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*Les stratégies adoptées par Stalin dans l'après-guerre pour réviser les frontières
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Les stratégies adoptées par Stalin dans l'après-guerre pour réviser les frontières orientales et occidentales

David Wolff

- 1 While Stalin changed the internal geography of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, until 1939, there were few opportunities to move international borders.¹ But by the time World War Two came to an end, with overwhelming personal, institutional, and raw military power, Stalin, who now spoke unselfconsciously in the name of the Soviet Union, prepared to adjust several borders in various ways, but all to Moscow's immediate benefit. In this article, we will examine the Polish, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Romanian, Turkish, Iranian, Chinese, Mongolian and Japanese borders in order to catalog the ingredients that went into Stalinist border resolution, East and West. In five of the nine cases, territory was lost directly to the USSR. In two cases, China and Mongolia, territorial rights in some measure were compromised. Iran and Turkey, the last examples, were threatened with revanchist/liberationist claims, but resisted. Not surprisingly, the Soviet Union's neighbors would not become its friends. Such was the ultimate end of Stalin's heavy-handed postwar border-making.
- 2 His Bolshevik penchant for social engineering, when applied to borderland demographics, would also result in several mass migrations, some forced, some voluntary, and some in-between. Armenians were repatriated to Armenia at Moscow's invitation. Iranian Azerbaijanis went into exile in Azerbaijan when Stalin sold out the separatist movement he had bankrolled and supported for eight months in order to pressure the Iranian government into concluding agreements on joint ventures and oil concessions. Members of both groups would soon find themselves accused of "bourgeois nationalism" and sent to Siberia and Kazakhstan by the thousands. Further West, Poland and Ukraine showed that migration by "population exchange," a method described by Stalin as "courageous"

in a moment of immodesty, could continue to uproot the lives of additional millions, even after the war had ended.²

- 3 Thus, the local dimension and the human element were always present between 1944 and 1946, as Stalin adjusted the Soviet periphery in complicated, multifaceted border-making operations, becoming “a man of the borderlines.”³ When things went well, territorial, security, demographic and propaganda goals were fulfilled simultaneously, as Stalin made use of the political skills he had developed as a “man of the borderlands,” while still preparing revolution in the Caucasus.⁴ Declassified records of Stalin’s talks with foreign leaders, from both socialist and capitalist camps, have become gradually available during the last twenty years taking us much closer to understanding the black box of his foreign policy vision. As the man at the top, Stalin didn’t have to explain anything to anyone and he rarely did, except in conversational asides with other world leaders coming almost daily as visitors to the Kremlin or in less formal settings reserved for the fraternal Communist party leaders.⁵
- 4 The Soviet documentation declassified in the last two decades is still far from complete, but Cold War studies now has enough materials in each of several cases to trace the contours of Stalin’s involvement in every detail.⁶ In this paper, citations are drawn from verbatim records of discussions with American, Czech, English, Hungarian, Mongolian and Polish leaders as well as multi-archival coverage of the Stalin-Song-Wang negotiations of June-August 1945, the most malleable moment for Eurasian borders. Most revealing, we have the marvelous May 1946 letter from Stalin to Pischevari, the forgotten leader of the brief Azerbaijani separatist movement inside Northern Iran under Soviet patronage. Pischevari had been overheard complaining that he had “been raised to the skies” and then “thrown into the abyss.” And Stalin coolly and condescendingly explained Pischevari’s “misjudgment of the existing situation.”⁷ From the Olympian heights of Moscow, Stalin conducted his Eurasian policy on many fronts simultaneously, a perspective not available to Pischevari.
- 5 The transcripts of Stalin’s conversations during the years 1944 to 1946 show him active on every border trying to establish the best postwar position in the most classic geopolitical sense of security. The subtlety of Stalin’s micromanaging negotiating technique is laid bare. At the borders, Stalin wove together an effective mix of strategies to generate local pressures for his desired result, providing or withholding moral support, money, arms and advisors, as he chose. These “facts on the ground” then became part of the background pressure on the statesmen against whom Stalin negotiated the world’s new borders. This kind of complicated mix of policies, running simultaneously on various borders and often affecting domestic Soviet border areas, required careful analysis and manipulation of two- or even three-level games, in Robert Putnam’s classic formulation of domestic-foreign policy interaction.⁸
- 6 So, for this period, at least, the concept of border-making is central to understanding Stalin’s goals and methods. This is not to contradict Rieber, for Stalin’s concern with borderlines and his origin in the borderlands are closely connected, just as the two concepts of borderline and borderland are.⁹ Both of these words, in turn, have tight causalities with the four dimensions of territory, nationality, population and history. Stalin, at various times, made seminal contributions to reshaping all of these within and along Soviet borders. With regard to the borders, history was especially important for Stalin, since it indicated the extent of possible expansion in various directions. Whether it was the provinces lost to Turkey after World War One or the influence at the Straits to

which the Tsars had aspired, history was often Stalin's guide in reimagining the frontiers of a Soviet sphere of influence much greater than Tsarist Russia had ever enjoyed. In 1937, at a Kremlin banquet, he damned the Tsars, but granted that "they did one thing that was good – they amassed an enormous state, all the way to Kamchatka. We have inherited that state."¹⁰

- 7 Below I examine multiple cases of border-making spanning 8 000 kilometers from Germany in the West to Japan in the East, as Stalin took advantage of Soviet postwar strength. Although the emphasis on Stalinist expansionism in the American-dominated Cold War historiography suggests that Stalin suffered from insatiable land-hunger like the nineteenth-century Russian peasant, in fact, close analysis reveals greater complexity. Stalin understood the economic, demographic, psychological, political and security dimensions of territory and therefore did not always pursue his goals as if more was always better. But this is what the Americans feared for on 4 April 1946 when the new American Ambassador Walter Bedell Smith presented his credentials to Molotov and was received by Stalin, his first question was "What does the Soviet Union want, and how far is Russia going to go?" An hour later, the conversation had progressed, but no answer to this question had yet appeared, so Smith returned to this question, "uppermost in the minds of the American people: 'How far is Russia going to go?'"
- 8 Stalin, turned from his notepad on which he had been doodling "lopsided hearts done in red [pencil] with a small question mark in the middle" and "looking directly at me" replied, "We're not going much further." Stalin then provided assurances regarding Soviet peaceful intentions towards Iran and Turkey.¹¹ And Stalin's word was law. Within hours, the Soviet government announced a withdrawal date for its troops in Northern Iran.¹² Vojtech Mastny, one of the foremost experts on Eastern Europe in the Cold War, has also written that "In Stalin's scheme of things, military seizure of territory for political gain was less crucial than it has usually been assumed."¹³ But even if territory was not the essential element, borders were, as we shall see below.

