After reading Herbert Feis’ *From Trust to Terror* and Richard J. Barnet’s *Roots of War*, one is left with the impression that these two books are representative not only of two different historical schools, that of traditionalism and revisionism respectively, but even more of two separate generations. Although both were written during the final stages of the Vietnam War and both Feis and Barnet would claim to be American patriots, the brand of patriotism displayed by the two is decidedly different. Feis, the hardened economist and bureaucrat who worked for both the Department of State and the Department of War between the years 1930 and 1945, is the American apologist. Barnet, a critic of the war in Vietnam, wrote two books on disarmament, served in the Department of State under JFK and founded the Institute for Foreign Policy Studies. He is the “thorn in the flesh” that keeps democracy on its toes.

Feis, as a traditionalist, does not question the accepted wisdom common to the US diplomats, statesmen, elected officials and generals who saw the beginnings of the Cold War. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. said after Feis’ death in 1973 that, “though Herbert Feis did not question the historical and intellectual framework within which the American policy developed, he was by no means a writer of old-tie history, intent on proving the infallibility of official judgement.”

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type of action. If Barnet is to be wholly trusted, the fact that the Soviet Union has committed untold
numbers of human rights violations and shown imperialistic tendencies as well as the US will be
excluded.

It will be the goal of this review to highlight those aspects of these mostly contrasting analyses which
shed the greatest light upon the still raging conflict within the USA as to whether to conduct, or to deescalate the Cold War. The contrast is first seen in terms of overall impressions. It must be stated that Barnetâ€™s account is quite a bit more readable. His inclusion of psycho-
historical analytical techniques and philosophical considerations of political ideologies, to include
an incisive analysis of neo-Leninist theory, serves to keep the readerâ€™s attention for much
longer periods than does Feisâ€™ strict historical accounting of post-WWII diplomatic give and
take.

Though similarly one-sided, these two books demonstrate differences in literary styles to as great a
degree as their authorsâ€™ plainly visible antithetical prejudices. Feis chooses to take the reader by the hand through five years of crucial policy negotiations and lays bare with great pains the splits within the camp of the Western Allies as well as the East-West split which eventually led to the Cold War. At times, Feis is as critical of the obstructions provided by the recalcitrant French as he is of the Soviets. This provides somewhat of a respite from his condemnation of the Soviets.

Barnet divides his complaints into three categories: the national security bureaucracyâ€™s autonomous and guilt-free perpetuation of the US preparedness for all-out nuclear war; the imperialistic nature of the USâ€™ capitalistic business creed which, along with a "pseudo-
Christian" morality, pervades both the exclusive "national security bureaucracy" and the community of the "American business elite" cementing them together in a common goal of perpetuating the mutually beneficial military-industrial complex; and finally the supinely manipulable American public, which takes little or no interest in foreign policy developments. Where Feis may be faulted for the inclusion of too much cumbersome detail, Barnet succumbs to the dangers of excessive abstraction. For instance, Barnetâ€™s "national security managers" who use "rat psychology" and systematically commit "bureaucratic homicide" during the Vietnam War, although occasionally tied down to names such as McGeorge Bundy or Robert McNamara, remain nameless abstractions. With Barnet, the United States is the sole beneficiary of all criticism. One tires of this eventually.

In the presentation of Cold War history offered by the two authors one sees the convenient exclusion of those topics which might seriously threaten the validity of their individual arguments. Barnet is particular guilty of this. His commentary totally ignores the malicious Russian war machine, which like the US war machine might undoubtedly bear some of the blame for the USâ€™ permanent mobilization for war. In like manner, by his silence on the matter, Feis relieves US government officials from any guilt of deceit or willful deception of the American people, the Western Allies or the Soviets. If Feis is to be trusted completely, the US is simply incapable of this type of action. If Barnet is to be wholly trusted, the fact that the Soviet Union has committed untold numbers of human rights violations and shown imperialistic tendencies as well as the US will be entirely ignored.

One can see the selective treatment of the Marshall Plan by the two as an example of this seemingly innocent tendency. Feis portrays the US proposal of the Marshall Plan for Europe as a self-less act of the American Government and ignores the fact that the US business community of the Cold War period is best seen in the way Barnet covers the Soviet involvement in Eastern Europe. It was, turning to the Feis text, the Soviet installation of the Lublin Poles to power in Poland which, as an example of Soviet deceit and lack of good intentions, served as the catalyst for US distrust of Soviet intentions. Of the Soviet involvement in Poland, as of the rest of Soviet involvement in Eastern Europe, Feis holds that "accords which the American Government had thought to be clear and valid were being distorted." (Feis, 173). The account which Feis gives of the initial souring of US-Soviet relations (to include war reparations exacted from Germany by Russia, the US termination of lend lease, the US disengagement from the Chinese nationalists and the development of the US policy of containment) is entirely absent in the Barnet account.

Certainly, after the subjugation of the Poles, the US had best beware of Soviet promises of autonomous democracies for Eastern Europe. Feis argues that Soviet intentions of preserving some type of strategic buffer zone in the region were probably sincere, but by no means sufficient to justify Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe. Reading Barnet, one would never know that the Soviet Union expanded its spere of influence greatly during the period of 1945-1950. It is obvious that, as Barnet ceaselessly ferrets out US policy inconsistencies, he selects his information just as
It is these apprehensions, these "paranoias", which dominated the thinking of diplomats during this immediate Cold War period following WWII that Feis relates best. In Feisâ€™ account there is, quite obviously, absolutely no mention of the affects of the interaction between the US Government and the American public in the forming of the Cold War consensus. Conspicuously, the US Government seems to be acting in a veritable vacuum and arriving at decisions with remarkable autonomy. This executive privilege of the national security elite, only implied by Feis, constitutes a substantial portion of Barnetâ€™s argument. As Barnet observes, the "national security managers" submit to the limitations which public opinion places upon foreign policy at the same time as they mold that public opinion. He argues that, "though the world of national security is an elite preserve, it is evident that those who make foreign policy always have one eye on the public reaction." (Barnet, 266).

