

Litvinov's Lost Peace, 1941–1946

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We won the war but lost the peace.

*Maksim Litvinov, c. 1950*¹

Introduction

The German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 prompted a rapid re-orientation of Soviet foreign policy. In a radio broadcast on 3 July, the Soviet leader, Josif Stalin, defined the struggle as an antifascist war of liberation and a war for national independence and democratic liberties that would align the Soviet Union with other freedom-loving peoples and states, including the United States and Great Britain.² Stalin's pronouncement on the character of the war paved the way for the political rehabilitation of Maksim Litvinov—the man who in the 1930s had personified the Soviet perspective of an international antifascist struggle in defense of freedom and democracy. Litvinov's return from the political wilderness was an important early indicator of Moscow's willingness to embrace a far-reaching military, diplomatic, and political alliance with Great Britain and the United States—an alliance that would first wage war and then enforce the postwar peace. As people's commissar for foreign affairs (i.e., foreign minister) before World War II, Litvinov had played a central role in the formulation and implementation of the Soviet policy of "collective security." Although it would be a gross exaggeration to say that Litvinov was the architect of the Soviet-Western wartime "Grand Alliance"—that was the prerogative of Stalin and Litvinov's successor

1. Statement to his daughter Tar'yana. Cited by Hugh Phillips, "Maxim M. Litvinov and Soviet-American Relations, 1918–1946," Occasional Paper, Kennan Institute, Washington, DC, June 1996, p. 13.

2. *Vneshnyaya politika Sovetskogo Soyuza v period Otechestvennoi Voiny*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1944), pp. 25–30.

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as foreign commissar, Vyacheslav Molotov—Litvinov’s symbolic contribution was certainly important.

This article focuses on Litvinov’s role in the conceptual and practical construction of the Grand Alliance. From the outset, Litvinov urged Moscow to adopt a conciliatory strategy toward the Alliance. He argued that far-reaching wartime cooperation with Great Britain and the United States would be the necessary foundation for a lasting postwar compact. Litvinov’s early advocacy of close cooperation developed into proposals for an institutionalized postwar grand alliance—a relationship among the great powers embedded in an interlocking system of agreements and organizations that would reconcile their conflicting interests and perspectives. It is difficult to say what the impact of a Litvinovite strategy would have been if it had been adopted, but his conception of far-reaching cooperation might well have averted, or at least slowed down, the rapid breakup of the Grand Alliance after the war. Such speculation aside, the evidence is clear that no reconstruction of wartime Soviet foreign policy can ignore Litvinov’s contribution to internal discussions. Although his views may not have prevailed in the end, their impact on mainstream policy was far from negligible. Moreover, at a time when the discourse of Soviet foreign policy was defined and dominated by Stalin,³ Litvinov’s independent voice stands out. His arguments brought a unique perspective to Soviet deliberations about the postwar order. For that reason alone, his role merits close attention.

The idea of a “Litvinov alternative” to the Cold War is not new. Such a notion has long been promoted by authors such as Vojtech Mastny, William Taubman, and Jonathan Haslam, all of whom have cited remarks by Litvinov to Western diplomats and journalists.⁴ During the war Litvinov complained more than once about Soviet foreign policy to the American journalist Edgar Snow. In June 1945, for example, he said to Snow: “Why did you Americans wait till right now to begin opposing us in the Balkans and Eastern Europe? You should have done this three years ago. Now it is too late, and your complaints only arouse suspicion here.” In May 1946 Litvinov told the American ambassador in Moscow that, under the circumstances, the best that could be

3. *Discourse* refers to the terms, phrases, slogans, concepts, theoretical formulations, and rhetorical devices used in policy discussions. In the Soviet context the references were typically, but not exclusively, ideologically loaded. As this article shows, Litvinov’s discourse on foreign policy and international relations was typified by the language of *realpolitik*, not that of ideology.

4. Vojtech Mastny, “The Cassandra in the Foreign Commissariat: Maksim Litvinov and the Cold War,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (January 1976), pp. 366–376. See also Mastny’s *Russia’s Road to the Cold War: Diplomacy, Warfare and the Politics of Communism, 1941–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 218–224; William Taubman, *Stalin’s American Policy: From Entente to Détente to Cold War* (New York: Norton & Company, 1982); and Jonathan Haslam, “Litvinov, Stalin, and the Road Not Taken,” in Gabriel Gorodetsky, ed., *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1991* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), pp. 55–62.

hoped for in East-West relations was a “prolonged armed truce.” The following February Litvinov lamented to the British journalist Alexander Werth that Soviet leaders were grabbing “all they could while the going was good,” rather than building on Western goodwill toward the Soviet Union.⁵

This article emphasizes what might be called Litvinov’s official “dis-sent”—the public and private views he expounded in official contexts—particularly when he served as ambassador to the United States from 1941 to 1943, and later as head of the Soviet Foreign Commissariat’s Commission on the Peace Treaties and the Postwar Order.⁶ The article draws on archival materials, published documents, and public sources to explore three episodes in the evolution of Litvinov’s views on the Grand Alliance: his early advocacy of the institutionalization of inter-Allied cooperation; his analysis of the necessary conditions and terms for a tripartite Anglo-Soviet-American peace; and his response to U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes’s proposal for a great-power pact on the disarmament and demilitarization of Germany.

Diplomatic Rehabilitation

After Litvinov was removed by Stalin from his position as people’s commissar for foreign affairs in May 1939, he went into retirement.⁷ Nothing more was heard from him publicly until the German attack on the Soviet Union. But

5. See the above texts for these and other citations.

6. Litvinov’s activities with respect to the peace treaties and postwar order commission have recently been the subject of a number of highly illuminating studies: Silvio Pons, “In the Aftermath of the Age of Wars: The Impact of World War II on Soviet Security Policy” in Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano, eds., *Russia in the Age of Wars, 1914–1945* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2000), pp. 277–307; Aleksei M. Filitov, “Problems of Post-War Construction in Soviet Foreign Policy Conceptions during World War II,” in Francesca Gori and Silvio Pons, eds., *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1943–1953* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 3–22; Vladimir O. Pechatnov, “The Big Three after World War II: New Documents on Soviet Thinking about Post-War Relations with the United States and Great Britain,” Working Paper No. 13, Cold War International History Project, Washington, DC, July 1995; and Aleksei M. Filitov, “V Kommissiyakh Narkomindela,” in O. A. Rzheshhevskii, ed., *Vtoraya Mirovaya Voyna* (Moscow: Nauka, 1995), pp. 54–71.

7. On Litvinov’s dismissal, see Albert Resis, “The Fall of Litvinov: Harbinger of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (2000), pp. 33–56. For accounts of Litvinov’s activities after May 1939, see Zinovii Sheinis, *Maxim Litvinov* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990), pp. 297–300; Hugh D. Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West: A Political Biography of Maxim M. Litvinov* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 166–167; and Arthur Upham Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1943), pp. 457–460. Litvinov remained a member of the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) until February 1941 and, according to Pope, retained the post of “Chief of the Foreign Affairs Information Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party—and had an office in the Narkomindel Building” (p. 458). Pope also says that Litvinov was invited to stand next to Stalin at the May Day parade of 1941 (p. 460) and that “when [Litvinov] had to go into town Molotov, his successor and still his close friend, often took him in his car” (p. 459)!

Litvinov's return to grace after 22 June 1941 was rapid. On 9 July the two main Soviet newspapers, *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, both featured the text of an English-language radio broadcast by Litvinov.⁸ That broadcast was followed by others.⁹ At the end of July Litvinov reemerged on the diplomatic scene when he served as the interpreter at a meeting between Stalin and Harry Hopkins, the personal envoy for President Franklin Roosevelt. He performed this same function in September 1941 when Stalin, Lord Beaverbrook, and W. Averell Harriman met to discuss Anglo-American aid to Russia.¹⁰ On 6 November 1941 Moscow announced Litvinov's appointment as ambassador to the United States.¹¹ The importance ascribed to this posting was signaled by a Politburo edict on 10 November appointing Litvinov a deputy people's commissar for foreign affairs.¹² Litvinov arrived in Washington on 7 December.

8. "Vystuplenie po Radio Tov. M. M. Litvinova," 9 July 1941. The speech was also published in *Soviet War News*, 11 July 1941. According to Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff*: "On the morning of July 8, 1941, foreign correspondents in Moscow were warned to listen to the radio that night. . . . To their surprise, they heard that Litvinoff was going to speak. They actually did not hear him, for the local radio was off at the time, but the text of his speech was cabled round the world" (p. 461).

9. According to Sheinis, *Maxim Litvinov*, pp. 304–306, in the summer of 1941 Litvinov made a few more radio broadcasts but was stopped from doing so anymore because Molotov objected to the text of a proposed broadcast dealing with the Nazi-Soviet pact. However, he was kept on the Foreign Commissariat payroll; indeed, he was evacuated with other commissariat personnel to Kuibyshev in October 1941.

10. *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins*, Vol. 1 (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), pp. 334, 391. There were two meetings between Stalin and Hopkins, on 30 and 31 July. Litvinov, it seems, was present at the second meeting, but this is not recorded in Stalin's appointments diary. However, the diary does not record Hopkins's 30 July visit either. Apparently, there is no extant Soviet record of the meeting interpreted by Litvinov. See *Dokumenty Vnesheinei Politiki* (hereinafter DVP), Vol. 24 (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 2000), p. 577 n. 17. According to Harriman, Litvinov was brought in to interpret his and Lord Beaverbrook's meetings with Stalin at their request because they did not want Konstantin Umanskii, the Soviet ambassador to the United States, to do it. W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946* (New York: Random House, 1973), pp. 86–87. However, Litvinov was already a member of the Soviet delegation to the supplies conference, having been added to the list of delegates on 25 September, three days before Harriman and Beaverbrook arrived in Moscow.

11. Hugh Phillips, "Mission to America: Maxim M. Litvinov in the United States, 1941–1943," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 1988), p. 262. In his memoirs, Harriman links Litvinov's appointment to criticism of Umanskii at his and Beaverbrook's meeting with Stalin on 30 September 1941 (pp. 93–94). According to the Soviet record, Stalin began by criticizing Laurence Steinhardt, the American ambassador in Moscow, as a bad influence in the diplomatic corps who spread alarmist and defeatist rumors. Stalin then asked Harriman what he thought of Umanskii; he replied that the Soviet ambassador talked too much and to too many people. He would be better off if he spoke to one person with the requisite authority. There was also an exchange about Maiskii's and Cripps's merits as ambassadors. Beaverbrook gave the former a glowing testimonial. See "Zapis' Besedy Predsedatelya Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov SSSR I. V. Stalina s glavami delegatsii Velikobritanii Lordom U. Biverbrukom i SSha A. Garrimanom na Moskovskoi Konferentsii predstavitelei trekh derzhav," 30 September 1941, DVP, Doc. 228. This section of the report was omitted from the version of the document published in the 1980s. The Harriman and Beaverbrook versions of the exchange do not differ in substance from that noted in the latest Soviet record. See Harriman Papers, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Container 160, Chronological File, 28–30 September 1941.