The Importance of Borders

- 9 As World War II came to an end, Stalin, sensing all of the opportunities open to him as the most powerful man on earth, moved to establish the new borders of the areas under his sway. It was also Stalin's way of making history for he expected these borders to last. In a 13 October 1944 meeting with Churchill and Mikołajczyk on the fate of Poland, Stalin was basically amiable with Churchill, but disagreed strongly once. Mikołajczyk's memoirs present the altercation as follows, Stalin speaking emphatically on behalf of "the Soviet government."¹⁴
- "I want this made very clear," he said gruffly. "Mr. Churchill's thought of any future change in the frontier is not acceptable to the Soviet government. We will not change our frontiers from time to time. That's all!"
- 10 Since all of these discussions of border are also intimately linked to the ethnicities of the population on the lands adjacent to the shifting borders, we can speak of a steady sorting of peoples and resolution of the borders, often with Stalin poised as the final arbiter. The following anecdote, remembered by Molotov, but attributed to Mgeladze, once the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Georgia, shows Stalin's passionate engagement with the imagining and making of borders, forged by military might, diplomacy, national prejudices, popular opinions and history.¹⁵

They brought Stalin a map of the USSR in its new borders, textbook size, and Stalin pinned it to the wall and said:

Let's see what we've got. In the North, all's in order, fine. The Finns sinned against us (*pered nami provinilis'*) and we moved the border away from Leningrad. The Baltic littoral (*Pribaltika*) is immemorial (*iskonno*) Russian land – ours again. The Belorussians live with us together now. The Ukrainians [also] together. Moldovans [also] together. To the west all is well. And then he went right to the eastern borders. What do we have here? The Kurile islands are ours now. Sakhalin is ours in full and that is good. And Port Arthur is ours and Dal'nii. And Stalin drew his pipe across China – and the KVZhD (Chinese Eastern Railway) is ours. China, Mongolia, all in order. But here our border does not please me, said Stalin, and pointed south of the Caucasus.

- 11 Stalin was jealous of his right as a world statesman to carve new lines in the earth. He was visibly upset when lesser men from lesser states tried to exercise this power. The Yugoslavs, the Hungarians, and, eventually, the Bulgarians would earn his displeasure over trying to redraw borders. The Yugoslavs were labeled “inexperienced” by Stalin after making territorial claims on all their neighbors simultaneously and the Hungarians were lied to with encouraging words and sent home to learn the embarrassing truth after they presented Stalin with a map showing a piece of Romanian Transylvania being ceded to Hungary to consolidate Hungarians on Romanian territory. This geographic operation would only happen in the happy imaginings of the Hungarians. It was Stalin the Border-maker who had already decided this question against them by throwing his support behind the Romanians at the London Conference of Deputy Foreign Ministers in January 1945.
- 12 And as there was limited territory on the spherical globe, Stalin conceived the exercise of power over territory as competitive in nature. Winners and losers, capitalists and socialists, were engaged in a zero-sum game. Milovan Djilas' famous citation from a visit to Stalin in 1944, where the *vozhd* argued the inevitability of each side advancing his “system” with his army, can also be interpreted in strictly territorial terms, the making of new borders between capitalism and socialism. This perspective was not lost on contemporaries. The American wartime ambassador, Averell Harriman, in an early presentation of the domino theory stated as much.¹⁶

Mr. Harriman expressed the opinion that the Soviet Union, once it had control of bordering areas, would attempt to penetrate the next adjacent countries, and he thought the issue ought to be fought out in so far as we could with the Soviet Union in the present bordering areas.
- 13 This slippery slope of concentric border zones suggests the importance of borderlines and borderlands, but in a rather abstract way. It also suggested the importance for the fate of Hungary of the March deal, consummated in Moscow by Czech president Benes, to give the Soviet Union a border with Hungary in Transcarpathian Ruthenia/Ukraine. Proximity can become fate.
- 14 Recent historiography on Stalin has been voluminous, but the territorial aspects have attracted little attention, despite their effects on millions and their role in bringing on the Cold War in both Europe and Asia. Studies of Soviet nationalities for the postwar period have largely focused on persecutions and deportations. Foreign policy studies have either been too broad, proving Stalin's lack of an overall plan of expansion against the capitalist world or too narrow, mainly analyzing bilateral relations with one or another bordering country, but not the general patterns of Stalinist border-making all over Slavic Eurasia. Karel Kaplan, for example, devoted a chapter to “Border and Frontier

Regions” in his book on Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948, but only covers bilateral relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland, together with Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Romania and the Transylvania question, an integral part of Stalin’s East Central Europe border realignment and territory trade is completely lost from view, not even appearing in the index.¹⁷

- 15 There is only one significant publication that addresses the issue of a Stalinist way of national-territorial resolution. This is a series of two articles by G.P. Murashko and A.F. Noskova that appeared in *Cold War History* in 2001. Each one of these articles offers an important translated conversation between Stalin and Eastern European leaders (Part I: Yugoslavia; Part II: Hungary) regarding territorial conflicts.¹⁸

Stalin’s Personal Border Diplomacy

- 16 Stalin had a clear pattern to his handling of border politics that mixed domestic, inter-ethnic and international factors. Despite this model, he could also be very case-specific, playing on individual hopes and national fears, encouraging nationalism in order to blind judgment and leveraging postcolonial syndromes in the “Third World.” Earlier, successful cases are likely to have brought on similar approaches later. This was Stalin’s “learning curve.” And, of course, Stalin applied the main lesson he had drawn from his World Wars – one front at a time – although the pace of events sometimes forced overlapping initiatives. Below I examine several cases in which the shifting of borders was on the agenda in order to see Stalin’s modes and methods up close. All of these proposed/threatened border adjustments took place during 1944-1946, as Stalin’s tank armies and diplomacy recaptured much of the irredenta lost at the end of the Tsarist period. It must have been very gratifying for Stalin to see the towns and territories of Eastern Europe that had remained beyond his grasp in 1919-1920 fall easily under Soviet control in 1944-1945. Similarly, the territorial losses of the Tsarist regime to Japan were finally made good in the final weeks of the war. Several of the cases presented below took place in Europe and others in Asia, with consequences extending the length of “Slavic Eurasia” from Germany to Japan.
- 17 In the first case, Stalin shifted Poland west, keeping the fruits of the Nazi-Soviet pact for Belorussia and Ukraine. Both Stalin’s ability to shift the blame for nationalist behavior on to the Union republics and his skill at creating bad blood between the British and their Polish protégés is on display. That nationalism for Stalin was “created” or “imagined” is best illustrated by his statement to the English ambassador Clark Kerr on 28 February 1944.¹⁹

Then there is the question of the border. We want to get back what was taken from us by force, namely Belorussian and Ukrainian lands. If there will be people in the Polish government who are without imperialist ambitions then they will understand the need to return these lands to the Ukrainian and Belorussian peoples. We will not tolerate any demands by Ukrainians or Belorussians for territory to which they do not have any right.

