

ORIGINS of the COLD WAR

ORIGINS of the **COLD WAR**

The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts
'Long Telegrams' of 1946

REVISED EDITION

**WITH THREE NEW
COMMENTARIES**

Kenneth M. Jensen, Editor



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The views expressed in this book are those of the authors alone. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Institute of Peace.

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Preface to the Revised Edition

When the first edition of this collection was being prepared by the United States Institute of Peace in late 1990 and early 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev was still the leader of an intact Soviet Union. There were signs of change, of course—Eduard Shevardnadze had resigned as foreign minister; reactionary forces were jockeying with Gorbachev—but the rapid and dramatic changes that culminated in the August 1991 coup and December's dissolution of the Soviet Union were still a long way down the road. And though we anticipated more change ahead, we had no reason to believe that 1991 would differ so greatly from 1990.

As a consequence, we applauded the Soviet government's modest efforts toward openness that made possible our co-sponsored conference on the origins of the Cold War and brought to light the Novikov "Long Telegram." The conference was held in two meetings, in Moscow and in Washington, during the summer of 1990. At the time, we hoped that our successes in gaining materials from Soviet archives that were relevant to the history of U.S.-Soviet relations would lead to further work along the same lines. Shevardnadze's unilateral opening of the Foreign Ministry archives on August 18, 1990, certainly seemed to prepare the way for more effective access to documents that would lure Western scholars to Moscow and present numerous opportunities for joint work by Soviet and Western scholars.

In fact, of course, the remainder of 1991 played out rather differently than we, and most other observers, had anticipated. The Soviet political scene grew more problematic, and it was

hardly the best of times for Soviets in charge of previously secret public records to advance the arduous and complicated task of turning their good intentions into useful retrieval systems and facilities. It was also hardly the best of times for Western scholars to visit the country for extended periods of work—or for Soviet scholars to go abroad. Still, new efforts were launched and professional contacts continued to be made. In the United States, a number of projects to assist the Soviets with the management of their archives and to conduct research in Moscow were begun or revitalized.

Events in Russia since August 1991 have been tumultuous and disruptive of our research objectives. But if they have not permitted rapid expansion of access to historical information, the openness that began during our experience in the summer of 1991 retains its promise. The demise of the Soviet Union, and especially of the Communist Party, has opened up to public access numerous sources of information, many more promising for Western historians of international relations than the Foreign Ministry archives. However, the burdens of making that opening meaningful have become far greater and more taxing at the very time when social and financial resources for new efforts in scholarship and information sharing have become notably more scarce.

Today we assume that it may be a long time before convenient access to Soviet archives will enable historians to further advance the project of understanding the history of Soviet and Western relations. Nonetheless, we offer this revised edition of *Origins of the Cold War* in the same spirit as the first: in the hope that it will encourage scholars and students to pursue this important historical project with as much vigor as possible under the circumstances.

The Revised Edition

When the original volume was in preparation, the Institute made available to the editors of the journal *Diplomatic History* its translation of the Novikov document for purposes of generating a symposium on "The Soviet Side of the Cold War." When the papers from that symposium appeared in the Fall 1991 issue of the journal, we realized that the Institute could significantly improve its

original effort by including in a new edition several of the *Diplomatic History* commentaries, since they shed new light on the origins of the Novikov document and provided context and perspectives useful in its analysis.

Two of the contributors to the *Diplomatic History* symposium, Viktor Mal'kov and Melvyn Leffler, had participated in our summer 1990 conference. Mal'kov, from the Institute of World History of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, subsequently undertook research on the origins of the Novikov document. (As the preface to the first edition indicates, this research had not been done at the time the document was given to the Institute.) Mal'kov drew on Novikov's memoirs, published in Moscow in 1989, and on a number of archival sources to reveal Molotov's role in the creation of the document and the document's subsequent role in early Soviet Cold War policy deliberations.

