as destructive as the separation of the “corn belt,” including the Great Lakes industrial zone, from the U.S.

Fourth, the authors considered religion to be a valid marker of nationality in Eastern Europe, and noted the religious split of people who spoke the “Ukrainian dialect.” If any border to be drawn in Ukraine, they believed, it was logically the border between the territories with religious affiliation to the Eastern Church and those belonging to the Roman Church”¹⁷. After the collapse of the USSR, such estimates were developed in “The Clash of Civilizations” by S. Huntington¹⁸.

Fifth, according to PPS/38 report, the United States could not be indifferent to the feelings of the Great Russians, who were the strongest element in the USSR, and any long-term U.S. policy had to be based on cooperation with them. As the Ukrainian territory was as much a part of the national heritage of the Great Russians as the American Midwest, the decision to completely separate Ukraine from the “rest of Russia” was bound to arouse resentment and opposition among the Great Russians. Implementation of this decision would certainly require U.S. military assistance to Ukrainians.

The authors of this report assumed that the Great Russians could tolerate the restored independence of the Baltic states, but not Ukraine. Since Ukrainians were too close to the Great Russians, they had to remain “in certain special relations” with them. Federal relations were considered the best option. According to it, Ukraine would have broad political and cultural autonomy, but would not be politically or militarily independent. Such relations were considered completely fair for the Great Russians¹⁹.

According to PPS/38, the U.S. goals for Ukraine had to be determined along these lines; and this issue had to be resolved as soon as possible, since Ukrainian and Great Russian emigrant groups were already competing for U.S. support. This decision was to be “neither pro-Russian nor pro-Ukrainian”, but one that “recognizes historical geographical and economic realities”, and thus “seeks for Ukrainians a dignified and acceptable place in the family of the traditional Russian Empire of which they form an inseparable part”²⁰ (actually, the recommended decision was pro-Russian).

PPS/38 stated that the U.S. “should not deliberately promote Ukrainian separatism,” but if it became a reality without American support, the U.S. should not openly have opposed it, as this would mean accepting unwanted responsibility for Russia’s internal development. The same principles were to be applied to other “Russian minorities” (namely, the peoples of the Caucasus). That is, on the one hand, the United States should not have placed itself in open opposition to such attempts in order not to lose sympathy from Ukrainian and

other minorities. On the other hand, the U.S. should not commit itself to supporting them.

According to PPS/38, sooner or later Russia would challenge an independent Ukraine, and this would have led to the need for U.S. military assistance. If the Ukrainian government could successfully withstand it, that would prove the analysis wrong, and Ukraine's ability and moral right to independent status. The U.S. was to remain neutral in this matter until its own interests were directly affected. If developments reached an undesirable stalemate, it was recommended that the U.S. was to encourage the two sides to resolve their differences along the lines of "reasonable federalism"²¹.

According to Section E of the PPS/38 report, titled "Choosing a New Ruling Group", in the event of the disintegration of the USSR, the United States would inevitably face demands for support from various competing political elements among the "Russian opposition groups". However, at that time, there was no opposition group that the U. S. fully supported, and was willing to take responsibility for.

Overall, according to PPS/38 report, the United States should not have supported disintegration of the USSR, and acclaimed the right to independence only for the Baltic nations, whose annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940 it did not recognize. These recommendations were based on the principle of non-interference in Soviet domestic affairs. The U.S. had to abandon it only when its own interests were directly affected.

The conclusions of PPS/38 report were commented by American scholar F. Costigliona after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in a paper published in Foreign Affairs in January 2023²². He believed that Kennan underestimated the strength of Ukrainian nationalism, but his 1948 predictions about Russian stubbornness toward Ukraine proved to be correct. In his words, although many analysts tend to portray "the current conflict as Putin's war", Kennan believed that any "strong Russian leader" would eventually not have given up on the complete separation of Ukraine²³.