- 18 In a similar mendacious vein, Stalin met with a personal emissary from President Roosevelt, the Polish professor Oskar Lange, and told him on May 17 that the Ukrainians had become “horrible nationalists” and he would have to “wage war on them,” if he gave postwar Poland lands east of the Curzon line.²⁰ Somehow Stalin was prepared to interpret

the Ukrainian partisans' attacks on the Soviet Union as linked to Polish territorial gains, when it suited him.

- 19 Stalin's ability to drive the Polish leader Mikołajczyk into a nationalistic corner was on display in October 1944, when Churchill made a desperate attempt to resolve the Polish issue. Churchill was frustrated, but most of his frustration was poured out on Mikołajczyk. As we read in Mikołajczyk's memoirs, on 13 October 1944, Churchill tried to force him to reach agreement in Moscow, but failed. Just as Stalin would wish, Churchill was rendered "sick and tired" of the Poles and Britain's determination to revive democratic capitalism in Poland was blunted. Churchill fulminated in vain:²¹

I shook my head, and it infuriated him that I refused his compromise.

"This is crazy! You cannot defeat the Russians! I beg of you to settle upon the Curzon line as a frontier. Suppose you do lose the support of some of the Poles? Think what you will gain in return. You will have a country. I will see to it that the British ambassador is sent to you. And there will be the ambassador from the United States – the greatest military power in the world."

"Then I wash my hands of this," he stormed. "We are not going to wreck the peace of Europe. In your obstinacy you do not see what is at stake. It is not in friendship that we shall part. We shall tell the world how unreasonable you are. You wish to start a war in which twenty-five million lives will be lost!"

"You settled our fate at Teheran," I said.

"Poland was saved at Teheran," he shouted.

"I am not a person whose patriotism is diluted to the point where I would give away half my country," I answered.

Churchill shook his finger at me. "Unless you accept the frontier, you're out of business forever!" he cried. "The Russians will sweep through your country, and your people will be liquidated. You're on the verge of annihilation. We'll become sick and tired of you if you continue arguing."

- 20 The Curzon line ran not only between Russia and Poland, but between Mikołajczyk and Churchill. Stalin could only be content.
- 21 At the same time, Stalin successfully created for himself the role of arbiter in territorial disagreements among Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians and Poles. The three countries of East Central Europe whose chances for democracy seemed hopeful at the end of WWII would fail to cooperate and slipped behind the Iron Curtain, while fighting each other over territory. Czechoslovakia and Poland, in particular, exhibited exactly the kind of intolerant nationalism that neither the Americans nor British could support. In a 28 June 1945 conversation with Czech Premier Fierlinger, Stalin showed his capacity for contagious cruelty in an exchange that encompassed Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish interests.²²

Fierlinger then asks what to do with the eviction of Germans and Hungarians from Czechoslovakia.

I.V. Stalin says: "We are not going to hinder your actions. Drive them away. Let them experience what it means to be ruled by others."

Fierlinger asks Stalin to give instructions to the Soviet military to help in this eviction of the Germans and the Hungarians.

I.V. Stalin asks, "Does our military interfere with it?"

Fierlinger says that they do not hamper it, but they would like to receive some active assistance.

Then I.V. Stalin asks Fierlinger if they were able to resolve the contested territorial issues with the Poles amiably.

Fierlinger responds that it was not possible because the Poles would like to split the Teshin region, which no Czechoslovak government would be able to accept.

To I.V. Stalin's question, "Does it mean that no compromise is possible on this issue?" — Fierlinger responds that the Teshin region is a very important part of the Czechoslovak territory, and the Czechoslovak government cannot make any concessions on this issue.

I.V. Stalin notes that in such a case the Poles most probably will not make concessions on any of the other territorial issues, in particular in the Kladsko region. The Poles will probably be persistent because we have promised this territory to them.

Fierlinger responds that the Poles have received too much territory, and they will not be able to digest it.

- 22 Along his European borders, Stalin seemed to enjoy instigating nationalist passions from which he could then refrain, staying cool to dominate the eventual, Soviet-friendly outcome. With the big stick in hand, Stalin could afford to speak softly, managing to instigate and arbitrate by turns.

Asian Cases: Successes and Failures

- 23 Below I examine a few more cases in which Stalin attempted to remake borders in 1944-1946, but this time in Asia, in an arc stretching from Turkey to Iran to Xinjiang to Mongolia to Manchuria to Japan. In the first case, uprisings along the Chinese border were promoted with the goal of putting pressure on the Chinese central government, when the Guomindang Foreign Minister Song Ziwen, Chiang Kai-shek's brother-in-law, visited Moscow to negotiate a Sino-Soviet treaty in the summer of 1945. Even as this stratagem succeeded, resulting in Chinese recognition of Mongolian independence and Soviet control of Manchurian railroads and ports, the Red Army and Navy began to capture Japanese-held islands in the North Pacific to which Stalin believed he held good claim based on the Yalta agreements. But his insistence on equality with the Americans despite having shed little blood in the Pacific provoked American resistance. Although Stalin secured the Kurile islands and Sakhalin, he was shut out of the occupation of Japan proper. Instead, he took over 600,000 Japanese hostage, a form of revenge, a way of keeping Japan down and a chance at producing alternative, left-wing leadership with Soviet inclinations for a potential future government of Japan.
- 24 On the day after the Soviet military occupied the last of Hokkaido's offshore islands, Stalin went public with his newest border gambit aimed at reversing the 1944 Iranian refusal to grant a Soviet oil concession and Turkey's refusal to allow a Soviet base at the entrance to the Black Sea. To this end, he sponsored the development of separatist Azeri and Kurd movements in Northern Iran, while encouraging diaspora Armenians to return to Soviet Armenia, with the hope of receiving lands taken by Turkey from the Soviet Union after World War I, the same lands on which the genocidal killings of Armenians had taken place. Neither of these claims would succeed as the Soviet Union instead found itself attacked for the first time at the United Nations and condemned by Churchill at Fulton, the symbol of a tightening US-UK alliance against the Soviet Union's perceived territorial ambitions.
- 25 A strong case can be made for this crisis on the USSR's southern flank being named as the first Cold War crisis. While the European cases often exhibited US-UK disagreement on the best way to handle matters, together with their general agreement that their Soviet ally was entitled to secure its Western border and to punish the Axis powers, Turkey/Iran was different. For the first time, the Soviet Union showed a desire to meddle in

international oil politics, the very resource on which the US-UK would build the postwar carbon economy. Interest in the Straits also could be interpreted as a Soviet interest in naval affairs and the Mediterranean, a threatening novelty especially for the British, who had dominated that Sea for 150 years.²³ Thus, the move south was a direct attack on both the geostrategic and economic underpinnings of the Anglo-American world order. Either an army in Iran or a navy in the Mediterranean would put Soviet forces on the petroleum pulse of postwar Europe, able to cut it off at any moment. This was completely unacceptable, so both the US and UK stood firm until Stalin accepted the promise of an oil concession that never materialized. Let us now examine these Asian cases in greater detail to clarify Stalin's tactics.