For his part, Leffler, a professor of history at the University of Virginia, took advantage of the time immediately after our conference to reflect on a number of important matters, including the extent to which Novikov's analysis stood up to the actual facts of Western attitudes and actions and the degree to which the "symptoms" of the building Cold War mentality—both East and West—are evidenced by Novikov's approach and conclusions.

A third contributor to the *Diplomatic History* effort, Steven Miner—an Ohio University history professor engaged at the time in the study of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy during World War II—brought to the symposium a most useful perspective on the limits of analyzing thinking in Moscow during 1946 (and later) on the basis of such partial evidence as the Novikov document. Miner's commentary—like Leffler's—should be kept in mind by new students of the early Cold War period as they turn for the first time to the Novikov document and other purportedly significant Soviet archival materials that may eventually appear.

We would like to thank the editors of *Diplomatic History* for permitting the inclusion of these three commentaries in this edition of *Origins of the Cold War*.

The ultimate significance of the Novikov "Long Telegram" is yet to be determined. Historian John Lewis Gaddis, introducing the *Diplomatic History* symposium in the fall of 1991, welcomed the publication of the Novikov document but lamented that it

provided “a woefully inadequate basis for beginning the daunting exercise of writing ‘the other side’ of Cold War history.” As noted above, work on “the other side” has moved forward over the past several years, but the project proceeds still on “woefully inadequate” bases.

Revising a book like this one thus has its hazards. Today, in the fall of 1993, with the struggle for democracy and reform in Russia still in an uncertain state, the sense of hazard is especially acute. Fortunately for the historian, however, even if the present environment changes, documents like those included in this book do not. The Institute once again commends the “Long Telegrams” of 1946—and the study of Cold War history—to scholars, teachers, students, and other interested readers. Now, perhaps even more than in 1990 and 1991, a clear understanding of the history of East-West relations is vital to the building of new relations between Russia and the West and to the new cooperative international endeavors that have brought hope—and substantial new complexity—to the post-Cold War world.

Richard H. Solomon
President
November 1993

Preface

During June and July 1990, the United States Institute of Peace and the Research Coordination Center of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducted a seminar for American and Soviet historians in Moscow and in Washington on the origins of the Cold War. During the Washington sessions, the chairman of the Soviet group, Vladimir Shustov, presented a copy of a previously unpublished cable sent by Soviet Ambassador to the United States Nikolai Novikov to Foreign Minister Viacheslav Molotov on September 27, 1946. The Soviet chairman suggested that the Novikov cable in some ways might be parallel to the famous "Long Telegram" sent by U.S. Chargé d'Affaires George Kennan from Moscow to the Department of State earlier in the same year.

Ambassador Shustov indicated his sense of the Novikov telegram's potential significance by stating that the Foreign Ministry intended to publish it. In Shustov's opinion, the Novikov cable, newly discovered in the archives of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, had been important to Molotov in his deliberations on the course of Soviet foreign policy, as he had indicated that it should be kept in his personal files until January 1, 1947. Shustov also said that the Novikov cable was "in a way parallel to Kennan's famous cable of mid-February."

Kennan's cable, which was sent on February 22, 1946, is rightly regarded as one of the landmark documents of the early Cold War period. It contained persuasive analysis of Soviet history, society, outlook, and intentions that influenced U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union for years thereafter and provided the

intellectual underpinning for what came to be known as the policy of "containment." Like the 1950 National Security Council Memorandum No. 68 (NSC-68), which spelled out the implications of the containment policy for U.S. foreign policy, defense, and security agencies, the Kennan telegram has been studied and re-studied well into the era of glasnost and perestroika and will be the subject of historical inquiry for some time to come.

In comparing the Novikov cable to the Kennan "Long Telegram," Ambassador Shustov offered the Novikov cable as a potentially significant Cold War document. Whether or not it will take some time to determine. As with any such diplomatic message, its place in a series of documents and events must be established to determine its role and the extent of its influence. Because the early history of the Cold War has been so thoroughly researched on the U.S. side, we have a very good idea regarding the influence of Kennan and his "Long Telegram." Soviet research on the origins of the Cold War is just beginning in earnest. Consequently, there are no firm answers yet to such questions as how Novikov figured in the constellation of Soviet foreign actors; how such cables from Soviet missions figured in policymaking; or whether Novikov was telling Stalin and Molotov something they wanted to hear from their subordinates or something, in Novikov's view, they needed to hear.

