

A Reluctant Call to Arms: The Origins and Development of the Truman Doctrine

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Chapter One Historiography and Methodology.....	1
Chapter Two From Allies to Adversaries: The Origins of the Cold War.....	22
Chapter Three A Failure to Communicate: Truman’s Public Statements and American Foreign Policy in 1946.....	59
Chapter Four Overstating His Case: Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine.....	86
Conclusion.....	120
Appendix.....	127
Bibliography.....	136

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Abstract

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For nearly seventy years, historians have scrutinized the origins of the Cold War and debated the Truman Doctrine's significance to this international conflict. These sometimes emotional deliberations produced three distinct narratives, which sought to justify, assail, or simply explain the thirty-third president's impact on US-Soviet relations between 1945 and 1947. Not surprisingly, all of these interpretations accept the premise that the chief executive's appeal for the Greek-Turkish aid package constituted a fundamental change in Washington's foreign policy towards Moscow. This thesis, however, posits that Truman never intended to establish an open-ended universal policy designed to govern America's international agenda for the Cold War's entire duration. On the contrary, an analysis of government documents, personal memoirs, oral histories, and contemporary periodicals reveal the commander-in-chief as an inexperienced world leader whose ambivalence towards the USSR created an initial reluctance on his part to publicly criticize the Kremlin's leadership. Evidence suggests that negative domestic factors in late 1946 prompted the chief executive to openly embrace a confrontational policy towards the Soviet Union. Determined to revitalize his beleaguered administration, Truman readily co-opted the Republican's anti-communist position when he decided to safeguard Athens' government from Greece's ongoing insurgency. Consequently, he countered Moscow's perceived aggression in the Balkans with an extreme rhetorical stance calculated to

gain immediate support from a hostile Congress and indifferent American public. Truman's zealous pursuit of this short term goal, however, inadvertently altered the public's long-term conception of US-Soviet relations. Though he never meant to establish a new doctrine, the president's speech ultimately resulted in a major paradigm shift in world affairs.

Chapter One

On March 12, 1947, the president of the United States addressed a special joint session of Congress to request \$400 million dollars in aid for Greece and Turkey. Standing at the podium before a hushed chamber of anxious lawmakers and dignitaries, Harry S. Truman carefully explained why these two reactionary governments in the Balkans and Near East deserved to receive immediate economic assistance from the American People. Communist subversion, he argued, threatened to undermine Athens and Ankara's sovereignty, which hindered the development of democracy in these nations. Furthermore, the chief executive warned that a Marxist victory in this region endangered the political stability of Europe and the Middle East. US national security, he observed, required Washington to adopt a more proactive strategy in the post-war world.¹ Consequently, the commander-in-chief announced the following tenets of the White House's foreign policy:

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political process.²

Stunned by the sweeping breath of the president's statement, legislators and citizens alike contemplated the implications of America's apparent new role in world affairs. Within two

¹ "New Policy Set Up: President Blunt in Plea to Combat 'Coercion as World Peril,'" *New York Times*, March 13, 1947, 1.

² "Text on President Truman's Speech on New Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, March 13, 1947, 2.

months, skeptical lawmakers begrudgingly gave the administration authorization to assist both Greece and Turkey.³

Since 1947, politicians, historians, and the public have reasonably viewed the Truman Doctrine Speech as an open-ended global commitment to contain the Soviet Union. Its precepts provided the rationale for America's military intervention in Korea, Vietnam, and numerous smaller conflicts throughout Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. However, a reevaluation of the primary sources associated with Washington's foreign policy between 1945 and 1947 suggest a different conclusion. Despite his speech having the obvious hallmarks of a major doctrine, Truman never intended to establish a universal policy designed to govern America's international agenda for the Cold War's entire duration.⁴ On the contrary, an analysis of the president's first two years in office portray him as an inexperienced world leader whose ambivalence towards the USSR created an initial reluctance on his part to publicly criticize the Kremlin's leadership. Only when domestic factors threatened to undermine his presidency in late 1946, did the chief executive openly embrace a confrontational policy towards the Soviet Union. Determined to revitalize his beleaguered administration, the commander-in-chief readily co-opted the Republicans' anti-communist position when he decided to safeguard Athens' government from Greece's ongoing insurgency. Consequently, he countered Moscow's perceived aggression in the Balkans with an extreme rhetorical stance calculated to gain immediate support from a hostile Congress intent on cutting the Federal Budget. In his zealous pursuit of this short term goal, Truman inadvertently altered the public's long-term conception of

³ "PASS GREEK-TURK AID BILL: House Shouts Down Foes of US Crusade Action, Called 'War against Russia's Bullets for Greece.'" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 10, 1; "Truman signs bill for Near East Aid," *New York Times*, May 23, 1947, 1.

⁴ Webster's Dictionary defines doctrine as "an official statement of a nation's policy, especial toward other nations." Victoria Neufeldt, ed., *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 402.

US-Soviet relations. Though he never meant to establish a new doctrine, the president's speech ultimately resulted in a major paradigm shift in world affairs.

Historiography

A surprisingly small number of book-length monographs exist regarding the background and drafting of the Truman Doctrine Speech. Most Cold War scholarship, therefore, incorporates this event within larger studies concerning the origins of America and Russia's post-war conflict. Divided into three main schools of thought, the historiography of this subject occasionally defies clear chronological divisions, which create interesting anomalies for researchers of this era. Some orthodox historians, for example, published their books during decades already dominated by revisionist works. Likewise, there are instances where post-revisionist literature appeared before important orthodox and revisionist text entered the academic discourse. Consequently, the thematic divisions in the following historiographical review are divided into categories, which reflect the occasional non-linear nature of this scholarship.

Orthodox

The Orthodox, or Traditionalist, historical interpretation of the Cold War's origins emerged immediately after Truman proclaimed his doctrine in 1947. Lacking access to classified primary sources and writing in an oppressive political climate that discouraged dissent, historians during the 1950s naturally produced works that reflected Washington's official positions vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Thomas A. Bailey's *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to our Day* is notable because it helped establish many of the themes found in subsequent texts from this era. Published in 1950, this book claimed that the American people entered the post-war period with unrealistic expectations concerning Moscow's future

intentions.⁵ Highlighting Russia's intransigence during World War II, the author asserted that the Kremlin's aggressive policies in Eastern Europe and Germany made it impossible for the White House to work with its former ally.⁶ Consequently, he praised Truman for replacing Roosevelt's "be-kind-to Russia policy" with a diplomatic initiative designed to contain Soviet expansionism.⁷ Perhaps not surprisingly, Bailey dismissed domestic opponents of this new strategy as "hidebound isolationist" and "timid souls" who wanted to appease the USSR.⁸ In his opinion, US citizens needed to support the president's new proposal because it ultimately extended and fulfilled the Monroe Doctrine's concept of national self-defense.⁹

In 1955, Foster Rhea Dulles' book, *America's Rise to World Power, 1898-1954*, acknowledged the possibility that Washington's post-war economic and military strength might have enhanced Russia's suspicion of its capitalist rival.¹⁰ This observation notwithstanding, the author agreed with Baily's contention that the Soviet Union violated its wartime agreements because it wanted to create an ever-expanding empire around its periphery. Worried about the American public's apathy towards foreign policy, Dulles applauded the Truman Doctrine Speech because it articulated a "broad and challenging conception of America's new world role...which

⁵ Bailey deplored the American peoples' general ignorance concerning Russia's history and its people. In his opinion, Roosevelt's "policy of appeasement" and pro-Moscow war-time propaganda capitalized on this lack of knowledge, which unfortunately created a naive outlook amongst the US populace. Thomas Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to our Day* (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1950), 291-5.

⁶ The author insisted that the Soviets failed to cooperate with the US and Britain throughout World War II. At most, he concluded, one could view the White House and the Kremlin as "quasi allies" who never fully trusted each other. *Ibid.*, 308.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 295, 333-5.

⁸ Bailey argued that the US, as the "historic champion of liberal movements," needed to assume its responsibility for the Free World's defense. *Ibid.*, 336.

⁹ According to the author, the US adopted the Monroe Doctrine in response to Russia's aggressive actions in the Western Hemisphere. While he acknowledged the older strategy's apparent contradiction with the Truman Doctrine, the author believed these policies enunciated principles that complimented each other. America's "defense line" he asserted, "moved from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of Corinth." *Ibid.*, 336-7.

¹⁰ Foster Rhea Dulles, *America's Rise to World Power, 1898-1954* (New York: Harper, 1955), 227.

necessarily involved intervention and entanglement on a heretofore unimagined scale.”¹¹ The president’ dramatic statement, he claimed, ended isolationist tendencies that traditionally hindered Washington’s ability to combat emerging threats.¹² The author happily concluded that US citizens now accepted the idea that “a threat to freedom anywhere was... a threat to their own freedom.”¹³ Reiteration of these assertions appeared in John W. Spanier’s text, *American Foreign Policy since World War II*. Published in 1962, his book maintained that “the United States had no choice but to act” in Greece because the USSR intended to dominate the Turkish Straits and the Middle East.¹⁴ The author argued that the psychological impact of losing this region threatened to undermine Western Europe’s political stability, which could force the White House to adopt a perpetual “garrison state” mentality.¹⁵ Such a development, he contended, created “a condition incompatible with the American way of life” because it sacrificed liberty for increased national security.¹⁶ Spanier, therefore, commended the Truman Doctrine because “what was a stake in Greece was America’s survival itself.”¹⁷

As the 1960s progressed, Washington’s military involvement in South East Asia prompted orthodox Cold War historians to defend America’s containment policy from an increasing number of revisionist critiques. In 1967, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that Truman’s post-war strategy represented a “brave and essential response of free men to Communist aggression.”¹⁸ In his opinion, Stalin’s paranoia and the Kremlin’s commitment to

¹¹ Like Bailey, Dulles worried about the American peoples’ impatient approach towards foreign policy matters. *Ibid.*, 231.

¹² *Ibid.*, 231-2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹⁴ John W. Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II* (New York: Prager, 1962), 39.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Orthodox historian such as Spanier generally accepted and restated Washington’s official cold war policy. This uncritical attitude inspired revisionist scholars to question the basic assumptions underlying the Truman Doctrine. *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “Origins of the Cold War,” *Foreign Affairs*, 46, no. 1 (October, 1967): 23.

Marxist ideology made conflict between the superpowers unavoidable.¹⁹ The president, he concluded, could never have adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Moscow because the Soviet Union did not act like a traditional nation state.²⁰ Consequently, the chief executive's academic critics premised their numerous arguments on false assumptions.

In 1970, Herbert Feis devoted an entire book, *From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* to correcting what he viewed as misconceptions about the conflict's origins.²¹ According to the author, Moscow's aggressive post-war decisions made it necessary for Washington to "take a public stand against Soviet intrusion into the lives of other nations."²² The White House's policy, he argued, conformed to the Monroe Doctrine's 124 year old precepts concerning national security.²³ Interestingly, Feis admitted that the Truman Doctrine contained vague statements, which invited a wide range of interpretations. For example, terms such as "free peoples" and "support," possessed a variety of meanings to different groups in American society.²⁴ Remarkably, he also acknowledged his uncertainty about the Doctrine's true scope. Lacking access to still classified White House records, the author relied on his interviews with Clark Clifford, who admitted that a Cabinet-level discussion concerning this topic occurred in the days prior to the president's landmark speech. Unfortunately, Truman's special counsel claimed that he did not remember how the chief executive answered this question.²⁵ Despite

¹⁹ Ibid., 49-50.

²⁰ Ibid., 46-9.

²¹ Feis acknowledged that "All historical tales are tinted by the light of the times in which they are written." In his opinion, historians needed "calmer, clearer days and... a more tranquil environment" to write an accurate account of the Cold War's origins. Herbert Feis, *From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (New York: Norton, 1970), x.

²² Ibid., 192.

²³ The author argued that in 1823, Monroe briefly considered Madison's suggestion to apply his doctrine on a global scale. Ultimately, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams persuaded the president to limit its scope to the Western Hemisphere. Ibid., 195.

²⁴ Ibid., 200.

²⁵ Ibid., 192.

these ambiguities, Feis defended the chief executive's actions because he spoke "as flatly and openly as...Moscow had spoken out against Capitalist democracies."²⁶

The end of the Vietnam War coincided with the arrival of the Post-Revisionist School; a new generation of historians who sought to analyze US-Russian relations without assigning blame to either nation. Ironically, one of its leading scholars, John Lewis Gaddis, published a neo-orthodox book in 1997, entitled, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. Utilizing newly declassified Soviet archive material, the author concluded that responsibility for the Super Powers' tensions lay primarily with Stalin, whose "authoritarian, paranoid, and narcissistic predisposition" made the conflict inevitable.²⁷ The Communist leader, he added, remained dangerous because of his adherence to the principles of Marxist-Leninism, which required the USSR to undermine the capitalist world's political stability.²⁸ Gaddis argued that Moscow's open-ended geopolitical threats forced Truman to preserve the West's balance of power with the Kremlin. The president's 1947 doctrine, therefore, manifested Washington's endeavor to safeguard London's economic trade routes and, by extension, America's economic and political strength.²⁹

The most recent neo-orthodox book, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism*, paralleled America's post-war foreign policy with George W. Bush's decisions concerning the War on Terror. Written in 2006 by Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, the text declared that these two chief executives relied on deeply

²⁶ Ibid., 198.

²⁷ While Gaddis admits the Cold War could have started without Stalin, he insisted that the Soviet leader's personality made the conflict inevitable. "The more we learn," the author observed, "the less sense it makes to distinguish Stalin's foreign policies from his domestic practices or even his personal behavior." John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 25, 293.

²⁸ Marxist-Leninist wanted to eliminate the capitalist world's imperial holdings in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Once achieved, they believed that a world-wide communist revolution could occur in the advanced industrialized nations. Ibid., 29-31, 290.

²⁹ Ibid., 50.

held moralistic arguments to combat “tyranny’s ideological assault on human freedom.”³⁰ In Truman’s case, the author argued that the president spent his first two years in office “educating and marshalling public opinion” in support of a comprehensive anti-communist policy.³¹ In her opinion, the commander-in-chief’s decision to sponsor Churchill’s “Iron Curtain Speech,” fire Henry Wallace, commission the Clifford-Elsey Report, and counter Soviet moves in the Near East constituted a coherent strategy against the Kremlin’s hostile designs. Furthermore, Spalding observed that the Truman Doctrine represented a conscious attempt by the White House to establish a new era in international affairs. The promotion of freedom, she concluded, remained the “centerpiece” of the president’s plan.³²

Revisionist

Perhaps not surprisingly, numerous historians eventually questioned the pro-American/anti-Soviet assumptions propagated by their orthodox colleagues. In 1959, William Appleman Williams published *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* to refute the commonly held belief that the USSR bore primary responsibility for starting the Cold War. In his opinion, Washington’s relentless pursuit of new markets and resources in Eastern Europe undermined Russia’s ability to safeguard its national security.³³ Furthermore, the author maintained that Truman “seemed...to react, think, and act as an almost classic personification of the entire Open Door Policy.”³⁴ As a result, the president adopted an aggressive foreign policy against Stalin, whom Williams argued only wanted to obtain an “economic and political understanding with

³⁰ Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism* (Lexington: University press of Kentucky, 2006), 4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 225.

³² *Ibid.*, 71.

³³ The author argued that the Truman Administration viewed Eastern Europe as an essential market for America’s economy. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: The World Publishing CO., 1959) 172-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

America” concerning Europe and the Near East.³⁵ Consequently, the author viewed the Truman Doctrine as an “ideological manifesto of American strategy,” and thus served as a blueprint for establishing economic hegemony across the globe.³⁶

The notion of blaming America for the breakdown of US-Soviet relations resonated with numerous historians during the 1960s. D.F. Fleming, for example, explored this theme in his book, *The Cold War and its Origins, 1917-1950*. Published in 1961, the text accused Truman of being “belligerent-minded” with the Russians, which ultimately destroyed Roosevelt’s carefully constructed wartime alliance.³⁷ According to the author, the president’s fervent anti-communist attitude unnecessarily strained his relations with Stalin, who sought only to secure the USSR’s legitimate interest in Eastern Europe and the Near East.³⁸ Furthermore, Fleming argued that the chief executive intended to announce a new doctrine against the Kremlin as early as September, 1945 but “on several occasions...some of his important advisors talked him out of it.”³⁹ However, when the situation in Greece “suited...his long held purpose,” the commander-in-chief used the opportunity to “proclaim from one of the world’s greatest rostrums the most gigantic encirclement ever conceived in the mind of man.”⁴⁰ In essence, Truman’s personality instigated the Cold War.

³⁵ Ibid., 155.

³⁶ Ibid., 175.

³⁷ D.F. Fleming, *The Cold War and its Origins, 1917-1950* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 268.

³⁸ The author defended Moscow’s post-war foreign policy during 1945-46. The Soviets, he argued, desired friendly governments in Eastern Europe to secure their western border. With respects to Iran, the Kremlin wanted to safeguard its southern oilfields in the Caucasus, while at the same time obtaining economic concessions comparable to those enjoyed by London. Finally, Russia’s proposal to share control of the Dardanelles with Turkey represented a legitimate national interest in protecting a strategic trade route. In Fleming’s opinion, the American and British government’s anti-communist beliefs motivated the western allies to undermine the USSR’s ability to recover from World War II. Ibid., 340-8, 418-9.

³⁹ Fleming based his assertion that Truman wanted to proclaim his Doctrine in 1945 on a *New York Times* article by Arthur Krock. Ibid., 441-2.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 447.

Fleming's work heavily influenced David Horowitz's 1965 book, *The Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War*. Intent on examining the "fictional basis of Western cold war mythology," the author hoped to reveal America's true role in starting the Superpower conflict.⁴¹ Like his Revisionist predecessors, Horowitz believed the Soviet Union's post-war policy focused primarily on economic reconstruction and national security. To that end, he highlighted the Kremlin's reparation program in Germany, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria to prove that Moscow never intended to impose communist governments in these nations.⁴² Likewise, he cited Stalin's decision to reign in Marxist movements in France and Italy as additional proof of the USSR's desire to peacefully co-exist with its neighbors. In the author's opinion, responsibility for the cold war lay with Truman, whose reversal of FDR's policies caused the US to "launch an ideological crusade" against the Kremlin.⁴³ Consequently, the president's rejection of Russia's "self-containment policy" doomed East-West relations, which forced the Soviet's to adopt a more defensive posture in Eastern Europe.⁴⁴

In 1967, Walter LaFeber offered a more moderate and impartial interpretation of this topic in his book, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1966*. Utilizing William's Marxist analysis, the author argued that the US government believed it needed to expand its access to foreign markets around the world in order to avoid another crippling economic depression.⁴⁵ As such, Truman attempted to use Washington's atomic bomb monopoly and economic influence to convince Moscow to open Eastern Europe to American trade.⁴⁶ According to LaFeber, Stalin's

⁴¹ The author believed that a better understanding of the Cold War's origins could help the US and Russia normalize relations. David Horowitz, *The Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 15.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 91-2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴⁵ Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War* (New York: Wiley, 1967), 6-10.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

desire to establish a security zone along the Soviet Union's western border, in addition to the dictator's personal paranoia, prevented the Kremlin from accommodating the White House.⁴⁷

The author concluded that the president and his advisors mistook the USSR's political intransigence in Europe and the Near East as being ideological in nature, which subsequently led them to adopt the Truman Doctrine's open-ended containment policy.⁴⁸

In 1970, Lloyd C. Gardner published, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941-1949* to challenge certain assumptions held by his fellow Revisionist historians. Unlike many New Left scholars, the author did not blame the US for starting the Cold War.⁴⁹ In his opinion, this overly simplified a complex situation where "neither side could fully control events or even freely respond to them in many instances."⁵⁰ Likewise, Gardner disagreed with Fleming and Horowitz's contention that Truman reversed Roosevelt's policy towards the Soviet Union. The inexperienced and untested president, he insisted, tried in good faith to carry out many of the diplomatic initiatives his predecessor postponed for the sake of preserving wartime unity.⁵¹ Despite these differences, the author put forth a modified version of Williams' "Open Door Thesis," which stated that Washington's post-war policy linked domestic freedom and prosperity to the establishment of free trade within a new liberal world order.⁵² The White House, therefore, opposed all blocs and spheres of influence, regardless of which nation controlled them. Consequently, whenever the USSR tried to advance its national interest in

⁴⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 23-5.

⁴⁹ The author did declare that "responsibility for the way in which the Cold War developed...belongs more to the United States. Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941-1945* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 317.

⁵⁰ Ibid., xi.

⁵¹ Ibid., 55-7.

⁵² The author disagreed with Williams' belief that Eastern Europe's economic orientation caused the Cold War. For Gardner, the Superpowers conflict occurred, in part, because the US wanted markets in every region of the world. Ibid., xi, 319.

Europe and the Near East, the US automatically construed these developments as an ideologically motivated move by the Kremlin to spread Communism.⁵³ Within this context, Britain's withdrawal from Greece necessitated the implementation of the Truman Doctrine in order to safeguard America's ability to transport goods and raw materials in the Mediterranean Sea.⁵⁴ Gardner concluded that the US, in effect, embraced containment as a policy because it reflected a "blend of puritan dogma and Yankee pragmatism."⁵⁵

In 1972, Richard M. Freeland wrote *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism: Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics, and Internal Security, 1946-1948* to explore how political considerations in the US influenced Washington's implementation of its Containment policy against the Soviet Union. The author reaffirmed Gardner's assertion that Truman's decisions in 1945 remained consistent with Roosevelt's policy during World War II.⁵⁶ Like his predecessor, the new president downplayed the White House's ongoing tensions with the Kremlin in the hopes that America's military and economic superiority might persuade Russia to cooperate in the post-war era. When this strategy failed, the chief executive decided in early 1946 that he needed to eventually adopt a more aggressive posture towards the USSR.⁵⁷ According to Freeland, the administration chose to exploit the Greek crises in 1947 because it highlighted Britain's need for indirect US assistance for its own fragile economy.⁵⁸ Furthermore,

⁵³ Ibid., xi.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 221.

⁵⁵ According to the author, the US assumed a pious attitude when it "declared to the world that it would decide when changes in the status quo violated the U.N. Charter." Ibid., 225, 222.

⁵⁶The author declared that FDR secretly distrusted the USSR during World War II. In Freeland's opinion, the president publicly portrayed Stalin as trustworthy because the White House needed Congress to pass legislation pertaining to post-war organizations such as the UN. Richard M. Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism: Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics, and Internal Security, 1946-1948* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 41.

⁵⁷ Freeland asserted that Truman's efforts to minimize US-Soviet tensions gave the American people unrealistic expectations about Moscow's post-war behavior. Ibid., 43-5, 68.

⁵⁸ The White House feared that America's economy could suffer if British trade declined. Securing the Mediterranean, therefore, became a top strategic priority for the US. Ibid., 70-5.

America's recent mid-term election allowed Truman to assume a more vocal anti-communist stance without fearing repercussions from his party's left-wing base.⁵⁹ The commander-in-chief's subsequent speech, the author contended, employed harsh rhetoric that exaggerated the Soviet threat in order to persuade a reluctant Congress and nation to support the proposed aid program.⁶⁰ Moreover, nine days after he proclaimed his doctrine, the president signed executive order 9835 creating the Federal Employee Loyalty Program. This event, Freeland argued, further illustrated how the administration created and used fear at home to increase political support for its new aggressive foreign policy.⁶¹ The author concluded that this strategy inadvertently created the conditions necessary for the rise of McCarthyism, which led to the curtailment of civil liberties in America during the 1950s.⁶²

In 1974, David L. Heinlein published *The Truman Doctrine: A Chief Executive in Search of the Presidency*, to illustrate how the president's political fortunes influenced the development of America's Cold War policy. Undoubtedly influenced by the ongoing Watergate Scandal, the author asserted that Truman turned to foreign affairs in 1947 to establish a "public acceptance" of his leadership.⁶³ With the Democratic Party's mid-term loss and his domestic program frustrated by an obstructionist Republican-controlled Congress, the chief executive seized upon the Greek crisis as an opportunity to make himself relevant in Washington again.⁶⁴ According to Heinlein, Truman's successful "quest for legitimacy" established an unfortunate precedent for

⁵⁹ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 87-8.

⁶¹ Ibid., 123-8.

⁶² Ibid., 334-60.

⁶³ David L. Heinlein, *The Truman Doctrine: A Chief Executive in Search of the Presidency* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1974), 304.

⁶⁴ Despite the emphasis of his dissertation, the author did acknowledge that Truman sincerely worried about Soviet expansion in Europe and the Near East. Ibid., 147-9, 278, 302-3.

subsequent presidents, who readily intervened around the world for the sake of their own political stature.⁶⁵

Post-Revisionist

During the 1970s, an intellectual trend emerged that challenged many of the conclusions embraced by New Left historians from the Vietnam War era. John L. Gaddis led this movement with his book, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*. Published in 1972, the author rejected the Marxist claim that “economic determinism” motivated Washington’s post-war policy towards Moscow.⁶⁶ In his opinion, various factors such as domestic politics, bureaucratic agendas, entrenched ideologies, personal traits, and honest miscalculations influenced how both Superpowers viewed each other’s actions.⁶⁷ Applying this analytical framework to the Truman administration, he determined that disparate elements such as Secretary of State Byrnes’ independent style, Kennan’s Long Telegram, Clifford’s classified intelligence report, Henry Wallace’s Madison Square Garden Speech, and the 1946 mid-term election all helped shape the development of America’s foreign policy.⁶⁸

Gaddis’ multifaceted assessment concluded that the majority of Washington’s foreign policy establishment sincerely misconstrued Russia’s actions in Eastern Europe and the Near East as aggressive moves designed to threaten the United States’ geopolitical position in the world.⁶⁹ According to the author, when “American omnipotence turned out to be an illusion” in early 1946, the White House, State Department, and Pentagon realized they needed to actively

⁶⁵ The author concluded that President Lyndon “was fatally tempted by the mirage of a larger reputation to attempt a decisive victory in Vietnam.” Ibid., 301, 304-5.

⁶⁶ John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 357-8.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 281, 358-61.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 283-90, 302-4, 321-2, 338-41, 344.

⁶⁹ The author also declared that Stalin should have been clearer about his limited objectives in Eastern Europe. Ibid., 355.

counter the Kremlin's expansionist policies in nations deemed strategically important to the US.⁷⁰ The occurrence of the Greek crises in 1947, therefore, caused the president to exaggerate the nature of the Soviet threat around the entire world in order to mobilize the nation's reluctant citizenry for this specific endeavor.⁷¹

Gaddis further solidified his reputation as a prominent Cold War historian when he published an intriguing article in 1974, entitled "Was the Truman Doctrine a Real turning Point?" As his title suggests, the author argued that the president's 1947 speech did not signal a true departure for America's post-war foreign policy. In his opinion, the US opposed totalitarianism in principle since 1940.⁷² Furthermore, the White House already implemented its containment policy against the Soviets in 1946 when Washington actively opposed Moscow's designs on Iran and Turkey.⁷³ The Truman Doctrine seemed special at the time, Gaddis argued, because the chief executive used "sweeping language" to pressure Congress into supporting a large appropriations request for Athens and Ankara.⁷⁴ The speech's melodramatic rhetoric notwithstanding, the author insisted that the administration only wanted to have a limited doctrine to contain the Soviet Union in Europe and the Middle East, not communism and

⁷⁰ In this regard, Gaddis concurred with Gardner's revisionist assessment concerning some of the misconceptions embraced by the Truman Administration. Furthermore, the authors agreed that both the US and the Soviets shared responsibility for starting the Cold War. *Ibid.*, 356, 360.

⁷¹ According to the author, the Truman Doctrine "constituted a form of shock therapy: it was a last-ditch effort by the Administration to prod Congress and the American people into accepting the responsibilities of... world leadership. *Ibid.*, 351, 356.

⁷² "Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point," *Foreign Affairs*, vol.52 no 2 (Jan., 1974)386-402., 387.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 386.

totalitarianism everywhere.⁷⁵ He concluded that universal containment did not become part of the president's foreign policy until the Korean War.⁷⁶

In 1980, Bruce R. Kuniholm applied Gaddis' post-revisionist ideas in his book, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece*. Downplaying the role of ideology, the author maintained that US-Russian tensions in the Middle East grew out of Britain's traditional conflict with Russia concerning warm-water ports, lines of communication, and oil concessions in the region's Northern Tier⁷⁷ In addition, bureaucratic factors highlighted the area's importance to the White House. According to Kuniholm, anti-Soviet officials such as Lincoln MacVeah and Loy Henderson began expressing their concerns about the region's future alignment as early as 1944.⁷⁸ The latter's leadership of the State Department's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (NEA), in addition to his close friendship with undersecretary of state Dean Acheson, helped influence Washington's perception of Moscow's post-war actions towards Iran, Turkey, and Greece.⁷⁹ In the author's opinion, the Kremlin's aggressive attempts to pressure Tehran and Ankara in 1946 justified the White House's response, which he characterized as cautious and responsible.⁸⁰ While he claimed that containment in the Near East "was a realistic and pragmatic policy," the author questioned the Truman Doctrine speech's "imagery and rhetoric which encouraged a misleadingly simplistic

⁷⁵ Gaddis cited America's aid to Tito's Yugoslavia after the latter's 1948 break with the USSR as proof that Truman never intended to contain communism. *Ibid.*, 392.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 386.

⁷⁷ The author defined the "Northern Tier" as the region of the Near East that borders the Soviet Union. Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), xv, xviii, 3.

⁷⁸ Kuniholm declared that Lincoln MacVeagh openly worried about London's ability to safeguard its interest in the Near East after the war. Specifically, he expressed his concerns about Greece's political future to Roosevelt throughout 1944 and 1945. *Ibid.*, 96-100, 240.

⁷⁹ According to Kuniholm, Acheson initially appeared disinterested in the Near East. Henderson, however, quickly mentored him about the region's significance to the US. *Ibid.*, 240-1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 378.

view or model of the world.”⁸¹ This erroneous conception, he concluded, helped create the mindset that made the Korean and Vietnam Wars possible.⁸²

In 1994, Melvyn P. Leffler wrote *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1953* to analyze how policy makers in Washington and Moscow relied on ideology to promote their respective national interest after World War II. Utilizing newly opened Soviet archives, the author argued that Stalin never implemented a coherent foreign policy between 1945 and 1947.⁸³ Despite his tyrannical rule, the ill dictator “was often silent” about Russia’s post-war strategy, which allowed “cunning men and competing bureaucracies” in the Kremlin to “design policies and promote their own interest.”⁸⁴ The result, Leffler observed, caused Moscow to highlight “ideological purification” within the USSR while it pursued contradictory goals in Eastern Europe.⁸⁵ Consequently, the Truman administration misunderstood the Soviet’s intentions when it developed its own policy to advance Washington’s national interest. Though the White House “cared little about human rights and personal freedom” in other nations, American policy makers worried that Stalin intended to use communism to disrupt the “configuration of power in the international system.”⁸⁶ This gave rise, the author concluded, to Truman’s anti-Marxist offensive with the Doctrine speech as its centerpiece.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Interestingly, the author conceded that Truman needed a dramatic speech in 1947 because the president’s earlier efforts to educate the American people failed to elicit support. *Ibid.*, xv, 415, 418.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 419-20.