12. "Protokol Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK VKP (b)," in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv

Apart from providing Litvinov with an important political role, his appointment as ambassador also brought him back into the decision-making loop of the Soviet leadership. It is crucial to note that, as ambassador, Litvinov had access to the correspondence between Stalin and Roosevelt. Because the Soviet embassy in Washington served as a conduit for messages to and from Moscow, Litvinov was sometimes able to convey his own views directly to Stalin.¹³

Ambassador to the United States, 1941–1943

During his time in Washington, Litvinov played a highly active and visible role in the campaign for Soviet-American cooperation. It was in this context that he first articulated his views on the Grand Alliance. Litvinov's main theme—the need for a high degree of Allied cooperation, coordination, and unity during the war—was clear from the beginning. Presenting his credentials to Roosevelt on 8 December 1941, Litvinov said:

The successful outcome of this struggle in the shortest possible time will, to a great extent, depend on the coordination of the activities of the more energetic and powerful participants, on the timely and rational use of their resources, and last but not least on the maintenance among themselves of the utmost mutual understanding and confidence, which will be necessary not merely during the struggle itself, but also during the subsequent period.¹⁴

Litvinov expressed this same theme in other public addresses.¹⁵ Perhaps the most significant of these was a speech to the Congress of Soviet-American

Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (hereinafter RGASPI), Fond (F) 17, Opis' (Op.) 3, Delo (D.) 1042. Sheinis records a discussion in early November 1941 between Litvinov and Stalin on the former's mission in the United States (pp. 379–380). However, no such meeting is recorded in Stalin's appointments diary.

13. See the files on the Stalin-Roosevelt correspondence in the Stalin fond in RGASPI, F. 558, Op. 2, D. 363–365. The procedure was usually as follows: Roosevelt's messages were forwarded to Molotov by the American ambassador. After Stalin had dealt with the matter, Molotov would send Litvinov a summary of Roosevelt's message together with Stalin's reply for transmission to the president. If Litvinov delivered the message personally, he would then report on Roosevelt's reaction or response.

14. "Remarks by the Ambassador of the Soviet Union (Litvinov) on the Occasion of the Presentation of Letters of Credence to President Roosevelt," 8 December 1941, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter *FRUS*), 1941, Vol. 1, p. 663.

15. Litvinov's speeches were regularly reported in *Izvestiya* (12 December 1941, 19 March 1942, 12 April 1942) and *Pravda* (14 December 1941, 16 December 1941, 19 March 1942, 12 April 1942, 17 March 1943). As one would expect, Litvinov's speeches were vetted in Moscow, including (on Molotov's behalf) by Litvinov's predecessor in Washington, Umanskii. See the note by Umanskii on Litvinov's forthcoming speech in Philadelphia in April 1942, in Arkhiv Veneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (hereinafter AVP RF), F. 06, Op. 4, Papka (Pap.) 22, D. 235, Listy (Ll.) 10–11.

Friendship in New York in November 1942.¹⁶ Litvinov began his remarks with an overview of Soviet-Western relations in the 1920s and 1930s, highlighting, in particular, the failure of Moscow's collective security efforts. The main reason for this failure, he said, was Western disavowal of the Soviet Union's role in world politics:

I am quite sure that when future historians set themselves to study the cause of the outbreak—25 years after one world war—of a second world war, they will be forced to the conclusion that the most important of these causes was the ignoring by the powers of the Soviet Union as an indispensable and powerful factor for peace. . . . Sincere and close cooperation between the great powers and the Soviet Union . . . would have destroyed the *raison d'être* of Hitlerism, and overturned all the calculations of the aggressive countries.

He insisted that the idea of collective security was “as vital and important as ever,” and he then stressed the importance of wartime cooperation:

Unity of views and coordination of action with regard to the main questions of common strategy in the struggle against the common foe, is essential not only in the interests of the speediest possible victory, but also for the forging of that close cooperation which the laying of the foundations of a new European order requires.

With regard to the postwar world, Litvinov emphasized the need for “the creation of a solid guarantee of peace, even if this requires an armed international peace.” In conclusion Litvinov argued that

It is impossible to enumerate, or even to grasp the enormous postwar problems which will face the United Nations the day after the victory is won. The right and just solution to these problems will be quite impossible without the full mutual confidence and close cooperation between the United Nations, with the proper participation of the Soviet Union. The wrong attitude to the Soviet Union has rendered a poor service to humanity and has led to the present catastrophe.

Litvinov's focus on the lessons of the prewar Soviet struggle for collective security is hardly surprising, given his own position and role in the 1930s. But such a view—one that recognized a continuity between earlier efforts to secure collective security and the need for postwar cooperation with the Grand Alliance—was atypical of Soviet wartime rhetoric, which implied that the

16. The reference here is to a file in Litvinov's “personal fond,” in RGASPI, F. 359, Op. 1, D. 10. The file contains corrected transcripts of the speech in both English (the version quoted here) and Russian. *Krasnaya Zvezda* and *Pravda* published a TASS report on the Congress (“S”ezd Sovetsko-Amerikanskoi družby v N'yu-Iorke,” 12 November 1942) that refers to, but does not detail, Litvinov's speech. However, *The New York Times* on 10 November 1942 carried a much more detailed report, which indicates that Litvinov did deliver a speech along the lines of the text in the archive file.

need for Allied unity began only with the German attack in June 1941. Moreover, whereas Litvinov had stressed the dangers and difficulties threatening Grand Alliance unity, mainstream Soviet rhetoric was often triumphalist and teleological, depicting inter-Allied agreement as links in a historical chain of ever-strengthening cooperation.

Litvinov's statements were also notable for the relative absence of quotations from Stalin on the war and on the Grand Alliance—quotations that were usually both the starting point and the ending point of Soviet disquisitions on the theme of Allied cooperation. In many respects Litvinov's speeches in the United States *anticipated* rather than simply parroted the arguments and themes propounded by Stalin later in the war.¹⁷ Finally, it is worth noting that although Litvinov's statements on the need to build the foundations of postwar unity during the war itself were far from unique in Soviet circles, the emphasis and urgency he placed on this theme was not so common.

Litvinov's public discourse on the Grand Alliance can be linked to his private advocacy of a policy of institutionalizing inter-Allied coordination and cooperation. When Litvinov arrived in Washington in December 1941, he immediately confronted the issue of Soviet participation in the war in the Pacific. With the Germans at the city gates, Moscow understandably declined any such involvement, and Litvinov did not demur.¹⁸ However, Litvinov was more sympathetic to Roosevelt's proposal on 14 December that the Soviet Union participate unofficially in a British-American-Chinese conference on the Far Eastern conflict.¹⁹ Stalin's equivocal reply to Roosevelt—that he wanted more information—was conveyed to the president by Litvinov on 18 December.²⁰ Roosevelt changed tack at this meeting and suggested the radical proposal of a “Supreme Military Council” under the auspices of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union.²¹ Litvinov tried to convince his superiors in Moscow that participation in such a council would be

17. On the evolution of Stalin's wartime views, see Geoffrey Roberts, “Stalin and the Grand Alliance: Public Discourse, Private Dialogues and the Direction of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1941–1947,” *Slovo*, Vol. 13 (2001), pp. 1–15.

18. “Telegramma Narodnogo Komissara Inostrannykh Del SSSR Poslu SSSR v SShA,” 11 December 1941, Doc. 62, in *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie Otnosheniya vo vremya Otechestvennoi Voiny*, Vol. 1, 1941–1943 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1984); and “Telegramma Posla SSSR v SShA v Narodnyi Komissariat Inostrannykh Del SSSR,” 11 December 1941, Doc. 63, in *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie Otnosheniya*.

19. Memorandum from Litvinov to Stalin, 15 December 1941, in RGASPI, F. 558, Op. 2, D. 263.

20. “F. Ruzvel't I. V. Stalinu,” 16 December 1941, Doc. 9, in *Perepiska Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov SSSR s Prezidentami SShA i Prem'er-Ministrami Velikobritanii vo vremya Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny, 1941–1945 gg.*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1957); and “I. V. Stalin F Ruzvel'tu,” 17 December 1941, Doc. 10, in *Perepiska*, Vol. 1.

21. Memorandum from Litvinov, 19 December 1941, in RGASPI, F. 82, Op. 2, D. 1091, Ll. 103–104.

compatible with continued Soviet neutrality in the Far East, provided that the council was divided into European and Far Eastern committees. Molotov rejected the idea, however, arguing that participation would hinder Soviet military planning and might lead to premature Soviet involvement in the war in the Pacific.²² Litvinov did not contest this decision (particularly since Roosevelt himself later dropped the idea), but during the war he repeatedly sought to institutionalize inter-Allied cooperation in some form.

Litvinov's view of the necessary foundations of the Grand Alliance can be linked to his stance on the issue of the Second Front, the central issue with which he grappled during his tenure as ambassador to the United States. In addition to stressing the military urgency of an Anglo-American invasion of Western Europe, Litvinov emphasized the negative political implications of U.S. and British inaction.²³ One of Litvinov's difficulties as ambassador was his longstanding antagonistic relationship with Molotov, which dated back to personal, institutional, and ideological rivalries from the 1930s.²⁴ Molotov did his best to marginalize Litvinov. This effort was exemplified by Molotov's demeanor during his visit to the United States in May–June 1942 to discuss the prospects for a second front and other issues. Andrei Gromyko, who was then a minister at the Soviet embassy, recorded in his memoirs that Litvinov and Molotov clashed privately over the interpretation of prewar British and French foreign policies.²⁵ Molotov pointedly excluded Litvinov from a number of conversations with Roosevelt and other U.S. officials.²⁶

Nonetheless, Litvinov did manage to take part in the meeting with Roosevelt on 1 June 1942. It was at this meeting that Roosevelt expounded his idea of an international "police force" comprising the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China, a force that would safeguard a peaceful order after the war. After being informed of this idea, Stalin strongly

22. *Ibid.*, L. 108; and A. Filitov, "The Soviet Union and the Grand Alliance: The Internal Dimension of Foreign Policy," in Gorodetsky, ed., *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1991*, pp. 97–101.