In seeking ways to end "the conflict", Costigliona referred to Kennan that the United States could not be indifferent to the feelings of "the Great Russians", because any viable long-term U.S. policy had to be based on cooperation with them. According to Costigliona, the realities of demography and geography dictate that Russia will remain the main force in these tragic "bloody lands" in the long run. For this reason, "for the sake of regional stability and long-term security of the United States, Washington must maintain a firm stance and clearly understand the interests of Russians, as well as Ukrainians and other nationalities". The way to reconcile the interests of Ukrainians and Russians (after 32 years of independence, nine years of Russia's aggression, and a year of a bloody full-scale war) Costigliona found in

Kennan's proposal of 1948 "for some kind of federal structure and regional autonomy in the disputed regions". He believed that they "remained promising", though its implementation was becoming "increasingly difficult". In his opinion, "a federation that provides for regional autonomy in eastern Ukraine and perhaps even in Crimea could help both sides coexist"²⁴.

These recommendations reveal that the author either does not understand the essence of the Russia's war or deliberately sides with Putin for reasons of political expediency. Costigliona's paper also demonstrates the lasting impact of Kennan's views on American political thought.

On the basis of PPS/38 report, the same day (August 18, 1948) the National Security Council issued secret Directives NSC 20/1²⁵. They included the most comprehensive statement of the goals that the policy of "containment" was to achieve. According to this document, two main goals of the U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union in peacetime and wartime were the following: (1) to reduce the power and influence of the USSR to the point where it no longer threatened international stability; and (2) to achieve fundamental changes in the theory and practice of international relations, which were followed by the government in power in "Russia"²⁶. NSC 20/1 emphasized the achievement of the desired results of containment by non-military means, although it did not exclude the possibility that war could break out, either accidentally or intentionally. According to this document, the goals of the United States in peacetime did not include the overthrow of the Soviet government. It was about neutralizing, not eliminating, Soviet power.

Regarding the national issue in the USSR, NSC 20/1 provided for the promotion of federalism in the USSR by all possible means to enable the revival of national life of the Baltic peoples. The independence of the Baltic peoples was not excluded. At the same time, the term "traditional Russian territory" was applied. It was noted that even in case of war, the U.S. goal was not to achieve any specific agreements that would include "independence of the Ukrainian or any other national minority" except for the Baltic countries²⁷.

Based on the strategic reports NSC 20, NSC 20/1, NSC 20/2, and NSC 20/3, on November 23, 1948, the National Security Council prepared a top-secret report NSC 20/4 for President Truman²⁸. It assessed the threats to the U.S. national security from the USSR, formulated goals and objectives to determine the measures necessary to counter them. The conclusions on the goals and objectives of the United States with regard to the USSR in NSC 20/4 mostly repeated the provisions of NSC 20/1 (and, respectively, PPS/38).

According to 20/4, communist ideology and Soviet behavior clearly demonstrated that the ultimate goal of the Soviet leaders was "world domination". They believed that the USSR could not be secure until non-communist countries were completely weakened, their numbers reduced, and

communist influence dominant throughout the world. The immediate goal of the Soviet highest priority after World War II was the political conquest of Western Europe, and U.S. resistance was the main obstacle to achieving these goals. Therefore, the greatest threat to U.S. security in the foreseeable future was posed by the hostile plans and considerable strength of the USSR, as well as the nature of the Soviet system²⁹. The risk of war with the USSR was determined to be sufficient to warrant timely and adequate preparation by the United States.

Among the factors that the United States could use to compensate for the relative Soviet advantages, compared to Western democracies, was the development of internal divisions within the USSR³⁰. To achieve its general goals through non-war methods the U.S. had to “encourage the development among the Russian peoples of views” that could help change Soviet behavior and enable the revival of national life by groups that demonstrated “the ability and determination to achieve and maintain national independence”. However, this document referred to “traditional Russian borders” and “traditional Russian territory” again. According to the documents, drafted by Kennan (PPS/38 and NSC 20/1), he viewed Ukraine as an inseparable part of it.

In summary, NSC 20/4 stated that in pursuing its military objectives, the U.S. should avoid making irrevocable or premature decisions or commitments regarding border changes, governance in enemy territory, the independence of national minorities, or postwar responsibility for the inevitable political, economic, and social changes resulting from the war. The President endorsed the conclusions of NSC 20/4 policy paper on November 24, 1948.