⁸³ Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1953* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 40.

⁸⁴ Shortly after World War II ended, the exhausted Soviet leader took an extensive vacation, which caused him to neglect his daily duties. *Ibid.*, 40-1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 52-61.

Gaddis and Kuniholm's post-revisionist themes heavily influenced Denise M. Bostdorff's work, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms*. Published in 2008, the text is unique because it is the only book-length evaluation of the president's historical speech.⁸⁸ Like Gaddis, the author agreed that the address signified one of many turning points that occurred between 1945 and 1947.⁸⁹ According to her analysis, speeches by Stalin, Churchill, Byrnes, and Wallace contributed to the world's perception and understanding of the growing US-Soviet rift after World War II.⁹⁰ Truman, however, inadvertently created uncertainty with the American people because he often made conflicting statements or simply remained silent with respects to foreign policy questions.⁹¹ When the Greek crisis occurred, the author observed, the chief executive used it as an opportunity to declare a comprehensive post-war strategy against the Kremlin. Bostdorff's subsequent treatment of the administration's intricate speech drafting process revealed how internal debates, bureaucratic competition, and public relations campaigns shaped one of the pivotal presidential statements of the Cold War.⁹²

Methodology

The following chapters examine the origins and development of America's post-war foreign policy between 1945 and 1947. Utilizing government documents, personal memoirs, oral histories, and contemporary periodicals, this analysis will illustrate how Truman's inexperience and personality traits complicated an already challenging international situation after World War II. His inconsistent decisions and public aloofness concerning Washington's relations with

⁸⁸ Denise M. Bostdorff, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), ix.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18-20, 25-7, 30-6.

⁹¹ Truman initially endorsed both Churchill and Wallace's speeches, only to publicly distance himself from their statements when they became too controversial. *Ibid.*, 26, 32-4.

⁹² The author evaluated the interdepartmental deliberations and debates concerning the scope and language of the president's speech. *Ibid.*, 65-7, 73-6.

Moscow in 1946 inadvertently created confusion with the American people. Consequently, when the Greek crises occurred in 1947, the president consciously overstated his case in order to garner support from a reluctant and generally uniformed citizenry. Unfortunately, the chief executive's powerful message created the impression that the White House intended to embark on an open-ended world-wide crusade against communism. Though he never meant to establish a new doctrine, the president's speech ultimately resulted in a major paradigm shift in world affairs.

Chapter two explores Truman's inheritance of Roosevelt's vague contradictory foreign policy agenda at the end of World War II. Though he tried to use American political power to great effect, the new president failed to persuade the Soviet Union to accept Washington's vision of a liberal international world order. Despite this development, the chief executive downplayed US tensions with the Kremlin in an effort to maintain good relations with his wartime ally. Moreover, this section illustrates how the commander-in-chief, though inexperienced, remained pragmatic and flexible towards Moscow, especially when compared with some of his hardline advisors in the cabinet and State Department.

Chapter three analyzes the Iranian and Turkish Crises of 1946 and how it affected the Truman administration's understanding of Stalin's intentions in the Near East. While he adopted a tough diplomatic stance against the Russians during these confrontations, the president remained aloof about them in public. Furthermore, his failure to communicate the White House's ongoing concerns regarding the USSR caused serious problems when he endorsed Wallace's Madison Square Garden Speech in September, 1946. The resulting public outcry created confusion about the president's foreign policy, which forced him to embrace Byrne's increasingly hardline position. The section concludes with an evaluation of the mid-term

election's impact on Truman's domestic political standing and how it influenced his willingness to pursue a stronger strategy against the Kremlin.

Chapter four examines the background of the Greek insurgency and why the White House believed it needed to safeguard Athens' reactionary regime. An evaluation of the State Department's records reveals that Dean Acheson and a small clique of advisors exercised considerable influence with both the president and the secretary of state concerning this matter. This group, in addition to the White House Special Counsel's office, adopted many of the themes and concepts found in the Truman Doctrine when they drafted the president's address in March, 1947. This section also analyzes Acheson's testimony before Congress and how he tried to limit the scope of the proposed Containment Policy.

The Conclusion summarizes the previous chapters' observations in an effort to create a new understanding of the president's Cold War foreign policy. Initially ambivalent about Stalin's post-war intentions, the chief executive eventually adopted an *ad hoc* policy to deter the Kremlin from expanding into strategically important nations such as Iran and Turkey. When the Greek crises developed in early 1947, the commander-in-chief consciously embellished the nature of the threat to obtain sufficient support from Congress and a largely indifferent public. Though the administration's subsequent decisions and statements tried to restrict the application of the principles enunciated in the Truman Doctrine speech, the White House ultimately allowed the American people to believe in the address's overly simplistic world view.

Despite their disagreements about Truman's possible motives for engaging the Soviets in the Cold War, all historians agree that the commander-in-chief intended to proclaim a major doctrine in March, 1947. Even scholars who claim that the administration purposefully

exaggerated the nature of the communist threat accept the premise that the chief executive intended to adopt a new world-wide strategy against Marxist groups and nations. This study challenges these assumptions and will show that the president viewed his speech as a pragmatic way to elicit support for an aid package ultimately designed to safeguard resources and lines of communication in the Near East.

Chapter Two

From Allies to Adversaries: The Origins of the Cold War

Unlike most international conflicts, the Cold War lacks an easily discernable starting point. Its origins, however, arguably began during the latter stages of World War II when latent national rivalries amongst the Allies threatened to undermine their certain victory over Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo.¹ After the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, the American, British, and Russian governments repeatedly failed to resolve their outstanding political differences regarding the future status of Eastern Europe and Germany. This ongoing diplomatic impasse unfortunately prevented the victors from converting their hard won military triumph into a secure postwar peace. Ultimately, long term national interest and mutual mistrust created a crises atmosphere which inexorably dominated the perceptions and judgments of the onetime allied leaders.

Adolf Hitler's aggression between 1939 and 1941 created one of the most unlikely wartime coalitions in history. Allied against a common existential threat, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union temporarily put aside their ideological differences and worked together to defeat the Nazi regime.² Under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership, America sent large amounts of Lend Lease supplies to the USSR, whose beleaguered troops fought against the bulk of the German army. In addition to this ongoing effort, the US and British high commands coordinated numerous military campaigns to reduce Berlin's threat to the

¹ Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 52-3.

² Between June and December, 1941, Hitler initiated Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union and declared war against United States. Together with Great Britain, which had been fighting Germany since 1939, this "Strange Alliance" of Imperialist, Capitalist, and Communist nations successfully coordinated their resources and strategic efforts against the Nazis. *Ibid.*, 15.

Atlantic Ocean's sea lanes, the Middle East, and the Russian Front. During 1942 and 1943, Allied industrial production and military assets exceeded the Third Reich's resources, which enabled them to defeat and counterattack Hitler's forces on numerous battle fronts in the European Theater of Operations.³ By mid-1944, the Red Army had successfully expelled the *Wehrmacht's* outnumbered divisions from western Russia and begun its relentless advance across Eastern Europe. As Moscow's troops "liberated" Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic states, Allied policy makers in London and Washington DC grew increasingly concerned about the political future of these nations.⁴

As a lifelong foe of communism, Prime Minister Winston Churchill repeatedly tried to thwart Russia's expansion into Eastern Europe. For example, the British leader attempted to persuade Roosevelt in early 1944, to use the Western Allies' foothold in Southern Italy as a base of operations against German troops deployed along the Balkans' Adriatic coast. Undeterred by this transparent British attempt to prevent the entry of Soviet armies into the region, the president rejected the proposed strategy because he feared it might delay or weaken the long planned cross channel invasion of North Western Europe.⁵ Disappointed by America's intransigence and increasingly nervous about the Russian military's westward march, the prime minister decided to pursue his own policy to safeguard the Balkans.

In October 1944, Churchill traveled to Moscow and concluded an informal agreement with Stalin that established spheres of influence between their two nations. This hastily written pact, embarrassingly referred to as the "naughty document" by the English leader, gave the

³ Allied victories at Stalingrad, El Alamein, Tunisia, and Kursk greatly reduced the number of effective German divisions in the field. While still formidable, the *Wehrmacht* no longer possessed the strategic initiative on any front. *Ibid.*, 16-25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

Soviet Union control of ninety percent of Romania and Bulgaria's post-war government, while Britain received the same level of influence in Greece.⁶ In addition, the two allied head of states decided to share equally in Yugoslavia and Hungary's political future. Despite Churchill's initial misgivings concerning their cavalier resolution of this issue, he believed this arrangement helped secure Greece, which protected London's Mediterranean economic lifeline to its colonies in the Far East. Furthermore, he surmised that his meetings with the "Old Bear" improved overall relations between England and the USSR.⁷ "I like him the more I see him," confessed the old Tory.⁸ "Now they respect us here and I am sure they wish to work with us."⁹

Unlike the British prime minister, Stalin had no compunction with the idea of trading nations to establish spheres of influence in the Balkans.¹⁰ Two German invasions, a Polish incursion in 1920, and the Western Power's anti-Bolshevik intervention during the Russian Civil War convinced the Soviet dictator that the USSR needed to control nearby nations, especially those adjacent to its territory.¹¹ One of his primary war aims, therefore, included the creation of a buffer zone in Eastern Europe where newly installed communist governments could help guarantee the Soviet Union's security. In this regard, he viewed Russia's domination of Poland as an essential requirement for Moscow's foreign policy goals.¹²

⁶ Simon Berthon and Joanna Potts, *Warlords: An Extraordinary Re-Creation of World War II through the eyes and minds of Hitler, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006), 268.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 269.

¹⁰ Stalin already had experience with the establishment of spheres of influence when he and Hitler concluded the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact in August, 1939. That treaty included a secret protocol which gave the Russians free reign in Estonia and Latvia in return for German domination of Lithuania. Both nations also agreed to partition Poland. James L. Stokesbury, *A Short History of World War II* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1980), 65-6.

¹¹ Ambrose and Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism*, 55.

¹² *Ibid.*, 55.

For his part, Roosevelt rejected both Britain's imperialistic designs and Russia's plan to divide Europe. Contrary to Churchill and Stalin, he wanted the impending post-war international order to align with the democratic principles of the Atlantic Charter.¹³ To this end, FDR sought to promote free elections and open trade in every region of the globe, including colonial possessions and previously designated spheres of influence.¹⁴ As the war progressed, he increasingly envisioned the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union working together as the world's "Four Policemen" in a collective effort to maintain peace through the auspices of the newly created United Nations.¹⁵ While somewhat vague, this idea dominated the president's thinking in February, 1945 when he met with his colleagues on the Crimean Peninsula to discuss Europe's future political status.

The Yalta Conference highlighted the growing frustration and tension experienced within the Allied camp during the last months of the war. Thus far, military necessity had prompted the Big Three to overcome their differences in the interest of maintaining a united front against German aggression.¹⁶ The USSR's need for Lend Lease supplies and a Second Front in France had encouraged Stalin to cooperate with the Western Powers, just as America's and Britain's desire to keep Russia fighting in the war prompted them to continue cordial relations with

¹³ Unlike FDR, Churchill and Stalin did not want to apply the principle of self-determination to their respective empires. Additionally, both leaders deemed it imperative to exclude the United States' influence from their economic blocs. Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2006* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 12-4.

¹⁴ Robert O. Paxton, *Europe in the 20th Century* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 507-8.

¹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, and Susan Butler, *My Dear Mr. Stalin: The Complete Correspondence between Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph V. Stalin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 189.

¹⁶ Numerous issues constantly threatened to weaken and destroy the Grand Alliance throughout the course of the war. Stalin viewed his allies' reluctance to establish a second front in France until 1944 as evidence that the US and British governments, especially the latter, secretly wanted the USSR to suffer higher casualties before the conflict ended. Likewise, the Western Allies' exclusion of Russia from negotiations concerning Italy's withdrawal from the war in 1943 upset the Soviet dictator and confirmed his suspicions that Washington, D.C. and London meant to hinder Moscow's position in the postwar world. Paxton, *Europe in the 20th Century*, 495-6.

Moscow.¹⁷ The Nazi's imminent defeat, however, removed the common enemy that had kept the Grand Alliance together for more than three years. With the war in Europe nearly won, the incentive to compromise quickly disappeared.¹⁸

While the Yalta Conference resolved various diplomatic and military issues, the question of Eastern Europe's political future threatened to divide the Allies.¹⁹ For example, Stalin demanded that the US and Britain join the Soviet Union in its recognition of the communist dominated Lublin Committee as Poland's new government. Though FDR accepted the USSR's insistence that a friendly regime control Warsaw, he endorsed Churchill's request that the provisional administration needed to include pro-Western Polish politicians from the London-based government-in-exile. After numerous debates, the Soviet dictator agreed in principle to have his puppet organization in Lublin "reorganized on a broader democratic basis."²⁰ With the Red Army already deployed as far west as the Oder River in Germany, the president and prime minister had little recourse but to accept Stalin's vague assurances. As the Conference concluded, FDR's military chief of staff, Admiral William Leahy, caustically observed that the language of the final agreement "was so elastic that the Russians can stretch it all the way from Yalta to Washington without technically breaking it."²¹

Upon Roosevelt's return to the United States, he addressed a joint session of Congress to report that the Allied governments had unanimously agreed to promote free elections in the newly liberated nations of Europe. Furthermore, he praised the coalition's willingness to

¹⁷ Ambrose and Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism*, 31-2.

¹⁸ LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 16-9.

¹⁹ Stalin's decision to have the Soviet Union participate in the new United Nations organization pleased FDR who deemed it essential for the maintenance of post-war peace in Europe. In addition, the Russian's promise to enter the war against Japan within three months of Germany's surrender greatly relieved Roosevelt. Paxton, *Europe in the 20th Century*, 499-500.

²⁰ LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

compromise on issues concerning Poland and its future political status. Though FDR acknowledged that the Big Three still had different views about certain post-war issues, he downplayed them and emphasized that the United States, Britain, and the USSR had never enjoyed better relations.²² Not surprisingly, the President's positive characterization of the conference and its results gave the American people the impression that "Uncle Joe" still remained a steadfast ally who shared the United States' desire to foster a free and democratic Eastern Europe.²³

Within days of FDR's March 1st speech, Stalin began to openly violate the Yalta Agreement when he prohibited the formation of pluralistic democracies within territory recently liberated from Nazi Germany. In Romania, the Russian chairman of the three-power Allied Control Commission ignored his American and British colleagues and unilaterally imposed a communist government in Bucharest. Meanwhile in Poland, the NKVD ruthlessly suppressed civil liberties and employed intimidation tactics to ensure the Kremlin's domination of Warsaw's new leadership.²⁴ Consistent with his belief that "everyone imposes his own system as far as his armies can reach," the Soviet dictator defiantly established and consolidated the USSR's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.²⁵

²² On March 1, 1945, the president addressed a joint session of Congress and optimistically reported that the Allies "made a good start on the road to a world of peace." He expressed his "firm belief" that the Yalta agreement created the necessary conditions for the realization of the "sound and just principles of the Atlantic Charter." Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Francis L. Loewenheim, Harold D. Langley, and Manfred Jonas, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975), 657.

²³ At Yalta, Roosevelt informed an unamused Stalin that he and Churchill referred to the Soviet dictator as "Uncle Joe" in their wartime correspondence. This term also reflected to the rehabilitation of Stalin's reputation in America and Britain during World War II. Since 1941, US propaganda consistently portrayed the USSR and its communist government as faithful allies who fought for the same western ideals as the rest of the coalition. Jim Bishop, *FDR's Last Year, April 1944-April, 1945* (New York: W. Morrow, 1974), 320.

²⁴ Berthon and Potts, *Warlords*, 292.

²⁵ Molovan Djilas and Joseph Stalin, *Conversations with Stalin*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), 114.

Stalin's draconian measures alarmed Churchill, who considered his recent actions a betrayal of the understanding they had reached one month earlier at Yalta. On March 8, 1945, the Prime Minister informed FDR that Parliament increasingly expressed widespread concern about Poland's fate and that he personally risked losing political influence in London if Moscow did not honor the Crimean agreement.²⁶ Viewing the situation as a "test case" of Russia's intention for Eastern Europe, he suggested that a joint message from the American and British heads of states could persuade Stalin to reverse his policy.²⁷ Churchill concluded that future East-West cooperation should largely depend on whether the Soviet leader moderated his policy towards Warsaw's government.

While Roosevelt shared the prime minister's concerns about the USSR, he also feared that their personal intervention might inadvertently aggravate an already tense situation. He, therefore, instructed the US ambassador to Moscow, W. Averell Harriman, to discuss and resolve the issues with Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslay Molotov.²⁸ The subsequent diplomatic exchanges, however, revealed the growing mistrust, frustration, and general animosity, which plagued the Grand Alliance. For example, Molotov's consistent repudiation of Harriman's assertions reinforced the ambassador's assessment that Russia's recent actions in Poland and Romania reflected "long-range plans established some time ago for the Balkan and Eastern European states."²⁹ The American diplomat warned Roosevelt that "unless we are

²⁶ Roosevelt, Churchill, Loewenheim, Langley, and Jonas, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, 662.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 663.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 669.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 669.

prepared to live in a Soviet-dominated world, we must use our economic power to assist countries naturally friendly to us.”³⁰

In addition to his categorical denials of any Russian wrongdoing in Warsaw, Molotov angrily accused the Western Allies of secretly negotiating with German officers in Switzerland for the purpose of obtaining a separate peace with Berlin.³¹ Within days, Stalin complained directly to Roosevelt that these covert meetings allowed the *Wehrmacht* to redeploy three infantry divisions from Italy to the Eastern Front in Hungary.³² The seriousness of this accusation infuriated Roosevelt who immediately sent a terse telegram to the Soviet leader on April 4. FDR’s message, drafted by Admiral Leahy and Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, declared that “I cannot avoid a feeling of bitter resentment toward your informers, whoever they are, for such vile misrepresentations of my actions or those of my trusted subordinates.”³³ Stalin responded on April 7 with assurances that his information came from trusted and reliable sources. Furthermore, he observed that it seemed “strange and incomprehensible” that Hitler’s forces continued to “fight savagely with the Russians for some unknown junction...in Czechoslovakia” while at the same time they surrendered several important cities in central Germany to the Anglo-American armies with little to no resistance.³⁴ Finally, the Russian leader dismissed Roosevelt’s concerns about the USSR’s domination of

³⁰ LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 17.

³¹ In early March, 1945, General Karl Wolff of the *Waffen SS* secretly contacted OSS agent Allen Dulles in Switzerland to explore the possibility of surrendering German forces deployed along the Italian front. Harriman and Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall advised FDR not to include the Soviets in the negotiations because they feared the Kremlin might complicate the process. The ambassador also concluded that the Russians “would never allow our officers...to participate in a parallel situation on the eastern front.” Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict & Crises: The Presidency of Harry S Truman 1945-1948* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 11; Roosevelt, Stalin, and Butler, *My Dear Mr. Stalin*, 302.

³² Roosevelt, Stalin, and Butler, *My Dear Mr. Stalin*, 306.

³³ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War: 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University, 1972), 93.

³⁴ Roosevelt, Stalin, and Butler, *My Dear Mr. Stalin*, 316.

Warsaw's provisional government and declared that "matters on the Polish question have ...reached a dead end."³⁵

The deterioration of US-Soviet relations became readily apparent when, in the midst of these dueling dispatches, the Kremlin abruptly cancelled Molotov's planned attendance for the April 25 opening session of the new United Nations organization.³⁶ Exasperated with the Russian leader's obstinate behavior, Roosevelt privately expressed to a close friend that "Averell is right; we can't do business with Stalin. He has broken every one the promises he made at Yalta."³⁷ FDR's belated realization of Moscow's aggressive policies prompted him to assure Churchill that the US and Britain "must not permit anybody to entertain a false impression that we are afraid"³⁸ Interestingly, the president added that "our armies will in a very few days be in a position that will permit us to become 'tougher' than has heretofore appeared advantageous to the war effort."³⁹ While this statement strongly suggest that Roosevelt intended to adopt a more assertive policy towards the USSR, his subsequent messages to the prime minister minimized recent differences between the Allied leaders and expressed a desire to maintain a good working relationship in the post war world.⁴⁰ Whatever his future intentions, Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945 dramatically altered the tone and dynamics of US-Soviet relations.

³⁵ Ibid., 318.

³⁶ Stalin informed FDR that "circumstances have developed in such a way that Mr. V.M. Molotov really, is not able to participate in the Conference." Specifically, he asserted that his foreign minister had to remain in Moscow to attend an abruptly called meeting of the Supreme Soviet. This disingenuous explanation suggested to the president that the Russian dictator might undermine the importance of the UN if the US pursued a foreign policy that conflicted with the USSR's. FRUS, 1945, I 165.; Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion & Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-67* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 380-1; Donovan, *Conflict & Crises*, 11.

³⁷ Donovan, *Conflict & Crises*, 11.

³⁸ Roosevelt, Churchill, Loewenheim, Langley, and Jonas, *Roosevelt and Churchill*, 705.

³⁹ Ibid., 705.

⁴⁰ Twenty four hours before his death, Roosevelt wrote to Churchill and suggested that they should "minimize the general Soviet problem as much as possible because these problems...seem to arise every day and most of them straighten out." Interestingly, this last correspondence between the president and the prime minister concluded with the recommendation that "We must be firm, however, and our course thus far is correct." Ibid., 709.

FDR's untimely passing thrust Harry S. Truman into the Oval Office at a moment when fast moving world events challenged the acumen of even the most experienced statesmen. Prior to his brief eighty-two day tenure as vice president, the former senator from Missouri had served ten years in Congress where he eventually gained national prominence during World War II as chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program.⁴¹ In 1944, Truman reluctantly accepted Roosevelt's request to run with him on the Democratic ticket in that year's election. Once in office, however, the new vice president quickly became frustrated with his limited access to FDR and his inner circle of advisors. He later complained that Roosevelt failed to brief him "about the war, or about foreign affairs or what he had in mind for peace after the war."⁴² Thus handicapped, Truman entered the White House without the benefit of knowing how his predecessor viewed US-Soviet relations and what specific policies he intended to pursue in the near future.

Lacking foreign policy experience and a personal familiarity with either Churchill or Stalin, the new president heavily relied on advice from officials in Roosevelt's cabinet and State Department.⁴³ Within twenty-four hours of taking the oath of office, Truman met with Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., who briefed him about Washington's growing problems with Moscow. For the first time the commander-in-chief learned about the Kremlin's "firm and uncompromising position" concerning Eastern Europe and how it had repeatedly violated the Yalta agreement in recent months.⁴⁴ Angered by what he viewed as Soviet intransigence, the president responded during the meeting that the United States "must stand up to the Russians"

⁴¹ Frank N. Magill, John L. Loos, and Tracy Irons-Georges, *The American Presidents* (Pasadena: Salem Press, 2000), 506-7.

⁴² Margaret Truman and Harry S. Truman, *Letters from Father: The Truman family's personal correspondence* (New York: Arbor House, 1981), 106.

⁴³ David McCullough, *Truman*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 355.

⁴⁴ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions* (Garden City, N.Y.: Double Day, 1955), 15.

because “we had been too easy with them.”⁴⁵ One week later Truman met with Ambassador Harriman who warned in stark terms that America must confront the USSR or face a “barbarian invasion of Europe.”⁴⁶ In the diplomat’s opinion, “elements around Stalin misinterpreted our generosity and...desire to cooperate as an indication of softness.”⁴⁷ He suggested that the president could rectify this problem by using US financial aid, which Moscow desperately needed for post-war reconstruction, as leverage in their ongoing political disputes. Truman agreed that “the Russians needed us more than we needed them” and that he expected the US to obtain at least eighty-five percent of what Washington proposed.⁴⁸ After the new chief executive promised to address the Polish issue with Molotov “in words of one syllable,” Harriman confided that he was “greatly relieved to discover...we see eye-to eye on the situation.”⁴⁹

Prior to his meeting with the Russian foreign minister on April 23, the president held his first foreign policy conference with his advisors to receive their recommendations as to how to proceed.⁵⁰ Secretary of State Stettinius reiterated his opinion that the Soviets needed to comply with the Yalta agreement, as did Ambassador Harriman who again proposed that the US should use economic aid as a diplomatic tool to remedy the situation. Secretary of War Henry Stimson disagreed with his colleagues and reminded them that “the Russians conception of freedom, democracy and independent voting was quite different from ours or the British.”⁵¹ Furthermore, he expressed his alarm that American officials did not fully appreciate Moscow’s security

⁴⁵ LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 18.

⁴⁶ W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946* (New York: Random House, 1975) 448.

⁴⁷ Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 70.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁰ In the wake of FDR’s death, Stalin decided to honor the late president by sending Molotov to the UN’s opening session in late April. The Soviet leader also used this opportunity to have his foreign minister meet and evaluate the new chief executive. Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946*, 441-3.

⁵¹ James Forrestal, Walter Millis, and E.S. Duffield, *The Forrestal Diaries*, (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 49.

concerns and Poland's key role in alleviating them. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal responded that the Kremlin's desire to dominate Warsaw's government "was not an isolated incident" and that similar actions had already occurred in Bulgaria, Rumania, Turkey and Greece.⁵² In his view, "if the Russians were to be rigid in their attitude we had better have a showdown with them now rather than later."⁵³ For his part, Admiral Leahy declared that the vague provisions of the Crimean settlement could be interpreted in multiple ways. While he emphasized his belief that the USSR never intended to honor their pledge to hold free elections in Poland, he also maintained that the US should not allow this issue to jeopardize overall relations between the two allied nations. Likewise, General Marshall counseled a cautious approach because he did not want the Soviet Union to reconsider its previous pledge to enter the war against Japan. Although no clear consensus emerged at the meeting, Truman predictably sided with Stettinius, Harriman, and Forrestal and reiterated his intentions to demand Moscow's adherence to the Yalta agreement.⁵⁴

Within hours of the White House conference, the president met with Molotov and immediately admonished him for Russia's recent behavior in Poland. He strongly insisted that the USSR must honor its agreements to include democratically elected representatives in Warsaw's new government. A failure to do so, Truman warned, threatened America's future political and economic "collaboration" with the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ When the foreign minister objected to these allegations, the president abruptly ended the meeting and asked Molotov to

⁵² Ibid., 49.

⁵³ Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 78.

⁵⁴ Forrestal, Millis, and Duffield, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 51.

⁵⁵ The president explained to Molotov that US public opinion influenced Congressional support in foreign policy matters. Consequently, the Soviet Union's actions in Poland risked undermining future relations between the America and Russia. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 80.

convey his message to Stalin. Taken aback by what had transpired, the Russian diplomat immediately withdrew from the conference and communicated this new development to the Kremlin.⁵⁶ The next day the Soviet leader responded with an angry telegram addressed to both Truman and Churchill in which he denounced the US and UK's persistent refusal to recognize the Lublin communist as Poland's legitimate government. He emphasized that "the question on Poland has the same meaning for the security of the Soviet Union as the question on Belgium and Greece for the security of Great Britain."⁵⁷ He then reminded them that London and Washington never consulted with Moscow about the composition of Brussels's and Athens's new governments, nor did Russia try to interfere with their formation. Stalin concluded that even though his allies "demand too much," he still hoped for a "harmonious solution."⁵⁸

The Kremlin's concern about the new president's initial behavior towards Molotov appeared well founded. Already aware of Truman's past anti-communist statements in the Senate, Moscow viewed his first series of decisions in the White House as confirmation that he intended to depart from FDR's more subtle and accommodating foreign policy.⁵⁹ For example, within seventy-two hours of V-E Day, the president signed an executive order that immediately

⁵⁶ According to Truman, Molotov complained that no one had spoken to him like that before, to which the president replied "Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that." Likewise, the Russian foreign minister angrily recalled how Truman "began talking to me in such an imperious tone!" In his opinion, the president "wanted to show who was boss." Ironically, Ambassador Harriman lamented "that Truman went at it so hard." The US diplomat justifiably feared that his superior's abrasive manner risked alienating the Soviets. Truman, *Memoirs*, 82; Felix Chuev, Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov, and Albert Resis, *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics-Conversations with Felix Chuev* (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1993) 54-5; Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946*, 454.

⁵⁷ Joseph Stalin to Harry S. Truman, April 24, 1945, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, Volume V, Diplomatic Papers* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1967), 263. Hereafter *FRUS*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁵⁹ Days after Operation Barbarossa began in June, 1941, Truman famously commented in an interview that "if we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances. Neither of them thinks anything of their pledged word." "Our Policy Stated," *New York Times*, June 24, 1941, 7.

ended most Lend-Lease shipments to the USSR and Britain. Drafted by Foreign Economic Administrator Leo Crowley and Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew, this authorization put into law a policy originally contemplated by Roosevelt shortly before he died.⁶⁰ While designed to satisfy Congressional critics who wanted to prevent the US aid program from being used for post-war reconstruction, the clumsy implementation of the executive order angered America's allies, especially the Soviet Union, which viewed the abrupt cessation of deliveries as a form of economic coercion. Embarrassed by the diplomatic *faux pas*, Truman rescinded the order and sent Harry Hopkins, an experienced presidential aide, to Moscow to reassure Stalin that the US had not intended to harm relations with the USSR.⁶¹ Though he accepted the president's explanation, the Soviet dictator commented to Hopkins that if America intended to put "pressure on the Russians in order to soften them up, then it was a fundamental mistake."⁶²

The Lend-Lease incident can be attributed primarily to Truman's inexperience in the White House and not from a sudden desire to alter the nation's foreign policy towards the Kremlin. Contrary to the Russian government's mistaken assessments, the president consistently tried to adhere to his predecessor's known post-Yalta agenda. For instance, when Churchill attempted to persuade Truman to delay the westward redeployment of Allied land units from Germany's Elbe River, the commander-in-chief insisted that they honor their agreements and begin the withdrawal of all their forces to the previously agreed upon zones of occupation.⁶³

⁶⁰ Crowley to Roosevelt, March 23, 1945; Crowley to Truman, May 11, 1945, *FRUS, 1945: Volume V, Diplomatic Papers*, 991, 999-1000.

⁶¹ Years later Truman sheepishly admitted that he had signed the executive order without having ever read the document. Unfortunately for the White House, Crowley and Grew construed the memorandum's language literally and ordered all US ships laden with Lend-Lease supplies to stop at sea and immediately return to American ports. Truman declared that this embarrassing episode taught him the importance of having only trusted advisors with whom he could delegate authority. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 227-9.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 229.