The Soviet Foreign Ministry published the Novikov cable, alongside the Kennan "Long Telegram," in the November 1990 issue of *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, an official publication of the Foreign Ministry. To the best of our knowledge, the present volume contains the first publication of the Novikov telegram outside the Soviet Union. Rather than conduct a detailed and time-consuming analysis of the document and present its findings along with the text of the cable, we decided that publication should come as quickly as possible to get the telegram into circulation for historians. Rendered in English translation, as it is here, the Novikov cable will be accessible to a wider range of scholars and analysts than would otherwise be the case.

We thought that it would be useful to set Novikov's cable alongside several other early Cold War documents of a similar sort. The most obvious document to include was Kennan's "Long Telegram." Given the role of the British in the development of East-West relations after World War II, we thought it would be

appropriate to include along with the Novikov and Kennan telegrams a series of three cables by Britain's chargé d'affaires in Moscow, Frank Roberts, that was sent to Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin during March 1946. Like the Novikov document, these cables have been compared to the Kennan "Long Telegram." [For more on the Roberts documents, see Sean Greenwood, "Frank Roberts and the 'Other' Long Telegram: The View from the British Embassy in Moscow, March 1946," *Journal of Contemporary History* 25 (London: Sage Publishing Inc., 1990), 103-22.]

Taken together, the Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts documents allow the reader the opportunity to make comparisons among U.S., Soviet, and British thinking in 1946. Irrespective of one's prior knowledge of this period, all of these cables are informative and fascinating. Needless to say, the Institute does not assert that these documents are necessarily equivalent—or, as Vladimir Shustov put it, "parallel"—in style, substance, or significance. How they come to be regarded with respect to one another is up to historians and other scholars.

United States Institute of Peace–Soviet Foreign Ministry Seminar on the Origins of the Cold War

The story of how the Novikov "Long Telegram" came into the hands of the United States Institute of Peace (and, therewith, into this publication) is in itself an event in the history of the Cold War, in particular with regard to its demise.

The seminar on the origins of the Cold War stemmed from discussions in 1989 between U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Richard Schifter, an ex officio member of the Institute's Board of Directors, and (then) Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin. In informal conversations about the aftermath of World War II, in the context of the end of the Cold War, the two came to agree that there was a lack of mutual understanding of the origins of U.S.-Soviet tensions spanning the last 45 years. They decided that it was time for the United States and the Soviet Union to begin to bridge this gap.

At the same time Schifter and Adamishin were discussing the lack of a common history, Soviet authorities and scholars within and outside the Soviet Union were beginning a campaign to open

Soviet archives. A number of important Soviet documents had been released and published in official organs, most notably the Hitler-Stalin (Molotov-Ribbentrop) Pact of 1939. In the fall of 1989, legislation to open archival holdings more than thirty years old was prepared for submission to the Supreme Soviet. Although at this writing such legislation has not been acted upon, the push for open archives has continued. In considering a new U.S.-Soviet look at the origins of the Cold War, both the Institute and the Foreign Ministry's Research Coordination Center committed themselves to the principle of free access to public documents and to encouraging the opening of Soviet and other archives.

Negotiations proceeded between the United States Institute of Peace and the Foreign Ministry during the fall and winter of 1989-90. In early spring 1990 a design was drawn up for a modest seminar to be jointly conducted by the Institute and the Research Coordination Center, a new entity within the Foreign Ministry charged with enhancing the role of objective research in Soviet foreign policy. It was decided that groups of American and Soviet scholars would meet in Moscow during the last week of June and again in the last week in July in Washington. Topics to be discussed included the state of Cold War historiography; Soviet-American relations, 1917-45; the wartime-postwar settlement; diplomacy at Yalta and Potsdam; the Pacific War, 1945; the creation and use of nuclear weapons; domestic factors and the origins of the Cold War; consolidation of the Cold War, 1945-50; and lessons of the origins of the Cold War.