Therefore, the U.S. strategic documents on the USSR, developed by the Policy Planning Staff, and approved by the National Security Council (August 1948) and the President (November 1948) included the following provisions: 1) a view on the USSR as “Russia” and its republics, except the Baltic republics, as “traditional Russian territories”; 2) a different attitude to the Baltic republics, comparing to Ukraine and other Soviet republics; 3) the absence of the goal of disintegrating the USSR, even in case of war; and 4) ambivalent approach to supporting the national aspirations of the peoples of the USSR. On the one hand, the strategic papers denied interference into internal affairs of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, they revealed U. S. interest in the revival of the national life of some peoples of the USSR, that were capable of achieving and maintaining national independence, and the goal of developing such views among them, which would help to change Soviet conduct.

In 1947 and the first half of 1949, the Truman administration shared Kennan’s approach to the political and psychological nature of the Soviet threat and implemented an asymmetric strategy of “containment” that relied on

political, psychological, and economic methods. This approach was manifested by the Marshall Plan (1947) and broadcasts of the Voice of America (in 1947, Russian-speaking program was launched).

As Kennan wrote in his memoirs, in 1948, it seemed that public opinion and the U.S. officials were recovering from the pro-Soviet euphoria of the end of World War II and moving to a more balanced approach. The Pentagon saw Stalin as the next Hitler, but the prevailing in Washington was perception that the Soviet threat was political as well as Marshall's moderate approach to build strength in the West rather than destroy the strength of "Russia"³¹.

The changing U.S. strategic approach to the USSR in 1949–1951. The establishment of NATO and Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, which Kennan did not support, was a retreat from the previous approach. In Kennan's opinion, the decision on NATO increased Soviet sense of suspicion and uncertainty, and thus weakened the possibility of negotiations between the U.S. and the USSR³².

G. Kennan's strategic views on the USSR were criticized by many as too defensive. After the USSR's successful nuclear weapons test in August 1949 and the Communist victory in China in the fall of 1949, this criticism was reiterated. While the USSR had superior conventional forces in Europe, the United States had lost the advantage of sole possession of nuclear weapons. The "loss" of mainland China to the Communists made the rest of Asia vulnerable. Under these circumstances, by the end of 1949, Kennan lost his previous influence and a position as Director of the Policy Planning Staff.

It was at this time, in December 1949, when the Voice of America began broadcasting in Ukrainian (later, in 1951, in Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian, Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani). The representatives of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) started their efforts to establish a Ukrainian-language program to broadcast to the Ukrainians in the USSR in spring 1948. To reach this goal, they negotiated with the officials in the Department of State and senators. In June 1948, the UCCA was notified about establishment of such program under the auspices of the Voice of America (VOA). The broadcasting started in almost 18 months, on December 12, 1949.

First, it aroused great enthusiasm by Ukrainians living in the U.S. and world-wide. However, during the first year the Ukrainian-language program had no Ukrainian content, and included translations of Russian broadcasts. It revealed a poor understanding by VOA managers of difference Ukrainians from Russians. Later, there were some improvements in the quality of the Ukrainian-language broadcasts, but they continued avoiding any reference to «liberation» of Ukrainians. The head of the broadcasting division of the Department of State explained that the function of the Voice of America was to implement U.S. foreign policy, and it was not authorized to engage in any

programming, designed to change the governmental or social structure of the Soviet Union³³.

The new director of the Policy Planning Staff P. Nitze (from January 1950), who succeeded G. Kennan, interpreted the “containment” mainly in military terms. He considered it necessary to base decisions on measurable indicators, and believed that the most important factor was Moscow’s capacity for aggression, not declared intentions. Therefore, the U.S. had to significantly increase its military power to match the capabilities of the USSR. This view was shared by Secretary of State D. Acheson (January 1949 — January 1953), who was given full charge of foreign policy by President Truman³⁴. Such interpretations were contained in the strategic document NSC 68 (April 1950), developed by the Policy Planning Staff under P. Nitze supervision³⁵.

NSC 68 was based on the “symmetrical” strategy of “containment” of the USSR, which replaced Kennan’s “asymmetrical” strategy. First and foremost, NSC 68 emphasized the military balance of power between the U.S. and the USSR. According to it, any further expansion of the territory under Kremlin dominance created the possibility that an adequate coalition could not be formed to sufficiently counter the USSR. The changes in the balance of power could be the result not only of military actions or economic maneuvers, but also of intimidation, humiliation, and loss of trust in the United States by the free world. Therefore, U.S. interests depended not only on force, but also on its perception. If only the United States appeared to be making concessions to its adversaries, the effect could have been the same if such concessions had actually occurred.