23. On Litvinov's activities in relation to the Second Front issue, see Phillips, "Mission to America."

24. On the rivalries and differences between Litvinov and Molotov in the 1930s, see Sabine Dullin's important article, "Litvinov and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs: the Fate of an Administration under Stalin, 1930–1939," in Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano, eds., *Russia in the Age of Wars, 1914–1945*, (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2000), pp. 121–146; and Geoffrey Roberts, "The Fascist War Threat and Soviet Politics in the 1930s," in Pons and Romano, eds., *Russia in the Age of Wars*, pp. 147–158. See also Geoffrey Roberts, "The Fall of Litvinov: A Revisionist View," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (October 1992), pp. 639–657.

25. Andrei Gromyko, *Memories*, trans. Harold Shukman (London: Hutchinson, 1989), p. 312.

26. The Soviet documents are published in Oleg A. Rzheshkevskii, ed., *War and Diplomacy: The Making of the Grand Alliance* (New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), pp. 163–261. The Russian edition is Oleg A. Rzheshkevskii, ed., *Voyna i Diplomatyiya: Dokumenty, Kommentarii, 1941–1942* (Moscow: Nauka, 1997), pp. 156–238. For Molotov's boasting about his maltreatment of Litvinov, see Albert Resis, ed., *Molotov Remembers* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), pp. 67–68.

endorsed it.²⁷ Litvinov's presence at the exchange was significant, given his subsequent advocacy of a peace imposed by the great powers and organized by the United Nations (U.N.). Roosevelt's concept of the postwar order clearly chimed with Litvinov's views on the need to formalize the Grand Alliance.

Litvinov's Recall to Moscow

Litvinov was recalled to Moscow in May 1943. On 7 May, just before he left Washington, he met with American Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. According to Welles's report, Litvinov claimed that he was returning to Moscow at his own request in order to influence Stalin's policy toward the United States. Litvinov said that

he did not believe his messages were received by Stalin—in any event, none of his recommendations had been adopted, and he himself was completely bereft of any information as to the policy or plans of his own Government. He said that he had even been forbidden by his own Government to appear in public or to make any public speeches.²⁸

Upon returning to Moscow, Litvinov was asked to prepare a report on U.S. policy. On 2 June 1943 he submitted a long memorandum to Molotov and Stalin on "The Policy of the USA," in which he returned to the issue of Allied military-political coordination. Litvinov's first point was that, in the absence of a permanent and regular U.S.-Soviet consultative or informational organ, Moscow had "very little possibility of influencing the military policy of the USA." Because of this limitation, Allied strategic plans were made and amended in London rather than in Washington. Later in the document

27. "Record of Talks with Roosevelt (1 June 1942)," in Rzheshhevskii, ed., *War and Diplomacy*, Doc. 77; "Telegram from Moscow. Sent 1 June 1942," in Rzheshhevskii, ed., *War and Diplomacy*, Doc. 82; "Telegram from New York. Received in Moscow at 1.30 p.m. 2 June 1942," in Rzheshhevskii, ed., *War and Diplomacy*, Doc. 83; and "To Stalin: Telegram from Washington. Received in Moscow at 6.55 p.m. 4 June 1942," in Rzheshhevskii, ed., *War and Diplomacy*, Doc. 97.

28. "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)," 7 May 1943, *FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 3, pp. 522–524. There have been various other suggestions concerning the circumstances of Litvinov's recall to Moscow at the end of June, supposedly to discuss postwar problems. Maiskii interpreted Litvinov's recall as a protest against western Allied foot dragging on the Second Front and linked his own recall with that of Litvinov around the same time. See Ivan M. Maiskii, *Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador: The War, 1939–1943* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), pp. 365, 378. A similar point is made by Vojtech Mastny, "Stalin and the Prospects of Separate Peace in World War II," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (December 1972), p. 1378. However, the timing does not fit. Litvinov returned to Moscow nearly two months before Maiskii, that is, prior to the Anglo-American clarification that the Second Front would not be opened in 1943.

Litvinov used the issue of the Second Front to demonstrate the lack of Soviet influence on Anglo-American policy. In the short term, he argued, the Western allies would launch a Second Front only if a catastrophe occurred on the Eastern Front—which was unlikely following the recent Soviet victory at Stalingrad. He then offered a stark warning about Anglo-American policy:

It is beyond doubt that the military calculations of both powers are based on the striving for the maximum exhaustion and wearing down of the forces of the Soviet Union in order to diminish its role in deciding postwar problems.

Litvinov pointed to American dissatisfaction with the Soviet Union's reticence about postwar questions and noted that, in the absence of Soviet-American contacts, the Anglo-American relationship was developing apace. He called for "the creation in Washington of an organ of permanent military-political contact with the president and the War Department." Referring back to Roosevelt's earlier suggestion of a supreme Allied war council, Litvinov acknowledged that the proposal had been rejected, but that it would behoove the Soviet Union "to participate in an American-Anglo-Soviet commission for the discussion of general military-political questions arising from the common struggle against the European Axis." Such a commission, he added, need not interfere with Soviet strategic plans but "(1) would allow us to influence the strategic plans of England and the USA, (2) give us useful information, and (3) positively end complaints and dissatisfaction on the part of both [American] government circles and public opinion [regarding Moscow's failure to discuss postwar issues]."²⁹

Evidently, Litvinov's proposal for an inter-Allied commission was looked upon favorably in Moscow and may even have contributed to the formulation of Stalin's own proposal for an Allied military-political commission. On 22 August 1943 Stalin sent a message to Churchill and Roosevelt, stating:

I think the time is ripe for us to establish a military-political commission of representatives of the three countries . . . for consideration of problems concerning negotiations with various governments falling away from Germany. To date it has been like this: the USA and Britain reach agreement, and the USSR is informed of the agreement between the two powers in the capacity of a third party passively observing.³⁰

29. Memorandum from Litvinov to Molotov, in AVP RF, F. 06, Op. 5, Pap. 28, D. 327, Ll. 5–28. In the file, the sections cited are replete with underlining and annotations that indicate Molotov's querying of Litvinov's views. This document (minus the Molotov markings) was published in *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR* (Moscow), No. 7 (15 April 1990), pp. 55–63. An English translation of the document may be found in Amos Perlmutter, *FDR and Stalin: A Not So Grand Alliance, 1943–1945* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 230–246.

30. "Lichnoe i sekretnoe poslanie ot Prem'era I. V. Stalina Prezidentu g-nu F. D. Ruzvel'tu i Prem'er-Ministru g-nu U. Cherrhillu," 22 August 1941, Doc. 174, in *Perepiska, Predsedatelya Soveta*

A second contribution by Litvinov to discussions of Soviet policy was the publication of an article in the authoritative Soviet biweekly journal *Voina i rabochii klass* (War and the working class).³¹ The article, entitled “On War Aims,” was published on 1 July 1943 under the pseudonym N. Malinin.³² It was the first of a series of reports and articles by Litvinov on the related themes of postwar security, international organization, spheres of influence, and great-power relations.

In this initial article Litvinov explored the question that would dominate his subsequent writings: how to establish and safeguard a peaceful international order after the war. Litvinov began by contrasting the predatory war aims of Hitler with the democratic and liberationist aims of the Allied coalition. In a gesture typical of wartime Soviet propaganda, he quoted relevant excerpts from Stalin's November 1941 and November 1942 speeches on the “liberation mission” of the Soviet Union. Litvinov linked the Alliance's aims with the “general principles of the postwar organization of the world” and argued that the implementation of these principles in a new postwar order would be complex and difficult and would require a thorough public discussion. He highlighted two areas of recent discussion about the postwar arrangements: German disarmament and dismemberment, and the establishment of a new international organization. On this latter issue Litvinov noted that there was little support for a revived League of Nations and that

a far more popular idea is that of establishing a directorate of representatives of the major powers, who would give a periodic account of their activities to a wide international body or to a plenary session of representatives of every nation. Un-

Ministrov SSSR s Prezidentami SShA i Prem'ér-Ministrami Velikobritanii vo vremya Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1957). Relevant here is the internal Soviet discussion of the response to a British proposal of July 1943 on “Principles which would Govern the Conclusion of Hostilities with the European Members of the Axis.” “Zapiska Komissii po Podgotovke Otveta na Angliiskii Memorandum ot 1 iyulya 1943 g.,” in Georgii P. Kynin and Jochen Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, 1941–1945 (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1996), Doc. 48; and “Proekt Otveta na Angliiskii Memorandum ot 1 iyulya 1943g.,” in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 49. For a clear exposition of the development of the Soviet position on the Italian question, see Olga V. Serova, *Italiya i Antigitlerovskaya Koalitsiya 1943–1945* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973). For an account based on the latest archive sources, see Silvio Pons, “Stalin, Togliatti, and the Origins of the Cold War in Europe,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 2001), pp. 3–27.

31. The journal was established by the Politburo in May 1943 (RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 3, D. 1047, Ll. 63–64) with a view to providing authoritative coverage of Soviet foreign policy and Soviet views of international relations. The journal was exempted from the Soviet censorship regime, and its content was closely controlled by Stalin and Molotov. Many of the articles published in the journal originated in internal policy briefings and reports. After the war, the journal's name was changed to *Novoe vremya* (New times).

32. N. Malinin, “O ‘Tselyakh Voiny,’” *Voina i rabochii klass*, No. 3 (1 July 1943), p. 1. An English translation was published in *Soviet War News*, 10 July 1943, p. 2, under the title “War Aims and Postwar Problems.”

der this plan the major powers would also be charged with international police duties, for which they would detail the necessary armed forces.³³

On 3 August 1943 Litvinov submitted to Molotov a memorandum describing the work of a commission on preparations for the peace conference.³⁴ On 16 August Molotov informed the American ambassador, William Standley, that Litvinov would be retained in Moscow “where his services were urgently needed” and that Gromyko would take his place in Washington.³⁵ On 2 September Litvinov met with Stalin, apparently for the first time since his arrival back in Moscow.³⁶ A Soviet Politburo directive on 4 September appointed Litvinov chair of the Foreign Commissariat’s commission on questions of peace treaties and the postwar order.³⁷ On 9 September, the day after the commission held its first meeting, Litvinov sent Stalin and Molotov a long note with proposals for the work of the commission.³⁸

Had Litvinov been promoted or demoted? Writing to his wife, Ivy, in August 1943, Litvinov reported that he had been ordered by the Soviet Politburo to remain in Moscow to “work on postwar problems.” He thought that the work might be interesting but also “a source of new friction” (presumably with Molotov). Litvinov further confided that his mood was “sometimes very gloomy and hopeless” but that he hoped her return to Russia would cheer him up.³⁹ Some scholars claim that by bringing Litvinov back to Moscow, Sta-

33. Quoted from the English version of the article published in *Soviet War News*. There are obvious echoes here of Roosevelt’s four-policemen idea, which the American president had expounded to Molotov and Litvinov a year earlier.

