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Barnet, Richard J. *Roots of War* (Kingsport, Tennessee: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1972), 341 pages.  
 Feis, Herbert. *From Trust to Terror* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), 412 pages.

After reading Herbert Feis's *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's 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." (Schlesinger, 519). That official intellectual framework, and not the fallibility or infallibility of the official judgement, was for Barnet the very root cause of the ignominious failure of US foreign policy in Vietnam. Barnet, who reveals himself to be somewhat of a left-leaning revisionist, attacks the conventional wisdom with a vengeance perhaps only surpassed by Pravda or Isvestia.

The theses of these two books are indeed antithetical, but taken together they serve to offer the student of the Cold War a balanced view which neither of these two taken alone would provide. With the goal of unearthing the roots of the Vietnam War, Barnet outlines defects within the

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USâ€™ bureaucratic national security system, its capitalistic economic system and its credulous and apathetic public. Barnet argues the US policy of permanent mobilization for war is based upon an ideological norm in domestic policy. That norm is what Barnet labels the "American business creed". A Calvinistic stress upon order and efficiency, hard work and progress combined with a Hobbesian reverence for the Leviathan-like central "national security bureaucracy" characterizes this creed. Barnet urges a basic change in this traditional American ideological norm. Feis confines his analysis to the twisting diplomatic moves and counter-moves which constituted foreign policy developments during the onset of the Cold War between the years 1945 and 1950. He argues implicitly throughout his account that the responsibility for and the concomitant guilt associated with the move of US-USSR relations from the trust of the Grand Alliance to mutual terror in a world plagued by nuclear proliferation is to be placed exclusively with the Soviet Union.

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 actually 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 particularly guilty of this. His commentary totally ignores the malicious Russian war machine, which like the US war machine must 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 was eventually to benefit immensely from the rebuilding of the European industrial machine. In criticizing the US business interests for their role in developing the Marshall Plan, Barnet ignores the fact that the US Government was largely motivated by the desire to take the governments of Europe "off the welfare rolls", so to speak. In developing the Marshall Plan, philanthropy on the part of the US Government was indeed balanced by a healthy dose of self-seeking financial concern on the part of US business concerns. Feis consistently ignores the role of the American business community in forming US foreign policy consensus. To see this clearly, one would certainly have to read Barnetâ€™s account.

This selective coverage given to events 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 sphere 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 carefully as does Feis. He refers numerous times to the US support of a repressive military regime in Brazil during the 1960â€™s but ignores the manner in which the Soviet Union moved rapidly into Eastern Europe during the late 1940â€™s and 1950â€™s. Although perhaps not intentional, this omission is glaring to the careful observer.

It should be noted, to Feisâ€™ further credit, that his article is more extensively permeated by a careful consideration of primary sources and their origins (such

as the Truman Doctrine and Kennan's Long Telegram). This produces a feeling of immediacy which Barnett's account lacks and evokes sympathy for the perception of US, British and French diplomats, even if their fears appear to be greatly exaggerated.

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 Feis's account there is, quite obviously, absolutely no mention of the affects of the interaction between the US Government and the US 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 Barnett's argument. As Barnett 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, Barnett assails the myth of "monolithic" Communism aimed at world domination. This myth, according to Barnett was created by the US Government by playing on the American people's Calvinistic fears of the Communist political system about which they knew little or nothing. Barnett 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, Barnett 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, Barnett 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 Barnett 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, Barnett's otherwise generalized and sweeping analysis is more careful than Feis's.

Sympathy with Feis or Barnett, like sympathy with the Cold War diplomats (US, British, French and Soviet) is greatly dependent upon the reader'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 Barnett'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 Barnett. This time he has surpassed himself." Kimball, in *America*, finds that, in *Roots of War*, "often facts which diminish his [Barnett'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 Barnett's work. These, however, consistently take Barnett 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 [Barnett'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 on *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 Barnett, 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 US and the USSR that together "we must turn over the tale to the philosophers, and to the since-born." (Feis, 412). He asks rhetorically, "will they resign themselves? Or will East and West rebel against the past and reform?" (Feis, 412). Barnett, 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. Barnett 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 this is to be accomplished he does not say, but perhaps that is the topic for another book. That neither Feis nor Barnett 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 to the American people requesting congressional aid for the CIA-backed Contras fighting the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua, one is reminded of President Truman's calling for aid for the embattled Greeks and Turks. Though the specifics are different, the scenario is quite similar. The message delivered to 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.

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From Trust To Terror T by Herbert Feis. Other editions.Â The book was about the Potsdam Conference and the origins of the Cold War. The Herbert Feis Prize is awarded annually by the American Historical Association, the pre-eminent professional society of historians, to recognize the recent work of public historians or independent scholars. ...more. Books by Herbert Feis. Moreâ€¦ Since the end of the cold war the unilateral exercise of American power under the second Bush administration in particular has been included in the "empire"™ debate.<sup>1</sup> The fact that some conservative American commentators are beginning to regard the idea of an American empire and the exercise of American power with a degree of satisfaction and pride has distracted attention from the ways in which the old European empires were dismantled after 1945 and the changes that were thus produced.Â As the Pacific War came to a dramatic conclusion in August 1945, British policy-makers faced the daunting challenges of achieving the restoration of order and stability in Southeast Asia. After reading Herbert Feis's™ 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.Â The theses of these two books are indeed antithetical, but taken together they serve to offer the student of the Cold War a balanced view which neither of these two taken alone would provide.