

TO THE EDITOR:

With respect to the Comment published in the June 1976 issue of the *Slavic Review* under the title of "A Reply to George F. Kennan," I should like to submit the following observations.

First, there is the question of the interpretation of Mr. Kennan's views on preventive war and sending American troops to Greece. Textual exegesis might seem less to the point than the speaker's own views of what he was saying, even after the passage of some time. True, Mr. Kennan's remarks as quoted do justify the conclusion of Mr. Wright that he "entertained" the notion of preventive war (if only under desperate and, on his own showing, highly unlikely circumstances) and that he "toyed" with the idea of sending American troops to Greece. The entertainment was, admittedly, scarcely lavish, and one toys with many ideas without advocating them, indeed often as part of the process of attacking them. But to one reader, at least, re-reading the original article reinforces the conviction that the author is indeed a practicing revisionist.

Now, Ambassador Kennan needs no defense from me, or anyone else, and Mr. Wright's scholarly conscience is his own business. "A falcon towering in her pride of place/Was by a mousing owl hawked at"—but not killed. Not even scratched, on my reading.

One may perhaps be permitted to wonder, however, that Mr. Wright's parting shot occasions no astonishment; I would not wish it to remain unanswered.

"I find it difficult to believe that anyone at this 1947 meeting meant for a U.N. force to be anything but a cover for U.S. involvement (as later, in Korea)."

Mr. Wright's credence problems, like his conscience, are his own affair. However, historians (if an aging economist may be permitted to address them) would, I think, be well advised to make some attempt to ascertain the facts about the beliefs, as well as the words, of those whose deeds they treat. My colleagues in the Foreign Service during the period in question—say, 1950–65—did, really, believe that they were helping the United States to lead the Free World in its efforts, through the United Nations and otherwise, to remain free. We thought the danger was real, we thought it should be met, and we thought it should be met together. We did not seek gratuitously "involvement" (which evidently is now a dirty word) in the affairs of others; we did believe that we should not (again) try to resign from the human race, nor flinch at the burdens our membership in it, as we saw it, entailed.

It is of course perfectly legitimate for anyone to argue that we were mistaken; it is not, I think, either proved or self-evident that we were either intellectually or morally blind. Am I getting a bit fed up with having the assumption that we were thrown in my face!

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Professor Wright does not feel that a response is necessary.

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor C. Ben Wright has spent a great deal of time and effort in trying to scrutinize George Kennan's responsibility for the military aspects of the Cold War. It seems to me, however, that the result of his labors, "Mr. X and Containment" (*Slavic Review*, March 1976), suffers from two shortcomings. It is not quite fair to Kennan since it fails to highlight the changing military aspects of the American-Soviet alliance, which provided the background for Kennan's enunciations. Even more