NSC 68 shared Kennan’s views on the political goal of changing the Soviet concept of international relations, but it stated that settlement negotiations could not take place until the Soviet system changed. This provision had appeared in the Department of State in 1949, and was the first point of disagreement between Kennan and the administration.

Among other recommendations of NSC 68, to achieve the U.S. objectives by methods short of war, the United States had to “take dynamic steps to reduce the power and influence of the Kremlin inside the Soviet Union and other areas under its control” to establish friendly to the U.S. regimes not under Soviet domination. Such action was regarded essential to engage the Kremlin’s attention, keep it off balance and force an increased expenditure of Soviet resources in counteraction. To this end, “a comprehensive and decisive program to win the peace and frustrate the Kremlin design” had to be designed to sustain for as long as necessary. It included development of programs to wage overt psychological warfare, calculated to encourage mass defections from Soviet allegiance and to frustrate the Kremlin design in other ways³⁶.

Another recommendation included encouraging “the development among the Russian peoples of attitudes which may help to modify current Soviet

behavior and permit a revival of the national life of groups evidencing the ability and determination to achieve and maintain national independence”³⁷. In other words, it was recommended to use the Soviet Cold War technique against it.

Thus, NSS 68 repeated the provision of NSC 20/1 and NSC 20/4 with regard to the USSR, however, without a reference to “traditional Russian territories”. This strategic document envisaged utilization of the USSR’s vulnerability to nationalism both in satellite states and within its own borders.

President Truman did not approve NSC 68 until the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, that proved the most important conclusions of NSC 68. It became the first “hot” war of the Cold War period, and demonstrated that the confrontation between the “communist” and “free” worlds went beyond Europe.

According to Kennan’s memoirs, in 1950 there were rapid changes in the strategic thinking of the U.S. government regarding the USSR. Unlike in 1948, even before the Korean War, there was an assumption that the USSR had a “grand plan” to destroy the power of the U.S., and establish world domination. According to Pentagon calculations, the peak of Soviet military preparations for the war was in 1952. Kennan did not share most of the NSC 68 assessments, including the imaginary “peak” of the Soviet threat, but supported development of plans of “containment” for a long period of time³⁸.

After the Korean War began, Kennan kept believing that Stalin would not launch a major war that could lead to a direct military clash between the two superpowers, because in such a war there could be no complete victory.

In August 1950, he took a long unpaid leave from the Department of State to work at Princeton University. During his last working day on August 21, he participated in a final meeting in the Department to discuss a formation of the private committee which would attempt “to unite the various Russian groups in a united front” (Cinderella project). According to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) declassified file, the formation of this committee with William Henry Chamberlain as the president had “Kennan’s blessing”³⁹.

According to W. Chamberlain, this committee (titled the Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism) tried to steer a middle course between the position of the extreme Russian nationalists and the extreme separatists, and to organize “the widest possible anticommunist front among all organizations, Russian and non-Russian”. The Committee attempted “to carry political warfare into the heart” of the USSR, but refused to adopt any attitude about boundaries or forms of federation among its peoples⁴⁰.

The efforts of this Committee achieved only partial success. In Munich, a coordinated center was established with representation of all democratic anticommunist groups among the political emigrants from the USSR. It

provided aid to publications and research projects, and inaugurated radio broadcasting (Radio Liberty) in Russian and other national languages of the USSR “to drive a wedge between the communist ruling class and masses of the people in the Soviet Union”⁴¹. Radio Liberty was funded by the Congress through the Central Intelligence Agency, and its broadcasting was less restricted in anti-Soviet propaganda.

According to Kennan’s memoirs, the level of threat of major war increased after the defeat of U.S. troops (as a part of the United Nations contingent) in Korea in late fall 1950 as a result of the Chinese offensive on the Yalu River. If the administration had authorized the bombing of targets on China’s territory in Manchuria, the defeat of U.S. troops could have been avoided. However, President Truman did not authorize such a move, as he tried to avoid further escalation.

G. Kennan strongly opposed the bombing of China, as he believed that further escalation could have led to retaliatory actions by the USSR, not necessarily in Korea. This could have set off a chain of events, as on the eve of the World War I, that could not be stopped⁴². Instead, he favored negotiations with the USSR.

