

States to make “a thoroughgoing exploration of Soviet intentions” in Europe, Kennan says. But President Franklin D. Roosevelt was reluctant to risk undermining Allied wartime unity.



Americans were given a rosy view of their wartime ally

FDR seems to have believed that Stalin would be swayed by his personal charm to collaborate in the creation of a new postwar Europe, Kennan notes.

Senior U.S. military commanders also had an unrealistically upbeat

view. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Roosevelt futilely tried “to assure democratic independence for the Eastern European peoples by accepting, and trying in good faith

to meet, what he took to be Stalin’s demand for ‘friendly governments’ in that part of the world.” The Americans were still trying to preserve amity at the Potsdam Conference of mid-summer 1945. In vain.

Kennan’s famous 8,000-word “Long Telegram,” sent from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on February 22, 1946, spelled out what he called the “Kremlin’s neurotic view of world affairs.” Moscow, while deaf to reason, he wrote then, was “highly sensitive to logic of force” and usually withdrew when it encountered “strong resistance . . . at any point.” Washington’s reaction to his analysis was “nothing less than sensational”; it became the basis of U.S. containment policy. Later, in July 1947, Kennan published his even more famous “X” article in *Foreign Affairs*.

“What happened in 1946,” Lukacs comments, “was that finally those in charge of this country’s world policy were catching up with [Kennan], and then, by and large, political and public opinion followed in 1947.”

A Greening of National Security?

“Is the Environment a National Security Issue?” by Marc A. Levy, in *International Security* (Fall 1995), Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Univ., 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

It’s been argued by some that global environmental problems ought to be considered matters of U.S. national security. Jessica Tuchman Mathews, a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Norman Myers, author of *Ultimate Security* (1993), believe that biodiversity loss, soil erosion, and other such problems ought to be treated with the same seriousness as Bosnia and Saddam Hussein. Levy, an instructor of politics and international affairs at Princeton University, is skeptical.

Some global environmental problems have no connection to any vital national interest. Acid rain, for example, “would have to rank very far down on the list of threats to national security because the values threatened—trees, sports fishing, and so on—are far from vital,” Levy writes.

Two environmental problems come closest, in Levy’s view, to being direct threats to U.S. security: ozone depletion in the stratosphere and the possibility of catastrophic global warming. But even in these cases, he says, applying the “national security” tag may not make sense. It wouldn’t change the analysis

of the problem, or the remedy. Indeed, the security alarm might draw more public and congressional attention not only to the problem but to the costs of taking action—and so make it harder to deal with the problem. One reason that the U.S. response in the late 1980s to the danger of ozone depletion was so effective, Levy believes, may have been that it was seen not as a “security” threat but as a straightforward “public health and chemical hazard problem.”

Why are Mathews, Myers, and others so eager to make environmental degradation a national security matter? Because, Levy suggests, they want “to whip up greater support for global environmental protection.” But this strategy could easily backfire, he says. Public perception of the relative seriousness of various environmental risks bears little relation to reality, as a 1987 Environmental Protection Agency study showed. A public convinced “that any problem that is international and ecological” is a matter of national security, Levy warns, would likely force policymakers to gallop off in pursuit of the wrong enemies.