

## The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

# The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

<https://www.e-ir.info/2011/11/23/the-evolution-of-stalins-foreign-policy-during-world-war-two/>

FREDERICK STRACHAN, NOV 23 2011

Even before the start of World War II in 1939, Stalin's principle foreign policy objectives were clear, he pursued consistently a geopolitical policy, which sought to quench his relentless desire for security by expanding the Soviet borders outwards, making Russia the dominant power on the Eurasian landmass with buffer states to her West. This objective was sought before and throughout the war and was driven by a mix of pragmatism, ideology and Stalin's paranoia- which made security his chief concern. Stalin's 'security objective' did not change in response to Western policy, however his methods for achieving it did. Before the war and until 1941, this was sought in the context of an alliance with Nazi Germany, who used Stalin so that they could achieve their aims in Poland and France. After Barbarossa, Stalin's objective remained the same, but his methods for achieving it had to change. When it became evident the Allies were hostile to Russia retaining its 1941 borders post-war, Stalin adopted the National Front Strategy, which emphasised democracy and moderation to achieve his goals without antagonising the West. When this clearly faltered, and when Stalin realised Russia's importance to the allies, especially after Yalta, he became less conciliatory, and was not afraid once again to be obstructive, and to use force to achieve his objective. Stalin also wanted economic aid and a second front from the West to relieve the pressure on the Red Army. Like the issue of borders, these objectives remained constant throughout the war, though his methods for achieving them did change in response to the policies of the Allies. Most remarkably, Stalin resorted to 'blackmailing'[1] the Allies, hinting of a separate peace with the Germans to force their hand.

Stalin was obsessed with borders because he believed that without their extension Russia was vulnerable; she had after all been invaded three times between 1914-1941. An important factor that must not be underestimated when regarding what Stalin wanted from the Western Powers is his personality and his paranoia. This was behind everything Stalin did. As Raymond Birt convincingly demonstrates, 'the clinical description of the paranoid almost perfectly describes Stalin's personality'; Stalin could not trust even those closest to him, let alone men such as Churchill, quoted once as saying that the Bolshevik baby should be strangled in its crib[2]. Throughout the war Stalin regularly accused the Allies of seeking a separate peace with Germany, this was why he was so desperate for a second front- to get Allied commitment. Events exacerbated Stalin's paranoia, he was particularly anxious following the 'Hess Affair' in 1941 and the 'Bern negotiations' in 1945. After Barbarossa, Stalin feared that the British policy was to sit back and watch Germany and Russia bleed each other dry. In a cable to Ivan Maisky (the Russian ambassador to Britain), 19 October 1941, Stalin wrote: 'Churchill is aiming at the defeat of the USSR, in order to come to terms with Germany... without making this assumption it is difficult to explain Churchill's conduct on the second front and the quantity of supplies to the USSR'[3]. Stalin believed that 'Churchill is the kind of man who will pick your pocket for a Kopeck if you don't watch him'[4]. Stalin's suspicion could not be shaken off even after Overlord, as demonstrated by his messages to Roosevelt in April 1945, where paranoia over meetings with the Germans in Bern led him to state 'you affirmed that no negotiations have been entered into. Apparently you are not fully informed'[5]. Stalin's paranoia is also a principle reason why security was so important to him, and why he persistently pursued territorial diplomacy, seeking buffer states to his West, and the recapture of strategic ports and islands from China and Japan in the East. These goals and the achievements of a Soviet 'sphere of influence' remained important to Stalin even after Russia was allied to the only remaining 'Great Powers' following the Axis defeat, and after a framework (the United Nations) had been set up to deal with inter-state conflict.