Scholars were then selected. The American group included Professor Allen Weinstein (chairman), an eminent historian who is a member of the Institute's Board of Directors; former United States Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford (special guest at the Washington sessions); Mr. Robert Conquest (Moscow sessions only); Dr. Francis Fukuyama; Professor John Gaddis; Dr. Kenneth M. Jensen; Mr. Walter Laqueur (Moscow sessions only); Professor Melvyn Leffler; Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis; Ambassador Paul Nitze (Washington sessions only); Professor Richard Pipes; Professor Elspeth Davies Rostow; Professor Walt Whitman Rostow; Assistant Secretary of State Richard Schifter; Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.; Professor Gaddis Smith (Washington sessions only); Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt (Washington sessions

only); Professor W. Scott Thompson; and Professor Adam Ulam (Washington sessions only).

The Soviet group included Ambassador Vladimir V. Shustov (chairman); Dr. Aleksandr O. Chubar'ian; Dr. Aleksei M. Filitov; Dr. Viktor L. Mal'kov; Dr. Mikhail M. Narinskii; Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksei Obukhov; Dr. Vladimir Pechatnov (Washington sessions only); Dr. Sergei Plekhanov; Dr. Konstantin Pleshakov; Dr. Yurii A. Poliakov; Vladimir Sokolov (Washington sessions only); and Dr. Vladislav Zubok.

The Moscow sessions of the seminar were held south of the city at Meshcherino, a group of dachas belonging to the Foreign Ministry. Three days of paper presentations and discussion were interspersed and followed by press conferences and meetings with Soviet scholars and officials in Moscow. The U.S. and Soviet groups met with Evgenii Primakov, a member of Mikhail Gorbachev's Presidential Council, in his Kremlin office for two hours, and with Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze at the ministry for more than an hour. Deputy Foreign Minister Obukhov, who took part in the seminar, and Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovskii sponsored dinners for the participants, as did U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock. The seminar received wide coverage by the Soviet and international media.

The Washington sessions of the seminar were held at the United States Institute of Peace and other venues. Two days of discussion continued the scholarly dialogue begun in Moscow. A briefing was held at the National Press Club and was shown on C-SPAN, and participants took part in meetings at the National Archives (hosted by U.S. Archivist Donald Wilson), the Library of Congress (hosted by Librarian of Congress James Billington), and the Department of State and on Capitol Hill (hosted by Allen Weinstein and the Center for Democracy).

The scholars were also received by (then) Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, who discussed future relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and other issues with them for nearly an hour and a half. Dinners were held for the participants by Ambassador Richard Schifter, Institute Board Member W. Scott Thompson, and Soviet Chargé d'Affaires Sergei Chetverikov. The Washington sessions closed with a dinner at the Mayflower Hotel at which Ambassador Paul Nitze and Representative Jim Leach spoke.

All the Moscow and Washington sessions of the seminar were intense and lively. While new information (particularly from the Soviet side, as the presence of the Novikov cable in this volume suggests) was exchanged, the meetings were principally characterized by a call for more research and for new ways of thinking about events that launched the Cold War. The Soviet historians present frequently referred to the history of the Cold War as a complicated mosaic, many missing pieces of which will be put into place as they are discovered in Soviet archives. They called for joint research efforts between Soviet and Western scholars to locate the missing pieces. At the same time, the Soviets noted that this in itself would not be enough: new thinking had to ensue, and Western historians could help their Soviet colleagues immeasurably in "preparing proper tools of analysis."

