

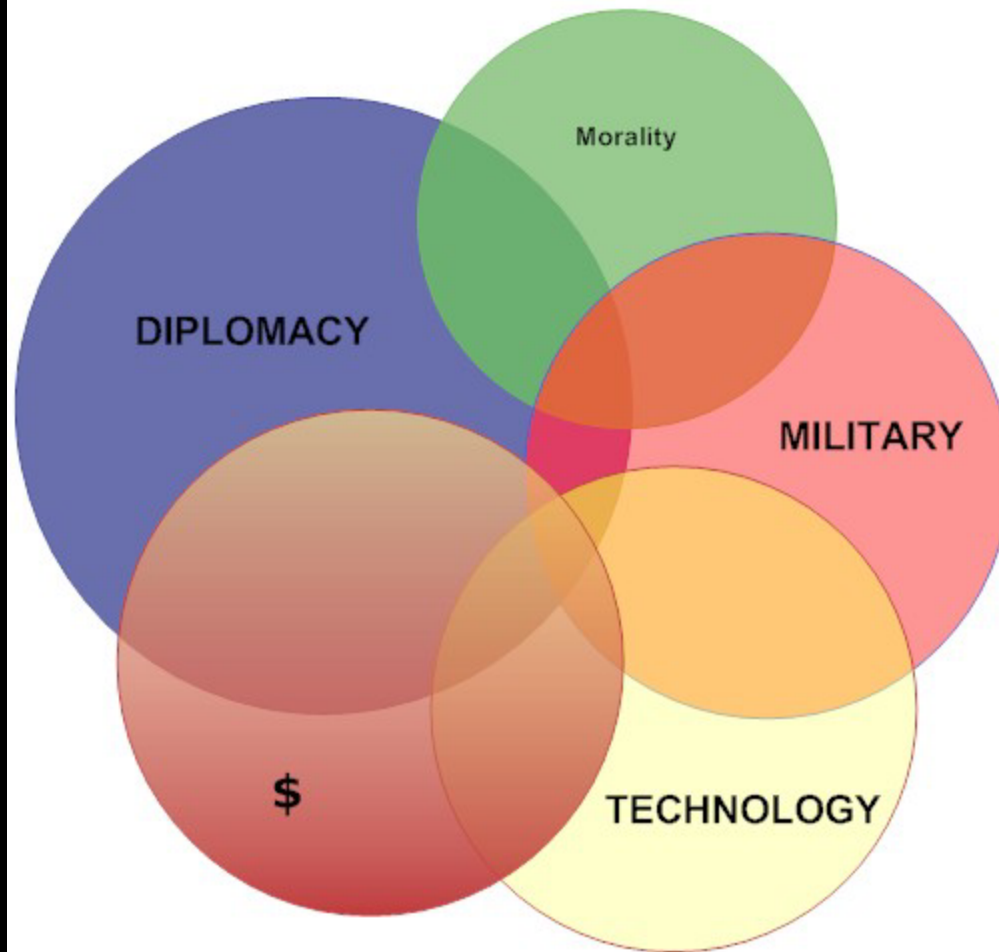
TO ERR WAS TRUMAN: US NUCLEAR POLICYMAKING 1945-52

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Dimensions of Decision



EVENTS

EGOS

ROOSEVELT DEAD!

Cerebral Hemorrhage Proves Fatal; President Truman Sworn in Office

Yanks Near Suburb Area of Berlin

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Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, died at 10:50 p.m. EDT (11:05 a.m. PST) today in a small room in the Hyde Park, N.Y., home.

Emergency Cabinet Session Summoned; Parley Plan in Doubt

WASHINGTON (AP) — April 12, 1945 — Franklin D. Roosevelt, President for 12 of the nation's years in this century's history, died at 10:50 p.m. EDT (11:05 a.m. PST) today in a small room in the Hyde Park, N.Y., home.

Mr. Roosevelt had been in Hyde Park, N.Y., when he died. He was 63 years old. He had been in the White House for 12 years.