34. “Zapiska Zamestitelya Narodnogo Komissara Inostannykh Del SSSR M. M. Litvinova Narodnomu Komissaryu Inostrannykh Del SSSR V. M. Molotovu,” 3 August 1943, in AVP RF, F. 6, Op. 6, Pap. 14, D. 149, Ll. 1–3. This document has been published in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 52.

35. “The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Standley) to the Secretary of State,” 16 August 1943, *FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 3, p. 564. The Politburo formally relieved Litvinov of the ambassadorship and appointed Andrei Gromyko in his place on 21 August. See the protocol in RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 3, D. 1048, L.49.

36. “Posetiteli Kremlevskogo Kabineta I. V. Stalina,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (Moscow), No. 2 (1996), p. 78.

37. Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, p. 665 n. 74. That same day, an Armistice Commission (Komissiya po Voprosam Peremiriya) was established under the chairmanship of Kliment Voroshilov. The task of this commission was to consider issues connected to armistice terms, above all, in relation to Germany. In November 1943 a Reparations Commission headed by Maiskii was set up.

38. “Protokol pervogo zasedaniya Komissii po Voprosam Mirnykh Dogovorov i Poslevoennogo Ustroistva pri NKID SSSR,” 8 September 1943, and “Zapiska Zamestitelya Narodnogo Komissara Inostrannykh Del SSSR M. M. Litvinova Predsedatelyu Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov SSSR I. V. Stalinu i Narodnomu Komissaru Inostrannykh Del SSSR V. M. Molotovu s prilozheniem,” 9 September 1943, in AVP RF, F. 06, Pap. 14, D. 149, Ll. 9–17, 33. These documents have been published in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Docs. 54 and 55.

39. See Phillips, “Maxim M. Litvinov and Soviet-American Relations,” p. 9. See also Elena S. Danielson, “The Elusive Litvinov Memoirs,” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Fall 1989) pp. 477–482.

lin removed him from the terrain of practical inter-Allied diplomacy, and that much the same calculation applied to Ivan Maiskii, who was recalled from the London embassy in June 1943 and subsequently appointed head of a Foreign Commissariat commission on reparations.⁴⁰ It has also been argued that, in the end, Litvinov's planning commission turned out to be little more than an academic think tank on the margins of Soviet policy making.⁴¹ The alternate view—which will be pursued here—is that Litvinov was given the postwar planning job because Stalin needed his experience and expertise. Moreover, as discussed below, Litvinov's policy work had many practical applications.

The change in Litvinov's personal fortunes in the summer of 1943 was part of a broader refocusing of Soviet foreign policy on issues connected with peace and the postwar world. The Soviet Politburo had established a commission on postwar policy as early as January 1942.⁴² This body produced a number of reports, but the Politburo evidently concluded that a radical reorganization of planning work was needed, even if it meant bringing back the Litvinovite "old guard."⁴³ This shift may have been influenced by the military successes that followed Stalingrad and Kursk, all of which seemed to guarantee an eventual Soviet and Allied victory. A more specific motivation may have been the prospect of the start of tripartite negotiations on the postwar order. On 9 August 1943 Stalin finally agreed to meet with Roosevelt and Churchill in a tripartite summit, which was subsequently scheduled for the end of November 1943 in Teheran. On 24 August Stalin consented to a meeting of foreign ministers in preparation for the Teheran summit.⁴⁴ Although initially intended as a preliminary meeting, the Moscow Conference of Foreign

Danielson, on the basis of this personal correspondence, suggests—mistakenly, I think—that Litvinov had been "demoted from ambassador to a nebulous position to work on postwar problems."

40. See Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 28. Zubok and Pleshakov state that "Stalin removed both of them [Litvinov and Maiskii] from practical diplomacy with London and Washington, which he considered to be his personal territory and shared only with Molotov." Another possible angle is suggested by a letter to Pamela Churchill in February 1944 from Kathleen Harriman (who accompanied her father, the ambassador, to Moscow in 1943–1946) that records Maiskii's wife's view that her husband had been recalled because of the failure to achieve a second front in 1943. Harriman himself repeated this point at a press briefing in London in May 1944. He added that "Litvinov seems to have come back quite a bit." Harriman Papers, Container 171, Chronological File, 22–29 February 1944; and Harriman Papers, Container 172, Chronological File, 25–30 May 1944.

41. Filitov, "Problems of Post-War Construction," pp. 3–22

42. "Zapiska Zamestitelya Narodnogo Komissara Inostrannykh Del SSSR S. A. Lozovskogo Predsedatelyu Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta Oborony I. V. Stalinu i Narodnomu Komissaru Inostrannykh Del SSSR V. M. Molotovu," 26 December 1941, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 15; and "Prilozhenie k Resheniyu Politburo TsK VKP (b)," 28 January 1942, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 18.

43. "Zapiska Sekretarya Komissii po Podgotovke Diplomaticheskikh Materialov G. F. Saksina," 2 February 1943, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 38.

44. See "Lichnoe i Sekretnoe Poslanie ot Prem'era I. V. Stalina Prem'er-Ministru g-nu U. Cherrillyu," 9 August 1943, Doc. 170, in *Perepiska*, Vol. 1; and "Lichnoe i Sekretnoe Poslanie ot Prem'era I. V.

Ministers (19–30 October 1943) developed into a wide-ranging inter-Allied forum for negotiation—the first of the wartime tripartite conferences that would shape the character of the Grand Alliance.

Litvinov and The Moscow Conference

Litvinov's involvement in the Moscow conference was the direct result of his position as chair of the peace treaties and postwar order commission. He drafted the main Soviet work plan (*plan raboty*) for the conference, advised Molotov on conference tactics and organization, and provided diverse memoranda and proposals on topics such as inter-Allied consultative machinery, security zones, international organization, the German question, Austrian independence, Polish-Soviet relations, and the geopolitical shape of postwar Eastern Europe.⁴⁵ A summary document presented to Stalin on 18 October clearly reflected Litvinov's contributions to Soviet policy deliberations.⁴⁶ Litvinov attended several briefings with Stalin both before and during the conference (on 18, 19, 20, 23, and 29 October) and was a member of the Soviet delegation to the conference itself.⁴⁷

In short, Litvinov was a leading figure in Soviet preparations for the meeting. At the conference Molotov dominated the proceedings on the Soviet side, but Litvinov played a crucial supporting role. A. H. Birse, the British interpreter at the Moscow conference, noted in his memoirs that “although Molotov did most of the talking at the meetings, Litvinov's occasional remarks and suggestions were always to the point and helpful. These were the principal figures on the Soviet side.”⁴⁸ After the conference, Litvinov was charged with briefing both the press and the Moscow diplomatic corps on the results.⁴⁹

One of the tasks that Litvinov had reserved for himself under the *plan raboty* was to analyze an American proposal to create “means of examining current political and economic questions.”⁵⁰ The U.S. delegation had recom-

Stalina Prem'er-Ministru g-nu U. Cherrillyu i Presidentu g-nu F. D. Ruzvel'tu,” 24 August 1943, Doc. 175, in *Perepiska*, Vol. 1.

45. The Molotov fond (F. 6) in the AVP RF contains the relevant papers: Op. 5b, Pap. 39, D. 1, 2, and 4–6, and Pap. 40, D. 11. A number of these documents are published in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1.

46. Memorandum to Stalin, 18 October 1943, in AVP RF, F. 6, Op. 5b, Pap. 39, D. 6, Ll. 16–27.

47. “Posetiteli Kremlevskogo Kabineta I. V. Stalina,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (Moscow), No. 3 (1996), pp. 82–84.

48. A. H. Birse, *Memoirs of an Interpreter* (New York: Coward McCann Inc., 1967), p. 140.

49. Harriman Papers, Container 170, Chronological File, 8–17 November 1943.

50. “Plan raboty,” in AVP RF, F. 6, Op. 5b, Pap. 40, D. 11, Ll. 8–9.

mended the establishment of permanent diplomatic machinery to discuss various inter-Allied issues. On 6 October 1943 Litvinov wrote to Molotov in support of the American proposal, arguing that the existence of such a mechanism would likely preclude the formation of a united Anglo-American policy. Litvinov averred that such a body should also deal with military questions, not least the issue of the Second Front. For that reason he believed it might be best for such a council to be based in Moscow, though he acknowledged the tactical advantage of a London- or Washington-based commission, which would enable Soviet representatives to delay making commitments while consulting with Moscow.⁵¹ Litvinov's views were reflected in a document presented to Stalin on 18 October recommending that the commission be based in Moscow.⁵²

It turned out, however, that the conference discussions on an inter-Allied consultative body revolved around British, rather than American or Soviet, proposals. The result was the establishment of the European Advisory Commission (EAC) in London, a body that played an important role in the formulation of Grand Alliance policy on the occupation of Germany. The EAC, however, was not responsible for considering other issues connected to the postwar peace settlement.⁵³

In response to an item submitted by the British, Litvinov sent a long memorandum to Molotov on 9 October 1943 describing “joint responsibility for Europe as contrasted with individual spheres of responsibility.”⁵⁴ Litvinov returned in this memorandum to the theme of postwar international organization, implicitly raising the issue of who would be responsible for postwar security. Would security, he asked, be a collective responsibility? Or would it be

51. “Metody rassmotreniya tekushchikh politicheskikh i ekonomicheskikh voprosov,” AVP RF, F. 6, Op. 5b, Pap. 39, D. 1, Ll. 96–99. This document is published in part in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 61.

52. AVP RF, F. 6, Op. 5b, Pap. 39, D. 6, L. 27.

53. On the discussion at the Moscow conference concerning the formation of the EAC, see Daniel J. Nelson, *Wartime Origins of the Berlin Dilemma* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1978), pp. 10–14. On the EAC and the broader German question, see Tony Sharp, *The Wartime Alliance and the Zonal Division of German* (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1975). The records of the conference discussions suggest that American and Soviet opposition to a British proposal for a wide-ranging but vague inter-Allied commission led to the establishment of a body with a more specific brief. The Soviet priority seems to have been the terms of the armistice with Germany, and, mindful of the unilateralist precedents set by the Italian surrender, Moscow was keen to ensure that there was advance Allied agreement on this issue. See the Soviet records of the Moscow conference plenary sessions on 22, 23, and 29 October 1943 in *Moskovskaya Konferentsiya Ministrov Inostrannykh Del SSSR, SShA i Velikobritanii* (19–30 Oktyabrya 1943g) (Moscow: Politizdat, 1978). For the American records, see “The Tripartite Conference in Moscow, October 18–November 1, 1943,” *FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 1, pp. 604–608, 620–621, 663–665. For the British records, see PRO FO/371 /37031, pp. 244–247, 252–253, 276–277.