One event during the seminar testified particularly clearly not only to its importance for the participants but to the importance to both the Soviet Union and the West of completing and reanalyzing the history of the Cold War. During his meeting with seminar participants, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said that, in the pursuit of peace between the United States and the Soviet Union, one must not only take public opinion into account but be led by it. "Scientists" (that is, professional historians) are of the greatest importance in shaping public opinion, he said, implying that public understanding of the Cold War is critically important to good future relations between the two countries and that historians, more than others, will shape that public understanding.

To Western ears, this argument may sound rather unusual, since Communist party members customarily speak of the party as leading public opinion, rather than the reverse. Shevardnadze's comments, however, reflect the different situation that now exists in the Soviet Union. If *glasnost* has created an enthusiasm for anything among Soviet citizens, it is an enthusiasm for reevaluating the past. What the Soviet Union should become in the future is preeminently a matter of overcoming the past—something that cannot be done without understanding it.

That the history of the Cold War is of new and very significant interest to the Soviets surely makes it of new and very significant interest to the West. By the end of the sessions, it had become the hope of the seminar participants—U.S. and Soviet alike—that the

joint study of the Cold War would lead to an objective, "scientific" history of U.S.-Soviet affairs that would contribute to the new relationship between the countries.

It was in this context that Ambassador Shustov offered the Novikov long telegram to the seminar participants. In his remarks, he stressed that the offering was made to show that Soviet intentions regarding the archives were in earnest. He wanted everyone present to understand that, by producing the Novikov document, the Soviet government was not making either a dramatic or a partial gesture. He remarked that it was not the Soviet intention to open archives "in a piecemeal approach." Here, Shustov appeared to be anticipating the possible accusation that the Foreign Ministry intended to "manage" information coming out of its archives.

That the Foreign Ministry favors free access to its archival holdings has been borne out by events. We are pleased to note here that the Soviet Foreign Ministry opened its archives on August 18, 1990 (a matter of weeks following the conclusion of our discussions), an action taken prior to the passage of any new Soviet law regarding archival materials.

Coming as it does at the beginning of a new era in Soviet historical scholarship, we hope that this publication will encourage scholars, teachers, students, and all interested readers to study the history of the Cold War while looking toward a future in which U.S.-Soviet relations are based on a new model of peaceful cooperation. It is our hope that this volume will find a wide audience. As the Cold War winds down, it is especially important not to lose sight of the fact that its full history has yet to be studied. And as Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze reminded the participants in the Origins of the Cold War seminar, the future of Soviet-American relations depends a good deal on a clear and objective understanding of the history of those relations.

Samuel W. Lewis
President
February 1991

Editor's Note

The translation of the Novikov telegram was initially undertaken by Dr. John Glad, who also served as a simultaneous translator during the Washington sessions of the Origins of the Cold War seminar. This translation was thereafter revised, annotated, and otherwise prepared for publication by the editor of this volume. Although some of the references in the text have been amplified (with editorial additions set in brackets), the document is presented in English in a manner as close as possible to the Russian original. As the reader will see, we have reproduced Foreign Minister Molotov's underlinings in the document. Other markings are described in the footnotes. Generally speaking, they are checks or lines in the margin, indicating attention to whole sentences or to portions of paragraphs.

Beyond the treatment noted above, we have left the Novikov document unannotated. By and large, the facts and events cited by Novikov were a matter of public knowledge at the time. The interested reader can easily look them up in any of a large number of historical treatments of the period, including the many books by seminar participants John Lewis Gaddis and Adam Ulam. Because of this, and our desire to get the Novikov document into circulation in English as soon as possible, we have not annotated the document to explain facts and events cited.

The Kennan document is reproduced as it appeared in *Foreign Relations, 1946, Volume VI: Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union*, pages 696-709 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1969). This publication contains some

amplifications provided by the journal editors. The document should therefore not be taken to replicate the original. Furthermore, we have made a few minor editorial changes to improve readability.

The Roberts documents are presented as they appear in the files of the British Public Record Office (Frank Roberts to FO, 14, 17, and 18 March 1946, FO 371 56763 N4065/4156/4157/38, Public Record Office, London), except for a few minor editorial changes.

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Kenneth M. Jensen

The Telegrams

