

in the area before the coming of the Japanese and the Russians (implicitly suggesting that here, too, China may have some claim to territory now held by the USSR). The following six chapters tell the story of Russo-Japanese rivalry since the seventeenth century, placing emphasis on the events of the last hundred years. A final chapter provides a picture of the contemporary political, social, and economic organization of life on Sakhalin under Soviet rule. This information is particularly valuable, because the island has been virtually closed to foreign visitors (including the author) ever since the Soviet conquest in World War II. Meaty footnotes, primarily of interest to the specialist, testify to the wide range of documentation. Excerpts from key diplomatic documents, a convenient glossary of Russian and Japanese place names, and a rich bibliography (mainly of Russian and Japanese sources) round out this valuable study. No doubt it will remain the standard work on the subject for many years.

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THE RIVALS: AMERICA AND RUSSIA SINCE WORLD WAR II. By  
*Adam B. Ulam*. New York: Viking Press, 1971. vii, 405 pp. \$10.95.

Adam Ulam has become a prolific and important writer on Soviet affairs. In this volume he elaborates an approach voiced earlier in his *Expansion and Coexistence*, with greater stress on the American side. It is a personal, "old-fashioned" narrative—always informed, often clever, sometimes elegant—somewhat condescending, barely tolerant of human foibles. It is much like a series of lectures to Harvard undergraduates (even some of the jokes are repeated). It will provoke both approval and annoyance, which is a good test of a fine book.

Professor Ulam's comments on Soviet policy are generally wise and insightful. Still, one wishes for a more systematic discussion of its underlying dynamics. He finds that "the sheer inertia of the past policies pushes the Soviet Union on the road to expansion [where?], though by now there is neither rhyme nor reason to this expansion" (p. 381). Soviet feelers and offers have often not been mere propaganda, though the United States has frequently failed to test Soviet intentions. The Soviet leaders considered the increase in their strategic capabilities (e.g., in the mid-1950s) as "justified by *defensive* considerations" (p. 214). He astutely remarks: "Can the Soviet system afford . . . free intercourse with the West, real collaboration in world affairs? This question is still being asked in the Kremlin today" (p. 98). But he fails to elaborate the differential impact of various American policies and postures on the several elements in the Soviet elite: "What is then prudent to hope for from the U.S.S.R. in the near future is that her rulers will become more aware of the risks of their policy of *pretending* to try to win the world for Communism, of aggravating international tension in various areas not because it promises to bring them solid benefits but because it causes discomfiture and trouble to the United States" (p. 391).

Ulam is best in laying bare the American misjudgment of Soviet intentions and capabilities. In a nice paradox he argues that possession of the atomic bomb "had in fact a debilitating effect on American foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia" (p. 77); he finds it "astounding" that the United States did not seek to "exploit politically" its monopoly of the atomic bomb (p. 82). America's "preoccupation with communism" led to an insensitivity to other interests, especially with regard to

its European allies, while “unconscious cultural domination” has tended to provoke resentment abroad.

Rather than question the underlying goals and perception of priorities, Ulam appears to deplore above all America’s failure to attain its aims, to see its policies through, to realize the extent of its power, and to use its potential influence and its ability to identify and take advantage of “potential weaknesses and vulnerabilities” in the Communist camp. But the reader cannot always be sure. He sharply condemns the “erosion of the rational approach to foreign policy which has plagued American society for decades” (p. 160), and he deplores the lack of American “political intelligence,” a “sense of proportion,” and “psychological endurance.” He castigates U.S. policy in Vietnam as a “monumental folly” which has exposed the “hollowness of the moralistic rhetoric in which American foreign policy has been clothed for more than a generation”—a policy which has helped both Russia and China but not the United States (pp. 343, 363, 366). Yet his slaps and swipes at recent policy dissenters are often unkind and unfair, and he tends to condemn Vietnam critics along with McCarthyites: “Ceaseless reprobation visited upon those necessary agencies [the diplomatic and military services] must impair democratic government as a whole” (p. 192).

Many readers will wish to question some of Ulam’s opinions and seeming contradictions. He insists that the United States has exaggerated its ability to shape the outside world, but has failed to use its overwhelming power to achieve its goals. At one point he argues: “Here were two countries whose *real* interests did not have to be antagonistic, but who were kept from a more meaningful *rapprochement* not so much by ideological differences as by a vast and seemingly unbridgeable gap in communications” (p. 244). Does this mean that Soviet-American tension has been due solely to misunderstanding? “For some time now,” Ulam says, “the United States and Russia have been struggling not so much against each other as against phantoms, their own fears of what each might become unless it scored points over the other or barred success to the other side” (p. 382). Perhaps the key to his view is the statement, “It is not the rivalry between the United States and Russia which offers the main threat to peace. It is the irrational premises and impulses that underlie the policies of both which threaten the world with incalculable dangers” (p. 382). But “the weaknesses of the West, unlike those of the Communist bloc, are psychological rather than organic” (p. 395); yet “what had kept the Berlin and Cuban crises of the past from erupting into wars had not been so much American policies as Soviet prudence” (p. 389).

Ulam is concerned primarily with power and politics. He recognizes but slights the strategic and economic factors, and he ignores ideology altogether. And he fails to explore alternative Soviet and American conceptions of the outside world—their roots and their implications. His recommendations are fairly modest: rather than seeking the millennium or doing penance for the past, American policy should undertake “the hard and often frustrating search for enlarging the area of accommodation with the Communist states” (p. 395).

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