54. “Vopros o sovместnoi otvetstvennosti za Evropu v protivopolozhnoost’ voprosu ob otdeľnykh raionakh otvetstvennosti,” in AVP RF, Op. 5b, Pap. 39, D. 5, Ll. 36–52. This document is published in part in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 62.

organized on the basis of “zones of security” or “zones of influence”? The majority opinion in the West, Litvinov noted, was that postwar security would be achieved by the establishment of some kind of international organization that would regulate a new, norms-based international order. This organization would have both the right and the power to impose its will on states. But there were problems with this concept, Litvinov argued, as shown by the experience of the League of Nations. What would be the structure of the new organization? What would be the roles of individual countries? How would relationships between small and big states be structured? And who would constitute the political leadership of the organization? If the answer to the last question was the “Big Four” (Britain, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States), what would be the relationship between this leadership and the other members of the organization? Also, given the emphasis placed on the leading roles of the “Big Four,” what would be the nature of their relationship with one another within the organization? Would, he asked, “these four powers be collectively answerable for the peace of the whole world, or will each have its own special zone based on the area in which it has the most direct interest?”⁵⁵

Litvinov himself evidently favored what he referred to as “the concept of dividing the world into defined zones of security.” He claimed that this idea had also gained favor in the West, citing a speech by Churchill that referred to regional councils within a general security organization. Litvinov concluded the memorandum by recommending the establishment of a special American-British-Soviet commission to study the question of international organization and postwar security.

At the Moscow conference, detailed discussions on postwar security were relatively limited, but the assembled leaders did agree to issue a declaration of principle on the establishment of a new international security organization.⁵⁶ This declaration guided subsequent Allied discussions on the establishment of the United Nations (UN) as a successor to the League of Nations. Another wide-ranging memorandum submitted by Litvinov to Molotov on 9 October 1943 dealt with the question of the postwar treatment of Germany and other Axis states. This was Litvinov’s first attempt to discuss postwar arrangements for containing the German threat.⁵⁷ Litvinov’s themes and arguments in the memorandum—on disarmament, demilitarization, decentralization, and reparations payments—prefigured much of the internal Soviet discussion on the German question that was to follow, especially the discussion within

55. AVP RF, Op. 5b, Pap. 39, D. 5, L. 10. This sentence was underlined by Molotov.

56. *Moskovskaya Konferentsiya*, pp. 321–322.

57. “Obrashchenie s Germaniei i drugimi vrazheskimi stranami v Evrope,” in AVP RF, F. 6, Op. 5b, Pap. 39, D. 2, Ll. 77–108.

Litvinov's own commission.⁵⁸ Of particular interest was Litvinov's belief in a prolonged Allied occupation of Germany to facilitate the radical postwar transformation of Germany that he envisaged. Continuing cooperation with Britain and the United States, he argued, would be indispensable for the long-term occupation of Germany. A far-reaching peacetime grand alliance was therefore essential.

The main theme emerging from the Moscow conference was a tripartite approach to the establishment of the postwar order. For the Soviet Union, the conference marked the beginning of the tripartite phase in wartime Soviet foreign policy—a phase that lasted until the Yalta and Potsdam conferences of 1945—during which Soviet diplomatic strategy presupposed a trilateral shaping and policing of the postwar arrangements.⁵⁹

Planning the Postwar World, 1943–1945

What was Litvinov's role in this tripartite phase of Soviet foreign policy? After the Moscow conference Litvinov was deeply involved in internal Soviet discussions leading up to the Dumbarton Oaks conference of August–September 1944.⁶⁰ In a series of internal memoranda, he elaborated his ideas on the foundations of postwar security.⁶¹ He argued that a top-level body, the security council, should oversee the new organization; that voting within the security council should be based on great-power unanimity; and that the fate of the new organization would depend on great-power relations. In this context he advocated the signing of agreements on the precise military commitments that each ally would make to the new international organization. He also favored a deal with Britain dividing the continent into Anglo-Soviet spheres of security and thereby stabilizing great-power relations in Europe.

Litvinov's views on postwar security surfaced publicly in another "Malinin" article—"The International Organization of Security"—published

58. See Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, passim.

59. See Geoffrey Roberts, "Ideology, Calculation, and Improvisation: Spheres of Influence and Soviet Foreign Policy 1939–1945," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (October 1999), pp. 655–673.

60. Litvinov's other preoccupation in 1943–1944 was the German question.

61. See T. U. Kochetkova, "Voprosy Sozdaniya OON i Sovetskaya Diplomatija," *Otechestvennaya Istoriya* (Moscow), No. 1 (1995), esp. pp. 31–37. The two main documents written by Litvinov are dated 28 April and 6 July 1944. This article—the only one I know of—is based on documents in the fond of the Litvinov commission (0512), which remains closed, at least to me. For the published Soviet records of the Dumbarton Oaks conference, see *Konferentsiya Predstavitelei SSSR, SShA i Velikobritanii v Dumbarton-Okse* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1984). This volume contains Gromyko's detailed reports on the discussions at Dumbarton Oaks but not his instructions and directives from Moscow.

in the Leningrad journal *Zvezda* in April 1944. In the article, Litvinov argued strongly in favor of a postwar security organization based not on the “false equality” of all states but on a “league of the great powers.” These great powers, he declared, would decide among themselves, on the basis of specific, practical agreements, how they would act to safeguard peace and security. He pointed out that the great powers had a poor record when it came to fulfilling obligations arising from general declarations about peace and security. In his view they were much more likely to meet commitments arising from specific bilateral and multilateral agreements. A peace organized on this basis, Litvinov concluded, did not require complicated and impractical plans for an international army (although he did not rule out some kind of international air force in the future). Peace, he argued, would be safeguarded by the military forces of the great powers, deployed and directed in a concerted fashion.⁶²

Although Litvinov believed that a postwar successor to the League of Nations had to be based on specific security agreements signed by the great powers, the official Soviet policy stopped short of this position. The Soviet Union’s memorandum on the international organization of security that was submitted to the Dumbarton Oaks conference in August 1944 did not mention separate great-power agreements. Instead, it concentrated on organizational issues, especially the principle of great-power unanimity as a prerequisite for collective action in defense of peace and security.⁶³ The rationale for this focus on organizational questions was that stable, well-defined relations within the new security organization would be the basis for a broader pattern of great-power unity and cooperation.⁶⁴

For Litvinov, however, the policy enunciated at the conference was unsatisfactory. In August 1944 he indicated to the Norwegian ambassador that there were differences between his view and the official Soviet position, which “favored a looser international organization.” In October 1944 he complained to Edgar Snow that “his [Litvinov’s] original plan had been discarded; instead, at Dumbarton Oaks, the Soviet Representative Andrei A. Gromyko had pulled out of his pocket an altogether different scheme.”⁶⁵ The official policy,

62. An English translation of this article may be found in the Harriman Papers, Container 203 (miscellaneous file of translations by the Joint Press Reading Service, Moscow). See also Phillips, “Maxim M. Litvinov and Soviet-American Relations,” pp. 10–11.

63. “Memorandum Pravitel’sstva SSSR o Mezhdunarodnoi Organizatsii Bezopasnosti,” 12 August 1944, in *Konferentsiya Predstavitelei SSSR*, Doc. 26.

64. See, for example, the editorial in *Voina i rabochii klass*, No. 20 (15 October 1944), p. 1.

65. See Mastny, “Cassandra,” pp. 369–370. Another policy difference between Litvinov and the official viewpoint concerned permanent membership for France on the UN Security Council. This dispute was connected to an ongoing discussion within the Foreign Commissariat about the postwar role of France. Litvinov favored the continued subordination of France as a power, whereas others favored the restoration of French power as a potential counterweight to Britain.

among other things, endorsed the setting up of an international military force—a notion derided by Litvinov as utopian in his *Zvezda* article.⁶⁶

Another point of tension between Litvinov and official policy concerned the role of regional entities within the projected postwar security structure. The official memorandum for Dumbarton Oaks stated that the question of regional structures required further discussion. In the directives issued to the Soviet delegation at Dumbarton Oaks, the position was much stronger—that they should reject any security system based on an extensive role for regional suborganization.⁶⁷ The Soviet fear was that regional structures might supplant the centralized structures of decision making (which Moscow could control via the veto) and might, in a worst case scenario, form the basis for power blocs arrayed against the Soviet Union.

Litvinov strongly disagreed. In another pseudonymous article published by *Voina i rabochii klass* in December 1944, he called for a postwar security system based on “security zones” linked to regionalized substructures of the new international organization. Such security zones, he said, would be the responsibility of the “leading states.” But Litvinov was at pains to distinguish these sorts of arrangements from blocs and spheres of influence. He insisted that the purpose of security zones was to ensure peace and stability. They would not infringe on state independence and would serve the interests of small as well as great powers. Litvinov also stressed that the extent of each zone would need to be clearly defined in order to avoid international conflicts.⁶⁸

In private, Litvinov's advocacy of great-power zones of security was even more radical, as is evident from a document he sent to Molotov on 15 November 1944, “On the Prospects and Possible Basis of Soviet-British Cooperation.”⁶⁹ It is not entirely clear why this document was drafted. Some scholars have linked it to the famous Percentages Agreement between Churchill and Stalin in October 1944,⁷⁰ but it is more likely that it was linked to the forth-

66. The idea of a combined international force to quell aggression was a theme of Stalin's November 1944 speech. The speech is reprinted in many places, including *Vneshnyaya Politika Sovetskogo Soyuza v period Otechestvennoi Voyny* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1946), pp. 38–52. It is also available on compact disc, as are many other recordings of Stalin's speeches. See also my “Stalin and the Grand Alliance.”

67. “Sovetskii Soyuz i OON: Direktivy Politbyuro TsK VKP (b) Sovetskoi Delegatsii na Konferentsii v Dumbarton-Okse 1944g.,” *Istoricheskii arkhiv* (Moscow), No. 4 (1995), pp. 52–58.