# The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

Stalin's security objectives remained constant throughout the war. Up to 1941, Stalin sought security through allegiance with Nazi Germany, believing that this was the best way to achieve balance of power in Europe and forestall a German attack that was expected sometime, as yet undefined, in the future. Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact because he was suspicious of British and French motives, fearing they would ally with Germany, as well as the fact that Britain would not (unlike Germany) allow Russia to annex Finland and the Baltic states. Whilst Hitler caused consternation in Moscow with the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact and the Spanish Civil War, Britain's disregard for Soviet policy in 1938, favouring the self-determination of the Sudetenland Germans over the territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia, led Stalin to believe that to maintain peace in the short-term a treaty with Germany was preferable. Stalin hoped to maintain peace and organise a series of buffer states on Russia's borders by keeping Hitler close.

The strategy of avoiding war to achieve his security interests in Europe was due to the weakness of the Red Army and Stalin's fear that in war the capitalists would unite to overthrow the Communist regime. The pact did therefore have an ideological backdrop, and on this occasion Stalin's suspicions are understandable: Britain wore its anti-bolshevism brazenly whilst Germany devised the Anti-Comintern pact. Stalin later told Churchill that he believed negotiations with France and Britain 'were insincere and for the purpose of intimidating Hitler, with whom the [Allies] would later come to terms'[6]. The Nazi-Soviet Pact split the capitalists down the middle, and allowed Stalin to take parts of Eastern Europe.

The significance of the Pact for the future course and evolution of Soviet foreign policy 'cannot be overemphasised'[7] as it defined the contents of a spheres of influence agreement- that is the exclusive freedom of political and diplomatic manoeuvre in a dedicated area, which Stalin sought throughout the war. The Pact was undoubtedly a success for Stalin, as although short-lived, he had got what he wanted from the Powers to his west: a buffer-zone from aggression and an intra-capitalist conflict. Stalin hoped he could work this to his advantage by enhancing Russia's position relative to both sides. Following Barbarossa, Stalin's objectives obviously had to change. Principally he wanted the destruction of Germany, and help doing so. However, he still desired a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, the value of which was demonstrated by extending Germany's advance in 1941. Restoration of the 1941 borders was what Russia was fighting for.

Even though the Wehrmacht's Operation Typhoon had moved the front to the Gates of Moscow by December 5 1941, remarkably, when Eden arrived in the city on December 16, Stalin asked the British Foreign Secretary not just for economic aid for the immediate dilemma, but also for an agreement as to where the Soviet borders should be when the war was won, Stalin insisting they should return to where they were in 1941. Eden was somewhat surprised, and when he revealed that he did not have the authority to agree to such a wide range of proposals Stalin's response was to refuse to sign an alliance. Even as the war progressed, Stalin's demands for the 1941 borders remained constant, at Yalta in 1944 when Zuhov's forces were 40 miles from Berlin, Stalin still felt the need to explain that 'throughout history Poland was always a corridor through which the enemy has come to attack Russia... [this is] because Poland was weak'[8].

Nevertheless, when the situation on the front was more desperate, Stalin's priorities changed. In May 1942 in London, Molotov remarkably dropped his demands for an agreement on post war borders and signed, to Eden's surprise, only a treaty of alliance with Britain for twenty years. It has been speculated that this U-turn was because Russia needed a second front more urgently and, in response to the Allied policy to not talk about borders until the peace, they changed their objectives[9]. Molotov the argument goes, dropped the border demands in order to create a sense of obligation on Roosevelt's part. Through their correspondence, Stalin believed that Roosevelt was willing to take steps towards opening a second front to relieve pressure on the Soviets. He had written to Stalin that he had 'in mind a very important military proposal involving the utilisation of our armed forces in a manner to relieve your critical Western front. This objective carries weight with me... time is of the essence if we are to help in an important way'[10]. This was encouraged on 24<sup>th</sup> May when the American ambassador to Britain, John Gilbert Winant, told Molotov that the second front counted more for Roosevelt than did border treaties. Thus Moscow was encouraged to desist from pushing the borders issue in London 'by a promise from Roosevelt of a second front that very year'[11]. Derek Watson argues that 'with the deteriorating military situation... broader objectives had to be abandoned for a second front to relieve pressure on the USSR and ensure its survival'[12].