⁶³ Like FDR, Truman believed in using the armed forces for achieving military objectives and not, as Churchill advocated, for obtaining political goals. In this instance, the president rejected the prime minister's suggestion that the Western Allies refuse to withdraw to the previously agreed upon zones of occupation until the

Likewise, the president sought to maintain the Soviet Union's previous pledge to enter the war against Japan within three months of Hitler's defeat.⁶⁴ Finally, Truman continued FDR's policy of keeping the Russian government ignorant of the Manhattan Project and refused to share information of its existence with his counterpart in Moscow.⁶⁵ Despite these attempts, it fell upon the new chief executive to address the numerous unresolved problems he had inherited in a manner that advanced America's long term national interest.

In June 1945, the president adopted a more pragmatic approach towards Stalin when he agreed to recognize Poland's provisional government, which had recently added a small number of pro-western politicians to its cabinet. Truman's acceptance of Warsaw's predominantly communist regime reflected his tacit acknowledgement that Washington could do very little to influence the political situation in the Russian dominated nation. It also illustrated the president's desire to maintain good relations with the Soviet leader whom he feared might retaliate by withdrawing the USSR's pledge to attack Japan in East Asia.⁶⁶ A month later, however, Truman and many of his top officials arrived in Germany with renewed determination to resolve the remaining post-war issues in a manner that advanced US interest.⁶⁷ The successful detonation of America's first atomic bomb twenty-four hours prior the Potsdam Conference's opening session

Russians renegotiated the Yalta provisions concerning German reparations and food supplies. Churchill to Truman, April 18, 1945; Memorandum of Admiral Leahy, April 21, 1945; Truman to Churchill, April 23, 1945; Churchill to Truman, April 24, 1945; Truman to Churchill, April 26, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume III, European Advisory Commission: Austria, Germany*, 231-2, 235-6, 240-1, 244-5.

⁶⁴ Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 265.

⁶⁵ On September 19, 1944, FDR and Churchill signed a secret protocol that confirmed Washington and London's intentions of keeping the Manhattan Project secret, especially from the Soviet Union. As president, Truman continued the policy of withholding America's atomic secrets from Russia. Aide-Memoire initialed by Roosevelt and Churchill, September 19, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Volume VIII, Conference at Quebec*, 492-3; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 525-7.

⁶⁶ Truman's conciliatory attitude towards the Kremlin began in May after the president's Lend-Lease decision offended Stalin and endangered future cooperation, especially in the Pacific Theater against Japan. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 228-9, 321-3.

⁶⁷ Despite his concerns about the Soviets, Truman initially liked Stalin when he first met the communist dictator at Potsdam. According to his diary, the president confessed: "I can deal with Stalin. He is honest-but smart as hell." Robert H. Ferrell, *Off the Record: the Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, (Harper & Row, 1980), 53.

emboldened the president's delegation, whom deemed it imperative to confront Stalin's policy towards Eastern Europe.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, the conflicting agendas pursued by Washington, London, and Moscow created a series of contentious debates that threatened to destroy the unity of the wartime alliance.

One of the first issues that dominated the Big Three's summit centered on a Soviet proposal to revise the 1936 Montreux Convention, which governed the legal status of the Turkish Straits. Stalin's suggestion that the USSR be allowed to establish military bases in this strategic waterway encountered immediate opposition from Churchill and Truman who both agreed that an internationalized Bosphorus and Dardanelles provided the only acceptable solution.⁶⁹ Likewise, the prime minister and president rejected the Russian delegation's demand that Germany must pay \$20 billion in reparations directly to Moscow to fund the Soviet Union's post-war reconstruction. London and Washington expressed justifiable concern that this punitive policy jeopardized the economic recovery and political rehabilitation of their defeated adversary. While Stalin remained unmoved by his colleague's anxieties, he eventually agreed to a compromise that

⁶⁸ US diplomat Robert Murphy recalled how Truman's demeanor changed after he read the first reports that detailed the atomic bomb test. According to Murphy, the president "seemed much more sure of himself, more inclined to participate vigorously in the discussions, to challenge some of Stalin's statements." Likewise, British Field Marshall Alan Brooke noted how Churchill firmly believed the new weapon "would redress the balance with the Russians" and alter the "diplomatic equilibrium." The psychological effect, however, remained one-sided because the western allies never made any threats, implied or direct, against the USSR in regards to the atomic bomb. When the president informed Stalin that the US currently possessed "a new weapon of unusual destructive force;" the Soviet leader "showed no interest" and calmly replied that America should promptly use the device against Japan. Stalin, unbeknownst to Truman and Churchill, already knew about the bomb's existence, thanks to his spy network, which had already penetrated the Manhattan Project. Robert D. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors: The Unique World of a Foreign Service Expert* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 273; Brooke, Alan, Alex Danchev, and Daniel Todman, *War Diaries, 1939-1945: Field Marshall Lord Alan Brooke* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 709; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 416.

⁶⁹ Stalin argued that the USSR's economic interest necessitated its need to militarily safeguard the Turkish Straits in the same manner that the US and UK protected the Panama and Suez Canals. His line of reasoning failed to elicit a sympathetic response from Truman and Churchill who agreed that any revision of the Montreux Treaty should be limited to guaranteeing free and unhindered navigation through the straits. Truman commented that only free transit along Europe's waterways could create an economically prosperous continent in the future. Conference proceedings, July 23, 1945 *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers, 1945, Volume II, the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference)*. 303-4.

reduced reparation payments from the western zones to twenty-five percent of what the USSR originally demanded. In exchange, Britain and the US begrudgingly accepted Russia's unilateral grant of governing power to Poland concerning the military occupation of German Pomerania and Silesia.⁷⁰ The reparation solution notwithstanding, the Potsdam sessions quickly degenerated into a series of increasingly adversarial disputes concerning the political future of Germany and Europe.

Disagreements at the Conference reached a new antagonistic level when America and the UK stated that they intended to withhold diplomatic recognition of Eastern Europe's communist governments unless the USSR allowed free and open democratic elections to take place throughout the region. Stalin and Molotov refused to concede this issue, which they deemed imperative to the Soviet Union's national security.⁷¹ Frustrated by the continuing impasse, Churchill bluntly declared that an "iron fence" threatened to divide Europe; a charge that the Russian dictator dismissed as "fairy tales."⁷² The Prime Minister's defiance continued under the leadership of Clement Attlee, the Labor Party leader who defeated and replaced Churchill midway through the conference. When Stalin inquired about the possibility of obtaining reparations from German assets located throughout Eastern Europe, Attlee's new Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, bluntly responded that "Greece belongs to the British" and that London had no intention of giving the USSR the right to acquire resources from western occupation

⁷⁰ Eleventh Plenary Meeting, July 31, 1945; Conference proceedings, August 1, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Diplomatic Papers, Volume II, the Conference of Berlin*, 510-54.

⁷¹ Conference proceedings, July 21, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Diplomatic Papers, Volume II, the Conference of Berlin*, 207.

⁷² Amazingly, Churchill's frustration with the USSR's new geopolitical position in Europe prompted him in late May, 1945 to request from his commanders a contingency plan that called for a preemptive American and British military strike against Soviet forces in Germany. Entitled Operation UNTHINKABLE, this unrealistic proposal never had the support of the prime minister's advisors. "Operation Unthinkable: 'Russia: Threat to Western Civilization,'" British War Cabinet, Joint Planning Staff [Draft and Final Reports: 22 May, 8 June, and 11 July 1945], Public Record Office, CAB 120/691/109040 / 001; Conference proceedings, July 24, 1945, *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers Volume II: the Conference of Berlin*, 362.

zones.⁷³ For his part, Truman deplored the proceedings' general lack of progress and informed his counterparts that "he did not wish to sit here as a court to settle matters which will eventually be settled by the United Nations."⁷⁴ The US delegation, he observed, "did not wish to waste time listening to complaints."⁷⁵ With all sides unwilling to make further concessions, the three week conference concluded with a communiqué that, in addition to a series of vague statement concerning the administration of post-war Europe, announced the creation of the Council of Foreign Ministers. This diplomatic body, the Big Three hoped, might address and resolve the numerous outstanding issues that threatened to end Washington and London's cooperation with Moscow.⁷⁶

The Allies departed Potsdam with mixed results but strong opinions. While Truman achieved his primary goal of obtaining a Soviet pledge to enter the war against Japan, he still believed the US and Britain had made too many concessions to Russia, especially concerning Eastern Europe. In his opinion, Moscow had not adhered to the spirit of the Yalta agreement and could not be considered trustworthy in important matters of post-war diplomacy. To this end, the president decided to exclude the Kremlin from having any role in the occupation of Japan once the war ended.⁷⁷ Stalin and Molotov, likewise, returned from the conference convinced that the Western Powers intended to pursue an Imperialistic policy designed to keep the Soviet Union economically weak and militarily vulnerable.⁷⁸ In a conversation with US diplomat Joseph E.

⁷³ Conference proceedings, August 1, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Diplomatic Papers, Volume II: the Conference of Berlin*, 579.

⁷⁴ Conference Proceedings, July 19, 1945 *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, Conference in Berlin*, 129.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁷⁶ In addition to the communiqué, the US, Britain, and China issued the Potsdam Declaration on July 26th, which renewed the demand for Japan's unconditional surrender. Potsdam Proclamation, July 26, 1945; Potsdam Communique, August 2, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, Conference in Berlin*, 1474-6, 1499-1514.

⁷⁷ Truman, *Memoirs, Volume I: Year of Decisions*, 320, 411-2.

⁷⁸ When Molotov recalled the Allied debates at Potsdam he observed that "we got what we needed, though they tried in every way to encroach on our interest-to impose a bourgeois government in Poland that would certainly have been an agent of imperialism." Likewise, he held a negative opinion of Truman's abilities and stated that "he

Davies, the Russian foreign minister bitterly complained about Truman's adversarial position with regards to German reparation payments and commented that the president seemed to care more for Berlin's welfare than Moscow's. "It is not easy," Molotov concluded, "for us to understand your new president."⁷⁹ Clearly, by August, 1945 the Grand Alliance had begun to disintegrate in a growing atmosphere of mutual mistrust and suspicion.⁸⁰

Within days of the Potsdam Conference's closing session, the US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki while the USSR initiated a massive invasion of Japanese-held Manchuria. The twin shock of these attacks overwhelmed Tokyo, which promptly surrendered to the Allies on August 15, 1945. With the final cessation of hostilities, representatives from the Big Three prepared to meet in Britain to address various unresolved issues and draft the necessary peace treaties to officially end the war.

The London Foreign Ministers' Conference, held between September 11 and October 2, 1945, revealed the Grand Alliance's numerous conflicts of interest, which had thus far been downplayed to the public. Despite Potsdam's shortcomings, America's new Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, remained confident that he could still induce the Russians to make serious compromises at the negotiating table. Molotov, however, zealously defended the USSR's prerogatives and refused to concede any important issues to the US. For example, when Byrnes's

was far from having Roosevelt's intellect. A big difference. They had only one thing in common-Roosevelt had been an inveterate imperialist, too. Molotov, *Molotov Remembers*, 53, 55.

⁷⁹ The Russian leadership construed Truman's decision at Potsdam as a violation of an earlier pledge by FDR to support German reparation payment to the Soviet Union. While Roosevelt had indeed promised to study the Russian proposal, it originally pertained to \$10 billion and not the inflated figure presented to Truman. Michael Dobbs, *Six Months in 1945: FDR, Stalin, Churchill, and Truman-From World War to Cold War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 340; Hopkins to Roosevelt, February 10, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, 920.

⁸⁰ Though Truman said of Stalin that he personally "liked the little son of a bitch," he viewed Russians in general as "pig-headed people" and hoped to "never have to hold another conference with them." Privately, he concluded that "force is the only thing the Russians understand." Harry S. Truman, *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 349; Truman, *Year of Decision*, 402, 412.

accused the Soviet Union of dominating Eastern Europe, specifically Romania and Bulgaria, the Russian foreign minister responded that London currently controlled Greece with an unpopular pro-British government in Athens.⁸¹ Furthermore, Molotov insisted that Moscow must have friendly governments in the region, especially in former Axis countries that had aided the German invasion of the USSR during the war.⁸² Ominously, the Russian foreign minister emphasized that if the US and UK did not acknowledge Eastern Europe's new regimes and the Soviet peace treaties associated with them, then the Kremlin might not be able to accept Washington and London's proposed settlement with Italy.⁸³ In addition to this threat, Molotov demanded that the US give the Soviet Union, Britain, and China joint occupation rights in Japan. Perhaps not surprisingly, the secretary of state rejected this request and subsequently failed to persuade Molotov to accept the status quo in Tokyo.⁸⁴ Shortly after the three-week meeting adjourned in complete failure, Byrnes publicly acknowledged the various disagreements encountered at the London conference but characterized them only as "temporary set-backs."⁸⁵ He conceded "the hard reality that none of us can expect to write the peace in our own way" and concluded with a confident prediction that future conferences could resolve any outstanding issues between the Allies.⁸⁶ Interestingly, Truman privately minimized the meeting's tense

⁸¹ Byrnes reiteration of America's demand for free elections in Eastern Europe angered the Russian foreign minister, who quickly tired of his colleague's lectures about democracy and popular sovereignty. In response, the Russians accused Britain of acting hypocritically in Greece, where the London-supported government remained unpopular with large segments of the population. Conference proceedings, September 16, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, General: Political and Economic matters*, 197.

⁸² Molotov went so far as to accuse the US and Britain of intentionally wanting to install anti-Soviet governments throughout Eastern Europe. *Ibid.*, 194-6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁸⁴ Conference Proceedings, September 24, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, General: Political and Economic Matters*, 336-8.

⁸⁵ "Report on the First Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers," *Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XIII, NO. 328* (October 7, 1945), 512. <http://archive.org/stream/departmentofstax1345unit#page/n3/512/mode/2up> (accessed March 13, 2015).

⁸⁶ After the London Conference, Byrnes privately admitted at a cabinet meeting that the Soviets could not be trusted to carry out their agreements concerning Eastern Europe. *Ibid.*, 507; Minutes of a Meeting of the

sessions when he acknowledged that conferences do not always produce “immediate tangible results.”⁸⁷ Successful negotiations, he concluded, still remained a viable option.⁸⁸

The diplomatic stalemate in London surprised Byrnes who firmly believed that America’s atomic bomb monopoly gave the US a distinct advantage over the USSR.⁸⁹ His reliance on the new weapon, however, already appeared misplaced to several of his colleagues within the Truman Administration. For instance, on September 11, 1945, outgoing Secretary of War Henry Stimson warned Truman against “having this weapon rather ostentatiously on our hip” because it only magnified the Soviet’s suspicions and distrust of Washington’s motives.⁹⁰ Likewise, Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson advised the president on the 25th to voluntarily end the United States’ continued exclusion of the USSR from atomic technology because it inevitably created the preconditions for an expensive nuclear arms race.⁹¹ The solution, both Stimson and Acheson independently concluded, must incorporate the open exchange of technical information with the Russians.⁹² Despite these well-reasoned appeals, Truman ultimately chose to maintain America’s atomic secrets rather than risk sharing them with Moscow.⁹³

Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, October 16, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, General: Political and Economic Matters*, 59-60.

⁸⁷ The president resented the media’s depiction of the conference as a failure. Truman, *Year of Decisions*, 518.

⁸⁸ Henry Wallace and John Morton Blum, *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973) 502.

⁸⁹ In April, 1945 Byrnes and Stimson informed Truman that the atomic bomb gave the US the opportunity to dictate foreign policy after the war. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 87.

⁹⁰ By September, 1945, Stimson had adopted a more pessimistic attitude about the atomic bomb and its influence on foreign relations. Stimson’s Memorandum to Truman, September 11, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, General: Political and Economic Matters*, 42.

⁹¹ Acheson to Truman, September 25, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, General: Political and Economic Matters*, 48-50.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 43, 50.

⁹³ Truman sided with Byrnes, Forrestal, and the Joint Chiefs; all of whom opposed Stimson’s suggestion of sharing atomic related technology with the Russians. When asked by a reporter why he decided to maintain America’s nuclear secrets, the president replied, “Well, I don’t think it would do any good to let them in on the know-how, because I don’t think they could do it anyhow.” Clearly this condescending attitude, which many Americans held at the time, underestimated the Soviet Union’s scientific and engineering abilities. Truman,

While the state of US-Soviet relations had deteriorated significantly since V-E Day, both nations still made efforts during late 1945 to maintain the alliance that had achieved so much during the Second World War. For his part, the president ordered his cabinet to refrain from any negative public statements concerning the Russian's adversarial attitude at London and Potsdam.⁹⁴ Truman adhered to this advice when he gave his first major post-war foreign policy speech on October 27, 1945. Though the president indirectly criticized the Soviet Union for its domination of Budapest, Sofia and Bucharest, he still specifically referred to the USSR as an ally whose citizens desired world peace as much as the American people.⁹⁵ Similarly, Byrnes spoke four days later about Moscow's "special security interest" in Eastern Europe and declared that the US, despite its insistence on self-determination, accepted Russia's need for friendly governments in the region.⁹⁶ Stalin, meanwhile, temporarily moderated Soviet policy in Hungary when he permitted Budapest to hold free elections on November 4. The Kremlin's reluctant acceptance of the balloting's outcome, which resulted with major victories for non-communist parties, encouraged Byrnes to organize another meeting with Molotov in December 1945.⁹⁷

The Moscow foreign ministers' conference offered the estranged allies an opportunity to readdress their seemingly intractable differences. After an initial round of discussions, Stalin

Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions, 525-8; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969)123-4; Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 94-6; United States, and Harry S. Truman. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman : containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President, April 12, 1945 to January 20, 1953. Volume 1:1945* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1961) 381.

⁹⁴ Wallace, *The Price of Vision*, 502.

⁹⁵ While the President admitted that the US could not always prevent the domination of small countries by stronger nations, he reiterated his promise to withhold America's recognition of any unpopular regime imposed in those states. Truman, *Public Papers: 1945*, 431-8.

⁹⁶ *Department of State Bulletin, Vol XIII*, No. 328, October 7, 1945, 710.
<http://archive.org/stream/departmentofstax1345unit#page/710/n3/mode/2up> (accessed March 13, 2015).

⁹⁷ Stalin initial acceptance of the election remained short-lived. While the Smallholders' party won 245 seats in parliament to the Communists' 70, the latter persuaded the new prime minister in February, 1946 to appoint a pro-Soviet official to head the ministry of the interior. With their control of Hungary's secret police, the Communists subsequently eliminated political adversaries and critics. Gregory C. Ference, *Chronology of 20th Century Eastern European History* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1994), 236.

surprised the secretary of state with a Russian proposal that allowed for the inclusion and of a small number of non-communist politicians in the Bulgarian and Romanian governments.⁹⁸ Grateful for this largely symbolic concession, the US diplomat reciprocated with a declaration that the Soviet Union, China, and Britain could participate in decisions regarding America's military occupation of Japan.⁹⁹ Remarkably, the newfound spirit of cooperation also extended to nuclear energy when Byrnes obtained Molotov's agreement to support the creation of the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission.¹⁰⁰ Though the conference ended with only modest achievements, it appeared as if these diplomatic developments might serve as a basis for future cooperation between Washington and Moscow.

The secretary of state's perceived victory, however, remained unappreciated and short-lived. Immediately after his return to the US he encountered severe criticism from the President and prominent members of Congress who feared that the recent agreements made at Moscow weakened America's standing in the world. Truman, for example, privately chastised Byrnes for making important decisions in Russia without first seeking approval from the White House.¹⁰¹ In particular, the president rebuked his secretary of state for releasing a communique at the

⁹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, December 23, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, General: Political and Economic Matters*, 752-6.

⁹⁹ The new Allied Council in Japan differed from its counterpart in Germany in that Britain, China, and the USSR assumed only an advisory role in Tokyo. The US, represented by General Douglas MacArthur, retained its supreme authority and unilaterally determined if allied suggestions regarding the occupation policy had any merit. Text of Communique, December 27, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Volume II, General: Political and Economic Matters*, 819-20.

¹⁰⁰ The Moscow agreement stipulated that the proposed UN Atomic Energy Commission had the authority to monitor the international exchange of nuclear related scientific data. Additionally, Byrnes and Molotov envisioned the organization as a means for ensuring that the new technology would be used for only peaceful purposes. To this end, they wanted to empower the commission with authority to verify the elimination of all existing nuclear weapons. *Ibid.*, 822-4.

¹⁰¹ According to Harriman, Byrnes insisted that the president had given him "complete authority" to make decisions while in Moscow. When the ambassador offered to send daily updates to Washington, the secretary of state told him not to because he could not "trust the white House to prevent leaks." The vague dispatches Truman did periodically receive angered the frustrated chief executive, who characterized the messages as being "more like one partner in business telling the other that his business trip was progressing well and not to worry." Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy*, 524; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 549.

conclusion of the conference before notifying Washington of its contents.¹⁰² Additionally, Truman expressed dissatisfaction with Stalin's concessions in Eastern Europe and stated that they did not go far enough to justify a US decision to recognize Romania and Bulgaria.¹⁰³ Congressional leaders, meanwhile, denounced Byrnes's offer to internationalize certain aspects of America's nuclear technology. Republican Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, a ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, informed the president that he disliked the secretary of state's proposal because it lacked a realistic scheme to verify Soviet compliance. Congress, he warned, "shall hold the Executive Department responsible" for any deficiency in the atomic agreement.¹⁰⁴ To Byrnes's disappointment, the results of the Moscow Conference inadvertently hurt US-Russian relations, which by the end of 1945, had already deteriorated considerably.¹⁰⁵

Persistent displeasure with the Soviet Union's policy towards Eastern Europe prompted the Truman administration, which had received increasing pressure from Congress and the American people, to adopt a more adversarial role at the beginning of 1946.¹⁰⁶ This stance became apparent in January when the US declined to grant a multi-billion dollar loan to the USSR.¹⁰⁷ Though willing to fund Moscow's post-war reconstruction of its devastated country,

¹⁰² Upon his return to Washington on December 29, 1945, Byrnes received a scolding from Truman who said that he had wanted to review and approve the series of agreements listed in the communique before the secretary of state released it to the press. The president bluntly warned that he "would not tolerate a repetition of such conduct." Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 550.

¹⁰³ George F. Kennan, the American charge d'affaires in Moscow, shared the president's assessment when he described the Soviet Union's concessions at the conference as "fig leaves of democratic procedure to hide the nakedness of Stalinist dictatorship in... Eastern European countries." George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1967) 284; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 551-2.

¹⁰⁴ Arthur Vandenberg, *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952) 229.

¹⁰⁵ Despite his low opinion of Byrnes's actions during the Moscow Conferences, Truman disingenuously told reporters on January 8, 1946 that he "was satisfied with the communique" and believed the secretary of state achieved "constructive results." Truman, *Public Papers: 1946*, 9-10.

¹⁰⁶ According to the American Institute of Public Opinion, nearly fifty-five percent of the American people trusted the Russian government in September, 1945. By November, only forty-four percent of the US population thought Washington could work with Moscow. Hadley Cantril and Mildred Strunk. *Public Opinion, 1935-1946* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951) 371.

¹⁰⁷ The Soviet Union lost 2 million citizens, 70,000 villages, 100,000 collective farms, and 32,000 factories during the war. With one-third of its economy devastated or displaced, the Kremlin estimated it needed at least \$6

Truman and Harriman wanted to use the financial assistance to induce political concessions from the Kremlin.¹⁰⁸ Suspicious of American intentions, Stalin refused to accept the loan's conditions and made preparations for Russia to adopt a new autarkic economic policy.¹⁰⁹

On February 9, 1946 the Soviet dictator gave a pre-election speech to announce the start of a new Five-Year Plan. He noted that this harsh economic program, which had been responsible for the USSR's industrialization during the 1930s, guaranteed Moscow's victory against Nazi Germany during World War II and illustrated the overall superiority of "the Soviet social order."¹¹⁰ According to Stalin, Russia required more centralized planning because it needed to quickly rebuild and expand its shattered war-torn economy. He concluded that only a revitalized nation, with a well-funded scientific community, could enable the USSR to safeguard its interest against aggressive capitalist nations, which had historically begun wars over access to raw material and foreign markets.¹¹¹

Stalin's speech immediately provoked a wide range of reactions in the United States. Publicly, mass media outlets such as *Time Magazine* condemned the Soviet dictator's suspicions of his loyal allies and labeled it "the most warlike pronouncement uttered by a top-rank statesman since V-J Day."¹¹² Conversely, *The New Republic* agreed with the Russian leader's

billion from the US to begin its reconstruction program. Jeremy Isaacs and Taylor Downing, *Cold War: For 45 Years the World held its breath* (London: Bantam, 1998) 25.

¹⁰⁸ Shortly after assuming the presidency, Truman endorsed Harriman's idea of using financial assistance to influence Russian behavior in Eastern Europe. A congressional delegation also sought additional concessions when it traveled to Moscow in September, 1945 and informed Stalin that the Soviet Union could receive an American loan only if he gave US officials unfettered access to the Soviet Union's economic data. Predictably, the Soviet dictator rejected this condition. FRUS 1945 V, 996; FRUS 1946 I, 1138; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 70-1; Harriman, *Special Envoy*, 533-4.

¹⁰⁹ The Truman administration also used US economic assistance as leverage against the British. In January, 1946 the president agreed to ask congress to approve a \$3.75 billion loan to England if London agreed to open its overseas markets to American businesses. The English reluctantly agreed. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 478-80.

¹¹⁰ Richard Sakwa, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union, 1917-1991* (London: Routledge, 1999) 292.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 289-93.

¹¹² *Time Magazine*, February 18, 1946, 29-30.

indictment of capitalism and urged the US government to “demonstrate our good faith” by lending \$6 billion to the USSR for their reconstruction program.¹¹³ *Newsweek*, meanwhile, expressed little alarm when it observed that the speech, in effect, acknowledged Washington’s current economic superiority over Moscow.¹¹⁴ Privately, administration officials expressed equally diverse opinions about meaning of Stalin’s statements. According to Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas considered the Soviet leader’s message nothing less than a “declaration of World War III.”¹¹⁵ Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace, however, concluded that the Russian’s rhetoric reflected the Kremlin’s justified fear of America’s growing political, economic, and military encirclement of the USSR.¹¹⁶ Interestingly, Truman dismissed his subordinates’ anxieties when he publicly commented, “Well, you know we always have to demagogue a little, before elections.”¹¹⁷ For the president, Stalin, like all national leaders, had simply given a political address designed to gain support from his domestic audience. Despite the White Houses’ attempt to downplay the speech’s significance, the State Department made new preparations to reevaluate the Soviet Union’s foreign policy towards the US and its allies.

On February 13, 1946 H. Freeman Matthews, the Director of the Office of European Affairs, asked George F. Kennan, the *Charge d Affaires* at the US embassy in Moscow, for an analysis of Stalin’s pre-election speech and how it could affect international relations.¹¹⁸ The

¹¹³ *New Republic*, February 18, 1946, 236.

¹¹⁴ *Newsweek* noted that Stalin’s projected industrial goals for 1960 “were still below those already achieved by the capitalist United States” in 1944. *Newsweek*, February 18, 1946, 47.

¹¹⁵ Millis and Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 134.

¹¹⁶ Wallace, *The Price of Vision*, 547-8.

¹¹⁷ Martin J. Medhurst and H. W. Brands, *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2000), 46.

¹¹⁸ The State Department correctly viewed Kennan, a career diplomat who had spent years in Central and Eastern Europe, as an expert on the Soviet Union. Footnotes 39 and 44, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VI*, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, 695-6; John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 217.

diplomat's 8,000 word response, aptly known as the "Long Telegram," ultimately provided the intellectual framework for America's evolving containment policy against the USSR.¹¹⁹ Divided into five main sections, this influential missive scrutinized the Soviet leadership's stated beliefs, explained the rationale for these views, predicted Moscow's future strategic initiatives, and concluded with advice for Washington's policy makers.¹²⁰

According to Kennan, Communist officials believed that capitalist nations harbored intrinsic hostility towards socialism and sought to destabilize the USSR. Consequently, this Marxist understanding of the world enhanced Russia's already strong xenophobia, which had historically dominated their collective mindset. The Kremlin's "neurotic view of world affairs," therefore, derived from their overriding fear that any open and sustained contact with external forces, especially Western ideas, could undermine Moscow's fragile regime.¹²¹ For these reasons, the Soviet government had to weaken and eliminate perceived foreign threats in an effort to safeguard its internal security.¹²²

In Kennan's opinion, Russia had adopted a multifaceted foreign policy to achieve their long term goals. For example, the Kremlin utilized or intended to develop official programs to expand their industrial base, improve the Red Army, dominate Eastern Europe, project power into the Near East, and gain United Nations support for their disruptive foreign policy goals.¹²³ Likewise, Moscow had concurrently implemented unofficial "subterranean" policies to create

¹¹⁹ Despite his superior's respect, Kennan's previous unsolicited warnings about the emerging Soviet threat had largely been ignored. When Washington finally requested a new evaluation of Russia's policy, Kennan declared, "Now, by God, they would have it." Kennan, *Memoirs*, 293.

¹²⁰ Kennan confessed he divided his detailed message into five separate sections "like an eighteenth-century Protestant sermon" because he hoped each part could "pass as a separate telegram and... would not look so outrageously long." *Ibid.*, 293.

¹²¹ Kennan to Byrnes, February 22, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VI, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union*, 699.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 699-700.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 701-3.

dissent within Western nations and weaken their influence in other countries.¹²⁴ To this end, Kennan insisted that the Kremlin had directed communist parties worldwide to infiltrate third parties such as labor unions, civil rights organizations, liberal publications, and churches in an effort to destabilize the world's capitalist governments, especially in the US and Britain.¹²⁵

Despite these dire warnings, Kennan observed that the Soviet Union, unlike Nazi Germany, respected the “logic of force” and did not want to risk a war with the Western Powers.¹²⁶ Furthermore, he optimistically concluded that Russia's dictatorial regime, already unpopular with its own people, might eventually collapse because of its inability to adequately govern the reluctant nations of Eastern Europe.¹²⁷ He, therefore, advised his superiors in Washington to formulate a long term “constructive program” against the USSR's subversive propaganda and, at the same time, offer firm guidance to endangered nations around the world.¹²⁸ Finally, he recommended that the Federal government “must see that our public is educated to the realities of [the] Russian situation” despite the “ugliness of the picture.”¹²⁹ In this manner, the American people could realistically assess the ongoing situation without being tempted to adopt an irrational attitude that embraced “hysterical anti-Sovietism.”¹³⁰

Kennan's Long Telegram made an immediate impact with officials in the US foreign policy establishment. Within the State Department, bureaucrats such as Matthews labeled the text “magnificent” while Loy Henderson, the director of near eastern affairs, acknowledged that

¹²⁴ Ibid., 703.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 703-6.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 707.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 707.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 707-8.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 708.