68. N. Malinin, “K Voprosu o Sozdanii Mezhdunarodnoi Organizatsii Bezopasnosti,” *Voina i rabochii klass*, No. 24 (15 December 1944), pp. 10–11. An abridged translation entitled “Regional Security—A Soviet View” was published in *World News and Views*, Vol. 25, No. 17 (28 April 1945), p. 135.

69. I rely here on the summaries provided by Filitov, “Problems of Post-War Construction”; Pechatnov, “The Big Three after World War II”; and Pons, “In the Aftermath of the Age of Wars.”

70. I have argued elsewhere (See “Ideology, Calculation, and Improvisation,” pp. 668–671) that the so-called Percentages Agreement is largely mythical.

coming Yalta conference and may simply have arisen from Litvinov's own persistent advocacy of postwar zones of security.

In the document Litvinov averred that the fundamental basis for postwar Anglo-Soviet cooperation would be the containment of Germany and the maintenance of peace in Europe. But he warned that the war would leave a dangerous power imbalance arising from the Soviet defeat of Germany and the concomitant decline of France and Italy. That problem, he argued, could be resolved by the demarcation of British and Soviet security spheres in Europe. Litvinov suggested a maximum Soviet security zone of Finland, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, the Balkans (excluding Greece), and Turkey. The British security zone would consist of Western Europe (including Norway), Denmark, Germany, and Austria, with Italy treated as a neutral zone. As Litvinov explained,

This delimitation will mean that Britain must undertake not to enter into specifically close relations with, or make any agreements against our will with the countries in our sphere, and also not to have military, naval, or air force bases there. We can give the corresponding undertaking with regard to the British sphere, except for France, which must have the right to join an Anglo-Russian treaty directed against Germany.⁷¹

Litvinov claimed that the decline of Great Britain relative to the United States would make the British government eager to conclude an accord with the Soviet Union that would consolidate Britain's position in continental Europe.

Two months later, on 11 January 1945, Litvinov sent a memorandum to Molotov, "On the Question of Blocs and Spheres of Influence," in which he returned to the question of Soviet-British cooperation.⁷² Litvinov reiterated his proposal for a division of Europe into British and Soviet spheres of interest or security, pointing out that tripartite discussions (about to open at Yalta) did not preclude bilateral agreements between the great powers. Litvinov also commented on an idea put forward by the American journalist Walter Lippmann for a division not just of Europe, but of the whole world, into spheres of influence. This proposal, Litvinov argued, was too fantastic and unrealistic to merit serious discussion. In particular, Litvinov derided

71. Filitov, "Problems of Postwar Construction," p. 13. Litvinov's enthusiasm for Anglo-Soviet cooperation at this time may be contrasted with what he reportedly said to the Polish ambassador in Washington in December 1941: that "the British had learned nothing whatever and that he was confident that when the post-war reconstruction period commenced the British would adopt exactly the same kind of selfish and shortsighted policy which they had adopted in 1920 and 1921, and which in his judgment had been so largely responsible for the new war conflagration." *FRUS*, 1941, Vol. 1, p. 665.

72. "Zapiska Zamestitelya Narodnogo Komissara Inostrannykh Del SSSR M. M. Litvinova," 11 January 1945, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 1, Doc. 140.

Lippman's concept of an all-embracing Western community of interest consisting of North and South America, Great Britain and the British Commonwealth, and Western Europe. Litvinov also claimed there was no reason for the United States to be involved in Anglo-Soviet discussions about zones of security, particularly in light of the widespread public opposition in the United States to blocs and spheres of influence. (He pointed out that U.S. officials who denounced spheres of influence in Europe would conveniently neglect to mention the Monroe Doctrine and the American sphere in Latin America.) Litvinov insisted that any agreement on British and Soviet security zones in Europe should be the result of bilateral agreements—-independent from the regional structures of an international security organization. This, however, would not rule out a U.S. security zone, in the form of a Pan-American section of the new organization.

Despite Litvinov's elaborate conception of postwar British-Soviet interactions, he offered only vague ideas about Soviet-American relations. In a memorandum sent to Molotov on 10 January 1945, Litvinov asserted that

although there are no inherent reasons for serious, long-term conflicts between the USA and USSR in any part of the world (with the possible exception of China), it is difficult to outline a concrete basis for positive political cooperation between the two countries, apart from their mutual interest in the preservation of world peace.⁷³

One problem with regard to the United States, as he saw it, was that the path to an explicit U.S.-Soviet spheres-of-interest deal was blocked on the American side, both politically and diplomatically. That left the option of an implicit or de facto postwar division of regions. Such a course of action—which was the one actually pursued by Stalin and Molotov—was fraught with difficulties, in Litvinov's view. He warned that an informal carve-up would lead to serious misunderstandings and frictions, a prediction that was amply borne out by subsequent events.⁷⁴ For Litvinov, an "organization of rivalries"—a concept based on clearly defined security spheres located and operating in a context of great power unity and solidarity—would be a much more desirable option to pursue.⁷⁵ As he saw it, this was the only sure guarantee that zones of security would not develop into competitive blocs and spheres of influence, a point emphasized recently by the Russian scholar Vladimir Pechatnov:

73. Pechatnov, "The Big Three after World War II," p. 11.

74. As Molotov argued in May 1946, "It is sometimes said that it is difficult to draw a line between the desire for security and the desire for expansion. And, indeed, it is at times difficult." V. M. Molotov, *Problems of Foreign Policy: Speeches and Statements*, April 1945–November 1948 (Politizdat, 1949), p. 49.

75. The phrase was coined by Silvio Pons.

In sum, this was Litvinov's general outline for the postwar world: an Anglo-Soviet strategic condominium in Europe, a stable but more remote relationship with the U.S., a division of the world into respective security zones among the great powers, sanctioned and liberalised by the rest of the international community through what would become the United Nations . . . [a] synthesis of geopolitical realities, great power cooperation and certain respect for the rights of smaller nations and legitimate rules of the international game.⁷⁶

Although Pechatnov is skeptical of some aspects of Litvinov's scheme, he acknowledges that Litvinov favored a broadly cooperative approach. Silvio Pons has expressed a similar view, stressing, in particular, that the alternative to the Litvinov strategy was Soviet isolationism and unilateralism (and, ultimately, the Cold War). But Pons is also critical of some of the underlying assumptions of Litvinov's analyses and prescriptions, especially the assumptions that British power would remain dominant in Western Europe, that the United States would return to isolationism, that significant antagonism would emerge between the United States and Britain, and that joint action on Germany was central to the continuing postwar unity of the "Big Three." Such assumptions were common enough at the end of the war, not least in Soviet circles, but they proved to be an inadequate basis for the planning of a peacetime grand alliance. The Russian historians Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov have pointed out a further problem:

Litvinov and Maisky, in their geopolitical fantasies also missed many other important realities that greatly complicated Stalin's relations with Western leaders after the war. Litvinov's proposal of a "neutral belt" from Norway to Italy, in combination with the dismemberment of Germany, if adopted, could have led to an even greater power vacuum in Europe that would arouse fears and competition between the East and the West.⁷⁷

Aleksei Filitov is also highly critical of Litvinov, partly for what might be called his "great power mentality"⁷⁸ and partly for what, in Filitov's view, was the sheer impracticality of Litvinov's proposed policies.

Ironically, while Litvinov was formulating a grandiose vision for the postwar world, his stature within the Soviet policy establishment was on the decline. In contrast to the important role he played before and during the 1943 Moscow conference, his involvement in the preparations for the Yalta and

76. Pechatnov, "The Big Three after World War II," p. 14.

77. Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, p. 38.

78. In the summer of 1944 Litvinov reportedly told the Norwegian ambassador that "the glory of the small nations is past." Harriman Papers, Container 174, Chronological File, 19–24, September 1944.

Potsdam conferences was minimal.⁷⁹ The same was true of the tripartite negotiations during the early postwar period.⁸⁰ Moreover, the Litvinov commission's work on the German question lost much of its relevance after Stalin abandoned the option of dismemberment in March 1945.⁸¹ The commission was formally disbanded at the end of 1945.⁸² Most telling of all, Litvinov played no role in the Paris Peace Conference of July–October 1946, which was convened to discuss peace treaties with the minor Axis states. The exclusion of Litvinov was surprising in light of the extensive preparatory work he had done on the Soviet drafts of these treaties. Despite this glaring setback, there was an interesting coda to Litvinov's role in Soviet postwar planning: his contribution to an internal discussion in the summer of 1946 on the Byrnes Plan for a twenty-five-year pact on the disarmament and demilitarization of Germany.

Litvinov and the Byrnes Plan

The origins of the Byrnes Plan, it seems, lay in a January 1945 speech by the Republican senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, who advocated the permanent

79. This seems to be the case, at least in the Foreign Ministry archive files that I have been allowed to see, which indicate that the main second-level advisers in the run-up to Yalta and Potsdam were the Washington and London ambassadors, Andrei Gromyko and Fedor Gusev, as well as Ivan Maiskii (with regard to the reparations issue).

80. After the Potsdam conference, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs set up a commission, chaired by Litvinov, to draft peace treaties with the minor Axis states—the first item on the agenda of the newly created Council of Foreign Ministers (AVP RF, F. 0431/1, Op. 1, D. 2, L. 20). Litvinov also continued to work, for a time, on the question of trusteeships for Italy's colonies (AVP RF, F. 0431/1, Op. 1, Pap. 5, D. 33). It seems that Litvinov was also involved in preparations for the meetings with Byrnes and Bevin in December 1945. See Georgii P. Kynin and Jochen Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, 1945–1946 (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 2000), p. 764 n. 194. Viktor Mal'kov, "Domestic Factors in Stalin's Atomic Diplomacy," in Patrick M. Morgan and Keith L. Nelson, eds., *Re-Viewing the Cold War* (London: Praeger, 2000), pp. 30–31; and Vladislav M. Zubok, "Stalin and the Nuclear Age," in John L. Gaddis et al., eds., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 49–50, quote Litvinov documents that indicate his involvement in Soviet discussions on the nuclear issue in late 1945. Interestingly, the documents cited by the two authors are contradictory. In Mal'kov's article, Litvinov (November 1945) urges negotiation with the west over the control of nuclear power, whereas Zubok's passage (December 1945) indicates that Litvinov thought such talks would be a waste of time. (Another source for Litvinov's views on the nuclear issue is his unofficial talk with journalist Richard Hottelet in June 1946. See Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, pp. 806–807 n. 379.)

81. See Geoffrey Roberts, "Stalin at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam: The Unpublished Record," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, forthcoming.