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Truman Takes Oath of Office as President

WASHINGTON, April 12, 1945 — Harry S. Truman was sworn in as President of the United States today.

He was 54 years old when he took the oath.

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Ship Blows Up, U.S. SUBMARINE SCAMP Hundreds Die AND LARGE LCS LOST

WASHINGTON, April 12, 1945 — A U.S. submarine, the Scamp, was blown up today by a Japanese submarine, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of crew members and the loss of the large LST, the USS LST-1161.

Yanks Storm Island

WASHINGTON, April 12, 1945 — U.S. forces have stormed the island of Iwo Jima today, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of Japanese soldiers.



TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



SECRETARY OF WAR STIMSON

A year ago his reputation was built of everything but real tape and a skeleton.
(National Defense)

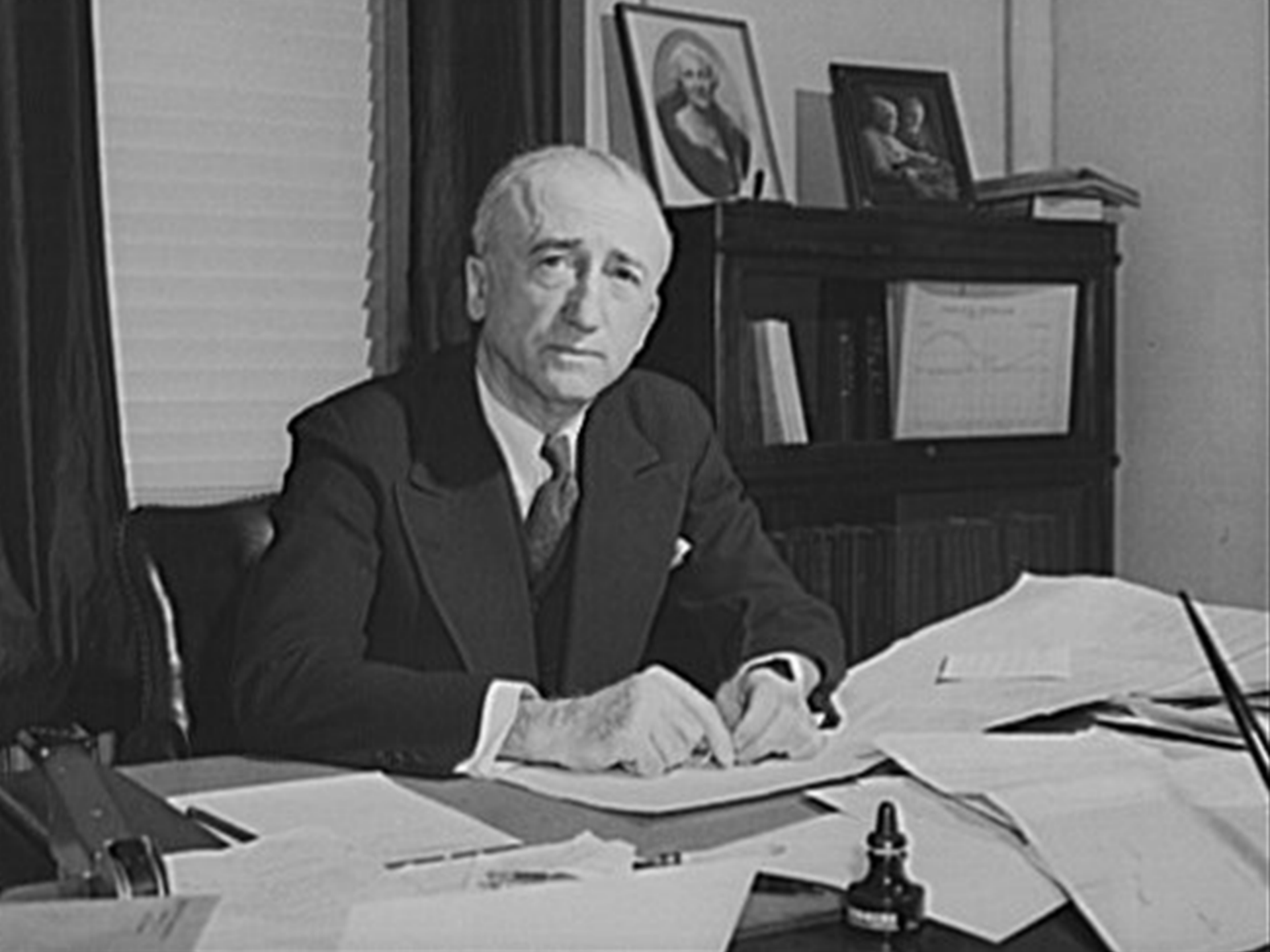


‘if no efficient international agreement is achieved, the race for nuclear armaments will be on in earnest not later than the morning after our first demonstration of the existence of nuclear weapons’

**‘Report of the Committee on Political and Social Problems’
Manhattan Project Metallurgical Laboratory, University of
Chicago, June 11, 1945 *[The Franck Report]***

‘It may be very difficult to persuade the world that a nation which was capable of secretly preparing and suddenly releasing a weapon as indiscriminate as the [German V2] rocket bomb and a million times more destructive, is to be trusted in its proclaimed desire of having such weapons abolished by international agreement.’