¹³⁰ Kennan's caution against being a hysterical anti-communist is ironic because he liberally utilized disease metaphors in his message to illustrate the nature of the Soviet threat. Years later, the US diplomat reread his telegram with “horrified amusement” and admitted it resembled “one of those primers...by the Daughters of the American Revolution, designed to arouse the citizenry to the dangers of the Communist conspiracy.” Ibid., 708; Kennan, *Memoirs*, 294.

its assessment “hits the nail on the head.”¹³¹ Similarly impressed with the dispatch, Byrnes promptly sent summaries of the “splendid analysis” to US diplomats stationed worldwide.¹³² Readership of the dispatch widened considerably when Harriman sent a copy to Forrestal who viewed the cable as an authoritative confirmation of his own beliefs concerning Soviet intentions.¹³³ Consequently, the secretary of the navy enthusiastically sent copies of the telegram to every member of Truman’s cabinet, including the president, and “made it required reading for hundreds, if not thousands, of higher officers in the armed services.”¹³⁴ In relatively short order, the precepts of Kennan’s telegram transformed Washington’s conception of US-Russian relations, which heretofore had been mostly confused and unrealistic.¹³⁵

The reorientation of America’s policy towards the USSR first manifested itself in a series of speeches during the last weeks of winter, 1946.¹³⁶ On February 27, Arthur H. Vandenberg, the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, gave a widely publicized address in Congress that asked the rhetorical question: “What is Russia up to now?”¹³⁷ In his response, he explained that the US and the Soviet Union’s rival ideologies had complicated post-war negotiations, which threatened the future viability of the UN. In a thinly veiled criticism of the Truman administration, he declared that the superpowers could “live together in reasonable

¹³¹ Hugh De Santis, *The Diplomacy of Silence: the American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933-1947* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 175.

¹³² Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 256; John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life*, 229.

¹³³ Harriman, and Abel. *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, 548.

¹³⁴ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, 295; Harriman and Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, 548.

¹³⁵ Not everyone completely endorsed the telegram’s contents. In his memoirs, Dean Acheson recalled that Kennan’s “historical analysis...might not have been sound” and that his recommendations remained too vague. He did, however, agree with Forrestal that his “predictions and warnings could not have been better.” Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), 151.

¹³⁶ The Administration responded slowly to Kennan’s recommendation that the American people be educated about the true nature of US-Soviet relations. For example, the president did not adequately address this issue until March, 1947 when he proclaimed the Truman Doctrine. *Ibid.*, 151, 222-3.

¹³⁷ Arthur H. Vandenberg, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., and Joe Alex Morris, *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 247.

harmony if the United States speaks as plainly upon all occasions as Russia does.”¹³⁸ The Senator elaborated that the White House must immediately “abandon the miserable fiction...that we somehow jeopardize the peace if our candor is as firm as Russia’s always is; and if we assume a moral leadership which we have too frequently allowed to lapse.”¹³⁹ Furthermore, he observed “there is a line beyond which compromise cannot go” and that Moscow must clearly understand where those parameters exist.¹⁴⁰ He concluded that only a tough US stance could “win Soviet respect...and trust;” two prerequisites necessary to ensure world peace.¹⁴¹

Vandenberg’s stinging rebuke of the president’s foreign policy team put additional pressure on Byrnes, who had already planned to address the Overseas Correspondents Club twenty-four hours later on February 28.¹⁴² In the wake of Stalin’s new five-year plan, Kennan’s telegram, and the senator’s speech, the secretary of state decided to use this event as a public forum “to set forth our position on existing problems.”¹⁴³ Byrnes boldly declared that even though mutual “suspicion and distrust” currently prevailed, the US had a “responsibility to use...influence to see that other powers live up to their covenants.”¹⁴⁴ He decried any form of international aggression “accomplished by coercion,” specifically the deployment of military units in “small...impoverished states,” and the “undisclosed penetration of power” against other

¹³⁸ Ibid., 248.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 248.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 248.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 249.

¹⁴² Although Vandenberg never mentioned Byrnes by name, many in the press considered his speech a repudiation of the secretary of state’s performance thus far. *Time* regarded the speech as “a clear challenge to Secretary of State Byrnes.” Likewise, Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* viewed the address’s call for a “positive” foreign policy a rebuff of Byrnes’s improvisational style and his tendency to compromise with the Russians. Ibid., 250.

¹⁴³ In his memoirs, Byrnes claimed that he originally minimized US-Soviet differences because of America’s rapid demobilization of its military during late 1945. After General Dwight D. Eisenhower informed the Secretary of State in February, 1946 that the Army’s reorganization had proceeded faster than originally anticipated, Byrnes believed he could finally publically address the growing rift between the superpowers. He asserted that the speech subsequently encouraged the Russians to openly discuss their positions in the press. James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, (New York: Harper, 1947), 254-6.

¹⁴⁴ James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, (New York: Harper, 1958), 350.

governments.¹⁴⁵ Finally, he warned that nations “must not conduct a war of nerves to achieve strategic ends” and concluded that if “we fail to work together there can be no peace...for any of us.”¹⁴⁶ Derisively known in the media as “the Second Vandenberg Concerto,” the speech received high praise from the Senator who openly endorsed the “new American approach” towards the Kremlin.¹⁴⁷

Of all the grand pronouncements made during this time, none achieved greater fame or scrutiny than Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech.¹⁴⁸ Invited by Truman to address Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri on March 5, 1946, the former prime minister used the occasion to highlight his concerns about the Soviet Union’s post-war behavior, especially in Europe.¹⁴⁹ After being introduced by the president, Churchill began his speech with an urgent appeal for a coordinated international response to the twin problems of “war and tyranny.”¹⁵⁰ A new military conflict, he believed, could only be prevented if the UN’s member states empowered that organization with an effective multi-national police force.¹⁵¹ To that end, he called for the development of a “fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples” whereby the US, Canada, and the British Empire could jointly utilize their collective armed services for peacemaking operations.¹⁵² Furthermore, Churchill envisioned this proposed military alliance as a means to counter the Soviet Union’s tyrannical domination of Eastern Europe. He boldly

¹⁴⁵ Vandenberg, *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 251.

¹⁴⁶ Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 350.

¹⁴⁷ *Time* asserted that Vandenberg’s speech had clearly given Byrnes a “firm shove.” Vandenberg, *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 251; *Time*, March 11, 1946, 19.

¹⁴⁸ Churchill entitled the speech: *The Sinews of Peace*. Winston Churchill, *The Sinews of Peace: Post-War Speeches* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1949), 93.

¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, during the Potsdam Conference Truman invited Stalin to visit the US and speak directly to the American public. On March 19, 1946 the president again extended the invitation to the Russian leader. The Soviet dictator, however, politely declined the offer because his doctors advised him not to go on “long journeys.” Truman to Stalin, March 19, 1946, Box 165, Russia- Stalin folder, President’s Secretary’s File, Truman Library.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁵² Churchill even entertained the possibility of common citizenship for Americans, Canadians, and British subjects. *Ibid.*, 98.

declared: “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe.”¹⁵³ Only Athens, he noted, “with its immortal glories-is free to decide its future.”¹⁵⁴ The English statesman subsequently warned that Moscow’s “expansive and proselytizing tendencies” directly threatened Turkey, Persia, and the Far East.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, he believed that Western nations such as Italy and France needed to guard against the Kremlin’s “Communist fifth columns,” which constituted “a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization.”¹⁵⁶ True world peace, he concluded, could only be sustained if Washington maintained its military superiority and sought to unite a free and prosperous Europe.¹⁵⁷

Predictably, Churchill’s powerful anti-Soviet speech elicited a strong response from America’s media, public, and political establishments. While the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* praised the address, the *Chicago Tribune* rejected the notion of an exclusive military alliance with London’s “old and evil empire.”¹⁵⁸ Likewise, the *New York Post* described the former prime minister’s statements as a “call to world disunity and war.”¹⁵⁹ Public demonstrations, meanwhile, accompanied Churchill as he traveled to the east coast shortly after his visit to Fulton, Missouri. In New York City, for instance, the Englishman encountered an estimated 2,200 protestors chanting, “We want peace-Churchill wants war” outside the Waldorf-Astoria where he attended a large dinner in his honor.¹⁶⁰ This occasion also showcased the serious concerns that many of Washington’s political elite had with the speech. Notables, such as

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 100-01

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁵⁸ *New York Times* “Mr. Churchill’s Message” March 6, 1946, 26; *Wall Street Journal* “Churchill’s Appeal” March 8, 1946, 6; *Chicago Tribune* “Mr. Churchill’s Plea” March 7, 1946, 18.

¹⁵⁹ “Talk Discloses Split in East’s Global Clique,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 16, 1946, 3.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

Eleanor Roosevelt failed to attend the event, which she boycotted with the statement that “the Russian position in world affairs ha[d] not been properly presented in this country.”¹⁶¹

Additionally, Senators Claude Pepper, Harley M. Kilgore, and Glen Taylor issued a joint statement that asserted that Churchill’s aspirations “would destroy the unity of the Big Three” and threatened to “cut out the throat of the United Nations Organization.”¹⁶² To Truman’s embarrassment, his secretary of commerce, Henry Wallace, publicly denounced the former prime minister’s message when he claimed it “would lead to war.”¹⁶³ The dangerous speech, he concluded, did not express the official policy of the American or British governments.¹⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, the Kremlin condemned the British statesman’s speech and tried to exploit the controversy surrounding it. The Russian newspaper *Izvestia* conveyed Moscow’s official views when it published Soviet historian Eugene Tarle’s harsh assessment of the Fulton address. The prominent professor dismissed Churchill’s poetic claims of a Communist iron curtain in Europe and instead focused on London’s worldwide dominion over its own reluctant colonial populations. The English, he argued, habitually violated the sovereignty of other nations; the most recent example centering on Athens where Britain had just used its army to “force upon the Greek people a hated regime of Fascist monarchy.”¹⁶⁵ He concluded that Churchill’s message intended to weaken America’s historical friendship with Russia because cooperation between these two nations threatened the future of the British Empire. Stalin also reiterated this view in a lengthy interview with *Pravda* where he labeled the former prime

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶² “Congress Splits on Churchill Plea,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1946, 1.

¹⁶³ “Speech Shocking to Wallace,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1946, 2.

¹⁶⁴ Britain’s ruling Labor Party also announced that Churchill’s speech did not “speak for the Labor Government.” “Europe’s Capitals Stirred by Speech,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1946, 5.

¹⁶⁵ “Moscow Scorns Foreign Threats,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1946, 2.

minister a “firebrand of war.”¹⁶⁶ In his opinion, the speech represented “a dangerous act calculated to sow the seed of discord among the Allied governments.”¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Soviet leader compared Churchill’s plan to create an alliance of English speaking nations with Hitler’s theories about the master race. According to the Russian dictator, the proposal meant that only “nations speaking the English language...should rule over the remaining nations of the world.”¹⁶⁸ The USSR, he contended, rejected such ideas.

The overall reaction to the Westminster speech surprised Truman, who eventually tried to distance himself from the controversy. When a reporter asked the president if his presence during the address could be construed as an endorsement of its contents, the beleaguered chief executive responded that he “didn’t know what would be in Mr. Churchill’s speech.”¹⁶⁹ Moreover, he argued that the prime minister “had a perfect right to say what he pleased.”¹⁷⁰ This statement, however, purposefully misled the public because the president had received a copy of the address prior to its delivery and heartily approved the language of the text.¹⁷¹ Though political expediency motivated Truman’s reaction, his attempts to insulate the White House from this crisis inadvertently reinforced the widely held belief that the US did not have a coherent foreign policy towards the USSR.¹⁷² In the absence of a strong presidential statement on the subject,

¹⁶⁶ “Stalin interview with Pravda on Churchill,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1946, 4.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁶⁹ Truman, *Public Papers: 1946*, 145.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁷¹ In his memoirs, Secretary of State Byrnes recalled that he provided an advanced copy of Churchill’s address to Truman, who subsequently refused to read the text because the president wanted to deny having any prior knowledge of its content. Secretary of Commerce Wallace, however, eventually learned that Truman did, in fact, read the speech beforehand and personally approved its message. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 349; Wallace, *The Price of Vision*, 558.

¹⁷² George M. Elsey, a naval duty officer in the White House Map Room, believed Truman’s “ambivalence” towards the Soviet Union led to his disassociation of the Iron Curtain speech. In his opinion, the president assumed too much of a “lighthearted, casual attitude” towards the USSR and needed to acknowledge the true severity of Russia’s threat to America’s interest. George M. Elsey, *An Unplanned Life A Memoir* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005), 137-8.

many Americans continued to maintain a positive attitude towards Russia and valued them as a worthy ally.¹⁷³

Conclusion

The deterioration of US-Soviet relations between February, 1945 and March, 1946 occurred because these two nations had diametrically opposed strategic visions for the post-war world. Moscow's determination to create a security buffer zone in Eastern Europe directly conflicted with Washington's desire for a democratically elected and economically free continent. Consequently, America and Russia's relentless pursuit of these irreconcilable policies drastically reduced their willingness to cooperate on a wide range of issues and established the basis for the Cold War.

While conflicting national interest and ideological differences gradually challenged the alliance's solidarity, the untimely death of Franklin Roosevelt highlighted the Big Three's growing tension. Though FDR had begun to manifest increasing concern about Stalin's unique interpretation of the Yalta Agreement, it is impossible to know what he might have said or done in the aftermath of World War II. What is certain, however, is that Harry Truman originally endeavored to pursue his late predecessor's foreign policy under the guidance of Roosevelt's cabinet and State Department. Unfortunately, the new president's inexperience, coupled with his blunt personal style, inadvertently magnified the ongoing tensions that existed between Washington and Moscow. Despite these shortcomings, the substance of Truman's decisions, if not its communication, represented a continuation of FDR's known agenda towards the Soviet Union during the first half of 1945.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 137.

A possible deviation from Roosevelt's plans occurred when Truman attempted to use America's economic power and atomic energy monopoly as diplomatic leverage against the USSR. This overbearing approach, however, needlessly antagonized an already suspicious Soviet leadership and ultimately failed to induce any significant concessions from the Kremlin. The White House, therefore, floundered during its first post-war conferences with Moscow and struggled thereafter to find a viable strategy to enhance US influence with the Russians. Consequently, Truman, like FDR before him, downplayed US-Soviet differences in an attempt to maintain normal relations with Stalin. Predictably, this tactic served only to mislead and confuse large segments of the American people, who still believed in the vitality of the Big Three Alliance.

By early 1946, growing concerns about the Kremlin's future intentions provided the impetus for Kennan's Long Telegram, which furnished the rationale for America's future containment policy. While this influential cable specifically counseled government leaders to educate the nation about the true state of affairs between the US and the USSR, the chief executive continued to overlook Washington's difficulties with Moscow, much to the chagrin of the internationalist in Congress. Likewise, the commander-in-chief dismissed his adviser's concerns about Stalin's February 9 election eve speech. Unlike many officials in his administration, Truman correctly viewed the address as a political message aimed at Russia's domestic audience and steadfastly refused to overreact to the dictator's statements. The president's subsequent treatment of Churchill's 'Iron Curtain Speech,' however, unfortunately muddled the situation when he first appeared to endorse the prime minister's address, only to distance himself from his statements once controversy ensued. Regrettably, this development

created the impression that the US appeared uncertain about its ongoing commitments to Western Europe's security.

The chief executive's actions throughout 1945 and the first half of 1946 demonstrated his initial desire to preserve America's alliance with the USSR. It also reflected his unwillingness to expend political capital on issues that could politicize Washington's foreign policy towards the Soviet Union. Such a scenario threatened to increase domestic criticism of the White House, which could undermine his ability to shape the nation's post-war strategic outlook. The president's habit of minimizing US-Russian tensions, therefore, illustrated how he remained unprepared during his first year in office to implement a dramatic shift in America's policy *vis-à-vis* Moscow. More importantly, this approach inadvertently created the need one year later for Truman to rely on scare tactics to implement his *ad-hoc* policy to preserve Western influence in Greece. In essence, the president himself created the preconditions that led to the Truman Doctrine, a policy he never intended to apply on a global scale against the Soviet Union.

Chapter Three

A Failure to Communicate: Truman's Public Statements and American Foreign Policy in 1946

Throughout 1946, President Truman's efforts to publicly downplay Washington's differences with Moscow inadvertently created dissension within his own administration, which only served to confuse the American peoples' understanding of US-Soviet relations. While the White House successfully countered the Kremlin's attempts to dominate Iran and Turkey, it still issued public statements that failed to reveal the president's growing negative private assessments concerning Stalin's future intentions. Pressing domestic considerations, meanwhile, severely undermined Truman's ability to persuade an exhausted electorate that the US needed to adopt a more expensive confrontational foreign policy in the near future.

The first major post-war crisis occurred in Iran during the spring of 1946. Occupied by the USSR and Britain since 1941, the Allies agreed at Potsdam to withdraw their military forces from this strategically important nation within six months of Japan's final surrender. As the March 2 deadline approached, however, it quickly became apparent that the Soviet government did not intend to honor its promise to evacuate the Red Army. The Russians maintained an active military presence, in part, because they opposed Tehran's continued refusal to grant exclusive oil concessions to Moscow.¹ As early as 1944, Stalin had encouraged the local Tudeh Communist party to engage in nation-wide demonstrations against the central government in an effort to

¹ According to long time Soviet diplomat Andrei Gromyko, the USSR also wanted to maintain troops in northern Iran until the British had withdrawn their force from bases in India and Iraq. Andrei Gromyko, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 237.

induce it to modify their policy. When Iran's leadership fought back and attempted to suppress the leftist group in 1945, the Kremlin orchestrated an open rebellion in territory still under its direct control.² Unable to prevent the establishment of the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, the Iranians desperately turned to the Truman Administration for assistance against the USSR.

At first, Secretary of State Byrnes declined to publicly pressure the Soviet Union because he did not want to "imply that we have already formed a fixed opinion with regard to the merits of the case."³ Discreet American diplomacy, he believed, could resolve the crises without inadvertently inflaming the situation. Initially optimistic, Byrnes personally questioned Stalin about the subject in the hopes that the Russian might reconsider his course of action. To his dismay, the Soviet leader insisted that the Red Army needed to remain in northern Iran because he believed saboteurs sponsored by Tehran intended to attack Russia's Baku oil fields.⁴ Dissatisfied with the Kremlin's explanation, the secretary of state decided to openly support Iran's request to have the UN Security Council address the issue.

Moscow's subsequent reaction to Washington's diplomatic efforts greatly alarmed the Truman Administration, which intensified the crises atmosphere between the two superpowers. For example, the Russians dismissed Iran's appeal to the UN and argued that if the international organization investigated this matter, then it also needed to examine Britain's military presence

² "Decree of the CC CPSU Politburo to Mir Bagirov, CC Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, 'Measures to Organize a Separatist Movement in Southern Azerbaijan and Other Provinces of Northern Iran'," July 06, 1945, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, GAPPOD AzR, f. 1, op. 89, d. 90, ll. 4-5. Obtained by Jamil Hasanli. Translated for CWHIP by Gary Goldberg <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112021>. Accessed June 28, 2015.

³ The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Iran (Murray), January 28, 1946, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, Volume VII, The Near East and Africa* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), 317. Hereafter *FRUS*.

⁴ Memorandum of Conversation by the United States Delegation at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, December 19, 1945, *FRUS, 1945 Volume II, General: Political and Economic Matters*, 685.

in Greece and Indonesia.⁵ Furthermore, the Kremlin claimed that its 1921 treaty with Iran allowed the Soviets to deploy troops into its southern neighbor if “conditions become disturbed” within that nation.⁶ Moscow insisted that only bilateral negotiations between itself and Tehran could resolve the ongoing situation.

Not surprisingly, tensions increased substantially when the March 2 deadline passed and the USSR still maintained troops in northern Iran. Three days after the deadline, Byrnes sent a diplomatic note to the Soviet government that reiterated the American demand for an immediate withdrawal of all of their troops from the region. To mobilize public opinion and perhaps placate some of his domestic critics, the secretary of state also issued a press statement that summarized Washington’s message to Moscow.⁷ Any hopes for a quick diplomatic resolution faded the next day when the State Department’s vice-consul in Azerbaijan, Robert Rossow, Jr., cabled Byrnes with reports of “exceptionally heavy Soviet troop movements” advancing towards both the Turkish border and the interior of Iran.⁸ According to Truman, the sudden influx of Red Army troops into the area had three important implications for the US. First, a persistent Russian occupation of Iran put Turkey’s national security at risk, which might induce Ankara to concede control of the Dardanelles region to Moscow. Second, if the Kremlin controlled the vast Persian oil fields, than it “would be serious loss for the economy of the Western world.”⁹ Finally, the USSR’s aggressive behavior threatened smaller nations and jeopardized the stability of the international order. Consequently the president adopted a firm, if understated, stance to counter what he viewed as unwarranted Soviet aggression.

⁵ James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (New York: Harper, 1947), 123.

⁶ James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, (New York: Harper, 1958), 334.

⁷ “U.S. Sends Two Protest to Russia on Manchuria and Iran Actions,” *New York Times*, March 6, 1946, 1.

⁸ Vice-Consul at Tabriz (Rossow) to the Secretary of State, March 5, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VII, The Near East and Africa*, 340.

⁹ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1956), 95.

Publicly, Truman downplayed the communist threat and tried to minimize the negative impact of Stalin's defiance. For instance, at a March 8 press conference he expressed his doubt that Moscow intended to go "down a one-way street" and leave the nascent UN organization.¹⁰ When asked what he intended to do if the Russians continued their refusal to evacuate their troops, the commander-in-chief only responded with the vague assurance that the issue "will be handled when it comes up."¹¹ Privately, however, the president directed the Pentagon and State Department to send clear messages to the Kremlin that conveyed the White House's strategic interest in the near east. A week earlier, Truman had already ordered the 45,000 ton USS Missouri to Istanbul ostensibly to transport the body of Turkey's late ambassador back to his homeland.¹² Despite the State Department's insistence that the voyage had "no political implications," most informed people generally understood the implicit message of the warship's deployment.¹³ The president also instructed Byrnes to send a second diplomatic note to the Kremlin demanding an explanation for Russia's recent troop movements.¹⁴ When Moscow failed to respond to this message, the secretary of state released a press statement on March 12 that described for the first time how the Soviets had reinforced their troops in northern Iran and why these maneuvers potentially threatened Iran, Iraq, and Turkey.¹⁵ Within three days Kennan reported from Moscow that TASS dismissed Byrne's concerns about the region and claimed his

¹⁰ "President Hopeful," *New York Times*, March 9, 1946, 1.

¹¹ Harry S. Truman. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman: containing the public messages, speeches, and statements of the President, April 12, 1945 to January 20, 1953. Volume 2: 1946* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1961), 146.

¹² Forrestal recorded in his diary that Truman rejected his recommendation to have a large naval task force accompany the Missouri. When the secretary of the navy informed Churchill, the former prime minister glumly observed that "a gesture of power not fully implemented was almost less effective than no gesture at all." James Forrestal, Walter Millis, and E.S. Duffield, *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 144-5.

¹³ "USS Missouri to visit Turkey, Italy, and Egypt," *Chicago Tribune*, March 7, 1946, 7.

¹⁴ The Secretary of State to the Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan), March 8, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VII*, 348.

¹⁵ "Red Army Pours In," *New York Times*, March 13, 1946, 1.

account “absolutely does not correspond to reality.”¹⁶ Forty-eight hours later the *charge d affaires* asserted that the USSR deployed its military units in an effort to intimidate Tehran with respects to their ongoing bilateral negotiations concerning oil concessions. The UN, he concluded, could resolve the crises in a manner that preserved Russia, Iran, and America’s national prestige.¹⁷ Administration officials agreed with this recommendation and renewed their efforts to achieve a solution through the Security Council.

On March 25, the Kremlin announced a preliminary settlement with Tehran that mandated the withdrawal of all Russian forces within six weeks.¹⁸ Later that day Iran’s UN ambassador denied that his nation made a secret agreement with Moscow and called upon the Security Council to use its inaugural session to investigate Soviet activities within his country. For his part, Truman supported this move because he believed the USSR “would carry on local aggression unless world opinion stopped them.”¹⁹ Predictably, the Russian ambassador to the UN, Andrei Gromyko, asked the Council to remove the issue from the agenda and allow Moscow’s bilateral talks with Tehran to continue unhindered. When Byrnes refused to acquiesce, the Soviet delegate angrily denounced the proceedings and walked out of the session.²⁰ The impasse, however, lasted until April 4 when Moscow and Tehran announced the conclusion a comprehensive agreement that gave the USSR a controlling interest in an Iranian oil company in

¹⁶ The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, March 15, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VII*, 356.

¹⁷ Kennan also concluded that Turkey remained secure in the short term and did not appear threatened by Russia’s reinforcements. The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State, March 17, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VII*, 362-4.

¹⁸ The Ambassador in Iran (Murray) to the Secretary of State, March 25, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VII*, 379-80; “Need for UNO move scouted by Stalin,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1946, 1.

¹⁹ Adolf A. Berle, *Navigating the Rapids, 1918-1971; From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 573.

²⁰ James B. Reston, “Council Proceeds: Soviet Delegate walks out of UNO,” *New York Times*, March 28, 1946, 1; Gromyko, *Memoirs*, 237.

return for the Kremlin's promise to evacuate its troops within a month.²¹ As tensions diminished, many in the Truman administration believed that only America's strong stance against Russia had preserved Iran's sovereignty from Soviet aggression.²²

Clearly, the Iranian crises, in addition to Stalin's February 9 election eve address and Churchill's March 5 Iron Curtain speech, had together created the distinct impression that the Big Three no longer intended to cooperate with one another on foreign policy matters. For his part, Byrnes expressed great satisfaction with the State Department's successful mobilization of US and world opinion against the Soviets in regards to the Iranian issue. He observed that "many of our newspapers and correspondents who had previously misunderstood our position... had been greatly shocked at Russia's attitude toward a small state."²³ In his opinion, "Russian popularity in the United States had been completely dissipated."²⁴ Though originally a proponent of negotiations with the Kremlin, the secretary of state now exhibited a more Trumanesque attitude towards the USSR. As for his counterpart in Moscow, Molotov angrily denounced what he viewed as hypocrisy in the allied camp. Britain, he declared at the Paris foreign ministers conference, still maintained "troops in Greece, Palestine, Iraq, Indo-China, and elsewhere" while Russia based its soldiers only in "security zones and... lines of

²¹ On October 22, 1947 the Iranian Parliament handed the Soviet Union a major diplomatic defeat when the legislative body voted against the oil concessions treaty by an overwhelming vote of 102 to two. With the Red Army completely out of Iran, the Russians could no longer intimidate Tehran as they once did. By 1947, the Iranian army had retaken full control of all of its northern provinces, which signaled the end of the Moscow backed Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan. "Iran's Parliament Nullifies Oil Agreement with Russia," *Christian Science Monitor*, 17; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department*, (New York: Norton, 1969) 198.

²² Truman, *Memoirs; Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 95; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 198.

²³ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of European Affairs (Matthews), May 1, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume II: Council of Foreign Ministers*, 204.

²⁴ A March 13, 1946 poll taken by the American Institute of Public Opinion revealed that seventy-one percent of its survey opposed the Soviet Union's foreign policy. *Ibid.*, 204; Hadley Cantril and Mildred Strunk, ed., *Public Opinion, 1935-1946*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951), 963.

communication.”²⁵ He added that London seemed intent on ignoring persistent requests from nations such as Egypt to withdraw English military units from their sovereign territory. “How long,” the Soviet foreign minister asked, “can such things go on?”²⁶ Within this prevailing mindset, the Russian government prepared to make its next move.

On August 7, 1946, the Kremlin sent a diplomatic note to the Turkish government that asserted that the 1936 Montreux Convention did not provide adequate security for the Soviet Union. The message enumerated four separate instances during World War II where the Axis powers used the Dardanelles to transit warships into the Black Sea to fight against the USSR. As such, the Kremlin claimed that only a joint defense of the straits by Moscow and Ankara could provide a satisfactory solution.²⁷ This request prompted an immediate response from the Truman administration, which viewed the move as another Soviet attempt to threaten and dominate one of its neighbors.

Within days of receiving a copy of the diplomatic note, US Ambassador Edwin C. Wilson sent an urgent message to Byrnes in Paris, which expressed his growing anxiety concerning Stalin’s long term intentions. Acknowledging Moscow’s age-old dream of controlling the Bosphorus, the nervous diplomat warned his superior that the Soviets intended to undermine Ankara’s independence and replace it with a friendly regime. Furthermore, he predicted that if Turkey became another Russian satellite, then the “last barrier” to the Persian

²⁵ Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr. and Joe Alex Morris, ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 277-8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 278.

²⁷ While the Russian note specifically guaranteed free navigation of the Dardanelles for merchant ships, it expressly demanded that the straits be closed to all naval ships other than vessels belonging to Black Sea powers. The Soviet Charge (Orekhov) to the Acting Secretary of State, August 7, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VII*, 827-9.

Gulf and Suez will have fallen.²⁸ The temptation for the Kremlin to conquer the rest of the Middle East, he concluded, “would be more than human nature could withstand.”²⁹ Ultimately, Wilson’s cable expressed the sentiment of what many officials in the Truman administration already had about the USSR. Consequently, when the president met with his advisors on August 15, 1946 to discuss America’s options, a consensus quickly emerged for a tough US response. At the meeting Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson expanded on Wilson’s theme and declared that if the Soviets seized control of Turkey, then Greece and Britain’s line of communication to India could collapse. He argued that Washington needed to respond to Moscow’s “trial balloon” with a strong message that rejected any possibility of the Soviet Union participating in the Dardanelles’ defense.³⁰ To emphasize the seriousness of the situation, Acheson recommended the sending of a large naval task force to the eastern Mediterranean to join the USS Missouri already deployed in the region.³¹ Forrestal concurred with the acting secretary of state and suggested that the administration give a background briefing to the major newspapers in an effort to mobilize public opinion.³² In the end, Truman accepted the unanimous decision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretaries of state, war and navy and decided to send the US fleet to the region. When Chief of Staff of the Army, General Dwight D. Eisenhower commented that this course of action might lead to war with the USSR, the president replied that he understood the risk but insisted that the White House needed to safeguard Turkey’s independence in order to promote America’s vital interest in the Middle East.³³

²⁸ The Ambassador in Turkey (Wilson) to the Secretary of State, August 12, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume VII*, 837.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 837.

³⁰ Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 192.

³¹ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 195.

³² Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 192-3.

³³ Truman *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Hope*, 97.