82. At the final meeting of the commission on 15 November 1945, Litvinov presented a report detailing the work accomplished. The report was sent to Molotov on 19 November, together with a proposal to liquidate the commission on the grounds that it was no longer necessary in the new, postwar circumstances. See the report in AVP RF, F. 6, Op. 6, Pap. 14, D. 149, Ll. 35–44. The report indicated that the commission was involved in the great majority of postwar planning issues considered by the

disarmament of Germany and Japan.⁸³ In June 1945 Byrnes (who had recently been appointed secretary of state by Harry Truman) requested that the State Department comment on a possible treaty along the lines suggested by Vandenberg.⁸⁴ Byrnes next raised the issue with Georges Bidault, the French foreign minister, in August 1945. Indeed, John Gimbel has argued that the main motive for the Byrnes Plan was to reassure France of its postwar security and to head off French demands for the separation of the Ruhr and the Rhineland from Germany.⁸⁵ An alternative view is that the plan was part of Byrnes's evolving strategy in 1945–1946 to reassure the Soviet Union of *its* postwar security, while simultaneously loosening Moscow's grip on the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.⁸⁶

Byrnes broached the idea of a pact on the demilitarization of Germany with Molotov at the London meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in September 1945. Molotov was interested in the idea but was overruled by Stalin, who ordered Molotov to stall by linking such a pact to a similar agreement in relation to Japan.⁸⁷ Stalin used a similar tactic at a meeting in Moscow in December 1945 when Byrnes asked him about the proposal for a pact on Germany.⁸⁸ In February 1946 the Americans circulated a draft agreement, and Byrnes raised the matter again at the Paris CFM meeting at the end of April 1946.⁸⁹ On 29 April the United States published its draft "Twenty-Five-Year Treaty for the Disarmament and Demilitarization of Germany."⁹⁰ Because Soviet policy on the Byrnes proposal had not yet been for-

Foreign Commissariat. The three main areas of policy from which the commission was excluded were the terms for the surrender and occupation of Germany (dealt with by a commission headed by Kliment Voroshilov), Polish-Soviet relations, and international economic and financial issues.

83. Arthur H. Vandenberg Jr., ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), pp. 136–138.

84. Patricia Dawson Ward, *The Threat of Peace: James F. Byrnes and the Council of Foreign Ministers, 1945–1946* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1979), p. 93.

85. John Gimbel, *The Origins of the Marshall Plan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), esp. pp. 112–117.

86. See Eduard Mark, "American Policy Towards Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Cold War 1941–1946," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (September 1981), pp. 313–336; and Eduard Mark, "Charles E. Bohlen and the Acceptable Limits of Soviet Hegemony in Eastern Europe," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Summer 1979), pp. 201–213.

87. Vladimir Pechatnov, "Soyuzniki nazhimayut na tebya dlya togo, chtoby slomi;t' u tebya vo;l'yu," *Istochnik* (Moscow), No. 2 (1999), p. 74. For an English translation, see "The Allies Are Pressing on You to Break Your Will . . . Foreign Policy Correspondence between Stalin and Molotov and Other Politburo Members, September 1945–December 1946," Working Paper No. 26, Cold War International History Project, Washington, DC, September 1999.

88. "Zapis' besedy I. V. Stalina s Dzh. Birnsom," 24 December 1945, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 71.

89. Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, pp. 74–81. This section of the book's introduction focuses in detail on the whole Byrnes plan episode.

90. Beate Ruhm von Oppen, ed., *Documents on Germany under Occupation 1945–1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 128–131.

mulated, Molotov merely indicated that the disarmament and demilitarization of Germany should be a subject of immediate action within the structure of the Allied Control Commission in Germany, rather than being left to the longer term.⁹¹ After Molotov returned to Moscow in mid-May 1946, the Soviet Foreign Ministry conducted an extensive internal assessment of the Byrnes proposal.⁹²

Litvinov offered his own analysis of the Byrnes Plan in a memorandum he sent to Stalin and Molotov on 25 May 1946. The memorandum was highly critical of the proposal, asking why there should be a special agreement on the disarmament and demilitarization of Germany outside the framework of a general peace treaty. Litvinov wondered how disarmament and demilitarization would be enforced when it was not clear from the draft treaty whether, or for how long, Allied forces would be stationed in Germany. Above all, Litvinov pointed to the danger that the signing of such an agreement could result in a premature end to the occupation of Germany.

But after expressing all these reservations, he argued that it would be wrong to dismiss the proposal out of hand:

If for some reason the American government insists on splitting the peace treaties and obtaining agreements now concerning the disarmament of Germany and Japan, we are not against this in principle. It is necessary, however, to put forward as a precondition the maintenance of the [military] occupation at least until the signing of a full peace treaty and even for a prolonged period after signature.

Litvinov went on to suggest that if detailed amendments were made to the American text—allowing the treaty to run for fifty years, with reviews of it to be held every five years after the first twenty-five years—the idea might be worth pursuing.⁹³

Another contributor to the internal discussion was Ivan Maiskii, who sent a memorandum to Stalin and Molotov on 27 May 1946. Maiskii argued that a simple rejection of the Byrnes proposal would be inadvisable, since it would provide ammunition to anti-Soviet elements in the United States. He, like Litvinov, argued that the Soviet Union should instead seek to amend the American document. Maiskii proposed the revival of Byrnes's original idea of a Soviet-American mutual assistance treaty that would disarm and demilita-

91. Notes from the meeting, in AVP RF, F 431/II, Op. 2, D. 1, Ll. 87–90. Gimbel, *The Origins of the Marshall Plan*, p. 115, comments that Molotov's arguments were "remarkably close to the State Department's analysis and advice of June 1945."

92. See Pechatnov, "Soyuzniki nashimayut na tebya," pp. 70–85. The People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was renamed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 1946.

93. "M. M. Litvinov I. V. Stalinu," 25 May 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 121.

rize Germany and prevent renewed aggression. He also proposed that Germany should continue to be occupied for at least ten years and that economic disarmament should accompany military disarmament to prevent the rebuilding of German scientific and technical resources that might later be diverted to rearmament.⁹⁴

In a document dated 12 June 1946, Litvinov and Maiskii jointly presented a “draft declaration” in response to the Byrnes proposal. Referring back to the Potsdam agreements, they emphasized the need for several steps—a program of economic disarmament, full denazification, and the implementation of democratic reforms that would transform Germany into a peace-loving, democratic state—to eliminate any potential for future German aggression.

Although Litvinov and Maiskii argued that there would be “no advantage from the security standpoint in concluding the proposed agreement *in its present form*” (emphasis added), their memorandum left little scope for negotiations around Byrnes’s text.⁹⁵ The same was true of other documents produced during the internal Soviet assessment of the Byrnes proposal. Soviet officials insisted on the need to return to the policy agreed on at Potsdam and the provisions for German reparations to the Soviet Union.⁹⁶ This argument was aired in public on 2 June, when an editorial in *Izvestiya* declared that the Byrnes proposal was a step backward and that the prime need was to implement the joint decisions undertaken at Potsdam and by the Allied Control Council.⁹⁷

At a CFM meeting in Paris on 9 July 1946, Molotov conveyed the official Soviet response to the Byrnes proposal. Aside from a rhetorical flourish or two, Molotov’s presentation followed the lines sketched out for him in the three Litvinov and Maiskii documents. After touching on specific problems, he concluded, “It is obvious to us that the draft treaty in the form in which it

94. “I. M. Maiskii I. V. Stalinu,” 27 May 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 126.

95. “Proekt M. M. Litvinova i I. M. Maiskogo,” 12 June 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 140.

96. See “V. G. Dekanozov I. V. Stalinu,” 26 May 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 122; “S. A. Lozovskii I. V. Stalinu,” 26 May 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 123; “A. Ya. Vyshinskii I. V. Stalinu,” 28 May 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 128; and “V. M. Molotov I. V. Stalinu,” 8 June 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 137. The closest to Litvinov’s and Maiskii’s original position was K. V. Novikov (“K. V. Novikov I. V. Stalinu,” 27 May 1946, in Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, Doc. 127), head of the Foreign Affairs Ministry’s Second European Department.

97. This comment appeared in the form of a long item in *Izvestiyas* “Nablyudatel” (Observer) column (2 June 1946), p. 1. The “Nablyudatel” column was a regular, unsigned feature that began in May 1944 and was devoted to commentaries on international affairs. It was invariably a good guide to the direction of Soviet policy.

has been submitted to us does not correspond to the interests of peace and the security of nations. The draft is in need of radical revision.”⁹⁸ In response, Byrnes conceded some of Molotov’s demands and sought to clarify other aspects of the plan, but he vigorously insisted on the genuineness of his attempt to resolve the postwar security problem posed by Germany.⁹⁹ The Soviet rejection of the plan, however, was already etched in stone.¹⁰⁰

Although the origins and motives of the Byrnes Plan are contentious, a charitable interpretation is that it represented the last opportunity for constructive Soviet-Western negotiations on the German question and perhaps even the last opportunity to avert the Cold War itself.¹⁰¹ As far as Litvinov is concerned, the Byrnes episode is illuminating in several respects. First, it shows that even as late as the summer of 1946 Litvinov still wielded some influence on critical issues. Second, it reveals that Litvinov and Maiskii found it necessary to modify their position in response to the more critical and negative flow of Soviet opinion on the Byrnes proposal. Third, it demonstrates that Litvinov was no starry-eyed, pro-Western appeaser. His critique of the Byrnes proposal was as sharp and scathing as any other. But unlike most of his colleagues, Litvinov did not ascribe bad faith to Byrnes or other Americans. Although Litvinov argued that the U.S. proposal did not protect Soviet interests, he believed that real negotiations on the matter were possible. This view was in sharp contrast to the general tenor of Soviet discussions at the time, which depicted dark, anti-Soviet and anti-Communist forces as the source of all problems in the Grand Alliance.

Litvinov’s personal frustration with the rapidly growing tension manifested itself in an extraordinary off-the-record interview with Richard C. Hottelet, a correspondent for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), on

98. Molotov, *Problems of Foreign Policy*, p. 62. The Soviet stenogram of Molotov’s statement to the CFM, together with Byrnes’s reply may be found in AVP RF, F. 431/II, Op. 2, D. 3, LL. 149–158.

99. Ward, *The Threat of Peace*, pp. 119–120.

100. Curiously, the Byrnes plan continued to exist in the diplomatic ether for some time, even after its author’s resignation as secretary of state. His successor, George Marshall, raised the idea at a CFM meeting in Moscow in March–April 1947. Subsequently, it transmuted into a plan for a three-power (British-French-American) treaty guaranteeing German disarmament—again aimed at assuaging French sensibilities. See various references in Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace: Britain, the Division of Germany, and the Origins of the Cold War* (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1990).