## The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

In fact, the American position had nothing to do with Molotov accepting Eden's proposal- before Molotov had even told the Kremlin that he was to meet with Winant, Stalin cabled him to say that Eden's 'was an important document. It lacks the question of frontiers, but is not bad perhaps, for it gives us a free hand. The question of security... will be decided by force'[13]. Eduard Marks believes that the 'unavoidable conclusion' was that the alliance was in fact an important objective for Stalin[14]. Stalin's policy was evolving and he was beginning to see a post-war continuation of the 'Big Three' as increasingly important. The Soviets themselves recognised the alliance 'was an important historical landmark' given the hostility evident since 1917[15]. Geoffrey Roberts argues the meeting in London was the beginning of a slowly evolving but nevertheless 'fundamental re-orientation of Soviet foreign policy'[16]. Stalin was beginning to commit himself to achieving security through the continuation of the alliance in peace. This, however, did not mean that his project of security through spheres of influence had been abandoned, it was being re-conceptualised into the division of the world into three Allied spheres of influence which would be the foundation of a Soviet-Western alliance. This is evidenced by enthusiasm about Roosevelt's post-war plans, expanded upon to Molotov on 29 May. In a cable to Molotov, 1 June 1942, Stalin wrote: 'Roosevelt's statements on preserving peace after the war are absolutely correct. One cannot doubt that without the creation of an association of the armed forces of England, the USA and the USSR to forestall aggression, it will not be possible to preserve peace in the future'. Stalin expressed essentially the same view in November 1944, saying the Grand Alliance 'came not from accidental or transitory motives, but vitally important and long lasting interests'[17].

Stalin was adjusting his security policy to one that combined aggrandizement with collaboration. For Stalin, these were not separate, but entwined: component parts of a single policy. Stalin was beginning to see the coalition not as an obstacle to his desires, but as central to achieving his expansionist and security aims. There are two evident reasons for the high value Stalin was now beginning to place on the Allies: firstly, for the Soviet economy to recover it would need significant Western economic aid, and secondly, at the end of the war Russia would be in no position for a trial of strength. There were other, more subtle reasons that were important to Stalin. Principally there was a defensive consideration, the Western militaries were impressive but an alliance would complicate their capitalist conviction to work against Russia. Stalin also wanted participation in the occupation of Japan, a North African trusteeship, revision of the Montreux treaty, and most importantly, reparations from Germany and a say in its post-war administration. These could only be achieved in the context of Allied unity.

Stalin therefore had to change his Eastern European approach. Whilst his aim of spreading Soviet influence remained the same, to keep the Grand Alliance Stalin could not openly impose revolution through murders and deportation as he had done previously. Roosevelt had sold the war to the American people as a crusade for liberal democratic values as expressed in the Atlantic Charter, and he induced the Allies to endorse this programme. If Stalin flaunted this Roosevelt might not survive, and the Grand Alliance would go with him. To keep the alliance alive *and* to spread Soviet influence, Stalin had to change his tactics, and ordered the Comintern not to push for revolution, but rather to stress the common threat of fascism. By causing the Nazi's trouble without aiming for revolution, Europe's Communists demonstrated to the West their patriotism and dedication to democracy- whilst also laying the foundations for future political influence, in ways which the Allies could not object to, and might actually be grateful for. Stalin himself made light of world revolution at Tehran, saying: 'We won't worry about that. We have found it not so easy to set up a Communist society'[18].

The National Front strategy was implemented across Europe to draw the masses towards communism without antagonising the West. This consisted of an stress on nationalism (rather than class) emphasising 'national roads to socialism'[19], calls for moderate and non-revolutionary socio-economic reform, such as land reform and mixed economies (popular ideas across Europe that were not overtly radical but would also break the power of the high-bourgeois and be a step towards socialism), a respect for 'bourgeois democracy' with its parliaments and parties, and finally the promise of effective governance: the Communists should be the responsible party in any parliament with practical answers to pressing problems. The purpose of these instructions was also made clear; Stalin stressed Allied solidarity and the need to preserve the alliance.