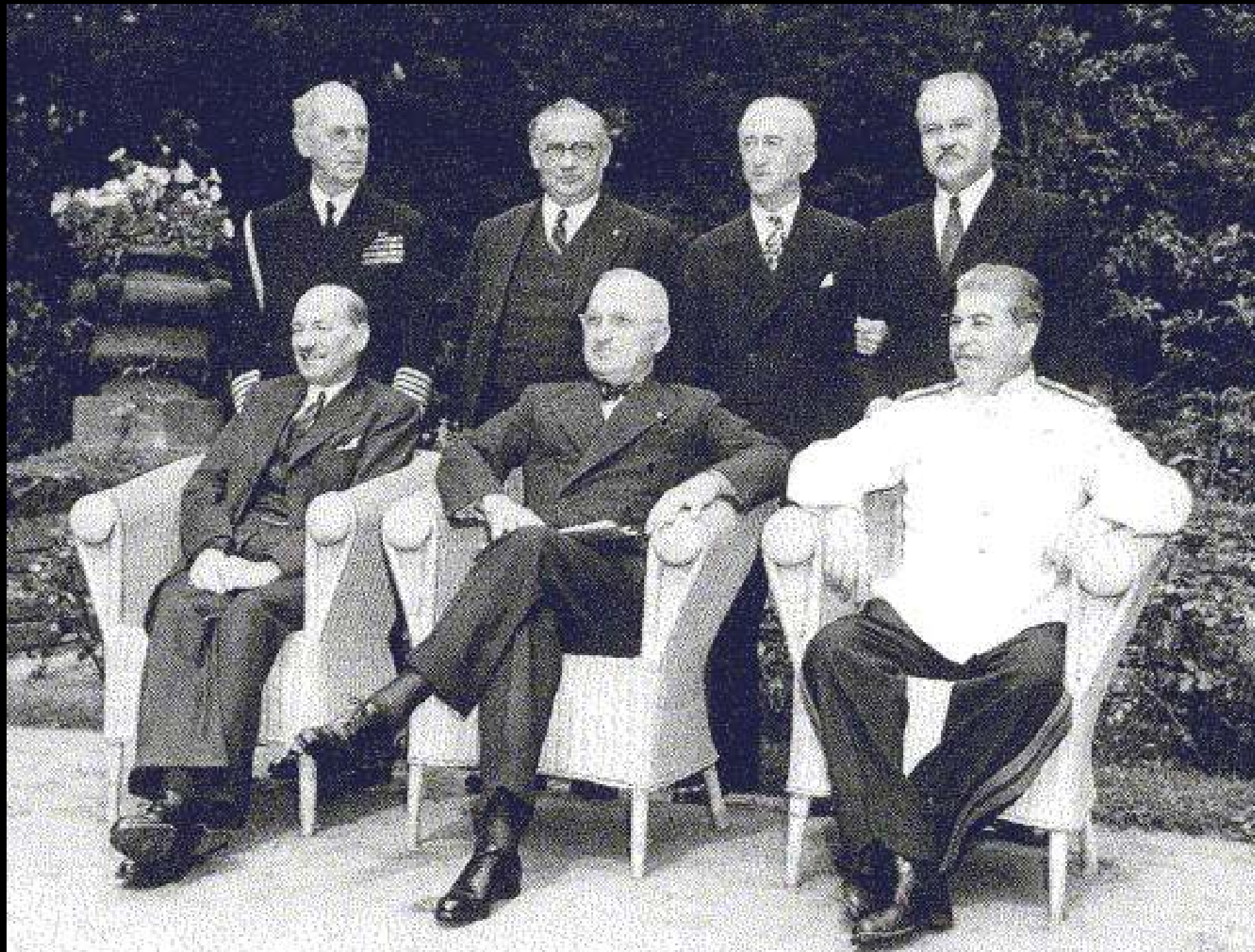
Franck Report, June 1945



‘[President Truman] would definitely fulfill every engagement made by President Roosevelt...[but] that he desired to know what those engagements were..he wanted all those loose arrangements defined clearly and definitely.’

Amb Joseph E Davies diary June 1945







Diplomatic alternatives to the bombings

- **Prior demonstration of the bomb**
- **Modification of unconditional surrender terms**
- **Engagement with USSR (prior disclosure of the bombs' existence, full involvement at Potsdam including signatory to final declaration and its communication)**



Truman's Mixed Message (Oct 1945)

- 'The hope of civilization lies in international arrangements looking, if possible, to the renunciation of the use and development of the atomic bomb.' *Message to Congress*
- any other nations wishing to acquire nuclear technology 'will have to do it on their own hook' *Speech in Tennessee*

Sec Byrnes' Mixed Diplomacy

- London (Sept 45) 'the bomb in his pocket'
- Moscow (Dec 45) proposed that the USSR should have equal status to UK and Canada
- Jan 46 UN meeting in London
- Kennan on Byrnes: 'to rescue something of the wreckage of the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe [by adding] some fig leaves of democratic procedure to hide the nakedness of Stalinist dictatorship'
- Truman: 'tired of babying' the Soviets and unless they were 'faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making.'

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



MAN OF THE YEAR

A nervous nation finds a firm and gentle man.

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



ELDER STATESMAN BERNARD BARUCH

His eyes have seen the joys and terrors of four wars.
(U.S. at War)