- 26 In 1944-1945, Stalin conducted a complicated pressure tactic along the Sino-Soviet border. Kazakh, Mongol and "Turkestani" nationalisms were mobilized, funded and armed. But when concessions had been extracted from the Chinese government in Nanjing (Chiang Kai-shek), in an agreement that obliged the USSR to recognize only the government in Nanjing, support for the separatist movements abruptly ended. A month after the Sino-Soviet "Treaty of Friendship and Union," was signed on August 14, the Soviet Union withdrew support from these movements, although some would be reactivated later. In exchange, the USSR received railroad and port rights in Manchuria, as well as Chinese recognition of Outer Mongolian "independence." Support for the Chinese Communist Army and Party continued quietly, *po tikhonku* as Stalin liked to say in his fluent, accented Russian.
- 27 The Mongolian leader Choibalsan visited Moscow in January 1944 and was clearly told that the wartime cooperation with Nationalist China against the Japanese was at an end. Stalin immediately offered to fund and arm a Kazakh nationalist bandit named Osman to loosen Chinese control of the Altai region, lying between Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and the Chinese Northwest. Choibalsan would personally deliver the several hundred rifles and submachine guns with 100,000 bullets. This was also a signal for Choibalsan to begin efforts to build a Greater Mongolia at Chinese expense. By March, Chinese patrols were in retreat and the American press began to warn against border incidents endangering the joint war effort against Japan. Stalin made clear to the Chinese that the border regions with the Soviet Union would not easily return to Chinese sovereignty after the war. The American and British Allies would also have to take into consideration Stalin's influence on China in Central Asia in balancing objectives at a time when pressure was being exerted to get the USSR into the war against Japan and to reach a settlement on Poland.²⁴
- 28 In late 1944, Stalin began to receive cables about a Muslim uprising in the Yili District of Xinjiang on the Sino-Soviet border. In February 1945 at Yalta, Franklin Roosevelt promised Stalin US support in negotiating a new treaty with China that would include the price of Soviet participation in the war against Japan, namely, joint operation of the Chinese Eastern Railway and Soviet control in the ports of Port Arthur and Dalian, together with Chinese recognition for the first time since Genghis Khan of the independence of Outer Mongolia. Roosevelt's promise guaranteed that the Chinese would come to Moscow to negotiate, but additional pressure would be necessary to achieve best results. In the end, as Hasegawa describes elsewhere in this volume, only the USSR's entering the war could compel the Chinese to settle and sign.
- 29 In March, secret Soviet aid to the East Turkestan Republic in Xinjiang began. On June 2, encouraging discussions regarding future aid were held with the Republic's leader Shakir Khodzhaev, also known as Alihan Tore, who was overseeing the drive to take Urumqi

from the Guomindang forces. Stalin continued to receive regular updates until September of separatist activities that would have been deeply disconcerting for Chinese statesmen.²⁵ All of this took place in the spring and summer of 1945 as China was being pressured by the US to conclude an agreement with the USSR, taking into account the agreement between Stalin and Roosevelt at Yalta in February regarding the Manchurian ports and railroads. Not only was the Chinese Northwest no longer in Chinese hands, but Choibalsan's participation in Stalin's pressure tactics on the border signaled his desire to build "Great Mongolia," including territories from the Altai, Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. The Chinese had every reason to feel threatened.

- 30 As Song arrived in Moscow on June 28 to try to avoid recognizing Outer Mongolia as an "independent" state, Stalin brought Choibalsan to Moscow for a public welcome from Foreign Minister Molotov on 4 July 1945 demonstrating to the whole world Moscow's full recognition of Ulan Baatar as an independent state. Of course, the airplane that transported Choibalsan (though an American-made DC-3) was flown by the Soviet military, suggesting degrees of dependence as well. Under this kind of border conflict pressure from afar, Chiang and Song continued to resist, but eventually agreed to recognize Mongolia. Stalin, in exchange, agreed to recognize only the central government of China.
- 31 Having accomplished larger goals from Mongolia to the Pacific, Stalin's support for the East Turkestan Republic and Osman quickly dried up. Alihan was pressured into October 1945 negotiations with the Chinese much against his will and later "evacuated" away to Tashkent in June 1946, shortly before the last meeting of the "Temporary Revolutionary Government of the East Turkestan Republic" that he had headed. The KMT would continue dismantling the ETR legacy in 1947, but by 1948 the KMT was in retreat and ETR veterans were mobilized to take power, only to be pressured into submission again, this time to a CCP delegation arriving from Moscow, again flying in Soviet planes. Many of the leaders of the ETR died in a mysterious plane crash near Irkutsk, while on their way to the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in Beijing.²⁶
- 32 Choibalsan, visiting Stalin again in February 1946, was now discouraged from provoking war with China over Inner Mongolia. At a later meeting with Choibalsan in August 1947, Stalin wondered, "What is happening with your border conflict? Whatever happened to Osman?" This clearly reveals that Stalin imagined his maneuver as a border conflict meant to pressure the central government of China through threatening activities in Altai, Xinjiang and Mongolia. This makes the Osman, Choibalsan, Song pressure-combination a demonstration of Stalin's border methods for using a few hundred rifles and submachine guns to squeeze diplomatic concessions from a powerful rival state. What local actors thought of as an ethnic conflict or as a national liberation movement was perceived by Stalin as a border issue, one with the ability to extract concessions from Chinese negotiators.
- 33 What at first glance appears to be a three-level game involving rebels in the Chinese Northwest cooperating with Soviet secret services, Choibalsan caught up in his dream of a "Greater Mongolia," and Stalin negotiating with Song, actually turns out to be more complicated. After each conversation with Stalin, Song visited the American embassy to reveal his progress and predicaments. Ambassador Harriman then consulted with Washington by coded telegram providing Song with advice by the next day.²⁷ Stalin had constructed a four-level game that ran all the way from the remote borderlands of the Altai to Washington, DC.