This strategy was a response to the democratic and liberal policies of the Western Powers, who refused to talk about borders until the peace. It was a way of achieving Soviet predominance in Eastern Europe without Western condemnation that might damage the Grand Alliance. Some historians have argued that this was not the case and

# The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

that Stalinist foreign policy was ad hoc, reactive and opportunistic. Vojtech Mastny argues that 'nowhere beyond what Moscow considered the Soviet borders did its policies foresee the establishment of Communist regimes'[20]. However, evidence since Mastny's time of writing shows that, although we still do not have the entire picture, Stalin did have a distinct strategy for Eastern Europe. The editors of the Russian Institute of General History's new collection of documents believe that 'it is obvious that the activity of the Comintern conducted until May 1943 was not only broken off thereafter but became more extensive'[21]; letters and cables sent to Europe's Communist parties make this clear. On 4 April 1943, the Polish PPR received a message stating that 'The political structures in Poland must be defined according to the decisions of the party platform, that is to say, as a democratic not a Soviet order', whilst in February 1944 it was instructed that it was most important not to 'create the false impression that PPR is carrying out a source of Sovietisation in Poland, which in the present state of external affairs, can only give encouragement to every sort of provocateur and every enemy of the Polish people'. The Comintern's successor, the *OMI*, was more explicit, telling the PPR that radicalism would 'make Poland a bone of contention between the Tehran powers', instead they should strive to create a 'situation favourable for our long term plans' (18 July 1944)[22]. Similar messages were sent out to the Communist parties throughout Europe in both East and West.

However, despite this, one must also remember that there were incidents throughout the war where Stalin made it very difficult for the West to believe that he did indeed intend on maintaining the Alliance. At the same time as instructing Europe's Communists not to be antagonistic, Stalin himself was doing exactly that. By ending relations with the Polish Government in Exile in 1943 for example, he was hardly showing his commitment to Alliance. Furthermore, throughout the war he pursued policies that were often utterly unacceptable to the Allies, importantly leaving the Polish Home Army to be slaughtered by the Germans in Warsaw, July-October 1944, despite the Red Army being only ten kilometres away. Glantz has argued that the Red Army was not in a position to take Warsaw at that time[23], however, even if that was the case, refusal to allow Allied planes to operate in Soviet territory to assist the Poles was inexcusable. This resulted in a loss of Allied faith in the Soviets, US Ambassador Harriman wrote to Cordell Hull that refusal to aid Warsaw was 'based not on operational difficulties, but on ruthless political considerations'[24]. However, Stalin did not see such actions as obstacles to a post-war peace. Instead, he thought it was appropriate, and his paranoia convinced him that the Home Army were 'power-seeking criminals... exposing unarmed people to German guns... Hitlerites [who] are cruelly exterminating the civilian population', telling Churchill that 'Soviet troops are doing all they can'[25]. To Stalin, the Poles were an enemy. Furthermore, it is likely that he underestimated Allied concerns about Warsaw. After all, hundreds of Soviet cities had been ravaged by the Nazi's and millions had died without such Allied concern. For Stalin, Allied disquiet over Warsaw seemed remarkable.

Towards the end of the war the National Front Strategy evidently failed to achieve its objectives. Nowhere in Europe did the Communists succeed in winning a critical-mass of support, and they could not hold onto power without resorting to dictatorial methods and the brute strength of the Red Army, something that was antagonistic to the Western Alliance. Furthermore, Stalin's inconsistent behaviour such as over Warsaw in 1944, his constant demand for the 1941 borders and his feeling that Russia had been badly treated, made the Allies feel threatened and concerned. Although ultimately the National Front strategy did not work, its adoption in 1943 was a clear response to the policies of the Allies whom the Soviets realized they had to work with to defeat fascism. Although brutality did eventually emerge in Eastern Europe, it was not supposed to be so- indeed repression was the result of the failure of the National Front Strategy, the attempt to achieve Sovietisation beyond Russia's borders and still be a member of the 'Big Three'.