‘...if I were a Russian I would want to get every impregnable or semi-impregnable wall to protect myself. I would do what she is trying to do – to have all along her border, countries under Russian influence.’

Baruch to Senate Military Affairs Committee, June 1945



Baruch at the UN (June 1946)

- No Security Council veto to prevent punishment of any nation developing AE for destructive purposes
- For a nation to relinquish 'winning weapons' it must have more than words to reassure it
- Only the elimination of war will stop nations competing in secret to develop weapons adaptable to mass destruction







Groves' resistance to AEC

- **Persuades War Dept to establish Sandia base where arsenal of AWs is to be stored and maintained**
- **Appointed chief of Armed Forces Special Weapons Project (exempt from AEC and Congressional supervision)**
- **Appointed to Military Liaison Committee of AEC**

US Public Opinion on the atomic bombs

Strategic Bombing Survey (1946)

***Hiroshima* John Hersey *New Yorker* (Aug 1946)**

- **Publication of the Franck report leading to 'The Crime of Hiroshima and Nagasaki' *Saturday Rev of Literature***
- **Reaction of Conant and Baruch**
- **Bundy ghosts Stimson's memoirs: 'I was informed that such operations might be expected to cost over a million casualties to American forces alone.' *Harper's* Feb 1947**

US Political Opinion re USSR

- **Kennan's long telegram** (Feb 46)
- Susceptible to 'logic of force' not 'logic of reason'
- Capitalism and communism can co-exist (Stalin disagreed) but communism 'a malignant parasite' feeding on diseased tissue
- Soviet weaker force
- **Clifford-Elsey Report** (Sept 46)
- Soviet leaders appear to be conducting their nation on a course of aggrandizement designed to lead to eventual world domination
- **Truman Doctrine** (March 1947) 'we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.'