Washington's strong diplomatic and military initiatives encouraged Ankara to resist Moscow's demands and subsequently persuaded the Kremlin to withdraw its request.³⁴ While the short-lived crises ended peacefully, it also conceivably could have resulted in open warfare between the super powers. Interestingly, Truman personally ignored Forrestal's advice and never made any public comments concerning this issue and the risk involved. In the end, the Turkish episode illustrated the president's lack of communication with the American people even as he adopted an open ended political and military commitment to safeguard Turkey's sovereignty.³⁵

The Iranian and Turkish crises helped create a consensus within the US foreign policy establishment as officials gradually accepted the view that the Soviet Union posed a persistent threat to its neighbors and, by extension, Washington's political and economic interest. Newly converted to this mindset and anxious to prove his toughness as a negotiator, Secretary of State Byrnes now wholeheartedly expressed the administration's plan to counter Russian intransigence in Germany. Despite this growing trend for a tougher American policy, Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace remained the last prominent member of the administration who still advocated a more conciliatory approach towards the USSR. The New Dealer's outspoken beliefs, however, inadvertently highlighted the contradictions in Truman's overall foreign policy and helped create an embarrassing situation that forced the president to publicly reveal his anti-Soviet position.

On September 6, 1946, Byrnes gave an important speech in Stuttgart, Germany that signaled a major shift in America's policy towards that conquered nation and redefined

³⁴ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 196.

³⁵ On October 1, 1946 Forrestal announced the permanent deployment of the US Navy in the Mediterranean Sea. The *New York Herald Tribune* observed that Forrestal's statement "formally linked naval operations with American foreign policy for the first time." Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 211.

Washington's role in Europe's political future.³⁶ The Allied Control Council, he claimed without naming the Soviet Union, failed to adhere to the principles of the Potsdam agreement. According to the year old accords, the four occupying powers promised to develop a central administrative bureaucracy to coordinate the resources of a unified German economy. The failure to achieve this goal, the secretary of state warned, jeopardized the post-war recovery of the entire European continent.³⁷ To remedy this situation, he announced the US intended to unilaterally restore limited self-rule to the German people. A democratically elected government, he observed, could better organize and manage the Reich's economic assets. In connection to this objective, Byrnes also revealed the Truman administration's intention to combine America's economic zone in Germany "with any or all of the other zones willing to participate in the unification."³⁸ Furthermore, he declared Washington's new plan to increase German industrial production, which thus far had been limited by the Allies. Increased trade, the diplomat argued, created the prerequisites for a "self-sustaining economy," which in turn benefited all the nations of the region.³⁹ Consequently, the secretary of state opposed any attempts by outside powers to politically detach the Rhineland and Ruhr from Germany. Finally, in a thinly veiled reference to the USSR, Byrnes commented that the US refused to accept any scenario where Germany

³⁶ In his memoirs Byrnes considered this address his "most effective speech." Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 368; "This time we'll stay," *The New York Times*, September 8, 1946, E6.

³⁷ In the twelve months following the end of the war, the four Allied Powers failed to cooperate on issues related to food supplies and industrial production in Germany. To address this problem, the US spent \$550 million through the auspices of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to help feed the devastated German population. Despite this aid, economic privation remained severe, which threatened to spread political instability throughout Western and Central Europe. This led many American officials to seriously contemplate the possibility that various communist parties might exploit the situation and seize power in nations such as Italy and France. Amazingly, Washington briefly considered a plan in 1946 to invade the French Republic in case this eventuality ever occurred. "Truman asks Congress Appropriate \$550 Million for UNRRA," *Wall Street Journal*, October 8, 1945, 3; "German food crises grows, Allied action termed urgent," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 25, 1946, 7; "Food and Politics," *Wall Street Journal*, April 11, 1946, 6; The War Department to the Commanding General, US Forces, European Theater (McNarney), at Frankfurt, Germany, May 3, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume V, The British Commonwealth, Western and Central Europe*, 435-8.

³⁸ "Text of Secretary Byrnes' Speech On US Policy in Germany," *New York Times*, Sept 7, 1946, 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

became “the satellite of any power.”⁴⁰ America, he dramatically concluded, vowed to maintain its military presence in its occupation zone.

Not surprisingly, world opinion immediately fragmented in response to this pivotal speech. In the US, the *New York Times* praised the secretary of state’s clarity and asserted that it “was the most comprehensive and clear cut” message concerning foreign policy since the Potsdam conference.⁴¹ Likewise, Britain’s *Daily Mail* described the address as “a breath of fresh air” while Italy’s *Il Giornale d’ Italia* expressed relief that “Mr. Byrnes had placed a tombstone on United States isolationism.”⁴² Predictably, the communist-controlled *Berliner-Zeitung* condemned the speech and warned that America’s new proposals risked permanently dividing the Reich into separate nations.⁴³ Interestingly, the Soviet government’s press organ, *TASS*, refrained from offering any critical comments and instead published a brief thirty-two line summary of the US program.⁴⁴ In stark contrast to this relatively benign presentation, newspaper editors from across France conveyed their intense disappointment with Washington’s unilateral decision to keep the Ruhr and the Rhineland within the Reich.⁴⁵

Like their nation’s newspapers, official government statements reflected a wide spectrum of opinions concerning Byrnes’ speech. London’s Foreign Office, for example, applauded Washington’s decision to stay involved in Europe’s post-war economic recovery.⁴⁶ Similarly, German administrators from the US occupation zone approved most of the secretary of state’s

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴¹ “Byrnes for German Regime,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1946, 1.

⁴² “32 Lines on Byrnes’ printed in Soviet Press,” *New York Times*, September 8, 1946, 26.

⁴³ Other communist nations, such as Poland, expressed their concerns with America’s new German policy. In Warsaw’s case, the government worried about a reference in the secretary of state’s speech that questioned the permanency of Poland’s new western border along the Oder River. “Berlin Russia Press Scores Byrnes’ Plan,” *New York Times*, September 9, 1946, 4; “Byrnes’ Speech Stirs Warsaw; called ‘Hostile,’” *Chicago Tribune*, September 8, 1946, 7.

⁴⁴ “32 Lines on Byrnes printed in Soviet Press,” *New York Times*, September 8, 1946, 26.

⁴⁵ “French Dislike Speech,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 7, 1946, 1.

⁴⁶ “Britain welcomes Byrnes’ Proposal,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1946, 4.

suggestions and welcomed the prospect of a permanent American military presence in their country.⁴⁷ The French government, however, disliked the idea of a resurgent Germany and questioned the Truman administration's long term commitment to maintain its troops in the conquered nation. Furthermore, Paris expressed its concerns that the Soviet Union could influence the proposed central bureaucracy and eventually seize control of the entire Reich once the US army left the continent.⁴⁸ As for the Kremlin, it appeared remarkably disinterested about the speech and simply commented that Washington's leaders appeared ready to "interest themselves in European affairs and those of the whole world."⁴⁹ Equally amazing, the address, which received bipartisan support in the US, failed to elicit a public statement from Truman himself.⁵⁰ Though many observers generally understood that the president had heavily influenced the speech, it seemed odd for the White House to appear aloof about this major foreign policy initiative.⁵¹ Within one week, however, events forced the chief executive to assume a more public role with respects to America's increasingly adversarial stance towards the Soviet Union.

Four days after Byrnes' Stuttgart Speech, former vice-president and current Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace met with Truman to obtain his superior's approval for an address he intended to give at a political rally on September 12, in New York City. The language of the prepared text described the idealist's vision for a new world order where Washington and

⁴⁷ While the speech received widespread praise in the western zones, many Germans rejected a statement in the address, which allowed France to seize the Saar if conditions warranted it. Chicago Tribune, "Germans see Ray of Hope in US Policy," *Chicago Tribune*, September 7, 1946, 1.

⁴⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of European Affairs (Matthews), September 24, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Volume V: The British Commonwealth, Central and Western Europe*, 609; "French skeptical on Byrnes' Plans," *New York Times*, September 7, 1946, 4.

⁴⁹ The Soviets most likely adopted a mute response because, as signatories to the Potsdam Accords, they had committed themselves, at least superficially, to many of the principles enunciated in Byrnes' speech. Moscow seemed content to have Paris, which did not attend the Potsdam Conference, voice its opposition to the prospects of a resurgent Germany. "This Time We'll Stay," *New York Times*, September 8, 1946, E6.

⁵⁰ "Capital calls Talk a Reply to Molotov Bid to Germans," *New York Times*, September 7, 1946, 1.

⁵¹ It is possible that Truman adopted a publicly detached attitude towards the Soviet Union because he did not want to make it difficult for Moscow to modify its foreign policy. "Capital calls Talk a Reply to Molotov Bid to Germany," *New York Times*, September 7, 1946, 1.

Moscow cooperated on a host of international issues.⁵² For example, he planned to remark that America and Russia should limit their competitive energies to the fields of economic and social justice. In doing so the two nations could eventually become more alike in the future, thereby enhancing the prospects for a lasting peace.⁵³ To achieve this utopian goal, he argued, the White House and the Kremlin needed to accommodate each other's interest in various parts of the world.⁵⁴ The speech boldly declared that "we have no more business in the *political* affairs of Eastern Europe than Russia has in the *political* affairs of Latin America, western Europe, and the United States...whether we like it or not the Russians will try to socialize their sphere of influence just as we try to democratize our sphere of influence."⁵⁵ In addition to his de-facto acceptance of the USSR's domination of Eastern Europe, the secretary of commerce planned to announce that "we must not let our Russian policy be guided or influenced by those inside or outside the United States who want war with Russia."⁵⁶ The adoption of a tougher policy, he cautioned, simply created pressure for the Soviets to reciprocate in kind.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Wallace expressed his concerns about Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech and warned that Washington could not trust London to advance America's interest in the world. "Make no mistake about it," he intended to inform his audience, "the British imperialist policy in the Near East alone, combined with Russian retaliation, would lead the United States straight to war."⁵⁸ Finally, the address concluded with the bold assurance that the president had read Wallace's prepared remarks and agreed that "they represented the policy of his administration."⁵⁹ Surprisingly, Truman did

⁵² Henry A. Wallace, *The Price of Vision* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 612-3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 666.

⁵⁴ Wallace, *The Price of Vision*, 661-9.

⁵⁵ Wallace specifically referred to the Balkans and how the Soviets could not permit the US and Britain to dominate this region. *Ibid.*, 665.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 665.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 664.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 664.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 664.

approve the speech. According to the secretary of commerce, he and the chief executive “went over it page by page, together...and again and again he said, ‘That’s right,’ Yes, that is what I believe.”⁶⁰ In contrast, the president recalled that he and Wallace spent only a few moments of a short fifteen minute meeting discussing general ideas contained within the address.⁶¹ With only enough time to “skim through the speech,” Truman endorsed it because he assumed “Henry was cooperating in all phases of the administration—including foreign policy.”⁶² Subsequent events, however, soon revealed the folly of this notion.

The release of an advance copy of Wallace’s speech to the media created an immediate sensation in Washington. Stunned by the administration’s apparent decision to alter its relationship with both Britain and Russia, reporters eagerly quizzed the president at his weekly press conference held four hours before the secretary of commerce’s address in New York. When asked to confirm Wallace’s assertion that the White House sanctioned the speech’s contents, Truman bluntly replied, “I approved the whole speech.”⁶³ Intrigued, a correspondent enquired if the address repudiated the state department’s foreign policy. The president emphatically declared that it did not. When pressed on the issue, he claimed that the ideas espoused by both Wallace and Byrnes “are exactly in line” with one another.⁶⁴ Dumbfounded, the reporters filed their stories, which exacerbated the inevitable controversy that followed.⁶⁵

Predictably, the commerce secretary’s provocative address at Madison Square Garden elicited wide spread criticism from all quarters of the political spectrum. For example, numerous

⁶⁰ Ibid., 612.

⁶¹ Truman later insisted that he and Wallace spent most of the meeting discussing issues related to the World Food Board. Truman, *Memoirs; Volume I: Year of Decisions*, 557.

⁶² Harry S. Truman and Robert H. Ferrell, *Off the Record: the Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 94; Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 557.

⁶³ Truman, News Conference, September 12, 1946, *Public Papers: 1946*, 426-7.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 428.

⁶⁵ Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, (New York: Random House, 1991), 118.

leftist at the CIO sponsored political rally jeered and heckled the speaker when he urged the USSR to appreciate America's economic interest in Eastern Europe.⁶⁶ Likewise, politicians from both parties expressed their dissatisfaction after Wallace's rejected Washington's "get tough" policy towards Moscow.⁶⁷ Democrat Tom Connally, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued a strong statement that supported the secretary of state and called for an end to "intraparty division."⁶⁸ The Republican National Committee adopted a harsher view when it denounced the speech as an "obvious attempt to submarine the Atlantic Charter."⁶⁹ Echoing this sentiment, Senator Robert A. Taft argued that the president, by approving the address, had "betrayed" Byrnes and the entire state department.⁷⁰ For his part, Vandenberg publicly questioned the administration's unity concerning its foreign policy and commented that "we can only co-operate with one Secretary of State at a time."⁷¹ Bipartisan support in international affairs, he warned, could only continue if the US and Britain maintained a united front against the Soviet Union.

Not surprisingly, Wallace's speech created major problems for Byrnes, who currently led America's delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. Confronted with numerous questions from foreign diplomats who suddenly doubted Truman's commitments to Europe and the Near East, the secretary of state immediately withdrew from the meetings until the president could settle the

⁶⁶ Leftist in the CIO generally opposed America's post-war plans in Europe. For example, Byrnes' Stuttgart Speech elicited severe criticism from Albert J. Fitzgerald, president of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE), who condemned the state department because it viewed "Germany through the eyes of corporation executives who are eager to reestablish relations with their Nazi counterparts." "UE officers assail Byrnes," *New York Times*, September 10, 1946, 3; "Wallace warns of 'Tough' Policy toward Russia" *New York Times*, September 13, 1946, 1.

⁶⁷ "President expected to back up Byrnes in Storm on Wallace," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 14, 1946, 1; Wallace, *The Price of Vision*, 664.

⁶⁸ "Connally, Vandenberg Urge Bipartisan Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, September 15, 1946, 1.

⁶⁹ "President expected to back up Byrnes in Storm on Wallace," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 14, 1946, 1.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷¹ "Connally, Vandenberg Urge Bipartisan Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, September 15, 1946, 5.

matter.⁷² This occurred on September 14 when the White House declared in a press statement that the US government had not changed its established foreign policy.⁷³ In language reminiscent of his previous attempt to disown Churchill's 'Iron Curtain Speech,' the chief executive insisted that while he approved Wallace's right to "deliver" the address, he did not endorse his message.⁷⁴ This disingenuous clarification satisfied no one, which prompted the media to castigate the president for his weak explanation. *Time Magazine*, for example, labeled the official excuse a "clumsy lie" while the *New York Times* wondered if Truman's repudiation of his secretary of commerce inadvertently made the Soviets more suspicious of America's intentions.⁷⁵ Wallace, meanwhile, showed no concern for the president's predicament when he defiantly told reporters on September 16 that he stood by his Madison Square Garden address and intended to give more foreign policy speeches in the near future.⁷⁶ This unwelcome announcement finally provoked Byrnes to issue an ultimatum to the White House. In a terse cable, the distressed secretary of state declared: "If it is not completely clear in your own mind that Mr. Wallace should be asked to refrain from criticizing the foreign policy of the United States while he is a member of your cabinet I must ask you to accept my resignation immediately."⁷⁷ Unwilling to lose his cabinet secretary and jeopardize America's ongoing

⁷² Byrnes later recalled how fellow diplomats had asked him if his recent public statements "correctly presented American policy." Embarrassed and frustrated, the secretary of state suspended his participation in the current negotiation with Molotov. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 372.

⁷³ According to Special Counsel to the president, Clark Clifford, the president privately confessed at a staff meeting on September 13 that he had had made a "grave blunder." Truman, however, waited twenty four hours before issuing a public statement because he thought the furor over the issue might pass. Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, (New York: Random House, 1991), 119.

⁷⁴ As author of the self-described "weak and misleading" White House press release, Clifford admitted he had little hope that it "might stop the hemorrhaging." *Ibid.*, 119.

⁷⁵ "Capital Faces Hang-Over On Wallace-Truman Issue," *New York Times*, September 16, 1946, 2.

⁷⁶ "Wallace Stands on Policy Speech, Plans a New Talk," *New York Times*, September 17, 1946, 1.

⁷⁷ Byrnes initially tendered his resignation on April 16, 1946 because of health reasons. Truman, however, persuaded him to remain in his position until the conclusion of the Paris Peace Conference. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 355, 373-4; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 559.

negotiations in Paris, the president attempted once more to resolve the crisis that he helped create.⁷⁸

On September 18 Truman met Wallace at the White House in an effort to reestablish order in his administration.⁷⁹ The chief executive proceeded to inform his wayward subordinate that he needed to stop giving speeches about foreign policy.⁸⁰ The New Dealer, however, balked at this demand and spent the following two and half hours trying to obtain concessions from the president.⁸¹ Finally, in what newspapers referred to as a “truce,” Truman allowed his commerce secretary to publicly speak about US-Soviet relations after the Paris Peace Conference concluded in October.⁸² Unimpressed with this new development, Byrnes hurriedly sent another angry cable to Washington and again threatened to resign.⁸³ In an abruptly organized teletype conference, the commander-in-chief assured his secretary of state that Wallace still needed to obtain permission if he wanted to speak about foreign affairs in the future.⁸⁴

As Truman tried to placate the State Department’s leadership, the *New York Times* complicated the situation when it published a confidential letter written by Wallace to the

⁷⁸ Privately, Truman acknowledged his responsibility in the Wallace fiasco. According to Clark Clifford, the president confessed “I know I made a mistake and it was a beaut.” Likewise, in a letter to his mother and sister the chief executive sheepishly observed “Never was there such a mess and it is partly my making. But when I make a mistake it is a good one.” Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 120; Margaret Truman, *Harry S. Truman*, (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1973), 317.

⁷⁹ As the last liberal New Dealer on Truman’s cabinet, Wallace’s presence in the administration helped the president with labor unions and progressives. This explains why the White House had adopted such a deferential attitude towards the commerce secretary. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 558; Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 373.

⁸⁰ Truman fully expected Wallace to resign during this meeting. Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 120; Truman, *Harry S. Truman*, 317.

⁸¹ In Wallace’s opinion, Truman needed to repudiate “the present bipartisan, Republican-dominated foreign policy” and instead adopt a more accommodating stance towards the USSR. The subsequent reduction of US-Soviet tensions, he argued, could help the democrats retain control of Congress after the 1946 election. Wallace, *The Price of Vision*, 617-23; Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 558.

⁸² “Wallace Gagged; Keeps Job: President and Aid agree to ban on talks,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 19, 1946,1; “Truman Silences Wallace until after Paris Parley; Secretary will keep Post,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1946,1; “Handicap for Mr. Byrnes: the Wallace Crises,” *Manchester Guardian*, September 20, 1946, 5.

⁸³ Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 559

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 559; Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 374-6.

president dated from July 23, 1946. Leaked by an anonymous source, the classified document catalogued the secretary of commerce's numerous concerns with America's current foreign policy.⁸⁵ One observation- that the Pentagon intended to wage a "preventive war" against Russia- infuriated the president, who promptly directed the Secretaries of War and Navy to refute the allegation in a joint press statement.⁸⁶ Consequently, the exasperated chief executive asked for and received Wallace's resignation on September 20, 1946.⁸⁷ At a hastily called press conference the president explained that while private citizens could disagree with Washington's foreign policy, "the government of the United States must stand as a unit in its relations with the rest of the world."⁸⁸ Furthermore, he expressed his full confidence in Byrne's work and concluded that the White House and State Department's conception of international relations remained unchanged.⁸⁹ Despite his initial desire to remain publicly aloof about such matters, Truman became increasingly identified with his evolving foreign policy.

Four days after Wallace's termination, the president received a classified study regarding America's current relations with the Soviet Union. Written by Special Counsel Clark Clifford and his assistant, George Elsey, the detailed 26,000 word report examined Russia's long term strategic goals and suggested the various means by which Washington could respond to Moscow's aggressive behavior.⁹⁰ Comprehensive in scope, this noteworthy analysis gathered

⁸⁵ "Text of Secretary Wallace's letter to President Truman on US Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, September 18, 1946, 2.

⁸⁶ Truman, *Memoirs: Year of Decisions*, 558.

⁸⁷ According to Clifford, the Wallace situation made the president "uncharacteristically depressed." Despite this observation, the special counsel recalled being surprised by Truman's announcement of the commerce secretary's resignation because it occurred just forty-eight hours after the so-called truce had been decided. *Ibid.*, 560; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 120.

⁸⁸ Truman, News Conference, September 20, 1946, *Public Papers: 1946*, 431; Wallace, *The Price of Vision*, 629.

⁸⁹ "Truman oust Wallace, Bolster Byrnes, Nails down unified US foreign policy," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 20, 1946, 1; "The President Acts" *New York Times*, September 21, 1946, 1.

⁹⁰ Originally, the president asked Clifford to compile a list of Russia's broken agreements. Elsey convinced his superior to instead write a comprehensive report because he "was convinced that Truman still failed to grasp the

information from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, the attorney general, and the secretaries of state, war, and navy. As such, the document revealed a consensus amongst the administration's senior officials to implement a containment policy based on ideas formulated in Kennan's Long Telegram.⁹¹

The Clifford-Elsey Report asserted that Marxist theory guided the Kremlin's overall foreign policy towards the US and Britain. According to the study, Moscow's firm belief in communism's "inevitable conflict" with capitalism explained why Russia maintained the Red Army in Eastern Europe and failed to cooperate with America in Germany.⁹² Furthermore, it provided the rationale for the Soviet Union's aggressive behavior towards Iran and Turkey. Despite these belligerent actions, however, the USSR currently desired peaceful relations with the West while it engaged in post-war reconstruction. The assessment predicted, however, that the Russians intended to strengthen and expand their political, military, and economic power until they achieved "eventual world domination."⁹³

In addition to their analysis of Moscow's general aspirations, Clifford and Elsey's report described specific Russian challenges to Washington's national interest. In stark language the study warned, "The Soviet Union is interested in obtaining the withdrawal of British troops from Greece and the establishment of a 'friendly' government there. It hopes to make Turkey a puppet state which could serve as a springboard for the domination of the eastern Mediterranean."⁹⁴

Moreover, the assessment highlighted the Kremlin's desire to acquire "atomic weapons, guided

magnitude of the Soviet challenge." *Counsel to the President*, 123-4; George McKee Elsey, *An Unplanned Life* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press. 2005) 141-2.

⁹¹ Report, "American Relations with the Soviet Union," September 24, 1946, box 63, folder 13, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 3, 9.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

missiles, materials for biological warfare, a strategic air force” and a large submarine fleet in order to intimidate the White House.⁹⁵ Finally, the document detailed Moscow’s espionage efforts against the US and its active support for subversive movements within the country.⁹⁶

In the special counsel’s opinion, the Truman administration needed to convince Russia’s leaders that their confrontational policies lacked any prospect for success. Traditional diplomatic compromises, the report noted, must be ruled out because it encouraged the Soviets to demand more concessions.⁹⁷ Instead, the study advised the president to adopt a comprehensive strategy to “restrain the Soviet Union and confine Soviet influence to its present area.”⁹⁸ This required the federal government to expand America’s military force, including its nuclear and biological weapons stockpiles.⁹⁹ In addition to deterrence, the document called for Washington to “support and assist all democratic countries which are in any way menaced or endangered by the USSR.”¹⁰⁰ Clearly foreshadowing the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, the assessment envisioned a broad open ended economic aid program designed to combat the Kremlin’s attempts to spread communism. Military assistance, the report cautioned, should only be used as “a last resort.”¹⁰¹ The study concluded that if the Soviets still refused to cooperate on international issues, than the US “should be prepared to join with the British and other Western countries...to build up a world of our own which will pursue its own objectives and will

⁹⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁹⁶ Ibid.,65-9.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 73.

⁹⁸ Years later Clifford and Elsey humorously conjectured that “future historians might have referred to the policy of ‘restraint’ instead of ‘containment.’” Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 125.

⁹⁹ The report stressed that “the language of military power is the only language which the disciples of power politics understand.” Box 63, folder 13, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library, 73.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 75.

¹⁰¹ The study concluded that “trade agreements, loans, and technical missions” offered the best means for safeguarding smaller nations from communist expansion. Ibid., 75.

recognize the Soviet orbit as a distinct entity with which conflict is not predestined but with which we cannot pursue common goals.”¹⁰²

After Truman read the Clifford-Elsey Report, he immediately asked his special counsel to bring all twenty copies of the study to the oval office. According to his aide, the president described the document as “powerful stuff” but insisted that it not be distributed to officials in the cabinet.¹⁰³ “If it leaked” the chief executive warned “it would blow the roof off the White House, it would blow the roof off the Kremlin. We’d have the most serious situation on our hands that has yet occurred in my Administration.”¹⁰⁴ Consequently, the assessment, which the commander-in-chief never acknowledged in either his memoirs or private diaries, remained classified until 1968.¹⁰⁵ Despite its suppression, the report’s findings undoubtedly altered Truman’s general attitude towards the Soviet Union. For example, Elsey recalled how the president’s usual “relaxed view of the USSR” abruptly ended after he received the study on September 24.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, Clifford noted at this time that the White House suddenly ended all active discussions pertaining to Russia’s longstanding request for a multi-billion dollar loan.¹⁰⁷ Clearly, the study had made a profound impact on the chief executive, who wanted to keep its contents secret from the American People.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Ibid.,72; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 126-7.

¹⁰³ Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 123.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 123-4.

¹⁰⁵ Truman’s suppression of the Clifford-Elsey Report prevented the study from being officially filed at the White House or State Department. The FRUS, therefore, does not contain this important document or refer to it anywhere in its records. In the 1960s, however, the former president revealed the report’s existence to *New York Times* columnist Arthur Krock, who subsequently published it in his memoirs. Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 124, 128; Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1968) 419-82.

¹⁰⁶ According to Elsey, Truman’s prior complaints about broken Russian promises never translated into an effective anti-Soviet policy. With much satisfaction, he concluded that the report’s analysis and predictions helped “hardened” the president’s attitude towards Moscow. Elsey, *An Unplanned Life*, 143.

¹⁰⁷ Clifford recalled that Truman “as recently as September 18,” supported a US loan to Russia. This ended one week later after the president read the report. Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 129.

¹⁰⁸ Truman’s decision to suppress the report is ironic because the study, echoing Kennan’s advice, urged the president to immediately educate the American People about Moscow’s intentions. The assessment observed that

The 1946 mid-term election unquestionably influenced Truman's prompt decision to keep the Clifford-Elsey Report from the public. Having just fired his controversial secretary of commerce, the president understandably did not want to refocus the nation's attention to Washington's foreign policy, especially at a time when it could become a new campaign issue. Furthermore, ongoing domestic issues had eroded the chief executive's political support and thus prevented him from immediately implementing the study's far reaching recommendations. Any attempt to transform America's relations with the Soviet Union, therefore, had to wait until after the November 5 election.

On June 4, 1946, Dean Acheson gave a speech in Boston where he announced that "the fundamental task in the conduct of our foreign affairs" centered on "focusing the will of 140,000,000 people on problems beyond our shores." Unfortunately, he wryly observed, the "people are focusing on 140,000,000 other things."¹⁰⁹ The under secretary of state's comments referred to America's numerous domestic problems, which had preoccupied Washington's attention since September, 1945. The military's massive demobilization, for example, created an acute housing shortage when millions of GIs suddenly returned stateside to resume their civilian lives.¹¹⁰ This, in turn, put additional stress on the nation's economy, which struggled to convert its production to a peace-time basis.¹¹¹ To make matters worse, the uneasy war-time alliance between the country's labor unions and business community had already dissolved as both sides sought to advance their respective interest at the other's expense.¹¹² Consequently, Truman's

"only a well-informed public will support" the open ended policies outlined in the study. Box 63, folder 13, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library, 78.

¹⁰⁹ *Department of State Bulletin*, XIV (June 16, 1946), 1045.

¹¹⁰ Truman, *Memoirs; Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 506-12.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 222, 484, 495.

¹¹² With the war over, business leaders wanted the Truman Administration to immediately end all price controls. Conversely, Labor Unions wanted the government to unfreeze wages, which had stayed the same throughout the war years. *Ibid.*, 495-8.

decision to end wartime controls for certain commodities in late 1945 inadvertently made the situation worse for millions of working class Americans whose wages had not increased during the previous four years.¹¹³ As labor unrest quickly spread across the US, the besieged chief executive mused: “Sherman was wrong...peace is hell.”¹¹⁴

The nation’s preoccupation with domestic issues intensified throughout 1946. Numerous strikes, for example, caused major disruptions in the automobile, steel, and mining industries, which jeopardized the countries long term economic stability.¹¹⁵ The president’s tolerance for these work stoppages ended, however, on May 23 when 250,000 railway employees walked off the job.¹¹⁶ With interstate commerce essentially paralyzed, Truman went before congress on May 25 and asked for emergency authority to seize industries, draft strikers into the armed forces, and arrest labor leaders. Perhaps not surprisingly, the railroad unions immediately ended their walk out, which the chief executive dramatically announced while giving his speech to the legislature.¹¹⁷ Although many people praised the president’s strong actions, it came at a political cost because he had alienated the Democrat’s liberal base. His party, therefore, entered the 1946 mid-term elections in a much weaker and demoralized state.

¹¹³ On October 15, 1945, Truman ended wartime bans on certain building materials to stimulate the construction industry and create new jobs. Unfortunately, the decision unintentionally inflated prices, which magnified the housing shortage and reinforced the unions’ demands for higher wages. Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict & Crises* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 119.

¹¹⁴ Truman half-jokingly uttered the phrase, “peace is hell,” at the Gridiron Dinner on December 15, 1945. Gridiron Speech, December 15, 1945, box 37, October-December, 1945 folder, PSF (President’s Secretary’s Files): Speech File, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

¹¹⁵ By late January, 1946, an estimated 1,650,000 workers had waked off the job in the automobile and steel industries. Two months later an additional 400,000 coal miners went on strike. “Wages lost through strikes total \$13.5 million daily,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 23, 1946, 2; “Strike of U.S. Miners,” *Manchester Guardian*, April 1, 1946, 5.

¹¹⁶ Two unions, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, ignored Truman’s request not to go on strike. Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 88; “Delay Rail Strike 5 Days,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 19, 1946; “Railway Strike 8th Major One since V-J Day,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 24, 1946, 4.

¹¹⁷ “Strike off; Trains running: Unions give in to U.S. Pressure,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 26, 1946, 1; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 90-1.