Stalin ultimately chose the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe over a continued Alliance with the West. This is because in Stalin's ideologically warped mind, security was more likely to be achieved through the creation of a sphere of influence than it was through the continued friendly relations of the other world powers- Stalin was always suspicious that the capitalists would unite against Russia sometime in the future, so therefore the continuation of an alliance was always temporary anyway. One must always be careful not to judge this decision with the benefit of hindsight, nevertheless, to many in the West who hoped for a continuation of relations with Russia in the future, such as Eden, Stalin's decision seemed an aberration of sense. In the end, as Stalin said in 1942, Eastern Europe was 'decided by force'. Stalin succeeded in bringing socialism to Eastern Europe, but not by methods he would have preferred, at a cost he had hoped not to pay.

## The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

After Yalta, to satisfy his paranoid security concerns, Stalin brought the 'iron veil'[26] down over Poland, much to British chagrin. Poland was the key to Soviet security, and to create the strong and friendly Poland Stalin wanted, a government made up of the London Poles was unacceptable as they were unwilling to play the role of a client state. Although it was an anathema to the British, Stalin felt he needed his Polish buffer-zone, and ultimately stopped at nothing to achieve it.

Stalin's more immediate objectives at the beginning of the war was to secure the agreement of economic aid and to get a second front launched in France. In his very earliest exchanges with Churchill, Stalin wrote: 'It seems to me that the military situation of the Soviet Union... would be significantly improved if a front against Hitler was opened in the West'[27]. As the situation grew more desperate, Stalin pleaded: 'How can we get out of this more than unpleasant situation?', before answering his own question: 'I think the only way out is this very year to create a second front in the Balkans or France, capable of drawing thirty to forty German divisions off the Eastern Front'[28]. This objective remained constant, despite repeated changes in Allied policies: Stalin still wanted a second front even after the Red Army looked as if it could win the war alone following the *Wehrmacht's* defeats at Stalingrad and Kursk. However, Stalin did change his tactics to achieve this goal, and was not afraid to play hardball to get his way; from 1942 onwards, bizarrely given the National Front strategy, Stalin's ploys to achieve a second front became consistently more aggressive until the operation was agreed[29]. This to some extent reflected Stalin's frustration at the failure to launch a second front after so much hope, as well as the dire military situation and the tremendous sacrifices Russia was making.

Stalin's determination to get a second front hardened in response to what he believed to be broken Allied promises, and their pursuit, at the expense of Soviet troops engaging the Germans, of imperialist aims in the Mediterranean. In April 1942 Roosevelt wrote to Stalin hinting of a possible second front, and in Washington in May 1942 Molotov pushed this, stressing the precarious Russian situation and arguing that if forty division were to be drawn off the Eastern Front that year, the subsequent Russian breakthrough could end the war before 1943. However, what Molotov did not know was that Churchill had already rejected Sledgehammer (1942 invasion of Europe) and was cowardly placing responsibility for informing Molotov on Roosevelt's shoulders, or allowing him to commit resources independently to a second front in 1942.

Roosevelt however told Molotov that he did have hope for a second front in 1942 and that this would be more practical if the Soviets were to reduce their demands for supplies from 8 million tons to 2 million, thereby freeing up ships to transport men to Britain. Roosevelt told Molotov that 'the United States was striving and hoping to create a second front in 1942' and by reducing their demand for materials the chances would be improved[30]. However, Roosevelt followed this by saying that it was necessary to consult the British, as it was they who would have to bear the main burden- he had therefore skilfully placed the decision firmly back on Churchill's shoulders. Roosevelt was genuinely concerned about the Eastern situation. He wrote to Churchill after Molotov's visit saying 'Molotov has made it very clear his very real anxiety as to the next 4-5 months... I have a very strong feeling that the Russian position is precarious and may grow steadily worse during the coming weeks... the important thing is that we may be and probably are faced with real trouble on the Russian front and must make our plans to meet it'[31]. Churchill however, believed the Mediterranean strategy offered the highest chances for success.