US Military Posture 1947

- **LeMay (SAC):** AWs change the fundamental military concepts of the US
- **Patterson:** US policy assumes the unrestricted employment of atomic energy as a weapon.
- **BUT**
- **Army strategists support continued efforts towards international control and tell Congress AWs not 'an inexpensive substitute for a balanced military establishment.'**
- **AEC audit only 12 Pu cores and no bombs assembled at Sandia**

US Military Posture 1948

- **Worsening US-USSR relations (Berlin airlift)**
- **Warplans to attack Soviet cities with ABs**
- **Defense Sec and MLC want assembled bombs at Sandia to be under military control**
- **Truman sides with AEC in July: 'no time to be juggling an atom bomb around...this isn't a military weapon...It is used to wipe out women and children'**
- **Truman to Forrestal (Sept) will order use of ABs 'if it becomes necessary'**
- **(Stalin calculated no risk of nuclear war over Berlin)**

US Intelligence on USSR 1947-8

- Deep hostility and suspicion – fear of imminent invasion of W Europe (Kennan disagreed)
- ‘The Soviet Union is very, very tired. Devastation in Russia is appalling and the country is in no fit state to go to war.’ *Monty to Ike Feb 1947*
- 1948 CIA report that Red Army is demobilizing at far faster rate than before (67 divisions in 1946, 31 in 1948)
- Allied forces in Europe comparable and much better shape

Strains within AEC

- Scientists on GAC depressed about failure of Acheson-Lilienthal plan for international control and resurgence of military aspects
- Political rhetoric on civilian AE running decades ahead of engineering reality
- Fermi: 'Security...a ridiculous fetish'
- Adm Gingrich resigns over Commissioners lack of attention to security
- Sen Hickenlooper calls for Lilienthal to resign
- 'National security...must be my paramount responsibility as long as I serve as a member of this Commission' *Strauss to JCAE, June 1949*

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE



Donna H. Baker

U.S. ATOM BOSS LEWIS STRAUSS
The bomb race runs on Moscow time.

Fallout from Russia Sept 1949

- ‘We have evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the USSR...Ever since atomic energy was first released by man, the eventual development of this new force by other nations was to be expected. This probability has always been taken into account by us.’ *President Truman to nation (9/24/49)*
- ‘a quantum jump in our planning...We should now make an intensive effort to get ahead with the Super.’ *Lewis Strauss to AEC (9/30/49)*
- Lawrence and Teller lobbied JCAE, AFSWP and JCS