Predictably, most Americans blamed the White House for America's post-war economic chaos. High prices, food shortages, and labor disruptions eroded Truman's popularity with the electorate.¹¹⁸ With respects to foreign relations, the president's ambivalent public statements concerning Washington's policy towards Moscow; combined with his vacillating reactions to both Churchill and Wallace's speeches made him look disinterested and untrustworthy to a growing number of voters. Furthermore, liberal's expressed dissatisfaction with what they viewed as a new confrontational policy against the Soviet Union while conservatives declared that it did not go far enough to free Eastern Europe from Russia's domination. The ensuing discontent enabled the Republicans to win majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives for the first time since 1928.¹¹⁹ With new congressional leadership intent on lowering taxes and scaling back military expenditures, the White House now appeared unlikely to implement the suggestions enumerated in the Clifford-Elsey Report.¹²⁰

Conclusion

Though 1946 ended with Truman in a politically weakened state, he still had achieved significant diplomatic victories against the USSR, especially in the Near East and Europe. In Iran and Turkey, his administration utilized diplomacy and veiled military threats to prevent the Kremlin from dominating these two strategic nations. In both situations, however, the president made few public statements, preferring instead to have Byrnes and his State Department representatives speak on behalf of the US government. Likewise, when the commander-in-chief

¹¹⁸ Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 83;

¹¹⁹ The Republicans won the election with the effective slogan--"Had Enough?" Ibid., 83.

¹²⁰ In addition to his problems with the new Republican majority, the president also had to contend with his fellow Democrats who had lost confidence in his leadership. Senator J. William Fulbright, for example, publicly urged Truman to appoint Republican Arthur Vandenberg as his next secretary of state before resigning the oval office, thereby making Vandenberg the next president. Predictably, the chief executive dismissed this unorthodox idea and thereafter privately referred to the oxford educated politician as "Senator Halfbright." "Truman rejects resignation Idea," *New York Times*, November 8, 1946, 19; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 83.

decided to unilaterally alter America's occupation policy in Germany he chose his secretary of state to announce the new program instead of himself. Clearly, the president had consciously chosen to publicly downplay, and in some cases, completely ignore Washington's growing tensions with Moscow. Consequently, large segments of the American people remained uncertain about the White House's evolving attitude towards the Soviet Union.

The Wallace fiasco in September, 1946 highlighted the persistent confusion that continued to surround Truman's foreign policy. The president's curious approval of his secretary of commerce's speech repudiated Byrne's recently stated policies concerning Germany's future and undermined US efforts to convince France and Britain that Washington firmly intended to stay involved in European affairs. The subsequent political controversy embarrassed the White House, which forced the chief executive to publicly support his secretary of state. In doing so, Truman alienated the Democrat's liberal wing, whose general views Wallace had represented during his tenure at the Commerce Department. His abrupt resignation, therefore, signified an important development for America's foreign policy because the government now possessed a more united outlook with respects to the Soviet Union.

The Clifford-Elsey report accurately expressed the administration's collective beliefs concerning the USSR's post-war intentions towards the non-communist world. Unlike Kennan's Long Telegram, which explained Soviet behavior within the context of Russia's history and current adherence to communist doctrine, this internal study primarily limited its analysis to Marxism's ideological influence on Moscow's leadership. The Kremlin's confrontational policies towards the capitalist west, the assessment observed, necessitated the need for the US to adopt a comprehensive long term strategy to safeguard its national security. Despite the report's suggestion that the president explain these issues to the American People, Truman suppressed the

study's existence because he correctly realized that its publication in September, 1946 could jeopardize Byrnes' current negotiations with the Russians at the Paris Peace Conference. Furthermore, the president most likely understood that the report's contents threatened to politicize foreign policy issues in the middle of a mid-term election campaign, which could weaken his bi-partisan support and hurt the Democrats at the polls.

Truman's domestic difficulties further hindered his ability to focus the nation's attention on international affairs. Inflation, shortages, and labor strikes preoccupied the White House, which struggled to implement the government's reconversion plan for the economy. Predictably, many Americans blamed the president for the countries numerous post-war problems and expressed their frustration by giving the Republicans majorities in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Consequently, by the end of 1946, the beleaguered commander-in-chief faced a new conservative congressional leadership determined to lower taxes, reduce the federal budget, and impose a more isolationist foreign policy.

The chief executive's actions throughout 1946 continued to reflect the dichotomy inherent in his approach towards the Soviet Union. Though he adopted an increasingly tough stance against Moscow in nations such as Iran and Turkey, Truman continued to maintain a subdued rhetorical style with the American people. This approach began to change, however, when political pressure from the Wallace fiasco forced the reluctant president to publicly support Secretary of State Byrnes' more hardline position. This development notwithstanding, the commander-in-chief still did not want to publicly address America's difficulties with Russia, as indicated by his suppression of the Clifford-Elsey Report just one week after his secretary of commerce's resignation. Only in the aftermath of his party's disastrous performance in November's mid-term election, did Truman appear receptive to his advisors' request to speak

openly about US-Soviet tensions. Domestic factors in late 1946, therefore, encouraged Truman to pursue a dramatic new foreign policy in an effort to salvage his presidency.

Chapter Four

Overstating His Case: Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine

Harry S. Truman entered 1947 eager to regain the political initiative at home and abroad. Britain's decision to withdraw aid from Greece, therefore, provided the ideal opportunity for the president to reassert himself with Congress and the American people. Despite his administration's internal disagreements concerning the severity of the situation, the chief executive readily accepted the premise that Washington needed to safeguard Athens's security from a perceived Soviet inspired insurgency. Unfortunately, the commander-in-chief garnered support for this endeavor by exaggerating the communist threat in the Balkans and overstating the scope of America's required response. Though his speech, subsequently known as the Truman Doctrine, represented a continuation of the White House's containment strategy; its arguments and presentation convinced the public that the US intended to embark upon a new long-term foreign policy against the Soviet Union.

Truman emerged from the 1946 mid-term election a changed man. Despite his party's disastrous performance at the polls, the president exhibited a newfound confidence in both his private and public demeanor.¹ In a letter to his wife, the chief executive boldly declared that "I'm doing as I damn please for the next two years and to hell with all of them."² Not content with the notion of being a caretaker president, Truman increasingly strived to imprint his personality upon

¹ Shortly after the 1946 election, the president's press secretary, Charlie Ross, informed his sister that "Nobody here in the White House is downhearted. The consensus is that President Truman is now a free man and can write a fine record in the coming years." Charles C. Ross to Ella Ross, November 13, 1946, Box 6, File: Miss Ella Ross, Charles C. Ross Papers, Truman Library.

² Ferrell, ed., *Dear Bess*, 540.

his administration while confronting the new Republican-controlled Congress. For example, the commander-in-chief stopped invoking FDR's memory and legacy, which became conspicuously apparent during his January 1947 state of the union speech when he failed to mention the late leader even by name.³ Beyond this stylistic change, however, the president also took substantive measures to increase his control and coordination of the executive branch.

On January 8, 1947, Truman revitalized the State Department and won wide spread praise from his critics when he replaced Byrnes with retired General George C. Marshall.⁴ Enjoying near universal respect and admiration, the former army chief of staff received unanimous support from the Senate, which made the unusual decision to forgo hearings during his confirmation process.⁵ Consequently, the popular new secretary of state quickly assumed office and immediately began to restructure the demoralized department.⁶ In short order, Marshall replaced his predecessor's lackadaisical management style with an organizational system that closely resembled his old command structure at the Pentagon.⁷ As a result, Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson now acted as his superior's unofficial chief of staff;

³ "Text of President Truman's Message to Congress on the State of the Union," *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1947, 8.

⁴ Byrnes originally tendered his resignation in April, 1946, only to have Truman persuade him to stay on until the conclusion of the Paris Peace Conference. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime*, 355-6, 373-4; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 1: Year of Decisions*, 559.

⁵ Remarkably, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee spent only twelve minutes deliberating Marshall's nomination before reporting it to the full Senate. "Marshall Wins Unanimous vote from Senators," *Chicago Tribune*, January 9, 1947, 3.

⁶ A common joke at the time declared that "The State Department fiddles while Byrnes Roams." This sentiment reflected the Foreign Service's widespread frustration with Byrnes' chronic aversion to bureaucratic work and policy planning. His lack of guidance, made worse by his constant traveling, produced an institution eager for Marshall's strong focus and leadership. Oral History Interview, Joseph E. Johnson, June 29, 1973, 78, Truman Library.

⁷ Marshall also increased the State Department's efficiency by reversing an old Byrnes decision that divided intelligence analysis according to geographic area. Consequently, a new Central Secretariat, under the command of Colonel Carlisle Humelsine from the Army's General Staff, coordinated and unified the agency's work. Furthermore, Marshall created the Policy Planning Staff and appointed George Kennan as its first director. This special body, unlike other offices in the department, examined long term problems and suggested possible recommendations. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 213-14 Joseph Marion Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks: An Inside Account of the Genesis of the Marshall Plan* (New York: HBJ, 1955), 101, 106-7.

charged with the task of distilling information into short summaries for future review and approval.⁸ This important development not only improved the department's overall efficiency, but also enhanced Acheson's role in organization, which substantially increased his ability to influence America's relations towards the Soviet Union.

The first, and perhaps most important event encountered by Marshall and Acheson centered on the ongoing Leftist insurgency against Athens' reactionary government. Despite the presence of 26,000 British troops since 1944, armed partisan groups from the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the National Liberation Front (NOF) ravaged northern Greece with raids designed to undermine the English-backed regime.⁹ London's desire to supervise this war torn nation received Truman's approval, who gladly limited America's participation in the region to mostly monitoring current events.¹⁰ In doing so, the White House learned in October, 1946 that Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania provided weapons to guerilla units, which routinely used their territory as safe havens.¹¹ Despite this worrisome development, the Pentagon assured

⁸ According to Joseph Jones, a special assistant in the State Department's Public Affairs division, Marshall's reforms "immediately straightened out the lines of authority" and "placed them in the hands of the man best qualified to be his chief of staff, Undersecretary Acheson." Joseph Marion Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks* (New York: HBJ, 1955), 101, 106-7.

⁹ When the Germans withdrew from Greece in October, 1944, the British Army occupied the nation and subsequently helped suppress a revolt instigated by leftist factions in the Greek resistance. Following their defeat, various insurgent groups such as the People's National Army of Liberation (ELAS) and the National Liberation Front (NOF) fled into the countryside where they started a guerrilla warfare campaign against the English-sponsored government in Athens. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 198-9; Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: January, 1947 [Nos. 46-50], Number 50, Papers of Harry S Truman: Staff member and Office File (SMOF): Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library.

¹⁰ While the British assumed primary responsibility for Greece, the US still participated in the nation's post-war development. For example, in January, 1946, Washington granted an Export-Import Bank loan of \$25 million dollars to Athens in an effort to reconstruct its devastated economy. Furthermore, the White House sent nearly 600 Americans to Greece in March, 1946 to help monitor the nation's first free elections. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 198-9.

¹¹ Yugoslavia and Albania also deployed their troops in an intimidating manner. Belgrade, for example, doubled its border force from 35,000 to 70,000 soldiers between September 1 and October 24, 1946. Likewise, Albania positioned two thirds of its 65,000 man army along its border with Greece. In all likelihood, these nations used their militaries to deter Athens from sending its units across the border in pursuit of the leftist insurgents. Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: October, 1946 [Nos. 34-38], Number 37, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library.

administration leaders that the “Greek Army is capable of suppressing the uprising.”¹² Though the War Department’s Intelligence Division blamed the Soviet Union for its satellite’s aggressive behavior, it declared “that Greece will not be formally attacked by any of her neighbors to the north, especially with British troops on her soil.”¹³ Consequently, the president rejected Greek Prime Minister Tsaldaris’ personal appeal for foreign aid when he visited the US in December, 1946.¹⁴ With the administration seemingly unconcerned about Athens’ immediate future, Marshall had no indication of an imminent Balkan crisis when he entered office one month later in January.

By February, 1947, the situation changed when the State Department received negative assessments concerning Greece’s political stability. Early in the month, America’s Ambassador to Athens, Lincoln MacVeagh, warned his superiors in Washington about the Greek economy’s imminent collapse. Such a development, he cautioned, guaranteed a KKE takeover in Greece, which could embolden the USSR to spread its influence throughout the Near East and North

¹² In October, 1946 the Pentagon informed Truman that Greece’s 85,000 man army, though ill-equipped, retained the ability to combat the communist insurgents located throughout the northern part of the country. The president understood that Britain’s troops provided only moral support to the Greek military and never engaged in actual combat operations. Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: October, 1946 [Nos. 34-38], Number 34 and 37, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library.

¹³ Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: October, 1946 [Nos. 34-38], Number 37, Papers of Harry S Truman: Staff member and Office File (SMOF): Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library.

¹⁴ Truman rejected Tsaldaris’s request, in part, because American officials lacked confidence in his ability to govern effectively. For example, a US intelligence report from November, 1946 heavily criticized the prime minister for his decision to exclude opposition parties from the Greek Cabinet. Only a true coalition government, the assessment concluded, could restore Washington’s confidence in Athens’ ability to solve its economic and military problems. Likewise, Tsaldaris’s stated desire to annex territory from Bulgaria and Albania caused diplomat Mark Ethridge to label him a “stupid fool.” Unimpressed with the prime minister, whom Dean Acheson called a “weak, pleasant, but silly man,” the Truman Administration declined to give large amounts of assistance to Greece until after he left office, which occurred in January, 1947. Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: November, 1946 [Nos. 39-42], Number 40, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library; Oral History Interview, Mark F. Ethridge, June 4, 1974, 32, Truman Library; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 199.

Africa.¹⁵ Anxiety about Athens' future also dominated messages from Mark Ethridge, a prominent American delegate on the UN's investigative commission in the Balkans.¹⁶ In a cable to the Secretary of State, Ethridge declared that the Greek army suffered from poor leadership and low morale, which decreased its combat effectiveness against the armed insurgents. In his opinion, Athens' unpopular government, combined with the KKE's increasingly confident and aggressive stance in the northern part of the country convinced Moscow that "Greece is [a] ripe plum ready to fall into their hands in a few weeks."¹⁷ A communist victory, he warned, enhanced the Kremlin's ability to extend its influence throughout Europe, especially in France and Italy.¹⁸

Not surprisingly, Marshall made immediate inquiries to confirm the veracity of these disturbing messages. On February 18, he ordered MacVeagh and Ethridge to meet with Paul Porter, director of the American Economic Mission in Athens, to determine the severity of Greece's difficulties.¹⁹ On the same day, the secretary of state also asked the British Foreign Office to share their analysis with Washington. Within twenty-four hours, the US *charge d'affaires* in London responded that "reports from British sources in Greece do not confirm [the] seriousness of internal Greek position as presented by Ethridge."²⁰ According to the English, Athens' political and military institutions did not suffer from low morale. Only the Hellenic

¹⁵ The Ambassador in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State, February 11, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 16-7.

¹⁶ On December 3, 1946 the Greek delegation at the UN persuaded the secretary general to examine Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania's possible support of the armed insurgency against Athens government. On May 23, 1947 the Balkan Investigation Commission declared, by a vote of nine to two, that Belgrade, Sofia, and Tirana provided safe havens, logistics, and training for Greece's leftist bands. Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: December, 1946 [Nos. 43-45], Number 44, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library; Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: May, 1947 [Nos. 63-67], Number 67, Papers of Harry S Truman: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library.

¹⁷ The United States Representative on the Commission of Investigation (Ethridge) to the Secretary of State, February 17, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 24.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-5.

¹⁹ The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Greece, February 18, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 25.

²⁰ The *Charge* in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the Secretary of State February 19, 1947, *FRUS 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 26.

nation's poor economy, London conceded, could eventually destabilize the country and create the conditions necessary for a communist takeover.²¹ In contrast to this rather sedate assessment, MacVeagh's reply from February 20, emphasized that he, Ethridge, and Porter concurred that the problems in Greece are "so critical that no time should be lost in applying any remedial measures."²² In the ambassador's opinion, the "deteriorating morale" of the Greek government, military, and civilian population compromised Athens' ability to prevent the nation's "imminent" economic collapse.²³ The diplomat concluded that if the US adopted "spectacular measures" to restore confidence in Greece's future, then this "explosive situation" could be resolved with positive results.²⁴

The contradictory assessments received by the State Department went directly to Dean Acheson, who used his position within the organization to influence Marshall's understanding of the Greek situation. On February 20, the undersecretary of state incorporated MacVeagh, Ethridge, and Porter's observations into a memorandum recently written by Loy Henderson, the department's director of Near Eastern and African Affairs. Originally entitled "Critical Situation in Greece," the report received important input from Acheson, who rebranded it with the more alarming heading, "Crises and Imminent Possibility of Collapse in Greece."²⁵ Completely ignoring London's calm appraisal, the edited assessment summarized the dire predictions made by American diplomats and concluded that Washington risked losing the Middle East, North Africa, and Western Europe to "Soviet domination" if Leftist insurgents overthrew Athens'

²¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²² The Ambassador in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State, February 20, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 28.

²³ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁵ Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Acheson) to the Secretary of State, February 21, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 29-31; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 217.

government.²⁶ The report advised the president to immediately send “a special bill to Congress...for a direct loan to Greece.”²⁷ Acheson emphasized that only substantial US foreign aid, in the form of money and military equipment, could save the Hellenic nation from a communist takeover.²⁸ Having highlighted the worst case scenario, the undersecretary of state presented his pessimistic analysis to Marshall, who subsequently instructed Acheson to prepare “the necessary steps for sending economic and military aid.”²⁹

On Friday, February 21, the State Department received two diplomatic notes from the British Foreign Office informing Washington that London intended to end its aid program to Greece and Turkey no later than March 31, 1947.³⁰ The United Kingdom’s decision, the messages concluded, necessitated immediate American assistance to both Athens and Ankara in order to safeguard these strategically vital nations from Soviet domination.³¹ Alarmed by this development, Acheson instructed Henderson and his staff to outline a proposal for Marshall to study before the secretary of state’s scheduled meeting with England’s ambassador on Monday, February 24.³² Consequently, the director of Near Eastern and African Affairs chaired a series of meetings throughout the weekend, which produced a strategic plan for the Truman

²⁶ Ibid., 30.

²⁷ Ibid., 31.

²⁸ Acheson believed “substantial aid from the US” could increase Washington’s influence with Greece. Specifically, he hoped that foreign aid could induce Athens to accept a new “broad national coalition” government. Ibid., 30.

²⁹ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 217.

³⁰ On the twenty-first, Marshall traveled out of town for the weekend to celebrate Princeton University’s Bicentennial. While the British did not officially inform the secretary of state until the twenty-fourth, they decided to send two advance copies of London’s diplomatic notes to the state department as a courtesy. Ibid., 217; Oral History Interview, Loy W. Henderson, June 14, 1973, 76, Truman Library.

³¹ London explained that the United Kingdom’s weak economy could no longer support its traditional overseas commitments. This admission did not surprise Truman and his foreign policy team because they regularly received intelligence updates about Britain’s economic status. The British Embassy to the Department of State, February 21, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 32-7; Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: February, 1947 [Nos. 51-5], Number 52, Papers of Harry S Truman: Staff member and Office File (SMOF); Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library.

³² Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 217-8.

administration to implement.³³ Approved by Acheson, the memorandum suggested that the Departments of State, War, Navy, and Treasury collectively develop an aid program for the White House to incorporate into legislation specifically drafted for this situation.³⁴ Furthermore, the document advised the president to brief congressional leaders and “acquaint the American people with the necessity of rendering assistance...to Greece and Turkey.”³⁵ With public opinion sufficiently mobilized and the chief executive armed with legislative authority, the US could assume responsibility for safeguarding Athens and Ankara’s political, military, and economic stability.³⁶ Ultimately, Henderson’s memo received support from Marshall, who subsequently assured Britain’s ambassador that Washington understood the implications of London’s decision.³⁷

Within hours of receiving the United Kingdom’s official diplomatic note, the secretary of state briefed the president and his cabinet about the changing situation in the Near East. Truman agreed with Marshall about the seriousness of the situation and directed the State Department to formulate a detailed policy based on Acheson and Henderson’s respective memorandums.³⁸ In short order, the newly created Special Committee to Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey met

³³ Henderson’s staff conferred with Kennan, who supported the idea of sending US economic aid to Greece. He rejected, however, giving assistance to Turkey because Ankara, unlike Athens, did not suffer from a war torn economy or communist guerrilla movement. Limiting American aid to Greece, he declared, safeguarded Turkish security without unduly antagonizing the Soviet Union with respects to their southern border. Acheson overruled Kennan’s objection and included Turkey anyway. Oral History Interview, Loy W. Henderson, June 14, 1973, 87, Truman Library; Kennan, *Memoirs:1925-1950*, 316-7.

³⁴ Henderson originally wanted the proposed legislation to include Iran because it “was sorely in need of help following its tribulations during the war years.” Despite his enthusiasm, he acknowledged that “since the British had not asked us to assume any responsibilities with regard to Iran I did not push the matter.” Oral History Interview, Loy W. Henderson, June 14, 1973, 87-8, Truman Library.

³⁵ Memorandum Regarding Proposals Contained in British *Aide-Memoires* of February 21 Relating to Greece and Turkey, February 24, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 41.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 41-2.

³⁷ Interestingly, the British ambassador informed Marshall that London had thus far kept its decision secret from Athens and Ankara. Lord Inverchapel concluded that it “probably would be disastrous to give such information to the Greeks or the Turks unless they could be informed at the same time that the United States Government had definite plans to aid them.” Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson), February 24, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 44.

³⁸ Truman, *Memoirs: Vol. 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 100.

to explore the White House's options. Chaired by the director of Near Eastern and African Affairs, the group determined that London's diplomatic notes constituted an acknowledgement by the British government that it could no longer "maintain its imperial structure."³⁹ This development, some members concluded, compelled the US to develop a "worldwide program" to contain communism.⁴⁰ In Henderson's opinion, only a presidential speech designed to "electrify the American people" could garner the necessary support for such an ambitious plan.⁴¹ His group, however, could not achieve a consensus to implement an open-ended global program. Consequently, they established the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) to set the parameters of a prospective US aid program for Athens and Ankara.⁴²

On February 26, the SWNCC reviewed the State Department's assessments and agreed that a communist victory in Greece and/or Turkey irrevocably damaged America's national security.⁴³ The secretaries of state, war, and the navy reported to the president that Athens urgently required approximately \$250 million in financial aid to prevent its economic collapse.⁴⁴ To this end, Marshall advised Truman to secretly ask the Greek government to formally request US assistance.⁴⁵ Furthermore, he advocated the transfer of available US military equipment to

³⁹ Minutes of the First Meeting of the Special Committee to Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey, February 24, 1947, 3:00 p.m., *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 45.

⁴⁰ Not everyone on the committee wanted the US to financially assist nations around the world. General James K. Crain, for example, argued that London's overseas commitments helped weaken the British economy. To avoid this eventuality, he wanted Washington to rely on military power to deter Moscow from seizing Greece and Turkey. This idea, however, received little support. *Ibid.*, 46-7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴² Memorandum by the Chairman of the Special Committee to Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey (Henderson) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson) [Undated], *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 48.

⁴³ Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson observed that "Greece and Turkey were of vital importance to the U.S. strategic position" while Forrestal emphasized the "strategic value of these areas to the Navy." Minutes of a Meeting of the Secretaries State, War, and Navy, February 26, 1947, 10:30 a.m., *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 57.

⁴⁴ Memorandum of the Secretary of State to President Truman, February 26, 1947, *Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 58.

⁴⁵ According to Henderson, the State Department "prepared for the Greek and Turkish Embassies in Washington statements describing what we were planning to do and added to these statements the drafts of the kind

help Greece neutralize the armed insurgency.⁴⁶ Finally, the three department heads advised the chief executive to educate both Congress and the American people of the need to support these two nations. Not surprisingly, the president accepted these recommendations and immediately began the task of garnering support for the proposed aid program.⁴⁷

On February 27, congressional leaders from both parties arrived at the White House to receive their first briefing about the Greek crises.⁴⁸ After speaking for a few moments about his decision to aid the beleaguered nation, the president invited the secretary of state to present the administration's rationale for the new policy.⁴⁹ Marshall subsequently described the negative implications of London's decision to withdraw aid from Athens. A communist victory in Greece, he warned, jeopardized Turkey's ability to resist Russia's ongoing "war of nerves" against Ankara.⁵⁰ He cautioned that if the Turks succumbed to Moscow's pressure, "Soviet domination might extend over the entire Middle East to the borders of India."⁵¹ Only American assistance, he argued, could safeguard the region from the Kremlin's aggression. The secretary of state

of requests we needed." In this manner, the White House exercised control over Athens and Ankara's official appeal for US aid. Memorandum by the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy, [Undated], *Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 59; Oral History Interview, Loy W. Henderson, June 14, 1973, 89, Truman Library.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁷ In his memoirs, Truman recalled the sense of urgency conveyed by State Department and Pentagon. According to the president, on February 26 his experts told him that a communist victory in either Greece or Turkey directly endangered the other nation's ability to resist Soviet aggression. Echoing Dean Acheson, who briefed him about the SWNCC's work, the president believed this outcome undermined US influence in Italy, Germany, France, and the Middle East. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 100.

⁴⁸ The eight-member Congressional delegation consisted of four legislators from each house. Truman, however, did not invite his most vociferous critic, Republican Senator Robert A. Taft, to the meeting. When Vandenberg immediately complained about his colleague's absence, Acheson disingenuously described it as "an accidental omission." Despite the under secretary's explanation, the administration undoubtedly wanted to exclude Taft from these initial consultations with Congress. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 219.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁵⁰ Marshall acknowledged that Turkey's situation differed from Greece's armed insurgency. Despite this fact, the secretary of state insisted that Moscow's persistent desire to dominate the Turkish straits forced Ankara to keep its obsolete army fully mobilized, which created a "drain upon the economy of that country." US financial assistance, he argued, could modernize Turkey's economy and military, thereby strengthening the nation's long-term national security. Statement by the Secretary of State, February 27, 1947, *FRUS, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 61.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

concluded with a strong appeal for Congress to support the White House's new endeavor. "The choice," he reminded his audience, "is between acting with energy or losing by default."⁵²

After Marshall finished his blunt statement, Acheson spoke to reiterate certain concepts for the representatives and senators.⁵³ Relying on metaphors and hyperbole, the under secretary of state compared the situation in the Balkans to "apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one."⁵⁴ A Greek collapse, he observed, could "carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt, and to Europe through Italy and France."⁵⁵ Furthermore, he added that the US faced "an eager and ruthless opponent" bent on "playing one of the greatest gambles in history."⁵⁶ In Acheson's opinion, the US needed to pursue a policy that actively countered all Soviet attempts to "penetrate" nations deemed vital to America's national security interest.⁵⁷ After the under secretary of state finished his remarks, the congressional delegation agreed in principle that Washington faced a pivotal decision.⁵⁸ As the conference concluded, all parties agreed to meet

⁵² Ibid., 61.

⁵³ In his memoirs, Acheson believed Marshall "flubbed his opening statement" and needed help in his presentation. The under secretary of state recalled that "this was my crises. For a week I had nurtured it...it was my task to bring it home." Undoubtedly, he overstated his role in the proceedings because Truman and Vandenberg never mentioned it in their respective memoirs. On the contrary, the president declared that congressional leaders "appeared deeply impressed" with Marshall's analysis. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 219; Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 103.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 219.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 219.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 219.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 219.

⁵⁸ There is some disagreement amongst the meeting's participants concerning how congressional leaders reacted to the briefing. For example, Truman recalled that "there was no voice of dissent" from the delegation whereas Vandenberg remembered that he and his fellow legislators made "general comments but no commitments." Acheson, however, specified in his memoirs that Vandenberg urged the president to repeat the under secretary's arguments in a speech to the American people. If he did this, the senator assured him, the chief executive could expect wide spread support from Congress. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 103-4; Vandenberg, *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 339; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 219.

again in the near future to discuss and review the specific details of the administration's proposed policy.⁵⁹

Initially, the White House and State Department intended to keep the meeting's contents secret from the public.⁶⁰ The high profile gathering, however, attracted the media's attention, which caused the Washington press corp. to speculate about the conference's purpose.⁶¹ In an attempt to maintain control of the narrative, Acheson spoke off the record to approximately twenty correspondents to inform them about the Greek situation.⁶² Consequently, on February 28, the American people learned for the first time about London's decision to end assistance to Athens and why the administration intended to assume Britain's responsibilities in the Balkan region. In a generally positive article, the *New York Times* reported that Truman's tentative policy embodied something far more profound than just "a loan to a small Mediterranean country."⁶³ The Superpowers, the newspaper noted, viewed Greece as a "political battleground," and as such, the besieged nation needed American aid to "halt the expansion of Soviet influence into Western Europe."⁶⁴ In a more neutral assessment, the *Christian Science Monitor* correctly speculated that the president's rumored decision could "force a complete redrafting of United States plans for foreign relief expenditure."⁶⁵ Finally, the *Chicago Tribune* criticized the fiscal aspects of the White House's plan with the argument that it ruined the Republican-controlled Congress's ability to implement tax cuts to Washington's \$37 billion Federal budget. With \$400

⁵⁹ The congressional delegation returned to the White House eleven days later on March 10, 1947. Truman, *Memoirs: Volume 2*, 105.

⁶⁰ "Truman ask aid to Greece; British unable to bear cost," *New York Times*, February 28, 1947, 1.

⁶¹ Joseph M. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 144.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 144; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 220.

⁶³ "Truman ask aid to Greece; British unable to bear cost," *New York Times*, February 28, 1947, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁵ "US to play Key Greek Role?" *Christian Science Monitor*, February 28, 1947, 1.

million already given to Athens since mid-1945, the paper also insisted that the chief executive's policy guaranteed little success in stabilizing the country.⁶⁶

While Truman's tentative Greek policy received intense public scrutiny in the press, his administration began the important task of drafting the president's forthcoming address to the nation.⁶⁷ Initial responsibility for this undertaking resided with Francis Russell, the State Department's Director of the Office of Public Affairs. On February 28, he convened the SWNCC's Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information to establish the themes and details of a prospective legislative message and/or presidential speech to the nation.⁶⁸ By March 3, the interdepartmental group produced a report entitled, "Public Information Program on United States Aid to Greece," which outlined many of the concepts later enunciated in Truman's speech.⁶⁹ In addition to its extensive background material and analysis, the document served as an important framework for Washington's evolving containment policy.⁷⁰ For example, the paper suggested that the president publicly refer to the armed insurgency in Greece as part of an open-ended global struggle instigated by the Soviet Union to undermine "free governments everywhere."⁷¹

⁶⁶ Interestingly, Acheson gave the president a similar assessment during a cabinet meeting six days later on March 7. According to the undersecretary of state, America's previous \$450 million dollars in foreign aid failed to improve Athens' stability. The Greek economy, he warned the president, faced "complete disintegration" within weeks if it did not receive further assistance from the US. "Report British ask US take Greek burden," *Chicago Tribune*, Notes to March 7, 1947 Cabinet Meeting, Box 1, File: March, 1947, Matthew J. Connelly Papers, Truman Library.