Stalin, responding to what Roosevelt had told Molotov, did agree to reduce his demand for supplies, he was therefore sacrificing one of his objectives to try and secure another. However, this was not what the British had in mind, and at the final negotiations back in London, Churchill suggested a small raid at most, making this very clear to Molotov in an aide-memoir stating that the British government was not bound by any definite obligations on the second front. This, as well as Churchill's visit to Moscow in August 1942 where he repeated there would be no second front, led to a change in Stalin's tactics. Stalin dropped the conciliatory, quid pro quo approach that he had adopted when sacrificing supplies for a second front and now put pressure on the Allies by questioning their resolve and by allowing his anger and suspicions to rise to the surface. When Churchill in Moscow told Stalin that there could be no second front in 1942 Stalin reacted harshly, saying 'you can't win by not taking risks' and 'you mustn't be afraid of the Germans'[32]. Stalin's anger is easy to understand, at this point in the war the Allies had secured no major victories (Alamein was to come) whilst the Russians had pushed the German's back from Moscow and was holding up the Leningrad siege at great cost.

## The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

After this meeting, and until Overlord was agreed at Tehran, the tone of Soviet diplomacy became increasingly hostile. In December 1942, an OSS report noted a Soviet newspaper article boldly stating: 'If the Russians are left to win alone, they would ignore the Anglo-Saxons in establishing peace. A common effort in the war would assure a mutual understanding and sound collaboration for peace'. Articles such as this alarmed the West and therefore did exactly as the Soviet government intended. US Admiral Ernest E King warned the other joint chiefs of staff, 16 January 1943, that 'unless the West took some definitive move toward the defeat of Germany, Russia would dominate at the peace table'[33]. This rocky relationship continued into the first part of 1943, considerably so after the Casablanca Conference where Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to delay the cross-channel invasion for a second time in order to attack through Sicily.

In 1943 Stalin's worries about Western intentions regarding a second front reached a point whereby the West believed that Allied-Soviet relations were in crisis. On 11 June 1943, Stalin informed Roosevelt that 'your decision... may gravely affect the future course of the war'[34] and he pulled out of a planned one-on-one meeting with Roosevelt, to signify his displeasure. Stalin also resented the fact that decisions such as Italy's surrender 2 May 1943, had been taken without him. This followed the breaking off of relations between Moscow and the Polish Government in Exile in April 1943 in the aftermath of the discovery of Katyn by the Germans. To make matters worse, from March 1943 Churchill suspended convoys to Russia after some heavy losses. Stalin believed the convoys were a binding commitment to the Soviet Union, Churchill, of course, disputed this.

However, we must also bear in mind that it was during this period that Stalin was beginning to consider the necessity of continuation of the post-war alliance. Whilst Stalin's short-term and most immediate goal was aid and a second front, he realised that in the long-run, to achieve his security desires a continuation of the friendship with the Allies was in Russia's best interests. At this point therefore, there was a conflict between what Stalin wanted from the Allies in the short and the long-term. To reconcile these two aims Stalin agreed to a 'Big Three' summit on August 8 (before the conclusion of Kursk) saying that it was 'desirable at the first opportunity'[35], but only if there could be a meeting of 'responsible representatives' to prepare the ground beforehand. The reason for this is that it gave Stalin a greater chance of achieving his short-term goals so that he could focus on his security ambitions at the Big Three meeting when it came. The Soviet agenda therefore at the Moscow Foreign Ministers Meeting, 19 October 1943, had only one point on it: 'Measures to shorten the war'. Additionally to this, Stalin ordered a series of initiatives to offset any bad relations he may have caused with his intransigence on the second front. The most important move was to abolish the Comintern May 15 1943, calculated to generate favourable reaction and be a timely measure to facilitate relations between the Allies. Cordell Hull exclaimed that the 'elimination of the organisation from international life... is certain to promote a greater degree of trust'[36]. In 1943 Stalin also made considerable accommodation towards the Russian Church. This was primarily motivated by the domestic reason of using the Church to promote patriotism and morale. However, Stalin only gave permission for the church to elect a new Patriarch on 8 September, after the tide had turned at Kursk. There is no doubt that Stalin also considered the international reaction when making this decision: the British Aid to Russia Fund had on its board both Mrs Churchill and the Dean of Canterbury Hewlett Johnson, whilst Stalin would have appreciated that it would also have gone down well in America.