101. Some have linked the opportunity for discussions on Germany to the possibility of a broad-based general European settlement between the United States and the Soviet Union that emerged, fleetingly, in mid-1946. See Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Division of Europe after World War II: 1946* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). A second turning point came in the summer of 1947 in the context of Soviet-Western discussions concerning the proposed Marshall Plan. By then, however, the East-West divide was much more entrenched than it had been at the time of the Byrnes plan, not least in relation to Germany. See Geoffrey Roberts, “Moscow and the Marshall Plan: Politics, Ideology and the Onset of the Cold War, 1947,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 8 (1994), pp. 1371–1386.

18 June 1946. According to Hottelet's report, Litvinov was depressed about the current state of East-West relations, including the issue of Germany. Litvinov believed that the division of Germany could no longer be avoided because each side wanted the entire country under its own control. Significantly, he found fault with the "ideological conception" prevailing in Moscow—the idea that war between the capitalist and Communist systems was unavoidable. He was also critical of the Soviet concept of "geographical security," and he warned that if the West gave in to Moscow's demands on Trieste, the Italian colonies, and other questions, more demands would surely follow. At the same time, Litvinov continued to insist on his old theme: that the only basis for Soviet-Western cooperation was a formal great-power agreement.¹⁰² A month after this conversation (which was likely bugged), Litvinov, aged seventy, retired from the diplomatic service.¹⁰³ On 24 August 1946, *Izvestiya* announced his resignation from the post of deputy foreign minister.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

This conclusion will touch on three sets of issues: the relationship between Litvinov's official and unofficial views; his influence on Soviet policy; and the limits of his realist perspective in the Soviet context. What did Litvinov really think? Are his truly held views to be found in the official documents he prepared or in the many candid and critical remarks he made about Soviet foreign policy to Hottelet and others? This question, by its very nature, defies any definitive resolution, but the range of evidence now available on Litvinov's wartime thinking permits a more grounded and reasoned analysis than was earlier possible.

On the question of the authenticity of Litvinov's officially expressed views, there can be little doubt that what he had to say was influenced by the official discourse and by what he thought his superiors wanted to hear. Otherwise, even Litvinov would not have survived in office for very long. But the consistency and coherence of his views on the Grand Alliance belie any simple assumption of conformity with an official line. Moreover, what he recommended to Molotov and Stalin was not so different from the unofficial prescriptions he offered to foreigners. The common theme was the need for

102. M. M. Belousov, "M. M. Litvinov o Mezhdunarodnoi Situatsii i Vneshnei Politike SSSR posle Vtoroi Mirovoi Voyny," *Istoriya SSSR* (Moscow), No. 1 (1992), pp. 161–163. This is a translation of the American ambassador's telegram report on the Litvinov-Hottelet conversation.

103. Sheinis, *Maxim Litvinov*, p. 343.

104. Kynin and Laufer, eds., *SSSR i Germanskii Vopros*, Vol. 2, pp. 806–807 n. 379.

agreements and institutions that would organize and constrain great-power relations. In internal discussions he emphasized how to control potential threats and condemned the destabilizing tendencies of the Western powers. To his foreign interlocutors, he stressed the need to offset the unhealthy tendencies in Soviet foreign policy.

The extent of Litvinov's influence on Soviet policy was severely limited by his antagonistic relationship with Molotov. Given the long history of difficult relations between the two men, Molotov could not have welcomed the former commissar's return to diplomatic life (as ambassador to Washington), no matter how expedient it might have been. Nor was Molotov apt to be enthusiastic about Litvinov's return to Moscow in 1943 to play a salient role in the policy process.

After the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1943, Litvinov played no direct role in Grand Alliance diplomacy. Nor at any time after his return from the United States did he enjoy direct access to high level diplomatic and intelligence sources. The work of his commission was based almost wholly on published (mainly press) sources. By all indications he had no further meetings with Stalin after October 1943.¹⁰⁵ His role was further reduced and restricted when the war ended. Many of the obstacles that Litvinov confronted were presumably erected by Molotov and his acolytes within the Foreign Ministry. That is certainly what Litvinov himself thought, judging by his scathing comments to Edgar Snow and others.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, given the limits imposed by these personal and institutional barriers, what influence did Litvinov exert on policy, particularly on Moscow's Grand Alliance strategy? Many instances of specific policy influence have already been noted. It is also clear that much of Litvinov's thinking—for example, his belief that the great powers should wield a veto in the UN Security Council—formed part of a consensus in Moscow about the future of the postwar world. But what about his geopolitical perspectives on relations with Britain and the United States and on postwar zones of security? Since no such policy was adopted or, it seems, even seriously contemplated by Soviet leaders, the obvious answer is that Litvinov's influence on postwar policy was marginal at best. The reality, however, was more complex. Although Stalin abjured Litvinov's proposal for a grand spheres-of-influence bargain with the West, he

105. I say "by all indications" because Stalin's office diary is not a complete record of his visitors and meetings.

106. The antipathy was mutual. In conversations with Feliks Chuev in the 1970s and 1980s, Molotov was scathing about Litvinov. At one point Molotov recalled: "We left him out of negotiations during the whole war. And now they talk about his role—that we couldn't make an agreement without him!" See Resis, ed., *Molotov Remembers*, p. 67.

did pursue a de facto Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. We do not know whether Stalin even read Litvinov's reports, but if he did, it is quite possible that they reinforced his belief that the West would have little choice but to acquiesce in a division of Europe. The reports may also have contributed to the belief that the division of Europe would not keep the Soviet Union from reaping the benefits of the other prong of Litvinov's strategy, namely, great-power cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.

The problem with Litvinov's strategy was not its components, but the overall design. He was advocating a high-risk approach that presupposed considerable trust among the members of the Grand Alliance. In the absence of such trust, the danger that benign zones of security could turn into threatening spheres of influence loomed large. Such concerns surfaced in a *Pravda* article in April 1945 that was highly critical of the views of Walter Lippmann. The article, by A. Georgiev, depicted Lippmann's vision of a postwar Atlantic bloc as tantamount to the reestablishment of the *cordon sanitaire* of 1918–1921. Interestingly, Lippmann was given space to reply in *Pravda* on 20 April. He vigorously denied that he was seeking a new *cordon sanitaire* and emphasized that his proposal for an Atlantic Society was aimed at containing Germany, not the Soviet Union. But an editorial note immediately following the reply repeated the argument that Lippmann's Atlantic Society would in reality be a gigantic Western military and political bloc. The editorial note denied that an international security organization could be based on blocs, and it endorsed the alternative policy of unity and cooperation among all peace-loving peoples and states.¹⁰⁷ Of course, such strictures did not apply to the emerging Communist bloc in Eastern Europe. The other great vision of the postwar world emerging at this time in Soviet discourse was that of a Europe transformed politically and ideologically by a decisive shift to the left, culminating in the establishment of "people's democracies."

This leads to the third and final issue: the constraints imposed by the Soviet system on Litvinov's "realist" approach. Litvinov's analyses and perspectives on postwar security were grounded in power, interests, and diplomacy—the classic ingredients of realpolitik discourse. Ideological aspirations hardly figured at all in his texts. His was a discourse shared by others in the Foreign Ministry, notably by the surviving Litvinovites from the prewar period: Maiskii, Yakov Suritz, and Boris Shtein. But their realist discourse faced competition from another, ideologically driven discourse, which was articu-

107. A. Georgiev, "O knige Uoltera Lipmana 'Voennye tseli SShA,'" *Pravda*, 16 March 1945, p. 3. Lippmann's reply on 20 April 1945 was published under the same headline. Lippmann was subjected to another attack in *Soviet News* (M. Marinin, "Mr Lippmann Discovers an 'Atlantic Commonwealth,'" 24 June 1946, p. 3). Lippmann's views are outlined in his book *U.S. Foreign Policy* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1943).

lated by, among others, officials who had been steeped in the Comintern tradition, such as Solomon Lozovskii and Dmitrii Manuilskii.¹⁰⁸ The ideology-based discourse reflected a much less sanguine view of postwar prospects for the Grand Alliance, a view rooted in fundamentalist precepts concerning the divisions and contradictions in socialist-capitalist relations.

The pessimists turned out to be more accurate than Litvinov in their forecasts, in part because their own discourse became a self-fulfilling prophecy. It inspired actions and attitudes that in turn resulted in the very thing that was feared—capitalist hostility. Moreover, the ideology-based discourse accommodated and legitimated the extension of Soviet power into Eastern Europe.¹⁰⁹ Surprisingly, this key geopolitical reality did not figure prominently in Litvinov's thinking at the end of the war. Yet its impact on Soviet foreign policy was immense. Soviet efforts to maintain the Grand Alliance were increasingly eclipsed by commitments to the emerging “people's democracies” of Eastern Europe.

In these later years Litvinov complained privately about the intrusion of ideology into Soviet foreign policy, but what was really taking place was much more fundamental. The realist discourse that Litvinov had constructed in the 1930s was being replaced by an ideological discourse. This personal, political, and institutional process within the Foreign Ministry, which had begun in the mid-1930s, was completed in the early postwar years.¹¹⁰ Even so, there were still opportunities within the ideological discourse to tilt Soviet foreign policy in favor of the Grand Alliance and to balance Moscow's drive toward security with the maintenance of *détente* with the West. Litvinov represented and personified this realist balance. The significant downgrading of his role at the end of the war heralded a rapid descent into the Cold War. Had the personal dynamics between Litvinov and some of his colleagues been more positive and had he tempered his grandiose visions with some practical realism, it is possible that his influence on policy could have been more durable and effective. After all, the final shift toward the Cold War in Soviet foreign policy did not occur until mid- to late 1947.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, with a policy that was ultimately determined by Stalin and Molotov, not by Litvinov, a more benign outcome may well have been beyond reach.

108. On the alternative to Litvinov within the Foreign Commissariat, see Pons, “In the Aftermath of the Age of Wars,” pp. 277–307; and Pons, “Stalin, Togliatti, and the Origins of the Cold War,” pp. 3–27.

109. See Eduard Mark's highly illuminating “Revolution by Degrees: Stalin's National-Front Strategy for Europe, 1941–1947,” Working Paper No. 31, Cold War International History Project, Washington, DC, February 2001).

110. See Dullin, “Litvinov and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs,” pp. 121–146.

111. See Roberts, “Moscow and the Marshall Plan.”

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