In April 1951, Kennan outlined his arguments against the war and the desired U.S. strategy towards the USSR in his article “America and the Future of Russia”⁴³. He considered it a continuation of the article “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” as he believed that its main points were often misunderstood and required explanation.

In 1951, Kennan argued that a war with the USSR was not consistent with the U.S. political goals. Moreover, such a war would be the biggest mistake the United States could make. The two main questions discussed in this article remain relevant today: what kind of state the Americans wanted “Russia” to become, and how they were to act to facilitate, rather than impede, the achievement of this goal. Unlike the previous article, the main U.S. goal with regard to the USSR was not only to change its conduct in the international arena, but also to create a “new”, “different and more attractive Russia”.

In Kennan’s opinion, the threat from the USSR existed as long as the totalitarian regime was in power. He summarized American expectations of the “new Russia” in three points: 1) it would lift the Iron Curtain forever; 2) it would recognize certain limits to the government’s internal power; and 3) it would abandon its long-standing game of imperialist expansion and oppression. He believed, if Moscow was ready to do so, the basic requirements for a more stable world order would be met.

G. Kennan’s assessment of the Ukrainian national factor in the U.S. policy in the 1950s. In the article “America and the Future of Russia”, Kennan routinely used the terms “Russia”, “Russian government” and “Russian

people”, and also referred to “greatness of the Russian people”, but, unlike the article of 1947, he raised “a delicate subject” of national self-determination of peoples under Soviet rule. In his words, there was “no more difficult and treacherous” political issue⁴⁴. Thus, in this paper he publicly discussed the topic that was addressed in the secret analytical report PPS/38, and top-secret Directives NSC 20/1, NSC 20/4 and NSC 68.

According to Kennan’s analysis, among other things, it was expected that the “new Russia” would “refrain from pinning an oppressive yoke on other peoples” who had “the instinct and the capacity for national self-assessing”⁴⁵. It was about the relations between the Great Russians and neighboring peoples outside the Tsarist Empire, as well as non-Russian national groups that were included within that Empire.

In this article, Kennan repeated some of the provisions of PPS/38, including the close political ties between non-Russian peoples on the borders of the “Great Russian family” and the Great Russians on the basis of their close economic ties. In his opinion, the only and necessary solution worthy of U.S. encouragement, was “the rise of such a spirit among all the peoples concerned as would give to border and institutional arrangements in that troubled area an entirely new, and greatly reduced, significance”⁴⁶. This language lacked clarity, but correlated with the provisions of NSC 68. Simultaneously, Kennan warned that Americans had to be extremely cautious when it came to supporting or encouraging any specific arrangements in the national sphere. After all, it was not known what exactly specific national groups would demand: independent or federal status, a special type of local government, or no special status at all.

Kennan’s remarks concerned the Baltic peoples, Ukrainians, and the satellite countries of Eastern Europe. Regarding Ukraine, he believed that it “deserved full recognition for the peculiar genius and abilities of its people, and for the requirements and possibilities of its development as a linguistic and cultural entity”. However, in his view, economically Ukraine was as much a part of Russia as Pennsylvania was a part of the United States. Therefore, he made the future of Ukrainians dependent on what the “new Russia” would become. “Who can say what the final status of the Ukraine should be unless he knows the character of the Russia to which the adjustment will have to be made?”⁴⁷.

G. Kennan turned to the Ukrainian theme again in his memoirs, published in 1972. While assessing the attitudes in the United States regarding the likelihood of war with the USSR in 1950–1951, he noted that there were “elements” who not only wanted war with “Russia”, but also had a clear goal for which this war should be waged. The most prominent among them were Ukrainians, who were recent refugees and immigrants, “especially Galicians and Ruthenians”, and associated themselves with Ukrainians on the basis of

some linguistic affinity (that is, Kennan was not sure whether they were Ukrainians). Their idea, to which they were “passionately and sometimes ruthlessly attached”, was that the United States had to wage war “against the Russian people” in their interests, in order to eventually achieve the breakup of the “traditional Russian state” and the establishment of their own regimes in the liberated territories.