⁶⁷ Marshall did not make his first public statement about the Greek crises until March 4. The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Greece, March 4, 1947, *FRUS, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 87.

⁶⁸ At this time, Truman remained uncertain about how to communicate his policy to the American people. Consequently, the State Department initially drafted a message that the president could use for either a written legislative request to congress or as a radio address to the public. Clifford, *Special Counsel to the President*, 134; Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Public Affairs (Russell), March 17, 1947, *FRUS, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 121-3; Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 150.

⁶⁹ Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 152.

⁷⁰ The FRUS published the report's most important section, entitled "Basic United States Policy," which enumerated the core concepts found in the Truman's final draft. Report by the Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, [Undated], *FRUS, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 76-8.

⁷¹ Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 151; Report by the Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, [Undated], *FRUS, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 76-8.

Only strong US economic assistance, the report observed, could safeguard democratic nations throughout the world from communist subversion.⁷² Pleased with the document's conclusions, Russell instructed Joseph M. Jones, a member from his staff, to work with Loy Henderson in developing a preliminary text for the White House to consider.⁷³

Incorporating numerous memoranda and internal State Department reports, the first drafts submitted to Acheson reflected the SWNCC's strong anti-Soviet mindset.⁷⁴ Though bureaucratic in tone and somewhat inelegant in style, these early versions of Truman's speech received the under secretary of state's eventual approval.⁷⁵ Some diplomats, however, expressed reservations about the message's global scope and impact. Kennan, for example, complained to Acheson that the "grandiose and...sweeping" nature of the text created potential problems for Washington's overall relations with Moscow.⁷⁶ Furthermore, he argued against US plans to assist Turkey, which he deemed unnecessary and ultimately dangerous for the region.⁷⁷ Marshall also viewed the speech as too melodramatic and ordered significant changes to certain sections in the text.⁷⁸ On March 6, for instance, the secretary of state told Acheson to excise a passage that equated communism with Nazism and Fascism. Moreover, he wanted to delete a sentence that

⁷² Ibid., 76-8.

⁷³ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 220; Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 150-3; Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Public Affairs (Russell), March 17, 1947, *FRUS, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 123.

⁷⁴ Report by the Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, [Undated], *FRUS, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 76-8; Loy Henderson and Joseph Jones' drafts of the President's Message, Box 6, File: Truman Doctrine Speech, Joseph M. Jones Papers, Truman Library; Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 152-3.

⁷⁵ Acheson held frequent drafting conferences in order to closely supervise Jones' work. In one such meeting, the under secretary of state told the speech writer that "if F.D.R. were alive...he would make a statement of global policy but confine his request for money right now to Greece and Turkey." In this manner, Acheson helped influence the scope of Truman's message to Congress. Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 154, 159.

⁷⁶ According to Jones, Kennan warned Acheson that the Russians "might even reply by declaring war." Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, 315; Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, 155.

⁷⁷ In his memoirs, Kennan blamed the Pentagon for "exploit[ing] a favorable set of circumstances in order to initiate a military aid program for Turkey." Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, 317.

⁷⁸ According to diplomat Charles Bohlen, he and Marshall thought "there was a little too much flamboyant anti-Communism in the speech." Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), 261.

directly connected America's security to Washington's Greek endeavor.⁷⁹ The under secretary of state dutifully made the requested changes and sent the revised draft to Truman for his approval.⁸⁰

On March 7, the president met with his advisors to discuss the latest developments concerning Washington's aid package to Athens and Ankara.⁸¹ During that day's morning staff meeting with Clark Clifford and Acheson, the chief executive decried the state department's initial drafts because, in his opinion, they "sound[ed] like an investment prospectus."⁸² Wanting "more emphasis on a declaration of general policy," Truman directed his special council to assist the under secretary of state with further revisions of the message.⁸³ Shortly afterwards, the commander-in-chief met with his cabinet to receive their views about the White House's evolving containment policy. Secretary of Labor Lewis B. Schwellenbach openly worried that some Americans might oppose US assistance to Greece and Turkey because they believed "we were again pulling British chestnuts out of the fire."⁸⁴ Others officials, such as Harriman and Acheson, feared that Athens' unsympathetic "reactionary" government could jeopardize the administration's ability to mobilize public opinion to support the program.⁸⁵ All participants, however, concurred with Forrestal, who stated that the Greek problem "was simply the

⁷⁹ The sentence in question declared: "I consider the security of the United States demands that such funds and authority shall be made available immediately." The Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State, March 7, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Volume V: The Near East and Africa*, 101.

⁸⁰ Ultimately, Truman overruled Marshall's objection and included a sentence that connect America's security to Athens' and Ankara's stability. Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, March 12, 1947, *Public Papers: 1947*, 180.

⁸¹ On March 6, Truman returned to Washington from a four day state visit to Mexico. This cabinet meeting, therefore, provided the first opportunity for the president to review his administration's work concerning America's new Greek policy. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 104.

⁸² The president's complaint centered on unwieldy, bureaucratic passages such as the following: "Through the Import-Export Bank we extended a loan of \$25,000,000 for the financing of self-liquidating projects." *Ibid.*, 105; . Loy Henderson's draft of the President's Message, Box 6, File: Truman Doctrine Speech, Joseph M. Jones Papers, Truman Library.

⁸³ Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 105.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 104-5.

⁸⁵ Forrestal, *The Forrestal Diaries*, 251.

manifestation of what had been in process of development in the last four years” and that the American people needed to “recognize it as a fundamental struggle” between the US and the Soviet Union.⁸⁶ Convinced that he needed to mobilize public support for Washington’s new policy, Truman announced his decision to personally address a special joint session of Congress.⁸⁷

With a better idea of the speech’s purpose, Clifford and his assistant began revising the White House’s message for its intended audience. Interestingly, Elsey immediately disagreed with the chief executive’s new decision and wrote a memorandum to persuade him to reconsider his strategy. In a document addressed to the special council, the hesitant staff member correctly observed that “there has been no overt action in the immediate past by the U.S.S.R. which serves as an adequate pretext for the ‘all-out’ speech.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, he feared a presidential address at this time could confuse and divide the public, which remained largely ignorant of America’s underlying problems with Russia. Truman, he concluded, needed to give a more limited speech that focused on Washington’s general desire to accelerate Europe’s economic reconstruction.

Ironically, Elsey’s arguments inadvertently convinced Clifford to strengthen the anti-communist themes in the president’s message. “This speech” he observed “must be the opening

⁸⁶ Despite the global scope of the administration’s proposed containment policy, Truman privately viewed its application in a more selective manner. For example, when the secretary of the Interior asserted that America’s political retreat from China appeared inconsistent with the White House’s new policy, the president replied that Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist troops appeared unlikely to “fight it out” with the more dedicated Communists forces. In the chief executive’s opinion, “It would be pouring sand in a rat hole under [the] present situation.” *Ibid.*, 251; Notes to March 7, 1947 Cabinet Meeting, Box 1, File: March, 1947, Matthew J. Connelly Papers, Truman Library.

⁸⁷ According to Truman, convincing the American people to support his administration’s new Greek policy required “the greatest selling job ever.” Notes to March 7, 1947 Cabinet Meeting, Box 1, File: March, 1947, Matthew J. Connelly Papers, Truman Library.

⁸⁸ In February, 1947 the Pentagon informed Truman and his advisors about the Soviet Union’s decision to extend the demobilization of its armed forces. The president knew, for example, that a shortage of skilled labor in the Russian economy necessitated the release of 500,000 soldiers from its military in late 1946. Furthermore, the War Department predicted that Moscow planned to cut additional troops levels again throughout 1947. Elsey to Clifford, Box 17, File: Truman Doctrine Speech, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library; Box 19, War Department Intelligence Review File: February, 1947 [Nos. 51-5], Number 52, Papers of Harry S Truman: Staff member and Office File (SMOF): Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Library.

gun in a campaign to bring people to the realization that the war isn't over by any means.”⁸⁹ To this end, the special counsel and his assistant made more than one hundred changes to the state department's initial draft in an effort to strengthen its language.⁹⁰ Consequently, their revisions replaced numerous mundane passages with sentences designed to create a crises atmosphere. For example, Jones' original reference to “the armed depredation of political dissidents” transformed under Clifford into an alarming description about “terrorist activities” conducted by “several thousand armed men.”⁹¹ Furthermore, the special counsel added metaphors and allusions to help explain the communist insurgency in an easily understandable manner.

The seeds of totalitarian regimes” he wrote, “are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They burst forth in their full stature when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep alive the flame of hope in the Greek people.”⁹²

Moreover, Clifford feminized the nature of the threat when he wrote about how other nations “have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will.”⁹³ He added that “political infiltration” and “violations” of Greek territory endangered Athens' “national integrity,” which hindered its ability to maintain a “self-respecting democracy.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ In his memoirs, Clifford recalled how “George's memorandum highlighted for me the importance of assuring that the speech contained no half steps or ambivalent language.” Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 133.

⁹⁰ According to Clifford, he and Elsey spent much of their time “Trumanizing” the State Department's original drafts. Numerous revisions, therefore, focused on making the speech “sound more like Harry Truman and less like a committee product from State.” Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 133-4, 135; Oral History Interview, George M. Elsey, July 10, 1969, 165-71, Truman Library.

⁹¹ Clifford's Annotated Copy of March 9 Draft; Elsey's Annotated Copy of March 9 Draft, Box 17, File:Truman Doctrine Speech, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library.

⁹² Elsey's Annotated Copy of March 10 Draft, Box 17, File:Truman Doctrine Speech, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 135.

⁹³ Harry S. Truman, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, April 12, 1945 to January 20, 1953. Volume 3: 1947* (Washington, DC: US G.P.O., 1963), 178.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 177-9.

For his part, Elsey clarified the president's message with arguably the strongest declaration in the entire speech. Known as the speech's "credo," this concise statement summarized the Truman Doctrine with the following three sentences:

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly processes.⁹⁵

Having highlighted the threat and proclaiming the proposed solution, the White House advisors returned the draft to Acheson and the president, who subsequently gave their final approval.⁹⁶

While Acheson reviewed the revised drafts, Truman met again with congressional leaders on March 10, to announce his official decision about Greece and Turkey. Speaking to the fourteen-member delegation, which now included Senator Taft, the president described his \$400 million plan to safeguard Greece and Turkey from communist aggression. Not surprisingly, his briefing received "a cool and silent reception" from the legislators, who feared the financial and political implications of the president's proposed policy.⁹⁷ Vandenberg, however, assured the

⁹⁵ According to Clifford, the speech "would not have achieved the status of a 'doctrine' without its three key sentences." Elsey's Annotated Copy of March 10 Draft, Box 17, File:Truman Doctrine Speech, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library; Clifford, *Special Counsel to the President*, 136, 138.

⁹⁶ Since March, 1947, there have been numerous claims concerning the authorship of the Truman Doctrine speech. *Time* magazine, for example, initially reported that Marshall wrote "three-quarters" of the address while *Newsweek* attributed Loy Henderson and his staff at the State Department with this honor. In 1955, Joseph Jones claimed that he, with Acheson's supervision, primarily "held the pen" which wrote the draft used by the president. Years later, Elsey ridiculed Jones for "patt[ing] himself on the back for the great speech he had written." Ultimately, Clifford correctly declared that "by the time the final draft was ready, so many hands had touched it that, despite some claims to the contrary, no single person could assert paternity." "The World," *Time*, March 24, 1947, 18-20; Behind Truman's, " *Newsweek*, March 24, 1947; Jones, *Fifteen Weeks*, 148; Oral History Interview, George M. Elsey, April 9, 1970, 297, Truman Library; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 134.

⁹⁷ On March 4, the Republican controlled Senate voted to reduce the Federal budget by at least \$4.5 billion dollars. Two days later the Democratic Congressional Conference informed the president that their support for his proposed aid package remained conditional. Assistance could be given, they announced, but only if it did not "further British policies in the Mediterranean" or help the Greek monarchy. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 221-2; "Greek Aid Favored on Reserved Basis," *New York Times*, March 7, 1947, 8.

chief executive that he supported the White House in this endeavor and announced his intentions to help pass the legislation.⁹⁸

On March 12, 1947, Truman presented his case to the American people in a somber address before a special joint session of Congress.⁹⁹ The Greek government's "urgent appeal" for assistance, he declared, compelled the US to send economic and military aid to the beleaguered nation.¹⁰⁰ Without mentioning the Soviet Union by name, the president characterized the armed insurgency in Greece as part of a global ideological conflict between totalitarian and democratic forces.

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guaranties of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.¹⁰¹

In addition to his request for US aid for Greece, the chief executive also wanted to assist Turkey in the "maintenance of its national integrity."¹⁰² While he remained extremely vague about what

⁹⁸ Truman, *Memoirs: Volume 2*, 105; "Truman Bares Scheme to Halt Reds," *Chicago Tribune*, March 11, 1947, 1.

⁹⁹ Congress interrupted Truman's twenty-one minute speech only three times to applaud the president. Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 137.

¹⁰⁰ Truman specified that he wanted to furnish \$400 million dollars along with "civilian and military personnel... to assist in the tasks of reconstruction." Harry S. Truman, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, April 12, 1945 to January 20, 1953. Volume 3: 1947* (Washington, DC: US G.P.O., 1963), 176, 179.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁰² The president devoted only four of the speech's twenty-eight paragraphs to Turkey's need for US aid. Interestingly, he never specified exactly what threatened Ankara's "national integrity." *Ibid.*, 178.

help Ankara specifically needed, Truman assured his audience that “the preservation of order in the Middle East” relied upon America’s support for this country.¹⁰³

Having given the administration’s rationale for providing assistance, the president attempted to refute some of the potential arguments he anticipated from his critics. For example, the chief executive argued that only the US possessed the necessary resources to support and safeguard the fledgling democracies currently under siege around the world. The war-torn British Empire, he stressed, could no longer contribute its wealth to such a large open-ended commitment.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Truman maintained that the UN lacked the ability to “extend help of this kind,” especially within a timely manner.¹⁰⁵ As for the Greece’s corrupt reactionary government, the president openly acknowledged its past “extremist measures” and political mistakes.¹⁰⁶ Despite their numerous imperfections, the commander-in-chief insisted that Athens’ current cabinet represented “eighty-five percent” of the Greek Parliament and, therefore, constituted a democratic government.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, he reassured his audience that Washington intended to send American economist and technicians to supervise the distribution of US aid to the Hellenic nation.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Ibid., 178.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 177, 178.

¹⁰⁵ While he did not mention it in his address, the president and his administration believed Moscow’s veto in the Security Council made the UN incapable of dealing with the Greek Matter. Ibid., 177; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 223.

¹⁰⁶ Truman declared that America’s aid program “does not mean that the United States condones everything that the Greek Government has done or will do. We have condemned in the past, and we condemn now, extremist measures of the right or the left.” In addition, the president cleverly noted that the world’s knowledge of Athens’ excessive policies derived from their government’s transparent democratic nature. Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, March 12, 1947, *Public Papers: 1947*, 177.

¹⁰⁷ Truman argued that American aid to Greece’s economy could stabilize the country, thereby allowing Athens to develop a “healthy democracy.” Ibid., 177.

¹⁰⁸ The president emphasized “the utmost importance that we supervise the use of any funds made available to Greece; in such a manner that each dollar spent will count toward making Greece self-supporting.” Ibid., 179.

Truman finished his speech with a final appeal for the White House's proposed program. Safeguarding the independence of free nations, he asserted, reinforced the principles of the UN Charter, which aimed to prevent the outbreak of another world war.¹⁰⁹ To this end, the chief executive viewed his \$400 million request as a reasonable appeal, especially when compared to the \$341 billion spent by the US during its four year conflict with the Axis powers.¹¹⁰ Finally, the president boldly declared that "direct and indirect aggression" against the free nations of Greece and Turkey "undermine[d] the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States."¹¹¹ To do nothing, he concluded, "endanger[ed] the peace of the world."¹¹²

Not surprisingly, Truman's address to Congress elicited strong reactions from around the world. Churchill, for example, praised the speech as "a great event" and boldly asserted that "if such a step had been taken by the United States before the last war, it would have stopped it."¹¹³ Likewise, the British Foreign Office stated they "were favorably impressed" with the address while their French counterparts greeted the development with "tremendous enthusiasm."¹¹⁴ Interestingly, Italy's leadership initially viewed the president's announcement as a tactical ploy designed to strengthen Marshall's negotiating position at the Moscow Foreign Minister's Conference. Despite their cynicism, Rome still used the occasion to ask the US to apply the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 179.

¹¹⁰ The chief executive downplayed the proposed \$400 million aid package with the assertion that it amounted to "little more than 1/10 tenth of 1 percent" of America's World War II budget. Ibid., 180.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 178, 180.

¹¹² Shortly after he addressed Congress, the president sent an interesting letter to his daughter, which revealed his thoughts concerning the Truman Doctrine's purpose. "This terrible decision..." he wrote, "had been over my head for about six weeks. Although I knew at Potsdam that there is no difference in totalitarian or police states, call them what you will, Nazi, Fascist, Communist or Argentine Republics. You know there was but one idealistic example of Communism. That is described in the Acts of the Apostles. The attempt of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, et al., to fool the world and the American Crackpots Association represented by... Henry Wallace, ... and the artists in immoral Greenwich Village, is just like Hitler's and Mussolini's so-called socialist states. Your Pop had to tell the world just that in polite language." Ibid., 180; Margaret Truman, *Harry S. Truman*, (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1972), 343.

¹¹³ "Churchill Applauds Truman Action," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 14, 1947, 7.

¹¹⁴ Department of State Summary of Telegrams, March 13, 1947, Box 22, SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files; January-May, 1947 File, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

newly announced Truman Doctrine to Trieste “because the same conditions of Soviet expansion prevail on the Adriatic as in the Eastern Mediterranean.”¹¹⁵ Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, meanwhile, issued predictable denunciations of the president’s plan or ignored the speech altogether.¹¹⁶ Interestingly, the Kremlin never released an official statement regarding America’s new foreign aid program.¹¹⁷ Notwithstanding this aloof attitude, Stalin’s government indirectly expressed its opinions through government and party press organs. *Izvestia*, for instance, published a two-column editorial that criticized the White House’s decision to intervene in Athens’ internal affairs, especially before the UN completed its Balkan Commission Report. The US policy, the paper claimed, weakened the international organization’s legitimacy and infringed upon Greek and Turkish independence.¹¹⁸ In a much harsher assessment, *Pravda* characterized Washington’s policy as a plan for “imperialist expansion under the guise of charity.”¹¹⁹ Western intentions to dominate the world, the periodical warned, “are inevitably doomed to failure.”¹²⁰ Finally, *TASS* accused Truman of undermining the “democratic elements in Greece,” and cautioned its readers that America intended to seize control of the Hellenic nation.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ World Reaction to the President’s Speech on Greece and Turkey, War Department Intelligence Review File: March, 1947 [Nos. 55-58], Number 57, Box 20: SMOF: Naval Aide to the President Files, 1945-53, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

¹¹⁶ The Polish government declared that “Truman was misinformed,” while Yugoslavia’s regime chose only to emphasize Britain’s “regret” at having to concede control of Greece to the US. Newspapers in both nations failed to publish any content about the speech. Ibid.

¹¹⁷ The War Department’s Intelligence Division believed Truman’s decision not to name the USSR in his speech made it difficult for the Kremlin to make an official protest because “it would be an admission of totalitarian aggression” on their part. Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

In the US, the president's speech fulfilled part of its purpose by seizing the nation's attention and forcing the public to reevaluate Washington's relations with Moscow.¹²² The initial response to the chief executive's appeal encouraged administration officials, who hoped to receive legislation from Congress by March 31.¹²³ An internal State Department study, for example, reported that forty-one major newspapers and periodicals strongly supported the Truman Doctrine, while only fifteen opposed to it.¹²⁴ Early congressional reaction, meanwhile, revealed qualified support for the White House's plan. Of the first seventy-five published statements, thirty-five legislators supported the proposal, twenty-two expressed opposition, and eighteen adopted a noncommittal position.¹²⁵ Though encouraging, these statistics also suggested that the president's aid program still faced significant resistance in Congress, which made its passage anything but a foregone conclusion.

Interestingly, domestic opposition to the Truman Doctrine emerged from both sides of the political spectrum. Henry Wallace, for instance, voiced the concerns of many progressives and liberals when he argued that "the entire policy of containing the USSR...by propping up reactionary regimes is bound to end in failure."¹²⁶ Furthermore, he castigated the

¹²² An unpublished poll conducted by the University of Denver's National Opinion Research Center declared that seventy-six percent of those surveyed heard or read about the president's speech. A similar four day poll by Gallup showed a seventy-five percent level of awareness. Confidential Summary, [Date Unknown], File: Truman Doctrine Speech, Box 6: Speeches to Arthur Vandenberg, Joseph M. Jones Papers, Truman Library.

¹²³ The National Opinion Research Center revealed that sixty percent of those surveyed supported the administration's plan to give \$400 million to Greece and Turkey. Confidential Summary, [Date Unknown], File: Truman Doctrine Speech, Box 6: Speeches to Arthur Vandenberg, Joseph M. Jones Papers, Truman Library.

¹²⁴ Ibid.,

¹²⁵ Within forty-eight hours of Truman's speech, only twenty-seven legislators gave unqualified support to the president while a further eight provided conditional backing for his plan. Senator Joseph McCarthy, for example, wanted the White House to immediately extend its new policy to other nations around the world, especially China. Likewise, Representative Alvin O' Kanski declared that the chief executive gave a "very timely message...and was ready to go along with him." However, despite this support, the congressman admitted that the administration's policy in East Asia *vis-a-vis* Beijing "befuddled" him. Department of State Office of Public Affairs, Division of Public Studies: Congressional Statements on President Truman's Address asking Aid for Greece and Turkey, March 12-14, 1947, File: Truman Doctrine, Box 6: Speeches to Arthur Vandenberg, Joseph M. Jones Papers, Truman Library.

¹²⁶ Henry Wallace, "The Way to Help Greece," *New Republic*, March 17, 1947, 13.

administration's circumvention of the UN and warned that Washington risked damaging the integrity and effectiveness of the nascent international organization. In his opinion, America needed to defer the problem to the Security Council, which could predicate its assistance on Athens' willingness to adopt significant democratic reforms.¹²⁷ Conservative Republicans, meanwhile, criticized the plan's financial and military commitments. For example, longtime representative and isolationist Harold Knutson dismissed the president's rationale for aid with his caustic observation that "the do-gooders won't feel right until they have us all broke."¹²⁸ Likewise, Senator William Revercomb openly wondered if the White House intended to send "our fighting men to back and protect the dollars we propose to grant."¹²⁹ In a parody of Truman's speech, Senator Charles Brooks summarized his party's fears and suspicions when he questioned whether the \$400 million request represented "one-tenth of 1%" of a new war-time budget aimed against the Soviet Union.¹³⁰ Despite these criticisms, however, the administration still believed it could pressure Congress to pass the chief executive's program.¹³¹

While the world contemplated the Truman Doctrine's possible repercussions, the White House and its allies implemented a propaganda strategy designed to solidify public support for the Greek-Turkish aid package. For example, on March 21, the president signed executive order

¹²⁷ Wallace wanted the Greek government to issue a general amnesty to the EAM, which he considered a primarily non-communist organization. Furthermore, he wanted Athens' reactionary government to share political power with leftist parties and to initiate necessary tax reforms in the Hellenic nation. Only then, he argued, could Greece receive foreign aid from the UN. *Ibid.*, 12-3.

¹²⁸ Department of State Office of Public Affairs, Division of Public Studies: Congressional Statements on President Truman's Address asking Aid for Greece and Turkey, March 12-14, 1947, File: Truman Doctrine, Box 6: Speeches to Arthur Vandenberg, Joseph M. Jones Papers, Truman Library.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ The day after Truman's speech, Democratic Representative Carl Vinson described the Republican's predicament to Forrestal. The legislator predicted that many conservatives on Capitol Hill could find it difficult to maintain their opposition to the White House, especially since the president enunciated many of the same anti-communist views espoused by the Isolationist. The fiscally-minded Republicans, he concluded, "are all put on the spot now and they all have to come clean." Excerpts of telephone conversation between James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy and Congressman Carl Vinson from Georgia, March 13, 1947, File: Speech to Congress on Greece, Box 27, Clark M. Clifford Papers, Truman Library.

9835, which created a Federal Employee Loyalty Program to investigate the political affiliations of government workers.¹³² By highlighting communism's potential threat to US institutions, the administration undoubtedly wanted to instill a heightened sense of insecurity in the American People, thereby making them more inclined to endorse the commander-in chief's foreign policy.¹³³ In addition to employing scare tactics, Truman also established a special committee to help him influence important demographic groups throughout the country.¹³⁴ Headed by Treasury Secretary John W. Snyder, this council subsequently sent cabinet members to meet with business, labor, farming, and religious leaders in an attempt to elicit the backing of their respective organizations.¹³⁵ Concurrent with these efforts by the Executive Branch, Vandenberg also did his part to rally Congressional support for the pending legislation. Within hours of the president's speech, the ranking Republican invited colleagues from both parties to submit written questions to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee so that it, in turn, could send them to the

¹³² Signed just nine days after the Truman Doctrine Speech, Executive Order 9835 established an invasive loyalty program that empowered the Federal Civil Service Commission to prevent the "infiltration of disloyal persons into the ranks of its employees." In his memoirs, Truman claimed he created this policy, in part, because he wanted to "set up machinery" that protected individuals "against false charges based on rumors or unsubstantiated gossip." Despite his stated goal, the program's vague guidelines allowed government entities to utilize confidential informants, which the accused could not confront and cross-examine. Exec. Order No. 9835, 1 Code Fed. Regs. 129 (Supp. 1947); Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 280.

¹³³ Not surprisingly, this policy gave the impression that communists threatened Washington's security, which resulted in wide-spread paranoia throughout the country. Ironically, this development inadvertently hurt the Truman administration years later, when critics such as Senator McCarthy accused the State Department of purposefully allowing China to fall to the Communist in 1949. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope*, 284-5.

¹³⁴ Established on March 7, the Committee made a series of suggestions designed to gain wide support from various sections of American society. The group, however, angered Acheson with their proposal that only countries with free enterprise systems could receive foreign aid from the US. According to Clifford, the under secretary of state denounced this idea because it severely limited the application of the Truman Doctrine. "Did the existence of a Labor Government in Great Britain" he asked, "mean that we could not give them assistance?" Ultimately, the State Department succeeded in downplaying the economic status of potential recipient nations. Truman, *Memoirs: Volume 2*, 105; Oral History Interview, John W. Snyder, February 4, 1969, 1098-99, Truman Library; Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 137.

¹³⁵ Snyder recalled that he personally spoke to about "twenty-five or thirty leaders of groups and organizations." These speeches, he insisted, helped increase his listener's "willingness to lend their assistance to backing up public opinion and supporting the aid program." Oral History Interview, John W. Snyder, February 26, 1969, 1165-7, Truman Library.

White House for answers.¹³⁶ In this manner, the Senator kept his fellow representatives well informed while indirectly helping officials in the State Department prepare for their hearings on Capitol Hill.

Despite having influential allies in Congress, the White House still encountered widespread resistance from a skeptical legislature. For example, inquiries into the Truman Doctrine's stated objectives created confusion and criticism amongst lawmakers, who disliked the Administration's less than forthcoming attitude towards the subject. When asked if America's foreign policy now revolved around containing communism, Acheson gave the technically correct response that the president's speech never mentioned "a crusade against any ideology."¹³⁷ However, he also disingenuously elaborated that "we are not trying to take a blow at anyone, or any country, or any doctrine."¹³⁸ Dubious of this response, Senator Alexander Wiley told the under secretary of state in a confidential executive session that "the American people are not as dumb as we sometimes assume."¹³⁹ In his opinion, the US Government needed to "call a spade a spade, and say that this whole thing is to stop the impact of Russia at this particular point."¹⁴⁰ In addition to this rebuke, the Senator wanted the administration to publicly announce Washington's real objective in the Near East, namely the safeguarding of America's

¹³⁶Francis O. Wilcox, the chief of staff for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, recalled how Vandenberg worked tirelessly to compile and organize the administration's answers into a special booklet for his colleagues' benefit. Oral History Interview, Francis O. Wilcox, February 10, 1984, 60, Truman Library.

¹³⁷ Assistance to Greece and Turkey, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 32-3.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 43

¹³⁹ Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine, 94-5.

¹⁴⁰ Washington's subsequent actions support the notion that the administration pursued an anti-Russian policy rather than an anti-communist program. For example, the White House exploited Tito's rift with Stalin in 1948 by approving a series of loans to Yugoslavia in September, 1949. This illustrated America's willingness to aid a Marxist dictatorial regime for the purpose of weakening Moscow's efforts in Eastern Europe. Ibid., 17; "US, Britain to Lend Yugoslavia \$61 million, Belgrade Reports Say," *Wall Street Journal*, September 6, 1949, 5; Current Economic Developments, September 26, 1949, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949, Volume V, Eastern Europe; the Soviet Union* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1975), 965-6.

access to Middle Eastern oil.¹⁴¹ Though Acheson never repudiated his remarks, other officials eventually acknowledged the obvious motivation behind Truman's aid package to Athens and Ankara. In a classified Senate hearing held on March 28, Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh admitted that the State Department viewed Greece and Turkey as a "strategic line" against the spread of "international communism."¹⁴² If these two nations fell, he argued, Moscow could seize western Asia and "pick the lock of world dominion."¹⁴³ Similarly, Brigadier-General George A. Lincoln warned representatives that "we are in an ideological struggle" with the Kremlin, whose leaders appeared intent on engaging a "subversive war" against the West.¹⁴⁴ Understandably, these inconsistent statements frustrated lawmakers as they tried to discern the administration's true objective in the Near East.