Furthermore, Barnet assails the myth of "monolithic" Communism aimed at world domination. This myth, according to Barnet was created by the US Government by playing on the American peopleâ€™s Calvinistic fears of the Communist political system about which they knew little or nothing. Barnet holds that, during the period of the Cold War, "anticommunism came to serve as a kind of glue to hold a rapidly fragmenting society together." (Barnet, 255).

It should be carefully noted that in his analysis, Barnet probes the motivations behind foreign policy much more deeply than Feis would ever consider doing. For example, Feis neglects the role of the Catholic Church, organized labor and the media in enlisting public support for Cold War policies. Significantly, Barnet is just as unsympathetic with the Catholic hierarchy for promoting anti-Russian sentiment in the US as he is with the "national security managers" for translating visceral anticommunism into foreign policy. The roots of anticommunism, somewhat synonymous for Barnet with the roots of war, include not only the "paranoid delusions" of our government officials but also the vicious reaction of Catholic clergy, union bosses and the press. Here, Barnetâ€™s otherwise generalized and sweeping analysis is more careful than Feisâ€™.

Sympathy with Feis or Barnet, like sympathy with the Cold War diplomats (US, British, French and Soviet) is greatly dependent upon the readerâ€™s own political orientation. Thomas Lask, a commentator for The New York Times, noted that "those who feel the American foreign policy since the end of WWII, especially as it relates to Vietnam, is a signal success will not much enjoy Richard Barnetâ€™s critical investigation of who makes the policy and how it is made." Reviews of Roots of War vary from the condescendingly critical review by Warren F. Kimball in the conservative Catholic magazine America to that of the conspicuously positive review offered by a critic in the more liberal The Nation. The Nation raves, "one has come to expect fine and important books of Richard Barnet. This time he has surpassed himself." Kimball, in America, finds that, in Roots of War, "often facts which diminish his [Barnetâ€™s] arguments never appear" and the book is "more of a plea than a history" (Kimball, 537).

The less committed reviews of Roots of War remain fairly objective and professionally detached from Barnetâ€™s work. These, however, consistently take Barnet to task for being heavy on criticism of those who exercise power and weak on solutions which would provide for a more just use of power. According to E. Berkley Thomas, in the Saturday Review, "unfortunately his [Barnetâ€™s] apocalyptic formulas for the future do not possess the cogency of his critiques of the past." The general respect felt for the aged and at that time ailing Feis provided for less sordid reviews. The general consensus of From Trust to Terror is summed up in The New York Times by Richard R. Lingeman, when he states that "Mr. Feis does little more than the admittedly considerable job of moving the world from trust to terror".

The common criticism issued against Barnet, that of lacking a positive approach to mending the gap of the Cold War, is also a problem to be found in From Trust to Terror. Feis seems quite bewildered as to the future of the Cold War and leaves those problems which he and his generation had seen growing to the next generation to solve. He closes by addressing the plea to the Cold War diplomats (US, British, French and USSR) that together "we must turn over the tale to the philosophers, and to the wise-born." (Feis, 412). He asks rhetorically, "will they resign themselves? Or will East and West rebel against the past and reform?" (Feis, 412). Barnet, in his conclusion, urges such nebulous solutions as a reduction of the national security bureaucracy, a lessening of the perennial stress on growth in US business circles and a greater participation of the public in the formation of foreign policy. Barnet concludes that "we can have a chance for a generation of peace only if the American people demand it and are prepared to build a society rooted in the politics of peace." (Barnet, 341).

How is this to be accomplished he does not say, but perhaps that is the topic for another book. That neither Feis nor Barnet can offer a concise plan for deescalating the Cold War is noteworthy. Even thirty years after the end of WWII and the onset of the Cold War, the debate still rages in the US over whether or not the de-escalation of the Cold War should even be a goal of US foreign policy. After listening to President Ronald Reagan address the American people requesting congressional aid for the CIA-backed Contras fighting the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua, one is reminded of President Trumanâ€™s calling for aid for the embattled Greeks and Turks. Though the specifics are different, the scenario is quite similar. The message delivered the American public is the same - "monolithic" Communism is assaulting the "free world". The Cold War rages today and we are no closer to peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union now than we were thirty years ago.

List of Works Cited

Thus a root cause of war lies in the opacity of the future and in the optimistic illusions that this opacity allows. These illusions lead states to fight in false hope of Save. Its proponents believed with Thomas Schelling that the likelihood of war is determined by how Save. Yet wars have kept erupting throughout the centuries, like a long trail of blood underscoring mankind’s history. Men are afraid that war might come because they know, consciously or subconsciously, that they have never rejected the doctrine which causes wars, which has caused the wars of the past and can do it again the doctrine that it is right or practical or necessary for men to achieve their goals by means of physical force (by initiating the use of force. As we approach the end of a century marked by wars on a scale without precedent in 5,000 years of recorded human history (so many dead from the years 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 alone that the sober estimates of cautious scholars can vary by tens of millions), and as we prepare to enter a new century with weapons, still. Unblooded (to use an archaic term) in their modern form, that supersedes in destructive capacity all previous weapons by a multiple so great that it is academic -- at just this moment