Stalin was making sure that he kept his allies onside as he still wanted a post war settlement that met his needs, whilst also warning them of the possible consequences of not opening a second front and reminding them of the vast sacrifices the Soviets had made in comparison to the Allies. At Tehran, Stalin stuck firm to his objectives, and again did not change them in response to Western policies. Indeed, Stalin's tactic at Tehran was to play hardball. After Russia's victories in 1943 Stalin felt confident enough to bullishly ask Churchill whether the British 'believed in Overlord, or are they simply talking about it to reassure the Russians?'[37]. Stalin's frustration led him to subtle blackmail to get commitment to Overlord: hinting that if Overlord was not conducted, he might be obliged to consider a separate peace. This was not lost on Churchill or Roosevelt. It resulted in the Allies agreeing to a date and a commander for Overlord.

Throughout the war what Stalin wanted most from the Western Powers was their commitment to a second front, economic aid and their agreement to the restoration of Russia's 1941 borders. These objectives did not change. However, his tactics for achieving them did. Stalin's agreement with Roosevelt in 1942 of fewer supplies for a second front shows that he was initially willing to compromise with the Allies. When this was not forthcoming he became

# The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

more and more assertive until Overlord was eventually launched in 1944. Regarding the crucial issue of borders, Stalin's realisation that this could be a stumbling block to long-term alliance led to the implementation of the National Front Strategy. However, as this clearly failed, Stalin turned to obstruction and force to get his own way over Eastern Europe and his buffer-zone. Stalin wanted continued co-operation, but on his own terms, and ultimately he chose the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe over continued alliance. He was not willing to compromise on governments that might be unfriendly to Russia, which meant that they had to be picked by Stalin himself. What Stalin wanted from the West remained the same, even if his methods for achieving them did not.

[1] Keith Sainsbury: *The Turning Point: Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill and Chiang Kai-Shek, 1943- The Moscow, Cairo and Tehran Conferences* (Oxford, 1985) Chapter VIII: 'The Tehran Summit: Stalin Decides Allied Strategy'.

[2] Raymond Birt, 'Personality and Foreign Policy: The Case of Stalin'. *Political Psychology*, Vol 14, (Dec. 1993). Pp 607-625. At Pp 621.

[3] Jonathan Haslem, 'Soviet War Aims', Chapter 2 in *The Rise and Fall of the Grand Alliance, 1941-45*, eds. Ann Lane and Howard Temperley: (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995). Pp 37.

[4] Ibid., Stalin to Milovan Djilas. From Djilas's Memoirs. Pp 37.

[5] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, *Correspondence between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of the USA and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945*, Volume II: 'Correspondence with Franklin D Roosevelt and Harry S Truman'. (1958). April 3 1945, No. 286. Pp 205-206.

[6] Jonathan Haslem, 'Soviet War Aims' in Lane and Temperley, (eds.): *The Rise and Fall of the Grand Alliance*. Pp 24.

[7] Geoffrey Roberts, 'Ideology, calculation and improvisation: spheres of influence and Soviet Foreign Policy 1939-1945', *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999). Pp 655-673.