G. Kennan did not deny that these people were indeed victims of Soviet communist regime, and they had religious and political reasons for hating Russia. But he emphasized three things about them. First, most of them really wanted a Soviet-American war, and pushed the U.S. government in that direction. Second, if it happened, they wanted it to be a war not against the USSR, but against the “Russian people”, who were their main target. Third, in many cases, their motives were not related to U.S. interests. For them, the United States was only a tool to achieve their hidden political goals⁴⁸.

Considering Kennan’s position on the USSR, which was quite conciliatory, he was involved in negotiating an armistice in Korea as a mediator. It was signed in June 1951, although further peace talks reached a deadlock. In early 1952, Kennan was appointed the U.S. Ambassador to the USSR. Ambassador Kennan arrived in Moscow on May 6, 1952.

In one of the secret diplomatic letters from Moscow (dated June 6, 1952), he characterized himself as “a symbol of that part of the Western world which has not yet lost hope for some improvement and stabilization of relations between the two camps”. In this regard, the Kremlin could have assessed his appointment as a demonstration of the U.S. government’s intention to move to “real” discussions, and link it to the possibility of “confidential negotiations aimed at amicably resolving some of the most dangerous issues” over which the two governments had disagreed⁴⁹.

The potential of Ambassador Kennan’s diplomatic mission was not realized. On October 3, 1952, on the eve of the opening of the 19th Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow (October 5), the Kremlin declared Ambassador Kennan *persona non grata*.

Shortly afterwards, on December 29, 1952, the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State prepared a report on U.S. objectives in the event of war with the USSR⁵⁰. Among its conclusions were the following: 1) the main policy of the United States was to prevent war with the USSR; 2) the conflict with the USSR could not be finally resolved in favor of the United States without the elimination or radical modification of the Soviet regime, as the most desirable outcome. However, the U.S. national interests could also be adequately served by a success that fell short of this absolute achievement. According to this document, in the event of war, the U.S. goal after the elimination of the Soviet regime and system was to replace it with a respected

local regime, with which American government could make a genuine peace based on mutual agreement, leading to its full participation in the organization of the postwar world. This meant limiting the identification of the enemy in the war to the Soviet regime and system, and abandoning the doctrine of national or popular guilt.

A genuine peace with a “Russian successor government” was to “preserve Russia’s essential territorial integrity” and leave “Russia” (like any other country for which such a decision might be made) not too strong for the security of others, but not too weak to fulfill its responsibilities in the world. “Russian territory” could be reduced at least to the borders of the Soviet Union in 1938. The post-war status of the Baltic states could not be determined at this time, but there was no reason for the United States to change its official position of recognizing their right to independence.

According to this paper, the post-war status of Ukraine, White Russia, and other “minority” occupied territories was to be determined between them and the next Russian government as an internal affair. The U.S. had to refrain from committing to their independence or quasi-independence, or from guaranteeing them the possibility of self-determination. In general, the U.S. was not to take responsibility for determining or preserving their post-war status.

Returning to the topic of Ukrainians in the United States in his memoirs, Kennan recognized their certain political influence in 1950s. He believed it was due to their connection to compact voting blocs in large cities, their ability to exert direct influence on some individuals in Congress, and to their successful appeal to religious sentiment and, more importantly, to “the prevailing anti-Communist hysteria”.

In Kennan’s words, the evidence of Ukrainians’ political influence was Captive Nations Resolution, adopted by the Congress as a declaration of the U.S. policy in 1959. It was written by Dr. Lev Dobriansky, associate professor at Georgetown University, and Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) Chairman. By this resolution, the United States undertook, to the extent that Congress had such authority, the “liberation” of 22 nations, including Ukrainians⁵¹.

Kennan believed that there could be nothing worse than what “these people” (Ukrainians) wanted from the United States — to commit itself politically and militarily not only against the Soviet regime, but also against “the strongest and most numerous ethnic elements on traditional Russian soil” (that is, “the Great Russians”). In Kennan’s words, he sympathized with the conquered peoples who were suffering under Stalinist rule, but he also sympathized with the Russian people who were struggling under the same yoke. Moreover, the United States committed to liberation for the sake of “national extremists” among whom there would likely never be any unity, and

who would never be able to defend themselves against Russian revanchist pressure “except by endlessly relying on American bayonets”⁵².