- 34 Only hours before Stalin concluded his treaty with the Chinese on August 15, the Japanese surrendered, creating the possibility to occupy the Kurile Islands without island-hopping battles, so costly in lives. As Tsuyoshi Hasegawa details in his article in this collection, Stalin's decision not to wait for surrender to take effect, but instead to order his troops into battle must have been both immediate and peremptory, forcing the hastily-prepared amphibious attack to incur heavy casualties at Shimushu, the nearest Kurile Island to Kamchatka.²⁸ On the same day as the Shimushu attack, Stalin attempted to obtain an occupation zone on Hokkaido by agreement with Truman, but the American president rejected this claim, preventing Stalin from controlling the Soya strait between Sakhalin and Hokkaido from both sides and leaving one shore of the Okhotsk Sea in non-Soviet hands. These were geostrategic considerations, but, as in the other cases, presented above, issues of population, history and relations with both the US and China were also in the mix. As Hasegawa notes, on the day after Stalin gave up on the Hokkaido operation, 500,000 Japanese POWs captured in Manchuria, the Chinese Northeast, and Korea were ordered to Siberia for hard labor that would last for years. Additional contingents from Sakhalin and the Kuriles eventually brought the total number over 600,000.²⁹
- 35 Although Hasegawa emphasizes Soviet labor needs, this act of cruelty could also be seen as a substitute form of historical revenge. Stalin's request to Truman for a piece of Hokkaido was phrased in terms of compensation for earlier Japanese occupations of the Russian Far East. If vengeance would not be available in the form of territory, Stalin would take it in the form of labor and suffering, both by the POWs/internees and their families waiting in Japan.³⁰ The most lasting result in Japan would be that millions of Japanese family and friends of the POWs quickly realized which side of the Cold War they wanted to be on.³¹ For Stalin, exclusion from the occupation of Japan was a deep loss of influence over a country that he believed would make a comeback as an Asian power after the war. Again and again, he complained about this to American representatives, demanding redress, linking progress on a German peace treaty to Soviet claims on Japan. But again Stalin avoided his nightmare situation, a second front, and waited until the last Japanese islands, the Habomais, were occupied on September 5 before standing up the Azerbaijan Democratic Party on Iranian soil on September 6, 1945.
- 36 With three successes in Poland, Ukraine and Mongolia under his belt, it is no surprise that Stalin would feel emboldened to try similar tactics along his Caucasus borders in 1945-1946 against Iran and Turkey, making use of local nationalisms (Azeri, Armenian, and Georgian) invoked with references to cross-border common culture and Turkish World War One atrocities. But with Iran, there was an important complicating factor. Owing his status as a world statesman to military industrial production and mobile tank armies, Stalin was deeply sensitive to the Soviet Union's need for oil.³² From today's perspective, with Russia ranking as the second largest producer in the world, this seems laughable, but at the time all Soviet oil came from the Caspian sea oilfields. This meant that Hitler's 1943 drive towards Baku had indeed been a deadly threat. The desperation of Stalingrad was entirely appropriate. Aging Russians still remember the coal-burning trucks of World War II, converted to save oil for the tanks. Stalin remembered too and would try to enlarge Soviet oil reserves across the border into Iran. A delegation headed by S.I. Kavtaradze, Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs, negotiated in Teheran in September-October 1944, but returned to Moscow empty-handed.
- 37 The next stage in the Iranian affair began just as the border stratagems described above either achieved success or showed signs of moving in a successful direction. The Czechs

signed over Subcarpathian Rus to Ukraine at the end of June, just as Song Ziwen was arriving in Moscow under pressure to reach agreement with Stalin from both the Americans, Osman and the ETR. Stalin's sense that the winds of fortune were in his favor may have encouraged him to overextend his border diplomacy. On 21 June 1945, the State Defense Committee (GKO) issued decree number 9168SS ordering Narkomneft to conduct oil explorations in Northern Iran with support from the Transcaucasus Front and the CP Azerbaijan (Comrade Bagirov). On 6 July 1945, the Politburo made M.Dzh. Bagirov, the head of the Azerbaijani Communist Party with its capital in Baku, responsible for "preparatory work" to establish both an Azerbaijan Democratic Party (ADP) in Iran and a Kurdish movement, both with explicit separatist intentions. Additionally, the ADP was to receive massive support for its campaign to elect deputies to the Iranian Parliament (Majlis). The election/separatist slogans were both class and nationality based. Land was promised to the peasants, work was guaranteed to the workers and equal rights were offered to Azeris, Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians. Party-based "combat groups" were to be equipped with "weapons of foreign manufacture," so their provenance could not be traced back to the USSR.³³

- 38 These decisions were enacted through the military, the oil ministry, and the Communist Party, with various supporting roles allotted to the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the Ministry of Finance, and the State Publishing House. Strikingly, no role was assigned to the Foreign Ministry, for this was "party diplomacy." In fact, on 7 June 1945, Kavtaradze had written to Molotov counseling against "renaming Iranian Azerbaijan into Southern Azerbaijan" because of the uses it would provide to "the English, the Saudis and other reactionary elements in their anti-Soviet activity in Iran," but he was ignored. The Peoples' Party of Iran (Tudeh) also condemned the founding of the ADP, stating unequivocally: "If the enemies of the USSR had created a plan against it, they could not possibly invent anything better than what is taking place at the present time."³⁴
- 39 But this was clearly Stalin's decision and the ADP was officially stood up on 6 September 1945, shortly after the USSR was excluded from a role in the occupation of Japan, and even as Moscow decided to keep Iran off the agenda at the London Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). The Americans, in turn, refused to discuss Japan. The main demand of the ADP was for Azeri "national and cultural autonomy" in Iran and the key figure in charge of the operation was Bagirov. On October 21, he wrote to Beria about the organization of assassination squads to clear the way for the autonomy movement in "Iranian Azerbaijan" and "Northern Kurdistan."³⁵
- 40 On November 29, Molotov wrote to the American Ambassador Averell Harriman viewing "negatively" the introduction of Iranian troops into the "northern regions" of Iran, since it would mean the creation of a new *de facto* border. Again, for the December CFM meeting in Moscow, the Russians refused to put Iran on the agenda, while Stalin told both Byrnes and Bevin that Red Army withdrawal could not be undertaken for fear that the Iranians might sabotage the USSR's only source of oil at Baku, near the border. On the diplomatic level, Soviet Foreign Ministry documents also linked withdrawal from Iran to Anglo-American troop withdrawals from China and Greece. Stalin was clearly "thinking globally and acting locally." With the failure of the Moscow CFM to address this issue, Teheran took the opposite tack, local restraint, while introducing an anti-Soviet motion to the UN Security Council, the first time that Moscow would face this new court of international public opinion.