Congressional hearings also focused on whether the White House intended to apply the Truman Doctrine to other nations around the world. When asked if he viewed Greece and Turkey as "lead off countries" for a larger program, Acheson replied that the government did not possess any "secret plans up its sleeve."¹⁴⁵ In another instance, a representative inquired if the administration viewed the president's policy as an extension of the Monroe Doctrine. Again, the evasive diplomat responded, "No, I do not. I think that is a very loose and confused way of dealing with a specific situation."¹⁴⁶ Dissatisfied with these vague answers, committee members pressed the under secretary of state for precise information pertaining to the chief executive's

¹⁴¹ Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine, 94-5.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁴³ To emphasize Russia's danger to the US, MacVeagh quoted a speech by Stalin, which revealed the Soviet dictator's desire to expand Communist revolutions throughout the world. Cited from a 1934 book entitled, *The Foundations of Leninism*, the address stressed that "the essential task of the victorious revolution in one country is to develop and support the revolution in others so the victorious revolution in a victorious country ought not consider itself as a victory self-contained, but as a means of hastening the victory in another country." *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁴⁴ According to Lincoln, Washington's conflict with Moscow resembled the rivalry between ancient Rome and Carthage. *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁴⁵ Assistance to Greece and Turkey, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 54.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

foreign policy. Senator Howard A. Smith, for instance, questioned if the administration intended to spend resources to counter communist activity in South America. Acheson insinuated that the White House might consider extending its aid program “if there are situations where we can do something effective.”¹⁴⁷ However, when asked if the State Department also deemed China worthy of future American assistance, the diplomat shrewdly attempted to limit the Truman Doctrine’s scope with respect to Asia. In his opinion, Chiang Kai-Shek’s situation differed significantly from Athens’ predicament because the Nationalist Chinese government did not face imminent defeat.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, he refused to speculate about “hypothetical” scenarios concerning Washington’s besieged Far Eastern ally.¹⁴⁹ Ultimately, Acheson assured Congress that the White House intended to review future request for assistance “according to the circumstances of each specific case.”¹⁵⁰

In addition to their concerns about the program’s purpose and scope, lawmakers also remained apprehensive about the military aspects of the president’s aid package. With half of America’s proposed assistance earmarked for Greece’s armed forces, numerous congressional leaders openly worried about the possibility of the US getting involved in an active shooting war against communist guerrillas.¹⁵¹ Senators Vandenberg and Connally, for example, opposed the

¹⁴⁷ Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine, 17.

¹⁴⁸ Chiang Kai-Shek did not suffer a major defeat until late 1948 when Mao’s reorganized Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) launched a successful offensive against Nationalist Government forces in northern China. Assistance to Greece and Turkey, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 17; “China Policy: Experts Advise: Keep Aid Near Present Level We Can’t Do More,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 22, 1948, 1.

¹⁴⁹ Eventually Truman asked Congress in 1948 to provide \$570 million to Chiang Kai-Shek’s government. Considering China’s geographic size (forty-one times bigger than Greece) and the strength of the PLA (forty times bigger than the communist guerilla force in Greece) this amount did not represent a comparable aid package when compared to Truman’s request for Athens. Assistance to Greece and Turkey, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 18; “China Policy: Experts Advise: Keep Aid Near Present Level We Can’t Do More,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 22, 1948, 1; US Department of State, *United States Relations with China: With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949*. [China White Paper.] Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1949, 387-90.

¹⁵⁰ Assistance to Greece and Turkey, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 13.

¹⁵¹ Of the \$300 million allocated to Greece, \$150 million went to military expenditures for arms, ammunition, equipment, and rations. The remaining aid went to agriculture (\$20 million), foreign exchange cost

bill's vague wording regarding the "detailing of officers and enlisted men" from America's armed forces for the Greek endeavor.¹⁵² In their opinion, this gave the president a "blank check" for future military operations in the Balkans, which they feared might inadvertently cause a war between Washington and Moscow.¹⁵³ In response, Acheson stressed the administration's intentions to use US personnel only for equipping and training Athens' army. Moreover, he predicted that America's plan to strengthen Greece and Turkey actually decreased the chances of conflict because it does "a great deal to eliminate the sort of situation which would produce frictions between the great powers."¹⁵⁴ The Pentagon's minimal participation, he argued, could indirectly eliminate the communist guerillas and stabilize the strategically important region.

Arguably, the most contentious issue for Congress centered on Truman's decision to bypass the United Nations. Representative Helen G. Douglas, for instance, denounced the president's unilateral approach to foreign aid because she believed he inadvertently weakened the nascent international organization while damaging America's long-term credibility. Rejecting this criticism, the under secretary of state insisted that the White House's actions involved more than one nation and thus constituted a bilateral policy towards the Near East.¹⁵⁵ In addition to this legalistic parsing of the lawmaker's enquiry, Acheson also dismissed suggestions for the US to submit Greece and Turkey's problem to the UN by bluntly declaring that this "would not be a

(\$50 million) and internal improvements (\$80 million). As for Turkey's aid, the US designated almost all of its \$100 million to Ankara's military. Questions and Answers to the Greco-Turkish Aid Bill, The Department of State Bulletin Supplement, Vol. XVI, No. 409 A, May 4, 1947, 872-3.

¹⁵² Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine, 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵⁴ Assistance to Greece and Turkey, House Hearings, 19.

¹⁵⁵ In his legalistic answer to Douglas, Acheson argued that "we ought not to use this word 'unilateral' quite as freely as some of us do. Unilateral means something that one country does. What we are now talking about here is responding to a request of another country. That at least involves two countries." Ibid., 46-7.

productive course.”¹⁵⁶ Despite the State Department’s views on this matter, leaders such as Senators Vandenberg and Byrd continued to express their concerns about the administration’s decision to circumvent the global body.¹⁵⁷ For his part, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee drafted legislation to correct the administration’s “colossal blunder in ignoring the UN.”¹⁵⁸ Eventually incorporated into the Greek-Turkish Assistance bill, the proposed amendment directed the White House to end its aid program if the recipient nations or the Security Council deemed the assistance unnecessary.¹⁵⁹ While Acheson correctly viewed this additional requirement as “window dressing” and a “cheap price for Vandenberg’s patronage,” it did ultimately increase public support for Truman’s aid program.¹⁶⁰

Finally, lawmakers expressed doubts about the true nature of Athens’ and Ankara’s respective regimes and questioned whether they constituted “free peoples” according to the president’s speech. Despite the Greek government’s reputation as being “undemocratic, corrupt, and reactionary,” the State Department characterized it as “essentially democratic” and insisted that both Greece and Turkey “are progressing along the road to democracy.”¹⁶¹ Dissatisfied with the administration’s answer, representatives such as Jacob Javits asked the under secretary of state if the US should be offering support to a right wing government that did not have wide spread support from its own people.¹⁶² Acheson replied that the Hellenic nation’s current

¹⁵⁶ Acheson’s real reason for bypassing the UN centered on the Truman Administration’s legitimate fear that the Soviets might veto Washington’s proposal in the Security Council. Ibid., 46; Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 223.

¹⁵⁷ In a speech before the Senate on April 22, Byrd reiterated that the US needed to involve the UN because he feared the Soviet Union might pursue unilateral actions elsewhere. *Congressional Record*, 80th Cong., April 22, 1947, 3888-9.

¹⁵⁸ Vandenberg, *Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, 345.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 345-6, Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 223-4.

¹⁶⁰ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 224.

¹⁶¹ Jones, *Fifteen Weeks*, 185-7; Department of State Supplement: Aid to Greece and Turkey, May 4, 1947, 874.

¹⁶² Representative Javits noted that at least twenty percent of Greece’s eligible voters could not vote in the 1946 election because of political oppression. He also speculated that the nation’s insurgency probably could not

government “was elected in an election observed by 700 Americans” and, therefore, enjoyed a legitimate mandate.¹⁶³ If Congress withheld aid, he warned, Washington guaranteed the spread of totalitarianism to Athens.¹⁶⁴

Despite their numerous doubts and reservations, lawmakers readily acknowledged the administration’s effectiveness in framing its foreign policy proposal. According to one prominent Republican Senator, the president’s request seemed like “a declaration of war.”¹⁶⁵ In essence, the Chief Executive’s stark portrayal of Moscow’s subversive threats left Congress with little real choice but to endorse the State Department’s anti-communist plan for the Near East. Consequently, the Senate and House passed the aid package on April 22 and May 9, respectively.¹⁶⁶ Pleased with this development, the chief executive signed the bill into law on the twenty-second, thus providing the US Government with the resources to continue and enhance its containment policy towards the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

Truman’s actions in 1947 salvaged his presidency and reoriented the American people’s conception of their nation’s foreign policy. His decision in January to replace Byrnes with Marshall restored much needed credibility and coherence to Washington’s heretofore muddled

survive without receiving wide spread support from the general population. Assistance to Greece and Turkey, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 21, 56-7

¹⁶³ Ibid., 21.

¹⁶⁴ Acheson repeatedly told Congress that it needed to quickly pass Truman’s proposed aid legislation to avert Athens’ collapse. On March 20, 1947 the under secretary of state warned the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that unless Greece received massive financial aid within one month, the nation “will get social unrest, a complete breakdown of government and industry, and...dissolve into economic and political confusion.” This alarmist view, however, did not reflect the reality of the situation because America’s aid to Greece did not begin to arrive until October, 1947, seven months after Acheson’s exaggerated warning. Ibid., 15-6, 57; Freeland, *The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism*, 92-3.

¹⁶⁵ Vandenberg lamented that Congress did not act as “free agents because we have no power to initiate foreign policy. It is like a presidential request for a declaration of war. When that reaches us there is precious little we can do except say ‘Yes.’” Legislative Origins of the Truman Doctrine, 128.

¹⁶⁶ The Senate passed the bill 67 to 23 on April 22, while the House voted for the legislation 287 to 107.

foreign policy. Interestingly, the new secretary of state's organizational reforms enhanced Acheson's influence within the department, which undoubtedly affected how the White House perceived and reacted to the Greek-Turkish crises when it began a month later.

Britain's decision to withdraw troops from Athens, coupled with the administration's highly selective interpretation of the Balkans' geo-political situation, prompted the president to once again intervene in the Near East. Though conceptually consistent with his previous decisions concerning Iran and Turkey in 1946, the chief executive's expensive new plan required a bold public statement in order to secure sufficient support from Congress. Accordingly, his advisors produced an address that incorporated the Greek insurgency within a wider ideological struggle. Employing sweeping rhetoric that linked America's national security to the political orientation of other countries, the speech stressed that only immediate US assistance could eliminate the threat posed by totalitarianism. Not surprisingly, Truman embraced this strong message because he wanted the American people to realize the challenges posed by the Kremlin's obstructive policies.

The administration's subsequent propaganda strategy helped pressure a skeptical Congress to pass the president's aid proposal. For instance, Truman arguably established the Federal Employee Loyalty Program on March 21, 1947 in an attempt to generate and exploit a sense of insecurity about communist subversion amongst the American people. Likewise, the chief executive created a special committee headed by Treasury Secretary John W. Snyder to facilitate the White House's ability to mobilize important interest groups across the nation. In this manner, an unlikely coalition of business, farming, and religious leaders became convinced that the Greek-Turkish assistance bill promoted free enterprise, helped the economy, and combated communism's godless crusade against western values.

Interestingly, while the president's actions reinforced the notion that his assistance program constituted a new doctrine, the State Department made efforts during congressional hearings to correct misconceptions about the policy's scope and purpose. Acheson, for example, downplayed the legislation's potential universal application when he declared that the administration did not intend to provide comparable economic/military aid for Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Chinese government.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the diplomat flatly rejected the notion that Truman's ideas somehow extended the principles of the Monroe Doctrine to the entire world. Ultimately, the undersecretary of state remained purposefully vague about the policy's future implications and refused to address specific scenarios put forth by lawmakers.

Despite its label as an economic assistance bill, the Greek-Turkish legislation essentially remained a military assistance program designed to deter the Soviet Union in the Near East. In his zealous efforts to pass this legislation, the chief executive overstated Athens' strategic problems and exaggerated Russia's subversive threat to America's long term security. In doing so, his rhetoric inadvertently elevated the new policy to the stature of an open-ended doctrine. While the commander-in-chief achieved his short-term objective and immediately enjoyed increased political support because of it, he did eventually regret how the public viewed his policy.¹⁶⁸ In March, 1957, the former president wrote a letter to Clifford on the tenth anniversary of his famous speech and admitted that "I never was very much impressed that that policy was named the Truman Doctrine. Like the Marshal Plan, it was only a part of the foreign policy of

¹⁶⁷ This is not to suggest that the Truman administration did not provide aid to Chiang Kai-Shek's. The China Aid Act of 1948, for example, gave nearly \$500 million to the Nationalist Government. While this assistance did not prevent Mao from winning the Chinese Civil War in 1949, American foreign aid did ultimately safeguard Taiwan's security from threats emanating from the mainland. US Department of State, *United States Relations with China: With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949*. [China White Paper.], 387-90; Raymond H. Geselbracht, ed., *Foreign Aid and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman* (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2015), 101,116-7.

¹⁶⁸ In November, 1946 Truman received only thirty-two percent approval from the American people. By April, 1947 his approval increased to sixty percent. "After Two Years," *Time*, April 7, 1947, 5.

the United States, and that is how history should refer to it.”¹⁶⁹ Despite his regret, Washington and the American people embraced the doctrine’s rhetoric and relied upon it to justify important decisions such as the Marshall Plan, Berlin Airlift, formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the US military involvement in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Though he never meant to establish a new doctrine, the president’s speech ultimately forged a post-war bipartisan consensus, which resulted in a major paradigm shift for America’s role in world affairs.

¹⁶⁹ Clifford, *Counsel to the President*, 139.

Conclusion

When Harry S. Truman assumed the presidency in April 1945, he inherited a vague and contradictory foreign policy from his predecessor.¹ Despite this impediment, the new head of state attempted in good faith to achieve Roosevelt's agenda for the post-war world. While the inexperienced president's blunt personal style undoubtedly magnified US-Soviet differences, his actions also revealed the White House's ongoing efforts to maintain a productive relationship with the Kremlin.² For example, when Stalin protested Washington's sudden decision to end all Lend Lease shipments in May 1945, the chief executive immediately rescinded the order and sent Harry Hopkins to Moscow to placate the Russian leader. Likewise, the commander-in-chief rejected Churchill's reckless proposal to maintain American and British troops in Eastern Germany until the Soviets complied with the Yalta Agreement.³ Perhaps more importantly, Truman recognized Poland's communist-dominated government in June, even though he personally resented the USSR's oppressive behavior in that country. Though significantly different in tone and style, the new president's foreign policy remained consistent with FDR's strategic vision during the first half of 1945.

Admittedly, the chief executive and his advisors believed they could use Washington's military and economic power to induce Russian cooperation after World War II. The limitations of this strategy, however, soon became evident when the Kremlin refused to retreat from its

¹ Roosevelt understandably deferred America's numerous issues with Russia because he wanted to maintain the Grand Alliance until they defeated the Axis Powers. For him, the Allies could address questions concerning national boundaries and political alignments after the war.

² Though Truman and Molotov's first meeting naturally garners significant attention, the chief executive's subsequent decisions reveal him as a concerned leader who sincerely sought a good working relationship with Stalin.

³ The new president rejected Churchill's proposal, in part, because he viewed international agreements as solemn promises that could not be broken. Accordingly, if Washington and London failed to fulfill their obligations vis-à-vis Moscow, then they could not justifiably claim any outrage with Russia's transgressions.

recently established buffer zone in Eastern Europe. Though frustrated with the Potsdam and London conference's shortcomings, the commander-in chief instructed his cabinet to refrain from issuing any negative comments in public about Moscow's perceived intransigence. In this manner, the president downplayed Superpower differences during late 1945 in the hopes of achieving an eventual understanding with the USSR.

Truman's ambivalent attitude towards Russia persisted into 1946 even as advisors and dignitaries began to express their apprehension about the Soviet Union's future intentions. Stalin's February 9 election eve speech, for instance, frightened some administration officials who viewed it as a de facto declaration of war against London and Washington. Other leaders, such as Wallace, feared that the Soviet leader's address reflected the Kremlin's anxiety about its perceived encirclement by pro-Western capitalist nations. For his part, the chief executive dismissed these concerns when he correctly declared that the Russian dictator made his statements for a domestic audience. Similarly, Kennan's Long Telegram on February 22, failed to galvanize the president in the same manner as it did with Washington's foreign policy establishment. In particular, he ignored the influential cable's recommendation that called for the White House to immediately educate the American people about the nature of the Communist threat. Thus, Truman wasted an ideal opportunity to speak about this topic when he deliberately distanced himself from Churchill's controversial Iron Curtain Speech on March 5. Though he initially endorsed the address, the commander-in chief feigned ignorance about having advanced knowledge of the former prime minister's remarks. Political pragmatism evidently outweighed his need to inform the public about the administration's concerns. Consequently, the chief executive's public discourse during this period revealed him as a

cautious leader unwilling to inform the US electorate about the disintegrating state of affairs between Washington and Moscow.

Despite the president's reluctance to speak openly about the Superpower's ongoing tensions, he implemented an effective containment policy against the Soviet Union throughout 1946. In both Iran and Turkey, his administration successfully utilized diplomacy and veiled military threats to prevent the Kremlin from dominating these two strategic nations. The commander-in-chief, however, made few public statements regarding these matters, preferring instead to have Byrnes and the State Department's representatives speak on his behalf. This is remarkable, especially in the case of the Turkish straits, because the White House believed these crises could possibly escalate into open warfare between Washington and Moscow. Truman, nevertheless, remained discreet about foreign policy issues, which inadvertently hindered the American people's ability to fully understand the status of US-Soviet relations.⁴

The chief executive's understated style eventually created serious problems for his administration by September, 1946. The president's endorsement of Wallace's Madison Square Garden speech directly challenged many of the conclusions found in Byrnes' recent statements concerning the United States' occupation policy in Germany. Predictably, this development undermined the State Department's efforts to convince Paris and London that Washington firmly intended to stay involved in European affairs. The ensuing political controversy embarrassed the White House, which forced Truman to publicly support his secretary of state and the policies he espoused.⁵ Arguably, this avoidable chain of events raises questions about the president's

⁴ A strong presidential statement or series of speeches could have provided clarity for the American people as they focused on these important foreign policy issues throughout 1946.

⁵ Truman's subsequent attempt to insulate himself from the Wallace controversy is reminiscent of his efforts to dissociate the White House from Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech. In both instances, the chief executive appeared to embrace a political decision only to withdraw his support when the public turned against it.

original intentions. Though the commander-in-chief disputed Wallace's claim that he read the entirety of his speech beforehand, he should have already known that his progressive secretary of commerce intended to convey a foreign policy position contrary to the administration's views.⁶ Either the chief executive committed another careless error similar to his Lend Lease decision sixteen months earlier or he used his subordinate's speech as a trial balloon to test the American people's receptiveness to the prospects of accepting a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.⁷ Whether his actions constituted an oversight or a miscalculation, the results obligated Truman to embrace a more public stance regarding America's difficult relations with the Soviet Union.

Four days after Wallace's resignation, the Clifford-Elsey report prompted the president to reevaluate Washington's policy towards Moscow. Originally commissioned to compile a list of Russia's broken promises, the White House special counsel and his assistant instead produced a comprehensive review of the Kremlin's geopolitical goals in the hopes of convincing the commander-in-chief to adopt a more vigilant diplomatic posture. The stark assessment undoubtedly affected the chief executive, who immediately ordered all copies of the study locked away in a safe. Despite the report's suggestion that the president speak to the American people about the Soviet threat, Truman remained silent because he believed that a national conversation about this topic could jeopardize Byrnes' current negotiations with the Russians at the Paris Peace Conference.⁸ Furthermore, the commander-in-chief understood that the report's

⁶ Wallace's private letter to Truman in July, 1946, is evidence of the secretary of commerce's foreign policy outlook. Even without this specific message, everyone in Washington already knew about his accommodating attitude towards the Soviet Union.

⁷ This may have been the president's original intention with Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech.

⁸ Just as he did with Kennan's Long Telegram, the chief executive ignored the report's wise recommendation that called for him to educate the American people about Washington's difficulties with Moscow.

conclusions threatened to politicize foreign policy issues in the midst of a mid-term election campaign, which could weaken his bi-partisan support and hurt the Democrats at the polls.

The Republican's electoral victory in November, 1946, influenced the chief executive's conception of US-Soviet relations. With extremely low approval ratings, the beleaguered president faced a new conservative congressional leadership determined to lower taxes, reduce the federal budget, and decrease America's international commitments. Conversely, Truman no longer needed to worry about appeasing his party's liberal base, which he already alienated with his handling of the Wallace fiasco.⁹ The new domestic situation, therefore, prompted the commander-in-chief to co-opt the Republican's vociferous anti-communist propaganda, which his opponents used so effectively as a campaign issue in the recent election. Eager to regain the political initiative at home and abroad, the president looked for an incident to enhance his stature with the American people.

London's decision to withdraw troops and foreign aid from Greece in February, 1947 provided Truman with an ideal opportunity to revitalize his presidency. With Dean Acheson wielding increased influence in Marshall's State Department, the foreign policy establishment assumed a more hardline attitude towards the Soviet Union.¹⁰ Undoubtedly, the under secretary of state viewed the developments in the Balkans with sincere concern. However, his biased evaluation of these circumstances skewed his superiors' ability to accurately analyze Athens' situation. Combined with Truman's desire to personally confront the Soviets in a public manner, the White House enthusiastically accepted the need for a new foreign aid program for the Near East.

⁹ Recall that Truman also angered his party's liberal wing when he threatened to draft striking workers into the armed forces in May, 1946.

¹⁰ Acheson readily accepted pessimistic assessments from anti-Soviet officials such as Henderson, MacVeagh, Ethridge, and Porter.

From the Truman Doctrine's inception, the administration utilized fear and suspicion to elicit support for its proposed aid program. For example, Acheson used disease metaphors and melodramatic hyperbole when he briefed the congressional leadership about Athens' turmoil on February 27, 1947. Likewise, the president's speech before Congress on March 12, helped created a crises atmosphere when he subtly equated the forces of totalitarianism with the depraved acts of rapist and sexual predators.¹¹ Furthermore, the chief executive established the Federal Employee Loyalty Program just nine days after his address because he wanted to instill a heightened sense of insecurity in the American People, thereby making them more inclined to support his foreign policy. Finally, the undersecretary of state repeatedly misled Congress about the Greek government's stability in an effort to accelerate deliberations and achieve a quick legislative victory.¹² By exaggerating the problem and intentionally spreading paranoia, the administration obtained the authority to assist Greece and Turkey.

Harry S. Truman undoubtedly believed in the riotousness of his foreign aid program. Heavily influenced by Acheson and Marshall, the president sought to convince the American People that they needed to support his new policy. His decision, however, did not constitute a new open-ended doctrine meant for the entire free world. On the contrary, the chief executive's efforts to help Athens and Ankara represented another short term solution that had become a hallmark of his pragmatic ad-hoc style of decision making. Unlike his previous demeanor with respects to Iran and Turkey in 1946, the commander-in-chief faced the Greek crises in a high profile manner because he believed only a national speech could successfully mobilize public

¹¹ In her book, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: The Cold War Call to Arms*, Denise Bostdorff observed that "since freedom often has traditionally feminine connotations-Lady Liberty, for example-its need for protection in Truman's address and in other US Cold War rhetoric may not be surprising." Bostdorff, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine*, 129.

¹² Recall that US aid did not begin to arrive in Greece until October, 1947. This contradicts Acheson's earlier prediction on March 20, that Athens only had one month's worth of supplies remaining in their domestic inventory.

opinion.¹³ Largely drafted by Clifford and Elsey, the address employed sweeping language about the dangers of totalitarianism and connected America's security directly to Athens' and Ankara's well-being.¹⁴ The special counsel, however, admitted that he and his assistant did not view the speech as a doctrine. In Clifford's opinion, Elsey's three sentence credo elevated the address into something more than they originally intended. Similarly, the rhetoric they drafted had little bearing on reality. The common belief that the Truman Doctrine proclaimed an anti-communist philosophy appears incongruous especially when the US provided loans to Yugoslavia in 1949 after Tito split with Stalin. Likewise, the speech's assertion that Washington only wanted to help democracies seemed dubious when the first two beneficiaries of America's aid led reactionary governments in Greece and Turkey. As for its world-wide scope, the president had no intentions in sending money to Chiang Kai-shek's government in 1947, much to the chagrin of the China Lobby in Congress.¹⁵ In essence, the Truman administration became a victim to its own success in creating an overly simplistic world view for the American people. Though he never meant to establish a new doctrine, the chief executive's speech ultimately resulted in a major paradigm shift for his nation, which now viewed international events through the prism of universal Containment.

¹³ Truman, of course, embraced the opportunity to appear presidential to the American People, especially after his party lost the control of Congress in the 1946 mid-term election.

¹⁴ Both Marshall and Kennan expressed their respective concerns about the speech's scope and style.

¹⁵ The president eventually overcame his dislike for Chiang Kai-shek in 1948, when he proposed a \$500 million aid package designed to stem Mao's recent offensives in Northern China. This decision, however, is still consistent with Truman's ad-hoc style rather than a long term solution dictated by an overarching doctrine.

Appendix

PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN'S ADDRESS BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS, MARCH 12, 1947

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Congress of the United States:

The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress. The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved.

One aspect of the present situation, which I wish to present to you at this time for your consideration and decision, concerns Greece and Turkey.

The United States has received from the Greek Government an urgent appeal for financial and economic assistance. Preliminary reports from the American Economic Mission now in Greece and reports from the American Ambassador in Greece corroborate the statement of the Greek Government that assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation.

I do not believe that the American people and the Congress wish to turn a deaf ear to the appeal of the Greek Government.

Greece is not a rich country. Lack of sufficient natural resources has always forced the Greek people to work hard to make both ends meet. Since 1940, this industrious and peace loving country has suffered invasion, four years of cruel enemy occupation, and bitter internal strife.

When forces of liberation entered Greece they found that the retreating Germans had destroyed virtually all the railways, roads, port facilities, communications, and merchant marine. More than a thousand villages had been burned. Eighty-five per cent of the children were tubercular. Livestock, poultry, and draft animals had almost disappeared. Inflation had wiped out practically all savings.

As a result of these tragic conditions, a militant minority, exploiting human want and misery, was able to create political chaos which, until now, has made economic recovery impossible.

Greece is today without funds to finance the importation of those goods which are essential to bare subsistence. Under these circumstances the people of Greece cannot make progress in solving their problems of reconstruction. Greece is in desperate need of financial and economic assistance to enable it to resume purchases of food, clothing, fuel and seeds. These are indispensable for the subsistence of its people and are obtainable only from abroad. Greece must have help to import the goods necessary to restore internal order and security, so essential for economic and political recovery.

The Greek Government has also asked for the assistance of experienced American administrators, economists and technicians to insure that the financial and other aid given to Greece shall be used effectively in creating a stable and self-sustaining economy and in improving its public administration.

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the government's authority at a number of points, particularly along the northern boundaries. A Commission appointed by the United

Nations security Council is at present investigating disturbed conditions in northern Greece and alleged border violations along the frontier between Greece on the one hand and Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia on the other.

Meanwhile, the Greek Government is unable to cope with the situation. The Greek army is small and poorly equipped. It needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore the authority of the government throughout Greek territory. Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.

The United States must supply that assistance. We have already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic aid but these are inadequate.

There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn.

No other nation is willing and able to provide the necessary support for a democratic Greek government.

The British Government, which has been helping Greece, can give no further financial or economic aid after March 31. Great Britain finds itself under the necessity of reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece.

We have considered how the United Nations might assist in this crisis. But the situation is an urgent one requiring immediate action and the United Nations and its related organizations are not in a position to extend help of the kind that is required.

It is important to note that the Greek Government has asked for our aid in utilizing effectively the financial and other assistance we may give to Greece, and in improving its public

administration. It is of the utmost importance that we supervise the use of any funds made available to Greece; in such a manner that each dollar spent will count toward making Greece self-supporting, and will help to build an economy in which a healthy democracy can flourish.

No government is perfect. One of the chief virtues of a democracy, however, is that its defects are always visible and under democratic processes can be pointed out and corrected. The Government of Greece is not perfect. Nevertheless it represents eighty-five per cent of the members of the Greek Parliament who were chosen in an election last year. Foreign observers, including 692 Americans, considered this election to be a fair expression of the views of the Greek people.

The Greek Government has been operating in an atmosphere of chaos and extremism. It has made mistakes. The extension of aid by this country does not mean that the United States condones everything that the Greek Government has done or will do. We have condemned in the past, and we condemn now, extremist measures of the right or the left. We have in the past advised tolerance, and we advise tolerance now.

Greece's neighbor, Turkey, also deserves our attention.

The future of Turkey as an independent and economically sound state is clearly no less important to the freedom-loving peoples of the world than the future of Greece. The circumstances in which Turkey finds itself today are considerably different from those of Greece. Turkey has been spared the disasters that have beset Greece. And during the war, the United States and Great Britain furnished Turkey with material aid.

Nevertheless, Turkey now needs our support.

Since the war Turkey has sought financial assistance from Great Britain and the United States for the purpose of effecting that modernization necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity.

That integrity is essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East.

The British government has informed us that, owing to its own difficulties can no longer extend financial or economic aid to Turkey.

As in the case of Greece, if Turkey is to have the assistance it needs, the United States must supply it. We are the only country able to provide that help.

I am fully aware of the broad implications involved if the United States extends assistance to Greece and Turkey, and I shall discuss these implications with you at this time.

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations, The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on

free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.

Moreover, the disappearance of Greece as an independent state would have a profound effect upon those countries in Europe whose peoples are struggling against great difficulties to maintain their freedoms and their independence while they repair the damages of war.

It would be an unspeakable tragedy if these countries, which have struggled so long against overwhelming odds, should lose that victory for which they sacrificed so much. Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world. Discouragement and possibly failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence.

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East.

We must take immediate and resolute action.

I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400,000,000 for the period ending June 30, 1948. In requesting these funds, I have taken into consideration the maximum amount of relief assistance which would be furnished to Greece out of the \$350,000,000 which I recently requested that the Congress authorize for the prevention of starvation and suffering in countries devastated by the war.

In addition to funds, I ask the Congress to authorize the detail of American civilian and military personnel to Greece and Turkey, at the request of those countries, to assist in the tasks of reconstruction, and for the purpose of supervising the use of such financial and material assistance as may be furnished. I recommend that authority also be provided for the instruction and training of selected Greek and Turkish personnel.

Finally, I ask that the Congress provide authority which will permit the speediest and most effective use, in terms of needed commodities, supplies, and equipment, of such funds as may be authorized.

If further funds, or further authority, should be needed for purposes indicated in this message, I shall not hesitate to bring the situation before the Congress. On this subject the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government must work together.

This is a serious course upon which we embark.

I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious. The United States contributed \$341,000,000,000 toward winning World War II. This is an investment in world freedom and world peace.

The assistance that I am recommending for Greece and Turkey amounts to little more than 1 tenth of 1 per cent of this investment. It is only common sense that we should safeguard this investment and make sure that it was not in vain.

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.

The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms.

If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world -- and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

Great responsibilities have been placed upon us by the swift movement of events.

I am confident that the Congress will face these responsibilities squarely.¹

¹ Harry S. Truman, *Public Papers of the President of the United States: Harry S. Truman: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, April 12, 1945 to January 20, 1953. Volume 3: 1947* (Washington, DC: US G.P.O., 1963), 176-9.

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