Thus, Kennan demonstrated a negative attitude towards the efforts of Ukrainian Congress Committee of America and Ukrainian political émigré to gain U.S. support for liberation of Ukraine. He characterized himself as a strong critic of the communist government, but also as an opponent of the “liberation” strategy of the Eisenhower administration.

He provided four reasons for this position. First, implementation of this strategy had little chance to succeed. Second, if one was going to take responsibility for supporting the effort to destroy political regimes in other countries, they had to have a clear idea of what to replace them with. The U.S. government did not have any democratic leaders with which to replace the communists. Third, the “liberation” could lead to war. The main reason why he opposed “liberation” was that such a policy would almost inevitably be used by Soviet leaders as an excuse internally for rejecting any liberalization or modification of the intensity of the Cold War.

Instead, Kennan firmly believed that the best option for the evolution of USSR in the direction desired by the United States was liberalization and modernization of the Soviet government. This could not be expected if the Soviet leaders were convinced that the United States had committed itself against them and had lost confidence in any outcome other than overthrow and complete destruction⁵³.

G. Kennan advocated for “gradual and peaceful changes” to which no governments were immune to bring freedom “from erosion of despotism rather than by the violent upthrust of liberty”. He also maintained that it was impossible to achieve fundamental changes “in the spirit and practice of government in Russia” through foreign propaganda and agitation, and without the initiatives and efforts “of the Russians themselves”⁵⁴. In his articles and memoirs, Kennan reiterated that the most important instrument of the U.S. influence on internal events in the USSR was its own positive example. However, CIA Cinderella project demonstrated that Kennan supported not only overt, but also covert efforts against the USSR. The main thing was that Kennan wanted to see “Russia” as an actor on the world stage, and this was a guideline in all relations with “Russian” political groups, both those in power and those in opposition to it.

G. Kennan had not changed these conclusions by spring of 1990, when the Foreign Affairs journal reprinted excerpts of his 1951 article⁵⁵. The editor’s commentary noted that changes in the USSR had actualized these conclusions almost 40 years later.

The impact of Kennan’s recommendations was not difficult to detect in President G. H. W. Bush’s speech in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on

August 1, 1991, in which he called on Ukrainians to abandon “self-defeating nationalism” and support the new federation project, proposed by President Gorbachev.

G. Kennan’s political recommendations were greatly influenced by his love for the “Russian people” and “Russian culture”, which he discussed in his writings and speeches, and his daughter Grace Kennan Warnecke described in her memoirs⁵⁶. F. Logevall quoted F. Costiglione: “Kennan’s love for Russia, his search for a mystical connection..., Kennan’s passion for pre-revolutionary Russia and its culture was real and unchanging, staying with him to the end of his days”⁵⁷. This, in turn, determined his political recommendations regarding Ukrainians, and after collapse of the USSR, regarding Russia and Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS. The ultimate goals of “containment” in Kennan’s interpretation were to make the USSR abandon expansionist foreign policy and to change the Soviet concept of international relations by means short of war. He believed that the threat from the USSR existed as long as the totalitarian regime was in power, and advocated for gradual and peaceful changes in the USSR towards liberalization and modernization. However, he rejected the idea of USSR’s disintegration, and recognized the right to secede only for the Baltic republics. He did not recommend any policies and did not support any activities to promote independence of Ukraine. However, he did not object to the revival of national life of some peoples of the USSR, including Ukrainians, and development views among them that would help change Soviet conduct.

Kennan viewed the USSR as “Russia”, and believed that the United States should build its policy on cooperation with Russians. His personal sentiments, that is love for the Russian people and Russian culture, also influenced his policy recommendations, and shaped his attitude to Ukrainian’s struggle for liberation. For him, Ukrainians and Russians were too close ethnically, and their economic activities were tightly intertwined. Therefore, Ukraine’s secession could have caused a negative reaction and consequences for Russians. He predicted that sooner or later Russia would challenge Ukraine’s independence. In this case, Ukrainians would be forced to turn to the United States for military support, which he wanted to avoid. For these reasons, he viewed the future of Ukrainians in a federal union with Russians in the “new Russia”. Some Kennan’s conclusions on Russia’s foreign policy remain relevant today, and his strategic thinking on Russia and Ukraine continues to influence a significant number of U.S. political scientists and politicians.

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