- 41 In contrast to the Iranian initiatives, the Soviet Foreign Ministry led the way on a simultaneous offensive against Turkey, the famous “war of nerves.” In June 1945, Molotov met with the Turkish Ambassador Selim Sarper and announced that, just like with Poland, he envisioned a change of frontiers from those agreed on in 1921. Molotov then proceeded to his second point regarding a Soviet base at the Straits, making it clear that the frontier issue could be abandoned, if agreement was reached regarding the Straits. The Turkish government immediately sought aid and comfort from both the Americans and the English.³⁶
- 42 In the summer of 1945, Moscow asked Georgian and Armenian SSR foreign ministry officials to prepare argumentation for the return of territories captured by Turkey in 1918, of which 20,500 square kilometers were to go to Armenia and 5,500 to Georgia. The arguments, united in a Soviet Foreign Ministry memorandum of 18 August 1945 spoke both of the Armenian and Georgian sacrifices to defeat fascism and the Turkish slaughter of Armenians in 1894-1896 and 1915-1916.³⁷ To territory and history was added the element of population on 21 November 1945, when the Politburo ordered the Foreign Ministry to aid diaspora Armenians from Bulgaria, Greece, Iran, Lebanon, Romania, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, France and the US to return to Armenia. The stated lack of available land for the 360-400 thousand diaspora Armenians planned for this repatriation underlined the need to regain the irredenta where Turkey had slaughtered over a million Armenians.³⁸ A unified conference of the Armenian church invoked Stalin’s earlier successes in reuniting peoples to encourage Armenians to return.³⁹
- Great Stalin! You have carried out the unification of the Ukrainian, Belorussian, Moldavian and Baltic peoples with steely firmness. You have delivered the Poles, Czechs, Austrians, Bulgarians and Yugoslavs from the foreign yoke, winning the hearts of humanity and the title “Savior of Peoples” [...] we now call on you to realize the same national reunion for the Armenian people by joining together Turkish and Soviet Armenia and organizing the return of the Armenians to their Motherland.
- 43 Meanwhile, increases in Soviet troop strength in Romania, as well as the non-withdrawal from Iran, kept Turkey mobilized and on edge until the spring of 1946.
- 44 Stalin’s moves against both Iran and Turkey were probably aimed at Britain, historically strong in the Near East. He may also have wished to punish London for Churchill’s mendacious encouragement in October 1944 to consider altering the Montreux convention controlling the entrance to the Black Sea. This was actually Stalin’s main desire from Turkey, although his subordinates, especially Beria, may have seen the matter differently. The role of the Armenians was supposed to provide a veil of justice for a small oppressed people behind which Soviet security interests could hide. Many of the returning Armenians came for patriotic reasons, but were soon deported to the Altai region as “Dashnak” nationalist spies.⁴⁰
- 45 Nonetheless, for a brief moment in the fall of 1945, hopes were high in Moscow. A former secretary of the CP Azerbaijan, M.G. Seidov remembers Bagirov meeting Anastas Mikoyan, an Armenian, and Lavrentii Beria, a Georgian, in Stalin’s antechamber. These latter two noted that the question of “Southern Azerbaijan” was “already solved and that the territory of the Azerbaijan SSR would soon expand,” suggesting a border change with Iran. They then suggested that now would be a good time to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and other thorny, outstanding Caucasian border/population issues.⁴¹ But the failure on the international level prevented any solutions domestically in the Caucasus.

Instead of being split by Stalin's pressure as imperialist rivals for oil were supposed to behave in Leninist theory, the Americans and British recognized their shared interest in the new global political economy driven by petroleum. Cooperation on Iran and Turkey in 1946 and Churchill's Iron Curtain speech of March 1946 presaged the Truman doctrine of March 1947 in which the US took over security obligations from Britain in the Near East

- 46 In 1944-1946, Stalin negotiated territorial and other advantages from border issues along his periphery, creating systemic-territorial buffers in the East and West. The rival great powers, the US and Britain, ultimately sanctioned these changes at the expense of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and China to the benefit of Romania, Mongolia and the USSR. In the Iran/Turkey case, Stalin's veiled goals were a more fundamental threat to the emerging postwar order. A base at the Dardanelles would have made the Soviet Union a Mediterranean naval power and an oil concession in Iran would have made the USSR an important player in the petroleum-based international postwar political economy that would underpin the capitalist system for the rest of the 20th century.
- 47 In March 1946, as Soviet troops in Northern Iran, where they had been since 1942, overstayed their withdrawal date, both Iranian Prime Minister Qavam and American Ambassador W.B. Smith encouraged Stalin to believe that Iranian oil would be his, if he withdrew his troops from Iran. Stalin announced the withdrawal on the same day (April 4) as his first meeting with Ambassador Smith, a clear sign that he was willing to accept these assurances. But the promised oil never materialized. Stalin had been duped.⁴²

Conclusions

- 48 Rieber's insights regarding Stalin as a man of the borderlands imply that Stalin speaks with two voices, one Georgian and one Russian, but in this article, we have seen Stalin speak with multiple identities. He defended the rights of the Ukrainians and Belorussians to former Polish lands, now to be Soviet. Later, he spoke on behalf of the Polish government, mainly Communist, but including Mikołajczyk, announcing that the Poles would not give up Kladsko, because they had Soviet support. His sympathies for Kazakhs, Uighirs and Mongolians were vocal and concrete, but soon gave way to more far-reaching advantages at Chinese expense, guaranteed by the Americans.⁴³ Stalin, of course, speaks regularly on behalf of the "Soviet government" and the "Russian people."
- 49 Previously, without Soviet documentation, Stalin's policies were deduced from the outside, but now they can be confirmed in their full complexity using Soviet and other former East-bloc documentation. Stalin's stratagems are characterized by multiple-level pressures on all players, nationalist emotions being instigated to obscure enemy judgment, and the readiness to start "mass actions," so costly in human suffering. The playing field extends across the full length and breadth of Slavic Eurasia, where Stalin's influence led to border shifts and Soviet expansion, although on a minor scale. When Stalin told Smith that the Soviet Union was not going "much further," he appears to have been truthful. Only minor border adjustments were envisioned, although whether "minor" is a word that can be applied to the North Korean aggression to capture the southern half of the Korean peninsula is arguable.⁴⁴
- 50 Border issues remained a critical concern of Stalin's foreign policy in the post-World War II period. They covered many points of contact between the USSR and its neighbors. The dominant position of the USSR and its tank armies in 1945 resulted in territorial

settlements favorable to the Soviet Union. Many of these would become irredentist claims against Moscow. Stalin's incitement of nationalist passions by shifting borders and exchanging peoples would make no lasting friends for the Soviet Union. It did, however, help to thwart democracy in Eastern Europe and leave Moscow as the only arbiter of key international issues, territorial and otherwise. In very different circumstances, 1945 treaty rights with China, obtained by borderland pressure tactics, secured the USSR a presence in Manchuria from which to aid the Chinese Communists. The agreements at Yalta would stand behind the Russian occupation of the Kuriles, creating a new locus of nationalist irredentism on the Japanese side. Across Eurasia, Stalin's border politics undermined tolerance, dominated nationalist agendas, and increased short-term Soviet influence. The long-term consequences cannot be evaluated so positively.