[8] Jonathan Haslem, 'Soviet War Aims' in Lane and Temperley, (eds.): *The Rise and Fall of the Grand Alliance*. Pp 27.

[9] Lydia V. Pozdeeva: 'The Soviet Union: Territorial Diplomacy', Chapter 14 in *Allies at War: The Soviet, American and British experience, 1939- 1945*, David Reynolds, Warren F. Kimball and A.O. Chubarian (eds.), (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

[10] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, *Correspondence*, Volume II: 'Correspondence with Franklin D Roosevelt and Harry S Truman'. (1958). April 12 1942, No. 17. Pp 22.

[11] Michael Balfour, *The Adversaries: America, Russia and the Open World 1941-62*. Chapter 1: '1941-45'. (London, 1981).

[12] Derek Watson, 'The Making of the Grand Alliance and the Second Front 1939-1942'. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol 5 (Jan. 2002), Pp 51-85. At Pp78.

[13] In Simon Sebag Montifiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003), Chapter 36, 'Molotov in London, Mekhlis in the Crimea, Khrushchev in collapse' .

[14] Eduard Mark, 'Revolution by Degrees: Stalin's National Front Strategy for Europe, 1941-7', CWIHP Working Paper No. 31 (2001).

[15] Maisky Report. In Pozdeeva: 'The Soviet Union: Territorial Diplomacy'. *Allies at War*, Reynolds, Kimball and

# The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during World War Two

Written by Frederick Strachan

Chubarian (eds.).

[16] Roberts: 'Ideology, calculation and improvisation', Pp 655-673.

[17] In Mark, 'Revolution by Degrees'.

**[18]** Ibid.

[19]Georgi Dimitrov. In Roberts, 'Ideology, calculation and improvisation. Pp 655-673.

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

[21] Institute of General History, Russian Academy of Sciences, *The Comintern and the Second World War after June 22, 1941* (1998) discussed in Mark, 'Revolution by Degrees'.

[22] Ibid.

[23] David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Defeated Hitler*. (University Press of Kansas, 1998). Pp 214.

[24] In Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed*. Pp 215.

[25] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, 'Correspondence', Volume I: 'Correspondence with Winston S Churchill and Clement R Atlee'. August 22 1944, No. 323. Pp 255.

[26] Winston Churchill to Harry S Truman, 12 May 1945. In Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, (London, 1954) Vol. 6. Pp 498.

[27] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, 'Correspondence', Volume I: 'Correspondence with Winston S Churchill and Clement R Atlee'. July 18 1941, No. 3. Pp 13.

[28] Ibid. September 3 1941, No. 10. Pp 20.

[29] Dmitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), Chapter 44: 'Stalin and his Enemies'.

[30] Derek Watson, 'The Making of the Grand Alliance'. Pp 72.

[31] Warren F Kimball (ed.), *Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence*. Part 1: 'The Alliance Emerging: October 1933- November 1942'. May 31 1942, R-152. Pp 503-504.

[32] In Simon Sebag Montifiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, Chapter 36.

[33] Mark A Stoler, 'The "Second Front" and American Fear of Soviet Expansion, 1941-43', Pp 136-137 *Military Affairs*, Vol. 39, (Oct 1975). Pp 136-141.

[34] *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Correspondence*, Volume II: 'Correspondence with Franklin D Roosevelt and Harry S Truman'. June 11 1943, No 92. Pp 70.

[35] Ibid. August 8 1943, No. 101. Pp 78.

[36] Cordell Hull Press Conference, May 16 1943. In Pozdeeva: 'The Soviet Union: Territorial Diplomacy'. Chapter



## **The Evolution of Stalin's Foreign Policy during Word War Two**

Written by Frederick Strachan

14, Reynolds, Kimball and Chubarian (eds.) *Allies at War*.

[37] Sainsbury, *The Turning Point*, Chapter VIII.

—

*Written by: Frederick Strachan*

*Written at: University of Cambridge*

*Written for: Professor David Reynolds*

*Date written: May 2011*