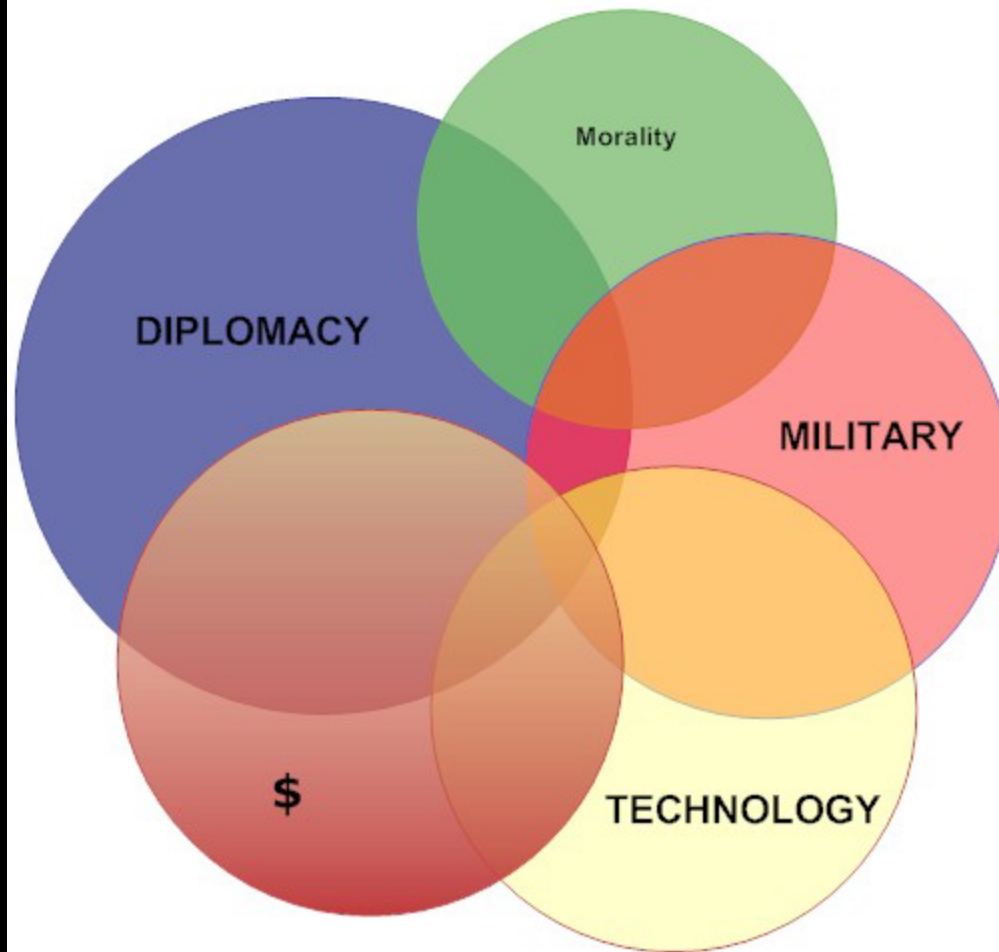
AEC's Response

- **GAC supported expansion of fission program but cautioned against Super because concerns about feasibility**
- **GAC scientists all objected on moral grounds**
- **Rabi and Fermi: 'necessarily an evil thing considered in any light' and called for global repudiation without verification**
- **3 Commissioners sided with scientists**
- **Dean suggested secret dialogue with Stalin**
- **Strauss 'government of atheists is not likely to be dissuaded from producing the weapons on "moral" grounds.'** *Letter to Truman (11/25/49)*

President Truman's Reaction to the Super

- **Appointed 3-man NSC subcommittee which reported on 1/31/50 in favor of Super. Press release that day**
- **Feb 1950, JCS 'most urgently' recommended 'immediate implementation of all out development of hydrogen bombs.'**
- **March 1950 Truman ordered AEC to prepare large-scale production and testing of thermonuclear materials**
- **Ordered State and Defense to review policies 'in the light of the probable fission bomb capability and possible thermonuclear bomb capability of the Soviet Union'. NSC 68 April 1950**

Dimensions of Decision



Korean War and Atomic Weapons

- (Oct 50) Modified B-29s sent to UK and Guam
- (Nov 50) Risk of wider war. JCS and State counsel against use of AWs
- (11/30/50) Truman asked about use of AWs at press conference. 'That includes every weapon we have'
- (July 51) Sen McMahon convinced US needs 'thousands and thousands' of Abs
- (Sept 52) DoD to determine needs for no and type of AWs
- (11/1/52) *Mike Test*

CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF PRODUCTION FACILITIES

AEC PRODUCTION FACILITIES 1947-1952

APPENDIX 2

☐ PROJECT APPROVAL

☐ 1 First Expansion

☐ 2 Second Expansion (Thermonuclear)

☐ 3 Third Expansion

☐ 4 Fourth Expansion

☐ CONSTRUCTION

☐ OPERATION