NOTES

1. On the interplay between nationality and *raionirovanie* in the prewar period, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 33-34.
2. Stalin praised this solution during a discussion with a Hungarian delegation headed by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on 10 April 1946. Stalin encouraged the Hungarians to trade population with both the Slovaks and Romanians. See G.P. Murashko, A.F. Noskova and T.V. Volokitina, *Vostochnaia Evropa v dokumentakh sovetskikh arkhivov, 1944-1953* Vol.1, 1944-1948 (M., 1997), 407-419, (hereafter VE refers to Volume 1 only, since Volume 2 is not used for this article). For an overview of the devastating demographic disruptions during the war, see the article by Mie Nakachi in this collection.
3. Among the Bolsheviks, Stalin had long been known as an expert on nationality and nationalism, so it should come as no surprise that he made use of these skills to manipulate both comrades and capitalists towards his chosen ends. For the prewar period, see Andrea Graziosi, "Stalin's Foreign and Domestic Policies: Dealing with the National Question in an Imperial Context, 1901-1926" (Paper presented at the Harvard Project on Cold War Studies, 2009).
4. Alfred J. Rieber, "Stalin, Man of the Borderlands" *American Historical Review* 106, 5 (December 2001).
5. Not surprisingly, the informal meetings outside the Kremlin were rarely recorded, but memoir literature provides several detailed accounts of such meetings at Stalin's two dachas a short drive from Moscow, so we can get the flavor of his intimacy. Most famously, Milovan Djilas *Conversations with Stalin* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1962) contains vivid portraits of late night suppers with Yugoslav and Bulgarian communist leaders at Stalin's dachas. Another example, the four meetings between Stalin and the leaders of the Japanese Communist Party in the summer of 1951 all took place at Stalin's "near" dacha at Kuntsevo. The Soviet translator and one of the Japanese participants, Hakamada Satomi, have left us descriptions. N.B. Adyrkhaev,

“Vstrecha Stalina s iaponskimi kommunistami,” *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka* 2 (1990): 140-44; Hakamada Satomi, *Watashi no sengoshi* [My Postwar History] (Tokyo, 1978), 93-102.

6. The recent social history of the Soviet Union makes it clear that Stalin did not control or even observe all aspects of life in the Soviet Union. That is the totalitarian model rather than the Stalinist reality. On the other hand in the areas he considered important, Stalin was a very hands-on micromanager. Security and foreign affairs were at the top of Stalin's list. Only he had a full picture of Soviet policy in these areas. Others, even Politburo members, simply carried out the assignments given them as part of the larger plan, safely hidden inside the boss's head.

7. Natalia Yegorova, “The ‘Iran Crisis’ of 1945-1946: A View from the Russian Archives,” *Cold War International History Project* (Working Paper No.15, 1996), 23-24.

8. Robert Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-level Games,” *International Organization* 42, 3 (1988): 427-460. For Putnam, the two levels are domestic politics and bilateral international relations, but in the context of 1944-1946, there is also a third level, relations among the Big Three powers of Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States.

9. For linkages between the two, see the conclusion to Stephen Kotkin and David Wolff, eds., *Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995).

10. Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin* (London: Pearson, 2005), 134.

11. Walter Bedell Smith, *My Three Years in Moscow* (Lippincott: Philadelphia, 1950), 50-53. Ambassador (General) Smith would return to the US in 1948 to become the first director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

12. *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie Otnosheniia, 1945-1948: Dokumenty* (M., 2004), 190-191. The Soviet stenogram of Stalin's meeting with Smith was circulated in top Party and Foreign Ministry circles giving clear guidance that agreement was possible with the Americans and that no attack was planned against Turkey or Iran.

13. Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 21.

14. Stanisław Mikołajczyk, *The Rape of Poland: Pattern of Soviet Aggression* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), 93-101.

15. *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: iz dnevnika Feliksa Chueva* (M., 1991), 14, also in English as *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics: Conversations with Felix Chuev*, ed. by Albert Resis (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993).

16. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945*, vol. 5, 839-842.

17. For the Czechoslovak case, Kaplan correctly notes the “negative side-effect” of territorial issues in uniting parties within individual countries of Eastern Europe to obtain territory at the expense of their neighbors, while making all parties increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union to reach this goal. This prevented any kind of cooperation against the Soviet Union's increasing role, the main issue, in Kaplan's opinion. Karel Kaplan, *The Short March: The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1987), 26-30.

18. There is only a two-page introduction to the translated documents to be found in Murashko and Noskova, “Stalin and National-Territorial Controversies, Part I,” *Cold War History* 1, 3 (April 2001): 161-172 and Murashko and Noskova, “Stalin and National-

Territorial Controversies, Part II," *Cold War History* 2, 1 (October 2001): 145-157. Both of these documents can be found in Russian in VE.

19. RGASPI (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii), f. 558, op. 11, d. 282, l. 96-106.

20. Stalin's comment is deeply ironic for, in fact, at that very moment he was waging war on the Ukrainian Nationalist Army (OUN) in a large scale "liquidation" operation conducted by the NKVD in Rovenskii, Volynskii and Ternopol'skii oblasts from May 15 to 20. (Entry for 20 May 1944) "*Osobaia Papka*" I.V. Stalina: *Katalog* (1994), 29.

21. Mikołajczyk, *The Rape of Poland*, 93-101.

22. VE, 232.

23. If the attempt to keep other navies out of the Black Sea was indeed a constant of Russian foreign policy in the 19th century, the attempt to project Soviet naval power into the Mediterranean was something new for the maritime powers, Great Britain and the US.

24. Pioneering research in Mongolian documents has allowed Sergey Radchenko to document this story. This account draws heavily on Sergey Radchenko, "Choibalsan's Great Mongolia Dream," *Inner Asia* 11(2009): 305-332.

25. "*Osobaia papka*" I.V. Stalina. The files sent to Stalin by NKGB and NKVD operatives in Xinjiang have never been declassified, but the catalog of these files provides basic data and dates on which the files were sent to Stalin.

26. Many of the materials not yet declassified are cited in detail in V.A. Barmin, *Sin'tsian v sovetsko-kitaiskikh otnosheniakh* (Barnaul, 1999). Information in this paragraph from pages 96-98, 116-117, 180. Barmin refers to ETR as a "trading card (*razmennaia karta*)" to be traded for greater advantages.

27. Copies of Harriman's cables can be found in the Harriman Papers in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, DC.

28. Although Stalin knew of the ceasefire, the distant Japanese garrisons had not yet been informed, so they resisted.

29. This total reflects the recent discovery of a card-file in the Soviet military archives that contains approximately 700,000 individual records. A detailed analysis, checking for duplicates, is still being conducted by the Japanese Ministry of Welfare, which received a copy of the cards. None of these cards have been released to independent or university researchers yet. For details, see the Yomiuri news site for July 23, 2009, last consulted on 7 November 2011 at http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/getsuroku/2009/national_07.htm.

30. Approximately ten percent of the POWs died in the USSR between 1945 and 1956 when the last prisoners were returned to Japan.

31. Yokote Shinji, "Soviet Repatriation Policy, SCAP and Japan's Entry into the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* (forthcoming).

32. N.K. Baibakov, the People's Commissar of Oil, remembers Stalin telling him that oil was the "soul (*dusha*)" of both military technology and the economy, giving the oil ministry all necessary support both to convert wartime production into oil production, while developing the "Second Baku," a wide oil-bearing area, running from the Urals to the Volga. On this, see N.K. Baibakov, *Sorok let v pravitel'stve* (M.: Izdat. Respublika, 1993), 47.

33. "New Evidence on the Iran Crisis, 1945-1946: From the Baku Archives," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, No.12-13: 310-312.

34. Yegorova, "The 'Iran Crisis'..." 11-12.
35. Dzh.P. Gasanly, *SSSR-Turtsiia: ot neutraliteta k kholodnoy voine, 1939-1953* (M., 2008), 284. There is also a book *SSSR-Iran* (M., 2006) by the same author, but in this article all cites are to *SSSR-Turtsiia*.
36. Whereas Hasanli makes heavy use of Russian sources, Turkish documents can be found in Arman Kirakosian, ed., *Armeniia i sovetsko-turetskie otnosheniia v diplomaticheskikh dokumentakh, 1945-1946 gg* (Erevan, 2010), 240-248 and Georges Mamoulia, "Les crises turque et iraniene, 1945-1947: l'apport des archives caucasiennes," *Cahiers du monde russe*, 45, 1-2 (Janvier-Juin 2004): 267-292, provides important regional insights from the Presidential Archive of Georgia.
37. On September 5, 1945, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia G. Kiknadze wrote directly to Politburo member L.P. Beria, a native of Georgia, revising the partition in Georgia's favor to 13,190 square kilometers for Armenia and 12,760 for Georgia. See Mamoulia, 285-286, where unfortunately the date of composition is not visible in the reproduced document pages, but is mentioned at the top of page 285. The report was presented personally to Beria by Kiknadze during a visit to Moscow in October according to Mamoulia, 269. On the same page, Sergo Beria, Lavrentii's son testifies that his father believed just the opposite of Molotov (and probably Stalin), that the claims at the Straits should be sacrificed in order to get back the lost Georgian lands.
38. Although the Armenian diaspora was over a million strong in 1945, only 102,277 returned to the Soviet Union, mostly from the Middle East and Balkans. Detailed statistics can be found in Claire Mouradian, "Immigration des Arméniens en RSS d'Arménie, 1946-1962," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 20, 1 (1979): 87.
39. Mouradian, "Immigration des Arméniens..." 80.
40. Gasanly, *SSSR-Turtsiia*, 502.
41. *Ibid.*, 456.
42. As late as December 1949 Stalin was still presenting the 26 million dollar bill for losses incurred by the non-performance of the agreement made in 1946. On this, see RGASPI f. 17, op. 162, d. 43, l. 78.
43. Despite the fact that he was one, maybe because he was one, Stalin is less willing to use his Caucasian identity in the postwar. Instead Politburo members from the key republics, Armenia (Mikoyan), Azerbaijan (Bagirov) and Georgia (Beria) stand in for him.
44. What is not disputed is that Kim Il Sung's all-out attack had hidden behind a border provocation on the disputed Ongjin peninsula.

ABSTRACTS

Abstract

Making use of Russian archives declassified since 1991, this article analyzes four cases in which Stalin tried to shift the borders of the USSR, not only to expand, but also to gain other benefits inherent to the frontier's dynamics. All the cases date from the period 1944-1946, when Soviet

tanks seemed invincible. Two European cases concern Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, Romania and Belarus. Two Asian cases cover much territory, with one in the Caucasus involving Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran and Turkey, and one further east concerning the formation of the Soviet borders with the Altai, Mongolia, Xinjiang, China and Japan.

The article's comparative analysis suggests that Stalin personally supervised all these border operations, aiming at goals involving security, geography and history, in the broadest sense. For Stalin, it was not just a matter of territory *per se*, but of achieving specific (desirable) goals that ranged from gaining an outlet to the Mediterranean or making the Sea of Okhotsk a Soviet lake; uniting the populations of Azerbaijan while securing additional oil reserves; or preserving lines of communication to forward positions in Vienna, Berlin and Port Arthur.

Stalin also understood the psychological side of territory, its ability to turn politicians' heads, preventing them from seeing the negative effects of knee-jerk nationalism. By incensing Mikołajczyk, he thwarted Churchill's good intentions. By encouraging Choibalsan, he kept Chiang Kaishek on the alert. By supporting Slovak, Hungarian and Polish nationalistic aspirations at cross-purposes, Stalin left the Western Allies with a poor impression of the new Central Europe. He also made it hard for these countries to work together toward any goal, and became the ultimate arbiter of their territorial dissension and much more. But ultimately, Stalin's border-making activities generated concerns, fears and revanchist movements, preventing Soviet neighbors from ever becoming Soviet friends.

Résumé

À partir des archives russes déclassifiées depuis 1991, cet article analyse quatre exemples qui illustrent la manière dont Stalin a tenté de modifier les frontières de l'URSS, pas seulement dans le dessein de s'agrandir mais aussi pour en tirer d'autres profits propres aux dynamiques frontalières. Ces exemples datent de la période 1944-1946 quand les tanks soviétiques semblaient invincibles. Deux cas sont situés du côté européen et concernent la Pologne, la Tchécoslovaquie, la Hongrie, l'Ukraine, et la Roumanie. Les deux autres, du côté asiatique, couvrent davantage de territoire. Le premier porte sur le Caucase, et met en cause l'Arménie, l'Azerbaïdjan, la Géorgie, l'Iran et la Turquie ; tandis que le second, beaucoup plus à l'est, concerne la formation du tracé des frontières soviétiques avec l'Altaï, la Mongolie, la Chine et le Japon.

L'analyse comparative de ces cas laisse penser que Stalin a personnellement supervisé toutes ces opérations relatives à la modification des frontières toujours dans des fins sécuritaires, géographiques et historiques au sens le plus large. Pour Stalin, il ne s'agissait pas seulement d'une question de territoire en tant que tel mais plutôt de répondre à des besoins spécifiques allant de l'obtention d'un débouché sur la Méditerranée à la transformation de la mer d'Okhotsk en lac soviétique ; de réunir les peuples d'Azerbaïdjan tout en s'assurant de nouvelles réserves de pétrole ; ou encore de conserver des lignes de communication pour soutenir les avant-postes à Vienne, Berlin et Port-Arthur.

Stalin comprenait aussi le rôle psychologique du territoire, sa capacité à tourner les têtes des politiques, à les empêcher de voir les effets négatifs du nationalisme primaire. En soulevant la colère de Mikołajczyk, il a contrarié toutes les bonnes intentions de Churchill. En encourageant Choybalsan, il a forcé Tchang Kaï-chek à rester vigilant. En confortant les désaccords dans les aspirations nationalistes slovaques, hongroises et polonaises, Stalin a fait en sorte que les Alliés se forment une mauvaise impression de la nouvelle Europe centrale. De même, en rendant impossible toute forme de collaboration entre ces pays, il s'est posé en arbitre ultime de leurs dissensions territoriales et plus encore. En fin de compte, toutes ces manœuvres visant à modifier le tracé des frontières ont généré nombre de problèmes, de peurs et de mouvements revanchistes, empêchant à jamais les voisins de l'Union soviétique de devenir ses amis.

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